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## REPRESENTATIONS AND RATIONALES IN BRITISH POLICY

SYLVIE LOMER

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# Recruiting International Students in Higher Education

Representations and Rationales in British Policy

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*This book is dedicated to my husband Josh, in completely inadequate thanks*

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# Contents

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ATAS | Academic Technology Approval Scheme |
| BC | British Council |
| BCECS | British Council Education Counselling Service |
| BIS | Department for Business, Innovation and Skills |
| CAQDAS | Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software |
| DCMS | Department of Culture, Media and Sport |
| DfES | Department for Education and Skills |
| DIUS | Department of Innovation Universities and Skills |
| DPMO | Deputy Prime Minister's Office |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| EU | European Union |
| FCO | Foreign and Commonwealth Office |
| GATS | General Agreement on Trade in Services |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GSM | Global Student Mobility |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEA | Higher Education Academy |
| HEFCE | Higher Education Funding Council for England |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| HESA | Higher Education Statistics Authority |
| HSM | Highly Skilled Migration |
| HSMP | Highly Skilled Migration Programme |
| HTS | Highly Trusted Sponsor |
| IBS | International Student Barometer |
| IELTS | International English Language Testing System |
| IES | International Education Strategy |

| | |
|---|---|
| IHE | International Higher Education |
| IPPR | Institute of Public Policy Research |
| IPS | International Passenger Survey |
| ISB | International Student Barometer |
| MAC | Migration Advisory Committee |
| NAO | National Audit Office |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NSS | National Student Survey |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development |
| PBS | Points-Based System for visas |
| PMI2 | Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education |
| PMI | Prime Minister's Initiative to recruit international students |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency |
| TNE | Transnational Education |
| TNHE | Transnational Higher education |
| UKBA | UK Border Agency |
| UKCISA | The UK Council for International Student Affairs |
| UKCOSA | The UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs (became UKCISA in 2007) |
| UN ESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNESCO | United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization |
| WPR | What is the Problem Represented to be? |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

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CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

The UK has recruited and welcomed international students into higher education for a long time, at first as part of its imperial rule, and more recently as a strategy for economic growth. Government policies have played varying roles in encouraging or limiting international student numbers. The last 20 years have seen an intensification of marketing of UK higher education overseas and a significant increase in the international student population. They have also seen more explicit national policy level interventions in differing forms. These policies have made a range of arguments for, and occasionally against, increasing international student numbers. Such policies represent international students, depicting them in various ways and shaping how they are perceived by institutions and the general public.

The first explicit policy intervention was launched at the London School of Economics in 1999. Tony Blair declared that the UK needed to recruit more international students. He claimed a range of benefits from their presence and kick-started a multi-million-pound programme known as the Prime Minister's Initiative for international students (PMI) to do so (Blair 1999). In 1997–1998, there were 116,840 non-EU domiciled students in the UK (HESA 1998). The aim was to increase the number of higher education international students by 50,000 students over 6 years, by 2005 and to make Britain "the first choice for quality" (British Council 1999). It launched the Educ@tion UK brand for the education sector as a whole. This included higher and further education, as well as language colleges and secondary schools—any



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institutions which could attract students from overseas (British Council 2000). The PMI's "package of measures" also included revisions to the student visa system to facilitate applications, relaxing limitations on work during degree courses and the expansion of scholarship schemes (Blair 1999). A substantial increase in international student recruitment and revenue for the UK followed (British Council 2003). The targets were exceeded by 43,000 students in both higher and further education (Blair 2006), and the brand was widely recognised. This was claimed as a success for the policy, although the UK had simultaneously lost 3% of its market share internationally (Böhm et al. 2004).

Two years later, the PMI was re-envisioned with the aims of improving the quality of experience for international students, employability and embedding partnerships (DfES 2006). This was entitled "the Initiative for International Education" or PMI2. This change of title reflected a change in focus, moving away from recruitment targets into a more sophisticated and multifaceted endeavour to embed the increases in international recruitment in a broader network of partnerships and institutional activities (DIUS 2009). Educ@tion UK was rebranded, recruitment and marketing activities were rethought and an emphasis on student experience was introduced.

In 2010, the Coalition Government was elected, with a promise from the Conservative Party (the majority partner) to reduce net immigration to "the tens of thousands" (The Conservative Party 2010). This closely followed the bogus college scandal where certain language colleges were offering substandard education to provide illegal access to work for their registered students (Home Affairs Committee 2009). Subsequently, universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) were required to monitor their international students more closely. While there was "no cap" on the international student numbers, the Home Office also made it apparent that student numbers would be reduced in consequence. Thus, despite claims of rolling out "the red carpet" (Cameron 2011) to international students, this suggests that their recruitment and presence is limited by wider migration policy.

In 2013, the Coalition International Education Strategy (IES) was published (BIS 2013a). It highlighted the value of international students in the UK, but also privileged transnational education(the provision of education and qualifications by UK HEIs to students physically located elsewhere), and the role of other education exports such as publications and technology. By 2012–2013, there were 299,970 international students in the UK (HESA 2013), a 256% increase from 1998, before the PMI. By this time, one in eight students in the UK was from outside the EU (UUK 2014). According to the IES, these students make a "massive contribution" economically, educationally and culturally to the UK, and this is why their presence has been valued (BIS 2013a). The IES sits alongside contemporary policy discourses on restricting inward migration into the UK, reflecting tensions and contradictions between different policy agendas.

Today, 19.3% of students enrolled at tertiary level in the UK are classified as international, of which 13.8% or 312,010 are from outside the European Union (EU) (HESA 2015). At PhD level, this exceeds 35% (OECD 2015). At taught Masters level, 23% of students in 2012–2013 came from China alone, while only 26% are from the UK (HEFCE 2014). This speaks to the UK's reliance on international students at the postgraduate level. The UK hosts 10% of world's internationally mobile students, second only to the USA (OECD 2015). In terms of market share, however, the UK has been consistently falling, speaking to the increasing diversity of international destinations for study. Commonwealth countries and those with colonial ties are a key source for the UK. Yet such countries also send students elsewhere in the world, suggesting a multiplication of imperial sites (Madge et al. 2009). However, the UK market share has fallen since 2011, losing to Australia and the USA (British Council 2015). The number of overseas entrants fell for the first time in 29 years in 2012–2013 (HEFCE 2014), primarily due to falls in applications from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Marginson 2014a). Predictably, these declines affected postgraduate taught courses more than undergraduates. While raw numbers recovered in the following year, numbers of applications through the UK's central application system for undergraduate courses were down in 2015–2016 (UCAS 2016).

The UK's contemporary policy on international students has emerged through its long history of engagement with international education in different forms. It is important to establish first that while higher education is often said to have a long tradition of internationalism, it is neither an exclusively modern nor Western phenomenon (Altbach 2004). It was not ever thus, however. Understanding higher education as historically international in character is in a sense anachronistic given that modern notions of nation state with borders and citizens originate only in the seventeenth century (Scott 1998). At least until the twentieth century (if not beyond), borders were permeable and nations mutating. South Sudan would be a contemporary case in point. The construct of "international" is built on the premise of the modern nation state. In a historical context, it would be more accurate to refer to scholarly mobility.

There is certainly a long history of scholars travelling. Ancient Egyptian empires educated the young elites of its vassal kingdoms (Wilson 2014). The library at Alexandria sent out scholars to centres such as Rhodes and Athens, and attracted and housed scholars from abroad including Aristophanes, Euclid and Archimedes (Welch 2012). In the seventh and eighth centuries, Nalanda and Sarnath in India attracted scholars (Rizvi 2011). The pre-medieval libraries and scholars of Arabic Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Byzantium (Sidhu 2006), Fez (Trahar 2010), and Timbuktu were centres for scholarship in the Arabic world and beyond. The Caliph of Baghdad established a House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma) for the study of mathematics, philosophy and theology, and accommodating scholars who introduced decimal numbers and algebra (Welch 2012). In China, the Tang Dynasty attracted scholars both from within the empire and beyond, through its state and private institutions. These were centres of scholarship, although they do not necessarily fit the modern model of the university and its students.

Later, the universities of medieval Europe attracted scholars from all over Western Europe and beyond (Humfrey 2011). In medieval universities in England, foreign students were a sign of international stature, attracting scholars to study for doctorates in theology (Perraton 2014). This declined with the split from the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century and gradually recovered in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During this period, it met the needs of the children of West Indian planters and attracted a number of students from Scandinavia, Germany and Prussia. Perraton (2014) describes a fledgling scholarship programme instigated by Tsar Boris Godunov, who sent four students to study in England, none of whom returned as intended to strengthen the empire. This indicates that even as early as the eighteenth century, higher education was understood as a political tool (albeit one that relies on students actually coming home).

It is often asserted that higher education acted as a tool for British imperial rule, training bureaucrats to administer the Empire and educating colonial subjects. The Company of Merchants Trading in Africa, for example, sponsored the education of African nobles for the purpose of facilitating trade (Walker 2014). However, until the 1860s, there were very few non-white foreign students from the colonies (Deslandes 1998), suggesting that this dimension of rule happened at arms' length or in very small numbers of elite students. The African aristocracy of Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, the Gambia and Nigeria sent only "a trickle" of their children to England for their school education (Perraton 2014). Private tuition and personal recommendation would have been required to matriculate at Oxford or Cambridge, highlighting the importance of social networks (Pietsch 2013). The founding of the University of London marked a different educational model, which provided accreditation for students in provincial and colonial capitals. Imperial subjects had nominally the same legal rights as British citizens, and race never constituted a formal barrier to university entry. This was naturally no guarantee of equal treatment, and racism and discrimination were significant issues for these students. The biggest growth in international student numbers began in 1885. In this latter part of the nineteenth century, British universities began to explicitly participate in the training of imperial civil servants with the creation of Oxford's Indian Institute in 1877, the creation of forestry courses and Manchester University's study of Asian languages.

From this point on, the UK hosted more international students, training bureaucrats to administer the Empire (Walker 2014) and to sell British goods and services (Sidhu 2006). Its function in this period was an investment to consolidate colonial power, by instilling English tastes, morals and values in colonial subjects. The early twentieth century saw an increase in colonial engagement with education both in Africa (Whitehead 2007) and India (Allender 2009). Scholarships were established by colonial governments to study technical and practical subjects in Britain (Perraton 2014). Scholarships were established by colonial governments to study technical and practical subjects in Britain (Perraton 2014). Sidhu (2006) suggests that education offered a moral salve for Britons' conscience in colonial relations. However, it also exposed students to critical social theorists like Malinowski at the London School of Economics and provided a space for nationalist ideas and powerful critiques of imperialism to emerge among future leaders like Nehru, Gandhi, Nyerere and Hastings Banda (Walker 2014).

After decolonisation, the prestige of UK degrees and fee subsidies continued to attract students from the Commonwealth (Walker 2014). While national universities were founded in ex-colonies, domestic institutions were at the time fundamentally reproductions of Western, imperial institutions and ideas, perpetuating colonial discursive mentalities (Sidhu 2006). Even countries not colonised by Western powers such as Japan, China and Thailand have adopted largely Western systems (Altbach 2004). International student mobility can therefore be understood as an extension of a colonial mentality, where students emerging from Western-influenced systems of education would seek to enter those universities or the country which constituted the model. However, Madge et al. (2009) suggest that this is an oversimplification and that such universities also offered a space for the critical reworking of colonial ideas.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the UK HE sector was what Humfrey (2011, p. 652) characterises as "haphazardly international". Belcher (1987, p. 127) goes further: "Britain does not really have anything like properly developed and comprehensive policy in this area". Students were generally welcomed as part of Britain's "moral obligation" to previous colonies and the new Commonwealth. This informal policy echoes the 1950 Colombo Plan, in which Australia agreed to subsidise students from the Asian regions in the stated interests of reducing poverty (Burke 2013). The Cold War led to rivalries in the development of higher education and increased momentum in the establishment of scholarship schemes (Sidhu 2006). These programmes were seen as instrumental in public diplomacy, keeping ex-colonies on the ideological side of the West (Nye 2004; Rizvi 2011).

In 1979 under the Thatcher Government, this policy of vague amiability came to an abrupt end, motivated by financial savings (Elliott 1998). The burden of subsidising international fees was increasingly seen as problematic, despite the £250 differential fee levied since 1967 (Humfrey 2011). It became difficult to argue that educating overseas students constituted a public good for the UK (Healey 2008). Full-cost fees were therefore introduced. This decision precipitated a backlash, as the UK was seen to be reneging on its commitment to international education and its obligations to the Commonwealth (Belcher 1987), and student numbers dropped considerably, particularly those from lower income countries (Walker 2014). In mitigation, the Pym Package of scholarships and funding through the FCO and Overseas Development Agency was introduced. At the same time, university funding was considerably reduced, leading to increasing dependency on income from international fees (Belcher 1987). Student numbers did not recover until 1984, largely due to institutional recruitment efforts in East Asia (Elliott 1998).

The period which followed was "one of rapid and confused change" (Belcher 1987, p. 132) when universities began engaging actively and enthusiastically in commercial overseas recruitment. Throughout the 1980s, there was still no comprehensive policy framework (Walker 2014). Overseas recruitment as an income source emerged as a way out of a dilemma on how to publicly fund mass domestic higher education without deregulating home fees. It was, in Healey's (2008) words, "arguably dysfunctional", as it constituted a distortion of market responses to government policy rather than an optimally efficient response. The dominant view of international education in the 1980s and 1990s was as trade, not aid (Rizvi and Lingard 2010), as formalised in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), a World Trade Organisation agreement, which recognises education as a service to be freely traded across national borders (Tilak 2008).

The increasing presence of international students in the UK is part of a wider pattern of increasing mobility. Mobile student numbers grew significantly in the latter half of the twentieth century. By 2012, more than five times as many people studied abroad as in 1975 (OECD 2015). It was during this period that Deng Xiaoping announced the "opening up" of China, contributing substantially to this increase. A total of 1.7 million people travelled for tertiary-level study in 1999, and over 4.5 million in 2012 (UNESCO 2015a). This movement is built on fundamental global inequalities, where students travel from poorer countries in the Global South to the Global North and West (Altbach 2004; Marginson 2006). 53% of mobile students come from Asia, and nearly every sixth international student is Chinese, with India, Japan and South Korea also significant source countries (Oxford University 2015). In 2000, the top 10 destination countries accounted for over 70% of globally mobile students, which decreased only slightly to 67% in 2012 (UNESCO 2015a). Six OECD countries (Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK, France and Germany) host over 75% of globally mobile students, a proportion which has remained stable over the last 20 years (OECD 2014). These main host countries are also often ex-imperial centres (Sidhu 2006), with the debatable exception of the USA, and use the English language. Countries where English is the dominant language receive almost 80% of globally mobile students (Rizvi and Lingard 2010), and some non-English speaking countries, such as France and Germany, are increasing their higher education provision in English (OECD 2015). This speaks to the legacy of the British Empire in contemporary international higher education.

Since 2000, a number of other countries have increased their recruitment efforts, leading the market to become increasingly competitive (Mazzarol and Soutar 2012). These include Singapore, Malaysia, Russia, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand. These competitive endeavours are apparent in the increase of marketing activities, national branding campaigns and explicit government policies. For example, Malaysia aims to expand its enrolment of international students to 250,000 by 2025, competing on quality, affordability, experience and "values-driven and globally relevant education" (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2015). Destinations for international higher education are multiplying, though the UK continues to thrive on its historical advantage.

While international student mobility constitutes a benefit for the host country, it can also contribute to brain drain, where educated skilled people leave developing countries and regions to reside permanently in developed nations (Ziguras and Law 2006; Naidoo 2007). Becoming an international student makes one a desirable migrant for some host countries, which consider that international graduates are not only highly qualified, but also likely to be well-integrated and internationally experienced (Raghuram 2013). Some countries, such as Canada, have actively changed their immigration policies in order to attract permanent migrants through higher education (Matross Helms et al. 2015). Attracting international students is therefore potentially problematic, where it contributes to entrenching global inequalities.

In the last two decades, new models of international education have developed, including the cross-border supply of services through online provision (Knight 2004), the establishment of branch campuses overseas (Altbach 2004) such as the University of Nottingham's Ningbo campus, the provision of higher education at a distance through transnational higher education (Marginson 2006) and the development of regional education hubs (University of Oxford 2015). Expanding digital initiatives and massive open online courses have expanded options for distance learning, although the latter have not lived up to their early promise of disruption of traditional university degrees. Host countries are internationalising "at home" and in the curriculum (Sawir 2013). In the UK, however, internationally mobile students remain the most visible indicator of participation in international education and the focus of this book.

Gross enrolment rates are increasing globally, but only a small proportion of eligible students actually travel for their higher education. Domestic enrolment is still globally the norm (World Bank 2015;

UNESCO 2015b), and outbound mobility ratios appear to remain relatively stable between 1999 and 2015 (British Council 2012). While absolute numbers of globally mobile students are considerable and growing, educational mobility is not by any means a universal trend, including less than 1% of the undergraduate aged population. Global educational mobility is normalised through media narratives, generating a global imaginary (Collins et al. 2014). We imagine that travelling for study is typical or at least within an understandable repertoire of educational decisions, despite the reality of the small numbers.

## Previous Work

This brief description demonstrates that UK policy on international students exists, that it takes place in a historical context of imperialism, and that the modern global eduscape is complex. Policy on international students responds to the economy, migration, culture and heritage, science and technology, and education (Knight 2004). It represents intersections between multiple policy domains. There have been a range of different positions on international students, which change over time. Such positions emerge and are developed through discourse.

Studies on international student policy have stressed the importance of this area of policy given its impact on institutions and the sector. Healey (2008) examines the market in international higher education from an economic perspective, concluding that growth in internationalisation has been developed in institutional response to government policy. Walker (2014) and Humfrey (2011) have conducted historical reviews, presenting the evolution of state policy on international students. Walker (2014, p. 17) in particular highlights how international students have been represented by state policy "entirely in terms of geopolitical and commercial advantage". She also suggests that university managers and academics have been increasingly impacted by national policy in general, as well as international education policy. Humfrey (2011) also detects significant impact within the sector of national-level policies, focusing particularly on teaching and learning. Jenkins (2014) examines the role of universities as border controls, citing devolution of responsibility from the state to institutions. He frames the demands imposed on universities as an exercise in governmentality, ceding power but also imposing new duties external to institutions' fundamental role as education providers. Dodds (2009) makes a parallel case for the introduction of national agencies (like the British Council and EduFrance) selling higher education as a sector; this dimension of liberalisation was a government initiative, in which institutions are implicated. This emerging field of study suggests that national policies on international education affect institutions. While studies on particular dimensions of such policies have been done (Healey 2008; Dodds 2009; Humfrey 2011; Karram 2013; Tannock 2013; Geddie 2014; Jenkins 2014; Walker 2014), there has not been a single study to pull together all intersections of these policies. This book intends to contribute to this literature with a more holistic approach.

National policies exert discursive influence, particularly entrenching the dominance of economic narratives. Karram (2013), for example, examines national-level discourses in Australia, Britain, Canada and the USA and found economic narratives of competitiveness to be dominating those of support to international students. Within this discourse, students are constructed as a recruit-able, marketable population, rather than active stakeholders. Stuart Tannock (2013) queries the equity of international education policies in the UK, contrasting their global implications for the entrenchment of social inequalities with domestic widening participation policies. Tannock's work highlights the ethical dimensions of international education policy, demonstrating that even where defined primarily as economic, policy actions or stances affect individuals through a cumulative process of exclusion. Kate Geddie's research (2014) identified multiple rationales within policy on international students and examined policy mobilities between the UK and Canada. These rationales have the potential to shape institutional practice and individual experiences and are made with reference to global discourses, such as those exposed in Karram's work. This emerging field of research indicates that policies, rationales and discourses can impact individuals and institutions, in ways that we do not yet fully understand. Thus, national-level policy on international students in the UK has the potential to impact institutions and lived student and staff experiences and is therefore an important area for critical study.

International student policy is emerging as a field of research. Discourse is an important conceptual tool for its exploration. Policy can be seen as discourse, because it is a site for the interaction of language and power to shape, codify and limit potential imaginaries and, crucially, social representations (Foucault 1972; Fairclough 1989; Sidhu 2006). Because policy is written by the powerful, the concepts and language used are likely to become part of entrenched, dominant discourses. They have the capacity to influence how people are thought about. When this concerns populations and groups of people who lack social power, the effects of discursive representations may be profound. International students are one such population, as they have no democratic voice in the countries in which they study and are marginalised in this sense, as well as in others (Devos 2003; Marginson et al. 2010; Robertson 2011). Given that there are national policies in the UK on international students, they can be expected to construct discursive representations.

Studies which have examined discursive representations of international students in other countries have found them to be presented as "a recruitable, marketable population", rather than "stakeholders", actors or partners in a system (Karram 2013, p. 8). They have frequently been represented as passive recipients of services, care and support provided by institutions, typically universities (Askehave 2007; Leyland 2011; Robertson 2011). Students are seen as "a source of contempt (for their inadequate English language skills), resentment (that we have to accept them at all)" (Devos 2003, p. 164). They have been constructed as "cash cows", powerful inasmuch as they are consumers (Robertson 2011), active when they are "recommending", "choosing" or "accepting" (Askehave 2007). They have been constructed as "capital", valued for their economic benefit (Collins 2006), which Rhee and Sagaria (2004) connect to portrayals of colonial subjects. In consequence, Sidhu and Dall'Alba (2012) argue that they have been "disembodied", seen as rational, choosing customers rather than embodied, grounded, networked individuals. International students have been dehumanised in policy discourses (Gildersleeve and Hernandez 2012) and securitised as a risk (Ewers and Lewis 2008). They have been simultaneously framed as desirable skilled migrants and as workers with deficits (Robertson 2011).

Students have also been portrayed as active citizens making valuable contributions to the countries in which they study (Robertson 2011; Burke 2013). They have been represented both as elite, associated with the trappings of symbolic cultural capital (Sidhu 2002) and in academic deficit (Bullen and Kenway 2003; Koehne 2006). They are associated with a decline in standards (Devos 2003), but Rhee and Sagaria (2004) suggest that in the USA they are also seen as "diligent, acquiescent workers" who are submissive to their academic sponsors. Their presence is seen to impact urban environments and cause social problems, such as crime and road accidents (Collins 2006). Fundamentally, they are constructed as Other, defined by their difference from the dominant population, often as a homogenous collective, where experience is totalised through statistical representation (Kell and Vogl 2008). This is replicated in academic research on student experience and adaptation, which often categorises students in "ethnic terms" (Coate 2009). Diversity is reduced and fixed to a singular racial identity, defined by stereotypical traits. These representations are described as "appropriative violence" (Collins 2006) and are grounded in a form of neo-racism (Rhee and Sagaria 2004).

From these studies, there is little sense of the representations of international students in UK national policy discourses. With the exception of Karram (2013) and Geddie (2014), studies in the UK noticeably focus on promotional genres (Askehave 2007; Leyland 2011) or adopt historical approaches to the policy (Humfrey 2011; Walker 2014). This is important because Koehne's (2006) study found that academic discourses did impact international students, who variously internalised and resisted them. If academic discourses do so, policy discourses are likely to have still greater impacts given the structural power they can exert. This responds to Madgeet al. (2009, p. 37) call for a commitment to an engaged pedagogy: "This project is… one of thinking about the discourses, power hierarchies and social relations that shape international students' presence in the UK".

## Scope

This study draws together previous work with empirical research, to develop a systematic, holistic analysis of UK policy on international students from 1999–2015. The aim is to explore the discursive representations of international students in policy. A text-based approach was adopted, to access public policy discourses (Sidhu 2002; Askehave 2007; Robertson 2011). Publicly available policy documents relating to international students were identified and qualitatively analysed. Carol Bacchi's (2009) "what is the problem represented to be" (WPR) analytical framework was then applied to the results of the qualitative analysis to establish how policy problematised and represented international students.

I use the definitions of international students as they are used by policy actors in the UK. Firstly, for higher education reporting purposes, international students are defined on their fee-paying status, which is determined by their place of permanent residence in a country outside the European Union, prior to starting the course (HESA 2015). Secondly, international students are defined by the Home Office as non-citizens from outside the European Economic Area, requiring a visa to study in the country (Rivza and Teichler 2007). On this basis, European Union students are excluded in this study, as European mobility policies are distinct in aim and implementation (Papatsiba 2005). These two definitions are not precisely synonymous, as British citizens, for example, who have been resident abroad would be categorised as "international" under the former definition, but not the latter. The definition also does not identify students who may have studied at secondary school in the UK and continued into tertiary education (Rivza and Teichler 2007). The OECD (2015) adopts two different terms: "foreign students" are those with citizenship other than the country in which they study, and "international students" are those who travel for the purposes of study. Rather than adopt this distinction, I work within the discrepancies, instead of resolving it, because such contradictions are key windows into the discourses. The term "international students" should, therefore, be taken throughout to read "people identified as international students in policy discourses", not as a category with meaning in reference to a fixed object outside the policy discourse.

This study is methodologically nationalist (Shahjahan and Kezar 2013). This is a function of the topic, rather than an intentional methodological choice. As "higher education remains an enterprise squarely situ-ated in the national context the world over" (Matross Helms et al. 2015, p. 51), policy tends still to be made within the national container. It is, however, influenced by global and regional discourses and non-governmental organisations. Therefore, this study has been geographically restricted to a single nation, but the analysis incorporates different national perspectives and a global conceptualisation. It can be understood as a necessary precursor to a broader, more global study of policy discourses.

In geographical terms, this study refers to the UK, with an emphasis on England. While higher education policy is a devolved matter (Bruce 2012) left up to the decisions of the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, migration policy is not, and it plays a significant role in the study. Even with reference to higher education policy, most of the documents refer to the UK as a whole. In part, this is because devolution is an ongoing process. Thus, this research does not attempt to discuss distinctions between English, Welsh, Northern Ireland and Scottish policies on international students. Indeed, to date, there is not yet a distinctly Scottish, Welsh or Northern Ireland approach to policy on international students apparent in documents, although this is likely to emerge as devolution progresses. Again, this is consistent with the discourse analytic approach, adopting the terminology present in the documents, which does not always reflect devolved responsibilities or differentiate between the nations. This is consistent with a discursive approach, revealing the piecemeal and contradictory nature of the policy-making process in the UK (Bird 1994).

## Study and Contribution

Clearly internationalisation has become embedded in institutional discourses and strategies as well as national policies (Knight 2015). Research into international higher education, however, is still a comparatively young field (Knight 2004). Such research has conceptualised universities as set within global environments, as an intrinsic part of their historical development (Altbach 2004). The commercial or commodity model of higher education as a private good dominates analyses, particularly around academic mobility (Naidoo 2007; Altbach and Knight 2007). International higher education markets are a key focus for analysis (Marginson 1997), given the consensus on the knowledge economy model (Naidoo 2003). The motivations for countries and universities to participate in international higher education are outlined: profit, values, regionalism, educational quality, reputation, political influence, aid and development, peace and understanding.

More critical approaches explore the meanings and representations behind such rationales. This alternative model of international higher education is a field assembled and structured by individuals, institutions, states and markets, which form truths about international students and education (Sidhu 2006). Critical voices highlight inequalities on a global scale, both represented within and deepened by higher education (Unterhalter and Carpentier 2010). Studies highlight the potential for a form of neo-colonialism to operate within international higher education, part of the cultural imperialism reproduced through globalisation.

Within the UK, there is considerable research, mainly small-scale and institutionally bound, on aspects of international students' experience from educational and market-oriented perspectives (e.g. Russell 2005; Barnes 2007; Pereda et al. 2007; Goode 2007; Montgomery and McDowell 2009; Hart and Coates 2010; Wu and Hammond 2011; Huang et al. 2014, among others). Psychologically oriented research, typically examining cultural adaptation, is also well-established (Brown 2008; Gu and Maley 2008; Eller et al. 2011). There is also literature on international students from a mobility perspective grounded in human geography, understanding the causes and implications of global border-crossing for educational purposes (e.g. Tremblay 2005; Brooks and Waters 2011; Findlay et al. 2012; Holloway et al. 2012; She and Wotherspoon 2013; Beech 2014). There are, however, few studies which address the structural forces which impact on international students in the UK, such as national policy.

Policy has the power to establish representations of activities such as international education and of people, such as international students. Discourses are the mechanism by which such representations reach social subjects, establishing common sense and unspoken concepts. Because the concepts are legitimated, repeated and rarely critically unpacked, they gain ground. Actions are taken and justified because of key discursive formations. Social subjects participate, sometimes unknowingly, in the strengthening, dissemination and creative reformulation of these discourses.

In the case of education, policy discourses enter public awareness and may influence institutional policies and discourses, expressed through marketing materials. They may also influence academics' representations of international education and students and therefore classroom practices. This generates "a relatively silent colonisation of the hearts and minds of academics and students" (Lynch 2006 p. 9). They have the power to alter conversations, interactions and consequently relationships between staff and students, and between students. Where students are conceptualised as in deficit, cultural Other, their agency and capacity for self-formation are silenced (Kettle 2005; Marginson 2014b). When such representations are fostered without being challenged, students may internalise them, using them as resources for their self-formation.

I argue that policy on international students has the power to affect educational relationships and individual self-representations. It is therefore an ethical concern (Madge et al. 2010). All education is an ethical matter, inasmuch as it entails a responsibility for critical empowerment, facilitating a space for individual becoming, and teaching for the critical engagement of social citizens. These opportunities rely on relationships to thrive, to ensure that "becoming" is a question of students' agency rather than an imposed production route to a disciplined being. So where policy discourses may be subtly altering these relationships, fostering a particular mode of being, it narrows down the possibilities for transformation, for agency and for critical engagement. The aim of this book is to illustrate how national policy discourses shape, narrow and discipline understandings of international education and international students.

The key contribution of this work to the field of international higher education is to adopt a critical, holistic approach to national policy in this field. The majority of policy studies, as outlined above, have been historical, descriptive or focused on pragmatic recommendations for institutions. There is a dearth of critical policy studies in international higher education. Neither is there an extensive body of primary research on policies which affect international students. Where studies incorporate this topic, they typically address a single aspect, such as immigration policy. It is rare to find a holistic policy study which takes international students as the starting point to examine the structural forces which contribute to the discursive construction of a social subject. Further, I make two methodological contributions, namely the use of qualitative data analysis software for policy analysis in higher education and the use of Carol Bacchi's "what is the problem represented to be". While the use of such software is well-established for the analysis of interview transcriptions and other forms of primary data collection, there are few examples of its use within higher education policy. Similarly, Bacchi's framework is well-established in education policy studies, gender and sexuality, but is little used in international higher education.

The book is divided into two parts and structured as follows.

In Part 1, I introduce the context, approach and central concepts which have informed the design and conduct of the study.

Chapter 2 contextualises the globalised discourses on international higher education and presents the rationales for engagement in international education that have been identified in previous literature. In essence, these rationales offer solutions to problems represented in policy.

Chapter 3 maps the policy on international students in the UK from 1999 to 2015. It covers three main eras of policy, from Tony Blair's Prime Minister's Initiative to the Coalition Government's International Education Strategy, as well as key elements of migration policy.

Chapter 4 presents the conceptual approach which informs the study and the methods used in analysing the policy documents. It explains how the conceptual approach of policy as discourse was operationalised into a textual analysis.

In Part 2, the results and discussion are presented.

Chapter 5 presents the global diplomacy rationale, showing how international alumni and their experiences are represented in ways that are interpreted to foster the UK's diplomatic interests overseas.

Chapter 6 explores the educational rationale that international students constitute an asset for the internationalisation, increased quality and reputational gains. International students are represented as consumers, and educational assets sometimes in deficit.

Chapter 7 explores the economic rationale, demonstrating how marketisation of international higher education represents international students as economic resources, as vectors of income, who also contribute to the labour market.

Chapter 8 explores how discourses around migration have shifted towards representing international students negatively, constructing them as a source of concern and risk.

Finally, Chap. 9 concludes by pulling together common threads between these rationales and representations and suggests directions for future research.

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CHAPTER 2

# International Higher Education Discourses

International education is a field of globalised policy discourses, with multiple power differentials. The national policy changes presented in the previous chapter have taken place not within a vacuum, but in a global context, impacted by ideas, logics and shared assumptions. This discussion is premised on Marginson and Sawir's (2006) distinction between internationalisation and globalisation, where the former is understood as relations between nations and the latter as diffuse networks of interactions on multiple levels, including but not limited to nations. Participation in international higher education, particularly the capacity to attract and host international students, has come to be seen as desirable for governments. This commitment to international higher education is part of a globalised discourse, which presumes benefits to host nations, students and the world as a whole. Policy offers multiple rationales for participation in international higher education and in particular for the recruitment, attraction and hosting of international students. They become a "privileged policy instrument" (Vincent-Lancrin 2004, p. 221) which nations deploy in rhetoric to further their self-interest.

Discourse theory suggests that all social practices are constructed through and embedded in discourses. For example, understanding education as a social practice highlights how educational practices shape behaviours and values, creating the future citizen. In doing so, both teachers and students use, acquire and create particular discourses, such as the discourse of employability. Talking about employability both shapes how people perceive and value it, and creates it as a real thing.



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Policy can be understood as social practice and therefore as discourse (Ball 1993; Saarinen 2008a). The creation and dissemination of a policy takes place within social contexts and draws on existing discourses with the intent of governing and shaping action, environments and events. A policy-as-discourse approach considers that policy extends beyond the formal document and includes the actions and justifications made around the text. These are embedded in meaning systems with particular assumptions, values and signs, producing "truth" and "knowledge" from a position of power. Policy creation and communication involves a series of discursive events: meetings to draw up the policy, consultation, writing strategy documents, press conferences, speeches, actions taken and evaluations conducted. These reveal the normative positions taken by the state and its attendant institutions, which also constitute policy (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Policy therefore extends beyond the document and includes the actions and justifications made around the text. "Policy" as a construct can thus be understood not as a unitary discourse, but rather a constellation of events where discourses emerge from a collage of creative reproduction, selection and adaptation (Bacchi 2009). For example, the Conservative austerity policy in the UK is justified through new combinations of older discourses of fiscal responsibility, social mobility and global competitiveness (among others), which all existed previously in other domains. It is the justifications and rationales for policy which reveal the values underpinning assumptions (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Therefore, it is important to examine the rationales presented for internationalisation of higher education, in a global discursive context.

As a social practice, policy is understood to be created through discourses, embedded in meaning systems with particular assumptions, values and signs, producing "truth" and "knowledge" from a position of power (Ball 1993). Policies are discursive formations in their own right but also create, reproduce and disseminate ideas and terminology which migrate into other domains. Bacchi (2009) considers that all policy is derived from (though not determined by) particular discourses and creative of particular discursive formations. Instead of seeing text as a transparent description of a real problem (Saarinen 2008a), akin to Ball's "policy as text" approach (1993), public policy can be seen to include the values, actions and normative positions taken by the state and its attendant institutions (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Considering the policy's discursive framework and context of production allows these to be incorporated into the analysis, exploring how values relate to the allocation of resources and the language used to legitimate policy (Codd 1988).

Policy actions proposed by governments and the rationales offered for them can be understood as means of solving implied problems (Bacchi 2009). Governments and other policy actors seek to legitimate their actions and power through discourse, drawing on ideological consensus to generate a shared understanding of the object. The creation and solution of problems fosters such legitimacy. Thus, policy rationales expose underlying representations of problems, made apparent by advocating particular solutions and reasons. In so doing, these rationales incorporate and generate multiple representations of social subjects. When policy encourages the attraction and recruitment of international students, justifications and reasons are given in rationales.

This chapter explores key aspects of globalised international higher education discourses. First, it explores how the globalised education policy field is sustained and the key dominant discourses therein. Second, it reviews the rationales made for engagement in international higher education, demonstrating how the global policy field influences these rationales. Finally, it explores how globalised discourses and policy rationales generate subject of international students.

## Global Structures and Spaces

Higher education, as discussed in the introduction, has a long tradition of internationalism. Global student and academic mobility, international curricula and global structures all create a policy space where nations and institutions collaborate and compete, but most importantly where they participate in shared discourses. While international education governance is underdeveloped (Marginson et al. 2010), participating states acquiesce in certain norms, structures and rules. These norms tend to exert pressure towards an increased commodification of education (Robertson et al. 2002). Countries comply with the value judgements implicit in shared norms through funding arrangements, provision of data and so on. In international student mobility, these norms are predicated on mutual acquiescence to a view of higher education as a tradeable service, which consumers cross borders to obtain. This is enforced by the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), established by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Enders 2004; Tilak 2008). The GATS established a requirement that all participating countries permit the trade in education as a service, whether supplied across borders through TNE or consumed abroad through study abroad (Sidhu 2007). While theoretically voluntary, in practice all member countries of the WTO are bound by this agreement by pressures from more powerful member states, regions and business interests (Robertson et al. 2002). States are required to remove barriers to the free movement of those providing or consuming such services. The GATS prevents states from arbitrarily preventing international students from entering the country. The dominance of the neo-liberal discourse leaves, as Robertson et al. (2002) comment, little space for the discussion of contradictions and problems of global capitalism. Capitalist markets, and their ideological foundations, have been the primary vehicle for disseminating global neo-liberal Western norms and values of governance (Tikly 2003). International education is a site of such governance. It is often argued that this power in global organisations in networks indicates a decline in state power, an inevitable consequence of globalisation. However, in many global organisations such as the WTO and the United Nations negotiations and agreements are still made between nations. And even within the structures of globalised discourses, states can still respond and take action on national levels (Brooks and Waters 2011). While the nation state should no longer necessarily be seen as the default "container" for policy (Shahjahan and Kezar 2013), it is still a critical actor.

International higher education is disciplined by multiple intersecting structures and is entrenched in neo-colonial power flows (Sidhu 2006; Rhee 2009; Rizvi and Lingard 2010). The inequalities between nations and universities, for example, lead to flows of students from East–South to West–North (Marginson 2006; Sidhu 2006), although this is starting to shift gradually (Becker and Kolster 2012; Universities UK 2014). English language still dominates as a medium for study and publication (Marginson 2008), retaining the status gained during the nineteenth century at the height of the British Empire and capitalising on the more recent cultural dominance of the USA. Speaking English confers cultural capital, facilitating employment in globalised business environments and evincing participation in cosmopolitan networks (Brooks and Waters 2011). League tables and ranking mechanisms help to structure the field by generating differentiation between nations and institutions, influenced by the practices of Western Anglo-Saxon nations (Marginson and van der Wende 2007). Nations and institutions respond to and shape this complex, multi-level globalised context (Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Saarinen 2008b). Rankings, publications and funding generate power for institutions and states; therefore, they compete for resources, which remain, for now, concentrated in the Global North.

Increasingly, policy discourses are taking place on a global, as well as a local or national scale (Rhee 2009; Rizvi and Lingard 2010), with discursive interventions through globalised mass media and neo-imperialism exerted through power structures (Sidhu 2006; Shahjahan 2013). Policies can travel, through borrowing of particular initiatives (Geddie 2014) and discursive interventions from transnational non-governmental organisations (NGOs) by creating conceptual models or naming phenomena (Saarinen 2008c). Such borrowing can be rational-technical in approach, but can also be the consequence of accepting particular normative frameworks. For example, the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Office (UNESCO) is overtly internationalist in its approach, identifying higher education as a site for possible harmonious exchange (De Wit 1999). It also collects data on international student mobility flows and facilitates quality development in higher education through networking, playing a technical as well as a normative role. Allan Luke (2011) gives the example of how the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) has become the standard measurement of English language proficiency through corporate lobbying. An apparently technical question—how best to measure and assure competence in English language—has normative roots, assuming that it is possible to measure such competence numerically, that British English constitutes its standard usage, and that it is appropriate to commodify the test, its results and its education, among others (Templer 2004). The IELTS, and others like it, have become so widespread in usage and acceptance of their legitimacy, conferring or preventing entrance to countries through visas as well as university entrance, that these normative concerns appear practically esoteric and certainly irrelevant. Like language testing, data collection on student mobility is another sign of discursive hegemony in globalised policy spaces.

## The National Space and Governmentality

These global interactions reflect the importance of shared rationalities and logics of governance, or governmentality (Rose and Miller 2008). The concept of governmentality identifies technologies and ways of thinking involved in governing people. Foucault (1977, p. 102) includes in this.

> the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific

> albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses in security.

In particular, Foucault (1977) highlights the role of knowledges (*savoirs*) accumulated for the purposes of controlling the population through statistics. A relevant example here would be the number of students entering the UK in a given year. The act of collecting such statistics, and constituting them as knowledge, expresses and enables state power. On the strength of such statistics, quotas could be imposed, for instance, and students located and deported. Such statistics and knowledges shape conduct and the relations between the state and its subjects (Sidhu 2007). The main construct of governmentality is the grounds on which the state legitimately acquires its authority, which in modern forms derives from its rationality, seeking perfection in the processes and instruments of government (Foucault 1977). It is thus essential for policy to demonstrate its rationality and the efficiency of its processes in order to be considered legitimate. Policy needs to be seen to work if it and its creators are to have authority.

Rose and Miller (2008) argue that the contemporary trend of disassembling state activities, "governing at a distance", makes governmentality more relevant than the state's coercive or sovereign role. Power is exerted through persuasion of thought, rather than force (van Dijk 1996), because the aim is not to defeat the populace but to make it productive and govern through the processes of production (Sidhu 2006). In the absence of a pervasive centralised state, essential services are delivered by third parties or quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations (QUANGOs). In the UK, higher education is governed at a distance through agencies such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and the British Council (Dodds 2009). This governing at a distance through organisations which demand oversight and accountability is actually argued to reduce the autonomy of institutions and the sector (Kogan and Hanney 2000; Shattock 2008; Trow 2006; Brown and Carasso 2013). As Marginson et al. (2010, p. 261) put it, "Responsibilisation…does not subtract from authority or control". Instead, control is exerted discursively, through shared logics.

These agencies engage in globalised education fields, respectively, through distribution of funding shaped by global rankings, assuring quality in TNE as well as domestically, encouraging aspects of internationalisationin teaching and learning in the UK, and branding and marketing of the UK as an international higher education destination. They co-construct governmentality "through a range of technologies that install and support the civilising project by shaping and governing the capacities, competencies and wills of subjects yet are outside the formal control of the 'public powers'" (Rose and Miller 2008, loc4599). These technologies include quality frameworks, global and domestic rankings, as well as the requirement of data dissemination such as the Key Information Sets which inform potential students and parents how much contact time particular courses offer, for example. The National Student Survey could also be seen as a technology for governance, given that it is run in part by HEFCE and plays a significant role in determining institutions' place in rankings. The design and implementation of the questionnaire reflect the normative beliefs and assumptions at work, and the results are treated as knowledge about "student satisfaction" as an object. It therefore exerts a disciplinary effect on institutions which change their practices to enhance their scores (Sabri 2013).

Taking "educational policy as a discourse of the state" (Tikly 2003, p. 166) therefore provides a window on governmentality. Through this window, national responses to global discourses of international higher education can be identified. Governments as policy actors interpret, translate, reproduce and at times resist these globalised policy discourses (Saarinen 2008c; Rizvi and Lingard 2010); they are not universal, but certain discourses could be said to be hegemonic, particularly marketisation.

## Globalised Discourses

There are multiple intersecting and contradictory global discourses around international higher education but only a few dominate. Kehm and Teichler (2007, p. 262) characterise internationalisation in higher education as "a highly normative topic with strong political undercurrents"; in other words, some stakeholders are committed to international higher education because of their principles and ideals. There is an important thread of "internationalism" (Altbach and Knight 2007), a commitment to a perceived international community as intrinsically good (Amit 2010). Policy, while subscribing in part to these ideologies, also offers more instrumental accounts of why nation states should engage in international education, framing international engagement in pragmatic terms.

The understanding of international higher education as a global marketplace is a dominant discourse (Molesworth et al. 2009; Robertson 2011; Brown and Carasso 2013). Marketisation is premised on the neo-liberal economic model, in which individuals are seen as economically self-interested, and free markets are seen as the most efficient method to distribute resources (Olssen and Peters 2005). This effectively depoliticises international higher education (Sidhu 2006). In human capital theory, individual workers are considered to possess degrees of economic and educational capital (Olssen and Peters 2005), which can be exchanged for value in the labour market (Marginson 1997). Higher levels of skills and knowledge confer higher value, on both an individual and a national level. In the knowledge economy model, nations benefit from a more highly educated and skilled populace, as well as from an economic structure which generates high-value knowledge through research and innovation, and generating income through the provision of high-level services like education. Education becomes more important to individuals, as they must be more skilled to be effective as knowledge workers (Robertson 2005). But higher education adds to individual human capitaland is therefore seen as a private good (Marginson 1997), where the qualification codifies and guarantees knowledge and skills which can be exchanged for labour market value. Marketisation is therefore associated with a shift away from the representation of higher education as a public good. This means that it is the responsibility of the individual to engage in their personal development by "up-skilling" and "up-educating" themselves, to compete.

It is this logic which permits the introduction of "user-pay" systems of higher education. The successful (in economic terms) implementation of such a system for international students, Walker (2014) suggests, made possible the introduction of tuition fees for home students in 1997 in the UK. Marketisation is also apparent in the liberalisation of certain aspects of the international higher education market, such as the use of agencies on behalf of national sectors such as the British Council Education Counselling Service and EduFrance (Dodds 2009). These agencies have undertaken the marketing and advertising of higher education overseas (Sidhu 2002; Askehave 2007), in much the same way as traditional products are advertised and marketed. In this model, students are understood to seek internationally recognised qualifications, choosing higher education destinations "only after making value for money judgements about comparable 'products'" in other countries (Elliott 1998, p. 37).

Organisations like the WTO (Sidhu 2007), World Bank (Robertson 2009) and the OECD (Shahjahan 2013) reproduce the normative frameworks of marketisation, shaping higher education as an economic instrument. They share, as Matross Helms et al. (2015) put it, "the policymaking space" with national governments. International higher education becomes implicated in national policy responses to these intersecting discourses as both a site for augmenting national human and knowledge capital, and an internationalised service industry on the GATS model as discussed above.

Nations respond to these globalised policy discourses by seeking competitive national advantage. In the marketised model of international relations, countries behave like corporations, seeking to maximise profits at the expense of other countries (Brown and Tannock 2009). Through marketisation, the competition state attempts to make national economic activities internationally competitive (Cerny 1997). Rather than conceiving of higher education as playing a national role in the provision of skills and training needed domestically or of playing an emancipatory, transformational role in the education of its citizens, it becomes another arena in which to compete internationally (Yang 2002). Yet even in a free-market model that seeks to limit state intervention, the role of the nation in investing and resourcing higher education institutions remains critical (Marginson and Sawir 2006). Such investment is often needed in order to bolster the competitive capacity of institutions and sectors. Higher education adds to national competitiveness by generating income through "exporting education" and generating knowledge and innovation through research and development. This trend is apparent in the discreet pressures for UK universities to create spin-off for-profit companies as a result of local innovation, part of a transparently neo-liberal agenda which aligns with the ideological emphasis on reduced state control and funding. Higher education also creates competitive national advantage by adding to reputation and influence, which are seen to enhance the nation's status (Anholt 2006). The profits are therefore not exclusively financial. A world-leading higher education sector adds to the nation's reputation and potentially to its global influence.

## Rationales

Rationales for internationalisation and in particular, the attraction and recruitment of international students, are frequently grouped into four categories: political; sociocultural; educational or academic; and economic (Elliott 1998).

The political rationale argues that hosting international students creates influence over other countries. This is seen to constitute a source of "Soft power" (Ma 2010; Trilokekar 2010), cultural or political influence exerted through attraction and reputation. Soft power is conceptualised as the opposite of "hard power" as military might (Nye 2004). Thus a country can force another country into action or submission through the use of their military, or they can exert more subtle means of influence. The latter would be considered soft power. This is also seen to support national security (Matross Helms et al. 2015). International education is seen as a source of soft power through educational exchange, where students are believed to become sympathetic to the culture and values of their host country (Belcher 1987; Knight and de Wit 1995; Vincent-Lancrin 2004). Similar beliefs underpin explicitly political regional mobility schemes such as the European Erasmus scheme which seeks to promote a sense of European citizenship. Papatsiba (2006a) terms this a "civic rationale", highlighting the idea that students will change their political identification as a result. The political rationale also includes arguments relating to diplomacy, international aid and development, and mutual peace.

The diplomatic rationale argues that international students are good for foreign policy and relationships between countries. International students may create informal diplomatic channels (Ma 2010) and maintain "international cultural relations" (Trilokekar 2010). They act as "young ambassadors" for their region when they study elsewhere (Papatsiba 2005) and generate influence on behalf of the country in which they studied on their return home (Qiang 2003). Where countries have strained official political relationships, international students or alumni are thought to be able to foster backchannels of informal communication. On global levels, Knight (2004) suggests that student mobility may contribute to bilateral "strategic alliances" between countries, creating positive diplomatic relationships (Belcher 1987). Where alumni have existing connections to the country in which they studied, this is seen to strengthen bilateral bonds in terms of trade and cultural connection.

Alumni are thought to use the networks they develop during their studies to build business links, to prefer to consume commodities from their host country, as well as sustaining friendships and relationships. Cumulatively, this is considered to enhance diplomatic relationships through familiarity and positive perceptions of the country.

The international aid and development rationale positions international education, and the welcoming of international students as vehicles for aid and development to developing countries (Belcher 1987; Rizvi 2011; Matross Helms et al. 2015). The aid rationale was particularly characteristic of national policies in the post-colonial period when countries like the UK and Australia engaged in schemes such as the Colombo plan to encourage development in ex-colonial countries (Harman 2004; Sidhu 2006). In this logic, sending students overseas for their tertiary education allows developing countries to import higher education at low cost (Altbach and Knight 2007; Ma 2010), and it is the responsibility of more developed nations to help subsidise this (Trilokekar 2010). This labour force can then contribute to nation building (Knight 2004). Traces of this rationale are still apparent in programmes such as the Commonwealth Scholars, which offers education in the UK to rising political leaders in Commonwealth countries. While superficially altruistic, the aid and development rationale implies long-term political advantage as a result of such engagement (Matross Helms et al. 2015). Its importance has decreased in recent years, except with reference to scholarship schemes, and has largely given way to the economic rationale (Harman 2004; Knight 2004).

Mutual understanding and peace is also argued to be a consequence of internationalisation generally and to foster national security agendas (Yang 2002; Qiang 2003; Knight 2004; Rivza and Teichler 2007; Ma 2010). When they study abroad, international students gain an understanding of the host country and culture, bridging ideological divides upon their return home. In the long term, this is argued to generate a cosmopolitan, global sensibility, contributing to sustained peace and political stability (Papatsiba 2005). Studying abroad is considered to foster a sense of global citizenship (Amit 2010), changing the perceptions of students away from a primary identification with their country of origin and encouraging them to take a broader more global view. Vincent-Lancrin (2004) describes this as the traditional foundation for internationalisation of higher education. The normative elements of internationalism are particularly evident in this rationale, as benefits are seen to be distributed globally rather than nationally; in other words, it is not a competitive rationale. Neither is it entirely altruistic, however, as nations are still seen to benefit individually from enhancing their national security (De Wit 1999). Increasingly, however, there is a conflation between the global citizenship discourse and employability, suggesting that "global competence" among graduates increases employment and productivity (Matross Helms et al. 2015). This frames global citizenship as an economic question.

The sociocultural rationale argues that international academic contact, and in particular the presence of international students, enriches the culture and society of the host country (Burke 2013; Harman 2004). In this narrative, international students are positioned in an educational role within communities and societies. Their presence is seen to diversify local communities, teaching residents about their country of origin through cultural contact. It also includes a dimension of soft power, as influence can be gained through international students' understanding of the host country's culture and language (Qiang 2003; Ma 2010). This evokes the inverse role of the student-as-ambassador, where they represent their country of origin while in the host country. This rationale has lost a degree of influence relative to the economic and political rationales (Knight 2004).

The educational or academic rationale is a significant motivator for international student recruitment. This suggests that an international classroom and student body stimulates critical thinking and a global outlook (Knight and de Wit 1995; Ma 2010). Internationalisation thereby enhances domestic academic standards and quality (Belcher 1987; Qiang 2003; Rivza and Teichler 2007; Becker and Kolster 2012; Matross Helms et al. 2015). Thus an internationalised education is a sign of a good education. This rationale assigns an "instructional role" to international students with regard to domestic students (Burke 2013), offering them knowledge and a global perspective, subsidising the internationalisation of the curriculum (Doherty 2008). For Yang (2002), an international approach is fundamental for many disciplines for research as well as for teaching, and he suggests that these are the "genuine values of internationalisation" (p. 87), as opposed to economic agendas. In the case of the Erasmus European exchange programme, Papatsiba (2006a) found that student mobility through this programme was implicitly intended to develop a "European standard" for higher education. In this model, it is international collaboration or cooperation that generates improvements in academic quality; conversely, it is sometimes argued that international competition enhances quality, by incentivising institutions to keep up with global pedagogical leaders (Luijten-Lub et al. 2005). Internationalisation discourses argue that universities must respond to globalised fields of work and consumption by internationalising classrooms and curricula to prepare students for life in a globalised world (de Vita and Case 2003; Healey 2008). Humfrey (2011) observes that a high-quality student experience has become synonymous with an international experience, creating an expectation that institutions will provide these global opportunities for interaction to satisfy students. Improving educational quality also enables institutions to build their reputations (Knight 2004, 2015), which may be extended to a national-level rationale with the development of national brands and agencies for higher education (Sidhu 2002; Dodds 2009). Quality discourses place higher education systems in global competition and comparison with other countries, in the interests of making nations more attractive (Saarinen 2005). Approaches to quality therefore converge (Marginson 2008), while competing. International rankings structure and reinforce this rationale, enhancing the "visibility and stature of the national higher education system on the world stage" (Matross Helms et al. 2015, p. 7).

Finally, the economic rationale is probably the most prevalent and widely observed (De Wit 1999; Qiang 2003; Harman 2004; Rivza and Teichler 2007; Geddie 2014; Knight, 2015). It is seen by some to be an instrumentalist or utilitarian approach (Papatsiba 2005; Amit 2010), with its roots in the marketisation discourse described above. Hosting international students is seen to generate revenue directly, creating an "education export" stream of income both institutionally (Bolsmann and Miller 2008) and nationally. International higher education therefore leads to economic growth (Knight and de Wit 1995; Knight 2004; Vincent-Lancrin 2004; Luijten-Lub et al. 2005; Becker and Kolster 2012). In the highly commercialised environment of modern international higher education, fee payments from international students constitute a significant source of revenue for countries. Set within a broader context of other international and TNE activity, such as institutional partnerships, franchise programmes, e-learning and publishing, the "sector" takes on an even greater economic significance (Altbach and Knight 2007).

Indirect economic benefits are also seen to accrue from international students' contributions to research and development, as well as technological progress (Knight and de Wit 1995). For many nations, and for regions such as Europe (Papatsiba 2005), international students are seen to bolster the labour market, thus encouraging economic growth (Qiang 2003; Tremblay 2005; Amit 2010; Knight 2015; Matross Helms et al. 2015). They are seen as skilled workers, acquiring valuable international knowledge and abilities, potentially filling gaps in the knowledge economy (Vincent-Lancrin 2004; Ziguras and Law 2006). In the case of Europe, this constitutes a long-term contribution to a unified labour market (Papatsiba 2006). In other cases, international student mobility is a way for countries to recruit into particular jobs in the short term, and in still others, as a long-term route into citizenship (Geddie 2014).

In addition, benefits to the student are frequently listed alongside benefits to the host country (Knight and de Wit 1995). Such benefits include broadening horizons, developing professional knowledge and skills (Papatsiba 2005), and "self-cultivation and transformation" (Amit 2010, p. 13). When they work, they gain experience, which is supposed to bolster their employability and human capital. However, for this study, the main focus is the rationales for national policies on attracting and recruiting international students.

I have endeavoured here to distinguish clearly between these rationales, but the reality in policy discourses is that they are "fuzzy" (Papatsiba 2005; Ma 2010; Kehm and Teichler 2007) in their conceptualisation and usage. Amit (2010, p. 9) observes a "self-conscious insistence on the synergy between transactional and altruistic notion of internationalisation", suggesting that the boundaries between economic, sociocultural and educational rationales are increasingly and deliberately blurred. For example, as Fig. 2.1 illustrates, under the assumptions of the educational rationale, the presence of international students improves education. This then enriches culture and society, thereby enhancing the national reputation and the educational reputation. Reputation increases future student numbers, returning to the economic rationale. With economic power, and cultural attraction create political influence. Therefore, approaches such as the PMI outlined in Chap. 3 represent a holistic policy approach consistent with these intersecting rationales, positioning international higher education as related to economic and foreign policy, as well as education (Becker and Kolster 2012).

Rationales against international student recruitment are less frequently identified in the literature, the prevailing discourses being in favour

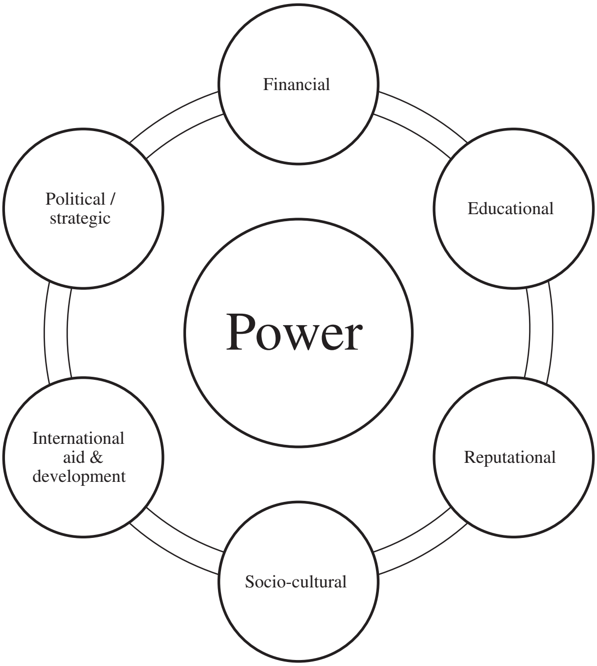


**Fig. 2.1** Interactions of rationales

of internationalisation. When mentioned, the potential negative impact on educational quality as a result of overexpansion constitutes an obstacle (Sidhu 2002; Devos 2003; Rivza and Teichler 2007). This may be related to accepting students without sufficient qualifications (Belcher 1987). Students are occasionally highlighted as being implicated in wider debates about immigration (Harman 2004; Urias and Yeakey 2009; Becker and Kolster 2012; Geddie 2014; Jenkins 2014) or as being restricted by strict immigration policies (Ma 2010). While concerns are raised by institutions and individuals about cultural homogenisation (Marginson and Sawir 2006), these do not appear to pose significant obstacles in national policies.

Thus international students are impacted by globalised education discourses and feature in policy rationales which depict them as advantageous to host countries on political, financial, academic, sociocultural and reputational grounds. More rarely, they are seen as problematic.

Both perspectives construct subject representations of international students and problematise their recruitment.

It is certainly not surprising that state policy focuses on the ways that activities benefit the state, and therefore the initial conclusion that international education policy is dominated by such rationales is not radical. It is, however, a useful starting point for understanding the discourses at work and their potential effects on students.

## Subject Positions in International Education

Discourses, particularly dominant discourses made from positions of power, such as national or global policies, affect people by establishing subject positions. By representing people in particular ways, depicting aspects of their experience or value, discourses can impact how people are perceived and alter or limit the actions they can take. These rationales construct multiple representations of international students, generating subject positions for them.

In the knowledge economy and human capital models, international qualifications act as positional goods, conferring distinction on graduates (Marginson 1997; Xiang and Shen 2009). They are read in labour markets and social networks as signs of particular dispositions, of membership in cosmopolitan elites (Waters 2006). In this sense, international education constitutes cultural capital, as well as educational capital (Bourdieu 1984), facilitating upward social mobility by indicating appropriate knowledge and behaviours appropriate to the aspired class (Marginson 2006). It also entrenches existing inequalities by privileging the already capital-rich (Tannock 2013). This global cultural capital encompasses educational capital as well as taste, attitude and lifestyle, "understood as exclusive resources that designate one's class and status, globally operate, circulate and exchange" (Kim 2011, p. 113). These resources enable members of the cosmopolitan elite to engage effectively in competitive, high-status fields of work (Weenink 2008). Yet mobility can disrupt agency by distancing students from social and cultural bonds, changing conditions of power interactions (Marginson et al. 2010).

Indeed, international education can be understood as a project of self-formation, where students "cross the border to become different" (Marginson 2014, p. 7). Given that international students choose to travel for their education—they are "volitional educational participants" in Lukes' (2011) phrasing—the importance of students' agency in the construction of meaning around their experiences should not be ignored. Agency is an overused and often poorly misunderstood concept, which I am using to refer to the capacity to act in socially mediated contexts (Ahearn 2001). In this sense, students take actions which make sense in their social context to enact their own change, creating different social positions (Kettle 2005). They can use mobility as a space for "becoming", enabling not only the accumulation of different capitals, but also the shaping of identity through imagination (Tran 2016). In contrast to the cross-cultural adjustment model, this reading understands students as self-determining in shaping the development of their own identities (Marginson 2014).

The discourses prevalent in institutions and national contexts offer resources for this process of self-formation, and pressures which can limit possibilities. In a neo-liberal economic ideology, failure in the labour market is attributed to the individual (Mulderrig 2003), rather than systemic inequalities: "it's your own fault if you don't succeed" (Brennan and Naidoo 2008, p. 294). If considered as a disciplinary technology (Tikly 2004; Asgharzadeh 2008), international education incorporates "a discursive logic that distils human relationships, dreams, visions and aspirations into the language of value (which) is indicative of the tenacious hold of a market-based instrumentalism on the intellectual imagination" (Sidhu 2006, loc762). In other words, by teaching international students how to be good workers, by making them employable and desirable for professional recruitment, international higher education constructs them as economic objects. The risk is therefore that students learn how to subjectify themselves. International education can be understood as a site for the development of a neo-liberal globalised subjectification in which students are taught to discipline and brand themselves and to embody the dispositions of a human commodity (Sidhu 2006; Rhee 2009). In essence, this is a variation on the perpetual structure/agency tension (Ahearn 2001): international students must be recognised as agents in the formation of their own identity, but so must the structural forces which impact the social contexts in which they take action as agents and offer the discursive resources to make meaning.

Because national policy discourses are powerful, the representations of international students therein have the potential to substantively impact self-subjectification. Therefore, while a critique of methodological nationalism could be levelled at a study of national policy discourses, international students' lived experiences are at least in part significantly shaped by them, given that they spend significant time and attention focused on the country in which they study. That is why this study focuses on UK national policy discourses.

## Conclusion

National governments interact with globalised policy discourses, rationalising their involvement in international education, and particularly their efforts to attract international students. The necessity of attracting and recruiting international students becomes a discursive object, a shared reality enmeshed in a web of beliefs. This implies that policy makers are seeking legitimacy for their actions (Saarinen 2008b; Bacchi 2009), gaining power through national positional advantage by hosting international students. Unspoken, implicit problems are "solved" by such policy interventions. In these rationales, particular assumptions are made and transformed into fact (Rose and Miller 2008) through their reproduction and widespread acceptance as "common sense" (Fairclough 1989).

In order to understand how international students are represented, this study draws on the concept of Discourse, understood as a system for making meaning in social contexts. Policy is therefore understood as Discourse, and as a set of discourses with particular power, particularly because it can mediate representations of people as social subjects. They are represented in multiple, overlapping images.

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CHAPTER 3

# International Student Policy in the UK

Policy on international students in the UK underwent significant changes and development from 1999 to 2015. Throughout this period, rationales for and against increasing recruitment of international students to the UK underpin policies. This chapter presents the key touchstones in policy on international students, drawing on both educational and migration policy.

I used a text-based method. Texts are understood here as snapshots of policy discourses, selectively constructed and socially produced, such that the choices around language and content reveal ideologies. As Shapiro (2001) indicates, texts are expressions of *mediated* social reality, so they cannot be used uncritically as a window onto social events. This chapter lays the groundwork for a critical analysis by first depicting the period as it is represented in the texts. In doing so, it also illustrates the policy formation process in UK international higher education. Describing this as a "process" may, in the light of the characterisations put forward in the previous chapter, be rather too strong a phrase. As an area of policy, international higher education is very fluid, and decisions often appear to be made ad hoc rather than with reference to a strategic plan (Belcher 1987; Walker 2014). Even where strategic plans exist, their implementation is contingent on a range of policy actors and stakeholders, each with their own agency. Therefore, when this chapter states that a document makes a statement, this does not necessarily imply that the statement reflects reality, only that the policy constructs it as reality.



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This study examines a diffuse policy field around a single object. As (Knight 2004, p. 17) suggests, on a national policy level international higher education policy includes "(e)ducation and other national-level policies relating to international dimension of higher education; other policy sectors include cultural, scientific, immigration, trade, employment, and culture". Therefore, policy documents have been selected from across these domains to capture the full range of policy on international students.

Higher education policy in the UK has traditionally been devolved to the institutional level. But during this period the role of state power has increased through increasingly centralised quality assurance, financial accountability and funding mechanisms (Deem et al. 2007), with an underpinning assumption that higher education plans a critical role in the creation and maintenance of national competitive advantage (Elliott 1998). Now, responsibility for quality lies with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), no longer run by institutions but instead a quasi-independent body, whose funding is managed by the Higher Education Funding Councils, similarly quasi-independent from government but representing substantial state control (Shattock 2012). Responsibility for universities has been located in different ministries at different times: until 2016 it sat within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), making the ideological relationship between education, skills and the economy explicit in organisational terms. Therefore, policy is understood here to include the activity of quasi-independent bodies, as well as statements from ministries.

International students, considered as a source of income, can be indirectly implicated in economic and financial policy, which derives primarily from the Treasury, as well as direct from the BIS. International education, classified as education exports, falls under the trade and industrial strategy, as explained in the recent strategy document (BIS 2013a, b). These strategies come under the broader 2011 "Plan for Growth", which highlights the role of education in economic recovery (HM Treasury & Department for Business Innovation & Skills 2011).

Migration or mobility policy has a major impact on international students. It is created primarily from the Home Office, and secondarily from the UK Border Agency. The Home Office sets general migration priorities and the UKBA implements particular visa regulations. Recently the UKBA has been officially disbanded (British Council 2013), and its key functions split between enforcement of immigration law and issuing of visas (UK Border Agency 2013a, b). It is now known as the UKVI, but this book refers mainly to its functions before the name change and uses the original title of UKBA.

Documents were included if they met four criteria. Firstly, they had international students as their main object or potentially impacted them, understood as limiting or facilitating actions international students may take, from acquiring a visa, to working, studying or altering classroom practices.

Secondly, they were published by a central government agency or centrally funded quasi-governmental organisation as described above, or were referenced frequently in such documents and, therefore, understood as influential in policy formation. This is consistent with the governing-at-a-distance practices of policy in higher education in the UK, which is not created or expressed exclusively through formal documents constructed within ministerial departments. Relevant bodies include Parliamentary activity, quasi-independent public bodies (such as the British Council, Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Migration Advisory Committee), and independent public bodies (such as the Higher Education Academy, the Quality Assurance Agency and the UK Council for International Student Affairs).

Documents from these agencies offer a window into public policy discourses, although they are not in and of themselves formal policy. I do not wish to imply here that these agencies are always perfectly aligned with central government policy—this is not a state-centred analysis. Indeed, it is clear that at times they lobby and contest government policy (e.g. UKCISA 2013). However, inasmuch as, for instance, the judgements of the QAA have implications for regulation it can be seen as representative of policy discourse. The analysis presented here takes account of the relative independence and centrality of the different agencies. But discrepancies do not necessarily indicate the operation of different discourses, as ruptures and discontinuities are typical of discourse (Foucault 1972). Thus, texts originating from quasi-governmental agencies, even where they are critical or diverge from central government policy, are still express, reflect or evidence policy discourses. There are of course a wide range of reports, speeches and press releases from organisations, and this represents only a small selection. It is not representative of all voices in the sector by any means and does not attempt to be so. Prominence has been given to central policy initiatives or information from ministerial departments, either on the basis of the position of the publishing organisation in the policy process, receipt of government funding, or the genre of the text.

Thirdly, they were publicly accessible or available. Because the focus is on policy discourses, publicly available documents were considered to illustrate the way that international students are talked about in public policy for a (Bacchi 2009, 2012). Those discourses would be most likely to filter into everyday discourses and therefore to impact students and those who interact with them. Therefore, access to archives or privileged information such as internal documents or information obtained through interviews was not sought. Public documents, published by the state, represent the "official" national discourse (Codd 1988).

Fourthly, they were published between 1999 and 2015. 1999 saw the launch of the first stage of the Prime Minister's Initiative, considered to be the first step in developing a set of policies relating specifically to international students. Setting 2015 as the end point allows examination of discursive events which have followed the publication of the Coalition Government's International Education Strategy.

No limitations were set on the genre of the document. Policy was understood not only as formal policy texts, but also on a range of informal genres originating from ministerial departments which represent and refract policy differently (Bacchi 2009): press releases, speeches, web pages and occasional newspaper articles. Including this range of genres captures the range of actions and justifications made, expressive of the values which underpin policy. This also includes research reports which have provided evidence for policy decisions, often commissioned by a government department. To differentiate between documents produced by the ministerial department and those commissioned from a third party, in-text citations use the department names for the former, and names of the authors have been used for the latter.

Documents were identified through a combination of web searches, database searches and use of the National Archive. This method resulted in small, though highly relevant, core sample of documents. In addition, references and inter-textual links were followed up. When one document mentioned another, I would locate and include the second document by a full title search on the above sites or organisational home pages. For instance, the Vision 2020 report (Böhm et al. 2004) was mentioned in multiple documents (DfES 2004; UKCOSA 2004; Bone 2008, Conlon et al. 2011), so I subsequently included it, on the grounds that it appeared to have been influential in policy discourses. Throughout the study, new documents were identified through this approach, until saturation was reached.

Policies on international students in the UK can be broadly grouped into 3 main stages. Firstly the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) ran from 1999–2004. It was followed by the PMI2, the second phase of the Prime Minister's Initiative, which ran from 2006–2011. Finally, the Coalition's IES, published in 2013 marked the beginning of a new period. These eras and key changes are presented in Fig. 3.1, which also details key changes to migration policy.

## The Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI)

As of 1998, there was "no corpus of government policy on internationalisation of HE as such, (although) the utterances of ministers make clear their recognition of the commercial and diplomatic value of the 'education export industry'" (Elliot 1998, p. 41). The PMI, as mentioned in the introduction, aimed to attract 50,000 additional higher education international students to the UK within 6 years (British Council 1999), and to make Britain "the first choice for quality" (British Council 2003, p. 14). This was to be achieved by a "package of measures" (Blair 1999) including: revisions to the immigration rules for students (Roche 2000); the development of the Education UK brand as part of a professionalised approach to marketing higher education; and the expansion of the Chevening scholarship scheme (Blair 1999). The Chevening scholarship is run by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and was established in 1983 as part of the Pym Package (Walker 2014). It is targeted at future leaders of developing countries and offers substantial funding and alumni support and networks and constructed as a public diplomacy initiative (Wilson 2014).

Immigration changes simplified visa procedures, by granting a visa for the duration of a programme of study, instituted a right to work alongside full-time study (Roche 2000) and facilitated switching between visa categories to work after graduation (Home Office 2002). These changes occurred in the context of a number of significant legislative initiatives to gain control of the asylum and migration system (Seldon 2007). It was also only 2 years after the publication of the Dearing Report, which recommended the introduction of domestic tuition fees of £1000 (Shattock 2012). These were introduced in 1999, in part in response to the funding crisis in higher education since 1995.

| Year | Government | Stage | International student policy events | Migration policy events |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999 | New Labour: PM Tony Blair | **Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) to recruit more international students** | PMI launched; market research for Education UK brand begun | Immigration and Asylum Act passed; visa applications for students made easier; right to work parttime on student visas established |
| 2000 | | | Quality strategy launched | |
| 2002 | | | Recruitment targets reached; SHINE international student award launched | Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act; right to work post-graduation |
| 2004 | | | | Right to recruit international students restricted to accredited institutions |
| 2005 | | | | Crackdown on "suspect colleges" |
| 2006 | | **Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2)** | PMI2 launched: focus on student experience, employability, partnerships | Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act; Points–Based System introduced; students' right to appeal restricted |
| 2007 | | | Education UK brand 'refreshed' | Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) introduced |
| 2009 | New Labour: PM Gordon Brown | | Funding for pilot projects to improve student experience; Teaching International Students project | Tier 4 system introduced; review of Tier 4; Bogus college scandal' |
| 2010 (January–April) | | | | Reforms to Tier 4: highly-trusted status introduced; right to part-time work restricted; English language level raised and restricted to secure tests |
| 2010 (May–December) | Coalition Government: PM David Cameron | | | Policy to reduce net migration levels introduced |
| 2011 | | | PMI2 officially ends Launch of Britain is GREAT campaign | English language requirements raised; border interviews reintroduced; permission to work and right for dependants to accompany students restricted |
| 2012 | | | | Post-study work route (Tier 1) closed; right to recruit restricted to HTS; minimum salaries for international graduates required; border interviews expanded |
| 2013–2015 | | **Coalition International Education Strategy** | International Education Strategy (IES) published; first industrial strategy for economic growth | Landlords and employers required to check immigration status of tenants and employees, respectively |

**Fig. 3.1** International student policy and migration policy

Targets were also set for further education recruitment, and English language schools and independent schools (British Council 2003). The governance of the PMI was led by the British Council, and the PMI pulled together four government departments (Education and Employment, Trade and Industry, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

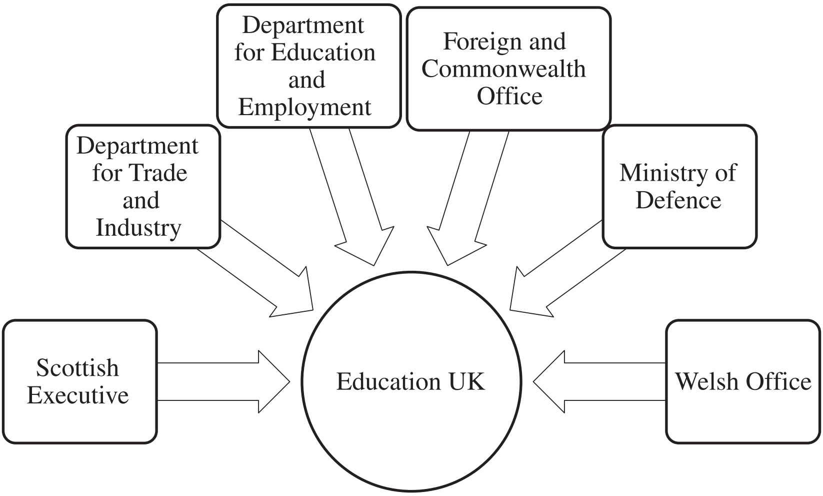


**Fig. 3.2** Funding for Education UK brand (based on information in British Council 2000)

(FCO), and the Ministry of Defence, the Scottish and Welsh devolved assemblies, and the British Council to develop an integrated policy approach (British Council 2003) (see Fig. 3.2). This was organised under the leadership of the Department for Education and Employment (later Department for Education and Skills), with the British Council managing the Education UK brand, and the Foreign Office retaining control of the Chevening scholarship scheme (British Council 2003).

The Education UK brand development was a major touchstone of the initiative. Based on a programme of market research, the perceptions of potential students, of staff and agents and higher education institutions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the UK sector were synthesised into what was claimed to be a coherent vision and brand. The brand "footprint" identified was of British Education as meaning "a dynamic tradition; the new world class; being the best I (international students) can be" and is "responsive; welcoming; alive with possibilities" (British Council 1999, p. 1). It was possible to develop a brand for the entire higher education sector, since the dissolution of the binary divide between universities and polytechnics in 1992 (Shattock 2012).

The aim of this process was to develop an umbrella identity for Britain, which could be marketed overseas by the British Council and by individual institutions within it. This brand sought to differentiate the UK from other competitor countries such as Australia and the USA and particularly to shed some of the negative perceptions of the UK. It comprised advertising campaigns, scholarship programmes, student awards like the SHINE International Student award, and competitions such as the "Real UK campaign…designed to inspire and inform prospective students and challenge negative or stereotyped perceptions of the UK" using celebrities and an emphasis on creative industries to reinforce the "cool Britannia" image (British Council 2003, p. 16). Perceptions of the UK as a nation, and consequently its higher education, as part of the "old world order", alongside a "lack of professionalism" in HE marketing and recruitment are cited as contributing to the UK's vulnerability in the face of increasing competition (British Council 1999).

To this end, the "Education UK brand" was developed under the PMI (British Council 1999; British Council 2000). It was initially created to increase direct recruitment and by emphasising UK HE's "affordability, dynamic tradition, new world class, diversity (and) welcome for international students" (British Council 1999, Para. 65), with a "clear definition of excellence that UK education provides" (Blair 1999). This is argued to be necessary due to a "blurring of the attractiveness factors of the UK and major competitors as national and institution brands become increasingly global" (British Council 2003, p. 7). This brand includes visual identities, logos advice for institutions on marketing, a database of education agents, and promotional materials (British Council 2003; British Council 2010).

In order to make Britain the "first choice for quality" (Blair 1999), the British Council Education Counselling Service developed a quality strategy for institutions to develop, to improve their overseas reputation. This emphasised students' academic, accommodation, lifestyle and career experiences. Institutions are instructed to develop statements of expectations for students and demonstrate their commitment to quality control (British Council 2000, p. 13). The emphasis on developing a reputation for quality meant that institutions were expected to demonstrate a commitment to "improving the quality of the international student's total experience" (British Council 2000, p. 13). In part, this meant establishing clear expectations, but it also appears to suggest changes to teaching, learning and support services. This represents a significant central interpellation into nominally autonomous institutions.

The 91% increase in international student numbers by 2002, within 3 years of the launch, was presented as a policy success solution to the problem of competition (British Council 2003). By 2005, the PMI had succeeded in its stated objectives: the recruitment targets were exceeded by 43,000 students in both higher and further education (Blair 2006). However, the rapidly changing context of international higher education meant that the work done on the Education UK brand, for example, was rapidly imitated by competitor countries (UKCISA 2011a), in particular, Holland, New Zealand and Malaysia (Geddie 2014). In fact, despite the rise in absolute numbers, the UK's market share actually declined from 1997–2003 by 3% (Böhm et al. 2004). The increase in numbers may instead be attributed to the overall increase in global student mobility, to an increase in demand rather than supply (Findlay 2011). It could also be attributed to tightening migration policy after 9/11 in the USA, which led to a loss in market share (Choudaha and de Wit 2014). Trends like transnational education, e-learning and private education providers, among others, are described as contributing to a "rapidly evolving world market" (BIS 2010, p. 2), in which the goals set by the PMI were no longer adequate. Therefore, its aims were refined and expanded in the PMI2—the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education.

## The Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2)

The PMI2 set recruitment targets of 100,000 international students. Like the PMI, the PMI2 was introduced at almost the same time as a change to domestic financing. From 2006, a Graduate Contribution Scheme was established, where fees were covered by a student loan, to be repaid after graduation (Shattock 2012). This represented an increase to £3000 annual fees. The PMI2 also broadened the scope from the PMI, including targeting diversification of source countries, and reputation management. It aimed to double the number of countries sending significant numbers of students to the UK, improve student satisfaction ratings, change perceptions, improve employability and grow partnerships (DIUS 2009; UKCISA 2011a). Some scholarships were also funded (DIUS 2009), although these constituted only approximately

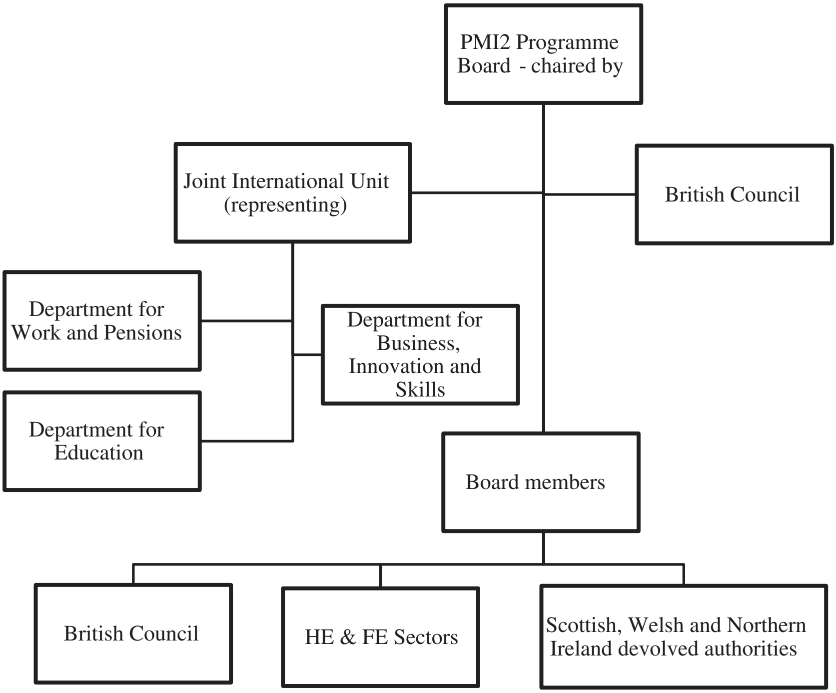


**Fig. 3.3** Management of PMI2 (DIUS 2009; British Council 2010)

5–8% of annual expenditures from the total PMI2 (DTZ 2011). Each of these key areas is explored in more detail below, and key dimensions of migration policy follow.

The change of title in PMI2 reflected the development from recruitment targets into a more sophisticated, longer-term endeavour to embed the increases in international recruitment in a broader network of partnerships and institutional activities (DIUS 2009), demonstrating a more nuanced understanding of the education marketplace. The governance of PMI2 also changed and was led by a board jointly chaired by the British Council and the Joint International Unit, which represented the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) international education activities (British Council 2010), as detailed in Fig. 3.3. In addition, the Home Office was consulted on those areas which affected migration policy. It is apparent that the Ministry of Defence and the

FCO are not included in the management of PMI2, unlike the PMI. Yet the introduction of the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) in 2007 was overseen by the FCO suggesting they remain involved in key areas. The ATAS requires students in "certain sensitive subjects" (such as biotechnology, engineering and computer science) to obtain permission to study, in the interests of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Kemp et al. 2008, p. 69). Although the 7/7 London bombings are not referenced in the ATAS documentation, there is a clear link to be drawn here. Given that the Points-Based System for migration management was also introduced during this period (UKBA 2008), this suggests that migration policy was seen to be more distinct from international education policy under the PMI2 than under the PMI.

**Marketing and communication strategies** remained largely the responsibility of the British Council and the Education UK brand (DTZ 2011). "The brand is designed to convey both the educational benefits of studying in the UK and the range of social, cultural and career advantages that a UK education offers. Crucially, it also positions the UK as a powerful partner and source of expertise in education more generally" (British Council 2010, p. 13). This underscores the shift in focus away from direct recruitment and onto strategic collaboration, positioning the UK as the world's paid consultant, prioritising "system-to-system" engagement, direct cooperation between governments aimed at developing domestic higher education systems, for example through partnerships. The Education UK brand was sustained through the continued expansion of the Education UK website, the issue of trademark licences to UK universities, the development of a network of education agents, and a range of marketing campaigns in priority countries (DTZ 2011). The brand is described as "built around a 'tradition of innovation'" (BIS 2010, p. 11), emphasising the UK's modernity in contrast to its perceived traditional, elitist image. It was intended to articulate a shared vision of the distinctiveness of UK HE (BIS 2009). It also situated the UK as an expert partner for other countries. Campaigns sought to approach and "inspire" students directly through social media and indirectly through training agents (BIS 2010).

**Diversification of markets** aimed to double the number of countries sending over 10,000 students by 2011 (DTZ 2011). Reliance on a few key countries, namely China, India and Nigeria for the majority of students appeared to render the sector vulnerable to unpredictable shifts.

Yet in executing the marketing and promotion strand above, these key countries actually took priority (BIS 2010), perhaps because they were predicted to be the biggest source of growth (Böhm et al. 2004). This target was not achieved (DTZ 2011).

**Improving the student experience** was one of its main aims of the PMI2 (BIS 2009; DIUS 2009), as student feedback collected during the PMI suggested that this was a weakness for the UK. It was measured in national-level surveys under the PMI2 (UKCOSA 2004; Ipsos Mori 2006). The student experience encompasses learning and classroom interactions, social life and accommodation, and support services (Archer et al. 2011). Thus, "soft issues such as host culture, social activities, informal welcome atmosphere, local orientation and friendship, together with matters relating to money" (Bone 2008, p. 3) take on greater importance relative to education. PMI2 funded several projects to "explore ways of making life easier and more rewarding for international students in the UK" (British Council 2010, p. 20) managed by UKCISA (2010a). These were claimed to have contributed to improving ratings for student satisfaction obtained under the International Student Barometer (a proprietary tool run by i-graduate) (Archer et al. 2010a), and positive evaluations were incorporated into marketing messages. The academic dimensions of student experience came under particular focus, as did finance and accommodation (UKCOSA 2004; Hyland et al. 2008), and social and cultural integration (Archer et al. 2010b). Student experience projects, such as intercultural mentoring, skills podcasts (UKCISA 2010a) and the "Internationalising Student Unions" project (DTZ 2011), were funded.

While satisfaction was found to be high, expectations often clashed with reality (Archer et al. 2010a) particularly with regards to application, arrival and study. Several intervention projects, therefore, sought to resolve this dissatisfaction with the provision of information to manage expectations (Archer 2010b; UKCISA 2011a). For example, the International Student Calculator (UKCISA 2011a) apparently addressed financial concerns by offering a more accurate prediction of expenses (UKCOSA 2004; Ipsos Mori 2006). Other PMI2 projects such as the Teaching International Students project conducted with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) sought to enhance the cultural awareness of academic staff and thereby improve classroom experiences of international students (Ryan 2010; DTZ 2011). Other projects aimed to encourage greater integration and value diversity among students, at least in part to offer cross-cultural experiences as part of a high-quality, inclusive education for both international and home students (Hyland et al. 2008). Shortly after the official end of the PMI2, the QAA (2012) published guidance for institutions on supporting international students, which consolidates much of the information acquired through the student experience strand of the PMI2 for staff and institutions.

**Developing partnerships and distance learning** meant establishing collaborative arrangements including "teaching programmes, student exchanges and strategic links at institutional level" (UKCISA 2010, p. 4) and developing distance learning and transnational higher education opportunities through technology (BIS 2009). These developments did not lead to the physical presence of international students in the UK, however, so will only be touched upon here, and in subsequent sections.

**Employability** became a significant element of the PMI2, framed initially as part of the student experience, but later as a distinct agenda. A UK higher education is presented as "an entry ticket to the best paid employment and a preparation for a globalised world of work" (BIS 2009, p. 26). In essence, it is considered that international students choose to study in the UK to gain an advantage in the labour market through a British qualification, as a "return on investment" (PMI2 Strategy Group 2006). The PMI2 sponsored research and projects, managed by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), intended to develop international employability for graduates (BIS 2010; AGCAS 2011; UKCISA 2010). It ran a series of events to train careers staff, engage employers and support students directly, for example, by publishing country specific employability guides and running a virtual career fair Fig. 3.4.

In sum, PMI2, with its key themes of employability, student experience, partnerships and marketing, still sought to increase recruitment of international students. But it did so with a longer term, more nuanced understanding of the factors which influence student decisions than did the PMI. The increasing project activity and greater involvement of the sector in the governance suggest a more networked, diffuse approach to policy development and implementation in this period. In parallel, significant changes occurred within migration policy which impacted international students.

## Migration Policy

Migration policy is primarily executed by the Home Office, on advice from the Migration Advisory Committee and policy guidance from the Cabinet and administered through the UKBA at the level of visa

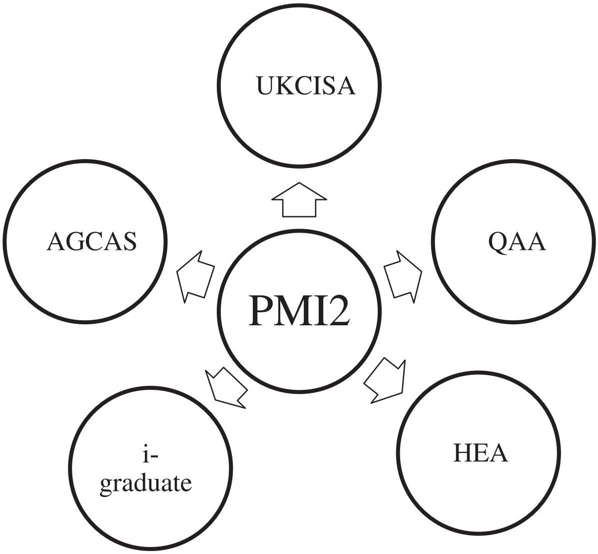


**Fig. 3.4** Non-departmental agencies involved in implementation of PMI2

issuing and border controls (see Fig. 3.5). This governance structure has remained stable, although the UKBA has since been renamed UK Visas and Immigration, with a slight redefinition in terms of responsibilities.

Alongside the PMI2, significant changes to migration policy were made. In 2006, the Points-Based System (PBS) was introduced, which sought to make the visa decision-making process more consistent and transparent (Home Office 2006). It aimed to "to increase the skills and knowledge base of the UK" by quantifying qualifications, experience and income, and correlating this with labour market needs. The independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) was established in 2007 to offer advice based on expert knowledge of the economy and labour markets, in particular in compiling lists of occupations in which the UK has a labour market shortage (Public Bodies Reform Team 2014).

The PBS "tier" relevant to international students, Tier 4[1], was introduced in 2009 and included the following changes:

- education providers, known as sponsors, taking responsibility for the student while they are in the UK (Home Office 2006);

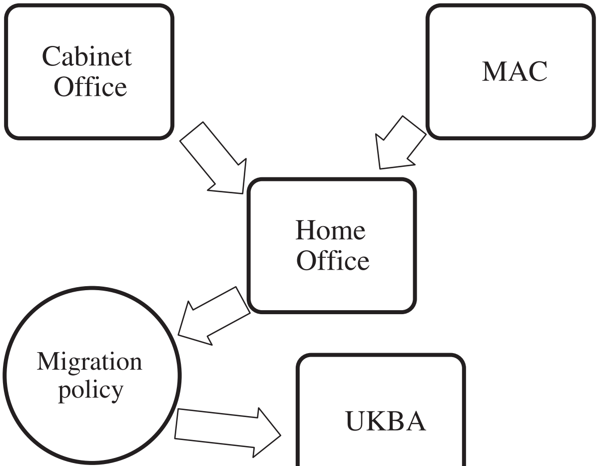


**Fig. 3.5** Migration policy governance and implementation

- issuing licenses to educational sponsors (HEIs primarily but also language colleges) (UKBA 2008);
- restricting which students would be considered eligible, to "guard against the risk of bogus students" (ibid., p. 6);
- UKBA relying on documents for checking of applications; and
- UKBA undertakes "active checking" while students are in the UK.

Students earn points by having an offer from an eligible HEI and sufficient financial funds to live and pay fees during their studies (Home Office 2006). An increased burden of record keeping and administration was placed on the sponsors, and adult students were from this point on expected to have qualifications before arriving. In practice, however, it appears that many students still experienced issues with this system (UKCISA 2009), including perceptions of excessive cost (exceeding £1000 in some cases), delays, difficulty proving funds and confusion about the application form and process.

Alongside the introduction of the Tier 4 system, a scandal broke around "bogus colleges", when a number of institutions (mostly private language colleges) were found to be "operating courses which (were) really a means to low-skilled employment" (UKBA 2008, p. 4). In 2008, an unknown number of students were found to be studying at unregistered or inadequately resourced colleges due to the lapses in licensing procedures (Home Affairs Committee 2009). Such colleges were operating with very limited teaching facilities, falsifying attendance data and diplomas. Students were found to be working considerably more than 20 h a week, often in black market employment. In the light of these criticisms, in 2009, Gordon Brown introduced a review of the Tier 4 system to address "abuses" of the system (Gower 2010), and "crack down on bogus colleges" (Travis 2010) in the context of a broader move to restrict illegal immigration (British Council 2010). It was argued that the new Tier 4 regulations would rectify this situation (UKBA 2009). The reforms targeted courses below degree level at private colleges and further education (UK Border Agency 2010, p. 8) and introduced the "Highly Trusted Sponsor" (HTS) status, without which institutions would not be able to sponsor international students for visas (UKBA 2011a). The number of institutions with HTS status was restricted (Johnson 2010). Procedures for inspection and monitoring were discovered to be flawed and new processes, such as the "highly trusted sponsors" register, were introduced (National Audit Office (NAO) 2012). English language requirements were raised, rights to work were restricted, and acceptable language tests were limited to "secure tests" (Johnson 2010). Without justification, Common European Framework of References for Languages level B2 is set as the minimum requirement: "B2 in listening, reading, speaking and writing is the appropriate level for those coming to study at level 6 (undergraduate) and above" (Home Office 2011, p. 11). This was contested in a court case by English UK on behalf of language schools but became part of the Immigration Rules in 2010, with broad consent from the rest of the sector (UKBA 2011b). It also became a requirement for students to be assessed through "secure", independent tests of English rather than in-house testing by institutions. The right to work during courses and the number of hours was also curtailed, in the name of restricting applications to "genuine students". These changes were poorly received by the sector (Acton 2011; Universities UK 2011b).

Despite these reforms, the Tier 4 system was widely criticised by the media as a "weak point in Britain's defences" (Gower 2010). Although it is evident that "suspect colleges" were being investigated in 2005 (Blair 2005), blame was laid at the door of the PBS.

## Coalition Migration Policy

In 2010, a general election was held, in which coverage of immigration was comparatively scant, suggesting policy convergence by the main three parties towards the political centre ground (Flynn et al. 2010). Such silence may also be attributed in part to the rise to prominence of the British National Party, with the main political parties seeing that major debates on immigration would give credence to the former's xenophobic stance (Gaber 2013). There was cross-party support for the principle of a PBS, although in the Conservative Manifesto, the student visa route was considered a weakness of the system and measures were proposed to tighten up on this route (Conservative Party 2010, p. 21).

A hung parliament as a result of the election led to the formation of a Coalition Government between the majority Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats. The immigration position at the outset was fundamentally similar to that of New Labour: "The Government believes that immigration has enriched our culture and strengthened our economy but that it must be controlled so that people have confidence in the system" (HM Government 2010, p. 21). This sustains the duality of acknowledging the economic potential of immigration while seeking to reduce "unwanted" arrivals. The only mention of international students in the document situates them in the field of immigration policy, not education or economy: "We will introduce new measures to minimise abuse of the immigration system, for example via student routes," (ibid.). There is a link discursively created between the international student and "abuse of the system" which is not, in this instance, mitigated with an acknowledgement of their contributions, as had been the rhetorical convention hitherto.

Significant changes are apparent in migration policy from the New Labour governments of Blair and Brown to the Coalition Government of 2010. The Blair policies, while still oriented towards reducing illegal migration, emphasised making student migration easy and attractive, by targeting part-time work, application procedures, access by dependants and post-study work opportunities. This included the introduction of the points-based migration system. In contrast, the Brown government began a process of tightening up requirements around English language, eligible institutions and part-time work (Johnson 2010). The Coalition Government continued this process, under the broader aim of making substantial reductions to net migration.

As part of the 2010 election campaign, Conservatives pledged to reduce net migration “to tens of thousands rather than hundreds of thousands” (Home Office 2010), as it was seen to be “out of control”, “unsustainable” (Green 2010), and causing negative social impacts and a lack of public confidence in the system (May 2010a). These conclusions were reached on the basis of a UKBA report which found that 21% of students who applied for visas in 2004 were still legally present in the UK after 5 years (Achato et al. 2010). Though contested by Liberal Democrats members, it became a defining tenet of the Coalition administration (Gower and Hawkins 2013). To achieve this ambitious reduction, significant reforms were announced by Home Secretary Theresa May (2010b), which primarily affected Tiers 1 and 2 of the PBS but also implicated the Tier 4 student visa route. While consistently acknowledging the contributions of “genuine students” (May 2010a; Green 2010), a succession of changes were made to student visa routes (see Fig. 3.1 for details) in consequence, aimed at reducing “abuse of the system”. These changes were expected to “cut the number of student visas issued by around 80,000 a year” (Cameron 2011a).

Further restrictions on work, work placements and the status of dependents were also imposed and the Post-Study Work route (Tier 1) was closed (Gower and Hawkins 2013), despite opposition from the sector (UKBA 2011b). In 2012, the work opportunities for graduates were modified so that international students could switch into a different Tier (either 2 “Skilled Worker” or 5 “Temporary worker”) if they could find a graduate-level job of a minimum salary (Gower and Hawkins 2013) or develop an entrepreneurial scheme. To qualify for a visa, students now had to demonstrate “progression” from their previous qualifications to their current course (UKBA 2011a). Finally, English language levels had to be proved through a particular list of “secure” tests (of which IELTS is by far the most preferred) and “targeted” spot-check interviews at the border were also reintroduced (Gower and Hawkins 2013), where the student could be refused entry if they could not hold a simple conversation to the border agent’s satisfaction. These border interviews were expanded to over 100,000 interviews in 2013–2014 to assess whether students are “genuine”.

This policy shift had consequences for students and the sector. Students were particularly dissatisfied at the closure of the Post-Study Work route and confused by the frequent changes in rules and guidance (UKCISA 2011b). They also found the cost of visa applications excessive, which has increased threefold in the last 5 years (UKCISA 2013a). This has led to a reduced sense of the welcome afforded to international students in the UK, potentially making the UK vulnerable to competition from more welcoming destinations. Universities found the burden of compliance under Tier 4 significant, with an average cost of over £300,000 per institution and a sector wide total of £66,800,910 in 2012–2013 (HEBRG 2013) and significant impacts on student advisers (Mavroudi and Warren 2013). Yet Prime Minister David Cameron (2011a) has argued that this package of reforms would "do nothing to harm Britain's status as a magnet for the world's best students" and "reject(s) the idea that our policy will damage our universities".

While the reforms were primarily aimed at the FE and English language sectors, full-time student numbers from outside the EU fell by 1 per cent in 2012–2013 for the first time since the 1980s (Marginson 2014). From 2011 to 2012, Tier 4 visas issued fell by over 60,000 (Gowers and Hawkins 2013), and although overall student numbers recovered by 2013, significant falls of over 20% since 2008 were seen in students from India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries (IEC 2014a). The majority of these reductions happened in the further education and language school sectors, with only a small reduction among HE institutions (Sachrajda and Pennington 2013). These findings suggest that despite low awareness of changes to migration policy among students, they can nevertheless impact perceptions among international students, with potential ramifications for the international education market. Thus the International Education Council (2014a) has called for more "positive messaging" from Government on international students.

At this time, there was also a debate about the definition of "migrant" and whether international students should be considered migrants or not. The Government uses the UN definition of migrant as someone who resides in a country for 1 year or more, which necessarily includes almost all international students (Secretary of State for the Home Office 2013d). Yet international students do not generally perceive themselves to be migrants (Mavroudi and Warren 2013), nor does the majority of the public (Blinder 2012). Other countries adopt definitions which exclude students, considering them temporary migrants, but the Government has rejected the possibility of adopting these (Secretary of State for the Home Office 2013d). If international students were excluded from the net migration figures, student visas would not be impacted by the Coalition target. Throughout these reforms, the

Government has reiterated that no cap is being placed on international student numbers (Cameron 2013). However, it would appear unlikely for the migration targets to be achieved without reducing international student numbers. Thus, reforms to Tier 4 were introduced in 2011.

It is in this context that the International Education Strategy was introduced.

## Coalition International Education Strategy

The International Education Strategy (IES), published in 2013, was the first of a series of industrial strategies (BIS 2013a), and was released with an "accompanying analytical narrative" (BIS 2013b). This policy aims to increase the income resulting from "education exports" and constitutes international education as "education exports". These exports include: international students; transnational education (TNE); English language teaching; education technology; and partnerships with other countries and emerging powers in particular; publishing and educational supplies; research and development, and further and higher education as well as schools and colleges (BIS 2013a). This marketisation model is consistent with that of domestic higher education. After the Browne Report was published under Gordon Brown's government, institutions were permitted to charge "market-priced fees", in practice up to £9000, which came into effect in 2012 (Shattock 2012). The IES is a plan for the UK to capitalise on the economic opportunities available in the global market. It argues that the UK's history, "global names", and "education brand" place the country in a strong position, yet still requires additional activity to ensure success, which is understood as growth.

Firstly, the IES aims to provide a "warm welcome" for international students, to support the predicted increase in numbers. This is to be achieved by offering "a competitive visa system" (BIS 2013a, p. 36), with no cap on student numbers which is nevertheless working towards "eliminating the immigration abuse and poor standards which affected international students in the past" (ibid., p. 37). Students are also to be protected from unscrupulous education agents, political or war crises at home and visa problems. Syrian students affected by the recent crises are mentioned as an example. Large scholarship programmes organised with emerging powers such as Brazil, Indonesia and China are to be welcomed. Finally, relationships with alumni and UK graduates are to be sustained to maintain engagement. Indeed, as of 2015–2016, the numbers of places on the Chevening scheme has been tripled (British High Commission Kigali 2014).

Secondly, a new approach to "building the UK brand" is outlined (BIS 2013, p. 58). The Education UK brand is brought under the centrally coordinated Britain is GREAT campaign. This is described as "providing a single, recognisable and distinct identity for the whole of the UK …(to) promote excellence beyond attracting international students via the Education UK recruitment service to cover all education exports" (BIS 2013a, p. 57, emphasis mine). The GREAT campaign attempts to establish a national brand identity for the UK, to promote tourism and industry, as well as education.

The GREAT campaign is supported by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) and is led by the national tourism agency, Visit Britain. It was also linked with the London Olympics in 2012, and with tourism and industrial promotion campaigns, linked through a visual campaign associated with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS 2011). The Education UK Unit, a joint BIS/UKTI initiative, is charged with identifying opportunities for education exports in key markets and supporting UK providers to take advantage of them (BIS 2013a). Heavily reliant on the symbolism of the Union Jack flag, the campaign is primarily visual (Pamment 2015). Posters employ powerful visual symbols, instantly recognisable images of the UK, largely evoking historical traditions, and launch events included celebrities with global recognition such as Victoria Beckham and Lennox Lewis (DCMS 2011). The "pillar" relevant to international education is "Knowledge is GREAT Britain". It includes images of iconic university buildings, mainly historical and highly ranked institutions, or striking architectural innovations, and students engaged in traditional academic activities, in libraries and laboratories, alongside half a Union Jack flag. This positions such institutions and buildings as emblematic of the rest of the UK. Other "pillars" include: heritage, countryside, shopping, innovation, business, culture, entrepreneurship, music, sport and technology. Through sponsoring education fairs at which multiple universities advertise in countries all over the world, the GREAT campaign aims to increase recruitment (e.g. British Embassy Luanda 2015; Johnson 2015). The campaign has been hailed as a considerable success, citing a return of over £500 million for an investment of £37 million (The House of Lords 2014, p. 614), which has led to an increase in investment in 2013–2014.

The remaining policies address the support for transnational education and its quality assurance, education technology, commercial relationships, improving the mutual recognition of qualifications, promoting outward student mobility, and education for development (BIS 2013a). These policies are presented as responding to a list of apparent challenges, namely a lack of coordination between agencies, institutional structures which inhibit growth, visas, new providers, increasing national competition and "changing customer relationships".

The lack of coordination between agencies and institutions is presented as a barrier to growth (BIS 2013b), and this strategy establishes a plan for "central co-ordinated activity" through the International Education Advisory Council, in which institutions will "actively consent" (BIS 2013b, p. 71). Figure 3.6 details involvement in this council. It appears superficially similar in intent to the organisational structure of the PMI2 but is led by a government body, rather than a quasi-independent agency like the British Council, representing a centralisation of control. UKTI also takes a more significant role, positioned as organising

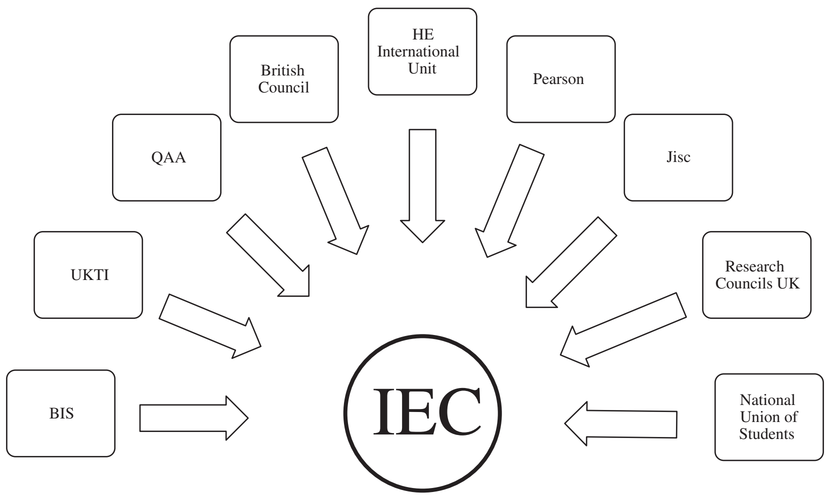


**Fig. 3.6** Representation of higher education bodies on the International Education Council (IEC)

"brokerage and support" for partnerships and "high-value opportunities" in international higher education (BIS 2013a, p. 38).

A lack of capacity for extensive growth due to governance structures is the next major barrier. The IES proposes to stimulate traditional universities into competitive responses by facilitating the entry of private providers into the market, described as "disruptive new business models" (BIS 2013a, p. 31). Charitable status and the institutional desire to avoid diluting their brand through excessive expansion are cited as reasons why institutions may resist expansion (BIS 2013b, p. 71). Planning constraints are also mentioned with regards to physical infrastructure availability, particularly in London. However, institutions continue to predict a growth in international student numbers of 6.8% on average (HEFCE 2013). The accompanying analytical narrative also mentions the possibility of establishing new institutions (BIS 2013b). While no comprehensive solution is offered to remove this obstacle to sector growth, the implication is that higher education institutions will be moved towards an increasingly marketised model, in which they will be expected to expand to sustain national economic growth.

Misperceptions of the visa system constitute another barrier to growth. The strategy suggests that the UK visa system reforms in 2011, as mentioned above, have led to the UK being wrongly perceived as "not welcome(ing) students as warmly as we used to" (BIS 2013a, p. 28), and that changing these negative views is essential. The message for international students is that there is "no cap on the number of students who can come to study in the UK and there is no intention to introduce one" (BIS 2013a, p. 35). There is no allusion here to the drive from the Coalition Government to reduce net migration or to how that might impact perceptions (see above).

Competition is still presented as a significant challenge, as with both the PMI and PMI2. In the IES, however, the emphasis is on increasing income in the sector overall, whereas the PMI stressed improving market position in international higher education. The IES also emphasises the threat to traditional providers from new types of providers, such as for-profit online universities (BIS 2013a). The policy, therefore, suggests that "established UK providers"—meaning state-sponsored universities—need to imitate the "autonomy, flexibility and entrepreneurial approach" typical of new types of providers (BIS 2013a, p. 32). It also highlights competition for overseas students, both by new and existing destination countries. However, the prediction is for an expanding market, in which the UK can increase its absolute student numbers, matching the offer from competitors rather than gaining market share.

"Changing customer relationships" is listed as the sixth and final challenge (BIS 2013a, p. 34). This does not refer to individual students, unlike the PMI, but rather to strategic partnerships with emerging powers. Examples are given of new relationships between countries supplying and demanding education and a list of eight priority countries is given: China, India, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Turkey, Mexico, Indonesia and the Gulf. The accompanying analytical narrative explains the demographic and economic reasoning behind these choices in terms of potential growth (BIS 2013b). It is notable that three out of the eight were already in the top ten source countries for international students in 2012 (HESA 2015).

The International Education Council (IEC) has met only four times to date and appears to focus through working groups on barriers to growth, "attracting legitimate international students" (i.e. visa system issues), education technology, the international student experience and recruitment (IEC 2014b). In addition, the Department for International Development (DfID) now has a taskforce for higher education, which aims to catalyse the development of higher education in domestic education systems. These working groups made recommendations, but as yet there is no evidence of impact. The work of the committee suggests that increasing international student recruitment is one of their key agendas (*ibid)*. No documentation is available for meetings after 2014.

Under the Coalition IES, new relationships between policy actors are established. In this era, it is the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) which takes the lead. Figure 3.7 summarises these relationships.

It seems that the Prime Minister's Office was less involved during the Coalition IES than during the PMI and PMI2. Similarly, although the DfES was involved particularly during the first era of the PMI, it is not directly involved with the International Education Council. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office was also involved under the PMI, but not under the PMI2, and is represented by their non-departmental public body, the British Council. While the British Council took the lead on policy development and implementation under the PMI and PMI2, this responsibility appears to be reclaimed by the BIS under the Coalition. Similarly, while the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) had significant responsibilities under the PMI2 for funding research and projects, it seems less central to policy development under

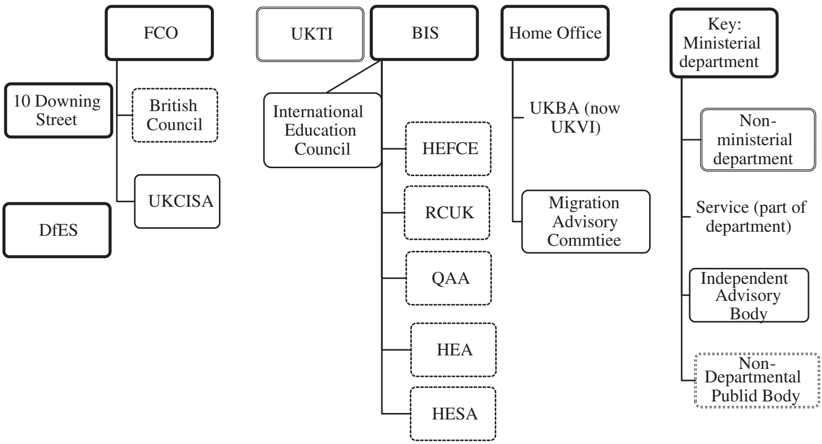


**Fig. 3.7** International student policy actors for England under the Coalition

the Coalition. Non-departmental bodies under the aegis of the BIS play some role in different areas of international student policy, namely the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and the Higher Education Academy (HEA). With David Cameron's resignation in 2016 and the subsequent ascension of Theresa May as Prime Minister, the BIS was dissolved and responsibility for higher education returned to the Department for Education. The implications for international education policy are at time of writing unknown, but the 2013 International Education Strategy appears to still be in effect, likely until at least 2018. Under the Coalition, relations with devolved authorities of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland also become less evident. Governance of international student policy is, therefore, a complex area in the UK and one where there is little research. This chapter demonstrates the dispersed nature of policy in international higher education: until the publication of the IES in 2013 (BIS 2013a), there was no "formal policy" (Marshall 2012), but there were state-sponsored activity and discourses in the field.

Two additional changes to migration policy have been introduced in the Immigration Bill in 2014 which affect international students. Firstly, despite clear opposition to the measures established through consultation (Home Office 2013a), the Government has imposed a National Health Service levy for migrants. For international students, this adds approximately £1000 to existing charges (UKCISA 2013a). The argument made is that students, like other temporary migrants, can access health services "without necessarily having made any previous contribution to the NHS or potentially, for example in the case of many students, without making any contribution during their stay either" (Home Office 2013b, p. 15). Secondly, landlords and banks are now required to check the immigration status of their potential tenants and customers, respectively (Home Office 2013c). For international students, this could prevent them securing private accommodation prior to arrival and due to long UKVI waiting times (up to 3 months), may delay the process even after their arrival (UKCISA 2013b). Thirdly, the Government proposes to simplify and change civil penalties for employers who hire illegal immigrant labour (Home Office 2013c). The implication for international students is that they will have to provide published evidence of term dates to their employers, to demonstrate when they do and do not have the right to work full time. For international students, it appears that increasingly tight regulations and increasing fees in different areas are creating a more hostile environment.

## Conclusion

In sum, while international students are mentioned first, current policy prioritises transnational education and education exports such as technology and publishing. In addition, there has been an increased emphasis on the outward mobility of British students (Bevan 2014; BIS 2014a). While mentioned under PMI2, these aspects of international higher education are foregrounded in the IES. The emphasis in the IES on those education exports where students are not physically present in the country may be linked to the targets to reduce net migration. However, it is important not to exaggerate the differences between the Coalition policy and the PMI. There is significant continuity, in that all three policy eras stress the importance of recruiting and attracting more international students, by offering a warm welcome. They acknowledge the benefits of international students and overlap with migration policies. The shift towards privileging transnational education and strategic partnerships is already apparent in the PMI2; the IES consolidates it (DPMO 2014; BIS 2015). The policies are differently positioned: Tony Blair introduced the PMI as a foreign policy and diplomatic initiative, whereas the IES is squarely positioned as an industrial strategy. This economic narrative is present in the PMI, where the financial benefits of international students are mentioned from the outset, but comes to dominate in the IES. Thus policy changes are not abrupt, but gradual, and trends established under one administration are upheld, reinforced and developed in subsequent governments. The consensus that international students should be recruited to the extent that they benefit the UK, however, does not change radically.

## Note

1. Tier 4 is the Study route under the Points-Based System. Other "tiers" are designed to accommodate different ranges of skills and employment situations. Tier 1, for example, is intended for highly skilled workers and Tier 2 for skilled workers with a job offer (Home Office 2006). Under this system points are allocated for experience, qualifications, English language, and in the case of students, finance.

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CHAPTER 4

# Putting Discourse Theory into Practice

This book is based on the critical analysis of publicly available policy documents relating to international students. I understand policy as discourse, drawing on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse. The approach to analysis has been informed by Carol Bacchi's "what is the problem represented to be" framework.

Bacchi's framework is grounded in discourse theory, heavily informed by Foucault. Discourse theory posits that through both language and knowledge, discourses represent, structure and imagine the world, changing it in line with particular ideologies (Fairclough 2003). Rules and regularities develop which create a code of knowledge about a subject (Thomas 2013), often around the people, theories, systems and techniques for defining and acquiring knowledge (Rose and Miller 2008). They define and "police the boundaries" of acceptable statements and debate (Devos 2003, p. 157). Discourses are dynamic, applied, interactive social processes of production and reproduction of knowledge and reality (Fairclough 1989). These affect what it is possible to say about an object, and consequently, discourses can be understood "as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972, p. 54). The material object, its "ground", is therefore not the focus of analysis because the discourse in question actually creates the reality it talks about.

A discourse is a collection of formations, practices and events within which "a group of statements…constituted its object" (Foucault 1972, pp. 35–36). Discourse comprises both the language and knowledge about an object and, therefore, establishes the logic and rules for that



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which is possible to be said (Foucault 1965, 1972). Discourse goes beyond describing reality: by "enabl(ing) and constrain(ing) the imagination and social practices" (Sidhu 2006, loc944), it helps to create and constitute reality. There may be multiple or even contradictory understandings of an object, for discourses are not homogenous, but make meaning in social contexts (Bacchi 2000; Iverson 2007).

Therefore, the notional object is problematic. What is called, for example, "madness" may in different eras refer to substantially different understandings, and further, the same term may be used in different discourses (juridical, religious, etc.) in the same era with different points of reference (Foucault 1965). Miller and Rose (1990, p. 5) emphasise discourse as technologies of thought. Knowledge of an object requires inculcation in particular procedures and techniques, such as statistics, experimentation, and so on, such that objects are talked about in particular ways which enforce power. This limits the potential for objects to be talked about or known differently. Discourse shapes epistemology, by determining socially which objects are appropriate focuses of activity, and how they can be known. As social practices, discourses are culturally conditioned tools for thought, which make it impossible to escape the "web of beliefs" (Moscovici 2000) without accessing shared knowledges or to speak from outside a discourse (Foucault 1972). But these discursive representations are real, not illusory, inasmuch as they are a shared system of social practices. In other words, the discursive representation has a reality distinct from but not independent of the object it purports to represent.

## Problematising

A discursive approach to policy investigates how certain topics become policy objects (Foucault 1972), for which problematisation is a useful concept. Problematisation explores how something becomes "an object of concern, an element for reflection, and a material for stylization" (Foucault 1988, p. 24). Discursive formations such as policy are understood as social practices characteristic of particular times and places, so discourses and social representations can be deprived of their common-sense status (Foucault 1982; Fairclough 1989; Filippakou 2011), because they have been different in other times and places. The goal is to look for the "rules by which a particular statement has been made" (Foucault 1972, p. 30), identify how it excludes other statements of possibility and "examine the interplay of (the) appearances (of concepts) and dispersion" (Foucault 1972, p. 37). Problematisation begins from the premise that the nature and content of discourses, and of policy discourses in particular, could be different, that their form and substance are not inevitable or natural. Nor, however, are they arbitrary, for their nature and content reveal power dynamics. Instead, they are determined by normative frameworks.

The construction of a "problem" is a particular characteristic of policy discourses (Bacchi 2009), wherein it becomes a real object. Governmentality and policy studies often focus on problems for problematisation (Rose and Miller 2008; Bacchi 2009). Government involves the creation of problems, and their solutions, which confers legitimacy on the ruler; the agent who identifies or names the problem positions themselves as having the power to solve it (Saarinen 2008b). Bacchi (2009) argues that the problematisations embedded in the policies reveal the mode of governance. Problems, as represented in policy, rely on particular assumptions of knowledge and reality, which can be challenged and contested: "what starts out as claim comes to be transformed into a matter of fact" (Rose and Miller 2008, loc1473). The way that problems and solutions are framed and represented is indicative of the logics of governance. For instance, Foucault distinguishes between sovereign and disciplinary power, where the former uses pomp and ceremony to rule, and the latter uses techniques of surveillance and discursive normalisation (Foucault 1977). Typically, modern modes of governance are hybrid, employing both sovereign and disciplinary modes (Bacchi 2009). In policy, it is primarily the disciplinary mode which is of relevance.

Hence Bacchi's (2009) "what is the problem represented to be" (WPR) approach (Fig. 4.1) provides a framework of questions to structure an analysis of discursive problematisations, beginning with "what is the problem represented to be". Often the problem may be implicit and may be read back from the solution presented, to explain why certain things are thought and how these representations are created (Webb 2014). Problematisations are often plural or nested within a single policy and may be contradictory (Bacchi 2009; Webb 2014). In Bacchi's framework, there is a double problematisation: firstly, the policy constructs the problem; and secondly, the analyst problematises the problem representation.

Applied to the rationales for engagement in international education—economic, educational, sociocultural and political—Bacchi's approach

What's the problem represented to be?:

An approach to policy analysis

1. What's the 'problem' (e.g. of 'problem gamblers', 'drug use/abuse', domestic violence, global warming, health inequalities, terrorism, etc.) represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?
3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?
6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations.

**Fig. 4.1** "What is the problem represented to be" (WPR) framework (Bacchi 2009)

supposes that the presentation of arguments in favour of a particular course of action can be read as solution, from which underlying problems can be inferred. Thus, the need to gain income through international recruitment implies a lack of money as a problem. The need to gain political influence through the agency of international alumni implies a lack of such influence, and so on.

## Assuming

Dominant discourses can naturalise certain ideological assumptions as common sense (Fairclough 1989) because they limit and shape what can be imagined (Sidhu 2006). This leads certain discourses to become hegemonic, reducing the usual plurality of contradictory discursive alternatives (Foucault 1972). In van Dijk's (1996, p. 85) words: "dominant groups or institutions may influence the structures of text and talk in such a way that as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are—more or less indirectly—affected in the interests of the dominant group". This suggests that, while the plurality of discourses is important, studying dominant discourses, such as political and state discourses, is more likely to reveal imbalances of power.

Thus, Bacchi's Question 2 asks what premises or assumptions are required to accept this problem representation, what is taken for granted or common sense (e.g. Spanger 2011; Stevenson 2013; Lancaster and

Ritter 2014). This explores the logic of the discourse, its judgements, reasoning, and necessary precursors (Foucault 1965). These premises are the background knowledge or beliefs that the reader must have to make meaning of the text (Saarinen 2008b; Loutzenheiser 2015), revealing the underpinning discursive structures which are shaped by governmentality (Bacchi 2009).

Public discourses such as mass media and policy texts often address an ideal subject or reader, forcing readers into a particular position or sharing assumptions to understand the text (Fairclough 1989; Saarinen 2008a). Implicitness can be used to create ideological common ground between the text producer and the reader (Bacchi 2009), reducing the space for disagreement or competing voices and reflecting existing power structures. The reader is incorporated at least temporarily into the discourse community of the policy text, for if they do not share in those assumptions, the text loses coherence. This is not to say that disagreement and rupture are impossible, but rather to highlight that the most powerful effects of policy discourses are likely to be those least spoken about for this reason—that disputing essential presuppositions causes the texts and actions to lose meaning. In particular, these may be found in specific understandings of social representations, relationships and narratives and can be operationalised by looking for keywords. Bacchi (2009) also identifies key "binaries", oppositional dichotomies that underpin problematisations such "licit/illicit drugs". These tend to simplify complex relationships or gradations by reducing them to binary categories which reveal the operation of conceptual logics.

In essence, this question operationalises Foucault's archaeological approach (1972), creating a window on discourse rules which determine what can be said. This involves exposing the metaphorical layers of concepts which have shaped how an object has come to be viewed, and what the conditions are that make the emergence of a policy problem possible (Gale 2010).

## Silencing and Excluding

Access to powerful, dominant discourses is limited, such that those with political power can define the discourses of the state (van Dijk 1996). This means that the "idealized schemata" created will necessarily include certain dimensions and exclude others, along lines which sustain the interests of the dominant group (Foucault 1972; Rose and

Miller 2008). Power is not unilaterally exercised, however (Sidhu 2006). Instead, it is deployed through a series of routine micro-practices, in a heterogeneous range of institutional contexts. Where contributions to the discourse are made by less powerful participants, they are shaped by more powerful participants (Fairclough 1989). Indeed, such contributions can only be made in adherence to the rules of the discourse. This means that the content, relations between concepts and subject positions will be primarily defined by the most powerful participants. Silences are created in these exclusions: "The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said" (Foucault 1972, p. 28).

Bacchi's Question 4 asks what is left unproblematic, not discussed or could be thought about differently (Bacchi 2009). Exposing silences shows what and who is marginalised in the process of policy creation and text production, and alternative ways of knowing (Tikly 2004; Taylor 2004; Spanger 2011; Stevenson 2013). Silences may be issues not discussed, often to do with inequalities or power relations, and particular subjects or indeed different discourses (Spanger 2011). Powerful discourses will tend to silence the discourses, assertions or representations of the less powerful (Lombardo and Meier 2009).

It is this focus on the power relations implicit within discourse which generates the critical potential of a discourse approach (Fairclough 1989; Foucault 1965). There is some disagreement about whether such criticism is intended to produce real-world changes. Foucault's (1972) position is that it opens space for alternative ways of thinking and speaking, that it "seeks difference and complexity" (Webb 2014, p. 369), and given that discourses *are* real, that this constitutes real-world change. In this sense, policy activism can consist of reworking and reinterpreting texts strategically (Taylor 2004). In the idiom of policy and policy research, this lack of an "answer" may appear inadequate. However, it is consistent with the philosophical assumptions of a discursive approach wherein any attempt to provide a definitive account of policy, or how it should be, would necessarily be specious and partial. Instead, the creative critical potential of this approach is to throw the familiar practices and assumptions of policy into question, to open discursive spaces to alternative representations, and to reveal shared understandings and social practices as a precursor to developing ethical alternatives (Tikly 2004).

## Creating People

Discourse constitutes the object (Foucault 1972), and for people, this means establishing subject positions, such that they can only take meaningful action within these positions. Categorical subject positions might include "victim" or "criminal", "husband" or "wife", "worker" or "manager" (Spanger 2011; Widding 2011; Svender et al. 2012). As Ball (1993, p. 14) puts it, "we are the subjectivities, the voices, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows". Because identities are embedded in discourses, people speak from social categories. Indeed, Hacking (1999) argues that the act of naming a group of people creates an identity for that group, which people come to fit. He suggests that developing a category (he gives homosexual as an example) causes bureaucrats and academics to recognise people who fit that category, where previously they would have described them differently (for example, as deviant). This "making up people" then defines what is possible for people to do, say and act out in their lives, because description allows action; if we can describe a thing or a person, it can be done. If it cannot be described, it cannot be conceived. Mass media can affect people powerfully because it creates through narrative formulae for how to live, the "habits of conduct" (Rose and Miller 2008, loc3098), which are internalised as standards, aspirations and habits. Policy discourses do the same, constructing images of political and social subjects embedded in power relations. This is Bacchi's (2009) Question 5: "what are the effects of this representation?" This question emphasises the discursive creation of subjects (Tikly 2004). Indeed, Loutzenheiser (2015, p. 107) revises this question to focus entirely on subjects: "who is the subject implied (to be)?"

Social categorisations represent objects and people conventionally, establishing a model or an ideal type for people to fit into (Fairclough 2003), which can marginalise them (Rose and Miller 2008; Van Leeuwen 1996). They set people in opposition to each other, or divide their own consciousness, an effect known as "dividing practices" (Foucault 1982). Many are "problem categories", such as non-participants (Stevenson 2013), resistant or in deficit (Bacchi 2009). Such discursive representations discipline people by limiting possibilities for action and identity (Moscovici 2000).

They can also be discursively marginalised in other ways. People can be described generically or specifically or aggregated as statistics, a key mechanism by which people are rendered calculable and governable (Rose and Miller 2008). Counting reifies people, turning them from agents into objects. Further, people can either be active agents in grammatical terms or passive (Fairclough 2003). This is not necessarily intentional manipulation, indeed it is usually not, but it can have material and discursive consequences (Bacchi 2009), and tends to reinforce existing structures of power.

However, this discipline is never total, and there are always possibilities for agency and struggle (Foucault 1982; Moscovici 2000). While limiting in some ways, categorisation also paradoxically empowers us to act as social agents, by defining social practices we can perform, as well as those we cannot (Fairclough 1989; van Leeuwen 1996). A single individual may occupy multiple subject positions (Loutzenheiser 2015) and opt in or out of certain positions. People interact with these narratives and discourses creatively, recombining them innovatively, and overtly resisting them (Foucault 1982; Fairclough 1989; Rose and Miller 2008). "Individuals and groups, far from being passive receptors, think for themselves, produce and ceaselessly communicate their own specific representations and solutions to the questions they set themselves" (Moscovici 2000, p. 30). Because power in a Foucauldian sense is productive and diffuse, it can rest with the individual, offering them the agency to create positive outcomes (Sidhu 2006). Discourses therefore both empower and disempower individual agents, sometimes simultaneously.

Self-subjectification is a particularly powerful dimension to this process (Bragg 2007), meaning the acts of individuals to create themselves as social subjects (Foucault 1982), sometimes by conforming to the idealised expectation of the category or opposing them. Self-subjectification refers to:

> those intentional and voluntary actions by which men (*sic*) not only set themselves rules of conduct but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria. (Foucault 1988, pp. 10–11)

In other words, people choose how to live their lives and how to define themselves, and do so in reference to particular values and norms. This process makes individuals responsible for their "choices", discursively amplifying certain behaviours and minimising others (Rose and Miller

2008). In viewing oneself as a project, everybody is an administrator or regulator of their conduct and lives (Marginson 1997). Responsibility for who we are then falls on of the individual. Therefore, every moral decision is an instance of self-subjectification because it refers to the "unified moral conduct", the broader social system of rules (Foucault 1988, p. 28).

Discourse is a particularly effective tool of power because it operates on cognitive and linguistic levels below consciousness (van Dijk 1996), enabling consent to be manufactured through definitions and limiting possibilities (Fairclough 1989). These indirect techniques of control mean that discourses can be internalised, affecting individual thought, action and self-identification (Lukes 2005). Subordinate or marginalised groups or individuals can train themselves out of desires and beliefs which fall outside the discursive norm for their group or identification. This has particular relevance in a neoliberal capitalist context, where the professionalisation and training of subjects for superior performance in the workplace becomes a "personal development" project (Rose and Miller 2008). In this model, *homo economicus* is rational, making decisions as an individual, not in a social context, where the skills and knowledges they acquire are commercialised, comprising their "human capital" (Marginson 1997). The augmentation of this capital entails "becoming an entrepreneur of oneself" (Tikly 2003, p. 164). However, this project of self-work means adopting and internalising the values and behavioural norms of free-market capitalism.

Although the structural focus of a Foucauldian approach may appear negatively deterministic, it is also critically productive and radical. It shows how power works through discourse in social representations, thus undermining power and opening up space for alternative representations and discourses, offering a tool for agency and resistance. Therefore, the discursive effects which may close off different options for agents and the power of dividing practices are significant and worthy of study (Bacchi 2009), which is the focus of this book. I acknowledge and value students' agency, but it is not the object of study. Instead, I focus on the structures of policy discourses in the critical interests of exposing their effects.

## Methods

The documents having been identified and selected on the basis described at the beginning of Chap. 3, the qualitative analysis was conducted using software to facilitate an inductive thematic coding.

Relationships between these themes were organised around rationales for or against recruiting international students. These rationales constituted the starting point for Bacchi's (2009, 2012) "what is the problem represented to be" (WPR) analysis. This framework was then applied to identify how international students are discursively represented in policy.

Documents were coded inductively, based on emerging themes (Braun and Clark 2006). In essence, inductive or open coding involves assigning codes as they emerge from the data, driven by data (Gibbs 2008). A software programme for qualitative data analysis, NVivo, facilitated the analysis, which enabled a large volume of documents to be included in the corpus: 125 documents in total were included, with over 3000 pages.

In the first stage of coding, after a preliminary reading for familiarisation, extracts were coded if they related to the research questions (Ashwin et al. 2015). Sentences relevant to the research questions were established by examining regularities, disjunctures and attention to discourse (Bazeley and Jackson 2013). The unit of coding varied according to the document, either line-by-line or a whole paragraph, depending on the document (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Saldana 2009). Line-by-line coding occurred in the thematically dense areas, which were also simultaneously coded where a particular sentence incorporated several themes. This lent a sense of the richness of the data (Bazeley and Jackson 2013). It was more common to code by sentences, but in some texts, the same code was applied to several sequential sentences or whole paragraphs where the subject of the text warranted.

Open coding began from the most central policy documents and proceeded to texts originating from quasi-independent or independent public bodies. I worked in chronological order to gain a sense of changes over time, enabling constant comparison (Gibbs 2008). I coded "close to the documents", using open coding and labelling the sections of text with language and terminology derived from the documents themselves (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Bazeley and Jackson 2013). Automatic coding was occasionally used to identify relevant key phrases, such as "the international student experience" and "the best and the brightest", which were used frequently verbatim. Reports were then checked to remove irrelevant results. It was not used otherwise, in order to preserve the integrity of an inductive approach. Inductive coding meant that when new codes were added, previously coded documents needed to be reviewed for relevance to these codes. I used text searches to find these.

This enabled the constant comparison that Gibbs (2008) argues is essential to good qualitative analysis; it maintained consistency and ensured that the same codes were used throughout the study.

"Second order" or "axial coding" involved reviewing each code individually for consistency. It also established relationships and connections between codes expressed through a hierarchy, reviewing redundant nodes, and renaming codes for consistency (Gibbs 2008). During this review, codes were merged when very similar meanings or patterns of coding were apparent, and "hierarchies" of codes were developed (Saldana 2009; Bazeley and Jackson 2013). Compound queries were used to check the comprehensiveness of coding. Internal consistency of codes was reviewed by exporting the reports and checking them manually. With a single coder, Bazeley and Jackson (2013) suggest the transparency of the analytical process must replace second coders as a measure of reliability. To this end, a selection of code reports is included in Appendix 3. A selection of code reports was reviewed by an external researcher.

Codes were categorised as rationales for or against recruiting international students; and descriptions of international students. This corresponds to grounded theory's "selective coding" (Gibbs 2008), where codes are deleted, retained and regrouped. These were recorded in NVivo using either "issues" or "enhance" or "benefits to indicate rationales against and for recruitment, respectively. During the qualitative analysis, I compiled a list of the codes which related to each rationale.

The quality of a qualitative analysis relies on the transparency of the analytical process, reflexivity, evidence of its grounding in the data (Gibbs 2008), its internal coherence, as well as whether the book proves convincing (Kuckartz 2014). To ground the conclusions in the data, the prevalence of particular themes is captured in citations. To provide a rich description of the entire corpus (Braun and Clark 2006; Gibbs 2008), quotes are used frequently and contextualised where possible.

Once the codes were organised into rationales for or against recruiting students, Bacchi's "what is the problem represented to be" (WPR) framework of 6 questions was applied to each rationale, as illustrated in Fig. 4.1.

For example, Chap. 5 explains the argument that international students should be recruited to enhance the UK's diplomatic influence through soft power, which can be generated through the goodwill created when students study in a foreign country. This rationale incorporates an implicit understanding of a problem, a proposed solution and a number of assumptions. Because there are several rationales with overlapping and competing discourses, Bacchi's framework is applied to each separately. Bacchi demonstrates the power of her questions in an integrated narrative, rather than a rigid march through each question individually, particularly as smaller problematisations may nest within larger ones. This is consistent with Foucault's earlier work (1965, 1977), in which he identifies key concepts within the broad research study and within each explores the historical development, ruptures and silences. Literature is used to highlight assumptions and offer alternatives.

## Conclusion

The approach used in this study can be characterised as broadly Foucauldian, adopting a problematisation analysis. It is document-based, but understands policy as discourse, such that texts are a momentary crystallisation of discourses used in social events and networks. A wide range of documents have been used, from a range of actors and genres, which helps to illustrate the fluidity of the domain of international student policy. These documents have been approached using open qualitative analysis, supported by NVivo software. After initial coding, a hierarchy of key themes was developed, which were further analysed using Bacchi's framework of questions.

Policy discourses were found to relate almost entirely to the recruitment of international students. The capacity of the UK HE sector to attract international students is explicitly valued: "Higher education has a fundamental value in itself and our universities are, in many ways, world-class: in research; in attracting international students; and in contributing to the economy" (BIS 2011, p. 7). This may seem an obvious, indeed a "natural" point (Foucault 1972), but there are other possibilities for policy: it could relate to discrimination, racism and insecurity experienced by students (Marginson et al. 2010); it could speak to inclusive practices and multiculturalism; it could seek to engage students as temporary citizens. That UK national policy discourse does not speak to these issues is not natural or inevitable; it is the culmination of a policy process of selection, prioritisation and discursive formation which have made certain statements "unsayable", naturalising particular assumptions (Fairclough 1989) and instituting silences.

This rest of the book critically analyses these assumptions and is organised around four key rationales relating to international student recruitment:

- International students increase the UK's global influence;
- International students increase the quality of UK higher education and its reputation;
- International students increase income to the UK;
- International students are less desirable when they are seen as migrants.

Within these rationales, international students are represented in a range of different ways:

- As ambassadors;
- As educational resources;
- In cultural deficit;
- As financial resources;
- As migrants.

The following chapters present each rationale, giving the findings of the textual analysis, and then explaining the WPR analysis.

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CHAPTER 5

# Influence: A Political Rationale and International Alumni as Ambassadors

Attracting international students is argued to increase the UK's influence in global diplomacy, as graduates of British education are considered to be more knowledgeable and appreciative of "British values". This generates political influence: "Education is a method by which the UK can influence other governments diplomatically, leading to political and trade links" (DTZ 2011, p. 46). This rationale is apparent throughout the period in documents from both the Blair and Coalition administrations, although it is the least prevalent of those discussed here. For example, in Blair's first Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) speech (1999), he argued that "(p)eople who are educated here have a lasting tie to our country. They promote Britain around the world, helping our trade and our diplomacy". In this excerpt, Blair argues that international students can increase the UK's influence overseas, as well as sympathising with UK interests.

The Coalition International Education Strategy (IES) evokes the same rationale, referring to "soft power", the capacity to influence through cultural attraction, as opposed to hard power, in the sense of military capacity or force (Nye 2004). The IES (BIS 2013a, p. 23) explicitly states that "(e)ngagement in international education, both in the UK and via TNE, enhances the reputation and brand recognition of UK institutions and *helps project the UK's soft power*" (emphasis mine). Although the PMI does not refer directly to soft power, it does refer to the role and contributions of international graduates in achieving the UK's diplomatic ends through influence. This suggests significant continuity over changes



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in political parties in government. But for the Coalition, unlike New Labour, this logic took second place to economic gain.

This chapter analyses the narrative which positions the increase of the UK's global influence as a rationale for international student recruitment. The first section presents the qualitative analysis, and the second section examines the problematisation underlying the rationale.

## International Students Generate Influence for the UK

In policy documents, the fundamental premise appears to be that the UK will benefit from overseas alumni who retain "ties" and "links" to the UK, as well as the increased "knowledge and appreciation" of Britain, its culture and "values" (Blair 1999; Home Office 2006; BIS 2013a). International education is seen as a policy tool for the UK to build diplomatic relations: "using education to strengthen our relationships with partner countries and build a platform for many other activities to our mutual benefit" (BIS 2013a, p. 61). The *Wider Ambitions* White Paper describes the UK HE brand as being aligned "with the Government's diplomatic and cultural agenda" (BIS 2009, p. 93). Thus, international students are seen as a source of soft power (DTZ 2011; BIS 2013b). They are expected to

> return home with an enhanced appreciation of British life, ideas and values, culture and institutions, and a good command of the English language; (and) As they rise to positions of influence in their professions, their experience is likely to predispose them to look to Britain for ideas, technology, trade and investment. (UKBA 2008, p. 4)

There is an implied understanding of diplomacy as incorporating trade activities, as well as more traditional diplomatic and cultural activities. International students are considered to "have a higher level of trust in the people of the UK" (BIS 2013a, p. 34) than those who have not studied or spent time in the UK. This is presumed to lead to an increased willingness to "do business with" the UK (Blair 1999; BIS 2013a, p. 36). Such willingness offers an opportunity to communicate "British values" overseas (BIS 2009).

### The Influence and Soft Power of Alumni

International graduates are thought to exit from UK HE willing and able to "promote Britain around the world" (DfES 2003, p. 65). Alumni are seen as "ambassadors" for institutions and departments (British Council

2003; Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). They are described as "our greatest export" (Joshi 2016). The BIS (2013a) therefore suggests that alumni networks should be used to "maintain relationships" between universities and graduates and between graduates and the UK. For example, a British Alumni Association of Cambodia was formed to "strengthen the excellent ties that exist between the UK and Cambodia" (British Embassy Phnom Penh 2013). This continues the PMI2's encouragement of HEIs "stay(ing) connected with their alumni as international alumni will promote the UK's reputation abroad" (Archer and Cheng 2012, p. 96). Such connections have even been valued in financial terms, with an "alumni award" programme available for UK alumni who have made "a significant impact upon their return", rewarding them with an expenses-paid study trip to the UK (BIS 2014a) and the Dadabhai Naoroji Awards, intended to acknowledge those "whose achievements have furthered UK-Indian relations" (DPMO 2014).

Education UK describes alumni as "long-term advocates" (British Council 2003), and the BIS as "unofficial ambassadors" (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). Indeed, more recently the title of "Education Ambassador" has been made official. In the Philippines, for example, seven ambassadors were named with the aim of "inspiring others to pursue a UK education and promoting world-class educational opportunities in the UK to Filipinos" (British Embassy Manila 2016). Such graduates "promote and help to facilitate educational, cultural, developmental and business links and collaborations" (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013, p. 38) with other countries. Likewise, the IES suggests that:

> UK alumni have created a network of people in positions of influence around the world who can *promote British foreign policy goals*, including by opening doors to people, resources and information we would not otherwise have been able to access. (BIS 2013a, p. 39, emphasis mine)

This implies that international alumni will be so closely aligned with British interests that they will actively work to realise them. It is supposed that "(m)ost graduates are likely to have some degree of influence in their home countries (or elsewhere)" (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013, p. 13). This capacity to influence other countries through cultural means, or soft power, is presented as deriving from the UK's reputation and "brand recognition" (BIS 2013a, b) (see Chap. 6). In Coalition documents, it is argued that international education increases both. While the focus in the IES is often on institutional or systemic partnerships, rather than direct student recruitment, both are considered essential to creating and sustaining soft power. International alumni “generate goodwill” for the UK, creating long-term reputational benefit (Home Affairs Committee 2011).

Scholarship programmes are one way in which such influence is developed. The Chevening scholarship programme, for instance, has over 41,000 alumni, described as “influential”, in more than 150 countries, including key strategic countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, India and China (BIS 2013a). “FCO funds the Chevening scholarship programme, aimed at those whom we believe will become *future leaders and decision-makers*” (*ibid.*, p. 53, emphasis mine). This scheme is funded primarily by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (and supported by host institutions, although this is not mentioned in most policy discourses), which demonstrates its importance as a political tool for the UK. Thus, scholarships are considered part of the strategic plan to increase the UK’s educational status (Blair 1999; British Council 2003). However, the proportion of students on such scholarships is considerably outweighed by the proportion of self-funded students (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). The emphasis in the policy discourses on the diplomatic weight of programmes such as the Chevening is, therefore, noteworthy in and of itself, given that it does not reflect the distribution of funding of the actual student population. The discursive positioning of scholarships as a tool for global diplomacy is consistent across all three policy periods. Funding was increased during all periods, from the PMI and PMI2 to the FCO in 2015 (although this was not explicitly stated by the Coalition IES). Both the New Labour and Coalition policy discourses share the rationale of increasing engagement in international education for the sake of diplomatic influence.

Under the Blair administrations, diplomatic influence was also presented as a benefit from short-term “controlled migration” (Home Office 2005; UKBA 2008), as well as specifically from international students. The presence of migrants in the UK is considered to “create a huge and invaluable source of goodwill for Britain abroad” (Roche 2000). Proposals for the points-based immigration system suggest that by “Identifying and attracting migrants who will … act as ambassadors for the UK on their return home” (Home Office 2006, p. 9), the UK can gain influence. Immigration is thus imagined as a tool for diplomacy (UKBA 2008). This logic is not evident in Coalition policy documents, where the potential for migrants to act as ambassadors is not apparent.

## Mutual Understanding and Relationships

There are two characteristics of the global influence rationale which appear in earlier texts and are later marginalised. The first is a more idealistic, cosmopolitan vision of globalisation, based on reciprocal relationships and understanding (DfES 2004). It shows commitment to discourses of internationalism as a key value. Alumni's "promotion" and "advocacy" is argued to "foster mutual understanding" between the UK and other countries (DfES 2004). According to the chair of the British Council (DfES 2006), "international learning builds international understanding as well as opportunity, creativity and liberty". Promoting a "global citizenship agenda" (DTZ 2011) is considered to foster intercultural understanding and positive attitudes to international exchange. These rationales apparently more altruistic internationalist are much less frequent than those that focus on the benefits to the UK, but they are apparent in earlier documents and not in the formal IES documents. In these later texts, these values appear to be replaced by a more transactional emphasis on trust and soft power.

Secondly, PMI discourses underscore the importance of emotional bonds and relationships (British Council 2003; DTZ 2011) but in Coalition and Conservative periods it usually appears in texts produced by independent bodies or academics, rather than formal policy documents (Miller 2013; Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). For example, Professor Gilligan, who was commissioned to conduct a programme of market research on the HE sector for the British Council (2003), comments that "(i)t is though only too easy to forget the longer-term political, social and economic benefits to the country of the relationships that can be developed and how these represent a long-term investment in our future" (p. 29). The DfES (2004) highlights the "affection" that international students hold for the UK, and Tony Blair writing for the Guardian argues that the "friendships and links (that) are forged" are important. These relationships are considered significant because they contribute to economic advantage. While the IES (BIS 2013b) does state that "the experience of students in UK education helps to create good relations" (p. 61), the relations in question are those between the UK as a state and future "global leaders". The emphasis in PMI documents foregrounds personal connections between individuals, in addition to national diplomatic links. Some Coalition policy documents do highlight significant emotional attachment and affection for the UK among alumni (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). Yet this is not commented on in the IES and other central policy documents, perhaps because it is most evident among the scholarship holders, and the main emphasis in the IES is on the economic and transactional relationship between international students and the UK (see Chap. 7). Given the contemporary hostility of migration policy discourses, it is noticeable that during the PMI even the Home Office (2002, 2006) expressed this conviction.

Aid and development work are important tools for public diplomacy and have in the past been associated with international education (Humfrey 2011; Walker 2014). But neither are major themes in these periods (Knight 2004). Education is acknowledged to be associated with development (British Council 2003; BIS 2013a) and the Department for International Development (DFID) undertakes considerable work in this area (BIS 2013c). Indeed, "(s)upport for the education and training of students from developing countries is an integral part of HM Government's overseas development policy" (UKBA 2008, p. 4). However, the discussion of international students in the UK only intersects with this work in reference to scholarships, such as the Science without Borders scheme (BIS 2013a). This scheme facilitates Brazilian Ph.D. students in the sciences to study in the UK and is presented in the IES as part of a reciprocal partnership for international development. However, in the next sentence the IES goes on to promise that the Government will "explore opportunities to create similar schemes with other emerging powers" (p. 53). This emphasis on emerging powers demonstrates that the eventual aim of this scholarship scheme is to increase the UK's influence, such that development is a secondary rationale. Hosting fee-paying international students is not positioned as a development function in this period.

The global influence rationale for recruiting international students explains the role of soft power and how overseas alumni are seen to enhance it for the UK. The next section applies Bacchi's "what is the problem represented to be" framework to enable a more critical reading.

## The Problem of the UK's Declining Global Influence

The rationale for recruiting international students to enhance the UK's global influence represents recruiting international students as a solution to an implicit problem (Bacchi 2009, Q1). The problem is represented to be the UK's diminishing influence on a global stage.

"Expanding political influence in the South and East" (BIS 2013a, p. 53) is seen as a sign of the UK's power is waning, or changing in a new world order, which constitutes a problem for governance and policy. The House of Lords Select Committee Report on Soft Power (2014) highlights how changes in the modern world such as hyper-connectivity and an increase in the influence of non-state actors have fundamentally changed the diplomatic sphere. It points to a decline and decentralisation in state power globally, and in the UK's power relative to the "increasingly assertive" developing countries, particularly Brazil, Russia, India, and China. The solution offered is for the UK to increase its use of soft power, through international cultural relations (Trilokekar 2010; British Council 2012a), and particularly through international education: "International education has an important role to play in this" (BIS 2013a, p. 53). The New Labour-led Cool Britannia rebranding initiative launched in 1997 to much criticism reflects similar concerns (Werther 2011). Britain's international image was seen to be stuck in the past, rooted in its period of imperial power, affecting global perceptions of products and the country (Leonard 1997). The rebranding campaign can be understood as an attempt to enhance the UK's international influence through soft power, suggesting that the concern about decreasing global influence has been a constant.

Soft power refers to the capacity to achieve policy aims through attraction, rather than force. Effectively, it encourages others to subscribe to the same aims and outcomes, co-opting rather than coercing or persuading. Nye (2004) suggests that this is often achieved by appealing to shared values, shaping what others want, relying on the attractiveness of a culture, its values, policies, language and institutions. Networks, compelling narratives, norms, cultural and economic resources generate influence for particular countries (British Council 2013; House of Lords 2014). This soft power is argued to be increasingly important in a postmodern world, where power has ebbed away from the nation state and flowed into transnational networks, civil society and the market. Soft power depends on cultural and economic resources to generate influence.

The view of Britain as declining in state power was not new in 2014. Indeed, it extended political analysis from the Thatcher Government during the post-war period (Turner 2010). Having relinquished colonial holdings from 1947 on, the 1950s and 1960s saw a radical restructuring of the UK's global power. The UK's influence was no longer directly exerted but instead worked through organisations such as the

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Similarly in the 1970s and 80s, the European Economic Area and later the European Union became a key forum for the exertion of power. Yet relative to France and Germany within the EU, and to America globally, the UK's influence appeared to diminish. While the Commonwealth had been a means to influence ex-colonies, it grew less relevant in the eyes of Whitehall through the 1980s. The UK's global influence became increasingly mediated, through global organisations and through the "special relationship" with the USA. In a historical context, the UK's soft power has indeed declined from its imperial past.

So has its hard power, its military might. But unlike during the Cold War, threats during the 1980s and 1990s emerged as non-state actors: radical, violent political movements associated with terrorist activities (Rogers 2010). The UK was seen as vulnerable to political violence, and the dispersal of biological and chemical weapons, as well as the arms trade which put weapons in the hands of a range of paramilitary movements. Britain's military interventions in recent years have mainly been undertaken in concert with the USA. Although a nuclear power, the UK likewise requires American support to maintain its defences (Turner 2010). Nor has there been the political will to substantially increase defence spending, which fell systematically from the 1980s until 1999 (Childs 2006), particularly in a climate of austerity after the 2008 financial crash. The rise of the Scottish National Party has brought the possibility of discontinuing the Trident missile system into the political mainstream. Thus, the UK's hard, military power has also declined and is unlikely to recover. Soft power, however, could enhance British influence for relatively low costs.

Recruiting international students is seen as a way to enhance British influence, creating a source of alternative, soft power. In then Foreign Secretary William Hague's (2013) words, "it is not so much the relative size of our power that matters in the twenty-first century, but the nature of it, and how agile and effective we can be in exerting it". Thus, students themselves are represented as a vessel for British influence, emphasising their role as alumni.

Policy discourses make a number of assumptions, which structure representations of international students (Bacchi 2009, Q2). The key assumption is that the state-level problem the waning influence of the UK can and should be addressed by individuals and in particular by international students.

Firstly, policy discourses presume that time abroad leads to an increase in positivity towards the host country. While it is sometimes acknowledged that such positivity is contingent on experience, it is assumed that most students do have positive experiences. Thirdly, policy discourses that this affinity will lead them to exert influence in favour of the UK in business and foreign policy objectives. Fourthly, it is presumed that students will be in positions of influence, during their career, where they can act in the UK's interests. Finally, policy discourses suppose that their fee-paying status is irrelevant; that scholarship recipients and self-funded students are tacitly assumed to adopt similar subject positions. Fundamentally, positioning international students as a tool of global influence assumes that individuals with free will and agency are responsible for addressing a state-level problem of the country in which they study. These assumptions are rarely explicitly stated, and when they are, do not appear to relate to real students as individuals, with an understanding of all the human messiness implicit to a conceptualisation of people as agents. Rather they appear to rely on totalising abstractions, representing "the international student" as a meaningful, generalisable entity.

## Attitudes in International Students

The first assumption is that time abroad increases positive attitudes towards the host country and is based on positive experiences. This is common both in policy and in the literature on soft power in higher education (Scott-Smith 2003; Kramer 2009; Atkinson 2010; O'Mara 2012; Wilson 2014). It is an underlying rationale of regional mobility programmes like Erasmus, as well as some of the most prestigious international education exchanges, such as the Fulbright and Marshall Scholarship programmes. Policy discourse constructs this as the result of exposure to a country, its people and systems through international HE (O'Mara 2012, p. 590). Wider public diplomacy initiatives share this notion, as the British Council report *Trust Pays* (2012a, p. 3) indicates when it argues that exposure and experience generate trust in the country and its institutions. Such trust is then translated, as the title of the report implies, into financial capital. Britain's economic structure relies heavily on service industries and the financial sector, while manufacturing is decreasing (HM Treasury 2011). In order to increase exports and inward international investment, a strong reputation sustained by trust in institutions is seen as necessary. Murat's (2014) econometric analysis appears to support the belief that exposure through education networks increases bilateral trade, particularly with post-communist, non-Commonwealth and non-English speaking countries. And yet despite such positive attitudes alumni are still expected to leave the UK and return "home".

There is, however, lack of empirical grounding for claims that international education changes attitudes. Certainly positive attitudes towards the host country are associated with international study (Han and Zweig 2010). But this does not necessarily imply change. Erasmus students, for instance, found that their views and sense of European identity did not change during their time abroad, largely because they were already positively disposed towards the host country prior to choosing to study there (Papatsiba 2006b; Wilson 2014). In this sense, mobility programmes may be self-selecting. The same is true of the US "International Visitors" Programme of the 1960s and 1970s (Scott-Smith 2003), the Entente Cordiale programme, the Fulbright (Sidhu 2006), the Commonwealth Scholarships, and the Chevening programme (Wilson 2014), in that participants were already positively predisposed. This selection bias means that international education is preaching to the converted, rather than adding value by changing attitude (Scott-Smith 2003). Similarly, self-funded students choose which country to study in based on those they already like and know about (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). By extension, fee-paying international students are just as likely to be a self-selecting group with higher than normal positive disposition towards the host country which does not, on average, change substantially as a result of their time abroad. What role international higher education plays in generating political affiliation is not as clear as policy discourses portray.

International students are likely to report positive experiences (e.g. Wu and Hammond 2011). But they are not necessarily more positive about the UK and its values than they were already predisposed to be before coming to the UK. Furthermore, a positive attitude towards the UK does not mean a negative attitude towards the home country. Han et al. (2013) found that Chinese students in the USA both held a positive attitude towards the USA and a strong attachment to China. This is not surprising but is not mentioned in policy discourses, which stress students' allegiance to the host, rather than home, country. Conceptualising attachment as multi-layered rather than uni-dimensional may therefore be a more useful understanding of how international students' experiences influence their identity. It cannot be assumed that international education generates a singular positive attitude towards the host country.

When changes in attitude do occur, it is contingent on exposure to host country and culture through "deep" social interactions, and by a shared sense of community (Atkinson 2010). This is borne out by Eller et al.'s study (2011), which established that extended contact between international students and UK students resulted in more positive attitudes and behaviour. But many students do not experience such extended social contact, and whether or what form change among these students may take is not addressed. In educational exchanges like Erasmus where students are essentially left to fend for themselves, they can lead "cloistered existences" (Wilson 2014) or "cocoons" where most friendships are with co-nationals or third country nationals rather than with host country nationals, at least at first (Papatsiba 2006b). Social isolation is frequently identified in the literature on cultural adaptation in the UK (e.g. Brown 2009; Montgomery 2010; Wu and Hammond 2011). Such isolation is aggravated where institutions often adopt residential policies of housing students in single cultural groups (UKCISA 2010a). In 2004, for example, UKCOSA found that only 35% of respondents in university-managed accommodation were living with both UK and other international students (UKCOSA 2004). Therefore, many students feel that they tend to make friends with other international students (Ipsos Mori 2006). Only 26% of UK students said that their friends include international students in the 2006 survey, suggesting that contact between UK and international students is not systematic. This does not appear to have changed over the last ten years, as a HEPI (2015) report indicates that home students are still not convinced that studying alongside international students improves their global networks. This isolation may constitute a negative experience, although intense relationships are not necessarily a requirement for many students (Papatsiba 2006b). The importance of deep cultural and social experiences to generate attitudinal shifts is not foregrounded in policy rationales. While under the PMI this lack of integration was constructed as a subsidiary problem (e.g. Archer et al. 2010b), the Coalition IES does not highlight this issue at all.

Indeed, many students report finding the international study experience stressful, lonely and highly challenging, rather than positive (e.g. Brown 2009). Even if positive experiences translate into positive attitudes for some students, the reverse is just as probable (Wilson 2014). So the aggregate change is likely to be null. Negative experiences, or changes in attitude for the worse, are mentioned very little in the corpus, except as a further problem to be solved (e.g. UKCOSA 2004; Archer et al. 2010b). The *Wider Benefits* report by Mellors-Bourne et al. (2013) is an exception. In the soft power narrative, there are no instances of student voice representing an unhappy experience or a negative attitude to the UK, which suggests a silence (Bacchi 2009, Q4). The policy discourses construct instead a totalising, idealised image of "the international student experience", which does not encompass individual variations of experiences, complex patterns of attachment or negative experiences. This is a problem because it makes negative experiences, criticisms or continued attachment to the home country appear abnormal and illegitimate. Failing to represent variation and negativity in the policy discourses creates a normative vision of what is supposed to happen, in idealised trajectory which may be imposed upon students.

## Changing Political Attitudes

So, available research challenges the policy discourse assumptions that overseas students generally experience the UK positively and that their experiences change their attitudes towards the UK. Research also challenges the presupposition that educational experiences generate changes in political orientation, "imbu(ing) our (British) cultures and values" into international students (Joshi 2016). This is assumed to foster a commitment to "Western liberal democratic values", a concept with a distinct historical lineage (Bacchi 2009, Q3). The dominance of the model wherein students change political attitudes during study abroad appears to derive from Cold War American policies (Kramer 2009; O'Mara 2012). They were politically oriented exchanges, widely believed to be effective in "winning hearts and minds". As Kramer (2009, p. 780–781) puts it, "international students in the United States have been imagined … as potential instruments of U.S. national power, eventually on a global scale". Examples of such programmes include the Fulbright Program, the Peace Corps, and the International Visitors Programme. These programmes positioned themselves as:

> cultivating and exporting an elite class of enlightened scholar- leaders who returned home with a positive view of the United States and a willingness

> to evangelize about the advantages of American culture and democratic governance. (O'Mara 2012, p. 597)

These were seen as one-way exchanges; it was not supposed that American exchange students would return as converted Soviets. Nye (2004, p. 44) argues that education exchanges with the USA "played a tremendous role in the erosion of the Soviet system", materially contributing to American foreign policy goals. This suggests that the UK's international education policy is heavily influenced by a particular narrative derived from US Cold War policies. If Cold War style solutions are being proposed, it suggests an understanding of modern geopolitics informed by similar concerns—an extreme sensitivity to threat and a sense of vulnerability to an ideological opponent. Such a commitment to ideological change is reflected in policy priorities of the early 2000s, as in the wake of 9/11 and the rise of awareness of fundamentalist Islam, a new ideological opponent was created. The influence of Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* book is apparent here, developing an analysis of modern politics as oriented around a dualistic conflict.

It is important to distinguish between political dispositions and identity. Mobility experiences may alter patterns of identification, encouraging students to self-identify with the host country. Political disposition refers to the political and ideological beliefs, related to but not coterminous with identity. Policy discourses assume that if a student identifies with the host country, then they will necessarily share its political and ideological orientations (Bacchi 2009, Q2). This is the logic which underpins the Erasmus programme, which aims to foster a sense of European citizenship. Within European regional mobility, a favourable political predisposition towards the EU as a political institution may be seen, in some cases, to translate into a social identification as a result of mobility experiences (van Mol 2013). However, van Mol (2013) points out that this was more apparent in students from countries more fully embedded in Europe, such as Belgium and Italy, rather than students from Norway and Poland (more distantly and recently affiliated with the EU, respectively). This builds on earlier findings that the effect of European mobility on social identification varies by individual and emerged almost randomly through unpredictable situations, encounters and filtered through the lens of individual perceptions (Papatsiba 2005). The transition from a positive political disposition to a social identification, therefore, varies by region, individual, and country. But the positive political disposition is a prerequisite for participation in regional mobility, rather than a necessary outcome. Therefore, mobility may consolidate existing political views, such as a positive predisposition towards a regional integration like Europe, but the evidence does not indicate that it can turn an ideological opponent into an ally. Furthermore, it is not necessarily legitimate to extrapolate conclusions from regional mobility schemes such as Erasmus to global higher education networks and post-colonial power relations within which international students in the UK are embedded.

If political or identity change is not assured even within regional mobility programmes, it is still less so for global mobility among non EU students. For example, the Marshall Scholars Scheme is a prestigious programme for 40 American students to study in the UK for up to a year. Among Marshall Scholars, political views were little altered by their international experience (Wilson 2014). Similarly, Chinese students' political views and attitudes also remained very stable over the course of their international experience (Wilson 2016). Wilson attributes this in part to the limited contact with home students highlighted above, and points out that many students may be primarily or exclusively engaging with news and media from their home country during their study abroad. Indeed, Hazen and Alberts (2006) found that many of international students actually saw the American political environment as a disadvantage. Similarly, in the light of the Brexit vote and the rise of xenophobia in public political discourse in the UK, it is a very real possibility that students will not see the UK as a safe, liberal political space, nor engage with its politics or its media.

Political change is often associated with a cosmopolitan attitude, an emerging positive internationalist orientation towards being a world citizen. But evidence of international higher education actually generating such a view is limited (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). International alumni in China certainly had more internationalist attitudes than the comparable middle-class group surveyed, but this could be the result of a selection bias; in other words, those who study abroad are likely to already hold cosmopolitan attitudes (Han and Zweig 2010). Gu and Schweisfurth (2015) found that international students thought they had developed their international outlook and cultural awareness significantly while in the UK. In their accounts of regional mobility, Erasmus students also highlighted their enhanced cosmopolitan outlook (Papatsiba 2006b). There is therefore some evidence that study abroad is perceived by students to develop a cosmopolitan outlook. Matthews and Sidhu (2005), however, suggest that internationalised educational spaces do not necessarily lead to the development of a cosmopolitan identification. Discourses of marketisation may limit this development. However, this change in perspective is not necessarily or primarily political in nature, as policy discourses appear to assume. Erasmus students, for example, gave culturally touristic accounts of their experiences and frame this change as personal development rather than relational or political. It is also difficult to discount the possibility that students are recounting the expected narrative, given that these studies rely on self-reports. In any case, personal change cannot be considered equivalent to a substantial shift in national political attitudes. The latter do not necessarily substantially change as a result of international experiences of a small minority. This would appear to call into question the discursive prominence accorded to educational exchanges in policy, particularly by the USA during the Cold War period.

Alumni are assumed to consistently support the UK's foreign policy. But given the limited evidence to support the claim for changes in political views or positive attitudes, this seems unlikely. There is evidence that international alumni will be less likely to adopt policies actively hostile to the UK (Han and Zweig 2010). But policy discourses do not account for what influence students who maintain their political outlook during study abroad may have. In addition, they are silent on how globalisation has impacted the political imaginaries of international students (Bacchi 2009, Q4). Instead of emerging from a Soviet or Communist cocoon of propaganda and ideological indoctrination, modern students are more likely to have grown up in (at least a nominal) democracy, with access to press significantly freer than was the case in the 1960s and 1970s, in countries implicated in a capitalist free-market system. The environment they enter in the UK may be institutionally and culturally different, but is unlikely to represent an ideological chasm. Enacting change in political attitudes would take careful study and agency from the students, and structure from the institution and society. If students choose not to engage with this project, their attitudes are unlikely to change. If institutions do not systematically adopt internal policies to encourage such shifts, political attitudes are unlikely to change radically. These limitations to the project of changing political attitudes are silenced in the policy discourses. Equally, academics should question whether adopting such a project is ethical. Knowing that international students may be isolated, lonely and confused, would it be right to undertake to change their political views? Are they not entitled to their attitudes and to maintain them? Traditionally, universities have been a space for debate and questioning of core beliefs and assumptions, but encouraging critical thought is a different matter from deliberately and systematically seeking to foster a single set of political values and beliefs, which would be the logical extension of the policy discourse.

## Influence of International Alumni

The fourth assumption is that students will be in positions of influence in their home countries: "Today's international students are tomorrow's world leaders" (Johnson 2015). The catchy piece of data that in 2011 27 world leaders were UK graduates (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013) has been widely refracted in subsequent texts and discussions (e.g. The House of Lords 2014). Students are useful to policy actors to develop "trade links, cultural bonds and diplomatic ties" (Johnson 2015). They are represented to be the "next generation of global leaders" or the "new world class" or "the brightest and the best". But this does not mean that all alumni are so influential. Chinese alumni, for example, do hold positions of influence, but they are more represented in the financial sector than in politics (Li 2010). The association of this discourse on "the new world class" with the selectivity implicit in the phrase "the brightest and the best" suggests that it is because students are in some way exceptional that they will achieve such influence. But while it is perhaps accurate to think of international students as the "new elite" (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013, p. 13), this is more a comment on their social status at home than their leadership or academic potential (Tannock 2013). For example, international students are more likely to come from middle or upper classes in China (Xiang and Shen 2009), Hong Kong (Waters 2006) and Kazakhstan (Holloway et al. 2012). This is likely true of other source countries as well. Yet the policy discourses attribute the influence of these alumni to their UK qualifications, rather than their pre-existing social status. But the potential ramifications of exacerbating global inequalities are silent in the policy discourse. They are, however, well established in the academic literature (e.g. Naidoo 2003; Altbach 2004; Unterhalter and Carpentier 2010).

If, as implied, "the new elite" refers to talent, not social status, it would be reasonable to suppose that visa requirements would emphasise talent or academic merit. But the UKBA immigration requirements show that the only limitations on acquiring a student visa, far from being the "best and the brightest", are only the offer of a place at a university and adequate funds (UKBA 2008), and a minimum English language level (Home Office 2011). It is incumbent on universities, as sponsors, to assess academic potential, but many universities apply minimum entry requirements. The absence of more stringent merit-based requirements subverts the presupposition that these students will be either the "best", the "next generation of global leaders" or in positions of influence in their home countries: the requirement is set neither by universities as sponsors nor by immigration authorities as a proxy for the state. A further silence is evident: the voices and perspectives of those who are likely the majority of international students who do not achieve significant positions of power or influence. While they may work in the UK's interests, in smaller ways, they could also, if disappointed by the promise of UK HE to help elevate them to such positions, become resentful or bitter, and counteract to the UK's influence. The policy discourses are silent on their potential impact, and emphasises rather what Wilson (2014) calls the "multiplier effect". This refers to the increased influence assumed to result from positive attitudes held by the powerful, which cascades out through their networks to change in perceptions and attitudes in their home countries (Scott-Smith 2003; Kramer 2009), for which there is little empirical confirmation.

It is possible, however, to construct an alternative representation of international students' roles in the generation of soft power Firstly, they may not be in significant positions of influence and, therefore would be incapable of promoting the UK's soft power, or only doing so in diffuse, nebulous ways. Secondly, the principle of multiplier model may be challenged (Wilson 2014). Even if international students were in positions of influence, this may not generate significant soft power for the UK, given how many sources of influence compete in modern media-rich environments. Finally, if international students' agency is acknowledged, they may choose not to promote the UK's interests, whatever their influence. Given that one of the aims of UK HE is to produce independent learners and critical thinkers, its alumni may be represented as independent, critical agents. Even if they have strong ties of affection and positive experiences, they may decide not to support British policies. A generation of British educated graduates, after all, actively campaigned for independence: Nehru, Ghandi and Nyerere, among others were prominent alumni who explicitly opposed British policies in the interests of their own nations. Students may, as the Lords Select Committee (2014) implies, access information about the UK and its policies, some of which may be critical, from which they may reach their own conclusions. For example, Li (2010) cites Fang Ning's work. An alumnus of the USA and a prominent thinker and writer, Fang is deeply critical of American foreign policy. Other "returnees" offer contrasting views of Chinese and American foreign policy (Li 2010). Influence is not then predictable in international education, and individual agency plays a major role. An alternative understanding, then, would represent international alumni as capable of understanding a country's interests and motivations, and of being able to think independently about the UK's foreign policy objectives before they support them. It would not assume a permanent state of compliance in graduates.

## International Students' Funding

Finally, the soft power benefits to the UK are assumed to be the same for self-funded students as for those on scholarships (Bacchi 2009, Q2). The majority of the evidence listed in support of a body of influential alumni working in the UK's interests is predicated on scholarship holders. Prior to 1979, international students were essentially subsidised in the UK, suggesting that during this period funding students in this manner was intrinsic to international higher education, a responsibility of an imperialist state. This evokes similar rationales from the 1950s Colombo package in Australia, and most of the 50s and 60s era US educational exchanges were funded by the US government. Such literature as does exist in support of the diplomatic benefits felt through international students relies on the evidence from scholarship programmes (Atkinson 2010; Wilson 2014). As the *Wider Benefits* report acknowledges, the inclination to act as ambassador is "perhaps directly related to a perceived obligation to 'pay back' to the UK" (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013, p. 96). This echoes Papatsiba's (2005) findings regarding the Erasmus programme, of students who received regional grants feeling a "moral obligation" to engage with the rise of regional potential. It does not, however, follow that self-funded or privately funded students will evince the same obligations. The *Wider Benefits* report (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013, p. 40) states that it is "(T)he elite Chevening scholars (who) articulate their ambassadorial role most clearly, and many will enter careers in which this mindset may have strong and wide influence". In concluding that study abroad in the UK generates soft power, this report deliberately oversampled scholarship recipients—33 out of 100 interviews conducted, where only approximately 2% of tuition fee income is covered by scholarships. There is also an inherent response bias in such studies, as students are more likely to agree to participate if they have had positive experiences (Wilson 2014). Therefore, it is probable that the conclusions regarding even the scholarship holders' strong feelings of obligation and ties to the UK may not be representative of the international student body as a whole.

The IES draws no distinction between self-funded students and scholarship recipients in claiming that UK alumni have the influence to foster British foreign policy (BIS 2013a, p. 40). Even the attractive statistic referred to above—27 world leaders studied in the UK—needs to be deconstructed: of the 13 listed by name in the IES, 11 graduated before full-cost fees were introduced in 1979. Britain's free international HE, barring living costs, may have generated substantial goodwill and consequently political influence. However, it is tenuous to extrapolate from this assumption that such influence will also be generated in an era of intensive marketisation and high-cost education. Indeed, Walker (2014) points out that the 1979 introduction of full-cost fees paid a heavy public diplomacy cost, in response to which the Chevening scholarship scheme was established. Scholarships were doing the public diplomacy work that free education had previously done; today it seems that fee-paying students are being assumed to make the same contribution. Alternatively, however, the relationship between international students and the UK can be understood as a transaction through a lens of marketisation (Marginson 2006; Walker 2014). In such a transaction, consumers would not necessarily expect or be willing to alter their political views to align with those of the provider. Whether marketisation coexists with internalised ideological and political change on an individual level, or instead undermines it, is a question that the policy discourse does not address.

## The Subjectification of International Students

The effects of this problem representation (Bacchi 2009, Q5) are to create a set of expectations about who international students are and how they will behave, while in the UK and afterwards. In essence, the target international student is interested in the UK's culture and politics as well as education, intends to participate in the academic and local community, building an understanding of "British values" and a knowledge and awareness about life in the UK. They are expected to have a positive experience, to make friendships and "lasting ties" both with staff and students and to develop a political affinity with the UK's interests. Students are expected to return home after they complete their studies, and to exert influence on their return, or at least after they reach the peak of their career. They are expected to stay in touch with the UK and their host institution. These expectations are reproduced and disseminated in policy, and through alumni and institutional networks. Sidhu (2002) comments on similar constructions of typical student behaviour and attitudes in British Council publications. In particular, the efforts of the British Council, in promoting the Education UK brand and marketing UK HE internationally through efforts such as the SHINE international student awards (British Council 2011), help to create a vision of the ideal international student.

Students can be represented differently, however (Bacchi 2009, Q4). Taking into consideration the actual entry requirements of the UKBA and many universities, the silent majority of students are unlikely to become major political or economic actors. They are self-funded rather than on scholarship, have a satisfactory but not transformative experience including some unpleasantness, and are positively predisposed to the UK but not infatuated. While some students may form ties and personal relationships with Britain and British people that last a lifetime, others may form networks primarily with other international students and co-nationals (see also Chap. 7). This suggests that soft power may not operate as clearly, one way or predictably as policy discourse implies. None of this, of course, is an argument against recruiting international students. Rather, it is an argument for understanding that students as people have agency, thought and individual experiences which are likely to moderate their exertion of political influence. To expect otherwise is arguably exploitative. It is not, after all, an obligation of international alumni to support the political interests of the UK. The risk for educators is that we learn from policy discourses to anticipate that students will be sympathetic and open to British political values and principles, establishing monologue rather than dialogue.

## Conclusion

The global diplomacy rationale suggests that international students are of long-term benefit to the UK, because, during their time in the country, they develop positive attitudes and lasting ties which lead them to exert influence in their own country in the interests of the UK. Students are assumed to develop an understanding and appreciation for "British values", the existence or content of which is left unproblematic. They are supposed to become more positive throughout the course of their stay, and yet to return home when their studies conclude. When they return home, they are assumed to occupy positions of influence. Thus, the UK can gain soft power through networks of influence and cultural attraction in a landscape of changing relationships between global powers, using its identity and reputation as a tool for public diplomacy (Anholt, 2007).

This problematisation is based on a Cold War logic prevalent in the USA, which led to funded scholarly exchanges with the USSR, and continued with the Franco-German exchanges and EU-wide programmes such as Erasmus. Such scholarships have been a key tool for the development of soft power and diplomatic influence throughout the colonial and post-colonial periods (Rizvi 2010). However, the current marketplace in international higher education (see Chap. 7) primarily relies on self-funded students, and scholarships are only a minor part of overall funding. Yet the influence exerted by international alumni, discursively established with reference to scholarship holders, is supposed to extend in the same way to self-funded students. Here, the soft power discourse appears to be at odds with the marketisation discourse.

In other ways, the two problematisations complement each other. References in the soft power narrative to making it easier for British trade and businessmen, encouraging lifelong brand loyalty to the UK, and so on, speak to the intersections. But with regards to the representation of international students, there is a tension between the imagined "alumni as ambassador" and "student as an economic resource". There are no guarantees that latter will necessarily develop into the former, particularly in the context of increasingly negative portrayals in migration discourses.

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CHAPTER 6

# Reputation: A Hybrid Educational-Commercial Rationale and Students as Consumers

In order to attract international students, a "reputation for quality" is considered essential. The initial target, often repeated, of the PMI was to "make Britain the first choice for quality" (Blair 1999; DfES 2004). Student choice of study destinations is associated with quality from the outset, and became critical to the "brand footprint" developed to enhance the UK's competitive position (British Council 1999). "Education exports also bring a number of indirect benefits, including strengthening the quality and reputation of the UK education sector", (BIS 2013a, p. 23). This is sustained throughout the policy periods, in the Coalition IES (BIS 2013a) as well as the PMI. While the UK is represented as having a strong tradition of high-quality higher education, this is argued to no longer be adequate to remain competitive in a modern marketplace. To compete effectively, reputation must be managed and enhanced: "Maintaining and enhancing our reputation for high-quality higher education provision is crucial for the UK's image as a destination of choice for international students" (BIS 2011, p. 39). This model of competitive higher education relies on discourses of marketisation, wherein HE is a tradeable service or product, which providers need to "sell" to consumers. International students are seen as a sign of this high-quality reputation.

They are also seen to enhance this reputation. By promoting UK HE through word of mouth, students act as brand ambassadors (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). International students must have positive experiences during their studies, and be satisfied when they leave, so they will contribute to the UK's reputation: "The UK's reputation for international



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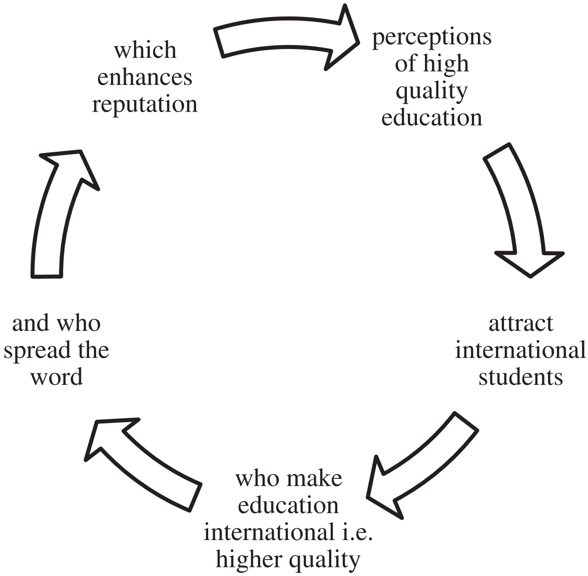


**Fig. 6.1** Cycle of international perceptions of quality

education is defined by what students experience—and what they say to others—this year, each year, in real time" (Archer et al. 2010a, p. 2). Also, students are seen to "strengthen the quality … of the UK education sector" (BIS 2013a, p. 23). International students are seen as vehicles for internationalisation, which is seen as a sign of high-quality education (DTZ 2011): "UK higher education has a strong reputation. Evidence of this comes through the number of international students who choose to study here (BIS 2009, p. 70)". When present in HE classrooms, international students are seen to help make education international to the benefit of all students and home students in particular (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). In turn, this enhances the UK's competitive market position in international higher education. There is a virtuous cycle in the creation of a reputation for quality, as Fig. 6.1 illustrates.

This chapter argues that the reputation rationale for increasing international student recruitment constructs students as resources for quality and as consumers. Their presence enhances UK HE by diversifying the classroom, making it international, and thereby improves the reputation of the sector and country. In this logic, students are a resource for quality. International students evaluate the quality of education through satisfaction with their experience; this creates them as consumers.

## International Students Enhance Education and Reputation

This rationale is a hybrid, in what Amit (2010, p. 9) calls a "self-conscious synergy" of rationales between the commercial, marketised aim of creating reputationto generate business, and the educational or pedagogical rationale which argues that the intrinsic quality of education itself is improved by recruiting international students.

## Internationalising Education

International students are seen to enhance education as vectors of internationalisation within the classroom (Blair 2006; BIS 2013a). Their presence is thought to benefit UK students by exposing them to different viewpoints (DfES 2004), which can "enhance their intellectual experience" (Bone 2008, p. 4) and "broaden(ing) the educational experience of the UK students they study alongside" (BIS 2013a, p. 4). UK students "gain from the window on the world which contact with international students gives them" (Blair 1999). This, it is argued, prepares all students for "careers in the global economy" (DfES 2006). The presence of international students will "inspire and educate home students about the wider world" (Ipsos Mori 2006, p. 4).

Learning experiences are considered better if they are international (British Council 2010, p. 3): "the real value of internationalisation is in the way it enhances the learning experiences of both our international and home students". This view is apparent from the PMI (Blair 1999), PMI2 (DTZ 2011) and the Coalition IES (BIS 2013a). International students contribute to education merely by their presence, and "bring(ing) diversity to the education sector, helping to provide an international dimension that benefits all students" (BIS 2013a, p. 24). Indeed, their presence is one of the metrics used by international rankings (Home Affairs Committee 2011), such that diversity is a sign of quality (BIS 2013b, p. 5). Students with nationalities or countries of residence other than the UK are counted as a measure of diversity (DIUS 2009). Diversity is primarily understood as a direct result of cultural differences based on nationality (Böhm et al. 2004, p. 39).

Typically, international students are described as a single entity, diverse in comparison to and differentiation from UK students (QAA 2012). While the diversity of the international student body itself is often mentioned, it is rarely described or discussed. For example, the IES claims that "(i)nternational students in the UK bring diversity to the education sector, helping to provide an international dimension that benefits all students" (BIS 2013a, p. 24). The "diversity of people" (Hyland et al. 2008) is taken to refer to people who come from different countries and, therefore, contribute "cultural diversity" (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013) or "cultural cross-fertilisation" (Johnson 2015). Institutions are argued to be "enriched" by the "new ideas, attitudes and experiences" (UKBA 2008, p. 4) of diverse student bodies. They are seen as an asset: "International students are potentially a great resource for all students in the class to learn cross-cultural team-working skills, in particular, and institutions are missing a trick if they fail to capitalise on it" (Ipsos Mori 2006, p. 7). Diversity is thus seen to benefit employability, offering the opportunity to develop transnational networks and globally relevant skills (Bevan 2014).

Diversity also constitutes a resource for broader communities, where international students are seen to confer social and cultural benefits on the UK (Home Office 2006; HM Government 2010; BIS 2015). Diversity through increased immigration, in general, is frequently said to "enrich and enhance culture" through the contributions of migrants (Cameron 2013) to "(o)ur literature, our music, our national sporting teams" (Blair 2004). Students, in particular, are seen to contribute to and enhance local communities, enhancing multiculturalism (DfES 2003). Typically, however, these claims are background to the economic and financial claims and they are noticeably less prevalent, though still present, under the Coalition IES than under the PMI.

## A Reputation for Quality

While diversity is seen to intrinsically improve education quality, it is the *perceived* quality of higher education, or reputation, which counts for recruitment (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013).

Perceptions of the UK as having a high-quality education system with good teaching are identified as essential to continue attracting international students (British Council 2000a; DfES 2004; QAA 2012; Clark 2015). In essence, "(t)he popularity of UK HE relies, to a large extent, on the quality of its provision" (QAA 2012, p. 2). This view is present throughout the study. In the launch speech of the PMI, Blair (1999) stated that international students "chose Britain because we offer high quality further and higher education". Similarly the Coalition IES claims that "(o)ur schools, colleges and universities have a long history of excellence and innovation, and a global reputation for quality and rigour" (BIS 2013a, p. 6). However, in the Coalition IES, most of the discussion about quality refers to transnational education, rather than HE within the UK. This excellence is positioned as a marketable strength of the UK, as likely to be in demand from the rest of the world (Clark 2015). The construct of reputation as attraction emerges also in debates on migration. One of the main arguments in favour of tightening visa controls was to maintain perceptions and experiences of quality of UK education (Home Office 2011). The importance of quality education is also essential for employability and graduate careers:

> (s)tudents appear to be attracted by the reputation and quality of courses provided by the UK education system as well as the reputation of specific institutions and a belief that employment and earning prospects will receive a boost. (DTZ 2011, p. 51)

Employability and quality are mutually reinforcing components of reputation: high-quality education is believed to lead to higher employability, and higher rates of employability are construed as indicators of high-quality education (AGCAS 2011; Archer and Cheng 2012; Bevan 2014). The two are frequently cited together: "Four of the world's top six universities are in the UK, and 5 out of the top ten by employability" (Joshi 2016). Both are positioned as necessary for a strong reputation, and this is codified by positions within global rankings.

Policy as attempted to manage reputation. The state leads this effort, apparent in exhortations like "every institution benefits from that collective reputation and it is in all our interests to defend and extend it" (Clark 2015, p. 5). This implies that there is a need for a central coordination of reputation management. For example, the Education UK Counselling Service aimed to "(p)osition the UK as the leading brand in terms of its reputation for quality and relevance with potential students, employers, governments, advisors and influencers" (British Council 2003, p. 23). Similarly, one aim of the PMI2 Programme was to "deal with the *specific perceptual concerns* of students (on the value of UK education), providing thought leadership on the quality of the student experience and employability agenda" (DTZ 2011, p. 52, emphasis mine). This suggests an attempt to influence and, by "leading thought", define students' perceptions of their experiences to enhance reputation. Student experience matters to reputation, formed through alumni's influence (UKCOSA 2004). If the experience of international students is not positive, they are said to be unlikely to positively promote UK higher education upon their return home (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). Alumni are constructed as a valuable "marketing resource" promoting higher education in the UK generally and their institution in particular (British Council 2003) is considered a valuable attribute. The aim is to improve competitiveness by enhancing reputation through the international student experience.

## Measuring Satisfaction with the Learning Experience

Reputation is understood as intrinsically linked to international students' experiences of UK HE, and consequently, their recommendations of the UK to other potential students: "we work hard to make sure they (students from all over the world) enjoy as well as learn" (Hancock 2016, p. 1). Thus an important part of policy discourses is devoted to the analysis of and interventions in student experience (British Council 2000a; Blair 2006; QAA 2012). While "the student experience" is understood to encompass both academic and social experiences, I will focus here on the academic dimensions.

"The learning experience", or "academic experience" is a broader concept than either "learning" or "education". Both learning and education are collapsed into "experience," defined through services, facilities, activities and opportunities (UKCOSA 2004, p. 26). Teaching is particularly emphasised: "(s)tudents' academic experiences depend largely on good teaching" (British Council 2010, p. 21). Library access, facilities and other resources are noted elsewhere to also play a large role in students' learning (Archer et al. 2010b). As evidence of the success of PMI2, it is noted that most UK HEIs "have responded by enhancing the student experience across all dimensions of study and encouraging a culture of continuous improvement among staff" (Archer et al. 2010a, p. 2). UKCISA (2010a, p. 11) claimed that "(u)niversities, colleges and students' unions have indeed offered new services, developed new opportunities and enhanced existing activities to improve the quality of the international student experience". "Learning" is used far more frequently to refer to the actions of institutions, to lifelong learning, distance learning and technology-based learning, and to "teaching and learning", than to describe what international students might learn. Thus, the "quality of education" is redefined to refer to the "quality of the learning experience", to reflect how students feel about their learning, rather than what they learn.

The object of interest is international students' perceptions of their "learning experience", rather than both "learning" per se or a concept of intrinsic pedagogic quality. International students "certainly value the British educational experience and the UK educational brand" (BIS 2013a, p. 5). Here the brand and the experience replace education or learning as the object. The Education UK brand under the PMI intentionally repositioned the concept, "redefining "quality" to include quality of student experience, facilities, welcome and livability, as well as education per se" (British Council 1999, Para 37–38). This emphasises "enjoyable achievement", "a rich life experience and enhanced career prospects, as well as high-quality education" (British Council 2010, p. 6). Privileging experience over intrinsic educational quality is part of developing a "reputation for quality" and justifies the use of student satisfaction as a measure of quality.

"Satisfaction" is frequently employed as a metric for quality and interpreted as evidence of success in international education (British Council 2010; DTZ 2011). For example, "(i)nternational student satisfaction remains high at 81%" (Archer et al. 2010a, p. 1). Similarly, "eight out of 10 international students are satisfied with their overall experience of studying in the UK" (QAA 2012, p. 5). It is made explicit that student satisfaction leads to reputational gains in the higher education marketplace (UKCISA 2011; Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). This relationship is more important during the PMI2 than the PMI and virtually disappears under the Coalition IES. The PMI2 (DIUS 2009) set the goal of making "demonstrable improvements to student satisfaction ratings in the UK". "Demonstrable" here means "quantifiable", so significant investments were made during the PMI in "tracking" and "measuring" international students' satisfaction, primarily through a proprietary index known as the International Student Barometer (British Council 2010). This investment does not appear to have continued in the IES, as there is no mention of such data after 2011. Student satisfaction still appears to be accepted as a proxy for measures of quality, however (BIS 2013a) and many UK institutions still participate in the International Student

Barometer. The construct of student as consumer begins to emerge from the satisfaction-quality discursive intersection.

Students are characterised as customers (BIS 2013a) and consumers (British Council 1999). Their behaviour as consumers is analysed, in terms of demand, closely linked to the underlying model of competition: "The first step in the development of the discrete choice model was to identify the range of choices for the consumer, and in doing so to determine the UK's competitors" (Böhm et al. 2004, p. 20). Notice as well the reduction of individuality to "the" singular consumer. The marketplace is analysed in terms of consumer behaviour and "customer care" (British Council 1999). Students are described as "Customers (who) are becoming demanding and discriminating" (British Council 2003, p. 4). Alumni are considered as future consumers of British goods and services (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). Students as consumers are acted upon: researched and analysed (British Council 2000a), managed (Archer et al. 2010b), communicated with (British Council 2010), offered products (British Council 2003), competed for, offered a service/convenience experience, marketed to, profiled, and protected (BIS 2013b). The explicit positioning of students as consumers is more intense under the PMI than either the PMI2 or the IES. However, the continuity suggests it is normal in policy discourses to refer to students as consumers.

## Meeting Needs and Expectations

In order to satisfy students, it is considered essential to "manage expectations" and meet their "needs". Student satisfaction is acknowledged to be influenced by expectations, particularly of support (QAA 2012). One of the key challenges cited in the initial branding documents is that "customer expectations are becoming increasingly sophisticated" (British Council 2003, p. 8) and that expectations affect perceptions of experience, particularly when they are not met. This is traceable to the *Vision 2020* report, widely cited in the corpus: "students are becoming increasingly demanding and discriminating" (Böhm et al. 2004, p. 37). The report emphasises the importance of responding to these changing expectations to sustain competitiveness. Students are continuously positioned as difficult customers: "international students' expectations have never been higher. And in times of economic uncertainty, delivering on the promise has never been harder" (Archer et al. 2010a, p. 2). Meeting expectations is the institutions' responsibility and the consequence of failure is a loss of reputation for the country as a whole.

There are clear signs of a marketised view of education. Education is presented as a purchase: "for those students paying full fees this is a "luxury purchase" and with this comes the expectations associated with this type of purchase" (British Council 2003, p. 31). Price and fees are explicitly associated with expectations elsewhere: "The new fee regime in the UK will inevitably raise expectations among home students" (Archer et al. 2011, p. 2). Similarly, with regards to research students, Kemp et al. (2008) comment on increasing power and new expectations and institutional guidance highlights the importance of "managing expectations" from an early stage (Archer et al. 2010b; QAA 2012). Managing expectations is an alternative to meeting them and is positioned as a task for central government action through marketing messages.

However, meeting many of these expectations would be resource intensive (DfES 2003; UKCOSA 2004; Archer et al. 2010b; UKCISA 2011). Resources are scarce in the context of reduced funding for HEIs, particularly in England, and, in the latter half of the PMI2, economic recession. The Brand Report concludes that institutions and the sector "have to *make them feel* guided and supported while they are with us and validated when they get back home" (British Council 1999, Para. 52, emphasis mine). The change is in influencing perceptions, not resources or institutional provision. Resources are strategically allocated to key areas of the student experience (Archer et al. 2010a), to manage expectations rather than alter lived experiences. The QAA guidance (2012) emphasises the offering of information rather than provision of particular services, additional staff time or facilities. The two of the PMI2's most heavily promoted pilot projects, Prepare for Success (a website offering study skills information pre-arrival) and the International Student Calculator (a tool to help students to plan their finances), also provide only information (UKCISA 2010a). An alternative response, rather than offering support for the apparent lack of English language, is to increase the minimum standards of English for visas (Home Office 2011; NAO 2012). This obviates the need for language support from the institution: "(r)aising the language bar will act as evidence of a student's fitness to complete the course in English, as well as assisting with their integration with other students and wider society on arrival in the UK", (UKBA 2010, p. 12). Avoiding intensive investment in support and services appears to be an important priority in the light of straightened financial circumstances of the sector. This makes students responsible for their expectations at the pre-arrival stage and minimises institutional obligations.

In addition, international students are frequently represented as having important "needs" (BIS 2011; QAA 2012; BIS 2013b; Home Office 2013a). Therefore, they are vulnerable (DTZ 2011; UKCISA 2013). Overseas students are said to "have different needs to British students" (British Council 1999, Para. 8). These needs are primarily pedagogical: for support with language, employability skills (DTZ 2011), "educational and cultural needs" (QAA 2012, p. 26), research skills (QAA 2009), study skills, group work and discussion (Archer et al. 2010b), and transitioning between learning and teaching styles (UKCISA 2011). They are also constructed as vulnerable with regards to personal safety and security (British Council 2007). It is suggested that institutions should provide support to assist with: shortfalls in personal finance (Miller 2013), difficulty obtaining refunds or deposits subsequent to complaints (UKCISA 2013), information provision (DTZ 2011), and counselling (Bone 2008). This reflects a deficit model of international students, where they framed as incapable of meeting the challenge of UKHE.

Indeed, the Brand Report (British Council 1999) makes a virtue of this characteristic by evoking the "rite of passage", where students experience an ordeal and therefore develop self-knowledge and become adults. Yet documents from more independent organisations acknowledged that students are largely self-sufficient, and frequently do not access support services, preferring to rely on their social networks (UKCOSA 2004; Archer et al. 2010b). This contradicts the dominant representation in the formal policies of a needy student in deficit requiring major support. Nor do policy discourses highlight the Ipsos Mori (2006, p. 11) findings that "(i)n terms of the actual studying there are no more problems reported by international students than UK students".

Meeting the apparent needs and expectations of international students is therefore argued to be an essential part of maintaining and enhancing their "learning experience", which facilitates their contributions to enhancing and internationalising UK HE. The quality of UK HE is thereby materially improved, and students are satisfied. Satisfied students contribute to promoting the UK and thereby enhance its reputation for quality, necessary for success in a competitive marketplace.

## Competing for Quality

The emergence of a focus on quality as a priority occurs in both a domestic and a global context. Domestically, a political will towards quality assurance in higher education emerged from the late 1980s, consolidated by the Further and Higher Education Act in 1992 (Filippakou and Tapper 2007). It was thought necessary to provide external accountability for the quality of teaching and learning, given the need to demonstrate value for money and the introduction of variable fees in 2003 (Shattock 2013). Teaching Quality Assessments were implemented by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in the early 1990s, and this function later moved into the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 1997. There was a general acceptance of a need for quality assurance, although significant contestation from academic staff resulted in an increasingly light touch approach. Quality was at this point defined primarily in procedural terms, requiring institutions to demonstrate their quality assurance processes and policies.

With the increasing marketisation of higher education in the UK, student experience became a key indicator of quality (Sabri 2011), highlighted in the 2011 White Paper *Students at the Heart of the System*. This extended the focus established in 2005 with the introduction of the National Student Survey, part of a package of public information on teaching quality (Williams and Cappucini-Ansfield 2007). Its intent was to systematically measure student satisfaction on a national level, seen as a way to reflect student voice in quality assurance processes. In part, the NSS results were a means to inform student choice, offering prospective students more information about their universities. They also offer the possibility of benchmarking and comparing institutions, both nationally through league tables, and internationally. The importance of satisfaction and quality has been recently emphasised by the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework, which proposes to link funding to the quality of teaching and learning in each institution. It is likely to draw extensively on the NSS as an indicator of quality.

The introduction of the NSS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland reflects a global policy convergence on both quality assurance generally and the adoption of student experience as an indicator of quality (Vidovich 2004). Australia has used a course experience questionnaire nationally since 1993 and the USA has had a national survey of student engagement since the late 1990s, now in use by 1100 colleges and universities (Grebennikov and Shah 2013). Within Europe, quality assurance has been a major topic of discussion since the late 1980s (Rhoades and Sporn 2002). The introduction of the NSS also coincides with the publication of the first *Times Higher Education Supplement* World University Rankings. Quality assurance and the measurement of student experience have developed as normative practices, the former sponsored by international organisations such as the OECD (Vidovich 2004). Luke (2011) suggests that there are moves, motivated by corporate interests, towards developing a universal metric for quality university teaching. However, the proliferation of rankings with multiple purposes and definitions of quality suggests that convergence is still fragmented and partial (Marginson and van der Wende 2007). This does not reduce the power of discourses on quality, rankings and experience.

Global rankings create competitive pressure by enabling students as consumers to make international comparisons on the basis of quality, pitting both institutions and nations against each other on quantified outcomes (Hazelkorn 2011). Quality assurance and enhancement sustain the UK's market position in the face of such competition. An international education is seen to be of higher quality, so the *THES* ranking measures the numbers of international staff and students as an indicator of institutional internationalisation (Marginson and van der Wende 2007). It also measures, through an opinion survey, the reputation of courses and institutions. Rankings are more usually taken as a symbol of reputation (De Wit et al. 2015) but can also be seen to generate prestige. Thus, not only do high rankings attract international students and consequently funding, but their presence also leads to higher rankings, enhancing reputation. This cycle is either virtuous or vicious, depending on the institutional and national status and contributes to entrenched international stratification as resources become concentrated in the most prestigious institutions. British quality policy and the place of the student experience within it are therefore influenced by the global as well as the domestic context.

So the problem of intense competition in global higher education markets and reputation is the solution (Bacchi 2009, Q1). In order to build a reputation for high-quality HE, quality needs to be measured, controlled, widely disseminated and improved by internationalisation. Thus, the "learning experience" is substituted for "education", such that the "quality of education" can be assessed using satisfaction with the learning experience. Because international education is seen to be better, internationally diverse classrooms are read as a sign of quality. Consequently, high international student numbers and satisfaction are taken as indicators of the quality of UK HE. But relying on diversity to provide an internationalised, and, therefore, high quality, education, generates its own problematisation: international students are viewed as unable to engage in such internationalisation, due to their deficit(s).

This account makes a number of assumptions (Bacchi 2009, Q2). Firstly, policy discourses assume the "learning experience" can legitimately be equated with "education" in discussions of quality. Secondly, they suppose that quality can be measured by student satisfaction. Thirdly, diversity is assumed to be equivalent to nationality. Fourthly, policy discourse equates diversity with an intercultural education, which is considered to be necessarily good. Fifthly, when international students do not effectively engage in such intercultural education, their deficit is assumed to be the reason. The fundamental assumption is that knowledge and behaviours can be read from culture, which can be read from national origin.

## Multiple Nationalities: A Sign of Quality

The first key assumption (Q2) is that the physical presence of students who have "other" nationalities constitutes diversity:

> To justify claims that an institution provides a true international education, and to attract top students from around the world, it is necessary to clearly demonstrate a strong physical global footprint; a sizeable body of international students (16 percent of all students in the UK are from abroad) and lecturers … a strongly internationalised course content; and a suitable number of opportunities for exchange and overseas study. (British Council 2012, p. 10)

This conceptualisation of diversity is "trapped within a set of nation-centric assumptions" (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, p. 194). Other dimensions such as religion, social background, wealth, prior education, disability gender or age are rare (Marginson et al. 2010). Religion, for example, is mentioned in conjunction with international students only by students themselves (UKCOSA 2004; Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). Yet these characteristics may be perceived as of central importance to students' own identity.

Where international students are not disaggregated by nationality, they are represented generically, in contrast to home students: "overseas students have different needs to British students" (British Council 1999, Para. 8), and a PMI2 sponsored mentoring project "had given them (staff) a better understanding of cultural differences and issues facing international students" (DTZ 2011, p. 18). This is replicated in students' perceptions (Hyland et al. 2008, p. 21). It establishes a dividing line between an aggregated body of "international" students and "home students". It is also in direct contradiction to the Ipsos Mori (2006) findings mentioned earlier that international students and home students tend to encounter similar difficulties in study. The implication is that because international students are not British, they are likely to experience more difficulties in their studies as a result of cultural differences. Instead, it would be perfectly reasonable to argue that students experience difficulties because they are students and university is hard. But policy discourses entrench the notion of difference based on culture instead.

Central policy documents use the term "diversity" unproblematically as a proxy for "different national culture". In contrast, documents produced by quasi-independent agencies (e.g. Archer et al. 2010b; Miller 2013) employ more nuanced analyses. This contrast highlights the totalising nature of this concept of diversity as national culture. In domestic policy discourses, such as those around widening participation in the *Higher Ambitions* White Paper (BIS 2009), diversity takes on a wider meaning to encompass class, culture, language and family background (e.g. Crozier et al. 2008). Dominant discourse on international students, on the other hand, reduces this to a single dimension: different nationalities. From a governmentality perspective, because this definition is held and replicated through quasi-governmental agencies such as HEFCE and the QAA (2012), it is likely to impact the behaviours of institutions, persuading HEIs to become "diverse" in compliance with this definition (Sidhu 2006; Rose and Miller 2008), rather than alternatives such as applying domestic widening participation discourses to international students. It is this understanding of diversity which underpins the dominant model of intercultural learning.

Diversity is invoked to legitimise and value difference. But the paradoxical effect is to highlight difference, setting home students against international (Marginson et al. 2010). This creates a binary of social identification between the two groups, which reduces the complexity of individual lived experiences (Bacchi 2009, Q5). In this sense, diversity as a discursive object works as a dividing practice (Foucault 1982) as it defines social groups in terms of difference, rather than similarities. By categorising students as either international, counter to "home" which is the presumed "normal", it marginalises or Others them (Asgharzadeh 2008). Collins (2006) argues that the celebration of diversity in New Zealand constructs the social category of the "Asian student", objectifying perceived attributes and fixing a static image of culture. Subtleties of personal history, cultural identification, minority status and so on are not encompassed by the discursive representation of diversity as national origin, particularly as the official definition of "international" for fee-paying purposes relies on residence, not nationality. One possible explanation for this reduction may relate to cultural capital (Waters 2006; Kim 2011). National diversity is cosmopolitan and elite, representing high symbolic cultural capital. It is considered valuable to have an international group, company or classroom because it is associated with money and power. Other forms of diversity—language, age, personal experience or minority cultural status, for example—carry no particular exchange value. There is also an element of exoticism, creating "a pleasurable experience of a category of strangers" (Collins 2006, p. 226). Internationally diverse classrooms can, therefore, be understood as symbolically important to the reputation of UK HE, denoting high-status interactions. But this reduces meanings of diversity to a single dimension of nationality, excluding those students whose individual trajectories and particularities deviate from a mono-cultural norm.

International diversity is a symbol of quality, an ideological interpretation of the concept (Filippakou 2011) understood as the physical presence of foreign bodies in the classroom. The way that quality is understood today is a product of the values created through globalised (and globalising) discourses and the acceptance of globalisation as a natural, positive phenomenon. The myth that the degree of internationalisation in a university necessarily translates into improved quality or standards is widely accepted, because it fits with the dominant ideological framework (Knight 2015b). It is also circular: the belief that internationalisation indicates quality underpins international rankings systems, which enhance reputation. These league tables, such as the *Times Higher Education*, incorporate numbers of international students, implying that their volume indicates high-quality education (Marginson and van der Wende 2007). Rankings both measure reputation, and by their influence, help to enhance it. Ashwin et al. (2015), however, suggest that this value for diversity of students was present in the alternative, rather than the dominant discourse in domestic policy. Nor does this narrative does not seem to be dominant in international student policy. It is notably more prevalent under the New Labour initiatives than the Coalition. Building quality based on reputation based on experience and satisfaction hollows out the concept of quality in education, reducing it to endless hall of mirrors, reflections of reflections deprived of substance.

## Intercultural Learning Experiences

The pedagogic benefits of a multicultural classroom and campus, with its potential to prepare students (UK and international) for a globalised working life, are taken for granted in the corpus. It is assumed that institutions do not need to adapt to accommodate the integration of international students by changing their teaching or academic practices (Marginson et al. 2010). However, this contrasts sharply with research on experiences of integration in the classroom. Several studies have found that rather than automatically "enhancing intellectual experiences", many UK and international students have difficult interactions and tend not to form friendships (Turner 2009; Wu and Hammond 2011). UK students are often resentful of the burden perceived to be placed on them, particularly in assessed group work (Cathcart et al. 2006; Knight 2015b). Yet they acknowledge that international students work harder than home students (HEPI 2015). Friendships formed are often superficially polite "hi-bye" interactions (Sovic 2009) with UK students often unwilling to accommodate international students or invest time in deeper friendships (Barron and Dasli 2010). Turner (2009, p. 245) comments that "HE classrooms remain configured according to implicit local norms that silently privilege home students over others", calling the nature of the presumed multicultural classroom into question. Classrooms, for example, are often still lecture theatres with opportunities for asking questions only in public. Contributions from students are typically verbal and ad hoc, likely to be dominated by home students and by the more confident and articulate among them. Students conscious of their language and unfamiliar with local norms may find these forms of engagement marginalising.

Mutual stereotypes emerge through such limited interactions, with UK students seen by international students as intolerant, confrontational and stuck in their ways (Turner 2009), and international students seen by home students as in language deficit, shy, silent and unprepared for UK HE (Cathcart et al. 2006; Henderson 2009). These representations may be unconsciously reinforced by institutional and staff discourses. Therefore international students tend to form stronger bonds and friendship networks with other international students, sometimes with co-nationals, and often with other international students (Montgomery and McDowell 2009). This "suggests that none of the students are benefiting as much as they could from the potential for learning offered by a heterogeneous student population" (Seymour and Constanti 2002, p. 8). While a "lack of integration" is addressed in the policy documents (British Council 2003; QAA 2012), the implications for intercultural learning are not addressed.

Where deeper integration and intercultural learning have emerged, it was the result of structured, frequent interactions built into curricula, programmes and institutional activities (Caruana and Ploner 2010). The simple presence of international students is unlikely to result in intercultural learning without more active interventions from staff and institutions. As Knight (2015b) suggests, this may be a well-intentioned but ineffective approach to internationalising the campus. Without casting doubt on the merits of intercultural learning, this indicates that an international student body sharing physical spaces is necessary but not sufficient to create such learning opportunities. For academics, this means that if intercultural learning is a goal, classrooms, curricula and campuses need to be carefully organised and considered with this shared objective in mind. It is not enough to put groups of people in the same space for them to learn from each other. Such subtlety of pedagogy is certainly not to be expected from state-level policy, particularly where there is a tradition of institutional autonomy, but it is telling that the challenges and the reality of teaching and learning in intercultural contexts are absent from policy discourses.

In this discourse, students are represented as passive resources for internationalisation. Internationalising the classroom is sometimes represented in both policy discourses and the literature as an empowering, inclusive project which respects the knowledge that (international) students bring to the classroom, moving away from uni-directional, monocultural knowledge transmission (Doherty 2008; Hyland et al. 2008; Caruana and Ploner 2010; Sawir 2013). However, internationalisation in the classroom is generally represented as fundamentally passive, achieved by the simultaneous presence of diverse people, requiring no particular action or agency from them, in contrast to the usually collaborative approach proposed in most literature. Internationalisation is done "to" groups of people, not "with". The first step in establishing a truly inclusive approach to internationalisation in the classroom would be to ask international students what role, if any, they wished to play in it and how it should be achieved.

The idea that passive internationalisation results in intercultural learning constructs an image of international students as teaching assistants or "resource", endowed with a responsibility to communicate their cultural knowledge to UK students. They are in essence "subsidising" internationalisation in the classroom (Doherty 2008), funding teaching directly and intercultural learning indirectly. Yet when the experiences of both UK and international students collide with an idealised narrative, this conflict is silenced. The ethos of inclusion, respect for prior knowledge and active student engagement—for deep pedagogic collaboration—may be experienced by students as exploitative if poorly or superficially implemented in the classroom, and left unproblematic. Alternatively, it could lead to unexpected consequences, such as naturalising cultural attributes in students' perceptions, fixing cultural categories as mutually exclusive (Doherty 2008). Where it is assumed that individuals are repositories of knowledge about their home country or culture, this makes them an embodiment of difference. Nor can it be assumed that all students wish to be educational resources. Some individuals may be delighted to share their knowledge and experience; others may be more reticent and indeed may consider that they have come to the UK to learn, not to teach. Through a clear discussion of pedagogical aims and theories, explaining the value of peer and active learning, students may come to make sense of this approach and to play a willing role. But the policy narrative does not tackle questions of agency, awareness or exploitation in intercultural learning.

## Satisfaction with Learning Experiences

While traditional views of educational quality have emphasised the knowledge and aptitudes acquired by students (Ashwin et al. 2015), these policy discourses represents students' experiences as the primary indicator of quality. Similar conclusions were reached through research on the National Student Survey in the UK (Johnson 2000; Sabri 2013), the National Survey of Student Engagement in the USA (Kuh 2009) and the Course Experience Questionnaire in Australia (Ramsden 1991). In all these countries, national survey instruments are gaining authority, conflating quality of education with experience. Accepting quality of experience as a proxy for quality of education places the student as the principal judge of their own learning (Ramsden 1991, p. 131). Framing students as “best placed” (Sabri 2011) to comment on their learning and the teaching they have experienced leads to such data being used as the primary and sometimes the only indicator of the quality of education. Confounding variables or context which may impact students’ evaluations are left silent. Yet students have been found to be impacted by other unrelated factors, such as age, gender and attractiveness of lecturers, as well as grades received (Zabaleta 2007). Although they may be best placed to report on their experience, students are not impartial or expert observers of their learning and teaching.

This suggests that it is possible to think differently about what students are actually evaluating with regard to their perceptions of teaching and by extension to their learning experiences. In identifying students as the main arbiter of quality, other potential sources of knowledge on learning are silenced: namely lecturers, institutions, and experts in the curriculum. There is, therefore, the potential for education to become focused on delivering an enjoyable experience in preference to a challenging or demanding education (Furedi 2012), the quality of which is determined by experts. This problematisation is replicated when institutions, QUANGOs and league tables accept student satisfaction metrics as legitimate and primary indicators of quality. I do not intend here to invalidate student feedback or input on courses and programmes. On the contrary, students are valuable partners for curriculum design, particularly in the context of critical pedagogy (Buckley 2014). It is their satisfaction alone that is not an accurate, comprehensive indicator of pedagogic quality.

Accepting experience as a proxy for quality enables its measurement through satisfaction, rationalising the domain of international higher education and making it susceptible to evaluation (Rose and Miller 2008). Quantifying the quality of experience also permits the ready dissemination of key numbers as signs of quality, crucial for building the international brand. The reproduction of such statistics suggests they are key discursive objects, generating intense media and social interest (Sabri 2013). These representations focus the public gaze on certain aspects of the HE experience (those that are measured) and not others

(Johnson 2010). What is being measured is not the intrinsic quality of these dimensions (for instance, measures of the resources provided in the library), but rather students' satisfaction with them. The subjectivity of this measure is left unproblematic in the policy discourse because the ultimate aim is the improvement of reputation, the perceived quality of experience. While the quantification of student satisfaction may appear discursively hegemonic, there are criticisms in the literature on the domestic uses of student satisfaction surveys, which also apply to international student satisfaction (Johnson 2000; Sabri 2011, 2013). In addition, alternative approaches to understand the interaction between student feedback and academic quality are possible. These approaches would be less susceptible to deployment for reputational advantage.

How the quantification of satisfaction as an indicator of quality has come about may be understood through a lens of governmentality. An apparent consent on the validity of measuring student satisfaction has been manufactured (Fairclough 1989), sponsored by the state. Because perceptions of quality generate status and income for the sector and the nation, there are significant vested interests at work in the measurement of satisfaction as an indicator of quality, which are embedded in the policy discourses. The International Student Barometer, for example, was funded centrally through the PMI, demonstrating that, although the implementation was done at a distance (i.e. carried out through a non-governmental body), the weight of government was behind the principle. Institutions who chose to opt out would therefore likely suffer reputational damage through lack of comparison in international league tables. This is consistent with a neoliberal, managerialist governmentality (Rose and Miller 2008) which increases state power and centralisation through a push towards public accountability through quality assurance (Shattock 2006; Filippakou 2011). This is likely to have variable effects across the sector, depending on the institutions' capital. While it is argued to be important for the UK HE system to be transparent in reporting international student satisfaction ratings, the implications of this transparency for the autonomy of the sector are not discussed. So through discursively redefining quality as satisfaction, and introducing key metrics associated with resource allocation which prioritise student satisfaction, institutions are encouraged to conform to policy representations of quality.

## Cultural Deficit

International students are expected to be fluent speakers of English, confident participants in class discussions, independent learners, critical thinkers, astute users of information technology, socially oriented and integrated, hard-working and intrinsically motivated by their subject. Goode (2007, p. 592) suggests that "students who do not "fit" this profile are seen as in deficit. While institutions are supposed to offer support for these needs (QAA 2012), the deficit discourse permits dissatisfied students to be marginalised, transferring responsibility to the international student (Marginson et al. 2010).

Underpinning discussions of students' various academic deficits is an unspoken assumption of "cultural deficit". This becomes apparent when national and regional origins are used to explain aspects of international students' experiences. This includes: information seeking behaviours (Ipsos Mori 2006), study habits (British Council 1999), involvement with social activities (Archer et al. 2010b), motivation for studies (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013), whether they work or not during their course (Archer and Cheng 2012) and their choice of subjects (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). By implication, it is the students' nationality that predicts different "needs", behaviours and attitudes. This model presents students as "needy" (Henderson 2009, p. 406). They become subject to a negative moral discourse surrounding "dependency", via infantilising them as immature learners, rather than as agentic students acting rationally". This resonates with Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) description of the therapeutisation of higher education, creating the student as a vulnerable patient in need of emotional aid to meet the rigours of study, incapable of coping (Panton 2004, cited in Bartram and Bailey 2010). Despite criticisms (Goode 2007; Ippolito 2007; Kingston and Forland 2008; Coate 2009; Montgomery 2010), this deficit model is still widely replicated in institutional discourses.

The deficit model of international students reveals what Bullen and Kenway (2003) term "culturalism": the privileging of culture as a primary explanatory tool, a culturally essentialist presumption of homogeneity within cultural groups (Marginson et al. 2010; Rizvi and Lingard 2010). In the policy discourses, cultural difference explains knowledges, perceptions and behaviours, and ultimately to underpin deficit representations of students. Montgomery and McDowell (2009) suggest that students are actually seen to undertake higher education in the UK to remedy a cultural deficit. Suggesting that international students, because they are not British, are necessarily in deficit (Bullen and Kenway 2003; Devos 2003) is neo-imperialist, or not to say implicitly racist. This involves silencing critical student voices when they highlight power imbalances in the classroom and post-colonial relationships (Welikala and Watkins 2008), which do not appear at all in the policy texts. There is also silence on institutional or cultural marginalisation of international students (Marginson et al. 2010).

Effectively, the deficit model makes individual students responsible for the quality of their experience (Sidhu 2006), implying that dissatisfaction is the result of their cultural, linguistic or academic shortcomings. This is apparent in associations made between lower satisfaction scores and regional origin. These links are attributed to "unrealistic expectations" and associated with "differences in educational culture between students' own country and the UK" (UKCOSA 2004, p. 27). Similarly, learning deficits are associated with national cultures, often with reference to Confucian cultures (Sidhu and Dall'Alba 2012). In the academic literature, learning styles or behaviours, such as memorisation are attributed to culture (Kingston and Forland 2008, p. 207). By extension, policy discourses attribute low satisfaction to learning deficits based on region of origin. This is a form of categorisation, where a group identity, such as "East Asian students" is constructed, understood as meaningful, and expectations and behaviours are read onto the group. It implies that culture determines learning approaches, and that those learning approaches valued or prevalent in British education are superior. Yet Welikala and Watkins (2008) established that family, individual and social group factors also contributed to differences between students' approaches to learning, which were not easily explained by culture. This undermines the validity of the deficit model.

The problematisation of the category "different" on the basis of their culture discursively marginalises international students in policy and may impact institutional and even classroom practices when its assumptions are reproduced in research. The deficit model also subjectifies students by, as Grace Karram (2013) found in the Canadian context, constructing students as passive recipients of institutional help, although the intent is usually to help students who are seen to be in difficulty or distress (Ippolito 2007). This has the potential to create a deficit identity for international students, where they are institutionally identified as a "problem category". This can create a self-fulfiling prophecy where students "live down" and internalise the discursive representations held by staff (Bullen and Kenway 2003; Goode 2007), and in this case, by policy makers. An alternative is, as Marginsonet al. (2010) suggest, for institutions to strengthen informal security for students rather than seeking to fill social and emotional needs, or blaming students for having such needs.

## Students as Consumers

Students are also constructed as consumers (Marginson et al. 2010). The equation of satisfaction with experience as a proxy for quality is premised on a marketised model of higher education, facilitated by a lack of consensus on an alternative vision of quality in higher education (Ashwin et al. 2015). In the marketisation model, the student experience is connected to the idea of a rationalistic, free consumer (Sabri 2011), who needs to be satisfied to generate "brand loyalty" and reputational advantage for the institution and the sector.

Satisfaction and its measurement have been linked to the marketisation of international higher education,  which has allowed international students to be represented as customers, and consumers (British Council 1999; Home Affairs Committee 2009; BIS 2013b). As Williams (2012) observes, the terms are used in the policy discourse interchangeably, although there is a technical distinction on the premise that consumers use and discard a product, whereas customers purchase a product or service. Therefore, the customerarguably has more power than the consumer, as they create a longer lasting relationship with the provider. In the policy discourses, however, there is little evidence of such a distinction, and students are described as both customers and consumers interchangeably.

Some argue that the position of consumer is an empowering one for students, offering them a set of rights and bargaining power (Williams 2012), such that student satisfaction surveys are seen to offer a voice which institutions must listen to in order to succeed. It is also assumed to create better quality of services, although this is not always the case (Marginson et al. 2010). But the main actor in this discourse is typically the institution or the UK as a nation state (Fairclough 1989), such that students are rarely depicted as agents (Mulderrig 2003), except in consumer choices and decisions. This concept of the student as consumer divorces them from their social or class background (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003), silencing how different life histories may influence students' experiences, behaviours and decisions on higher education, international as well as home (e.g. Crozier et al. 2008; Xiang and Shen 2009). A degree of equality is thus assumed between all students (Tannock 2013). These silences may encourage a passive learner identity and alter learning (Naidoo et al. 2011).

The emphasis on satisfaction rests on a conflation between a moral imperative (that it is right to listen to students and respond to their views) with an epistemic conviction (that students are privileged knowers) (Moore and Muller 1999). Moore and Muller argue that "voice discourse" causes researchers to suggest that the voices of the discursively oppressed are the only authentic forms of knowledge. Extending this argument to the "student voice" implies that student experience discourses position students as "oppressed" within the higher education system, and that satisfaction surveys are therefore empowering in that they offer a voice (Buckley 2014). But National Student Surveys produce a narrow representation of student voice primarily in terms of satisfaction and experience, constraining possible statements (Sabri 2013). Restricting student voice in higher education in this way is a serious concern, because, as Giroux (2002, p. 450) suggests, it is a public space where students can learn "the ideals of engaged citizenship", gaining a critical social awareness about the world, the state and their place in it. In the absence of such conversations, the radical potential of international higher education is lost.

By valuing student voice to the extent that they can recommend or voice negative views of a country and a university, a subject position is discursively created, which is primarily defined by consumer-like relations, actions, and rights. This encourages students to exert consumer rights, such as complaints, rather than citizen or universal rights, like protests or lobbying (Marginson et al. 2010; Robertson 2011). When students exert consumer rights, they exercise agency within the confines established by marketisation discourses. However, Marginson et al. (2010) suggest that international students in Australia are largely unaware of their rights as consumers and so are unlikely to exert them. "Consumer" is also often a passive role, where the institution takes the main action, as described above where students can be "marketed to" and "protected" (Askehave 2007; Naidoo et al. 2011). Similarly, it encourages students to see an education, or rather the sign thereof, a degree, as something to "have" rather than something to "be" or become (Molesworth et al. 2009), such that they focus on the acquisition, on meeting the threshold requirements, rather than on the possibilities for becoming. Yet the role of a consumer can also be a more active, engaged model where the consumer is a co-creator and active agent in learning (Naidoo et al. 2011), so there are alternative models. Even so, the role of consumer is a limited one, where rights are conferred on the basis of economic power only. A more powerful alternative model is articulated by Marginson et al. (2010) who argue for a rights-based approach to students as self-determining with agency, entitled to the full range of freedoms on the basis of universal rights.

Another alternative representation of students' involvement in the creation of representation can be found in the concept of imaginative geography (Collins et al. 2014). This idea suggests that the way a particular place and space is perceived is socially constructed, influenced by media, literature, social media, and advertising (Beech 2014). Thus international students are active agents in the creation of the imaginative geographies of the UK, engaged in storytelling around their experiences and meaning-making around the branding they see and the other stories they hear. These multifaceted, diverse constructions draw on other connections and discourses, such as post-colonial narratives (Beech 2014), but extend beyond the narrow market-based concept of "reputation" into the imagined identity of a nation as experienced by educational visitors. It relates closely to students' self-formation, as their "desire to become" through educational mobility is narrated through their accounts of place (Collins et al. 2014). Attempts to control reputation through international students could therefore be seen as unethical, as attempting to define the limits to their imaginative geographies limits as a consequence the possibilities for personal identity creation. Implicit in this representation is the presumption that engagement in international education must be to the benefit of the UK to accept the presence of international students. Yet under international agreements such as the GATS (Rizvi and Lingard 2010), the UK cannot prevent global student mobility entirely, so the problem can be thought about differently: as laudatory rhetoric in a post hoc justification.

## Conclusion

Students are discursively represented as consumers or customers in a fundamentally passive relationship with institutions. As such, they have the power to evaluate the quality of their learning experience, which is substituted for education quality. Therefore, their satisfaction determines how UK HE is perceived internationally, creating a reputation for quality. Students are also seen as resources for internationalisation, again a passive role in that their embodied national diversity does the work of generating intercultural learning for UK students. In this sense, international students create, evaluate and promote quality international higher education. Where this does not occur, international students are held to be in cultural deficit: their difference is at once valued for what it signifies (a cosmopolitan globalism), and de-legitimised when it results in different attitudes or negativity. In valuing their difference as diversity, a dividing practice is established between international and home students, as evident in problematic classroom interactions and mutual stereotypes. By seeking to explain the reasons behind student satisfaction, and validating its use as an indicator of quality, the narrative has the discursive effect of disempowering critical international student voices in a neo-colonial assignation of difference, constructing the "Other", necessarily in deficit.

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CHAPTER 7

# Income: An Economic Rationale and International Students as Economic Contributors

The most dominant rationale in the policy discourse is the financial incentive to recruit international students. At its heart is the premise that the UK needs more money and that direct international recruitment is an appropriate, effective means of obtaining it. The 2011 Budget (HM Treasury and DBIS 2011, p. 40) argues that "Higher education is central to economic growth". The direct income gained through tuition fees and related payments (Conlon et al. 2011), as well as the economic growth that results from the labour market value of skilled graduates, are claimed as essential functions of international higher education. From the outset of the PMI, the economic gains were cited as a major factor in attracting international students: "British exports of education and training are worth some eight billion pounds a year. Money that feeds into our institutions and helps our goal to open up opportunities for more people to study" (Blair 1999). This emphasis has intensified throughout the period, and David Willetts' foreword to the Coalition International Education Strategy echoes the same logic: "Overseas students who come to Britain to study make a huge contribution to our economy" (BIS 2013a, p. 3). He cites tuition fees, other payments and the boost to local economies as well as the national economy as a consequence of international students' presence in the UK. The focus gradually turns away from the physical presence of international students and embraces virtual engagement in international education at a distance. The conceptualisation of education exports in the Coalition IES is much broader than direct recruitment to UK HEIs, including transnational education,



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educational publishing and equipment, educational technology, English language schools and research (BIS 2013a).

The emphasis on income gained through education exports in general, and international students' presence in the UK in particular, relies on a number of problematisations at work in the discourse of marketisation in higher education in policy on international students. The first section highlights the key concepts which emerged from the qualitative analysis. Essentially, the income to be gained from international students' tuition fees, other expenditures, and labour market contributions are argued to give the UK a competitive advantage in the international higher education marketplace, thus maintaining its global status. The second section presents the WPR analysis, which argues that the underlying problem is one of competition, where the UK is vulnerable to losing market share. The core assumptions in this representation of the problem are that international higher education is a marketplace, universities are businesses, education is a commodity, and growth is a unilateral benefit. This engenders a subject representation of international students as ways to earn money, as vectors of income, rather than individuals.

## Income Generation and Competitive Advantage

International higher education, and particularly the direct recruitment of overseas students to UK HEIs, is constructed as a global business (DfES 2003), with economic benefits to the UK (BIS 2009). It is represented as a source of external income (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013) and therefore "a major contributor to national wealth and economic development" (British Council 2012b, p. 3). It is also described as a sector (Böhm et al. 2004), and an industry (BIS 2013b): "(e)ducation is a tradable sector with imports and exports like any other tradable sector, such as manufacturing" (Conlon et al. 2011, p. 12). International education is frequently described as a "market" (British Council 1999; DfES 2004; British Council 2010; British Council 2012). The presence of international students in the UK is presented in terms of supply and demand (BIS 2013a and d), which can be influenced by national policies. The rhetorical use of international student numbers is prevalent in policy discourses, and is closely linked with the market model (Blair 1999; DfES 2006; Cameron 2011a). Almost without exception, all the documents highlight the numbers of international students as a sign of success. For example, "In 2002/2003, 174,575 international students studied in UK higher education institutions", (DfES 2004, p. 17), "an extra 93,000 (international students) in HE" were recruited (DIUS 2009), and "In 2011/2012, there were 435,000 international students studying at 163 publicly funded higher education institutions" (BIS 2013a, p. 14). Further, student numbers are discussed as targets. For example, the PMI set a target "to achieve a higher education market share of 25% by 2005 (50,000 additional students)" (Blair 1999). This is a small sample of the ways in which international students are quantified in policy discourses. These representations of students through numbers, percentages and references to the market, rather than using case studies or named individuals, reduces individuals to statistics. It indicates how far discourses of marketisation have penetrated into international higher education policy.

### *Income*

The size of the market in international higher education is said to have "grown sharply in recent years" (BIS 2013a), often quantified in terms of income potential (BIS 2013b): for example, "(I)n 2008/09, the size of the global market for higher education was £3.34 million" (Conlon et al. 2011, p. 77). Universities are claimed to be "earning more than £9 billion in foreign exchange" (Clark 2015). A growth rate of 7% is predicted between 2012 and 2017 in the global education market (BIS 2013b). This sustained growth is unusually high in comparison to other sectors (Böhm et al. 2004), and is, therefore, an important target for government intervention. These data are typically presented to set out the potential profits the UK could amass (DfES 2003; BIS 2013b). The UK's "performance" in terms of "market share" is then evaluated (British Council 2003).

The economic benefits derived from increased income constitute the main rationale for increasing the UK's "market share" (Blair 2004; Home Office 2002; DfES 2003; DTZ 2011; BIS, 2013a). Financial benefits are argued to accrue to institutions from tuition fee income (e.g. British Council 2003) and to the wider UK economy through spending on other "goods and services" (e.g. Conlon et al. 2011) and job creation (e.g. Johnson 2015). Through their financial contribution, international students are seen to stimulate demand for courses where domestic numbers are low, sustaining provision in a wider range of courses (Johnson

2015). This funds research and teaching in HEIs (British Council 2003) and is thus sometimes presented as ultimately benefiting UK students through intercultural learning.

HEIs are observed to be increasingly dependent on this income (Home Affairs Committee 2009). Such dependence could be construed as a source of concern, but Blair (2006) and other central policy actors (e.g. British Council 2003; BIS (2013a) instead represent this as a contribution from the sector to the country. Yet the inherent risk of a commercial approach is acknowledged: “Although international students represent an important source of income for universities, the international activities of our higher education institutions cannot be primarily motivated by commercial self-interest, or they will wither” (BIS 2009, p. 89). This perspective is an unusual one in the corpus, although concerns are expressed regarding the perceived dependence on particular “markets”; having too many students from one country on one course (British Council 2003). Hence, the PMI2 emphasised the importance of diversifying recruitment, aiming to double the number of main source countries of students to the UK each year (DIUS 2009). This goal was not achieved (DTZ 2011), and the sector remains reliant on a few source countries, particularly China (UUK 2014).

Income generated through overseas students is quantified: “overseas students alone are worth £5 billion a year” (The Labour Party 2005, p. 25); and “international students bring in around £8 billion a year to the UK” (Home Affairs Committee 2009, p. 10). Because this income is derived from foreign currency sources, it is treated as an export (Conlon et al. 2011). The importance of the income students bring is enforced by the requirement to demonstrate that they have “sufficient funds” available to obtain their visa (Home Office 2012). Students needed to have enough money to pay their fees and support them for the first year, initially set at £9600 (UKBA 2008). After the reforms of 2010–2011, the requirements for proof of this funding became more stringent, necessitating cash funds in the students’ own bank account for more than 30 days, or proof of relationship to the account holder, restricting acceptable banks, and so on (Home Office 2013a). The rigidity of these requirements has been the subject of much criticism from quasi-independent organisations (e.g. UKCISA 2010) and Parliament (e.g. Home Affairs Committee 2011), but highlights the importance of students’ money for policy makers. In contrast, the Home Office does not itself verify academic status or prior qualifications, leaving this up to institutions. This is a clear indication of priorities in defining the legitimacy of students as immigrants, which is predicated on their financials, rather than their academic status.

### *Filling Gaps in the Labour Market*

In addition to direct revenue, international graduates are framed as generating income through their participation in the labour market, filling "skills gaps" (Roche 2000; Blair 2006; Brown 2009; Cameron 2011). This rationale occurs throughout the policy periods, but especially under Labour Governments, where migration policy is placed in the service of the UK's knowledge economy and industry (Home Affairs Committee 2011). In this logic, certain professions are framed as having "labour shortages", unable to recruit adequate numbers of workers domestically, such as the IT and health care sectors (Roche 2000). Recruiting highly skilled migrants, and, in particular, international students with UK HE qualifications is seen to solve this dilemma (MAC 2010). Immigration to fill a skills gap is not a preferred option; instead, it is considered a last resort when those skills are not available domestically (Brown 2010; May 2010b). As described in Chap. 3, the Points-Based System for migration management includes international students under Tier 4, who could at first easily seek graduate employment in the UK after studying (Home Office 2006). This was a key factor in maintaining the attractiveness of the UK under the PMI and PMI2.

While continuing to acknowledge the contributions of migrants and the necessity of filling skills gaps, later discourses emphasise greater selectivity in recruiting migrants and students, and tightly restricting those certain students permitted to work as graduates (May 2010b; Cameron 2011). With the aim of maximising the economic and cultural benefits to the UK, particular migrants are sought: "those whose ideas and innovation can help drive our growth and productivity" (UKBA 2011, p. 17). Specifically, this means that "*entrepreneurs* will be welcome; *scientists* will be welcome; *wealth creators* will be welcome" (May 2010b, emphasis mine). The most desirable migrants are therefore business people and those in high (economic) value occupations where the returns to the UK economy will be quick and easily measurable. For example, the Postgraduates for International Business programme established by UKTI places international students into internships in local business in order to enhance their export potential (UKTI 2014). This implies that international students' labour is valued and legitimised when it leads to export income. In contrast, the Immigration Skills Charge to be introduced in 2017 will levy businesses which employ migrants in skilled areas by £1000 per employee by year, with the aim of upskilling British workers (Home Office 2016). This policy shift demonstrates the increasing hostility towards skilled migration, encompassing international graduates. The UK's economic interests with regards to domestic unemployment rates, as well as overall growth, remain central, but different policy tools and logics are used.

### *The International Higher Education Marketplace*

The economic model at work in this rationale frames international higher education as a marketplace. This marketplace is described as rapidly evolving (British Council 1999), experiencing "volatility" (British Council 2000, p. 9), "dynamic" (British Council 2003, p. 6), and experiencing "major changes". The documents describe a "series of social, cultural and demographic changes throughout the major target markets" (British Council 2000, p. 9). In particular, these changes are identified as "growing customer expectations, intensifying competitor activity, technological advancements, enhanced mobility, ageing populations, growth in knowledge-based economies and changing government attitudes" (British Council 2003, p. 7). Mellors-Bourne, et al. (2013, p. 19) adds "changing patterns of demand". The overall market is considered to be expanding in terms of the number of students who would consider international education (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). These changes in part led to a shift in focus away from direct student recruitment towards strategic collaboration (British Council 2010), and transnational education (BIS 2013a, b). This reflects an emphasis on the diversification of educational income sources (DTZ 2011). "Traditional student recruitment" is argued to no longer determine who succeeds in the global education market (British Council 2010, p. 3). Indeed, the IES sets out the Coalition Government's aim as being to "effectively promote excellence *beyond attracting international students* via the Education UK recruitment service to cover all education exports: transnational education, education products and services and work with other countries to develop their own education infrastructure" (BIS 2013a, p. 58, emphasis mine). This demonstrates the shift in emphasis: while direct recruitment will "continue to be important to UK education exports" (BIS 2013a,

p. 14), the majority of the strategy is devoted to transnational education. This suggests that transnational education is preferable for political reasons, namely the increasingly divisive debate on migration (see Chap. 8). Transnational education allows the UK to acquire the same income from education exports, without the inconvenience of physical bodies being present within the borders of the nation.

Within the market, competition is an important theme (DfES 2003; BIS 2009; BIS 2013a). The market is argued to be increasingly competitive (British Council 2000a), due to more countries becoming involved, and established destination countries becoming more strategic and more aggressive (Böhm et al. 2004; QAA 2012). Countries listed include "China, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Australia, France, Japan, Italy, Canada and South Africa" (British Council 2010, p. 5) as having increased their "market share" i.e. attracted more international students. So while this discourse presents demand for international higher education as growing, so is supply and competition.

In representing international higher education as a marketplace, education is at times represented as a product (British Council 2003; BIS, 2013d). For example, the Brand Report (British Council 1999, para. 57) describes educational institutions as "product providers", and the IES (BIS 2013a, p. 61) emphasises the importance of students being sure that "they are getting a quality product and a recognised qualification". In the PMI, the "product" typically refers to particular programmes or courses (British Council 2000a). In the IES, it appears to incorporate the experience as well as the course, consistent with the latter phase of the PMI2.

In order to measure marketplace success, students are represented as numbers and targets. High international student numbers are represented as indicators of the UK's competitive success. The PMI and PMI2 targets for recruitment are frequently mentioned (Blair 1999; DfES 2006) and evaluated (DIUS 2009; DTZ 2011). These targets are widely represented as successfully met: "we have not only reached this target but beaten it by an extra 43,000 students" (Blair 2006); "the targets were exceeded ahead of schedule, with an extra 93,000 (students) in HE" (DfES 2006); and "(the PMI) was very successful, exceeding its 75,000 student recruitment target by 43,000 students" (British Council 2010, p. 6). A more measured evaluation in the DTZ final report (2011, p. 4) states that "the PMI2 has met some of its targets", identifying the increased diversity of recruitment as a particular area which was not met.

Similar ambitions are also expressed in the IES, although in more cautious terms: "(w)e *consider it is realistic* for the number of international students in higher education in the UK to grow by 15–20% over the next 5 years" (BIS 2013a, p. 35, emphasis mine). The target is more explicitly set in the press release than in the strategy itself: "(i)t (the IES) aims to secure an extra £3 billion worth of contracts for the UK's education providers overseas, and attract almost 90,000 extra overseas university students by 2018" (BIS 2013c). This discrepancy suggests that government does not wish to position itself as responsible for actively promoting direct recruitment of international higher education students. This contrasts with the discourse prevalent during the PMI, where there is a suggestion of possession over students: *"we want to have* 25% of the global market share of Higher Education students" (Blair 1999).

### *Maintaining the UK's Position*

Policy discourses therefore argue that the UK must maintain its market position, as indicated by student numbers, against the competition, by becoming more professional in its education marketing (British Council 1999), define the unique selling points of a British education (British Council 2003), and measure the perceptions of international students (DTZ 2011). The PMI targets were to increase the "market share" of higher education students held by the UK (Blair 1999). The UK is argued to have a strong position within the world market, (British Council 2003), "second only to the USA" (DfES 2004, p. 20) and to be a "world leader in the recruitment of international students" (Blair 2006). Similarly, the IES (BIS 2013a, p. 26) argues that "(t)he UK has a number of truly international educational brands, many of them with a long tradition behind them". The shift to describing education as "brands" again evidences the dominance of marketised discourses. This is quantified as "a market share of 13% in 2011" (BIS 2013b, p. 6). The British Council (2000a) and Blair (1999) attribute this position to a "reputation for quality". However, increasing competition is presented as threatening this position (British Council 2000a; Bone 2008; Kemp et al. 2008), requiring a "different approach" (British Council 2010, p. 16) to recruitment (through partnerships and transnational education). As the IES has it, "the UK needs to move quickly to secure a world leading position" (BIS 2013a, p. 49). Without such changes, the BIS (2011, p. 78) projects that market share would "decrease… to 8.8% in 2020".

The national brand (see Lomer et al. 2016), and education marketing more generally, are considered to be key ways to improve the UK's position (Blair 1999; DfES 2004; Cameron 2011; BIS 2013a). They are intended "to create the demand from international students that will satisfy member institution needs" (British Council 2000a, p. 16). This statement is explicit: the demand is not merely being met by education providers; rather, it is being generated through marketing in the service of institutions. Education is, in this positioning, merely another attractiveness factor for the UK, like its tourist attractions, and as such may be expected to behave like other industrial sectors.

## The Problem of Money

Unlike in other rationales, the policy discourses explicitly document challenges in this area (Bacchi 2009, Q1), which change over time. The PMI highlighted the lack of professionalism in higher education marketing (British Council 1999). By 2006, the challenges had become more focused on consolidating the national brand through a renewed focus on student experience and employability, and diversification (DfES 2006). From 2009, in the wake of the bogus college scandal, the challenges cited were primarily to strengthen the immigration regulations in the interests of sustaining reputation for competitive advantage (May 2010a, b). The IES published in 2013 refocuses attention on the marketisation of the sector, especially "a lack of coordination", different forms of competition and a structure not amenable to growth (BIS 2013a, b). There is palpable continuity underlying these shifts: the UK is always argued to be in a relatively strong position, but nevertheless vulnerable for different reasons, and the answers are typically found in marketised responses. This creates a role for policy interventions to provide the right marketised responses, legitimising government activity.

These challenges reveal a clear problematisation (Bacchi 2009). At their heart, they are implicitly addressed towards the aim of increasing the UK's income. This presumes a need for more money, both for higher education and the country as a whole. Over this period, central funding for HEIs was being significantly reduced, particularly in England, (Sastry 2006) having fallen by 10% from 2000–2011 (Universities UK 2013). Policy discourses do not mention this unsurprisingly. It may, therefore, be inferred that this "export income" is a replacement for central government funding, which may explain the lack of concern regarding the sector's dependence on global revenue streams. In addition, it is suggested that international students may stay on as graduates to fill particular skills gaps in the labour market. This also contributes to the national economy. Nationally, while positive economic conditions ruled from 1999–2007, Buller and James (2012) argue that the New Labour government had to create a sense of economic competence, which they did by explicitly implementing conservative monetary policies by increasing the UK's income and reducing state expenditure. Since 2007, the economic crisis has dominated political discourses, making revenue gain still more central as a rationale (HM Treasury and BIS 2011).

The economic role played by higher education in generating national income took on an increasing importance in a climate of austerity after the 2008 financial crisis. The over-confidence of New Labour's predicted "end to boom and bust" ended spectacularly in the 2008 financial crisis, triggered by subprime lending in the US market and spreading rapidly to the rest of the world (Kharas 2010). The ensuing credit crunch led to reduced economic activity globally, threatening the UK's market position and funding for higher education (Robertson 2010). Although state funding had increased from 2002–2010, this was seen as insufficient to match student demand (Shattock 2013) and maintain global market position. Full-cost fees for home students of £9000 were introduced in 2012 as a result of the 2010 Browne review (Shattock 2013). The decision was taken by the Conservative-led Coalition, although it is likely that a New Labour administration would have adopted a similar position given previous policy decisions such as the 2003 introduction of variable fees (Brown and Carasso 2013). This meant that the majority of institutional funding derived from teaching, rather than block state grants (Brown and Carasso 2013). International recruitment was therefore important to sustain higher education funding for domestic purposes (Universities UK 2014), in a context of full-cost home fees and straightened economic circumstances. It has become a key source of institutional funding for certain universities and parts of the sector, namely high ranking and Russell Group universities (Universities UK 2013). Despite opposition from student groups, the imposition of full-cost fees was legitimated by the acceptance of the knowledge economy principle that higher education constitutes a private good, rather than a public good (Williams 2012). Chronologically, the decision to impose full-cost fees on international students preceded the domestic fee hike by about 30 years. This suggests that acceptance of the market and private good model for international higher education enables the later introduction of equivalent principles for home students. If returns accrue primarily to the individual rather than the society or the country, it can be seen as legitimate to impose the cost on the individual not the taxpayer.

The knowledge economy model is also apparent in the emphasis accorded to higher education as an export industry. Usually universities' role in the knowledge economy is considered in terms of training graduates, enhancing their marketable skills in desired areas. However, as an industry in its own right, with its own export capacity, higher education is also a prime example of a knowledge-based industry: its resources are the human knowledge and skills of its staff rather than its physical assets or equipment, and profit is generated through its human capital creating intangible goods (Olssen and Peters 2005). In this sense, generating higher education exports is a coherent element of a knowledge economy strategy.

A knowledge economy strategy has been a key element of economic policy since the early years of the Blair administration (Robertson 2010). Consistent with wider European policies and the Bologna process, this policy emphasised Britain's global competitiveness, highly skilled workers, and also the expansion of higher education markets overseas. The 2003 White Paper *The Future of Higher Education*, for example, considers selling education overseas to be a global business. The 2009 DBIS report *Higher Ambitions* suggests that in view of the net annual contribution to national income, higher education plays an important role in making Britain competitive as a knowledge economy, although this is secondary to its role in knowledge generation and training.

A number of core assumptions underpin this representation of the UK's income as a problem (Bacchi 2009, Q2). Firstly, that international higher education is a marketplace. Secondly, that UK HEIs are businesses and that the role of the sector is to generate income nationally. Thirdly, that education is a product. Fourthly, that growth is unequivocally positive. These assumptions have been challenged by the literature with regards to UK HE, on numerous grounds. The following discussion will apply these criticisms to international education and consider alternative ways in which international education may be understood. There are two broad categories of critique: firstly, on the grounds of the accuracy of the assumptions about marketisation made, and secondly, on the potential negative impacts of marketisation. In this problem representation, students are constructed as numbers and income sources.

### *International Higher Education: A Marketplace*

The most fundamental assumption is that international higher education is a marketplace. This is widely held throughout the policy periods, without explanation, justification or alternatives. Brown and Carasso (2013) suggest that the characteristics of a market model in higher education would include: fully autonomous institutions; low barriers to market entry and wide student choice; wide variance on price; freely available information which enables students to make rational choices; regulation in the form of consumer protection; and qualitydetermined by what employers and students value. They, along with Marginson (1997), conclude that higher education is more accurately described as a "quasi-market", moving in the direction of full marketisation. "Quasi-markets" are seen to achieve government goals (Dill 1997; Naidoo and Williams 2014), as some state power is retained with the appearance of neutrality operating through the marketplace. On a national level, UK HE may be seen as quasi-market due to a number of factors: the difficulty of establishing an entirely new university; the low probability of the government allowing an HEI to fail (Dill 1997); and the continuing subsidisation of student fees by the government through the loan system (Brown and Carasso 2013), among others.

International higher education, however, is more widely accepted as a marketplace (e.g. Harman 2004; Naidoo 2007). It is seen to be closer to a "true market", as the competitors are countries rather than institutions (e.g. Tham 2010; Shu 2012). Therefore, new entrants are countries which have traditionally not competed for international higher education, like Malaysia (Tham 2010) and Taiwan (Ma 2010). In this sense, the barriers to market entry are lower, and there is no international regulation or overarching quality assurance. The GATS agreement assured a degree of free movement in trade and services, and consequently in student mobility (Robertson et al. 2002). This, it is argued, ensures wide and free student choice internationally. It is also argued that global competition generates increased choice and lower prices (Naidoo 2007). Global league tables (Marginson and van der Wende 2007) and the importance of reputation to the capacity of countries to attract international students (Xiang and Shen 2009; Hazelkorn 2011) suggests that students conceive of education as a product, wishing to have the best.

However, international higher education could be argued to fall short of a "true market" ideal type (Bacchi 2009, Q4). Firstly, higher education institutions often compete internationally as a sector rather than as individual institutions. National agencies like the British Council, IDP Australia (Sidhu 2002) and EduFrance (Dodds 2009) promote an entire sector. In the UK, institutions operate within a national brand (Lomer et al. 2016), and there is a strong driver towards both national and international collaborative research relationships (e.g. BIS 2013a). So there is a tension between competition between individual institutions, and an expectation that HEIs will behave in similar, marketised ways, as defined by the national brand. This is consistent with the move towards "governing at a distance" (Rose and Miller 2008). The market actually can be seen as a governance mechanism. Yet it is widely portrayed as a depoliticised field (Sidhu 2006), meaning that the capacity of the sector to resist government intervention is reduced. So domestically, institutions do not necessarily compete or behave differently; instead, the sector competes with other countries, institutions behave in similar ways and tend to comply with the marketisation model. This suggests that the sector is effectively disciplined through the international marketplace.

Secondly, the marketplace is regulated in the UK, although not globally. The QAA regulates all institutions, and, therefore, their international provision, which Brown and Carasso (2013) argue to be tightly controlled by ministerial intervention via HEFCE. International higher education in the UK is also further regulated by the UKBA (Jenkins 2014). At the time of writing, permission for HEIs to recruit legally international students depended on having "Highly Trusted Sponsor" status, entailing compliance with a wide range of oversight by the Government (UKBA 2011; UKBA 2013). This suggests that international higher education in the UK is only partly marketised. These regulatory barriers are discussed, for example, in the BIS (2013a, b), not silenced, but they are interpreted merely as challenges for the sector to work around. This creates a contradiction to the market discourse: on the one hand, markets need free movement across borders; on the other, demands of border security limit such movement. Yet policy discourses fail to address the incompatible conceptualisations of international higher education implicit in these two representations. Immigration policy represents higher education as a fundamentally national affair, where students are presumed to remain within the borders of the nation in which they hold citizenship. Market-based economic policy supposes that students can move as freely as tourists on holiday in order to consume the service of international higher education. This contrast of thinking about higher education causes tension in policy.

### *Problems with the Marketplace*

The neoliberal consensus argues that market mechanisms are always effective solutions. But a number of critics also point to the perils of fully marketising international education. On a national level, it is argued that marketisation can reduce higher education's capacity to act as a public good (Tilak 2008), limit its potential to provide space for transformative education (Molesworth et al. 2009), and entrench social disadvantage (Naidoo 2007). International higher education can similarly cement global inequalities between countries (Tilak 2008; Xiang and Shen 2009; Tannock 2013) by concentrating income, prestige and talent in comparatively wealthy developed countries. Yang et al (2002, cited in Marginson et al. 2010) suggest that marketisation may actually decrease the quality of student experience, although as suggested earlier, this is in itself a marketised concept. Marketising international education may, therefore, have unintended consequences not considered in the policy discourse.

In particular, participation in international higher education is likely to be influenced by social and cultural capital. Discourses of marketisation construct students as perfect consumers, making free, rational choices based on economic criteria. For example, the Coalition Plan for Growth (HM Treasury and BIS 2011, p. 71) argues that:

> Markets rely on active and informed consumers who…force businesses to produce efficiently and innovate. Growth is undermined when consumers face excessive barriers to switching suppliers, (or) where there are market failures in the flow of consumer information.

The economic plan in which international higher education is implicated therefore relies on a model of consumer behaviour which does not hold true for international students. For example, Waters (2006) documents how social capital influences decisions to study internationally among Hong Kong students. Similarly, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) identified family experiences of particular countries as having a major impact on the choice of study destination. Social capital also influences how students access and understand information, which may be challenging to interpret in its complexity, leading some to rely on the heuristics of global rankingsor paid agents (Xiang and Shen 2009). These examples only touch on the complexity of this issue, which for international higher education, draws on intersections of wealth, social and cultural capital, transnational networks, race and class, language and post-colonial networks of movement and power (Sidhu 2006). They are sufficient, however, to call into question the accuracy of presuppositions of equal access or perfect consumer behaviour underlying the market model. The requirement to have a certain, large, amount of funding available even to obtain a  substantiates this critique; it automatically excludes significant numbers of potentially able students (Tannock 2013). The impact of capitals on students' access to and experiences of international higher education,  however, are left unproblematic in the corpus. This suggests that students who have little by way of social or financial capital are marginalised by the policy discourse, and are not the target market.

Yet Blair (1999) claims that the PMI would seek

> to ensure that our universities and colleges *are open to able students* from around the world. In a world of lifelong learning, British Education is a first class ticket for life. I want to see the benefits of that education, that ticket, *given to as many as possible* across the world. (emphasis mine)

"British Education" is not, as asserted here, open to as many "able" students as possible from around the world, for they are prevented by barriers of financial and social capital. This claim is undermined from within by its silence on these inequalities (Tannock 2013). It suggests that equity as a value (Matross Helms et al. 2015) is primarily a rhetorical commitment. This point has been frequently made in criticisms of neoliberalism in education (e.g. Giroux 2002; Lynch 2006), but is less frequently made with reference to international higher education where the public good argument is more complex and criticism of marketisation less frequent (Marginson 2016). Yet if international higher education is to have a positive global impact to be driven by ethical, humanist values, these criticisms must be extended to international higher education and into our classrooms.

### *HEIs as Businesses and the Paradox of Government Control*

In a market governed by neoliberal principles, higher education institutions are seen as businesses. One of the key challenges documented in the corpus refers to the difficulty of encouraging HEIs to adopt business-like behaviours.  Market research conducted to help develop the

"Education UK brand" concluded that UK HEIs had "low levels of marketing expertise" (British Council 2000a, p. 5), "unclear selling propositions", and "a failure to recognise in real detail how markets are changing". This theme emerges again in the Coalition IES (BIS 2013a, b) which identifies a key challenge of "co-ordination failure", limiting the sector's capacity to respond and take advantage of "high-value opportunities". The implication in both of these examples is that HEIs are not responding like businesses and that this constitutes a problem. Ironically from a strict liberalisation perspective, the solution embedded in these policies appears to be central government "coordination". This took the form of increased activity through the British Council Education Counselling Services, the creation of a national brand (British Council 2000a) and later providing "brokerage and support" (BIS 2013a) to help HEIs coordinate. The "Britain is GREAT™" campaign conceptually positions international higher education to borrow from the UK's national image as traditional, with a strong heritage and a reputation for creative industries like fashion and music, aligning it with other exporting industries (Pamment 2015). In so doing, the inherent differences between HE, and, for example, the aviation industry, are elided and its character reduced to visual symbolism. These effects potentially tighten government control over a nominally autonomous sector, operating according to market norms (Shattock 2006; Trow 2006).

For universities are not businesses. Certainly, the public/private distinction has become increasingly blurred over the last 20–30 years (Tight 2006). HEIs are now expected to behave in more business-like ways, implementing instrumental approaches to managing academics, heavy reliance on the National Student Survey (NSS) and similar data sets relevant to "consumer satisfaction" (Naidoo 2007; Sabri 2011), as highlighted in the previous chapter. But universities also still rely heavily on public funding—45% of Russell Group universities' income came from public funds (Russell Group 2010). While this proportion is likely to fall (Brown and Carasso 2013), the state is still considered to have some responsibility for HE. On a national level, HE is supposed to provide a public function, as suggested by their charitable status (HEFCE 2014), by facilitating the creation of knowledge and providing a competitive advantage within the knowledge economy (Olssen and Peters 2005). This is a key silence and a way to think differently about higher education (Bacchi 2009, Q4). The public good, or "externalities of higher education" (Tilak 2008), is harder to demonstrate on a global scale as benefits are thought to confer on the country where the graduate works—typically their home country (Healey 2008). However, earlier understandings of international higher education positioned it as a tool for development (Walker 2014) as in the Colombo Plan (Harman 2004), and as Chap. 5 suggested, as global diplomacy. It is, therefore, possible to conceive of universities delivering international higher education as something other than businesses generating income. Instead, there could be recognition of the global public goods which emerge from higher education (Marginson 2016). It is concerning that universities are not resisting the move to become business-like. There is compliance in the sector on this point rather than a concerted development of alternatives.

### *Growth Is Good*

One of the central assumptions of international higher education as a marketplace is that growth in the UK's market share of international higher education is necessarily good, as it increases the UK's income and makes the nation more competitive. This assumption, deriving from tenets of neoliberal economics, is so widely held as common sense (Fairclough 1989) that in the international higher education literature that it is rarely explored or justified in great detail. In the policy corpus, success is equated with growth. Both the PMI and the Coalition IES, aim to increase international student numbers, representing this growth as desirable. The PMI2 target was to "sustain the managed growth of UK international education delivered both in the UK and overseas" (DIUS 2009), and the IES, among other industrial strategies, aims "to secure sustainable future growth in the economy" (BIS 2013c). The conflation of success with growth is replicated in the compilation of rankings data (Marginson and van der Wende 2007), echoed in university rationales (Bolsmann and Miller 2008), and in much of the literature on international higher education in other countries (e.g. Harman 2004).

However, it is possible to think about this problem differently: the logic of competition and measuring by market share means that if the UK increases its proportion of international students, another country loses (Slaughter and Cantwell 2012). Marketplace competition is a zero-sum game unless "new markets" are opened up. This can be understood to further contribute to global stratification, deepening inequality between countries (Marginson 2006; Naidoo 2007). Some students are made appealing targets for competition, but other groups become less attractive (Rizva and Teichler 2007). The drain of talented students from developing to developed countries, exacerbated by global rankings that consolidate the reputations of already powerful countries (Marginson and van der Wende 2007), leaves developing countries with struggling tertiary sectors (Naidoo 2007). This consequence of the UK's market success is largely silent in the policy discourse and potentially undermines policy claims to seek to build "a new relationship with the emerging powers … based on values and mutual respect" (BIS 2013a, p. 53). If the UK's success is dependent on other countries losing their "brightest and best" students, and those with the most financial capital, this would seem to be in contradiction with the imperative to build relationships with precisely those countries.

While the adoption of policies for growth is taken for granted as a rational strategy, it is possible to think differently about growth in international higher education. Healey (2008) suggests that the reality of tightening public funding and massification of HEIs meant that growth in international higher education was a reactive, chaotic response to government policy, instead of a rational, deliberate strategy. This is consistent with other accounts of UK HE policy formation as haphazard (Belcher 1987; Bird 1994; Kogan and Hanney 2000; Humfrey 2011). Since the results of my research demonstrate that international higher education growth is, in fact, part of government policy as well as a sector response, extending Healey (2008) argument suggests a multi-vocal, contradictory, national policy, where expanding international higher education offers an exit route from straightened budgets. This interpretation is consistent with Blair's promise of abiding by the stringent fiscal policies set by the Tories (Buller and James 2012): with limited spending capacity, seeking another resource stream becomes paramount for the state to sustain HE as a valuable asset.

Growth in international higher education can also be seen as undesirable for its impacts within the UK. Healey (2008) suggests that significant expansion is more likely to take place in lower-ranking universities in vocational subjects, consistent with Marginson's (2006) analysis. This could lead to what Sir Drummond Bone (2008) called the "ghettoization" of international students, in particular, subjects and courses, leading to a domino effect with regards to experience, satisfaction and eventually, reputation. Potentially, excessive growth could lead to reduced rather than enhanced quality. It also exposes universities to increased risk of market failure (Slaughter and Cantwell 2011). Therefore, it is possible to see growth not as a rational, inevitable response, but also as a problematic, irrational response which disenfranchises other countries which could be considered partners and collaborators in international higher education.

### *Desirable Migrants and the Knowledge Economy*

Economic growth is represented as hindered by skills gaps in the labour market in the UK, which international graduates as workers solve. Generally, where skills shortages occur in highly skilled, knowledge-intensive domains, international students are desirable temporary solutions (Tremblay 2005). New Labour migration policies targeted economic performance (Düvell and Jordan 2003), and saw skills gaps as barriers to growth, to be resolved by relaxing immigration requirements for highly skilled and graduate pathways (Wright 2012). Under the PMI, informed by a knowledge economy model, students constituted a source of skilled labour in areas where the UK was lacking (Geddie 2014). In this framework, skills are an element of individual human capital (Raghuram 2008), which can benefit nations that attract people with these skills. This is seen as essential to compete as a nation in the "race for talent" (Suter and Jandl 2008; Tannock 2009) and produces a synergy between labour policies and immigration (Düvell and Jordan 2003). This assumes that international graduates are an effective source for gaps in labour skill markets, although it is possible to think about this solution differently. For example, Migration Watch (2015) challenges this problematisation, stating that after the closure of the post-study work visa, comparatively few visa applications were made by graduates with job offers in the UK.

The convergence of the UK's adoption of this policy with other countries experiencing temporary skills gaps and demographic labour shortages (Raghuram 2008; Hawthorne 2010; Cerna 2014) suggests that this representation of the problem and solution has come about through policy transfer (Bacchi 2009, Q3). Canada and Australia have tailored their migration policies to the needs of employers and businesses using Points-Based Systems for systematic recruitment, in particular, labour shortages (Ziguras and Law 2006; Robertson 2011; She and Wotherspoon 2013). In such a system, private actors can have an impact on public policy (Wright 2012; Cerna 2014), but whether such lobbying is ethical or appropriate is left unproblematic in the discourse, which assumes that policy should meet the needs of industry. What is not discussed in this model of competition is the ethics of recruitment, in terms of how this impacts countries which send students (Geddie 2014). Narratives around brain drain rarely appear in policy documents.

It is assumed that the UK is a desirable destination for migrants, and that British industry will be able to recruit the "brightest and the best" (Cerna 2011). This assumption rests on a neoliberal economic model, where people are conceived of as rational economic actors, who will seek out migration opportunities on a primarily financial basis (Raghuram 2008). It also rests on the concept of a meritocracy, implying global equality of opportunity (Tannock 2009), despite the clear economic barriers to migration. However, the evidence of the effectiveness of highly skilled migration policies (Suter and Jandl 2008; Cerna 2011) regarding rates of stay and job positions (Hawthorne 2010) and contributions to the economy is limited. The inverse may in fact be true, that changes to permission to work while studying may have made the UK a more attractive destination for many students (Düvell and Jordan 2003; DTZ 2011). Certainly, the 2011 changes to the post-work study route negatively affected recruitment from India (Kemp 2016). The status of international students as sought-after highly skilled migrants who contribute to the economy is therefore not self-evident. Such policies are not necessarily effective, and rely on particular assumptions about mobility and individuals' reasons for being mobile.

### *Education as a Product*

Having accepted international higher education as an industry, education is understood as a commodified product. In the British Council Brand Report (British Council 1999), for example, particular courses are framed as products: "Product: Degree courses, Technical courses, Vocational course" (Para. 60). Later, the British Council suggests that HEIs need to systematically consider their "product development strategy"(British Council 2000a, p. 13). Similarly the Coalition IES talks in terms of students "getting a quality product and a recognised qualification" (BIS 2013a, p. 61). This discursive construct positions students as consumers, as illustrated in the previous chapter, a tendency which has been observed in other research on advertising to international students (Sidhu 2002; Askehave 2007; Leyland 2011).

But the consequences of constructing education as a product, and students as consumers, are seen to be in conflict with deep approaches to learning (Molesworth et al. 2009), as the meanings attached to international higher education are reduced to the economic benefits they create for students (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Molesworth et al. (2009) argue that seeing education as something to "have", consequent to a capitalist, liberal model, encourages students to "acquire" education in the form of a qualification, leading them to reject intellectual transformation. Where a pedagogical relationship is read as equivalent to the relationship between consumer and provider, relationships become instrumental, and learning may be compromised (Naidoo et al. 2011). Within the literature on international higher education students in the UK, marketisation is often taken as a given, reproducing the problematisation (e.g. Pereda et al. 2007; Barnes 2007; Bartram and Bailey 2010; Hart and Coates 2010). Indeed, the British Council (2003, p. 8, emphasis mine) quote an IDP Australia report as saying:

> The fundamental shift in the funding of higher education towards the consumer has had a profound impact on the expectations and needs of students. Fundamentally, this shift has resulted in a *breakdown* in the traditional teacher- learner relationship which has been replaced by a customer-service relationship.

Despite the clear negative terminology, the report presents this pragmatically and uncritically, as a challenge to be met and a given, rather than a major pedagogic flaw. That marketised practices have become the common-sense activities of the international sector speaks to the naturalisation of the marketisation discourse (Fairclough 1989). However, there are critical voices in the literature, albeit fewer than those who critique marketisation in domestic HE. For example, Naidoo and Williams (2014) suggest that pedagogical relationships are being commodified through explicit charters with students, such that learning is reduced to observable behaviours. Similarly, Giroux (2002) argues that marketisation contributes to a narrow vision of responsibility, agency and values, as well as depriving students of a collective voice. De Vita and Case (2003) take the internationalisation of the commodified curriculum to task as superficial and self-contradictory. Rajani Naidoo (2007) argues that this may have a particularly negative effect on developing countries, focusing on more vocational skills productive in the short term but without the extended depth of knowledge to gain sustainable advantage.

There are also alternative conceptualisations of international higher education. For instance, Madge et al. (2009) advocate an ethic of care and responsibility in international education. This “engaged pedagogy”, after bell hooks, demands of educators that they work towards self-actualisation with students. This extends beyond critical education, into a holistic approach to the individual as a spiritual, embodied people. Sidhu and Dall’Alba (2012) suggest that an emancipatory cosmopolitanism is still possible in modern corporate global HE. However, as Ashwin et al. (2015) found with regards to quality, the alternative discourses are partial and incoherent, each voicing different critiques, and, therefore, failing to present a coherent alternative, which may be why marketisation discourse has become so pervasive.

### *International Students as Subjects: Economic Contributors and Numbers*

International students are represented as valuable because they make major economic contributions to the UK through their fee payments, and other expenses while in the UK (Bacchi 2009, Q5). Indirect economic benefits are also thought to emerge from alumni connections leading to increased consumption of British brands and products, the establishment of trade networks leading to commercial advantage for the UK, economic development from skilled migration (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013) and job creation (Home Affairs Committee 2011). As the IES has it: “countries (try) to attract more students from overseas to come to them to study, because that is what produces the largest and most visible financial benefits to the country concerned” (BIS 2013a, p. 31). Here, the financial returns on the presence of international students are made the preeminent rationale for their recruitment. The importance of economic contributions and financial benefits are emphasised throughout the policy periods, but in PMI texts, they are often listed last, after benefits to global diplomacy, cultural and social benefits, and educational contributions. This suggests that under the Coalition Government, the economic rationale for international students has superseded, though not eliminated, rationales of diplomacy and education.

The frequent use of international student numbers is revelatory. The numeric representation of international students in a binary category aggregated as statistics suggests attempted control through the collection of knowledge (Rose and Miller 2008). The act of quantifying a group of people transforms them from agents into objects, reifying them. Particularly with regards to the migration policy, separating out international students as a calculable category of analysis renders them subject to the actions of the powerful, namely their control through visa systems. Yet they engage in international education in varied and hybrid ways (Madge et al. 2014).

A points-based immigration system attempts to simplify and quantify the skills held by migrants through qualifications, language levels, and desirable experience (Raghuram 2008; Cerna 2011; Hawthorne 2010), and in the case of students, their financial worth (Marginson et al. 2010). Again, the use of quantification appears as a technology of governance, regulating migrants' access to opportunities and mobility (Rose and Miller 2008). One crucial silence, however, regards questions of class, capital and equality—in other words, how some graduates come to have desirable skills while others do not (Raghuram 2008). Students' financial vulnerability during their studies is also not a significant component of central policy discourses (Marginson et al. 2010), although it is mentioned in some documents from quasi-independent organisations (UKCOSA 2004; Ipsos Mori 2006). Neither is the colonial legacy much discussed in terms of how this influences students' global imaginaries (Madge et al. 2009). Reading their presence as a sign of the UK's market success attributes action and agency to the nation and industry, rather than to students. The establishment of a statistical category of the "international" student creates an "othering" discourse, establishing a binary between home students and the international "Other" (Collins 2006; Sin 2009; Trahar 2010; Thomas 2013; Madge et al. 2014). This is a hollowed-out imagined subject, recognisable only by their difference to the supposed norm, such that "the international student" (note the definite article), is homogenised as foreign (Devos 2003). It also allows attendance monitoring and the deployment of recruitment statistics as fact-totems of success in the marketplace (Sabri 2011).

Students are active grammatically when making a financial contribution. They "contribute" (UKBA 2010), "bring" income and benefits (Home Affairs Committee 2009), "invest" (Home Office 2006), "make a contribution" (British Council 2003), "boost the economy" (BIS 2013c), "spend" (Blair 2004), and "can deliver tremendous... economic benefits" (British Council 2003, p. 14). However, this depicts only limited agency, because there is no choice implied. If a student is international, and not a scholarship recipient, they must make an economic contribution in this discourse. Indeed, if they do not, then this is seen as problematic. Research students (Kemp et al. 2008; Suter and Jandl 2008) are seen to contribute directly to knowledge creation and innovation. Students are often literally valued in terms of their economic contribution: “overseas students alone are worth £5 billion a year” (Labour Party 2005, p. 51), “nearly 50% of students globally worth £2.5 billion” (BIS 2013a, p. 15), and “an additional 50,000 students by 2004/2005, worth £500 million per annum” (British Council 2003, p. 14). Indeed, this is criticised by Sir Drummond Bone (2008, p. 3), who argues that the “problem with the UK (in terms of a falling market share) is a perception that our universities are solely interested in international students as a source of revenue”. This was part of the logic behind the PMI2 revisions to emphasise building longer-term “sustainable relationships” (DfES 2006), as a result of perceptions that the UK was financially focused (British Council 2003). But these long-term sustainable relationships, like Sir Drummond Bone’s criticism, are intended still to generate revenue for the UK, and this discourse is still prevalent.

As “designer migrants” (Kell and Vogl 2008) international students contribute to both the labour market and culture (Raghuram 2008; Cerna 2011). Having been educated in the country, they possess immediately transferable educational capital in the form of local qualifications, appropriate language levels (Hawthorne 2010) and desirable skills. In consuming education locally, they contribute economic capital and when they work, they contribute labour (Robertson 2011). In the policy discourse, there is little mention of experiences after entry, or on citizenship which, in contrast to the USA, Canada, and Australia, is not an intended outcome from highly skilled migration in the UK (Raghuram 2008). Rather, it is seen as a temporary stop gap measure (Wright 2012), which confers no rights on the workers. The discourse is also silent on job satisfaction (Raghuram 2008) and vulnerability (Nyland et al. 2009; Marginson et al. 2010). This suggests that the dominant policy discourse privileges the interests of the national economy and industry, over the interests of individuals, constructing individuals in terms of their relation to the labour market.

Crucially, the ultimate beneficiary is the UK (Fairclough, 2003), rather than the student. Other research on international students has identified similar rationales (Leyland 2011; Robertson 2011). Although the economic benefits to students are also present, they are much more prevalent in the documents from quasi-independent organisations (e.g. Kemp et al. 2008; Archer and Cheng 2012) than in the central policy texts (Blair 1999; British Council 2010; DTZ 2011). This is, however, a notable silence in the Coalition era texts, where it is rarely mentioned (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013 is the exception). When the benefits to students are mentioned, it is the perception which is highlighted, and little attempt is made to establish or document material changes in students' circumstances which might be attributed to a UK education (again with the exception of Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013). The relationship established is one in which the student benefits the nation, and where the student's worth is measured in their financial contribution. The ideal subject (Fairclough 1989) created through this discourse is a relatively well-off student whose family transfers money to the UK. They spend money freely while in the UK (Conlon et al. 2011), live in private accommodation, have private health insurance (Home Office 2013a), and establish preferences for UK products and brands, as well as long-term commercial networks (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2013).

Students may internalise this representation, learning to value themselves primarily in economic terms (Sidhu 2006). International education can be understood as a process of self-formation, where students are engaged in actively creating their transformed self, drawing on their own values, concepts and experiences (Marginson 2014b). As Rizvi and Lingard (2010 p. 207) suggest, marketisation "converts students into economic units, with the implication that only those aspects of other cultures that are commercially productive are worthy of attention". This closes down possibilities for pedagogical strategies to facilitate self-formation beyond the economic. In a context of neoliberal ideological dominance, this representation contributes to dehumanising subjects, depriving students of an expectation of a democratic voice and treatment as an individual and reducing their agency to economic choices. Yet despite research which highlights such rationales in the UK (Askehave 2007; Bolsmann and Miller 2008; Leyland 2011) and research from Australia which offers similar critiques (Devos 2003; Robertson 2011), the UK literature on international students offers no such discursive critical of political representations. By this silence, researchers acquiesce in the economic subjectification of students.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored the prevalence of a market-based problematisation in the corpus, where the problem is represented to be gaining competitive advantage and income for the UK. The core assumptions are that international higher education is a marketplace, that education is a product that competition is essential, that higher education is a source of income generation for the UK internationally, and that growth is necessarily a measure of success. In this discourse, international students are represented as a means to income generation, or economic resources, to the benefit of the UK.

However, criticisms suggest that international higher education neither is nor should be a perfect market. They have also highlighted how global inequalities may worsen as a result of such competition and growth. Criticisms have also been made of the effects of conceiving of education as a product in terms of reducing its transformative potential. These alternative voices, while disparate and diverse, demonstrate that it is possible to imagine international higher education differently, as emancipatory, equitable, caring and pedagogically sound.

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CHAPTER 8

# Immigration: A Rationale Against International Student Recruitment

Wider migration policy discourses have negatively impacted international students present in the UK, creating a counter-rationale to their recruitment. Immigration policies have fluctuated from welcoming increased immigration for economic growth under Blair, to more recent attempts to reduce net migration under the Coalition government. It is argued that as migrants they contribute to public concern, social pressures, and abuse of the system. International students are categorised as migrants, caught in the same negative discourse. The solution is to "ensure that only the brightest and best can come" (May 2010a).

Stepping outside the policy discourse for a moment, it is important to distinguish between technical and political usage of the terms "migration" and "immigration". Technically, migration refers to both inflows (immigration) and outflows (emigration) of people *of any nationality* across borders. Thus, net migration is the sum total of emigrants subtracted from immigrants. In UK political discourse, however, migration has come to mean "immigration", and "migrant" has come to mean "immigrant". To remain, as Foucault (1972) insists "within the discourse", I use the terms as they are used in the discourse in the presentation of the results (Sect. "Changing perceptions of migration" but distinguish between the two in my analysis (Sect. "Public concern & social pressures").

This chapter begins with the qualitative analysis, which shows a changing view of immigration and of students as migrants. It draws on those key migration policy documents with particular relevance to




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international students. Because documents were included on the criteria that they related to or impacted on international students, a full review of migration policy during this period is not attempted. Rather, migration has emerged as a theme from the policy on international students. The second part of the chapter explores the problematisation, arguing that migration discourses implicate students, at first to their benefit (see Chap. 7 in relation to skills gaps) and later to their detriment. It explores the assumptions and subject effects which derive from the categorisation of students as migrants.

## International Students Should not be Recruited Because Net Migration Should Decrease

In policy discourses, migration is supposed to "work(s) for Britain", and be "in our country's interests" (Blair 2004). The UK's interests rank above those of migrants, or sending countries. Similarly, when Prime Minister, Gordon Brown (2009) made "(t)he case for managed and controlled migration where it is in the national interest—economically, socially and culturally". Later documents stress this still further: "The Government believes migrants should come to the UK for the right reason—to contribute to our society rather than simply taking from it" (Home Office 2013a). The use of the word "taking" suggests a model of society where resources are limited and migrants (read immigrants) have no intrinsic right to access services or resources. In contrast, migration is sometimes argued to be essential for growth and avoiding the collapse of public services (e.g. Blair 2004). This representation also continues into Coalition discourse: "And the *right* immigration is not just good for Britain—it's essential" (Cameron 2013, emphasis in original). The distinction here is in the use of the modifier, "the right" immigration, which speaks to the increasing "selectiveness" of later migration discourses. It is where immigration is not seen to work in the UK's interests that problems arise.

## Changing Perceptions of Migration

Economic benefits are seen to be a key rationale for migration, and during the PMI and PMI2 periods, this rationale predominated (Home Office 2002; Blair 2005; Brown 2009). Immigrants are represented as playing significant roles in the provision of public services (Blair 2004) and figures are cited to show their "disproportionate" contribution to the economy—10% of GDP while only being 8% of the population in employment. While migration is constructed as needing "control" and "management", the contributions of migrants are presented as a rationale for further increasing and welcoming immigration (e.g. Home Office 2002). Early speeches (Roche 2000; Blair 2004) select examples from historical moments of great potency in the national consciousness, such as Polish pilots in World War Two, and Indian soldiers on the Western Front. This implies an attempt to naturalise immigration to the UK, by incorporating it into national narratives of identity. Positioning migration as "an inevitable reality of the modern world" (Home Office 2002, p. 4) is one way of making it seem ideologically neutral (Fairclough, 1989), causing significant migration levels to be seen as natural and the benefits as common sense. This obscures the role of neoliberal values in encouraging and responding to migration as an economic issue.

Policy discourses under the Coalition Government also acknowledge important contributions from immigration (May 2010a Home Office 2011; Cameron 2013). Indeed, they sometimes draw on precisely the same examples to illustrate Britain's strength in diversity (Cameron 2015). However, in these later speeches, it appears to be a preliminary rhetorical move conceding ground before establishing a need for tighter control, leading to the establishment of a target to reduce net migration, specifically the number of non-EU immigrants (HM Government 2010, p. 21) to around the "tens of thousands" (Green 2010b; Cameron 2011; Home Office 2013a). These are seen to be the "levels our country can manage" (Cameron 2011). Although negative perceptions of the UK's welcome to international students are seen as a barrier to increasing growth in the sector (BIS, 2013), "the sheer number of students coming in, and the large proportion of total inward migration this represents" (May 2010a) are said to be unsustainable (Green 2010a; Home Office 2012). The 2015 Brexit vote was also embedded in this anti-immigration narrative.

## Public Concern & Social Pressures

The policy documents claim a "public concern" (Home Office 2011), "something we heard on the doorstep" (Cameron 2011), regarding "the perceived abuse of public services, pressure on jobs and employment, and numbers of immigrants" (Home Office 2011, p. 27). While present under

New Labour as well (Blair 2004; Brown 2010), the mantra of public concern became more prevalent after 2010. According to the Home Office Impact Assessment (2011, p. 27) regarding reform to the student visas, "the reasons given for public concern include the perceived abuse of public services, pressure on jobs and employment, and numbers of immigrants".

The rapid influx is claimed to cause "great economic and social pressure", in particular "on key public services such as schools, the health service, transport, housing and welfare" (May 2010b). Although earlier documents have occasionally highlighted "tensions" (Home Office 2002), impact on employment (Home Office 2006) and a lack of social integration (Blair 2004), the Coalition Government places more emphasis on the negative impacts of immigration (e.g. Cameron 2011). The proposed solution is to reduce migration, which will alleviate "congestion and pressure on public services such as schools and healthcare at a time when public spending is reduced" (Home Office 2011, p. 10). In the British situation, this is further complicated by EU membership, which requires of member states that they allow free movement of people. The UK cannot prevent immigration from European member states, which also contributes to net migration. Public concern around the perceived lack of border controls this generated arguably contributed to the 2016 Brexit vote. A secondary solution proposed was to introduce a health surcharge for all immigrants (Home Office 2013a), which was implemented in 2015 (Home Office 2015). Students are implicated in this proposed solution because they are categorised as migrants (May 2010b), albeit at a reduced rate of £150 instead of £200.

## Abuse of the System: Bogus Students

Public concern is also said to centre on perceptions of abuse of the visa system. Under New Labour, it at first referred to asylum (Roche 2000; Blair 2004). The public is said to lack "confidence in our immigration system" (Home Office 2011), so reforms and "tough action" are in part intended to "restore public confidence in the immigration system" (May 2010a). New Labour policies also identify public concern as significant, particularly regarding the asylum system (Roche 2000; Home Office 2005) and bogus colleges (Home Affairs Committee 2009). but later becomes linked to students: "We are also overhauling the visa system to make it simpler for talented individuals who want to come to study in Britain, while keeping out anyone who intends to abuse the system"

(Blair 2006). Limiting abuse was part of the rationale for establishing particular procedures as part of the Tier 4 student visa route (UKBA 2008; Brown 2010), to facilitate "genuine students" to enter the country (BIS 2009). Yet the Coalition Government was "determined to be different" in tackling abuse of the system, which is said to undermine public confidence (Green 2010a; Home Office 2013a). Issues were primarily identified with the abuse of the Tier 4 route (May 2010a) and reforms to the student visa route attempted to prevent "abuse by filtering out those who contribute least and pose the highest immigration risk" (Home Office 2011, p. 9). While "abuse" primarily relates to illicit economic activities, other risks are also present, such as terrorism (Home Affairs Committee 2009; Gower 2010) and "proliferation", the transmission of information related to creating weapons of mass destruction. This concern led to the introduction of the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) (UKBA 2008; QAA 2012).

Bogus colleges were a particular focus of the debate on abuse. These colleges were found to be facilitating illegal economic activity among their students, offering subpar education and resources (Home Affairs Committee 2009). This discourse began under a Labour Government, (Home Office 2006), intensified during Gordon Brown's premiership (Gower 2010), and became still more prevalent under the Coalition and Conservative Governments (Cameron 2015). While this is described as "protecting international students from rogue providers and dodgy operators" (Johnson 2015), students came to be labelled as "bogus", in contrast to "legitimate students" (Home Office 2006; May 2010a; Cameron 2013). So-called "bogus students" are those who "have no intention of studying and who disappear to work illegally" (UKBA 2008, p. 8), typically from courses in further education, English Language colleges or less selective higher education institutions. They are said to be "disguised economic migrants" (Home Affairs Committee 2009, p. 65) or to be seeking long-term residence (Home Office 2011). They are said not to have "a genuine desire to study" (May 2010a) and to be "gaming the system" (Cameron 2011), sometimes through fraud (Home Affairs Committee 2009). Yet only 2% of HE students are shown to be non-compliant (Home Office 2010). This suggests an attempt to discursively reposition "legitimate students" as distinct from "illegitimate" or "bogus" students and to distinguish such efforts from the overall drive to reduce migration. This activity is also legitimated with reference to maintaining the reputation of the sector (Johnson 2015).

## Selecting Students

The policy discourse attempts to resist "misperceptions" of these efforts as a cap on student visas, as they do not intend to reduce the number of "genuine students" (Home Affairs Committee 2011). Rather, it is argued that the intent is to reduce abuse: "we want to see tough action being taken against those who have no right to be here or who abuse our services" (Home Office 2013a, p. 1). There is frequent reiteration of the statement "there is no cap on the number of legitimate students coming to Britain" (BIS 2013, p. 4) in various forms (Cameron 2011; BIS 2013c; Home Office 2013d). Indeed, legitimate students are welcomed: "(w)e're rolling out the red carpet to those whose hard work and investment will create new British jobs" (Cameron 2013). Or alternatively "Government's welcome to international students is genuine. But it is to genuine students" (Johnson 2015). The positive terminology—"red carpet", "welcome" and "genuine"—is used in conjunction with quite restrictive criteria.

The repeated iteration of the phrase "the brightest and the best" indicates increased selectivity (Roche 2000; Home Office 2006; May 2010a; Green 2012; BIS 2013; Cameron 2015). These statements are frequently positive framed: "we want universities to attract the best talent from around the world to come and work and study in them" (BIS 2015, p. 2). The stated objective of the Impact Assessment of changes to UKBA regulations is to "improve selectivity of students and Post-Study Work route migrants to the UK, to ensure they are the brightest and the best and those making the highest economic contribution" (Home Office 2011, p. 1), by "weeding out those who do not deserve to be here" (May 2010a). The exclusionary discourse, restricting migrants and students to those who are "desirable" or "deserving", advocates "a system where we only let in those students who can bring an economic benefit to Britain's institutions and can support Britain's economic growth" (May 2010b). In this discourse, students need to earn their right to study in the UK by their elite status and contributions to the country. Phrases such as "only let in" and "weeding out" reveal the exclusive nature of this discourse, which is stronger in Coalition policies than under New Labour.

Negative economic costs of this increased selectivity are accepted: "Whilst we recognise that the estimated economic costs of these proposals appear significant, it is clear that Option 2 (restricting requirements for international students) will help tackle abuse in the student system and help to reduce net migration" (Home Office 2011, p. 32). These costs primarily affect further education and English language tutors sectors, seen as sites of greatest abuse, while HE is positioned as a site for legitimate students (Cameron 2013). In a report for the BIS, Conlon et al. (2011) estimate that these proposals reduce estimates of annual growth in education exports from 4 to 3.7%. The Migration Advisory Committee (2010) also anticipates economic costs in wider net migration reductions. This appears to be in tension with claims to be acting in the best interest of UK universities (Home Office 2011), and with the broader economic goals of the International Education Strategy, to foster growth in education exports (BIS 2013). This tension is apparent in the attempt by Dr. Vince Cable, then Business Secretary, to mitigate declines in student numbers from India: "the doors are open to Indian students to benefit from our world-class universities" (BIS 2014). In an echo of the 1983 Pym Package, he also announced a number of scholarship opportunities for Indian students.

This counter-rationale may, therefore, be summarised as follows. Restricting the right to study in the UK to selected legitimate students who make the right kind of contribution reduces abuse of the system. Although it may lead to reduced economic growth, this is an acceptable cost. Reducing abuse of the visa system by limiting access is intended to restore public confidence in the migration system, and to reduce perceived social pressures which lead to public concern. This is part of an overall drive to reduce net migration, where high levels are seen to be "unmanageable" and "unsustainable", and not in Britain's interests.

## The Problem of Students as Migrants

The central problem is represented to be excessive immigration causing public concern, to be solved by reducing abuse and overall immigration numbers (Bacchi 2009, Q1). Prior to 1997, public attitudes had been broadly positive towards immigration, as numbers had been low during the Conservative Governments of the 80s and 90s (Ford et al. 2015).

Blair's government liberalised migration policy considerably, particularly on economic migration (Ford et al. 2015). In 2000, the concept of "managed migration" for the economic benefit of the UK gained prominence in policy (Düvell and Jordan 2003; Flynn 2005). This is a response to pressure from business interests. The economic and labour market rationales for immigration were made, highlighting the potential gains to the UK (Roche 2000). This established a category of "wanted" immigrants based on their skills (Mulvey 2011), where the "unwanted" were understood to be asylum seekers and illegal immigrants with nothing to offer. The UK's humanitarian obligations under international treaties do not figure much in this narrative. "Managed migration" as a policy could be seen as continuous with the previous Conservative administration, although they did not publicise this stance as overtly as the Blair government did (Mulvey 2011). International students were linked to "managed migration", as well as to the financial and political rationales (Roche 2000). Changes to visa procedures and work permissions demonstrate that New Labour sought to facilitate international students' entrance to the UK and its labour market.

Policy was much more restrictive on issues of asylum, and six major acts of Parliament were enacted in less than 10 years (Spencer 2007). At the outset, the main focus was on reforming procedures and bureaucracy, rather than making radical shifts in policy. From 1998, with the publication of the White Paper *Fairer, Firmer, Faster*, changes to immigration procedures were made, to become "more user-friendly and streamlined" (Roche 2000) and more modern (Düvell and Jordan 2003). The Immigration and Asylum Act in 1999 attempted to revise the "complex", "piecemeal" and "outdated" systems, positioned as reducing illegal immigration and limit opportunities for abuse of the system (Fiddick 1999). There is no mention of student migration in the Immigration and Asylum Act itself, where the focus is firmly on asylum seekers, and illegal migrants. These restrictive efforts were limited by human rights and EU legislation (Ford et al. 2015).

A dualistic policy emerged of strict enforcement of immigration overall but promoting student immigration for economic reasons. This corresponds with Ford et al. (2015) observation that this period saw a negative shift in public mood towards immigration. This shift is observable in many countries around the world, such as Canada and Spain (Gilligan 2015). The rise in public concern and deeply hostile media coverage around immigration from this time on appears to be linked to refugees and asylum seekers, as well as to the rise of radical right-wing anti-immigration political parties, such as the UK Independence Party. This is evident in the minutiae of some of the subsequent changes. A number of restrictions were implemented on asylum seekers and refugees in which students were sometimes ignored, sometimes implicated.

For instance, rights of appeal for students were restricted in both the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002) and the 2006 Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act, while the 2004 Asylum and Immigration Act, does not deal with students at all. Instead, they aimed to make New Labour appear strong on asylum during a period of rapid increase in applications: in 2002 alone, there were 84,130 asylum applications (Philo et al. 2013).

The 2002 White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* advocated making it easier for postgraduate students in particular subjects to switch immigration categories, especially from study to employment, after completion of their degree (Home Office 2002). This is argued to contribute economically and particularly to address work-force gaps in the UK as careers such as doctors, nurses, dentists and religious ministers are explicitly identified. Such a focus is consistent with what Flynn (2005, p. 477) describes as "the intention to reconfigure migration policy around business interests". In other words, facilitating international students' work has the twin benefits of attracting more international students and of addressing labour market shortages, both of which satisfy the needs of businesses, as Chap. 7 indicated. The establishment of the Migration Advisory Committee in 2007 consolidated this approach, as they create skills shortage lists to inform migration policy. However, student work visas were time limited and did not contribute to permanent settlement entitlements. The UK was therefore not looking at international students as a source for permanent, skilled population growth, unlike Canada and Australia during this period (Ziguras and Law 2006).

The culmination of these changes came after the 2005 general election with the introduction of the Points-Based System (PBS) (Home Office 2006), which presented a full system for managing migration. It was in effect less liberal and more regulated than previous regimes (Ford et al. 2015). This system was influenced by the Australian model, partly in response to Conservative calls during the election for quotas (Geddes 2005). It was intended to eliminate subjectivity in the decision making process by awarding fixed numbers of points for every condition met (Home Office 2006; Mavroudi and Warren 2013). The study route, Tier 4, was implemented in March 2009 (UKBA 2008). It was almost immediately revised as a result of the bogus college scandal (see Chap. 3 for more details).

The Coalition Government has essentially continued with the Points-Based System, but has placed caps on particular routes and tightened regulations (Ford et al. 2015). This is consistent with their shift towards a cautious rhetoric on reducing immigration in order to tackle the "burden on public services" (Bale et al. 2011). In attempting to shift perceptions away from the Tories as the "nasty party", it became important for Cameron to be seen as "reasonable" on the immigration debate. The emphasis was on reducing numbers and controlling immigration, not ending it, and the reasons given were apparently practical, rather than ideological. In the wake of the Brexit vote, this mitigating pressure appears to have diminished somewhat and the political rhetoric is now becoming increasingly uncompromising.

Within the problem representation, international students are represented as migrants. This generates a number of assumptions (Bacchi 2009, Q2). Secondly, "public concern" about immigrationis presumed to include students. They are discursively conflated with asylum seekers and illegal immigrants and are assumed to add pressure to services and community tension. The risk posed by students to the UK appears as a secondary problem, where the solution is increased discipline through compliance with visa regulation rules imposed on students and HEIs.

## Defining Migrants: Students

The power of the state through discourses to define and socially categorise groups of people (Foucault 1982; Moscovici 2000; Fairclough 2003) is highlighted in the debates over whether students should be officially classified as migrants (MAC 2010; Home Affairs Committee 2011; BIS Committee 2013; Home Office 2013d). The Government's position is that in reporting data to international organisations, it conforms to the UN definition of a long-term migrant—someone who remains in a country for 12 months or more (Home Office 2013d). This formal definition underpins the use of the term migrant to apply to students in less formal contexts.

Firstly, the rules by which this statement has been made (Foucault 1972) rely on a shared understanding that this "someone" is not a citizen of that country—a legal alien (Marginson et al. 2010). This has become an unquestioned common-sense assertion but it speaks to a mono-national singular understanding of citizenship, at odds with the cosmopolitan vision of the global citizen. Secondly, this demonstrates how global governance can operate through requirements on data reporting, and how the collection of statistics as a source of knowledge can have material effects (Rose and Miller 2008). In this case, the categorisation of students as migrants means that their numbers decrease because overall migrant numbers must decrease. Thirdly, it demonstrates different interpretations of compliance with this requirement. The Government argues that it can *only* report net migration in terms which conform to the UN definition. Universities UK in their evidence to the Home Affairs Committee (2011) and indeed the committee itself in their conclusions, argue that while this data can be reported to comply with international requirements, other definitions can be used to inform domestic policy. These alternatives seek to disrupt the representation of students (Bacchi 2009, Q6). Universities UK (cited in BIS Committee 2013) refer to Australia, Canada and the USA, which distinguish for the purposes of domestic policy guidance between permanent and temporary migrants, while still reporting internationally in compliance with global definitions (Cavanagh and Glennie 2012). Changing this technical label would potentially filter through into the public discourses, offering greater nuance. The Government's response (Home Office 2013d, p. 6) argues that the quality of existing data sets in the International Passenger Survey (IPS) adequately disaggregate categories of migrants for policy purposes, and reiterates their intention to "comply with the international definition".

This is justified with reference to the social impact of immigrants. The Immigration Minister stated that:

> to say somebody who comes here for three years as a student is not here, so doesn't count, is just absurd…The idea that somebody can be here for three, four, five years or longer but in some way do not have an impact. They are living somewhere, so they are having an impact on housing. They will be taking public transport. If they are here for three years, it is quite likely they use the health service. All the immigration pressures on the public services, which we all know about, are as affected by an individual student as they are by an individual on a work permit. (BIS Committee 2013, p. 5)

A "migrant" here is defined on the basis of their social impact. The implication is that social pressures on public services are a key part of being an immigrant, as will be further explored below. The definition of students as migrants is consistent with discourse from the PMI era (Home Office 2002, 2006; Blair 2004; UKBA 2008). However, during this period, they and other skilled immigrants were defined as "contributing" rather than "impacting", and are seen as desirable. Thus, while the formal definition may be the same, associated meanings have changed.

Another key facet of the understanding of a "migrant" is their border-crossing: a foreign citizen entering the UK is an immigrant. However, this is belied by the methodology of the data collection. The International Passenger Survey collects data on everyone who crosses international borders to enter the country with the intent to remain for over a year. This includes British citizens returning from a stay abroad (Blinder 2012). In 2010, this category constituted 16% of immigrants to the UK. Net migration figures therefore include the movement of UK citizens, which is rarely highlighted in policy discourses. This suggests that the technical collection of data relies on understandings of "migrant" which are not commonly shared by the public, yet the statistics themselves have the discursive power to impact how the public perceives the problem (Bacchi 2009, Q5).

Conceptually, it is problematic to categorise students as immigrants, as it reduces their experiences and individuality to a single dimension: their border-crossing (King and Raghuram 2013). As with the categorisation of students as international, the distinction fundamentally "others" them, creating a binary (Bacchi 2009) in student populations between the norm—home students—and the Other—international migrants. In consequence, they are subjected to a range of additional technologies of government. The effect on students is clear: they are made to feel insecure, frustrated, and disempowered by immigration processes (Marginson, et al, 2010). They report feeling insulted, humiliated, and being treated "not treated like a student but rather as a potential criminal" (UKCISA 2011, p. 27). Justifying this point of difference with reference to the social and economic impacts of immigrations (on housing, transport, health care, etc.) implies that students do not have the right to use such infrastructure in the host country. It also implies that migrants use make disproportionate use of services. This generates insecurity for students who have no entitlement to access essential services, which could potentially be withheld.

It is entirely possible to define students other than through their immigration status. Even Enoch Powell (cited in Acton 2011, p. 3), in his famous *Rivers of Blood* speech, differentiated between permanent settlement and students: "This has nothing to do with the entry of

Commonwealth citizens, any more than of aliens, into this country for the purposes of study or improving their qualifications…They are not, and never have been, immigrants". If he, the lodestone of radical opposition to immigration, identifies students as distinct from immigrants, this categorisation is not inevitable or "natural". The distinction between students and immigrants is consonant with public perceptions of immigration (Blinder 2012) as people also reported seeing a difference between students and immigrants. King and Raghuram (2013) propose an alternative: that mobility can be understood as a continuum from "local travel" to "global travel". This would emphasise the continued global movement that many international students are likely to experience, and the domestic or regional mobility experienced by home students. Such a redefinition would minimise the binary division created between "home" and "international" students, and could be combined with an increased emphasis on student rights to enhance the security of students who were not formally differentiated from their peers.

## Reducing Immigration: A Numbers Game

The way statistics have been gathered informs the representation of the problem of "too many" international students. The collection of information is a key technology for governance, a way to control the population (Foucault 1977; Rose and Miller 2008). Yet here, available data is limited, and sources contradictory (MAC 2010). The most widely used source, the International Passenger Survey, samples travellers at a range of ports, and may significantly under-represent international students departing (Mulley and Sachrajda 2011). The UKBA records visas issued, but since not all students who apply for visas come to study (UKBA 2010), this likely overestimates potential entrance. Since paper-based exit checks were abolished in 1998, the Home Office has not been able to establish which visa holders left the country. Therefore, the Home Office cannot determine exact numbers of international students in the country (Achato et al. 2010; MAC 2010) and likely overestimates, given that departures are underestimated. In the policy discourse, it is the UKBA data most commonly referred to (e.g. Green 2010; Cameron 2011), meaning that inflated numbers are discursively dominant. These discrepancies are rarely mentioned in central policy documents. Exit checks were reintroduced in 2015, which may alter the representation of official statistics. Although if they do identify fewer students in the country than previously estimated, this will no doubt be presented as a "fall in numbers" and attributed to the success of the policy rather than a simple change in the methodology of data collection.

Immigration is represented to be a problem when there is "too much" and when it is illegal. However, the Coalition Government solution was to reduce net migration, which counts *legal* entry (MAC 2010), and this is sustained in the Conservative Government commitments. Reductions in illegal immigration are by definition not calculated or measured, and would not contribute to achieving this goal (Mulley and Sachrajda 2011). The numbers of illegal immigrants cannot be known with any accuracy (Blair 2005). To attain immigration levels in the "tens of thousands", reductions have to occur in countable entry points, reducing legal net migration (Acton 2011). As the biggest category of immigrants, with high rates of compliance (Home Office 2010), students are a "soft target" (Cavanagh and Glennie 2012), easier to accessthan asylum seekers or illegal economic migrants. The discursive effect (Bacchi 2009, Q5) of reducing net migration is, therefore, to shift the burden onto reducing legal student migration, suggesting that the underlying political problem is the *public perception* of immigration numbers, not the numbers themselves. An alternative would therefore be to engage in a campaign to change the public perception of immigration, particularly with regards to international students, rather than changing international students.

## Undesirable Migrants and Public Concern

The PMI and Coalition policies both concur in their representation of students as migrants. But under Coalition policies, they become represented as undesirable and causing public concern. This is a key subject effect, with a number of implications.

Both terms "migrant" and "immigrant", used often interchangeably in public discourses, carry negative connotations caused by a discursive association between "migrants" and "asylum seekers" (Blinder 2012). Throughout Blair's premiership, there was a perception of an uncontrolled influx of asylum seekers (Spencer 2007), often reported in the vocabulary of natural disaster—floods, waves and flows, for example (Philo et al. 2013). This hostility towards asylum seekers then spilled over to apply to all those categorised as migrants (Spencer 2007), including students. More recently, the vocabulary has taken an entomological turn with David Cameron referring to “a swarm”, as of insects (BBC 2015). The hyperbolic tenor of this dehumanising language has created a veil of legitimacy for xenophobic sentiment.

This leads to the assumption that student immigration causes major public concern. Research for the Oxford University Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (Blinder 2012) confirms a high level of public concern, potentially influenced by intensive and hostile media coverage (Philo et al. 2013). This suggests that the discursive power of the media is potentially significant in the creation of this problem (Bacchi 2009). However, when thinking of students, members of the public were more likely to be positive than if considering permanent immigration (Blinder 2012). There are also significant critiques and attempts to disrupt this association between immigration and students (e.g. Milligan et al. 2011; Cavanagh and Glennie 2012; Universities UK, 2011). Therefore, the assumption in policy discourses that public concern about immigration encompasses students maybe called into question.

Public concern is typically linked to long-term or permanent migration. In categorising students as migrants, the aspiration to permanent residency is assumed. However, international students may alternatively be represented as planning a temporary stay (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002). Students frequently state that they hope to gain short-term work experience prior to returning home (Milligan et al. 2011). According to Home Office data, the 3% of students who reach permanent settlement after 5 years typically do so via work or family routes—legally, in other words (Achato et al. 2010). None of these particular situations cause public concern and most would accept that marriage, for example, is a valid reason for long-term migration (Blinder 2012). Yet these findings are not widely reproduced in the discourse. When thinking of immigration, most people do not think of temporary immigrants or students (Gilligan 2015). Instead, the numbers of those who stay for longer than 5 years—“more than a fifth”—are the focus (e.g. Green 2011; Cameron 2011), although these students are all doing so legally, through graduate work or continued study (Achato et al. 2010). Suter and Jandl (2008) estimate that typical global stay rates are between 10 and 30%, but may be higher for higher education levels and in particular subjects. The IPPR estimates 15% stay over 7 years in the UK (Cavanagh and Glennie, 2012). Therefore, comparatively the UK is on a par with, or lower, in terms of permanent student migration than other countries. Although the policy discourse reports this as excessive (e.g. May 2010b), it can also be understood as a small minority of the total population. For many countries, such stay rates are desirable and sought after, not problematic. The categorisation of students as migrants, therefore, has negative connotations of permanence, but can be thought about differently, as short-term migrants. As Universities UK (2011, p. 39) states, “International students are not permanent migrants to the UK”.

The public concern also rests on the perception of a burden on social services, which is represented to be a problem. Citizenship and permanent residency confer the right to accesshealthcare, education, social services and welfare benefits, while temporary or illegal migration does not (with the exception of health care) (Blinder 2012; Philo et al. 2013). Such access is seen as generous and students are assumed to burden public services to the same extent as permanent settlers (e.g. Cameron 2011; Home Office 2011). There is little accurate data on this question, but it is likely that in the short-term international students use health services, social services, and school-level education proportionately less even than their domestic counterparts (MAC 2010; George et al. 2011). Students are estimated to generate around 40% lower public costs than their UK equivalents (George et al. 2011), which could be seen as outweighed by their fee contributions. The assumption that students “take” in using public services during their stay, and more fundamentally, that they do not have the right to do so is, therefore, open to question. An alternative argument might be made that as they contribute so substantially to the economy and universities by internationalising the classroom, they have a right to use public services (e.g. UKCISA 2013b).

Indeed, it is possible that the public concern itself is overstated, a victim of political over-extrapolation. Instead, many studies find “public opinion regarding immigration is complex, ambiguous, malleable, volatile and divided” (Gilligan 2015, p. 1376). Different opinion polls ask different questions, making longitudinal comparison difficult (Ford et al. 2015). In the UK, the public distinguish between immigrant groups, differentiating between skills levels, regional origin, race and motives. Opinions also vary by the respondents’ personal experiences and the level of immigration in their immediate vicinity—the higher; the more positive attitudes tend to be (Gilligan 2015). In addition, there is a relationship of mutual influence between public concern and media attention: the media reports on matters of interest to the public, but the public determines which issues to be concerned about based on what they see in the media (Ford et al. 2015). This indicates that “public concern” is itself a discursive object, created within policy discourse as an object. It may be real, and certain people are clearly worried, but it does not exist independently of the way that policy and media construct it.

Where international students are exposed to this discourse of "taking rather than contributing" and see themselves depicted in public discourses as immigrants, they are likely to feel less secure and welcome in the country (Marginson et al. 2010). It is within the power of teachers and academic staff to mediate such perceptions, helping students to make meaning from them in the classroom. Having open, critical conversations to help contextualise public debates and xenophobic sentiment can help mitigate students' feelings of alienation. But it requires that academic staff are aware of such discourses and prepared to engage in such conversations, and supported in doing so by their institutions.

## Students Abusing the System: Surveillance, Compliance and Discipline

Public concern also encompasses illegal immigration, which for international students means "abuse of the system", as presented above (Q1) (Spencer 2007; Blinder 2012). The consensus on reducing "abuse" of the system is clear, dominant and rarely challenged (Q6). Although there is widespread criticism in the sector of UKBA regulations and implementation (e.g. Jenkins 2014), there are few challenges to the need to reduce "abuse" (e.g. Universities UK 2011), or the right of the state to take such action, so the sector as a whole is compliant (UKBA 2010). Institutions comply by collecting and sharing attendance data, by maintaining documentation about students' accommodation and visa status, and by reporting students' academic status to the Home Office. Academic staff likewise comply with those institutional requirements. The explicit consequences of "non-compliance" are that institutions have their right to recruit international students withdrawn, as happened to London Metropolitan University. For universities that rely heavily on international student fees, such a result is potentially catastrophic. There is therefore little institutional will to resist compliance, or even to engage critically or theoretically with the disciplinary consequences.

Students pose a risk, which is represented to be a problem: "we need to know that (students) are behaving properly when they are here" (Green 2011). This construct appears to have developed through policy borrowing from the USA where after the 9/11 attacks (Borjas 2002), perceptions of risk among international students increased significantly (Ewers and Lewis 2008). Security activities intensified as a result (Urias and Yeakey 2009). Terrorism per se is not typically associated with international students in British policy discourses, but the introduction of the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) (Merrick 2012) suggests a perception of related risks, namely the proliferation of "dangerous" knowledge (Urias and Yeakey 2009). The ATAS was established to monitor "postgraduate study in certain sensitive subjects, knowledge of which could be used in programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery" (FCO 2013), evoking similar concerns in the USA about leakage of sensitive information (Borjas 2002). This programme was introduced in 2007, only a few months after the July 2007 terrorist attacks in London, although no explicit link between the two is made.

Such perception of risk and fear (Urias and Yeakey 2009) has underpinned increased monitoring and surveillance of international students and their academic activities in the UK (Ewers and Lewis 2008; Merrick 2012; Jenkins 2014). The range of surveillance technologies on students is significant. When applying, students are required to provide evidence of their English language levels, finance and academic qualifications (UKBA 2013). The risk is therefore represented to be that students with restricted finances and with lower levels of English may undertake illegal work. Student work is categorised as suspect because the binary categorisation between legitimate and bogus students relies on whether students work or not (Robertson 2011). That English levels are a risk factor and test results as a form of insurance is also widely unquestioned (Marginson et al. 2010). Students from many countries are required to complete police registration upon arrival (UKCISA 2013a). On the basis of which countries are included on this list (e.g. Yemen, Colombia, China, and North Korea), risk factors appear here to focus on geographical nexuses of organised crime (National Crime Agency 2014) and the potential for security risks (MI5 2015). Biometric residence permits require students to provide biological data which is then used to legitimate their activities (opening a bank account, for example) (Warren and Mavroudi 2011). In 2014, the Government established a requirement for landlords and employers to verify the immigration status of tenants and employees (Immigration Act 2014). In combination with the attendance monitoring in place at many universities through technologies such as swipe cards and attendance logs, the cumulative effect is one of intense monitoring and surveillance, largely unchallenged by the sector.

Although Warren and Mavroudi (2011) found that many migrants did not object to this experience, others found it alienating, creating a point of difference between them and British citizens—a dividing practice (Foucault 1988; Bacchi 2009). In an educational context, this creates a "two-tier student identity" (Jenkins 2014, p. 1), where a student's legitimacy rests on their physical presence and other behaviours rather than on their academic activities. The campus becomes securitised and academic staff are placed in the position of border guards through the act of maintaining attendance registers and reporting on their students' behaviour to the Home Office (Jenkins 2014). If students are seen as autonomous academic actors, rather than migrants, their physical presence at particular "checkpoints" throughout the academic year could be considered of secondary importance. The imposition of migration regulations threatens traditional student autonomy, which demonstrates that at other times in history, international students have been conceived of differently, not primarily through their status as border-crossers (King and Raghuram 2013). A key silence here concerns students' rights—whether they have the agencyto choose to attend certain parts of their course, to select which aspects they engage with or the right to privacy, to withhold some of their personal biometric data. The simplest, easiest thing that we can do as academics and teachers is to start discussing this with students: asking them about their experience, what they understood from it, whether they object to this securitisation, sharing our own concerns. These conversations can bring the discursive mechanisms to light, offering a teachable moment for the development of a critical social consciousness. If we can do nothing else, it is at least our ethical responsibility to illuminate the state power at work directly on bodies in our classrooms.

The emphasis in the construction of "risk" as a discursive object is on risks to the UK and the visa system, not to the student themselves and the risks they experience. With regards to work, the problem could be represented to be the exploitation of students rather than the visa system. Marginsonet al. (2010) give an account of the systematic discrimination and exploitation of the student workforce in Australia, and argue that policies do not adequately protect students' rights as workers. Instead, as in the UK, policy "equates 'work rights' only with the 'right to work'" (Ibid., p. 127). While in the policy discourses there is no definitive evidence of such exploitation in the UK, this rights-based critique represents an alternative understanding of students as workers. Further, by inverting the question of "risk", this places students at the centre of the issue, asking what risks they experience not what risks they pose. This assumes that students are themselves ethical beings, not innate security risks. After all the vast majority of students are law-abiding citizens, posing no security risk and unlikely even to work illegally, not potentially violent radicals or criminals.

## Conclusion

Thus, representing students as migrants has become a discursive barrier to their recruitment in policy, particularly after the 2010 election of the Coalition Government. In contrast to the economic rationale for migration presented in the previous chapter, it found that the migration was negatively framed, in relation to public concern, perceived "abuse of the system" and pressure on public services. Where immigration leads to "low skilled employment", "bogus colleges", or "risk" it is argued that it should be reduced. The Coalition Government's drive to reduce net immigration impacted students as the biggest category of legal immigrants. Student migration is represented as a problem where they are also assumed to generate public concern, exploit public services, abuse the system and seek permanent settlement. They are also seen as a risk, and surveillance is the solution. This discussion has highlighted these assumptions and has demonstrated that there are alternative conceptual and discursive possibilities.

Disjunctures appear in the intersection of the discourses of migration with those of education, and those of economics. Although students are rarely explicitly linked with the threat of terrorism or the exploitation of the visa system to their own economic ends, they are monitored and surveyed as if they were. Although they are described as "the best and the brightest", they are suspected of wishing to work on illegally on the black market for below minimum wage. Although they are sought out by the country and institutions for their economic and educational potential, they are thought to be exploiting health and social services. The discursive assimilation of students with migrants has, therefore, come into conflict with the economic and pedagogical rationales. Students who are valued for their academic contributions, through their embodiment of cultural diversity, are nevertheless suspected of violating immigration regulations. Students who are sought after for their financial contributions are nevertheless prevented from entering the country because they do not meet increasingly selective criteria. Students who are supposed to be developing lasting respect and affiliation with the politics of a country are nevertheless interrogated by immigration officials and prevented from staying on after their degree, while experiencing increasingly hostile media representations. Policy discourses take too much for granted about the goodwill and predictable behaviours of international students.

What the policy discourse fails to consider is the impact of each rationale on the other, given students' agency. Why should a student who has been subjected to a rigorous and tedious biometric testing regime be positively disposed to the political values of a country? Why should a student who has been sent to stand in line at a police station for 3 h to register, and paid for the privilege, turn to the police as a safe institution? Why should a student who hears and reads hostile comments about immigrants seek out and build relationships with British people? Why should a student who has been offered a separate academic induction and has been subjected to different bureaucratic regimes to their domestic peers (and perhaps later sees extreme inebriation as part of Welcome Week) believe it to be their responsibility to educate their classmates? Students choose what to do, and they do so on the basis of what they see, hear and experience. When people are treated with suspicion rather than kindness, they respond with suspicion. That is not a conducive environment either for education or for the development of mutual respect, understanding and a sense of global citizenship.

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CHAPTER 9

# Conclusion

Policy discourses on international students have been dominated by rationales for or against international student recruitment. In essence, international students are discursively framed as desirable to the extent that they benefit the UK, solving key policy problems, which they are seen to do educationally, economically and politically. However, the debate on immigration problematises students as migrants, creating a barrier to their presence by framing them as less desirable for the UK. The three rationales in favour of recruitment have proved to be quite stable over changes in government, although shifts in emphasis have revealed discursive differences. Firstly, while international students are considered to enhance the UK's influence, this was conceived of in terms of public diplomacy under the PMI, and in terms of soft power under the Coalition IES. Secondly, while reputation was an important rationale through the period, the PMI sought to materially alter student experiences to generate satisfaction, whereas the Coalition IES relies exclusively on branding to do so. Thirdly, the economic rationale intensifies and comes to predominate under the Coalition IES, such that all engagement in international education is fundamentally justified in economic terms, whereas, under the PMI, other rationales were also important. Finally, immigration came to be seen as a counter-rationale under the Coalition Government, whereas under New Labour it was also seen as a positive incentive to engage in international student recruitment. These rationales have shaped the discursive representations of students.



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## How Have Students Been Represented?

Throughout the latter half of this book, representations of international students constructed through policy rationales have been exposed. I will now pull these together.

International students are seen as migrants. They are defined by their border-crossing and their nationality, in contrast to the supposed norm of students who study within the country of their birth and nationality. Incidentally, citizenship and residency are assumed to "naturally" coincide; a normal person is seen to reside permanently in the country of their nationality. In the UK, international students can be seen either as legitimate migrants and "genuine students" or as "bogus". This is defined primarily with reference to their paid employment. A genuine student's principal concern is their study, and work should be only an afterthought in their experience. A bogus student, on the other hand, needs or wants to work a substantial number of hours, in addition to or instead of devoting the majority of their attention to their education. They are therefore seen to be abusing or exploiting the system. Genuine students can also be seen as desirable migrants, to the extent that they possess skills in demand in the workforce. After graduation, highly skilled students, or those with enough money to invest in entrepreneurship, become sought-after migrants—for a limited time. They are not seen as desirable permanent immigrants, or as entitled to work as part of their education. They are instead classified by the degree of risk (security and economic) they are seen to pose, categorised on the basis of their nationality and the education provider they are enrolled with, and become increasingly subject to surveillance. At the heart of these discourses is an understanding of human capacity as subject to points-based evaluation, subordinating individuality to the driver of the knowledge economy.

Second, international students are seen as consumers of international education as a product. Marketing and branding attract them to a country and its education, building meanings for international education. As consumers, students purchase a set of services, and an experience. Their satisfaction generates perceptions of quality. They are encouraged to take action as consumers, through complaints, customer satisfaction surveys, and exerting demands on the strength of their payments. Students are seen to make rational decisions based on a construct of human capital, investing in their future employability. Yet they are also seen as fundamentally passive. Finally, as satisfied consumers, they are also seen as a marketing resource, as brand ambassadors who help to promote the UK through word of mouth, valued for their capacity to generate reputational capital.

Third, international students are seen as a means to make money, economic resources, measured in volume. Their presence is attributed to the successful branding and marketing of the UK higher education sector overseas. They are vectors of direct income, part of an education export industry, within which competition drives intrinsically beneficial growth, generating income for the country. Through their fees, accommodation and associated spending, the UK acquires a relative competitive advantage. When justifying their presence, international students are almost invariably referred to as "bringing in money". This is seen to benefit institutions, local communities and regions, and above all the country. Their presence is valued to the extent that they benefit the UK, and the responsibilities of the UK to international students are not significant.

Fourth, international students are seen as educational resources. Their presence in British classrooms makes them intercultural spaces, creating opportunities for home students to acquire skills and knowledge necessary for employment in the globalised workforce. International students' knowledge of their home countries and cultures means they can act as resources, as windows on the world for immobile home students and each other. Read through a culturalist lens which ascribes behaviour and deficit to national origins, international students are passive vectors of globalised knowledge whose mere presence is adequate to enhance quality. They contribute to internationalisation at home, and facilitate the introduction of an international curriculum. The implication of this representation is that they are expected to be knowledgeable regarding the subject they have come to study in application to their home country and prepared and confident in sharing this knowledge. While this is often presented as an inclusive and empowering model, acknowledging students' prior experiences and understanding, it could be experienced differently by students.

Fifth, international students are seen as in deficit. Where they struggle with or resist the role of educational resource, or other dimensions of the student role, they are represented to be in linguistic or academic deficit. Expectations of international students which the institution cannot meet are represented to be unrealistic. Students are constructed as "dependent" or "needy", and made responsible for their needs. Students are expected to adapt to the institution and the UK, rather than the reverse. Although there is much discussion of "support", this often takes the form of visa advice, counselling, and remedial skills support, rather than academic aid. Students' deficit is often associated with their culture and nationality, implying a cultural deficit for which a British higher education is the remedy. Thus, national culture is seen as both a resource as above, and a liability.

Sixth, international students are seen as ambassadors for the UK. The global diplomacy narrative represents students as influential, elite, understanding of "British values" and sympathetic to them. They are imagined to be converted during their stay to "British values", particularly a (notional) liberal democratic ideology, and to develop a political affinity for the country, its people, institutions and products. These relationships are represented as generating soft power for the UK, increasing its influence through a network of alumni ambassadors overseas. Such students are also seen to be future leaders of their country, invested in its political and economic development and engaging in international higher education in order to progress their country. Therefore, they are seen to be likely to hold positions of influence in the future, which they can exert in favour of the UK, in tribute to the positive experiences and lasting relationships they built here. The alumni ambassador is premised on a model of the "elite" student, often a major scholarship holder.

These representations overlap, mutually reinforce each other, and contradict each other. However, they are all premised on certain commonalities. Firstly, all these representations present students as passive. Their views, opinions, political ideologies, experiences and future trajectories are seen as malleable, capable of being influenced and changed by institutions or national policy. There is little sense in the policy discourse that students may have fiercely held political, personal or religious beliefs, or influential previous experiences, which will not change and may influence the meanings they ascribe to their experiences of the UK. Nor is there a sense that they may be conscious and aware of these endeavours and may selectively, knowingly, decide which to engage with and which to resist, or pay lip service to. There is an assumption that profound transformative identity shifts occur for all students in predictable patterns, despite abundant evidence that such shifts are highly individual, locally situated, and socially mediated. Secondly, these representations are premised on a homogenous model of who international students are, allowing quantification. When students are discussed as educational resources, or ambassadors, or in academic deficit, there is rarely a differentiation between students. Where differentiation does occur, it is typically on a national or regional, characterising “East Asian students” or “Arabic students”, as if a middle-class male agnostic student from an elite private school is Seoul is equivalent to a Christian public school female student from a modest family background in Guangzhou—or indeed as if any two people can ever be said to have the same experience or interpretations. Explanations of student behaviour or dissatisfaction are sought in quantifiable demographic characteristics, rather than in individuality, agency or experiential dimensions.

## How Has International Higher Education Been Represented?

Policy rationales also discursively construct multiple intersecting representations of international higher education.

The first and most dominant representation is a marketised vision of international higher education. Globally, higher education is seen as a marketplace, where providers compete for student-consumers through marketing and branding. The ultimate aim is seen to be economic success. Higher education is also seen as a product, as something that can be brought, sold and possessed by individuals, in the form of educational capital. It is manifested and signified by the qualification. Yet this product is also seen as comprising a set of services: teaching, access to resources, skills training, and support. It is also represented as an experience, akin to tourism or leisure, where the provider is responsible for what the consumer experiences. “The student experience” is a commodity itself. Marketisation produces multiple understandings of international higher education: as a marketplace, a commodity, a product and set of services.

The second representation is of international higher education as a national industry for export. In this representation, higher education is equated with manufacturing and service industries, competitive in a global marketplace. From the perspective of state policy, industries help to maintain national advantage, by enhancing economic status and global reputation. In this model, global growth is not seen to advantage the UK unless a disproportionate share of the market can be acquired. Higher education is seen as an industry where the UK has a traditional, historical advantage and therefore significant gains can be made. It also confers prestige, generating political advantage. International higher education is seen as both the sign of political influence (in that it is capable of attracting students) and as the generator thereof (in that their future actions increase political influence). The imperialist origins of this advantage are not seen as problematic.

International higher education is also seen as a safe, controllable intercultural contact zone. The need for intercultural interaction and fluency is acknowledged; however, it may also be seen as a risk. Recent debates around radicalisation, for example, suggest that there may be political concerns about the unpredictable consequences of intercultural contact. In international higher education, however, intercultural contact has a clear instrumental agenda: to increase employability in global labour markets. Classroom conversations can be steered by staff, are purposeful in their curricular links, and other events in the university have predictably anodyne intentions. Student union field trips to popular cultural attractions, for example, foster the touristic experiential narrative. International higher education is not seen as a political space, raising critical awareness of global injustices.

As such, international higher education is seen as an opportunity for the cheap global education of home students, enhancing their employability and integration within a globalised labour market. With relatively low rates of outward mobility of British students, there is a policy concern that the UK may lose its labour market advantage if its graduates are not equipped to work in global businesses or abroad. Internationalisation of the curriculum is seen as the solution, but this is a major, resource intensive project, which does not provide the interpersonal contact required to make bone-deep change. Relying on international students' presence in classrooms as educational resources, however, offers institutions the opportunity to avoid cost-heavy curricular redesign.

Finally, international higher education is seen as a route for migration. It is seen as both a way to attract desired migrants, and as a veil for undesired migrants to obscure their "true" intentions. Institutions as sponsors are positioned as the primary beneficiary, who therefore demands increased migration. They are implicated in the enforcement of migration regulations, and held accountable for infringements. The state has the authority to regulate the demands for students made by institutions, and the responsibility to control migration in international higher education.

## What Has Changed?

Policy discourses on international students represent them in complex, interwoven, plural ways. They have changed since 1999, but not in strict association with changes in political parties in control. Overall, there has been more continuity than change. Both Coalition and Labour administrations have valued and rationalised the recruitment of international students to the extent that they benefit the UK, framing them as solutions to policy problems. This is a reasonable endeavour for national policy, but privileges the interests of already powerful entities (the UK higher education sector, its institutions and the British state) over less powerful, potentially marginalised individuals far from home. Both Coalition and Labour administrations have sought the income from international students, the reputational gain earned by virtue of their presence, the potential benefits to higher education for home students, and the hope of increased political influence. In the discourse of the Coalition Government, the idea that international graduates might fill domestic labour market skills gaps has largely been dropped, and the negative perception of excessive immigration has instead become dominant. Both Coalition and Labour governments, however, adopted a discourse of exclusiveness and selectivity in attempting to attract the "best and the brightest" students. They took different actions to achieve this, the Coalition Government opting to rule out certain students who did not meet threshold standards, and the Labour Governments seeking to attract and reward desired students. There is more attention paid under Labour Governments, particularly in secondary policy documents, to the actual education and classroom experience than is apparent under the Coalition Government.

At the heart of these representations, however, is a key binary categorisation: international students are "othered", defined by their difference, by the adjective "international" which says they deviate from the presumed norm of "home" students. Even narratives which seek to value this difference entrench and replicate it by the discursive reinforcement of accepted social categorisations. In other words, every time we accept that something meaningful can be said about "international students" as a group, we perpetuate the conceptual marginalisation of a social group.

Even critiques which seek to empower the very group they discuss, by identifying them as a group reproduce the division—including this book.

Yet policy critiques need to be part of the discourses which they critique, because understanding discourses as socially constructed requires participating in them. That means using the discursive formations, even while dismantling them. There is no way out of the discourse, no way to stand outside it. Because UK policy talks about and defines international students as a meaningful category, this book has also done so. But, I have not taken "international students" themselves as my subjects. Instead I have taken their discursive representation as my subject and sought to critique it through a problematisation framework.

This book has contributed to the emerging field of research on international student policy and by extension to international HE, by mapping its iterations in the UK, establishing what has happened, what has been said, what has changed and what has stayed consistent. It has also linked education policy to migration policy. This study builds on the work of Humfrey (2011), Geddie (2014), Walker (2014) by taking a critical approach to representations of international students in policy, a new approach for the UK. These findings extend similar approaches taken by research from Australia into new geographical territory. It has also made methodological contributions. It demonstrates that Bacchi's framework of questions can usefully be applied to UK HE policy, and this work is one of the first to adopt this approach. The results also show that systematic approaches to inductive text analysis can be facilitated through software, as this is one of the few studies to employ CAQDAS in policy text analysis in UK higher education.

## What Are the Alternatives?

I have sustained an attempt at grammatical objectivity throughout this book, which I have dropped for the purposes of this conclusion. I identify myself as an international student, not in a facile "we are all international" motto, but as an intrinsic part of my life history. I spent the majority of my childhood in Indonesia and Benin, and all of my adolescence in the USA. In every new education system, I became the "international student". I spent a year in France on a study abroad programme, using my second nationality, and operating in what I perceive as my second culture; again as the international student. On returning to the UK as a postgraduate, I imagined myself coming back to my "home system", but I was classified as "international" on the basis of my residency, and my lack of knowledge about the higher education system suggested that I was indeed a stranger at home. Yet I am white in ethnicity, British in (first) nationality, and a native English speaker. In writing on international students I have therefore frequently been alienated by the discourse: firstly, I have been categorised as "international" by virtue of my residency, a categorisation I resisted as I identified as British and English. Secondly, when the discourse on "international students" has so clearly constructed a racialised, nationalised Other, I found no place for myself there. I later taught students with similar stories: a British student of Nigerian origin educated in Saudi Arabia, classified as international; and a Hong Kong student with a British passport who completed secondary school in the UK, still classified as international. They are caught in a system which represents them as a homogenous entity. So are their colleagues. So when I talk about "us", I mean all those who have been categorised, in one form or another, as "international students".

Firstly, we can be seen as having hybrid, fluid, multiple identities rather than fixed or nascent identities (Madge et al. 2014). International education can be seen as a multi-sited and multi-scalar transnational social field (Gargano 2009), where there is a continuum of mobility rather than a dichotomy (King and Raghuram 2013). Students can be seen as grounded in multiple social spaces, geographically situated and socially mediated, where meanings are ascribed by individuals (Gargano 2009). We can be seen as agents in the creation and maintenance of our own identity(ies). We can be seen as embodied individuals, where gender, ethnicity, age, and sexuality mediate experience and create meanings (Sin 2009; Holloway et al. 2012). Students can be seen as "workers, political activists, or family members" (Raghuram 2013, p. 141), as well as students. We are socially connected in friendship and kinship networks which may be with other international students, with host country nationals, and with family and friends overseas. One student was a mature Chinese student from a rural province, of minority ethnic origin whose native language was the regional dialect, not Mandarin. In a class of 18-year-old privileged Mandarin speakers, she talked openly about how isolated she felt. Her closest friend became a Saudi Arabian mother of three; they had more in common than she had with the rest of the class. I saw similar friendships emerge between Singaporean and Colombian students, bonded by their work ethic and high achievement. Most students are at various times more or less stressed, anxious and lonely. This can be understood as intrinsic to the condition of international higher education, implying distance, strangeness and constant change, rather than as an individual deficit. "The international student experience" is a notional, arbitrary collective, unlikely to lead to the predictable development of a cosmopolitan identity. Indeed, students may adopt an instrumental approach to acquiring the trappings of cosmopolitanism, as a tool for social advantage rather than transformative personal change. All of these possibilities coexist in plural, fragmented forms, made whole only by the individual.

International students can be seen as possessing varying degrees of intersecting capitals: social, economic, educational, and cultural. Many may belong to a socio-economic elite, at least to upper middle classes, but others may be financially insecure (Choudaha and de Wit 2014) or from rural, working class backgrounds (Sin 2009). While we may be personally ambitious, looking for respect, status and wealth, others may be fulfilling a parental ambition, sacrificing our own interests or passions out of filial duty (Sin 2009). Equally, this ambition may not be a choice: we are often caught in an opportunity trap, paying heavy personal costs to realise opportunities in an intensely competitive workforce (Brown 2003). Such aspirations could be argued to reflect an internalisation of economic representations, where we measure our worth in financial contributions and wealth. Ambition may of course not be purely economic; it may be for relative status, or a particular occupation, or the realisation of an entrepreneurial plan. It may simply be to learn. For some of us, ambition plays little role in our desire for international higher education, and we are motivated instead by personal reasons and a desire for different experiences (Choudaha and de Wit 2014). For many of us, international higher education is a continuation in globally mobile lives (Madge et al. 2014), and is a natural extension rather than a major decision. It may be seen as a route to permanent migration (King and Raghuram 2013), or as temporary (Gargano 2009). Migration intentions can change over the course of an international education, as friendships, marriages, and careers develop (Raghuram 2013). For some, international higher education is a way to pursue elite higher education (Brooks and Waters 2011). For others, it is the last resort after exclusion from domestic higher education. For still others, it may be the only option to pursue a particular subject or course. Others may seek the cultural capital from an extended stay overseas. The complex interactions of different forms of capital mediate both access to international higher education, experiences within it, and trajectories after.

The marketisation narrative positions students as economic beings, rather than political. Where our political views are mentioned, we are assumed to be easily influenced, to change our ideologies as a result of cultural adaptation and intercultural learning. Instead, international students can be seen as having stable political orientations and opinions, which define their engagement in international education, rather than being defined by it. They can be seen as patriotic, committed to the interests of their own country (Holloway et al. 2012), positioning themselves as ambassadors *to* the UK, rather than from it. Rather than acquiring liberal democratic values, many of us are already committed to them. We can also be apolitical, disengaged entirely from the political process. International higher education could be seen as a site for reciprocal influence and exchange, rather than uni-directional.

Above all, we could be represented as agents, in control of our futures, our migrations, and our education. Instead of educational resources to be exploited, we could be seen to be in a necessary engagement in intellectual production, with a right to critique as full partners (Madge et al. 2014). International students could be seen as knowledge creators and generators, co-creating resources as active agents in learning and education (Naidoo et al. 2011). This would imply a full and radical commitment to a critical pedagogy (Buckley 2014), alert to and explicit about post-colonial mentalities and power relationships (Sin 2009). International higher education could be seen as an endeavour based on care, responsibility and relationships, rather than transactions (Madge et al. 2009).

Finally, we could be seen as temporary citizens with a full suite of political and democratic rights (Marginson et al. 2010), with long-term vested interests and therefore a political voice in the country where we study. Instead of being endowed with a limited range of rights by virtue of our economic contribution, international students could be seen as possessing a full range of freedoms—to learn, work, study, love, migrate—by virtue of universal human rights.

Instead of representing international higher education as a marketplace, or a resource for competitive national advantage, it could be seen as a global public good, rather than a private good (Marginson 2016). On a national level, higher education is seen to be a public good where there are cultural, social and economic benefits which result from a higher overall level of education. If these benefits are seen on a global scale, then it can be considered a global public good. In this representation, a user-pays model may not be seen to be appropriate if the benefits are understood to be felt beyond in the individual. Similarly, the way in which education is marketed to the individual student might change, communicating instead with families, communities and international networks. Finally, the way that universities structure their curricula would change, moving beyond a narrow individualistic focus on graduate outcomes and attributes towards a broader understanding of students as socially networked with the potential to create positive social change as a result of their education.

## Where Next?

This book has addressed a number of questions which still merit further scrutiny opening up avenues for more research in the future. From a global policy mobility perspective, it could form the basis for establishing relationships between changes in international student policy across a range of countries and build on work on exploring how policies travel (Geddie 2014). For example, it is apparent that the PBS migration system was largely borrowed from Australia; similarly, the British Council branding initiative appears to have been imitated by Canada. Policy seems to travel bilaterally and unsystematically.

Narrowing down into the UK, this study could move out from discourses in texts and into discourses in life, the extent to which the representations from policy impact the way that international students represent themselves, and see themselves represented. It could also examine the way that higher education professionals represent international students, how they are refracted in institutional discourses.

Moving away from public policy discourses, accessing policy actors, ex or current, could explore (albeit partially and retrospectively) informal discursive representations. An alternative window on public discourses would be to examine the media representations of international students, as Philo et al. (2013) did with refugees. A genre-focused study could, using this corpus, examine the chains of reproduction wherein a single document can be reinterpreted and recycled in different forms: from research report to policy, to speech, to press release, for example. A critical discourse analysis could sample equivalent genres from this diverse corpus such as speeches and conduct a linguistic analysis on the representations to further substantiate the inferences made here.

## So What Now?

The findings of this research offer the HE sector in the UK, and elsewhere, an enhanced critical awareness of these discursive representations in policy, and the extent to which they may influence institutional, disciplinary and individual decision-making, styles of talking and ways of being. Discourses have the power to define and limit the ways that we live our lives and think about ourselves, so they can profoundly influence academic, institutional, and students' identities and lived experiences. The danger in having such a substantial gap in the literature on this subject is that sector actors may be unaware of the ways in which they unconsciously reproduce and act out discursive representations with which they may be philosophically deeply at odds. I do not advocate an alternative set of representations because students are individuals, and as such as varied, unpredictable, and changeable, neither universally "weak and vulnerable" or "strong and resilient". Any attempt to construct alternative representations would generate its own disciplinary effects, disempowering students as agents in new, creative and subtle ways.

For policy, this study offers a reason to think differently about international students in UK HE. Firstly, the competitive zero-sum model of the market is profoundly damaging to global equality, development and in the long run, stability. Increasing market-share deprives another country of its piece of a finite pie. It also means perpetuating extant inequalities—by seeking out people who are already potential higher education students of one country or another and offering them additional advantages, it creates a class of hyper-educated people while others lack access to basic primary education. By then further expecting that those people will go home after they finish studying, the current policy is creating its own demise. Effectively, current international HE recruitment sends home a group of well-educated, privileged people with all the tools to set up domestic higher education in the UK's model. Just as the UK once sold guns, before selling the industrial technology to manufacture them, the country and the HE sector are now selling the intellectual technology to make higher education. We are creating our own competitors—if we are doing our jobs well. A lasting international HE sector, therefore, needs different rationales to lead to different representations of students.

It is essential for academic researchers as beneficiaries of the IHE system to acknowledge the discursive power of policy over international students. Because national policy often sets the terms of public discourse, its representations of international students may be having significant unexplored consequences, perpetuated by the academy. Silence on post-colonial implications of othering students by their country of citizenship or residence and their culture represents compliance. Reproduction of consumer and deficit models of students are already part of students' self-subjectification. Cooperation in a diplomatic narrative implies a primacy to British foreign policy objectives. It is the ethical responsibility for those of us who participate in IHE to critically examine how the policy represents students, and if necessary, to resist and disrupt it. This is a necessary precursor to the emancipatory, caring, critical, empowering pedagogy to which most institutions and academics are dedicated.

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# Appendix A
# Policy Actors

## Departmental Bodies

**BIS—Department for Business, Innovation and Skills—**previously DIUS—Department of Innovation Universities and Skills. The Department has responsibility for economic growth, education, skills, businesses and consumers. It incorporated **The Department for Trade and Industry** from 2007.

**The Cabinet Office** supports the Prime Minister and the running of government. It is a ministerial department which takes the lead in certain policy areas.

Variously, **the Department for Education and Employment, Department for Education and Skills** and **the Department for Education** was the department responsible for the education system in England and had responsibility for higher education until 2007.

**The Department for Work and Pensions** is a ministerial department responsible for pensions, welfare and child maintenance policy.

**The Department for Culture, Media and Sport** is a ministerial department with responsibility for promoting cultural and artistic heritage, innovation, and creative industries.

**The Foreign and Commonwealth Office** is a ministerial department that promotes the UK's interests overseas, dealing with security, promoting exports and providing consular services.

**Home Office**—a ministerial department in charge of immigration, crime, policing and counter-terrorism.



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The **Ministry of Defence** is a ministerial department responsible for the armed forces, intelligence and security services.

**The Scottish Executive,** now **the Scottish Government** is the devolved government for Scotland with responsibility for health, education, justice, rural affairs, housing and the environment.

**UK Border Agency** (now **UK Visas and Immigration**) is part of the Home Office and manages visa, asylum and citizenship applications.

**UK Trade and Industry** is a non-ministerial department responsible for promoting inward investment and exports.

**The Welsh Office** is a UK government department which coordinates devolved responsibilities, representing the UK government in Wales and Welsh interests in Westminster.

### *Non-departmental Public Bodies*

The Government defines an NDPB as a "body which has a role in the processes of national government, but is not a government department or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from ministers" (Cabinet Office and Efficiency and Reform Group, 2014)

The **British Council** works overseas to develop cultural relations, by providing services in English language, arts, education and society, in the interests of fostering ties between the UK and the rest of the world. It included the British Council Education Counselling Service, which coordinated its higher education recruitment and marketing activities, and Educ@tion UK, a brand and recruitment website. It is an NDPB sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**Migration Advisory Committee** is an advisory NDPB sponsored by the home office which advises the government on migration issues, specifically the impacts of immigration, limits under the points-based system and skills shortages in the labour market.

The **Higher Education Funding Council for England** is sponsored by the BIS and distributes funding to universities and colleges.

The **Higher Education Academy**—responsible for enhancing teaching and learning in UK higher education, aimed at improving the student experience. Receives majority of funding from HEFCE to whom it is responsible.

The **International Unit** is a research and policy body funded by HEIs.

The **International Education Council** is formed of stakeholders from the education sector and chaired by the Minister responsible for universities.

**Quality Assurance Agency**—under contract with the funding councils, independent of government and HEIs, entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education as a statutory function.

The **Higher Education Statistics Agency**—collects and monitors statistics for subscribing higher education institutions on behalf of HEFCE, although it is formally independent.

**Research Council UK** is a partnership between the UK's seven research funding councils, distributes funding and supports research.

**UK Council for International Student Affairs**—a national advisory body in the interests of international students. Independent body, funded in part by grants from the BIS and Scottish Government, and by membership subscriptions from HEIs. Previously known as UKCOSA, UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs.

*Independent bodies involved in implementation and research for policy*

**The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services** is a professional body for careers and employability in higher education.

**DTZ** is a commercial real-estate organisation, which also includes a research team covering market trends.

**i-graduate** is a commercial organisation which tracks student and stakeholder opinions for institutions and countries.

**Ipsos Mori** is a leading market research company in the UK.

# Appendix B
# Coding Structure

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alumni | Ambassadors | | |
| | Economic benefits of IS to UK | Income from international students | Fees income |
| | Enhance culture | | |
| | Enhance education | | |
| Benefits to the UK | Enhance global diplomacy | Mutual understanding | |
| | | Relationships | |
| | | Soft power | |
| | | Trust | |
| | Enhance global trade | | |
| | Enhance local community | | |
| | Britain is GREAT | | |
| | Education UK brand | | |
| | English language reputation | | |
| Brand and the UK offer | Reputation | Perceptions of UK HE | |
| | | Reputation for Quality | |
| | | Visas cause negative 'misperception' of UK | |



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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education as market | Attract & recruit IS to UK | | | |
| | Competition | Competitor countries | | |
| | | UK's market share | | |
| | | | Barriers, limits, constraints | |
| | | | Decline | |
| | | | | Global demographic change |
| | Demand | Growth | Opportunity | Domestic HE overseas capacity |
| | | | | Potential international students |
| | Education as product | | | |
| | Education export earnings—general | | | |
| | Education marketing | | | |
| | Foreign Direct Investment | | | |
| | Industry forecast | | | |
| Education as pedagogy | Education as change | | | |
| Inclusion | Discrimination and racism | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| International students | Academic credentials—requirements for IS | | |
| | Achievements | Awards | |
| | Age | | |
| | | Career potential & employability | |
| | | English | |
| | | Intercultural experience | |
| | Benefits of UK HE | Personal Growth and development | |
| | | Professional networks | |
| | | Social status—elite | |
| | Bogus students | | |
| | Brightest and the best | | |
| | Characteristics | | |
| | | Agents | |
| | Choice & decision | Influencers | |
| | | Motivations | |
| | Cost | | |
| | Diversity | | |
| | Entry requirements | | |
| | EU students | | |
| | Expectations | | |
| | | Academic difficulties | |
| | | Accommodation | |
| | | Admissions | |
| | | Emotions | |
| | | Friendships | |
| | | Hardship | |
| | | Learning | Learning experiences |
| | Experience | | Academic experience |
| | | Post-study work | |
| | | Safety | |
| | | Satisfaction | |
| | | Social integration | |
| | | Teaching | |
| | | The international student experience | |
| | | Transition | |
| | | Welcomed | |
| | | Work during study | |
| | Gender | | |
| | Help and support to IS | | |
| | home country | | |
| | Institution | | |
| | Lower standards | | |
| | Migrants | Dependants | |
| | | Return home | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Numbers | Over-dependence | | |
| | Perceptions of the UK | | | |
| | Religion | | | |
| International students (cont) | Return home | | | |
| | Scholarships | | | |
| | Student engagement | | | |
| | Student voice | | | |
| | Students as customers | Customers | | |
| | | Consumers | | |
| | Subjects of study | | | |
| | Vulnerable | Needs | | |
| International-isation | | | | |
| | Brain drain | | | |
| | Human capital | | | |
| Knowledge economy | Knowledge economy—attract workers | | | |
| | Skills shortage | | | |
| | Asylum | | | |
| | Controlled migration | | | |
| | Emigration | | | |
| | | Compliance | | |
| | | | Sponsors | |
| Migration | | PBS (Points-based system) | Student funding requirement | |
| | Immigration system | | Student language requirement | |
| | | Rules | | |
| | | Visa system—problems | Abuse | Bogus colleges |
| | | Visas—system is working | | |
| | Migration—benefits | | | |
| | Migration—issues | ATAS | | |
| | Public perceptions of immigration | Public concern | | |
| | | Public confidence | | |
| | Development and aid | | | |
| Other countries | Impact on home countries of IS recruitment | | | |
| | Overseas government attitude | | | |
| | System to system engagement | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Income from other sectors | Income from alternative providers | |
| | | Income from English language teaching | |
| | | Institutional partnerships | |
| | | Products and services | Publishing |
| | | | Qualification business |
| Other sectors | Located elsewhere | Technology | |
| | | TNE | TNE—opportunity |
| | | | TNHE |
| | Overseas universities in UK | | |
| | | Alternative HE providers | |
| | | English language teaching | English language teaching opportunities |
| | Physically present | FE | |
| | | Life-long learning | |
| | | Schools | |
| | | Income from research | |
| | Research | Research collaboration | |
| | | Research excellence | |
| Quality | Reputation for quality | | |
| Responsibility for international students | | | |
| Rights—students | | | |
| Rights—universities | | | |
| | Funding and investment | | |
| | Nature of policy | | |
| Role of UK government | PMI—Prime Minister's Initiative | | |
| | Privatisation | Joint ventures | |
| | | Private equity investment | |
| Student mobility—global | UK students abroad | | |
| Target or goal | | | |
| Terrorism | | | |
| UK HE characteristics | Capacity for international student recruitment | | |

# Appendix C
# Extracts of Coding Reports

## Attract and Recruit International Students

<Internals\\Policy \\Main\\1999 Blair PMI Launch at LSE Attracting more International Students>—§ 3 references coded [7.33% Coverage]

Reference 1—3.57% Coverage

Today, we are launching a long-term strategy to reinforce the United Kingdom as a first choice for the quality of study and the quality of our welcome to international students.

Reference 2—2.04% Coverage

We are introducing a package of measures to help encourage students from overseas to study in the UK. We will offer to international students a new welcome and more open doors.

Reference 3—1.72% Coverage

We have the measures in place, but we are also setting tough targets for recruitment. We want to have 25 per cent of the global market share of Higher Education students and we want to increase the number of international students studying in Further Education institutions by 100 per cent. Our aim is to reach these targets by 2005. Tough targets, but deliverable.

<Internals\\Policy \\Main\\1999 British Council Brand Report>—§ 1 reference coded [0.30% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.30% Coverage

This document provides a status update on the development of the British Education brand. It follows publication of the preliminary report



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In May 1999—"Branding British Education" and the launch of a government sponsored initiative to attract more international students to the UK.

<Internals\\Policy \\Main\\2000 British Council realising_our_potential>—§ 8 references coded [2.81% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.27% Coverage

The report does not cover the many positive things happening in institutions, the British Council or with the very welcome Prime Minister's initiative to attract more international students to UK education. The report deliberately focuses on our weaknesses so that we might recognise them and address them. How we react will determine how successful UK education will be in the international education marketplace in the early part of the 21st century.

Reference 2—0.06% Coverage

• Relatively unambitious recruitment targets; • Little detailed understanding of the potential of current and future markets; • Inadequate attention being paid to long term planning;

Reference 3—0.17% Coverage

• A failure to recognise the long term recruitment benefits of strategic relationship building and the scope for staff exchanges;

Reference 4—0.14% Coverage

A framework for the development of a world-class international student recruitment strategy for institutions.

### *Alumni: Ambassadors*

<Internals\\Policy\\2000 British Council Realising our potential A strategic framework for making UK education the first choice for international students>—§ 1 reference coded [0.12% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.12% Coverage

Alumni ambassadors

The cultivation and management of champions who act for the institution

<Internals\\Policy\\2003 British Council Education UK Positioning for success—consultation_document>—§ 2 references coded [0.17% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.05% Coverage

In the long-term, such students act as long-term advocates in the wider world both for the UK and the institutions they attended.

Reference 2—0.12% Coverage

• The PMI targets and focus of work has mainly been in the area of recruitment. However, it is current students and recent graduates who are the potential ambassadors for the UK. They can facilitate improved international relations and trade links and are central to achieving the long-term objectives of the PMI.

<Internals\\Policy\\2005 Home Office Selective Admission Making Migration work for Britain consultation>—§ 1 reference coded [0.23% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.23% Coverage

5.7 There are also a number of other important cultural, social, political and international outcomes which should accompany a successful managed migration system: migrants who will act as future ambassadors and advocates for the UK and the use of English as a business and teaching language and effective public diplomacy and raising the UK's reputation abroad.

<Internals\\Policy\\2010a Archer et al Measuring the effect of the Prime Minister's Initiative on the international student experience in the UK (I-graduate report)>—§ 1 reference coded [0.37% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.37% Coverage

As the PMI2 initiative draws to a close, the challenge is to sustain that engagement and the responsiveness of institutions and of staff, to ensure each year that the UK's international students are, in increasing numbers, its advocates and ambassadors.

<Internals\\Policy\\2011 DTZ Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education Phase 2>—§ 2 references coded [0.15% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.11% Coverage

70 Ambassadors and Representatives joined the pilot and tagged themselves as "UK educated" during 10 week pilot Reaching a combined network of 20,300+ friends and family (Approximate number based upon analysis of 75% of the Ambassadors "& Representatives"" networks) Based on feedback from 22 Ambassadors and Representatives who have provided feedback to date, 50% were asked for advice, from an average of 6 prospects during the 10 week period. The Ambassadors and Representatives traded 266 links to Education UK pages.

Reference 2—0.04% Coverage

Development of a network of ambassadors and potential long-term influencers with strong positive connections with Education UK; Contribution to country alumni databases.

### *Reduce Migration: No Cap on Students*

<Internals\\Policy\\2011 Home Affairs Committee Student visas>—§ 3 references coded [0.26% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.14% Coverage

5. There has been a lack of clarity about whether the Government's principal aim is to place a cap on the number of student visas issued each year as it did previously with Tiers 1 and 2 of the migration system or to deter those seeking to abuse the student visa system in order to work and settle in the UK. The Government has stated it does not intend to place a cap on student visas, arguing that its proposals are aimed at tightening the system rather than cutting down on the number of genuine students. On 24 January 2011, the Minister for Immigration said in the House of Commons:

Reference 2—0.07% Coverage

On 8 February, during an adjournment debate on the issue the Minister said: "We want to encourage all those genuine students coming here to study at our world-class academic institutions."6

"I can tell the hon. Gentleman that we are not currently looking at limits on tier 4 immigration visas" 7 students.

Reference 3—0.05% Coverage

6. We are in agreement with the Government that any cap on student visas would be unnecessary and undesirable. Any cap could seriously damage the UK's higher education industry and international reputation.

<Internals\\Policy\\2011 Home Office Impact assessment of student reform UKBA>—§ 2 references coded [0.18% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.08% Coverage

Students make up the majority of non-EU immigrants; however we do not propose to put a limit on student numbers. We recognise the important contribution that legitimate international students make to our economy and cultural life and to making our education system one of the best in the world.

Reference 2—0.10% Coverage

As there is no limit placed on the volume of students allowed to qualify under the new proposals there are uncertainties around the volume estimates; without a limit it is possible that student visas issued will not significantly reduce. The Home Office will continue to monitor the number of students and dependants coming through the route.

<Internals\\Policy\\2011a Cameron PM Immigration policy (speech)>—§ 1 reference coded [0.75% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.75% Coverage

That's why with us, if you're good at your subject, can speak English and have been offered a place on a course at a trusted institution—you will be able to get a visa to study here.

<Internals\\Policy\\2013 BIS Committee Overseas students and net migration (report of session)>—§ 1 reference coded [2.81% Coverage]

Reference 1—2.81% Coverage

Despite the view of the Home Office, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills appears to be sympathetic to removing overseas students from the Government's migration figures. Speaking on 29 May at the Gulf Education Conference in London, Rt Hon. David Willetts MP, the Minister for Higher Education, said that higher education, which was already a "great British export industry", could be "far bigger". He went on to say that he wanted to see an expansion in the numbers of overseas students because "growth is the government's agenda, and we want to see it grow" [47]. He also told the House in the previous week that there was "no limit" on the number of genuine students who can come to the UK to study. However, he appeared to acknowledge that the visa regime had an impact on overseas student stating that:

Of course we are in close contact with the Home

Office on the implementation of these rules, but the key point is that there is no cap on the number of overseas students who can come to Britain[48].

<Internals\\Policy\\2013 Cameron PM Immigration policy (speech in Bangladesh)>—§ 1 reference coded [3.76% Coverage]

Reference 1—3.76% Coverage

We want the brightest and best students in the world to choose our universities so we've said no cap on student numbers at our world class universities.

<Internals\\Policy\\2013a BIS International Education- Global Growth and Prosperity (Industrial strategy)>—§ 5 references coded [0.19% Coverage]

Reference 1—0.04% Coverage

there is no cap on the number of legitimate students coming to Britain, nor do we plan to impose one.

Reference 2—0.04% Coverage

We have no cap on the number of students we want to welcome to the country and no intention of introducing one.

Reference 3—0.06% Coverage

The Coalition's Mid-Term Review stated there is no cap on the number of students who can come to study in the UK, and there is no intention to introduce one.

Reference 4—0.03% Coverage

While being clear that all legitimate students are welcome, without a limit on numbers,

Reference 5—0.02% Coverage

there is "no limit on the number of legitimate students"

# Further Reading


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