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HIGHER EDUCATION, GLOBALIZATION AND EDUSCAPES

TOWARDS A CRITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
OF A GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

PER-ANDERS FORSTORP & ULF MELLSTRÖM



Palgrave Studies in Global Higher Education

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Per-Anders Forstorp • Ulf Mellström

Higher Education, Globalization and Eduscapes

Towards a Critical Anthropology of a
Global Knowledge Society

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Linköping and Karlstad, January 2018

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Ulf Mellström

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1

Knowledge Society as Ideology and Practice

Introduction

Young people are today prepared to travel far and wide in order to acquire higher education. A select few benefit from scholarships, but many students pay for their tuition themselves or with help from their families. They all dream of a better future and regard higher education as a necessary step in the desired direction. Some of them return to their home country to make a career and perhaps participate in building their nation, while some stay in their new country or move elsewhere with freshly acquired credentials. Their skills are highly desired in most of these places, and in many others where skilled workers are highly sought after. Students dream, imagine, and travel so there are many related questions that can be asked: What are their dreams and imaginings? How does their travel affect their identities and their dreams of the future? How does the experience of living in a foreign country correspond to and contribute to their imaginings of identity, home, and belonging? How are cultural and political visions of the knowledge society/economy affecting their own dreams?

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are today becoming increasingly dependent on these incoming foreign students who provide necessary economic input in a time of reduced governmental support. Universities place the education they provide within the framework of a global market for services and relate these to regional and national goals centered on the prospects of forming a knowledge society (KS) and a knowledge economy (KE).¹ Universities are the link between national and regional guidelines and the students. How are the universities perceiving incoming students? How are they acting to expand their student body and in what ways are these strategies corresponding to ideological frameworks provided by governments, transnational bodies, and markets? How are universities changing because of their global missions? How do nations and regions formulate their imaginings and what role do higher education and knowledge formation play in their visions?

As indicated, students, mobility, and higher education raise many general questions and interferences across various scales, scapes, and flows: from the individuals and their peers, to institutions and governments at national and regional levels. This book examines the transnational scapes and flows of higher education. It is about students, mobility, higher education, and the knowledge society in the contemporary global context and focuses on the motives and incentives for mobility from the perspective of both individuals and institutions at various levels and scales (regions, nations, and institutions). Mobility in the global context, for purposes of education, research, and knowledge formation, tends to be presented in educational discourses as something that is beneficial for all those involved. This discourse often feeds on a general but also naïve enthusiasm that celebrates globalization, knowledge, mobility, and technology.

The key argument advocated in this book is that the vision of a knowledge society/economy, maintained both by individuals and by institutions, needs to be put into perspective beyond the taken-for-granted conditions and meanings. We wish to take the readers further than the standard understanding of a knowledge society/economy as a technological fix in a relatively neutral sense, and to show it as culturally embedded (through practice) as well as its ideological underpinnings (theory).

Based on an analysis of the ideologies of knowledge inherent in strategies put forward by the European Union (EU) and the European Council in the Lisbon Protocol for instance, the political logics of the knowledge society will be explored at a *regional* level. At the *national* level, Sweden will exemplify how the uptake and implementation of regional educational policy plays out. At the *institutional* level, the narrative of a private higher education provider, Hult International Business School, will be told from its rapid development during the last decade beginning with the acquisition of a defunct corporate business school in the USA to occupying five global campuses today. Relying on ethnographic fieldwork as well as interviews in Malaysia, India, Sweden, Norway, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the anthropologies of knowledge inherent in global higher education will be explored in subsequent chapters. In particular, the individuals and their idiosyncratic travels into the Western world will be explored through interviews. In general, this book will attempt to show both how institutional actors in the West strive to cope with the global situation and how individuals in other parts of the world (mainly Asia but also Africa) cope with the dreams, promises, and pitfalls of globalization. *Eduscape* (short for educational landscape) is the central notion that we employ in order to center the discussion in its spatial as well as ideological dimensions.

While not being averse to the phenomenon of educational mobility per se (from which both authors have benefited), nor unaware of potential constructive dimensions of globalization, we analyze this complex cluster in a critical way in order to show how the ideology and practices of mobility for the purposes of education, as well as the desire for higher education as a step toward social mobility, correspond to the ideological framework of a global knowledge society/economy that is often used in various policy contexts to characterize the current epoch and proximal future. This critique suggests an intervention into contemporary debates in which the values of educational assets and biographical cultural capital generally seem to be both accepted and increasing. The lived experience of higher education in a global context contributes to the accumulation of mobility capital that is certainly valuable for the individual, but that also helps to reinforce power asymmetries. We carry out this analysis in order to problematize the naïve endorsement and

reproduction of globalization as the paradigmatic, but much too simplified, nirvana of win-win, all while taking care not to fall into the trap of endorsing economic nationalism. This book addresses a phenomenon that is today most visible for those who are engaged in higher education and that will probably attract increasing attention in the future. Our argument constitutes a counterpoint in the general debate about knowledge, migration, and mobility, which tends to be surrounded by the tensions between humanitarian concerns and the economy. In these discourses, skilled migration is highly prioritized, as distinct from other forms and incentives for migration and mobility which are not.

Mobility and migration for the purposes of higher education is not a new phenomenon. Historical and cross-cultural examples of educational mobility or peregrination are plenty, showing how centers of learning attract young people, generally men, to spend time for study, contemplation, and socialization into guilds, orders, and professions (Haskin 1923; Rashdall 1968, Ben-David 1992; Ridder-Symoens 2003a, b; Rüegg 2004, 2011). In the West, Christian monasteries were early examples, followed by emerging universities in Italy and France. A main reason for educational mobility in other historical eras has been the scarcity of centers of learning and that students were recruited from regions where such possibilities were lacking. For instance, the early universities in Italy and France attracted students from European countries where universities were not yet established or developed to sufficient levels. Another reason for educational mobility was that these centers of learning often maintained the function of educating an administrative or ideological elite who subsequently sustained the established order, fiefdom, kingdom, or empire.

Granted that, the phenomenon of educational migration is not historically unique. We are currently witnessing a numerical increase of student mobility especially over the last 20 years; a fact that is often reiterated in higher education policy and research. We are also witnessing an increasing concern among HEIs to attract students from distant regions and/or to establish centers for learning in proximity to high demand for higher education, most visibly in China, South East Asia, and the Gulf states. The mobility of students and, in general, the mobility of professionals (researchers, technicians, economists, creative professionals, etc.), committed to knowledge formation and knowledge production, constitute the circulation of a skilled workforce that is today

highly regarded. In nations and regions which pay tribute to the idea of knowledge society/economy, the idea and practice of mobility for the purposes of study, work and for the benefit of economic dynamism is of high value. Generally, mobility among students and professionals is regarded as something being both desirable and worthwhile. Students compete for scholarships abroad or are prepared to pay large sums for education with the corresponding hopes of social mobility, employability, and economic prosperity. Researchers, as well, compete for scholarships and awards associated with travel and mobility, which help to build up and strengthen their merits when it comes to ‘internationalization’—an indispensable resource in the career of a researcher and widely regarded as an asset on the job market. While educational migrants were historically limited in numbers and restricted to the privilege of the few (e.g. men, aristocrats), migration is today an ubiquitous phenomenon that affects many, both men and women, and not just those who travel, but also their families and friends who see them depart, as well as the people and environments that see them arrive. Mobility stemming from educational reasons is often mixed with other motives, for example forced migration or young people’s willingness to travel, and facilitated by structural reforms such as the Bologna-style harmonization of curriculum. Meanwhile this mobility is also hampered by restrictive policies of immigration.

Research on the Knowledge Society/Economy, Higher Education and Mobility

Scholarly interest in mobility and higher education has been growing along with the increase of what is often called the global higher education market. Long at the center of research dealing with international and comparative education more generally, mobility and higher education are now also the focus of disciplines that study market mechanisms, governance, technology transfer, politics and policy, employment and welfare, as well as popular culture. They relate to studies in international relations and global studies through an emphasis on mobility and migration and to studies on globalization more generally, by providing an example of contemporary changes in the scales and dynamics of economies and societies which affect millions of individuals across the world.

Regional bodies such as the EU are active in endorsing mobility in higher education both at the ideological level and at the practical level through incentive programs and mobility grants. Policy providers and governmental bodies worldwide, not just in the West but also in South East Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, are increasingly interested in the phenomenon of skilled migration and mobility at all levels and in pursuit of securing a skilled labor force for future growth and welfare provision. Global higher education is also an area of competition, recruitment, and mobilization. New spaces and hubs are created, for instance, in Singapore and the Gulf states. Individual HEIs in many countries expand their horizons of recruitment beyond the national borders and, whether true or not, global outreach is often perceived as mandatory for survival and growth among competing HEIs concerned with rankings and reputation.

Research on students, mobility, and higher education is done in many different disciplines, mainly in international and comparative education and the sociology of education. The topic is also attracting attention from researchers in global studies, geography, anthropology, business administration and economics, science and technology studies, political science, and so on. The focus in these studies is on one or more of the following:

- Growth of global higher education; ‘the 21st century knowledge race’ (Altbach 2016; Wildavsky 2010)
- Student identities and experiences (Brooks and Waters 2011; Murphy-Lejeune 2001)
- Business models, branding, and marketization of higher education (Kirp 2003; Slaughter and Rhoades 2009)
- Higher education policy and the transfer of policy frameworks (Robertson 2012)
- New providers of higher education (Ball 2012)
- History of higher education and mobility (Ben-David 1992; Gürüz 2008; Rüegg 2004, 2011)
- Development of ideas on the knowledge society, the knowledge economy, the learning economy, national systems of innovation, and so on (Archibugi and Lundvall 2001; João Rodrigues 2000; Miettinen 2013)
- Geographical distribution and changes in higher education (Brooks and Waters 2011; Holloway and Jöns 2012)

- Globalization and higher education; ideology and practices of globalization and internationalization (Robertson and Dale 2015)

This book relates to and benefits from several of these approaches and thus shares many of the insights from previous work. Its main mission is to provide an addition to a body of research that is mainly located in the sociology of education, partly by following the critical perspectives developed by Roger Dale, Susan Robertson, and others, as well as endorsing a critical anthropology perspective. One primary aim of this book is to rearticulate the notions of the knowledge society and a knowledge economy that are so prominent in our time. We will argue against easily won ethnocentrism and epochalism (Savage 2009) but still try to account for the persistent popularity of the KS and KE thesis. We will describe the foundations of this thesis, its logics, and epistemology and explore how it is anchored in other notions such as globalization and higher education. Another key aim is to account for contemporary pluralities in educational mobility by articulating a postcolonial experience. The perspective of critical anthropology will be employed as a fresh approach to engaging with knowledge practices on several interfering scales of society. Based on the critical analysis of interviews and documents, some of the earlier research on higher education and the knowledge society will be challenged. The purpose of the introduction and the two following chapters is to set the scene and to introduce the key themes of the book. In this introduction, we will identify the general questions asked as well as the more specific research questions. We will specify our aim through situating ourselves in relation to key themes in contemporary social, political, and cultural development as well as in relation to relevant social and cultural theory.

Situating the Problem, the Aim, and Ourselves

Many nations and regions around the world are currently engaged in attempts at acquiring leading roles in what is often referred to as a future knowledge society/economy. This idea of a coming, or already existing, epoch of knowledge rests on a number of assumptions, one of which is that the global world will be divided into economies and forms of

production dominated by either manual/industrial work or knowledge/learning/creative work, and that the most successful path to survival and prosperity is to be positioned at the higher end of the global food chain, that is the part which is built on work dominated by a strong knowledge, learning, and creative component. The regions of the world that today are characterized as entering a post-industrial mode are also those which are candidates for future supremacy in the knowledge society, but there are also other regions that aspire for future competitiveness and supremacy such as China, India, Russia, and Brazil, to name a few. The general assumption in all these regions is that the emerging industrializing sections of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, that today are primary hosts to outsourced manual labor from the West, will remain in their subordinate roles according to assumptions about historical development and the logics of stratification inherent in the idea of a knowledge society/economy. Obviously, this will most likely not be the case. The idea of a knowledge society builds on the assumption that knowledge, competence, and other ways of labeling intellectual assets are in some sense based on neutral abilities and thereby free for anyone to use in an idealized state founded on the market and meritocracy. Here knowledge is understood in tandem with other dimensions of an economy that are subject to processes of commodification and marketization as symbolic goods. The knowledge society/economy is conceived as the privileged form of organizing work and production in the future, and thus plays a strong role in policymaking and in many socialization activities from elementary school to higher education and throughout lifelong learning.

The objects of this study are the ideologies and practices of the knowledge society/economy as demonstrated by the experiential dimension of living in a knowledge society at the historical moment in which higher education and mobility, for individuals as well as for institutions, nations, and regions, carry the promises of future welfare and prosperity. We study transnational flows of people and ideas and the scalar dynamics (Dale and Robertson 2012) of spaces and scapes within higher education and knowledge formation. *Higher Education, Globalization and Eduscapes: Towards a Critical Anthropology of Global Knowledge Society* examines transnational scapes and flows of higher education. We study transnational educational mobility and the genesis, distribution, and diffusion of

the thesis of a knowledge society/economy, including the multiple functions that are attributed to 'knowledge'. We explore the experiential dimensions of living in a knowledge society through an engagement with students who have moved for education purposes. Another focus that sets the agenda for this book will be the critical potential of anthropology; using this perspective as a resource for cultural critique, the Western experience and assumed 'ownership' of the global knowledge economy will be thrown into relief. Critical anthropology is a sub-discipline of anthropology but shares interests with applied anthropology, cultural anthropology, and postcolonial studies. It offers (as we will argue) an important perspective for a contemporary rearticulation of the shortcomings of hypotheses on the knowledge society. The analytical potential of critical anthropology is coupled with what we call 'interdisciplinary knowledge studies', thus embracing input from critical studies in areas such as education, geography, sociology, gender studies, postcolonial studies, and global studies. In order to justify changes in global higher education our particular addition to this body of work within the sociology of education will be this critical anthropological dimension hitherto missing.

Instead of reproducing the ideologies already included in the narrative of a knowledge society/economy, this book reflects the importance of understanding the uptake of this concept from the perspective of individuals and institutions, and contributes to demythologize the hype of globalization and the knowledge society/economy. The questions we ask throughout the book are as follows: What are the students' experiences of educational mobility? What are the lived dimensions of living in knowledge society? Is it the same knowledge society/economy thesis that comes back in all these visions? What is the function of 'knowledge' and knowledge society in contemporary politics and society? With these four questions, we are criticizing the way knowledge is used, but we are also criticizing something more fundamental, that is the logic by which various assets becomes marketable. We argue that this process risks taking something very important away from our general interpretation of knowledge. In the process of commodification, 'knowledge', once assumed neutral, becomes a tool, but which now can be utilized to acquire domination and power.

Outline of the Book

In the introduction, the problems and subsequent questions relating to the thesis of higher education, student mobility, and the knowledge society/economy have been identified in order to set the stage for an analysis of their cultural embeddedness and ideological underpinnings. The first two chapters will provide an outline of key concepts and themes that are being used and explored with regard to KS and KE, as well as a discussion on issues related to the material and methodological approaches in the study. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are based on interviews with students and Chaps. 7, 8, and 9 are based on analysis of institutions, nations, and regional bodies.

Chapter 2: *Key Concepts and Themes*. Eduscapes can naturally be investigated on various levels and from many different aspects: flows of ideas, travel practices, university and government policies, institutional policies, commodification and massification of higher education, spatial imaginaries, ethnic and gendered student communities, virtual and open universities, and so forth. Eduscape as a central concept in this presentation and analysis will be the vehicle by which to understand both the institutional practices of the West and the actions of individuals in other parts of the world. The notion of an eduscape will be linked to the idea of ‘imaginaries’—that subjective horizon of expectation and experience that individuals as well as institutions inhabit. In this chapter, we also focus on globalization in a way that accounts for the determinism inherent in some uses of the notion, ‘eduscape’, that is, we explore the horizons of meanings that are evoked through its usage. We will also give a critical account of the growth of global higher education, of the emergence and rhetorical functions of the thesis of a knowledge society/economy, and of critical anthropology.

Chapter 3: *The Empirical Complexity of Knowledge Society: Material and Methodological Framework*. The three groups of materials (fieldwork, interviews, and documents) used are described in Chap. 3. In this chapter, we also explore the methodological conditions for the subsequent analysis through a discussion of the discursive dimensions and an analysis of the concept of interference, which we use in order to relate the various dimensions of scalar dynamics.

Following these three chapters, the book is essentially organized into two parts dealing separately with the experiences of individuals and groups of students (Chaps. 4, 5, and 6) and the experiences and expectations of institutions at various levels: the regional, the national, and the institutional (Chaps. 7, 8, and 9). The two sections share similar theoretical and analytical concerns but build upon two different sets of material and methods. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 investigate transnational experiences of students, lecturers, and professors by following the roots and routes of their global mobility. Through the global and contemporary massification of higher education, we witness new generations of students with global horizons, ambitions, and networks. Thus, in this section of the book, we are giving the concept of eduscapes a momentum by investigating global horizons, spatial practices, and the social imaginaries of a number of interviewed students and lecturers in India, Malaysia, Russia, and Sweden, coming from a vast range of countries. In addition, we are also drawing on a complementary variety of materials, such as application letters for doctoral positions, informal interviews, and ethnographic observation.

Chapter 4: *Roots and Routes: Transnational Families and Global Horizons*: In this chapter we trace origins, contexts, and educational traditions of individuals, families, clans, and national belonging. In the global and uneven geography of higher education consumption, motives for becoming a transnational student differ along the lines of gender, clan, nationality, and ethnicity, although hopes and dreams for future betterment are collectively held aspirations. Traversing these are the collectively held hopes and dreams for future betterment. These aspirations act as a propelling imaginary force in everyday lives and are channeled through stories from relatives and friends, but also through the increasingly aggressive marketing of higher education worldwide. A migratory exiled experience where higher education is the driving force behind the mobility patterns is not only something that concerns individuals but also part of stories shared among family and kin. In other cases, transnational students are educational migrants who leave patriarchal, familial patterns, sexual repression, or political turmoil behind them, beginning new translocational life journeys in and out of exile. Our data is often witness to a constant lack of resources but also global networks of family, kin, and friends eager to help. We also

see that the entry of global eduscapes into the logic of everyday life is given a constant larger influx by the twin forces of present-day globalism: migration on a massive scale and mass mediation.

Chapter 5: *Transnational Educational Mobility and the Power of English*: In our ethnographic material, we confront inhabitants of imaginary educational landscapes, but often with one common denominator: a desire to master and learn English; the 'master' language of transnationalism, globalization, and academic capitalism. It is through mastering English that nourished dreams can be realized and which through individual fantasies are channeled. In this chapter, we argue that English can be seen as a symbolic container for desires, requirements, careers plans, employability, and a future-oriented modern lifestyle in general. Global eduscapes are stratified with English as the symbolic signifier. English is the language of power but also opportunities. However, the cultural contingency of mastering English is also quite different with regard to geographical location. We are here looking into how student mobility and academic careers are formed in three different peripheral parts of global eduscapes: Scandinavia, Northwest Russia, and Malaysia.

Chapter 6: *The Gender Politics of Eduscapes*: In this chapter, we investigate how gender and gender politics are forming student mobility and academic careers in global eduscapes. Gender is a surprisingly under-researched dimension of globalization and higher education. It is surprising since it is such a crucial dimension for individuals, families, and relatives in their decisions of what kind of education is considered, where to study, and what to expect in terms of outcomes. Higher education is generally highly gendered with regard to which subjects are studied but also concerning who has the possibility of being mobile in contrast to immobility. Men, women, and trans-persons are very differently positioned in relation to expectations of gender normativity and sexuality. This is something which forms their educational biographies in many different ways. In this chapter, we are giving voice to transnational students that are educational migrants leaving patriarchal family patterns, sexual repression, or political turmoil behind, and begin translocational life journeys in and out of exile.

In Chaps. 7, 8, and 9 we will use the notion of eduscapes to explore the imaginaries of actors at various scales, such as regional, national, and institutional. These different levels of institutional action and actors will be dealt with respectively in three separate empirical chapters. The separation

of levels is made for analytical purposes and does not imply that these in fact are distinct. On the contrary, institutional actors at various levels are closely related and even interfering with one another in various ways. For this purpose, we use the methodological vehicle of ‘interference’ (see Chap. 3) to understand how these levels are interfering and counter-acting with each other through a scalar dynamic.

Chapter 7: *The European Union as Eduscape*: The EU is just one among many regional actors that regard improved quality and access to higher education as the primary measure of building a knowledge society/economy. Through close readings of policy papers, white papers, and guidelines used in implementing policy, the ideological framework of higher education, mobility, and globalization on the EU level will be articulated. Some comparative dimensions will be introduced to illustrate the ‘unique ordinariness’ of EU policy in this domain; that is, by claiming to be unique and exceptional, the EU is doing something extremely ordinary and acting in the same way as many other actors.

Chapter 8: *Becoming an Exporter of Higher Education: Positioning Sweden as a ‘Knowledge Nation’*: The example of Sweden as a small ‘knowledge nation’ and as a member of the EU will be used to show that national priorities and aspirations do not cease once the nation becomes part of a union. While negotiating with regional bodies and adapting to their policies, the nation, not the least in the case of Sweden, carries its own agenda fueled by a perceived history of being a leading science nation and a space for innovation. This blend of historical consciousness and regional negotiation forms an eduscape in between the national and the regional.

Chapter 9: *Going Global: How to Kickstart a Global HEI*: Particular universities and other HEIs act both autonomously and according to grand plans designed by aggregated authorities. This is visible for instance in the marketing of higher education by these actors, on the Internet, in brochures and catalogues, in advertisements, in ‘designed journalism’ and content marketing. In this chapter, these attempts at marketing and the promotion of a particular institution will be the focus of the analysis inspired by critical marketing studies. Yet the overarching goal is to contribute to an understanding of the eduscapes of institutions.

Chapter 10: *Conclusion and Discussion: Toward a Critical Anthropology of a Global Knowledge Society*: The concluding chapter will provide a discussion in which the anthropologies and ideologies of knowledge

explored in the previous chapters will be related and converged into an argument concerning a critical understanding of the knowledge society/economy. We will first pull the analyses and arguments together in a way that is coherent while offering both a retrospective and forward-looking view. Taking a moment to look forward is important because we can at this stage summarize our investigation by reinterpreting some of the key notions of higher education and mobility in a fresh way. Rearticulating these notions is an attempt to spawn new associations with the initial aim that underlie them.

It is our intention that this book will be accessible and of value to three general audiences. The first of which is those engaged in anthropology, ethnology, global studies, and cultural studies employing theories and methods relating to globalization and mobility. Here the study will be of value because of its empirical engagement with the scapes and flows of globalization and the critique that stems from this point of view. Secondly it is hoped that it will speak to researchers and students as well as policy-makers in the realm of higher education, its post-national character and its important political value, the study will be relevant as a desired contribution toward an understanding of cultural mobility in higher education. Lastly, this book addresses several actors, whether sociologists, cultural geographers, or political scientists, engaged in cultivating the notion of a knowledge society/economy (or even an information society/economy), and who need to consider a global perspective on these matters in contrast to various ethnocentric approaches currently available. The book is guided by the straight argument that we need to put the notion of knowledge society/economy into different perspectives. Thus, the book will function as an original intervention into a current debate on learning and its socio-cultural and political values thus attracting the attention of a general audience as well as advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is therefore written with a concern for this dual address in mind. The book is suitable for inclusion in the syllabuses of a wide range of subjects and academic disciplines such as sociology, cultural geography, anthropology, cultural studies, higher education, globalization studies, information science, and so on. Needless to say, the book will be valuable for use in universities and other institutions of higher education across the world, as well as being relevant to policymakers and

politicians in their decision-making and implementation processes that have real-world consequences.

Notes

1. The notions of a knowledge society and a knowledge economy are not identical. Their respective articulations, similarities, and differences are discussed below. We will, however, for analytical purposes treat them as parallel, distinct notions that are expressions of an imaginary of a society in the near future.

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2

Key Concepts and Themes

Introduction

This chapter outlines the key concepts and themes addressed in this book. *Eduscapes*, coined as an analogy to Appadurai's (1996) inventory of scapes, inspires the coming analyses (Forstorp and Mellström 2013). Eduscapes can be understood through the concept of *imaginaries* which is used to signify the subjective hermeneutics of an individual's anticipations and understandings of where higher education plays a role, as well as a means of addressing the aggregated expectations formulated in policy paradigms at regional, national, and institutional levels. Finally, we explore the notion of *critical anthropology* to support the perspective endorsed in this book. The key themes in our discussion of current knowledge production in the world of higher education are the *knowledge society/economy*, *globalization*, and *higher education and mobility*.

We paint a rather broad canvas of the key concepts and themes concerning the role of knowledge, learning, globalization, mobility, and higher education in our current epoch. Some of these current thematizations are often presented as brute facts but we argue they are better regarded as ideological constructs and hypotheses. In this approach, we are aiming to

approximate how these themes are commonly represented, indicating problems and inconsistencies that follow, and which will be further addressed in the upcoming chapters. As such, we are setting the stage for a critical intervention by anticipating the analysis in chapters that follow.

Key Concepts

Eduscapes

Eduscapes is shorthand for ‘educational landscapes’ and is a key notion in this book (Forstorp and Mellström 2013). Further elaborating on the introduction in Chap. 1, we define eduscapes as the transnational flow of ideas and people in regard to research and higher education. These eduscapes comprise nodes of knowledge centers and peripheries characterized by positional dynamics and which shift over time all the while remaining connected through modern communication technologies embedded in different epistemic, ethnic, and learning communities. These educational landscapes can be investigated on various levels and from different perspectives: as flows of ideas, travel practices, university and government policies, institutional policies, as instances of the commodification and massification of higher education, as spatial imaginaries, ethnic and gendered student communities, virtual and open universities, and so on. Drawing on Arjun Appadurai’s (1996) conceptualization of global flows and different forms of global scapes (finance-, media-, techno-, ideo-, and ethnoscapescapes), this scape (eduscape) is adding another global dimension of social facticity focusing on education as well as its realm of social imaginary.

As a cultural phenomenon, ‘eduscapes’ has its historic roots in the experiences acquired through the ‘grand tour’, ‘Bildungsreise’, and peregrinations, as much as through labor migration. Spatial movement for educational purposes is not specific to our time (see Chap. 1), but follows age-old patterns of mobility which give rise to diasporas, colonialism, postcolonialism, exploration, and ‘conquistadorism’. However, one new dimension of concurrent eduscapes is the intensification, diversification, differentiation, and technologization of ‘scientific’ knowledge and institutionalized higher education on a global scale not previously experienced (Forstorp and Mellström 2013). In

this book, the notion of eduscape will be placed primarily in its contemporary context.

Appadurai does not explicitly mention education as part of his ‘scapes’, although an analysis of education could be located across several of them as, for example, an aspect of finance, media, and ideology. For instance, eduscapes will converge with other scapes such as diasporas or ‘ethnoscapes’ (Appadurai 1996) in cosmopolitan settings constituted by ethnic enclaves in institutions of higher education. For Appadurai, scapes are always distinctly signified and embedded in the conditions and world-views of each actor, which means that they cannot be objectively represented (Appadurai 1996, p. 33; Spring 2008, p. 333). Previous usages of ‘eduscapes’ make explicit reference to the typology of Appadurai, although the concept has been given quite different interpretations in the literature of media education, postcolonial and globalization studies, cultural studies, and comparative education (for an overview see Forstorp and Mellström 2013, p. 8 ff.). Cultural studies scholar Luke uses the notion of ‘eduscapes’ as a general extension of the argumentation, as it stands in Appadurai, with a focus on the unevenness, disjunctures, and heterogeneity of scapes and flows. Luke does not however explicitly discuss how and why this notion should replace the original five scapes:

My use of the term ‘eduscapes’, then, is meant to invoke inconsistencies and incongruences of that hot export commodity coveted by providers and highly desirable from the vantage point of consumers: branded international education and credentials brought to you by the ‘enterprise university’—we take VISA, Mastercard or AMEX. (Luke 2005, p. 162; cf. 2006, p. 101)

In the work of Luke, which we partly follow, ‘eduscapes’ functions as a comprehensive lens for a descriptive and critical analysis of scapes and flows in the realm of global education, knowledge, and knowledge distribution. Carney and Ambrosius Madsen use ‘eduscapes’ as well as educational ‘policyscapes’ in the context of comparative education studies. ‘Policyscapes’ refers to a cross-national dimension of shared educational policies, evidenced by their analysis of educational policies on three different continents which show great similarities (Carney 2009, 2010,

2012; Ambrosius-Madsen and Carney 2011). Policyscapes are a way of linking diverse policy-related phenomena instead of treating them as located within distinct national contexts, thus identifying the transnational dimensions of policies while simultaneously overcoming methodological nationalism (Robertson and Dale 2008; Amelina et al. 2012). Most similar to our own usage of 'scapes' is the one proposed by Beck (2008), who uses the notion of eduscapes to go beyond the notion of internationalization and better reflect the complex character and multiple dimensions of education in transnational contexts.

With our use of eduscapes, we are aiming at an analytical vehicle that encompasses people, places, and processes; institutional practices as well as spatio-temporal strategies of individuals. The concept can consequently be used on different scales; from the region, to the nation and the institution as well as the individual. It can also be used to explore the dynamics between these scales. For our purposes, eduscapes refer to places such as hubs of knowledge and capital. It can even designate institutional arrangements that refer to the ideology of a group, an organization, or a nation. It can also encompass processes of knowledge negotiation and reference the subjective trajectories of individuals in time and space, including their imaginary (educational) landscapes. Eduscapes is a way of looking at higher education and migration. In contrast to the notions of internationalization or globalization that tend to soak up differences (see below), eduscapes is a fruitful way of accounting for the different standpoints of the actors, ranging from gender, ethnicity, or class in their local, regional, or other contexts.

Imaginaries

Also inspired by Appadurai is our use of the term 'imaginaries'. Appadurai argues that imagination can be understood as a social practice which is a key component of the new global order, which presents a distinctive new role for imagination in social life (1996, p. 31). The imaginary dimensions of scapes complement their so-called factual components. These imaginary dimensions are part of the subjective scapes, fluid and irregular landscapes inherent in 'scapes' and constitute building blocks for what Appadurai,

inspired by Anderson (1991), calls *imagined* worlds. ‘Imagined worlds’, then, are the ‘multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe’ (Appadurai 1996, p. 33). These imagined worlds and their fluid landscapes are disjunctive and unpredictable, and are elements of imaginaries, which, as a concept, are based on three aspects. Firstly, it is founded on the awareness of the media and images in the current cultural circuits where it works as fuel for people’s imagination. Secondly, it relies on the idea of the imagined community; and thirdly, it draws on ‘the French idea of the imaginary (*imaginaire*) as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations, which is no more and no less real than the collective representations of Émile Durkheim, now mediated through the complex prism of modern media’ (Appadurai 1996, p. 31). In the same way eduscapes is shorthand for educational landscapes, ‘imaginaries’ as a collectively constructed landscape builds on spatial metaphors and does a similar conceptual job as ideology (Grant 2014) and habitus (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, p. 34), by attending to ‘the common understandings that make everyday practices possible’ (Taylor 2004, p. 34; Rizvi 2014, p. 13). Imaginaries are implicit and contain norms relating to the working order of society. There are different imaginaries but some become more powerful than others (Rizvi 2009).

When it comes to eduscapes, imaginaries (social and cultural) make up that subjective horizon of expectation and experience that both institutions and individuals inhabit. The cultural imaginaries of eduscapes are here regarded as a symbolic matrix within which people imagine and act as collective and individual agents. Following the British historian Dawson (1994, p. 48), the cultural imaginary (in singular) is a ‘network of discursive themes, images, motives and narratives available in a culture in a specific time’. For our purpose, when it comes to education and the knowledge society/economy, the social imaginaries are understood as the everyday hermeneutics of how collectives and individuals navigate the symbolic matrix of eduscapes. In this landscape of meaning and collective aspiration of eduscapes, the imaginary dimension is equally as important for the individual and institutional actors as the actual physical movements. In our analysis, we are thus moving in between cultural scripts and social facticities that are conditioning institutional policies and strategies