

The Historiography of the International Student Policy Trajectory

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Through Gayatri Spivak's¹ strategy of historiography and the notion of 'reading against the grain' this article provides, by way of the formulation of a model of the international student policy trajectory, a descriptive and interpretive discourse analysis of Australian policy concerning international students. The objective is, to borrow from Spivak, to attempt to retrieve the subject 'in an attempt to undo a massive historiographic metalepsis'.² In this way, this argument 'situates' the effect of the subject so that any discourse that takes place does so as a result of that subject. The subject here is the international student and the discourse analysis considers the norm for official historiography from the point of view of such a student.

The central problem to be addressed in this article is how international students are represented in policy. Related to this is the problem that in the making of policy only certain voices are heard. In connection to these, the argument will be made that there is a practice of ambivalence in the historiography of the international student policy trajectory, which is evident at several levels. It initially became apparent through Australia's moves toward nation-building, then through the strategies of marketing, and later through the issues relating to economic rationalism. The discourse surrounding international student policy has increased in complexity from one of being a drive to export education and recruit students, to one that encompasses a drive by the Australian nation for international education. Thus, the issue of education for international students has become complicated by concerns such as broad economic strategies, aid, trade and internationalisation. These have all led to a commodification of the education of international students. The formulation of policy has various components, each of which impacts on the others. In this against-the-grain reading, it is demonstrated how education for international students is marginalised by the drive for the growth of Australia's economy. The economy is shown to have permeated and influenced Australia's education system, subsequently leading to an ambivalence toward the presence of international students in Australia and the issue of international education in general. This article will argue that the historiography of the policy for international students shows that it was formulated within conflicting discourses that lead to the construction of ambivalence.

Situating historiography

Spivak's³ and Edward Said's⁴ discussions of historiography are useful in contextualising international student policy. Spivak⁵ likens historiography to a strategy, an art of planning to reach a specified goal. Similarly, Said⁶ discusses the use of 'historical-cultural blocks' as part of a historiographical analysis that refers to systems and currents of thought through which a nation establishes itself in a

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particular period of history. These are connected in complex ways to various activities, which subsequently formulate the ideas and values that are relayed to present the worldviews of a society, community or group.

Spivak⁷ focuses on the use of strategy by saying that 'it can also be unwitting', hence there are bound to be discrepancies in its implementation. These occur between the objective formulation, its development and its comprehension. Spivak maintains that no one strategy can be assumed to be totally appropriate to a system. She argues that planners of a strategy must recognise that any plan may not progress according to the initial objective.⁸

Similarly, Said⁹ foregrounds the notion of elaboration in historiographical analysis, which he argues is an inherent part of the construction of any new system. Elaboration has two contradictory but complementary issues. The first is that to refine, or work out, some prior or more powerful idea is to perpetuate a worldview. The second is that culture and cultural thought are highly complex: the values attached to the culture and cultural thought of a group or community are so strong that they become part of the processes of history. So the cultural reasons given for the formulation of a particular policy often lead to the policy becoming a political issue.

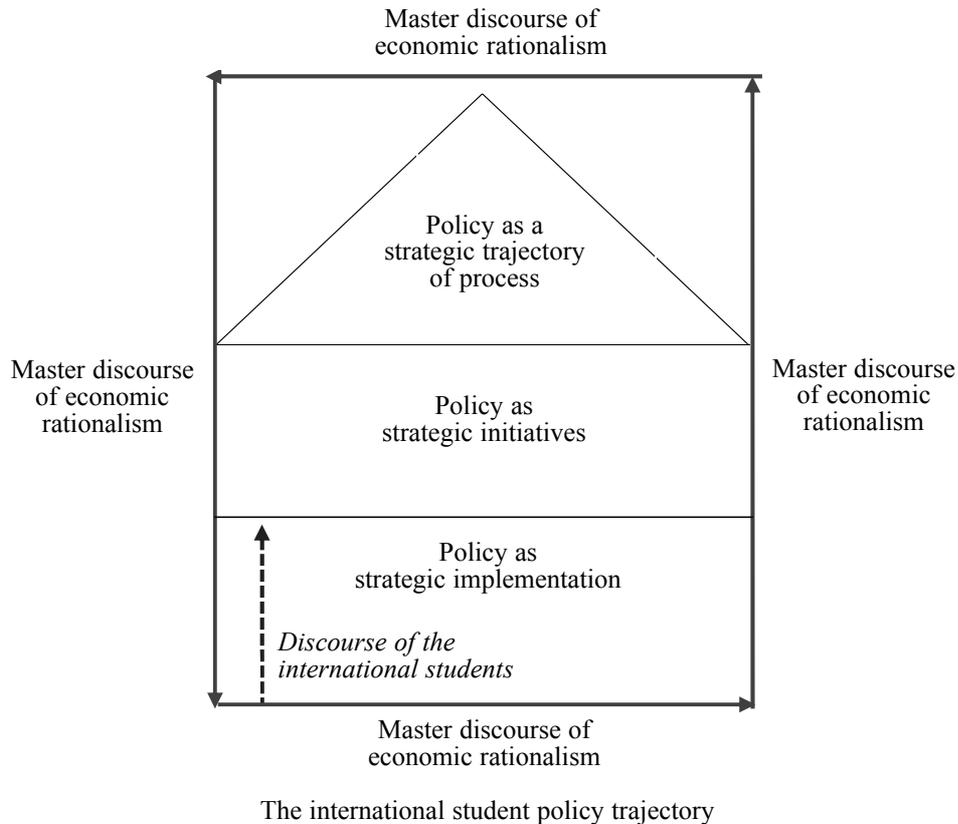
The notion of policy has importantly been analysed by Stephen Ball¹⁰ and John Codd.¹¹ Ball defines policy as text and discourse.¹² His view of policy as text is influenced by literary theory. Representations of policy are encoded in complex ways via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and meanings in relation to history, experiences, skills, resources and context. According to Ball:

policy texts are rarely the work of single authors or a single process of production. They are the product of compromises at various stages, for example, points of initial influence, legislative formulation, parliamentary process and the micro politics of interest group articulation.¹³

Even when they are generally accepted, the text is never a closed register but is always in a state of flux. Policy as a discourse ensemble involves collocations of related policies that exercise power through the production of truth and knowledge.¹⁴ Further, Ball argues that policy as discourse combines subjectivity, voice, knowledge and power relations.

Codd argues that there are two aspects to policy analysis.¹⁵ One aspect is policy determination and effects, which include the inputs and transformational processes operating upon the construction of public policy and the effects of such policies on various groups. The other is an analysis of policy content, which examines the values, ideologies and assumptions underpinning the policy process. The notions presented by Ball and Codd indicate both the open-endedness of policy and the number of pathways it can take, as well as the possibility of many layers of interpretation.

In addition to the notions of policy analyses provided by Ball and Codd, I would add another: that policy is a process. The word 'process' is linked with Spivak's notion of 'strategy' as the art of planning or directing a particular process to reach a specified objective¹⁶ and Said's exploration of historical-cultural blocks as researching a period of history.¹⁷ These two features are associated with the



way policy follows a trajectory, as shown through the international student policy trajectory model, through which a notion of policy is drawn.

In this model, there is a reading of policy as strategic initiatives, referring to the ideology, principles and convictions underpinning the policy process at a federal level in Australia. The reasons for education as trade and the checks and balances that are formulated to bring about the desired outcomes at the federal and institutional level are noted here. In addition, a reading of policy as strategic implementation is provided. In this instance, strategic implementation refers to the various ways in which policy is interpreted and put into practice at an institutional university level. The master discourse of economic rationalism is symbolised by arrows that merge into each other from all sides, indicating a continual process of discursive practice. The subsuming of the discourse of the international student is represented by the broken arrow, which travels upward but cannot go past the level of policy as strategic implementation. The student voice cannot be heard. The discourses operating in this model come under the construct of policy as a strategic trajectory of process. From this construct flow the trajectories of policy as strategic initiatives and policy as strategic implementation.

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It is necessary at this point to understand how Australia represents itself in its policies. Evident in such representations are what Homi Bhabha refers to as the 'instability of knowledge' and the notion of 'nation-space'.¹⁸ Bhabha describes these as part of the processes of a 'nation coming into being' and of 'composing its powerful image'. The controlling body, which in this case is Australia as a nation-state, regards itself and all that it stands for as the centre, and everything else as the periphery. A descriptive and interpretive discourse analysis of the international student policy shows that its historiography is embedded in the ambivalence concerning the centre and the periphery of Australia's colonial and postcolonial history. This is especially true in regard to three historical features. First, Australia's concerted move toward the formation of a new nation-state while still consciously holding onto a form of government envisaged by the British empire; second, its formulation of the 'white Australia' policy as being a marker of national difference; and third, its move toward globalisation leading to internationalisation, a part of which is international education.

Australia's formation as a nation-state is inherently linked to Britain. Australia became an offshoot of the British empire initially through circumstantial necessity, then through strategic and conscientious thought and planning.¹⁹ Even if Britain was at first keen to rid itself of 'undesirables', then later British settlers in Australia were equally keen to maintain their ties to the motherland.

The white Australia policy has been argued to be:

the indispensable condition of every other Australian policy. Embodied in the Immigration Act, 1901–25, its intention and significance has been argued to be exceedingly easy to understand once it had been freed of the rhetoric.²⁰

Foremost among this discourse was the issue of what was culturally acceptable to Australia. This led to cultural and racial bases of inclusion and exclusion. The tenuous ground of who belonged and who did not led to a highly ambivalent foundation of policy-making. National unity could only be achieved if there was racial unity, though not necessarily racial homogeneity.²¹ Thus, Europeans were allowed, while restrictive policies were placed on those who were from Eastern nations. The Monroe Doctrine began a policy of securing a white Australia and a reduction of 'coloured aliens',²² ignoring the actual presence of immigrants of different traditions and ideals within Australia.²³

At first, the white Australia policy had only been concerned with excluding the Chinese. Later, it worked to exclude certain British subjects, namely Indians. When Britain voiced its disapproval, an alternative method, a test of education, was suggested by Britain and accepted by Australia. In its implementation, there was again a sense of ambivalence. In the Act passed in 1901, it was stated that if a non-European wanted to settle in Australia, he or she could be given a spelling test in any European language. In 1905 the Act was changed so that the spelling test could be given in any language at all. This new law was supposed to be fairer, but did not alter the fact that Asians were still given spelling tests in languages they did not understand.²⁴ The repercussions of this particular Act can be seen in the number of English-language tests that a student is required to sit before entering a university.

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Eventually the white Australia policy began to lose ground. The policy constructed Australia as a place of racial hegemony. Australia, recognising this as a strategic hindrance in its move to nationhood and economic prosperity, began to rewrite the policy in more acceptable discourse. In 1966 the door was opened wide for 'well-qualified Asians' and their families, who could be expected to 'integrate readily' into Australia.²⁵ The white Australia policy was finally ended in 1974. However, the sense of ambivalence found in international student policy was already in place. The foundations of exclusion and inclusion, the sense of othering and the concepts of 'we' and 'they' had already been laid for Australia in its relationships with Britain and with its Asian neighbours.

The defining of aid

As a way of easing itself out of a situation fraught with tensions, Australia turned to the giving of aid as a strategic initiative. It was against this backdrop that international students were introduced to Australia, first initiated through the Colombo Plan in 1951. The plan was a Commonwealth initiative intended as a program for the South and South-East Asia region 'in the conviction that the poverty of one depresses all'.²⁶ One aspect of the plan was to provide 'facilities for study abroad in advanced technology in various fields' and was said to be 'no Plan as such, but a collective concept of national efforts supplemented by external assistance'.²⁷ The discussion surrounding the plan called Asia to work with Australia. It is interesting to note that this plan was a response to Australia establishing itself as the hub of the Asia-Pacific.²⁸ Australia enrolled 5,000 international students between 1950 and 1965.

'White Australia'²⁹ was still official policy and this prevented foreign students treating enrolment in higher education in Australia as a back door method of migration.³⁰

Any economic gains for Australia were not mentioned in the Colombo Plan. Australia believed that it would be advantageous to offer aid as a way of consolidating its economic position in the region.

In a subsequent development, the gesture of aid was overlaid by a fee imposed on overseas students in 1979, the Overseas Student Charge (OSC). The charge was increased annually, reaching a peak of 55 per cent of the cost of an enrolment place by 1988. Thus, private fee-paying students were understood as a component of Australia's aid program.³¹ This money was collected before a visa was issued and was used to augment the revenue of the government.³² Also in 1979, a conscious effort was made to clarify policy objectives for what was then termed the 'overseas student program'. The policy objectives were redefined as:

the advancement of Australia's interests in countries of particular importance to Australia (especially Association of the South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), Papua New Guinea, the South Pacific and the Middle East) by improving communication, understanding of and sympathy for Australian policies and to promote cultural exchange.³³

The conflation of educational aid and economic gain began as early as 1979, thus leading to the ambivalence and complexity surrounding what was educational aid

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and what was economic gain. This ambivalence and complexity led to policies relating to international students being formulated only on an *ad hoc* basis.

Underlying these factors was a trajectory of policy-making for international students that was overtly influenced by economic rationalism. This first became evident when the 'Goldring' and 'Jackson' Committees were set up to review aid and education for overseas students and to review private overseas student policy.³⁴ Their reports were presented in 1984. The committees presented contrasting reports and recommendations.

The Goldring Report opposed the discourse of marketing that was becoming prevalent for Australia as a nation.³⁵ It depicted Australia as establishing itself as a centre for education. However the report suggested that this could have negative effects on Australia's relationship with other nations, as it could be seen as an assertion of Australia's political interests. The report stressed that 'many of Australia's interests were affected by its policy towards overseas students', and 'The terms in which Australian overseas policy objectives were stated were "unduly inward-looking and no longer appropriate"'.³⁶ This committee recommended three policy objectives. The first was that the Australian Government should contribute to the social and economic development of people and institutions in developing countries, especially those in the Asia-Pacific region, by granting them access to Australian education and training resources. The second was to increase cultural exchange and to improve the quality of Australian education and training resources. The third was to serve Australian interests by improving communication with, and understanding of, Australia. Of particular note was the recommendation that the overseas student program become an integral part of Australian education policy.³⁷

In marked contrast, the Jackson Report foregrounded the discourse of marketing in education as beneficial to the country's economy.³⁸ It found that the training of overseas students in Australia had significant benefits, including:

high returns, both for future relations with developing countries and as a form of aid. Discouraging the entry of these students would harm Australia's foreign relations, deprive the community of cultural contacts and neglect a potential source of export earnings.³⁹

The report stated that to that date, 'the Australian contribution to development in Asia [has] taken place at the margin'.⁴⁰ This use of strategic language in the reinstating of Australia as the centre of learning commodified educational aid as a product that was to be used primarily for the benefit of the country. A strong recommendation was made to make aid more beneficial to Australia, which could only be done if it was assessed against cost-effectiveness.⁴¹

The Goldring Report was rejected and the Jackson Report was accepted by the then government. Allowing international students into Australia was seen as a strategic initiative for the Australian economy. In carrying this out, the government also reduced funding for the education of international students. The government, as the centre, was able to use the periphery, which in this case is the same students, for its economic benefit. From this point on, Australia began to make a concerted move toward making provisions for overseas students. Taking this position enabled the government to use its discourse of economic rationalism in their strategy of marketing education as a 'commodity'.

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In September 1985, this view led the government to adopt formally the 'Policy on the Export of Education Services' as part of a wider policy to boost the country's foreign exchange earnings. Universities and colleges were encouraged to increase their incomes and earn foreign exchange by charging full-cost fees to private overseas students. The institutions were given the incentive to do so by being given the right to retain the whole of the recurrent component of the fees and, from 1988, the whole of the capital component. Universities and colleges became eligible for an annual export development grant of \$200,000 to help them establish and market courses for overseas students, and immigration procedures for full-fee students became less restrictive than for the students in the continuing subsidised and sponsored programs.⁴²

There were stages to the market ideology in the construction of the international student. The conceptualisation and construction of 'the international student' took on a complex ideological meaning that went deeper than that of the Colombo Plan. A move implemented by the Hawke Government in the 1980s altered the principles being followed.⁴³ On the one hand, the practice of sponsoring overseas students, with or without an 'overseas students contribution', as under the Colombo Plan, constructed education as aid; on the other hand, charging full fees for private students constructed education as trade.

Initiating education as trade

Students from overseas began to be discussed under such headings as 'marketing', 'recruitment', 'full-fee student' and 'profit margin'. In the 1988 Dawkins Report, the teaching of full-fee-paying overseas students came under 'Other Issues',⁴⁴ thus indicating that the subjectivity of the students was subsumed under an economic profile and that teaching and learning were relegated to the margins. The marketing of education was started in 1986 by private intensive English-language training institutions (ELICOS centres) and a few private universities and colleges.⁴⁵ In 1987 and 1988, universities, technical and further education institutions and technical schools also began to recruit fee-paying students from overseas. This gained momentum when the government announced in 1988 that the subsidised private overseas student program would be phased out by 1990.

At this point it is important to explore the role of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) in relation to the market ideology developing in the recruitment of students.⁴⁶ Recruitment for the sake of generating income as a form of trade, rather than as an objective of education, led to a growing concern in the South-East Asian countries from which the students had mainly been recruited. There were problems with non-accredited courses, especially intensive English-language courses, illegal immigration, dubious recruiting practices, the linking of the promotion of education with the trade and marketing offices of Australian diplomatic missions, and the financial collapse of some private institutions.⁴⁷ The education industry in Australia was in danger of developing a bad name, and there was concern about losing the South-East Asian education market. This concern led to the formulation of another policy for international students, the Code of Ethical Practice, which was initiated by the AVCC.⁴⁸

This code, which was first released in January 1990, was formulated to ensure that the potential benefits of the provision of education to international students

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were fully realised for both the students and the host institutions. The Australian Government encouraged the formulation of the code, which had the power to exclude those institutions that did not meet the required standards of education and support. The marketing of educational services overseas had to be consistent with the maintenance of academic standards in Australian institutions and the safeguarding of the interests of both Australian and international students.⁴⁹

To ensure that good practice was followed, the federal government also introduced other regulatory procedures and codes of practice. The first was the *Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration of Providers and Financial Regulation) Act* of 1991 (the ESOS Act). Further to this, at the State level, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA, formerly the Australian Education Council) produced a code of practice for the provision of international education and training services at the institutional level. In 1994 the AVCC prepared an additional Code of Ethical Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by Australian Higher Education Institutions.⁵⁰ All these regulatory procedures and codes of practice could be said to be a result of the recognition of the benefits of the income being generated from international student recruitment. As an Australian export industry, international education was at this time 'nearly as big as wheat, generating export earnings in 1994 of 1.1 billion in US dollars'.⁵¹

Envisaging international education

The next major shift in policy for international students occurred when government policy refocused from trade in education to international education. This can be attributed to the Australian Government establishing itself as the centre of learning and beginning to consolidate its political position in the Asia-Pacific region. In the process, it began to envisage other benefits of trade in education for Australia. This refocusing, as expressed by then-Minister for Employment, Education and Training Kim Beazley in September 1992, involved moving away from a concentration on exporting student places to a recognition of the wider activities that spanned the cultural, economic and interpersonal dimensions of international relations.⁵²

This change of emphasis from trade to internationalism was not an easy one. It led to more ambiguity and complexity, especially since the internationalisation of education was conducted alongside the marketing of education. As stated in the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) document of 1992, education and training as an export industry was a valuable source of revenue for Australia and an important means for strengthening international relations with other countries. The document points out that through developing internationally relevant skills, concepts and collaborative networks, Australians could better participate in international labour markets and trade.

The benefits of this process were seen in Australia's integration into the Asia-Pacific region and the global economy. If re-invested, the revenue from fees paid by international students could be used to fund new places and thus relieve the Australian taxpayer. Other trade benefits would be the personal and institutional links that would enhance subsequent trade and investment.⁵³ Following this, the Higher Education Council of the National Board of Employment, Education and

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Training (NBEET) produced a statement of purpose. The objectives for Australian universities it outlined were to better communities both in Australia and overseas.⁵⁴

In December 1993 the government announced the establishment of the Australian International Education Foundation (AIEF), which was officially launched in November 1994. The purpose of the AIEF was to strengthen the partnership between the government and the education industry through the international division of the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, to promote and market Australian education and training services overseas.⁵⁵ The foundation had several objectives. These included the promotion of the benefits of the internationalisation of education and training for Australia and other countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. The form of initiatives was intended to enhance Australia's standing in the international education and training community, and to promote understanding of the global nature of the education and training export community.⁵⁶

One of these initiatives was the Code of Ethical Practice in the Offshore Provision of Education and Education Services by Australian Higher Education Institutions which was prepared by the AVCC in 1995.⁵⁷ This code of practice was an extension of the 1994 code, which catered for onshore students. In 1996 Senator Amanda Vanstone, as Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, announced:

[the] government would maintain the Australian International Education Foundation (AIEF) as a genuine government-industry partnership for promoting Australia's international education and training capabilities and to realise the vision of Australia as a recognised world leader in education and training.⁵⁸

Vanstone further stated that the Australian education and training community would also be supported in its international objectives through \$6.5 million in funding in 1996–1997 for international education and training programs focusing on countries and regions, consistent with Australian trade and foreign relation priorities. This funding included \$1.2 million in seed funding to enable universities to establish international student exchange programs through the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) Program, and \$0.8 million to expand Australia's involvement in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Forum Human Resource Development Working Group and the South East Asian Ministers for Education Organisation (SEAMEO). Also in the pipeline were policies to recover some of the government's administrative costs on the international students' program through provider registration fees and a student information services fees for students applying for study visas.⁵⁹

Australia made internationalising education a top priority. The government intensified its efforts to implement procedures that it thought were in the best interests of international students. In the year 2000, therefore, Federal Parliament passed a collection of Bills that aimed to strengthen the regulatory framework for the activity of international training providers in Australia. This followed a review of the 1991 ESOS Act that was carried out by DETYA in consultation with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, State education authorities and industry peak bodies, including the AVCC. A significant result of the review was the establishment of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA),⁶⁰ an independent, not-for-profit national agency that promotes, audits and reports on

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quality assurance in Australian higher education. The Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) formally established AUQA in March 2000. It operates independently of governments and the higher education sector, under the stewardship of a board of directors.

New legislation was implemented in stages throughout the first half of 2001. The reforms included a legally enforceable National Code of Practice for registration authorities and providers of education and training for overseas students, establishing standards to be applied by State registration authorities to approve providers for inclusion on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) and in monitoring registered providers' compliance. Providers found in breach of the ESOS Act or the National Code would attract fines or, in the case of serious breach, the imposition of conditions, suspension or cancellation.⁶¹

In an AVCC discussion paper on international education,⁶² several issues are highlighted. The paper states that the government's process of recruiting students hinders rather than furthers Australia's nation-building. It recognises that a market ideology has been adopted, but also points out that government-imposed regulations deter economic growth. The revenue raised from these regulations include a \$30 tax on all international students, amounting to \$5 million in the year 2000 — a sum that was not re-invested in the international education sector. Adding to this is the issue of requiring students who have previously studied in English to sit an English-language test. The paper notes that this requirement could wipe out key markets, for example, the Indian postgraduate market. Moreover, the cost of the Australian government's student visa, at \$290, is said to be one of the highest in the world.

Of significance to the increasing complexity and ambivalence of provisions surrounding the international student policy was the ministerial message by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training, Brendan Nelson, who warned that any vision of education should be informed by the 'recognition that sweeping social and economic changes are being worked into Australian society, transforming entire communities'. Nelson related this to, among other things, the global competition for international students and pointed out that, while Australia has been a successful player in the overseas student market, this position could change with competition from other established international education providers.

The importance of the international student market can be further seen in a letter from the Director of Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS),⁶³ Linda Laker, to education providers. In this letter she emphasised international budget initiatives. These comprise the allocation of \$5.1 million for increased monitoring and enforcement activity, including the removal of non-*bona fide* providers, the investigation of providers, more rigorous compliance monitoring and additional information sessions to assist providers to understand and meet their obligations. In the education initiatives for 2003–2004, the federal government has allocated \$113 million over the next four years, in recognition of 'the benefits this industry provides to the nation'.⁶⁴ These include continuing the relationships and networks that Australians develop with overseas students.

Policy as strategic implementation

A reading of policy as strategic implementation at a university level shows that, in line with the Australian national intent, the government has expanded the policy of trade in education with a policy of internationalisation in the education of its students. In fact, there is specific reference to the internationalisation process in mission statements and strategic plans, and the acceptance of the importance of key issues such as the internationalisation of the curriculum, enhanced familiarity with overseas qualifications and awards, flexible entry points, flexible cross-crediting through exchange and study-abroad programs, and the recognition of the non-commercial benefits of internationalisation.

There is a presupposition in these policies of what is best for international students, whose own voices have not been heard. The implementation of policy for international students at an institutional level has not been solely the responsibility of the university. It is a result of a directive from a higher level, which in this case is the federal government. It thus becomes evident that some of the measures put in place at this level, although well-meaning in their intentions, were always constructed under the master discourse of economic rationalism that is dictated by the federal government.

Evaluation

In order to fully answer the question of how international students are represented in policy, it is necessary to situate international students within a colonial or postcolonial experience. In Australia, the 'move' to nation-building shows the policies of a nation running parallel to colonial and postcolonial practices, which impinge on the issue of providing and not providing aid, charging and not charging an overseas fee, cutbacks on educational funding, looking for student markets overseas and receiving full-fee-paying students in order to better the Australian economy. These processes have led to a postcolonial condition much in the way that Stephen Slemon describes as 'concealing forms of divisions between groups, intersection lines and cross-over points'.⁶⁵

Australia's values have been marked by a Foucauldian⁶⁶ discourse of power and knowledge, which is particularly pronounced in relation to issues of migration and travel. This also reflects on policy for students who wish to enter the country. Australia's political move toward self-realisation as a nation is also ambivalent, as this country still considers itself to be a 'progeny' of another, initially Britain, and now with the surrogate 'adding on' of America.⁶⁷ In fact, Australia's policies have been heavily influenced by mainstream ideological shifts in Britain and America toward globalisation and internationalism. Australia's struggle to become a nation rests on the identification of people through inclusion and exclusion. Bhabha rethinks the notion of 'the people' thus: 'If the past is the myth of the nation in a displaced time, "the past", the people is the recurrent myth of every national discourse about its presentness'. Further, he argues:

to study nationhood through its narrative address means an interrogation of what it means to construct a people, or how a people is inscribed or how a discourse creates its own authority by referencing a 'people'.⁶⁸

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Similarly, in Australia's history, a particular notion of 'people' was constructed through the white Australia policy. There were the people who were given access to Australia; there were others for whom there were restrictions. Over time, comparable modes of access and restriction were formulated into policies that regulate another group of people: students from overseas.

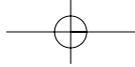
In asking the question of what exactly the policy for international students is, it can be argued that from aid to trade to internationalisation, there is a gamut of policies that one has to be familiar with in order to understand the suite of policies for either 'students from overseas' or 'international students'. For the academy and its educators, interaction with such students has been framed within the discourse of economic rationalism, melded with that of education. What has become evident is that educational concerns have been subsumed, considered peripheral to the principles of economic rationalism. In this way, too, the traditional purpose of an educational institution (the imparting of knowledge and the development of intellectual thought) has become a segment, rather than the focus, of the apparatus that helps operationalise the day-to-day running of such an institution.

What then are the markers of the notion of international education? The 'reading against the grain' of policy suggests that there is not only an instrumental construction of knowledge to meet its 'strategy',⁶⁹ as seen in the formulating of policy for international students, but also a move to the ambivalent, as seen in the revenue that is gained for the institution and the nation. In discussing historiography, Spivak posits that groups in power generally perceive their task as making a theory of consciousness or culture, rather than specifically a theory of change.⁷⁰ This argument can be extended to institutional authoritative bodies who may perceive policy for international students as a body of knowledge that embodies a particular way of thinking and constructing international students in relation to their recruitment.

Conclusion

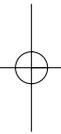
Some of the measures put in place at an institutional level, even though well-meaning in their intentions, are 'shrouded' under the blanket of how much more income such measures will generate. Other benefits that the presence of international students could bring in the way of positive diversity, cultural awareness and long-term friendships between local and international students are subsumed under the all-encompassing aim of accumulating funds.

Within an ideological infrastructure, the construct of what is known as the international student policy inherits a notion of knowledge, power, ideology and culture that traces its pathways from the colonial to that of present-day postcolonial Australia. In signifying the constant articulation of discourse between power and knowledge, the tenuous ground of policy negotiation and structuring have been brought to the fore. In this article, the *ad hoc* nature of policy,⁷¹ as well as the factual explanations and causal connections⁷² that are employed in their formulation and writing, have been explored. In so doing, it has been argued that those who are in positions of authority re-establish policy into constructs that discursively represent the views of particular groups and, by their omissions, suppress the voices of groups that are rendered marginal. The policy for international students is in a state of flux, having become embedded in Australia's



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current 'historical-cultural block'⁷³ of economic rationalism. Therein lies the ambivalence and complexity surrounding the policy for international students.



Notes to pp 201–209

- 4 Annette Kuhn, 'Women's genres', *Screen*, vol 25, no1, Jan–Feb 1984, pp18–28.
- 5 John Fiske, *Television Culture*, Routledge, London, 1987.
- 6 G McLean, 'From corner shop to cop shop', *Guardian*, 18 February 2002. Accessed 19 February 2002. <http://media.guardian.co.uk/mediaguardian/story/0,7558,651855,00.html>.
- 7 Jenkins, op. cit., p 156.
- 8 See Camille Bacon-Smith, 'Spok among the women', *New York Times Book Review*, 16 November 1986, p 1; Camille Bacon-Smith, University of Pennsylvania Press Press, Philadelphia, 1992; Constance Penley, *NASSA/TREK: Popular Science and Sex in America*, Verso, London, 1997.
- 9 John Tipper, private correspondence, 18 February 2004.
- 10 'Sue', 'Blue Movie', <http://www.brit.co.uk/sue/blue.htm>, not dated; 'Talan', 'Dark Blue Reflections', 1995. Accessed 28 August 2003. <http://www.brit.co.uk/fiction/talan/dvr.htm>
- 11 dear gertrudeperkins, 'Funny ol' business, cops and robbers'. Accessed 15 July 2004. <http://www.opendiary.com/entryview.asp?authorcode=B254636&entry=10727&mode=date>.
- 12 'Matt', <http://www.billfans.com>, 25 June 2004.
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The Historiography of the International Student Policy Trajectory
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