PRODUCING SUPERVISORS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: REFLECTIONS ON ACADEMIC TRAINING ABROAD

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ABSTRACT In Ghana, a considerable proportion of academics have experiences of PhD training in the global north. This is often the result of higher educational capacity-building projects, which fund students' scholarships as either a full stay or a number of stays in the funding country. Empirically, the article draws on seven narratives of academics with experiences of PhD traing abroad now supervising at Universities in Ghana. Based on postcolonial perspectives on supervision, I explore how and in what forms experiences of academic training in the global north are present in the supervisors' narratives of their supervision in the global south and what meaning and implications their experiences with supervision in the global north have for their current supervision practice. The article shows in what ways the academic practices of Ghanaian academics' are influenced and related to their experiences abroad and mobility between the global north and global south. The article concludes that educational practice operates beyond the immediate supervision context, both in terms of supervision practice and in the wider cultural setting of supervision. As such, it adds to our knowledge of supervision in the postcolonial contact zone.

ABSTRAKT I Ghana har en betydelig del af de universitetsansatte erfaringer med ph.d.-vejledning i det globale nord. Dette hænger ofte sammen med såkaldte kapacitetsopbygningsprojekter, der har finansieret enten hele eller dele af deres ophold som ph.d.-studerende ved universiteter i det globale nord. Denne artikel bygger på personlige narrativer med syv ghanesiske akademikere. Med udgangspunkt i postkoloniale perspektiver på vejledningen analyserer jeg i denne artikel, hvordan og i hvilke former erfaringer fra det globale nord er til stede i vejledernes narrativer om deres nuværende vejledningspraksis i det globale syd, og hvilken betydning og hvilke implikationer deres erfaringer fra det globale nord har for deres egen vejledningspraksis i det globale syd. Artiklen viser, hvordan ghanesiske akademikeres praksis er påvirket af og relateret til deres erfaringer og mobilitet mellem det globale nord og globale syd. Artiklen konkluderer,

at erfaringer med vejledningspraksis har betydning ud over den umiddelbare kontekst for denne vejledning, både i relation til ens egen vejledningspraksis i andre sammenhænge og til den bredere kulturelle ramme for vejledning. Dermed bidrager artiklen til vores viden om vejledning i den postkoloniale kontaktzone.

Introduction

In this article, I am interested in supervisors' experiences of being educated in an intercultural context in the global north and how these experiences are negotiated and used in narratives of their supervision practice as academics in the global south. I unfold this by analysing the narratives of seven Ghanaian supervisors.

The education of African academics is shaped by their colonial history with an inherited colonial educational system (Teferra and Altbach, 2004), and what have been termed a 'colonization of the African mind' (Wa Thiong'o, 1987). Hence, many African universities, despite their independence, have strong educational relations with European universities (Adriansen et al., 2016a). In addition, African universities have become part of the global educational system with growing international student mobility and play a role in the world's educational economy (Teferra & Knight, 2008; Teferra & Altbach, 2003). Most often, international student mobility means mobility between universities although the digital world is expanding an on-line version of mobility between universities. For historical reasons, a substantial part of the mobility of African academics has been from the global south to the global north, with significant differences in numbers between countries (Kishun, 2011).

In a Scandinavian context, government-financed capacity-building projects have played a significant role in the mobility of African academics by organizing and funding scholarships, either as a full stay or a number of stays in the funding country (Møller-Jensen & Madsen, 2015; Breidlid, 2013; Fellesson & Mählck, 2013; Silfver & Berge, 2016). Hence, mobility in these cases is embedded in an idea of capacity-building for higher education in Africa, which has significance for knowledge production and

negotiations of knowledge, both in terms of dependency and empowerment for the partners involved (Madsen & Nielsen, 2016).

From a postcolonial perspective, the mobility of students and researchers between the global north and the global south does not simply occur: it is related to the geographical place, time and history of the persons and places involved (Manathunga, 2014; Connell, 2007). Being abroad is a result of physical movement between places; however, it is also a construction of social spaces produced through interaction and reproduced through the participants' relations, interwoven with historical power relations. Mählck and Fellesson (2016) show how such social spaces are experienced and contested by development aid-funded Tanzanian and Mozambican PhD students in Sweden. Also Manathunga (2014), in her work on intercultural supervision, shows how the experiences of PhD students abroad are created in various ways in social spaces with their supervisor and are linked to the time, place and history of the partners involved. However, what has as yet been less explored is the relations between the PhD students' experiences abroad and their later academic practice in the global south. This is the focus of this article and through it I address the wider aspect of the immediate supervision context from a postcolonial perspective.

Scientific knowledge often presupposes a notion of universality, suggesting that the place of production and consumption of knowledge is not relevant. However, as shown by Livingstone (2003), geographical place has significance for the production and reproduction of science and how scientific knowledge relates to the places and settings within which it is produced and reproduced. Also, from a postcolonial perspective, a critique of the perceived universality of knowledge and especially Eurocentric epistemology has emerged, focusing on power relations (e.g. Breidlid, 2013; Connell, 2007). This postcolonial critique sees the production of knowledge as a field in which power is exercised and the global north positions the global south as underdeveloped. However, as shown in Madsen and Nielsen (2016), negotiations of knowledge production are complex. In a project concerned with how international collaboration affects scientific knowledge production, they show how negotiations of knowledge production and the choice

of methodology situate African partners in a dependent role. However, at the same time, the very access to this methodology means that African partners become more independent in their knowledge production because they are empowered with access to knowledge and methods previously inaccessible to them (Madsen & Nielsen, 2016). Also, Zink's article (this special issue) stresses that negotiations of knowledge in research collaborations between the global north and global south are complex in terms of having multiple meanings, moralities and patterns of economic activity.

Adding to this complexity is how the knowledge produced is negotiated and put into place after being abroad. Adriansen et al. (2016b) found that *'African academics are not only exposed to more privileged working conditions* [when in the global north]*, but are also trained in different ways of thinking and behaving that may not always be applicable when they return home'* (2016b: p 137). Thus, not only is knowledge production related to the geographical place where it is produced and embedded in power relations, but also the later negotiations of this knowledge upon return to the global south are related to the experiences abroad.

Within this setting, I want to explore the multiple ways in which experiences abroad are related to the negotiations of knowledge in supervision by analysing the narratives of Ghanaian academics educated in both the global south and the global north. I want to explore how they negotiate and bring forward their practice of supervision given their location in a Ghanaian higher educational setting today and furthermore if and how their experiences abroad are related to these negotiations. To do so, I draw specifically on Manathunga's (2014) work on postcolonial theories in the development of a pedagogy of intercultural supervision. My hope is to contribute to a more nuanced view of the complexity and richness of producing and negotiating educational knowledge that we bring with us as academics in moving between places and to inform our knowledge of the potential and challenges of student mobility in intercultural settings.

Using concepts from the study of the postcolonial contact zone
Based on postcolonial theory, Manathunga (2014) explores the concepts of assimilation and transculturation in intercultural supervision. She shows empirically how these two pedagogies

operate in intercultural supervision in an Australian context and uses them to show how knowledge and relationships unfold in what she terms the postcolonial contact zone. She describes assimilation in supervision as an approach that *'plays out a limited, one-way process of socialization into Northern/Western knowledge'* (2014, p 85). With this approach, Northern knowledge and theory are seen as universal and timeless; hence assimilation acts as a denial of non-Western knowledge systems, place and time. In contrast to this, the transculturation approach *'occurs when supervisors demonstrate a deep awareness that Northern knowledge is only one possible knowledge framework and encourage their students to explore Western knowledge to see what deconstructive possibilities can be achieved when aspects of this knowledge are blended with their own cultural knowledge'* (2014, p 104). Assimilation approaches can be devastating for the student whose cultural knowledge is not valued and whose intellectual and professional histories are ignored, whereas transculturation approaches provide opportunities for mutual learning for both students and supervisors. Despite this analytical dual distinction, Manathunga (2014) in her emperiacl work shows the multiple ways these pedagogies are played out in the postcolonial contact zone.

Supervision relationships in the postcolonial contract zone for African PhD students have been little researched with important exceptions in Mählck and Fellesson (2016) and Doyle et al. (2017) and research on African PhD students' later supervision practice as academics in the global south is even more sparse. The contribution of this article is therefore to take the concepts developed to understand the pedagogies operating in the postcolonial contact zone and establish if it is possible to use them to understand narratives of supervision practice in the global south. Hence, assimilation and transculturation are used as analytical concepts to examine how supervisors negotiate their experiences abroad in their narratives of current supervision practice and broader educational knowledge – in other words, to reveal the interrelatedness of mobility and knowledge production concerning educational matters.

Methodology
During the last ten years I have been involved in capacity-building projects funded by Danish International Development Assistance (Danida), focusing on higher education in Senegal,

Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Over the years, together with colleagues, I began to wonder about the interrelatedness of the participants' various and often extensive education in the global north and the work we were doing (Madsen & Nielsen, 2016; Adriansen & Madsen, 2013). Gradually, this research field expanded from practice.

In this article, I report on a small study with seven Ghanaian supervisors (six male and one female) attending two PhD supervision training courses held in 2012 and 2013 in Ghana where I was teaching together with colleagues. The supervisors were selected to secure maximum variation (Flyvberg, 2008) based on the knowledge we had from interaction with the group of participants during the supervision training course. A research assistant (male) undertook qualitative interviews with the supervisors during breaks and in the evening. The interviews were set up as a time-line interview (Adriansen, 2012) focusing on the supervisors' educational trajectories in place and time and lasted about an hour. They adopted a narrative approach and explored the informants' educational narratives, mobility between the global south and global north, experiences abroad and reflections on their current supervision practice. The research assistant was not related to the participants in any way; however, being in the setting of a PhD supervision training course, the participants may have wanted to narrate themselves as 'good' supervisors. The interviews were transcribed and the analytical approaches described above were used to select, frame and produce the analysis. In the first part of the analysis, I look across the seven interviews focusing on variations within the different themes. In the second part of the analysis, I take a single interview to enable the narrative to unfold at full length and thus focus on the interrelatedness in the narratives. The choice to combine these two approaches was made to give the reader access to some of the richness and complexity of the material. When possible, I use quotes to privilege the participants' voices in the analysis.

With regard to scientific field, the participants represent business, engineering, psychology and pharmacy. The mobility of the seven informants differed in terms of the number of years spent abroad, country and number and type of scholarships. Six participants started their university education in Ghana,

one abroad; all of them undertook their PhD degrees outside Ghana in various European countries and North America. They started at university at different times in the period from 1985–1999. However, the participants were also much alike with regard to continuous mobility between the global south and the global north and their final return to the Ghanaian higher education system. At the time of the interviews, they were all working as academics within the Ghanaian higher educational system with supervision duties.

Supervisors' narratives of supervision: signs of experiences abroad
Relationships in supervision
Several of the supervisors reflected on their relationship with their supervisors when doing their PhD and their current relationships with their own students. Ambrose[1] described his relationship with his supervisor in a Scandinavian country:

> We were very close. Initially, I was not comfortable relating to him the way he wanted me to. I called him professor and he said no: "call me by my first name". I wanted to book appointments and do it the formal way, but he said no. So I think, after one year, it started changing. By the time I completed my MPhil, we had become friends, but then the respect and responsibility were still there. And that's how we continued.

Ambrose experienced a supervision relationship in which demand for a specific kind of student independence was explicit (informal relationship) and in his narrative Ambrose narrated this as a process he went through and succeeded in. To establish a friendly relationship in the supervision that incorporates the personal is a key feature of transcultural pedagogies (Manathunga, 2014). However, it is difficult to see from the quote if the demand for this kind of independence is also related to a lack of a sense of time and history in the supervision interaction, in which the student must be like the other students: namely independent, applying certain work habits and adopting a certain relation to his supervisor. A disregard for time and history are associated with an assimilationist approach in which

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1 All names used are pseudonyms.

the students' personal, intellectual and professional histories are not built upon. The quote ends with: *'but then the respect and responsibility were still there'*, which could indicate that Ambrose in his narrative 'talked back' what was transmitted to him by the dominant culture (Pratt, 2008). As Mary Louise Pratt highlights in her foundational book *Imperial Eyes*: 'while subjugated peoples cannot readily control what the dominant culture visits upon them, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, how they use it, and what they make it mean' (2008, p 7).

Ambrose, with five PhD students at the time of the interview, reflected on his own supervision as follows:

> 'With one of them it is not too difficult, but the others are very difficult. Because I was taught and encouraged to work independently: "to send the work and own it. Don't ask is it good for me to put this there. If I have an opinion, I will stress it". And the relationship... I try, but especially the students that I inherited want to be spoon-fed. If they write a sentence, they want you to look at it and correct... It is relatively easier when you get somebody from scratch and then take the person along than with somebody who has been there for three years.'

This description clearly shows that Ambrose reflects his experiences abroad in his narrative of his current relationship with his PhD students. He actively uses the experiences to explain and legitimize his views of how a PhD student must be (independent in a specific way) and not be (want to be spoon-feed). Ambrose wants his students to apply certain working strategies and he perceives his role as a supervisor to be to secure this. The quote illustrates signs of a assimilationist approach, revealing a deficit view of what the students bring with them. Just as Ambrose had to assimilate as a PhD student, as a supervisor he expected his students to assimilate in ways that in his narrative is strongly embedded in his experiences of being abroad.

Malongo described the relationship with his supervisor in the global north in terms of him being different. He was the only non-native PhD student in the department of the

European University where he did his PhD and he described the relationship in the following way:

Interviewer: You said it was beyond a working relationship?

Yes… I told myself I want to finish. I'd been the first black person in the working group. I needed to prove that we are also worthy of what they are doing… I needed to work extra hard to prove [myself] to my professor. Because most of the time they are sceptical about African students. Now it became more of a father–son and then a colleague level, because he knew that I was also teaching at a university [in his position in Ghana]. For the other doctoral students [European] it wasn't like that… So the relationship, supervisor-graduate student, was beyond… We would talk about things, about the programme. And now, the relationship is still on.

Malongo narrated his relationship with his supervisor as mutual and transcultural in Manathunga's (2014) terms, but also as cast in a colonial framework (I needed to prove that we are also worthy of what they are doing). As the narrative unfolds, it is apparent that it was his responsibility to establish the relationship because he was the different one (being a black African student) – on the other hand he also narrates his difference (being a university teacher and hence a colleague) as the reason why he managed to establish this relationship compared to the other doctoral students. Malongo still has contact with the supervisor and has recently arranged for a new PhD student from Ghana to join his former supervisor.

Andrew narrated the supervision relationship as a difference between supervisors situated in the global south and in the global north respectively:

When I started, it was the first time my department [in Ghana] had organized a PhD programme. So there was a lack of policy, there wasn't any material to refer to. So there were challenges. But in [a European country] everything was there. There was a coordinated programme and the libraries were resourced. So it was easier for us … compared to when we were in Ghana.

But our Ghanaian supervisors were... mine was a special case, my supervisor found a lot of interest in my work. Many supervisors in Ghana do not show that kind of cordial relationship between supervisor and student. So many students find it difficult to approach their supervisors – and if they [supervisors] don't find the work interesting, they don't get involved. Mine wasn't like that. He got involved.

This quote recounts 'some' Ghanaian supervisors as people who do not get involved with their students, but at the same time Andrew characterizes his relationship with his Ghanaian supervisor as different. He uses his experiences abroad to highlight this and to contrast the differences. Also, Andrew seems to cast his narrative in a colonial framework, in which the global south is positioned as being in need of development.

Along the same lines, Malongo narrated the difference between the global south and the global north in relation to his current supervision practice:

'I was more independent at that time – I knew what I was doing [reflecting on doing his own PhD]. Based on that, coming back [to Ghana], I always want to have students who I can interact with, but the research environment there is a bit different. Here [in Ghana] there are all the limitations – especially with funding. You sit down with students and you have to accommodate different approaches here and there... so it's more... when we meet, it's interaction that we're having. Then I have to guide. That is what I do. So it's a form of mentorship, but with more interaction. I always tell them: "I'm not a depository of knowledge. You can get a lot of information on the internet, so when you come – come and discuss ideas".... you [he himself] somehow have to use the pastoral approach: do this, that and that.'

In this quote, Malongo articulates independence as a characteristic of the good PhD student, with independence seen as indicating someone who can be interacted with. However, he also relates independence to place in the sense that he narrates a story of it being more difficult to be an independent

PhD student in a Ghanaian setting due to what he frames as limitations. He negotiates his supervision practice in relation to these limitations by being more pastoral in defining what his PhD students should do. Hence, also in this quote we see clear relations with the experiences of being abroad in the narrative of current supervision practice. He continues:

> I prefer to monitor them [his PhD students] – going to the lab and finding out what they are doing. So nowadays they will come and say, "Come and have a look at these interesting results, I'm having these challenges". Our staff for my PhD [in a European country] were a bit different. Before you go to your main supervisor, you needed to sort everything out with the leaders of the working group before you had a meeting with your supervisor.

Here, Malongo shows that he has negotiated and transformed his own role as a supervisor into a relationship in which research results are discussed in their making with his PhD students (in the laboratory situation) in contrast to the more hierarchical relationship he experienced himself in an European country. Malongo trains his students to be independent. In this regard, he is talking back to the Western culture (Pratt, 2008) by establishing a relationship with his PhD students other than that he himself experienced abroad. The ability to transform something based on experiences abroad is also shown in a study of a Senegalese researcher's education in Senegal, Denmark and France (Adriansen et al., 2016b). Here, the researcher, Mbow uses his experience of an academic critical approach in a European university to question the application of Western research methods when he returns to Senegal.

A deficit view of knowledge diversity
Present in a number of the narratives of the supervisors was the change in their topic during their PhD or the abandonment of previous work supposed to be part of their PhD. Andrew explained:

> I had to change my topic – because my supervisor gave me two options to choose from. Either a PhD that will give you a career or a PhD that will only give you a degree. I chose the one that would give me a

career. Because of that, I had to stop everything I was doing and move into my current thought… That guy [the supervisor] was more of a business guy, so he wanted to see something that was more business… I had almost two years' experience in Ghana, 18 months, before I went to [the European University] and changed… So, although the time was short, I could see that I was performing… and the work became interesting.

This quote is an example of an assimilationist approach in relation to the subject matter of the PhD. The European supervisor did not see the possibilities or have an interest in the subject that Andrew brought with him. In this case, Andrew's research subject that he had worked on for more than a year was entirely abandoned. Ester also reflected on the topic of her PhD. She described how she was very interested in a topic that she had been working on, but that the supervisor, who had capacity within the field, rejected taking her as a PhD-student. Ester recounted that the topic she ended up doing was not her focus of interest in the following way:

I said to myself: I'm not going to sit around and wait for somebody to reject me or take me – I will take what I can get – get the experience and the skills – and go on to what I want to do. And it worked out OK.
Interviewer: It must have been hard to do a PhD in a subject that didn't really grab you?
'For me that wasn't too hard – because I saw it as a means to an end.'
Interviewer: Did you talk to your supervisor about that?
'[Not really]… He wasn't as interested as I was.'

This extract shows that the point of departure for including knowledge diversity in a supervision relationship can be hampered not only by an assimilationist approach in the supervision but also before the relationship has even begun. In this situation, it is much less clear how knowledge diversity is acted out in the supervisory relationship. However, later in the interview, Ester went on to say that she negotiated with the supervisor and managed to get the subject turned a little towards her interest.

In the interview with Andrew, who as already mentioned also changed topic, he later on reflected on his own supervision practice as follows:

> Yeah, I asked him [his PhD student from another West African country] the same question: what do you want to do, a PhD with a degree or a PhD with a career? And from his current work it looks like he just wants a degree… I'm asking him to rethink the subject and see how he can modify it to reflect certain current trends, something like that.

Here, Andrew uses his experience abroad to justify his supervision practice, namely asking the question whether the intention is to do a PhD for a degree or a PhD with a career in mind. However, it is difficult to see if he perceives doing a PhD solely for a degree as not or less legitimate. He directs the PhD student to modify the subject, which has signs of an assimilationist approach. Although we do not know what his reasons for this are, he clearly positions doing a PhD as a means to a career as the 'good' PhD. His experience abroad is visible in his supervision narrative and he articulates what a good PhD student must do based on his own experience.

In contrast to the narratives of Andrew and Ester, two of the other supervisors described how they established a supervision relationship with professors abroad within their research field of interest. In both cases, they had successfully applied for funding and neither the subject of the research nor the data collected in Ghana were changed or neglected by their supervisors. One of them replied to the interviewer's question: You potentially offered him a free PhD candidate? *'Yeah… in addition to that, later I realized that it also enriched his CV, attracting… funds.'*

The different experiences of not being able to or being able to include own ideas and research illustrates how knowledge production is shaped in various ways by the positions made available to the PhD students when being trained in the global north. When students from the global south can contribute to the production of a 'successful' supervisor by adding funding, issues of knowledge production seem smoother. In his paper on Ugandan PhD training, Zink (2016) finds similar results

and Mählck (this special issue) relates the experiences to what she terms 'the pressures from neo-liberal work regimes in academia', which give supervisors in the global north limited positions within which to act.

Creating a third in-between space?

Some of the supervisors reflected on the very limited organisation of PhD programmes in existence in Ghana when they embarked on their PhD studies compared to their experiences at universities in the global north. The supervisors interviewed undertook their PhD studies at a time when PhD programmes in Ghana were at first either lacking or recently introduced. In some places, they have now been fully implemented. This period in time has been a window for creating a third, in-between space in which experiences from the global south and global north could be translated into new forms of PhD programmes.

Robert elaborated on setting up a unit for PhD affairs inspired by his experiences abroad:

I studied in [a European country] for my PhD where they have a unit for post-graduate work and that unit had a dean. So, when I came back and saw that we didn't have anything like that, I said that we should form a unit to be in charge of PhD work and see to their problems – if there's a problem between a supervisor and a student you would be the first point of call… I saw it as something lacking. I was of the view that the board for postgraduate work wasn't doing much. They were not on the ground to see the problems their students were having. Therefore, there was the need to have decentralized units in the faculties to see to those things.

Asked why he found that important, Robert explained:

I had just gone through my PhD and had seen some of the problems that I had and how I went about solving them… and coming here I realized that students were just on their own and at the mercy of their supervisor, because if the supervisor was no good, they had no way of changing even the supervisor and all that, so I said – if we have a unit like that, the students will

look up to you… A PhD student should graduate by going to a set number of courses – and it was the unit that would be able to see to that.

Robert's narrative highlights the Ghanaian PhD programme as lacking in some important dimensions and specific elements of the PhD programme he experienced in the global north as superior and worth installing. This example can be interpreted as a long-term result of capacity building in higher education in the global south. However, it can also be interpreted as a questionable feature of the kind of academic mobility that emerged in the post colonial era between universities in the global south and the global north. There is no sign in this narrative of creating a third in-between space; in terms of negotiations of new spaces. Hence, from a postcolonial perspective, the above can be seen as mimicry, where the dominant culture are being cherished in such a way that as described by Ashcroft: those from the periphery immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origions in an attemps to become 'even more English than the English' (Ashcroft et al., 2003, p 4). From a capacity-building point of view, however, the above is a sign of success, with the efforts of supporting and educating academics in the global south being fulfilled (Winkel, 2014).

The production of one supervisor: negotiations of experiences abroad
In what follows, I discuss the story of one of the supervisors: Boateng.

When embarking on his master's degree without funding in the global north, Boateng had to work to pay the bills and fees. He would go to class during the day, rest for a couple of hours and then do paid work the whole evening and night, wash and take the train to class. He would sleep in the one-hour break and the other breaks at university. On Sundays, he would go to church, then study at the university until late afternoon and finally sleep to the next day to gain energy for the following week. When finishing his master's his professor realized how much Boateng had been struggling. He could not believe the strain and stress he had put himself through and gave him a considerable amount of money. Later on, when doing his PhD alongside having a full-time job, Boateng would get home from work in the late afternoon and would rest, then sit and work

until midnight. The next day he would study a couple of hours before going to work. Boateng finished his PhD in four years.

This description of Boateng's experiences abroad can be interpreted as a story of individual hardship and willpower. However, he himself ascribed it to the story of his culture. He recounted:

> The environment expects so much of you – you cannot let yourself down… when you leave the shores of this country [travel abroad for education], it will be unthinkable for you not to come back with a PhD… I have yet to come across anybody who went abroad from Ghana to study and never came back with a certificate.

Boateng interprets and ascribes his experiences abroad to culture: it is not legitimate to go abroad and return without a PhD degree, no matter what pressure one has to endure. In this lies an implicit notion of having an opportunity by being in the global north, related to an idea of the presence of more superior knowledge. This became clear when he later in the interview referred back to his education in Ghana, where he together with all his peers in the lecture hall of the university were told: 'Work very hard – aspire to go to the best universities in the world'. In this lies a notion of more superior knowledge lying outside Ghana. This resonates with other studies. One such is the life story of a Senegalese climate change researcher told by Adriansen et al. (2016b) and another is the work of Hountondij (1990) in which he discusses the scientific dependence of African universities and quotes the French biologist De Certaines. De Certaine enrolled as a student at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal, some years after independence. He stated: *'In the African universities where I was trained… I was told, in a sense: here you are working on the margins of science; if you really want to reach the heart of the matter, you will have to leave'* (De Certaines, 1978, quoted in Hountondji, 1990, p 5–6).

Boateng emphasized the significance of the relationship with his supervisors when abroad:

> My supervisors had confidence in me – I think that was very important. I was meeting deadlines, I was attending meetings and conferences – there were a lot

peer meetings – that was very helpful – I didn't have to reinvent the wheel.

I always take my hat off to my professor – he said what is important now is the PhD – after the PhD you have all the time in the world to do whatever you want to do – and for me that was great advice. He focused me. For me, I thought this PhD was a big thing – I had to be able to conquer the whole world at the end of it. Then I realised I only had to go into one particular area – the confidence they had in me was a great motivation – and the support at work was critical – I could take time off, I was able to use my annual leave. I had a lot of annual leave which I could use for my study which was helpful.

Manathunga (2014) describes how recognizing the importance of encouraging students to have a life outside their research is part of adopting transcultural approaches in intercultural supervision. In the quote above by Boateng, he experienced, in contrast, a supervisor who told him that you could always get a life when you have finished your PhD. Interviewing Boateng, he argued this helped him focus and that it helped him through. To understand this, I turn to the concept of the cultural production of the educated person developed by Levinson and Holland (1996). They contend that using a culturally specific conception of the educated person *'allows us to appreciate the historical and cultural particularities of the "products" of education, and thus provides a framework for understanding conflicts around different kinds of schooling'* (1996, p 3). By using this concept in reflecting on Boateng's experiences abroad, we can gain insights into his negotiations of academic practice in different cultural settings, but also into what is perceived and what is being legitimized as an educated person. In the case of Boateng, the cultural production of the educated person in Ghana implies having experiences from abroad and also being able to endure.

Whereas the first (experiences from abroad) is a generally accepted aspect of the cultural production of an educated person in Ghana, as cited above, we do not know if it is common to see PhD candidates from the global south adapting as Boateng did in terms of the latter (endurance). However, it comes out quite

strongly in the following quotations, in which he reflects on his own supervision practice, that he sees the ability to focus and not 'be distracted by' life outside research, as well as being able to endure hardship, as the legitimate way of doing a PhD. Boateng narrates this as confidence and consistency:

> I build confidence with my students: I tell them "I may be an expert in one area, but in your area you may be more knowledgeable than me, so under no circumstance should you be intimidated. I'm here to guide you, to show you what works and what doesn't, but you must have confidence that at the moment you are an authority in this field". Just saying that to them makes them feel they have something to offer.

> I keep saying to people "It's not about the amount of time you have – if you can dedicate two hours a day every day consistently for four years you will get your PhD. It's not so much about the amount of time you spend – it's the quality of the time you have".

> One thing I do not condone is laziness… so I expect students to work pretty hard and my students know this.

In the three quotes, we can see that Boateng, through his supervision practice, is negotiating the becoming of his students. The guidance he gives his PhD students to structure their time (two hours each day) is directly linked to his own endurance when doing a PhD and he does not tolerate laziness – something that if he had indulged in would have meant he may not have obtained his PhD. It is clear that in his supervision practice in the global south today Boateng negotiates and strongly reflects his own experiences abroad outlined above. In Manathunga's terms, he is downplaying the time and history of his own PhD students by mirroring the experiences he himself had in the global north as the way a PhD student should act and perform. However, using the cultural production of the educated person as an analytical tool, Boateng's narrative can be seen as the legitimized way of supervising in this specific setting. In advocating the concept of cultural production, Levinson and Holland (1996) focus our attention on culture as a continual process of creating meaning in social and material contexts.

Whereas being abroad for Boateng was a story of hardship and willpower, the return to Ghana in many ways fulfilled the perceptions of being an educated person today and gave him the benefits this brings. He told us:

> If you have a PhD, you are very well regarded in society – that gives benefits money cannot buy. Highly respected people in Ghana are in academia – they are perceived to be honest and genuine – because they have been abroad they are considered to be objective – if someone in academia vouches for somebody, the chance is that it will be accepted.

In the narrative, the experience of having been abroad comes out quite strongly as part of the cultural production of an educated person in Ghana. Boateng recounts the experiences abroad as a narrative of being a respected and educated person in society.

'Work very hard – aspire to go to the best universities in the world'

In this conclusion and invitation to further study, I wish to stress that this article has shown how educational practices operate beyond the immediate supervision context, both in supervision practice and in the wider cultural setting of supervision. This is an addition to Manthunga's (2014) significant work on developing pedagogies in the postcolonial contact zone, as I discuss below.

The small study of seven Ghanaian academics has shown that through training and education in a Western scientific culture, the Ghanaian academics bring certain values and ways of thinking of supervision to the foreground. They use their experiences abroad to narrate their supervision practice in the global south. The values and legitimized views of being a 'good' PhD student are negotiated and contested on their return to Ghana. The analysis shows how the supervisors have different ways of negotiating and narrating their experiences abroad, but for all the supervisors interviewed, their experiences in the global north were present in their narratives of current supervision practice. To address this, we can to some extent use the concepts (assimilation and transculturation) developed for understanding intercultural supervision in the contact zone (Manathunga, 2014).

The study, however, also shows how the supervisors' negotiations of their experiences abroad are related to the cultural production of the educated person in Ghanaian academia. The message 'work very hard – aspire to go to the best universities' is part of the culturally accepted view of knowledge production as something that is superior in the global north. Hence, becoming an educated person in Ghana means having experienced often multiple movements between universities in the global south and global north. Being an academic gives status in society and experiences abroad become an asset. This means that the supervisor's experiences abroad are negotiated within this cultural production of an educated person on their return to Ghana. Here, the concepts of assimilation and transculturation fall somewhat short.

My hope has been to contribute to a more nuanced view of the complexity and richness of producing and negotiating the educational knowledge that we bring with us as academics between places, and to inform our knowledge of the potential and challenges of student mobility in intercultural settings. Initial steps towards this have been taken by adding the concept of cultural production to the concepts used to understand supervision in the postcolonial contact zone. Adding the concept of cultural production seems to allow a further embracing of the complexity of the historical and cultural aspects that intersect with knowledge relations in the practice of supervision. Based on the findings, the article questions assumptions that academic training obtained in a Western setting is inherently useful or inherently useless. Instead, in creating third in-between spaces we should compel academics to *'think across and live within several knowledge systems'* (Manathunga, 2014, p 85), despite the challenges that this implies.

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