

Creating a Veneer of Internationalisation? Are UK Higher Education Institutions doing enough to Integrate International Academic Staff into their Working Environment?

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Overview

- Roughly **54,995** IAS currently work in UK HEIs out of 198,335 academics 28.3%(HESA, 2016).
- In 2006, **8% of 131 HEIs** had international staff recruitment as part of their internationalization strategy (Koutsantoni, 2006)
- In 2013, the University of Nottingham reported that **58% of UK HEIs** now see IAS recruitment and international staff mobility as being important.
- In 2013, *Improving the Experiences of International Staff in UK HE* (ECU: London) provided guidance and recommendations on assisting IAS transition to life in UK.



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Existing Literature

- There is a lack of focus on contributions made by IAS, in favour of international student contributions to campus life (Walker, 2015; Green & Myatt, 2001, Kim & Locke, 2010).
- Focuses on the impact on academic identity: transitioning from one academic environment into another (Balasooriya, Asante, Jayasinha, & Razee, 2014).
- Details how IAS struggle to cope with different student cohorts and educational settings (Garson, 2005).
- Suggests IAS members feel HEIs have little interest in tapping into their prior experiences (Maadad, 2014).

THEORETICAL APPROACH

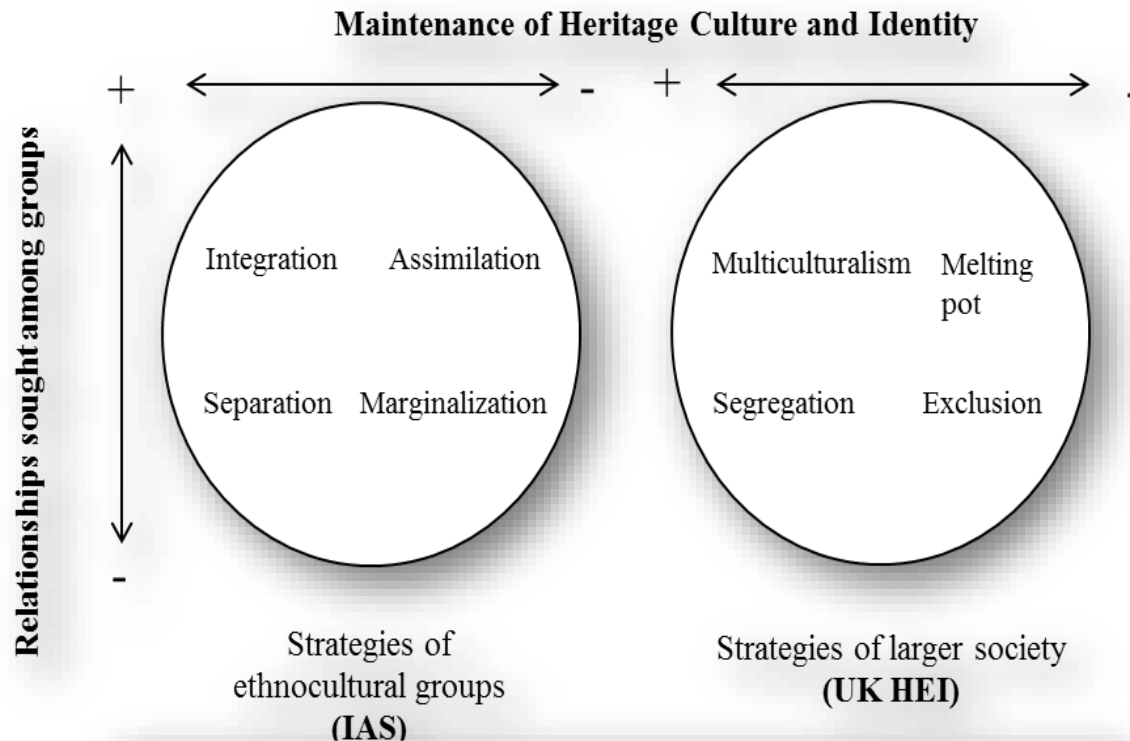


Figure 1: Berry (2008) Intercultural strategies in ethnocultural groups and the larger society, (p. 332)

Research Questions: IAS

To what extent:

1. Are IAS fully merging, meshing and homogenizing into UK HEI culture, creating *integration*?
2. Are IAS choosing not to maintain their cultural identity, preferring to acquire the dominant group characteristics, creating *assimilation*?
3. Do IAS separate from other cultures & maintain their values, causing *separation*?
4. Do IAS feel they suffer enforced cultural loss or feel unwilling to have relations with others due to discrimination or isolation, therefore causing *marginalisation*?

Research Questions: HEI

To what extent:

1. Is the HEI encouraging integration and widely-accepting diversity as a feature of their HE environment, creating ***multiculturalism***?
2. Does the HEI make an effort to assimilate, creating a ***melting pot***?
3. Is the HEI involved in forcing the separation of IAS, creating ***segregation***?
4. Is the HEI imposing marginalisation and thereby ***excluding*** IAS?

Methodology and Data Collection

- Northern UK Post 1992 HEI.
- Semi-structured interviews.
- **18 respondents** across Business, Computing and Engineering, Humanities, Applied Sciences and Art Design and Architecture.
- Qualitative data – thematic analysis.

Sample n=18

IAS Participants	Gender	Nationality	Role
2	Male Female	Greece	Lecturer, Module Leader
1	Male	Pakistan	Lecturer & Researcher
1	Female	Israel	Lecturer, Module Leader and Course Leader
1	Male	Jordan	Lecturer, Module Leader
1	Male	German	Lecturer, Module Leader
1		Chinese	Lecturer, Module Leader
2	Female Male	French	Lecturer, Module Leader Lecturer & Researcher
1	Male	Polish	Lecturer, Module Leader
1	Male	Ghanain	Lecturer, Module Leader
1	Female	Sri Lankian	Lecturer, Module Leader
1		Italian	Lecturer, Module Leader
1	Male	Iraqi	Lecturer, Module Leader

Key quotes: *IAS Integration & Assimilation*



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“I tried to go out with English people outside of work. Perhaps knowing a bit more of their social life and how they live will help me understand how to be different or more accepted at work”

“Here a lot of attention is being given to students’ feedback. Student feedback is again, a very different thing from Pakistan. How can you take students feedback seriously, they’re not even serious about their studies. Most of them anyway? But it happens here so...I’m fine with that”

“You need to adapt. You can’t resist the environment they will isolate you detach you from things that are very important for UK Development... So I had, I’m not saying I was forced to do it, I’ve been attracted to do the things that they are doing because I think that’s for healthy environment”



Preliminary findings: *IAS Integration & Assimilation*

Integration

- Self - directed behaviour to develop understanding of new culture.
- Polite, willing, out-going behaviour - lubricates (facilitates) new relationships.
- Acknowledgement of ‘otherness.’
- Steep learning curve/survival instincts - adaptability necessary for success.

- Assimilation

- Search for commonality.
- Rely on (exploit?) colleagues’ good nature.
- Agency – recognising a need for assimilation.
- Adaptation is a process.

Key quotes: IAS Segregation & Marginalisation

“I was always reminded that I was French all the time....my boss my colleagues, you try your best to integrate...but you are always pushed back to “yeh, but you are French, you look so French”...” and I thought OK, could you help me move forwards?”

“I’ve had to tone down my ‘Italianness’”

“Even in that melting pot I don't think we're very accustomed to people from different cultures...when it comes to work, I don't think we open up that much. They (uk) try to, they try to be nice and friendly, ... but still what I learnt from work is draw a line in-between work and life.”

“Sometimes a bit shy sometimes I didn't ask because I though they wouldn't say no, but it's the feeling that you know, that I'm asking too much maybe. Sometimes it makes me feel maybe not myself? I used to Google things sometimes just to avoid the asking so sometimes asking would have been like the last resort.”



Preliminary findings: *IAS Segregation & Marginalisation*

Segregation

- Adaptation is a process (separate at first).
- Lack of guidance around processes and procedures leads to anxiety.
- Lack of support for pedagogical practice leads to anxiety – move from teacher to student centred learning.
- IAS seem to feel domestic faculty (UK) are not always accommodating.

Marginalisation

- IAS find themselves as a discreet group among domestic colleagues.
- Institutional language UK- centric - assumes familiarity with cultural norms (schooling systems/institutional hierarchies/functions and procedures).
- Provide internal mentors to overcome feelings of isolation.
- IAS do not report feeling marginalised.

Key quotes:

HEI *Multiculturalism & Melting Pot*

“An international HEI has international recognition, is an international brand...international students international staff. I am foreign and have decided to come here. The HEI is here to support but you cannot expect everything.”

“In terms of people it’s very diverse, I think its international but I can’t really tell if the culture of organisation here is really international, I can’t see that, I can see traces of it, in terms of people, but how is this embraced in all the processes and the whole routines that we do here? No I don't think so.”

“I believe if the university is really into internationalisation stuff, I mean to make more... they must or they should be at least maybe like someone sitting there in one of the offices to support those lecturer to settle down for a year.”



Preliminary findings: *HEI Multiculturalism & Melting Pot*

Multiculturalisation

- International student recruitment.
- IAS recruitment.
- International networks form and exist.
- Openness and freedom to express in UK HEI culture.

Melting Pot

- Unharnessed potential to use IAS' cultural expertise to inform practice across all functions (especially in T&L)
- Lack of awareness of 'otherness.'
- No evidence yet of UK fully embracing other cultural ideas/ behaviours.

Key quotes: HEI Segregation & Exclusion

“Having my opinion is quite fair in the UK. In the UK whether a person is a professor or at secretarial level all the people are considered, everybody is considered seriously. I think that is one of the main differences from Pakistan. Here is more equality”

“I don't feel different in a bad way, I don't feel like I'm unwelcomed.”

“Even that person I know, who has been here for over 20 years, still feels that at times, because she doesn't have the right accent that she is being pointed at...we still feel outside of you know the team. There is still groups within teams if you like, EU, international and UK.”

“Some (HEI) events could be organised in a more friendly way, which are important to certain Communities. I think that sort of thing needs more promotion.”



Preliminary findings: *HEI Segregation & Exclusion*

Segregation

- HEI inductions are seemingly too weak.
- IAS call for expectations to be made clear from the outset - without this difficult to cope & engage in professional life.
- No recognition by HEI of real needs of IAS- forcing them to identify informal own support networks (usually from other IAS academics).
- More internal events to promote cross-cultural understandings and develop more diverse networks.

Exclusion

- HEI seemingly fails to acknowledge difference but no evidence of purposive marginalisation.

Initial Conclusions: IAS

- Integrated IAS not as result of an internationalised HEI, but because of informal networks and need to adapt to survive in the new culture.
- Assimilation is propelled by the individual not facilitated by the HEI.
- Lack of consideration and understanding of difference by domestic faculty and the HEI can lead to segregation.
- Above can lead to feelings of marginalisation.

Initial Conclusions: HEI

- Ideal of a multi - cultural HEI partially fulfilled.
- Concept of melting pot not acknowledged by IAS or facilitated by HEI.
- HEI does not impose or force exclusion or segregation
- However, lack of HEI structures for inclusion and diversity can create feelings of segregation.
- HEI should consider making ‘reasonable adjustments’ including:
 - Better induction programmes
 - Mentoring schemes
 - IAS specific office –accommodation, visas etc.
 - Written resource for HEI Procedure and Policy
 - Terms of reference
 - Social events
 - Subject specific teaching support

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