

# INTERNATIONALISATION AT COPENHAGEN BUSINESS SCHOOL

An Explorative Study on experiences of Identity and Learning



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# **Internationalisation at CBS: An explorative study on experiences of Identity and learning**

## **I- Introduction**

In the last decades, the importance of international education in the academic debate has been growing together with the numbers of international students around the world. International education has been expanding across national borders as a consequence of globalisation. This process has many dimensions, because of the fact that education goes through a large process of change, from the supranational institutions that design it to the individual that receives it.

The objective of this thesis is to present an in-depth analysis of the implications of the internationalisation of higher education at Copenhagen Business School (from now on CBS), focusing mainly on the discourse of internationalisation created by both the institution and the international full-time students. Together with the discourses of internationalisation, I will also focus on the understandings of learning and the identity transformations those students' experience. My purpose with this thesis is to look at three dimensions of internationalisation, which are societal, institutional and individual, and to integrate them in my research. I will research in the societal influences in learning and identity formation within a Higher Education Institution (from now on HEI), in this case CBS. In the following paragraphs, I will present the three dimensions of internationalisation I have mentioned.

As humans, we construct the world around us collectively following a process of giving meaning and giving ourselves a specific position in it (Fornäs, 1995). Formal and informal education is a very important process for personal and social development. Schools and universities occupy a lot of time in our individual growth and adulthood. Educational institutions represent a recurrent context for making sense and understanding the social world. Learning is socially constructed, and therefore we need to understand our present

moment in history in order to understand how we learn. Learning has to do with society, which is why I will present the changes that society has been through in the last decades, which have resulted in the internationalisation of higher education.

Learning is also contextual, meaning that we will not learn the same in two different situations. Referring to formal learning, the institutional context by which learning is defined is very important to understand the attitudes and results of the learning processes. Learning has to do with institutions, and therefore I will present the perception and articulation of the internationalisation process as it happens at CBS.

Finally, learning is also something determined by the individual experiences of the learner. What was learned in the past and what is expected to be learned in the future affects how and what we learn as individuals. Thus, learning has also to do with the individual. It is highly related to individuals' identity construction, which is why I use identity theories to understand how the internationalisation process and the learning context and practices affect the perception of the individuals' identity.

Subsequently, we as individuals are affected by the context in which we find ourselves, since contexts are fields of interaction, embedded in ideologies and ways of knowledge. In other words, the process of internationalisation of higher education will not be the same in Denmark than in Spain. Within fields, we can find more fields, for example, CBS and Roskilde University belong to the Danish field of higher education. Still, the process of internationalisation will vary between CBS and Roskilde University. Moreover, as the individuals from my sample are international students, they have another context to refer to when they enact reality and when they reflect on internationalisation. At the same time, these individuals have been exposed to other institutions and educational cultures, which have had an impact on the learning processes and on the sense of their self, or their personal identity.

In sum, all the aspects of the context in which one finds him or herself, are affecting their understandings of the social world. I will look at cultural diverse people in the same context, asking to them for their understandings of the context and their selves in it. My intention with this research is to explore the fit or misfit between the dimensions of internationalisation and how these fits can be used to improve the higher education experience. Since it is an explorative study, I let the students talk about what is of most importance for them in terms of identity and learning processes, and relate those concepts to the process of internationalisation.

### **Research Question**

What I am interested in is to investigate how learning and identity are related at CBS in the context of internationalisation of education. That is why I look particularly at the international students, because they will be the most affected by the discourse of internationalisation. I will look at how international students construct their understanding of learning and how this is related to their expectations in the future and experiences in the past, that is, to their identity construction. I will also look at how internationalization as a global discourse affects institutions and their definition of curricula and learning processes and outcomes. With this, I will transgress my initial unity of analysis, which is the individual, and focus on the institution. My main explorative research questions are:

RQ1: How do International Students perceive, negotiate and maintain their sense of identity in the context of the internationalisation of higher education?

RQ2: How do international students perceive their learning process in the context of internationalisation?

### **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is distributed in eight main chapters. In the introductory chapter I present the overall premises, followed by the main research questions. In the

second chapter, the methodology will be presented. In this chapter II will present the philosophical assumptions, methods, and roots for the research and analysis. In the third chapter, I present the literature review used to carry out my research. Chapter three includes three blocks of literature, two referring to the individual, learning and identity, and one referring to the global context. In chapter five I present the institution together with an understanding of internationalisation from its strategy. In chapter six I will present the analysis, describing the most important findings. The discussion chapter presents a reflection of the findings, in accordance to the literature reviews. Finally, the conclusion will wrap everything together, and will tie up the thesis.

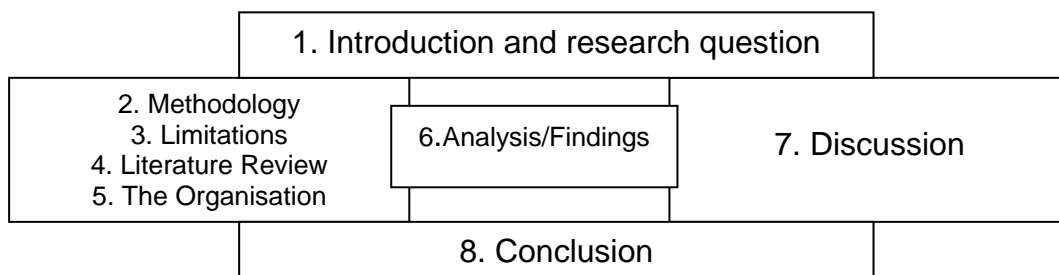


Figure 1. Structure of the thesis

As it is illustrated in figure 1, part one of the thesis is mirrored in the conclusion after the findings. The methodology and the discussion are side chapters that explain how I get to the findings, and what comes up in the findings in relation to the literature review and CBS. I will now begin with part II, and I will present first the methodology of my research.

## II- Methodology

### Philosophical framework

The philosophical framework of this thesis is based on qualitative inquiry. For qualitative inquiry I refer to the reformist movement that began in the 70s in the academia. This movement was questioning the assumption that knowledge had to be inferred by positivistic methodologies, this is, observing

reality as something that can be observed and described following natural norms. Qualitative inquiry questions the means and the goals of human inquiry of the 'mainstream' social sciences. Furthermore, the qualitative researchers argue that social reality is transformed by the very research, together with the theories in which the research is framed. Therefore, the way of approaching reality changes, since the function of the researcher is no longer neutral. Moreover, they advocate for a fundamentally different research in social sciences in relation to natural sciences, saying that reality cannot be fully understood by the causal relations characteristic of natural sciences.

Within qualitative inquiry there are many epistemological stances that is, many 'glasses' with which to see the nature of knowledge. My standpoint for this thesis is framed with *interpretivism* (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994), since I want to understand the meaning of human action by grasping the subjective consciousness of the actor from the inside, thus I consider human action as meaningful. Words are embedded in and dependent on its context and therefore they have consequences. Language is articulated through multiple language games that constitute different systems of meanings, like institutional and cultural norms, which need to be taken into account when interpreting data. Also, it is important to consider human subjectivity when developing knowledge, without scarifying the rigor or the objectivity of the data. In addition, I take into my analysis the hermeneutic principle of the involved researcher, challenging the classic Cartesian picture of the uninvolved, objective researcher. I am affecting my research field since I take an inevitably active role in shaping my understanding of it.

I also take some insights from the following epistemologies: social constructivism, critical theory, postmodern and poststructuralist theory. With social constructivism I express that reality is constructed socially, thus through interaction with other individuals. Therefore, it is our sense making and enactment of reality that makes it exists. Thus, all reality is subjective. It is determined by the interpretations of the participants in the concrete field (Bourdieu, 1997), which is a social arena in which people maneuver and



struggle in pursuit of desirable resources. In this sense, there is no ultimate truth. It is socially constructed:

*The world... is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it'*

(Potter, 1996, p.98)

Hence, the understanding of the discourses of a social context is an important condition for interpretation. Following the Foucaultian tradition, in the late modernity there is an intense development of psy knowledge (Rose, 1990), which is knowledge presented as an absolute truth and made up by socially legitimised specialists. This kind of knowledge has consequences in the way we understand the world, in the discourses available through which we construct meaning. For example, the discourses of globalisation or internationalisation are created by specialists and they exclude other discourses at the present moment of history. The degree of expertise of those who create the discourses, legitimise their authority to describe what truth in our social world is. We as individuals believe in expertise, although we may not know what makes them experts.

With postmodernism I acknowledge the importance of language and discourse in constructing the reality and expressing cultural features and identities. Language also carries out many cultural and structural connotations, which can be implicit forms of power and domination in society. Furthermore I acknowledge the person as subject of this discourse, and not merely as an object that receives the structure of power and domination. The individual has agency to determine which identity to adopt. It is up to us how to present us in the social world.

The main objective of this research and thesis is to analyse reality with the aim of improving it, questioning some given characteristics to improve our consciousness of the structure we take part in and that we are reproducing with our actions. In this sense, this thesis is informed by critical theory, which consists in critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining it (Alvesson and Deetz,

2000). I want to give voice to what I think is a problem in the educational field of the western late modernity. As an author that takes part in the reality of the study, it is important to transcend the observation as an objective to a more engaged way of using research.

### **Methods, sample and analysis**

The study presented in this thesis was conducted from December 2008 to April 2009. During this period, 4 focus group interviews were carried out, 3 with international students; most of them were graduate students attending a full master programme. Morgan (1988) defines focus group interviews as group interviews where the researcher takes the role of a moderator, instead of the role of interviewer. In focus group interviews the reliance is on the interaction within the group, based on topics supplied by the researcher. Thus, focus groups enhance the induction process in research, and at the same time it generates in-depth information of the participants' perception of the social reality they experience.

The programmes I got access to were: MSc in Economics and Business Administration, and thereby the lines in Finance and Strategic Management (FSM), Strategy, Organisation and Leadership (SOL), and International Marketing and Management (IMM); Asian Studies Programme (ASP), and from the MSc in Business, Language and Culture, which is divided in two lines: Business and Development Studies (BADs) and Leadership and Management studies (LMS). This last line changed name and partially its content last year, before it was called Intercultural Management (ICM). I also got access to three students from Danish programmes, being MSc in Business Administration and Law (CMJura), MSc in Business Administration and Psychology (CMPsyk) and Master in Social Sciences in Political Communication and Management (CSoc).

In the sample there were also 2 exchange students<sup>1</sup> from USA, 2 last year bachelor students from China and Poland, and 2 students from Lithuania that were enrolled in complementary courses during one year to get enough credits in some subjects to course a master programme. This diversity allowed me to see if there were significant differences between the exchange, bachelor, masters, and complementary courses students.

Participants had different nationalities, ranging between Russia, Bulgaria, China, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Singapore, Spain, Mexico, US, Norway, Germany and Denmark. All the participants were volunteers in the study, and had been recruited via my informal network and through the use of mail lists. In total, 34 students participated, form the following geographic zones: Scandinavia (8), East Europe and Russia (11), Old Europe (8), America (4) and Asia (3)<sup>2</sup>.

The focus interviews were lasting between 1 and 2 hours, and took place in different computer rooms in the same building of CBS' campus. I used a blogging session to carry out the focus groups interviews. This method had some advantages<sup>3</sup>, as I was able to conduct larger interviews, and there was more anonymity and spontaneity since the participants did not have to ascribe their person to their posts. Also, I avoided the presence of the tape/video recorder, which created a familiar feeling, since students are fairly used to use blogs in their social lives. In the last years and with the growth of the new technologies, some researchers talk about the virtual identity, which is one of our multiple identities that is constructed, negotiated and maintained through the many virtual tools we have now a days: facebook, gmail, blogs, msn, fotolog, etc. In this sense, the fact that I used a blog for the focus groups interviews allowed me to incorporate the virtual identities into my analysis, giving it more perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> I distinguish between international full-time students, which are the students that come to CBS to take the whole programme there and will receive a diploma from CBS, and exchange students, which are the students that are at CBS for a shorter period of time, and will receive a diploma from another university.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 2: list of participants.

<sup>3</sup> Disadvantages are explained in the limitations section.

The sessions followed the same structure. The students were appointed to come to the room at a concrete time. My colleague and I would be there, and would introduce ourselves and the project. The students would sit by a computer each. On the screen, there was a presentation page<sup>4</sup>, where they would log in to find their instructions and go to the first question, which was dealing with their experience at CBS. We were also logged into the blog, and could ask questions to make them elaborate unclear comments, or ask questions related to what they wrote. After approximately 40 minutes, the researchers would ask the students to change to the second question, which was to define learning and experiences of learning at CBS. During question 2, we would ask for their previous experiences and to compare them, if they could. After more or less 40 minutes extra, we changed to the third question, which was dealing with motivation to learn and how CBS had an impact on this. In that question we asked about career prospects and the role of CBS' reputation.

When the interview was over, we asked the students about their impressions - of the project. Most of the students were satisfied after the focus group interview, and some of them told us that it was interesting to reflect about learning and identity, since it is something they did not used to do.

Once I had the data of every session, analysis was conducted inductively using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz; in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Charmaz describes constructivist grounded theory, as a move towards a more flexible and heuristic strategy in grounded theory avoiding formulaic procedures and the assumption of reality being objective and neutral (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The rigor of grounded theory provides qualitative researchers with a set of clear guidelines to build exploratory frameworks that specify relationships among concepts. With the end of each focus group or interview, I would relate the contents to the other interviews and identify new concepts and definitions.

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 3: sample of focus groups.

As Chamaz states, my data are narrative constructions, reproductions of the experience of the participants and as such it will never be completely “real”. After obtaining any kind of data, I proceeded to interpret it and code it, not with preconceived codes, but with open and changing codes, looking for the meaning and the relation between the codes. After identifying a number of codes, I looked for theories dealing with them, which helped me identify the boundaries of my research and the relevance of my findings. This theories and articles are sampled in the literature reviews, as well as in the discussion. The theoretical sampling helped me to make sense of the use of the data and codes I had, and limited my focus in a useful way. Still, the process of looking for bibliography is not easy, and it is very challenging in relation to the scope of the research. In numerous occasions I found myself that I was going out of my field, but grounded theory was a very good method to revise and readapt the questions to the participants; it let me have the agency I wanted as a researcher, allowing me to get involved in my research.

To complete the data I carried out a number of semi structured and non structured interviews with some of the participants in the focus groups. In total, I talked to 12 of the participants, 2 of them in a formal semi structured interview, which lasted from 1,5 to 2 hours, and the other 10 in informal interviews, asking for clarification of some of the answers or comments from the blog. With formal interviews I mean that they were limited by space and time, the interviewees knew that they were in an interview, there was an introduction to the theme and they were tape-recorded. By informal interviews I mean talking with people in the cafeteria, at Nexus or outside CBS, asking them questions about their comments or what they thought about my conclusions. In the last situation, students were much relaxed and did not reflect much about what they were saying. I did that since I experienced a difference between the information the students were giving me in the focus groups to the things that normally are talked in more informal situations. Moreover, I also sent some questions to 2 of the participants after the focus, asking about some comments they made.

Once I had all the data, I used discourse analysis to get deeper insights of the meaning of the statements and the context, and to frame it with the internationalisation discourse. Discourse analysis is a method that goes behind the inquiry; it is a way of questioning the basic assumptions behind the research and the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind a statement or a research project. Discourse analysis is a way of deconstructing the text and interpreting its silences, absences and contradictions. Every action and statement is embedded in a discourse, in a meaning apprehended, in a way of knowledge. I wanted to understand the motivations and the assumptions of students in learning and identity processes, and to see the impact of the internationalisation discourse.

All in all, my research is framed in qualitative inquiry. I use both theoretical assumptions and methods from this perspective in research, and it is very important to understand that the objective of the research is to gain knowledge, not to develop a model. In the next chapter, I am going to present the limitations of my research and this thesis.

### **III- Limitations**

The first limitation of this study and thesis is that I concentrate in Western society and theories. This is due to my personal background and to the theories I am used to study. Therefore, I will not enter in the theories and practices of internationalisation outside the Western world, even though there is a lot to investigate about how internationalisation is done in the non-western world.

I decided to use an adapted method of inquiry (focus interviews in blog sessions) for two reasons. First, I wanted to get an inside perspective of the students, I did not want them to feel shy, but to be able to talk from a complete anonymity. I believe that there is an increasing virtual identity, which is constructed from all the social utilities that the internet brings us, like facebook, msn, e-bloggs, forums, gmail, among others. In this sense, I

wanted to get a collective virtual narration of the perception of CBS and the learning that is conducted here. Second, it was a good opportunity for trying something new, which would not require transcription and would offer me a different insight of participants' perception. Once done, I find it had many positive sides, but also negative ones, like any other method of inquiry. For example, the communication is very fast, but the system would not allow many comments to be uploaded at the same time, so some comments got lost for good. Third, some of the students took a passive way of participating, reading what the others wrote and making few comments. Also, some of the students were not confident with writing in English, since the blog lacks an orthographic correction. Furthermore, spontaneity was limited since the participants had to think before writing. All in all, the method enabled a very interesting process of inquiry, and all the participants had a very positive impression of it.

My informal network constituted the sample in 2 of the interviews; the other 2 were engaged from mailing lists I got from my work at CBS Learning Lab. I sent a mail asking the secretaries of the different international master lines if they could send a generic mail to the students enrolled in the masters. Not all the secretaries send out the mail, so the task was not as easy as it could look. I want to highlight the problem of getting people to participate in CBS, since students are not engaging in many evaluations or activities at CBS. In this sense, those who accept to participate are not a representative sample of the population of students, but those that are more motivated and normally performing better.

Unfortunately, I could not get access to any internal international students<sup>5</sup> or someone who was a Danish citizen with other ethnical background. I used only external internationals and nationals.

In research, there are many limitations, some that we are aware of and some that influence our research without we even notice it. In this section, I have acknowledged the most important limitations, because I believe it is important

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<sup>5</sup> Referring to the concept by Jiang, 2008

in terms of validity of my research. Once this is acknowledged, I will proceed to introduce my literature review and the theoretical stand point of my research.

#### **IV- Literature Review**

To understand, to theorise, to make sense of culture, there are many roots and routes (Ricoeur, 1965 in Fornäs, 1995). Roots are the starting point of the hermeneutic process and routes the way that leads to the meaning or the interpretation. I have just presented the routes to my research in the methodology, and now I proceed to describe the roots of my thesis in this literature review.

First, I will present the literature review of two key concepts in my research, which are identity and learning. I have limited this literature review to the student identity and to learning theories, which are applicable in the context of higher educational institutions. These two concepts, together with the last section of this literature review, are the fundamentals of my analysis. In the last section, I will present the educational field in late modernity and CBS as an organisation that acts within this field.

##### **1. Identity**

Identity and culture are highly contested terms in the contemporary literature. Although there are many different ways to see identity, as there are many different social science theories that deal with it, my intention is not to cover them all meticulously, but to identify major traits in the history of social theory of identity, to have a clear view of what we are talking about. My intention explaining identity is to exemplify what is happening to international students when they embark into the adventure of studying abroad, pointing out the emotional character of learning.



Following the Encyclopaedia Britannica<sup>6</sup>, the term identity seems to have its roots in the Latin term *identidem*, which is a contraction of *idem et idem*, literally same and same. Therefore, we share common identities between individuals, being for example student, woman or Spanish. At the same time, when we have an identity as a woman, we differentiate women through a binomial (categories) relation to the term man. This is caused by the determinism of western languages, that attribute an either or category to gender, either a man or a woman. In this sense, our language makes that if we a woman, we exclude ourselves from being a man. Language in all its complexities namely symbolic, nonverbal and verbal, define the space of *possibles* in our identifying process. One person has many identities that are *mutually constitutive* (Lawker, 2008:3), in the sense that they are not necessarily related, but all together constitute identity. Moreover, identities are situated in a context, it does not mean the same being a university student in the 19<sup>th</sup> century than it does now a days. Identities are multiple and an ever changing flux. You cannot step in the river of identity two times, for the water will never be the same, neither will be the multiplicity of identities or a single one.

In academic terms, we can distinguish between modern and postmodern identity (Herbert, 2001). The modern concept of identity is dominant in social sciences from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the 60s, when two major world developments contributed to social theories, namely the modern experience of industrialized countries and the post colonial experiences of “new nations”. Hence, the modern identity is the prevalent in the early modernity, while the postmodern identity merges in the change to late or reflexive modernity.

The modern identity can be found in the work of some American pragmatist like Mead, James and Cooley, and it is characterized by the assumption that there is the presence of a concrete, real subject, which can be studied

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<sup>6</sup> <http://search.eb.com/thesaurus?va=null&query=null> : Etymology: Middle French *identité*, from Late Latin *identitat-*, *identitas*, probably from Latin *identidem* repeatedly, contraction of *idem et idem*, literally, same and same.

through objective and subjective reports about personal experience and the interaction process. Language is a way to communicate the inner life of the person, while identity is a unique sense of self, an essence. This essence is prior to language making. The problem of identity in modern terms is to create one, to confront the uncertainty of the social world. Identity in modern terms gives meaning and continuity to the individual, linking him/her to the society and the different social groups. This theoretical stream of psychological social science is also referred to as the foundation of Symbolic Interactionism (SI), a theoretical stream that is born in the US, during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. SI theorists argued for an interpretative, subjective study of human experience, and sought to combine the former with building an objective science of human behaviour, a science that would conform to criteria borrowed from the natural sciences (Denzin, 1992:2). SI is very diverse from its beginnings, for example while James and Cooley had a more phenomenologist base; Mead was more oriented to experiences and actions, being more sociological.

In the beginning of the 60s, SI will give emergence to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of authors, who produced new texts articulating symbolic interaction and its relation with Freud and his development of the psychoanalysis and the European Social theory. In this generation we find the early work of Goffman, who forged a dramaturgical symbolic interactionism, where the individuals enact their identity in the social world as in a theatre, where there are front and back stage realities, where there are frames that can be broken and where the other social actors expect something from us. Hence, for Goffman individuals construct their identities with the purpose of managing impressions during everyday life performances, to obtain strategic resources out of the interaction with other individuals. Furthermore, Stone (1962) pointed out the importance of appearance, discourse and meaning in the interaction of the individual with society, giving to understand that identities in this sense are 'situated', and that they will vary depending on the mood and /or appearance the result of the concrete interaction. All in all, we can see a pattern that is taking theory to a postmodern stage, where identity will no longer be seen as something essential and objective, but as something fragmented, multiple and

dynamic. In fact, identity as postmodern is conceptualized as an open-ended process of forming multiple identifications. Postmodernist thought sees identity as a strategy, meaning that individuals display a dimension of their identity that is more adequate in relation to their concrete strategy. For example, the concept of mimicry (Bhabha, 1994 in Ailon, 2007), which involves displaying one identity that looks like acquiescence while hiding evasive forms of resistance, expresses this strategic orientation of identity. The postmodern identity includes the notions of agency and power exercise. The individuals are seen as more reflective, strategically acting to get access to power and scarce resources.

Identity is no longer seen as some primordial core of personality that already exists (Wegner, 1998:154), neither something we switch on and off, it is something we take along with us, it is fragmented in the different practices we take part in, it is one and multiple (Wegner, 1998). Identity is constantly in movement, so that it goes back to the past, the future expectations and the present in a non-continuous way. Thus, identity can be described as synchronic, meaning that it does not have a linear evolution.

In this sense, identity is a constant process of identification, belonging and positioning in different and dynamic fields or communities we take part in. Thus, identity can be understood as a plurality of dispositions that are transferable inter-fields. However, identity is not essential, and can be deconstructed, eliminated or reformulated at any time, both tacitly and implicitly. Individuals mostly have some agency to determine how to use the multiple and fluid dimensions of their identity with strategic intentions. Still, identities keep transforming since individuals face uncertainty and incomplete information in the social world.

Our identity construction directs the way we make sense of the world in different directions, due to the various interests we get at different points in time. Therefore, in understanding reasons of motivation, it is important to consider our orientation, our implicit contract with the different communities we are formally or informally engaged with.

As individuals we develop our sense of identity in interaction with the social context we participate in. Due to the rapid change and discontinuity that are prevailing features in our world, people face many different contexts and are part of many groups and interactions during their everyday life. The different frames in which we take part in our daily lives have codes of behaviour, co-opted patterns that define the expected and the out-of-frame behaviours (Morean, 2005). We act in these frames together with other individuals, maintaining a relation of trust with them that allows us to have a sense of belonging that is an active part in shaping our identity.

### Identity and International Students

International students attribute meaning to the world around them in relation to their circumstances, which include their past, and their active participation in communities, where they interact with other individuals. These meanings are constantly revised and negotiated as individuals come in contact with other settings, in and out of CBS, and are reframed within each social group and environment. I consider that these students have a multiplicity of identities, in which there is no single “core self” (Goffman, 1961). They all have multifaceted personalities that are manifested in different facets, depending on which are the will and interpretation of the individual’s situation. A change of context, however, may result in a rupture of the individual with its context, cultural understanding and their repertoire, so the individual may experiment an identity discontinuity at the beginning of their international experience (Scanlon et al, 2007).

Furthermore, individuals gain a sense of belonging to geographically located places (Scanlon et al, 2007), so when a student changes its education institution, she/he is not just changing the place, but also the social belonging to that place. In the new environment, there will be an initial sense of anonymity and isolation, where in the previous setting, the student had a stable learning environment in a located geographic place, together with a specific identity that fitted the different roles they were facing in that geographic location.

International students often experience an increase in national identity salience, and as a result, they often seek out co-nationals who can support their identity and create home-culture enclaves (Kosmitzki, 1996; Wilkinson, 1998; in Hecht et al. 2003). As Kosmitzki has underlined, individuals who live in a non-native culture may experience challenges to their cultural identities as it is related to the culture-specific aspects of their environment. Social Identity theory (Tajfle and Turner, 1979) and acculturation theory (Berry, 2003) recognize both that cultural identity is challenged and modified during interaction between two distinguishable cultural groups. But these theories don't agree on the effects of the interaction. While Social Identity theory predicts a reaffirmation of the cultural collective, acculturation predicts the acquisition of non-native cultural identity.

In addition, CBS is a Danish Business School where English and Danish are both official languages, both in regard to teaching as well as to the academic services. That enforces a multilingual system where the students are enhanced to express themselves in another language than the one they are used to, creating a conflict within what is thought for the individual to be its "real person" and the "false expression" that gets articulated with another language. This is considered for many as one of the more renitent limitations for the adaptation of another culture's values and patterns of behaviour (Grimshaw and Sears, 2008).

In sum, identity means epistemologically 'the same', but it is what it makes us different. Identity is multiple, fragmented and it is ever-changing. In our postmodern world, identity is not the essence of one person, but it is constructed in the interaction with our social context. Therefore, when international students begin their adventure to study abroad, they will experience an identity discontinuity, thus they will have to make sense of their new context and adapt to the new features of the national context. That process is full of advantages and disadvantages. Students may become more reflected and reflexive in terms of their national context and the way they learn best, they can get to belong to a new group of international students, they can acquire language competences and cultural sensibility. The disadvantages

consist in anxiety for not understanding, feeling lost, feeling isolated, a duality between the “real” and “false” person, etc. It is quite obvious that the experience of studying abroad has an impact on students’ identities, and therefore, on their future.

When the reason for the changing of context is learning, it is likely that there will be consequences of this in the learning processes and practices. Cultures have their own specific way of learning, so the international learner will have to adapt to those to obtain a successful experience. In the next section, I will present relevant theories of learning for the international experience.

## **2. Learning**

The definition of learning used in this thesis is related to the philosophical assumptions described in the methodology. Thus, learning is a *situated activity in which issues of cognition, context and social interaction cannot be considered in isolation from each other* (Chapman and Pyvis, 2005). Learning involves the whole person, implying a relation to social communities, and not only to specific activities.

The recent trend of internationalisation in the educational field has consequences in the learning and teaching environments, since there is more mobility and interaction between cultures. The participation of students and staff in periods of their education in other Universities puts them in contact with different learning and teaching environments, which in many ways can be seen as a benefit, since it encourages them to think out of the box and learn to learn in other ways. When a student has different learning resources they become more aware and reflective about learning. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, learning is a constant in our lives, and what we learn can be applied in our daily lives and across national borders. Learning is about competence and experience (Wegner, 1998), we learn how to do things and we improve our ‘knowledge base.’

As identity is affected by context, so is learning. I advocate for a conception of learning as contextual (Nygaard et al., 2006), meaning that learning changes in detainment of the context and the time where and when it takes place. Learning is social, because we learn together with other people. In higher education, learning is embedded within a national culture including its political ideologies, because it is created and managed by the Ministry of education. The Ministry is as well included in the government, and it represents and enacts political ideologies. Therefore, education is never neutral; it will always reflect the context in which it is embedded.

Learning can be defined as *“the process of acquiring new personal knowledge skills or competences, which can be used when meeting forthcoming challenges in life”* (Nygaard et al, 2006). Learning is thus constructed by three interrelated and dynamic continuums (Hermansen, 2005): feedback and feed-forward; habitus-reflection; and toil-exuberance. The first of these elements refers to the reaction to experience (feedback), and the pre-understanding of future situations based on our present experience. This means that every student learns differently in each situation, and that each learning process is determined by its past experience and its future expectations. The second element has to do with the level of learning, where habitus (Bourdieu) means unconscious learning and reflection conscious learning. The last element refers to the attitude within the frame of learning, ranging from toil, where learning is seen as not motivating, slow and difficult, to exuberance, where students are highly motivated and positive concerning learning.

Moreover, there is empiric evidence that students have different approaches to learn, as well as different motivations. Marton and Saljo (1976) developed the concepts of deep and surface learning. Marton conducted a research project at Gothenburg University to examine how students approached the reading of academic articles. The results defined four types of responses to learning: passive and active deep learning, and passive and active surface learning. The students that had an approach to learning characterized by deep learning would try from the beginning to understand the meaning, interact actively with the arguments of the author relating them to previous

knowledge and their own experience, and try to determine the extent of the evidence presented in the author's conclusions. On the other hand, a student with a surface approach to learning, has the reproduction of knowledge as an intention, and will use memorizing of what she/he considers important as a strategy with the objective to answer questions about it. This second approach to learning is more task oriented and constraint by being that.

Learning is different in content as Ausudel (1968) proved. He stated that there are two main types of content in learning, being meaningful learning and rote learning. In that sense, when what is to learn is highly mechanical and not meaningful, the student will take a surface approach that permits the memorization of the content and will avoid a deeper use of cognition. When the content of learning makes sense when interiorizing it, so that understanding it makes it easier to process it, the student will adopt a deep learning approach.

The theories developed by Marton and Sajlo together with Ausudel have been very popular in teaching and learning literature, and they raised the idea that the deep and meaningful learning were the most desirable ways of teaching and learning. Still, we cannot understand the reality of learning as something purely academic, and individuals take choices in their lives that give more or less importance to determinate subjects in different moments. There are many actors and contexts in learning, which make it difficult to define a 'best practice' in learning. For example, a deep learning approach can lead to confusion if something cannot be understood in relation to other knowledge, because it is not related. Moreover, many teachers have not enough pedagogical preparation, and they may lead to confusion to some students who try to make sense of what they say. Rote learning is also very desirable in many subjects, for example in the fields of law or physics, where a lot of knowledge needs to be learned by heart. It is maybe more desirable for the students to develop the critical sense that enables them to choose in determinacy of his or her identity, expectations, motivations or experiences. That brings me to the importance of the role of the teacher as a facilitator for learning, and not as a deliberator of knowledge. The teacher has a very



important role in formal education, for it is the one that must show that different ways of learning are possible, and needs to engage the students in the subject.

Regarding the motivation to learn, Vermunt (2005) acknowledges the importance of the orientation of the individual to learn in relation to the learning approach and learning outcomes. He distinguishes 4 distinct orientations to learn: vocational, which is oriented to obtaining a degree and obtaining knowledge to apply on the future career; personal, which is concerned with personal self-fulfilment and taking new challenges and insights for personal development; academic, which is related to progression in the academic ladder and in obtaining knowledge for knowledge sake; and finally social, which is oriented to have a good time and broaden social networks and is materialized with the use of campus facilities and engagement in social activities.

In relation to international students, Marton and Säljö (1997) stated that the previous experience on learning in other countries help students not to embrace a reproduction directed learning. They suggested that 'increased experience in formal education goes together with a development in conceptions and views people have about learning' (Vermunt, 2005). If this were true, there would be fewer students with a reproduction strategy to learning between graduates than among bachelor students. Still, research shows that in many cases, the further up the student in the academic ladder, the less willing to engage in deep learning he or she is.

Hence, learning is contextual and social. Learning has to do with past experiences and future expectations, it is conscious and unconscious and has to do with the individual, and it is related with motivation. How students relate to experience and expectations, or what motivates them, or how they are conscious of what they are learning, is determined by their identity and context. To understand learning, we must consider emotional and contextual factors in education. As Wegner (1998) states, learning cannot be designed though curricula can. In any formal education space, each individual will be in

a different position in these continuums, depending on their experience, motivations, connection with the content of the classes, expectations or habitus.

In this section, I have described and defined learning, and some theories concerning learning approaches. I have highlighted the difference between deep and surface learning, as well as the rote and meaningful learning. I had these concepts in mind when I carried out the interviews with the students about how they approach learning.

In sum, it seems quite difficult to separate the identity construction process from the learning process. The individual engages in the learning process with his/her identity in the interaction with the social world. Now that the two central concepts of my thesis have been described, I will take a step back and present the global context of the higher education to connect it in the next chapter with the concrete context at CBS.

### **3. The educational field in late modernity**

In this section, I will present the social theories in which I base my hermeneutic process. I use examples of the educational field or international students, to connect the macro level or the contextual factors to the concrete theme of my research. First of all, I will present a reflection of the late modernity, which I am going to link to globalisation and finally to the theme of internationalisation of higher education, as a consequence of the former.

Fornäs describes our present moment, in terms of historical dynamics, as late modernity, which is saturated with communication media, and where culture and cultural understanding are in focus. That is, culture is represented in the media and the media is embedded within culture. With all the communicative resources we have access to nowadays, our '*space of possibles*' has increased. For example I can read the same news from a hundred different perspectives on the Internet, whereas before I could only have access to the 10 or so newspapers that were available at my local store. Still my

interpretation of the information will probably be different than the one of someone living in another time or space. Therefore it is important to understand the social world and the societal structure where the individual is placed, because 'their schemas of understanding become means of self-understanding' (Lawler, 2008).

The growth of information sources and the importance of cultural exchanges are part of a process of globalisation, which is presented in the popular discourse as a phenomenon characteristic of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, 'driven by innovations in information and communication technologies and mass air travel and underpinned by the growing dominance of English as the common language of business, politics and science' (Crystal, 1997 in Healey, 2008). I present a reading of globalisation and its antecedents in the next section.

### **Globalisation and Late Modernity**

Globalisation has had a high impact in the last decade in the Western countries, both in terms of civil society and in the political spheres. Globalisation has been associated with the development of the global market, which has meant the blurring of boundaries for the capital and for production and distribution. Globalisation has clearly an effect on the higher education context. But, where does it come from, and what does it mean? I will use Ulrich Beck's theory on modernity to answer these questions. I believe this theory is meaningful because it shows how HEIs have changed following major societal changes and the individuals have also changed as a result of the changing institutional structure.

Many changes occurred during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For my thesis, the most important of these changes are the democratization of almost all the spheres that before were exclusive of the upper class (education, politics, fashion, culture, art, etc.) and the development of a critical line of thought referring to sustainability. These changes altogether help us to question the assumptions, which the early modern society is based upon, and they open a space for a debate of what was established. They pose an incremental shift to

a set of assumptions and values that give birth to the late or reflexive modernity. Individualism deepened its hold in western imagination. People became better educated, and the workforce requirements became based on qualified jobs. Individuals lost the feeling of blind loyalty to their employers and engaged in a more reflexive relation between their individuality and the institutions. The new technologies and the facility with which the information is exchanged helped the emergence of this reflection about information. In the late modernity, the 'I' is the primary agent of meaning. As Habermas argues, the key element of the late modernity is reflexivity;

*'Reflexivity is the criterion for an attempt at least to identify thresholds between what we call premodern and modern. I know that's an uneasy topic, but nobody helps us; we find ourselves in the modern condition' (Habermas, 1992)*

Individuals become more self-referential and reflexive both in everyday life and in research. Ulrich Beck (1992) qualifies this reflexivity as the element that turns modern processes and institutions against modernity itself, in a society where progress has become a problem as well as a goal (Fornäs, 1995). In the modern society, the deconstruction of myths and prejudices of society, together with the reflection on cultural and social problems is often turning against modernity in itself.

Thus, from modernity to late modernity there is a constant movement from the structure as the shaper of meaning to the self or the self- agency. All of this is based in a norm of autonomy (Rose, 1991 in Lawker, 2008)) intrinsic in late modernity, in believing that we enjoy an apparent freedom and an absence of power and control. We want constantly to be autonomous, to take our own decisions. Our society prizes autonomy as the one value that a decent live is based on. Still, we follow the discourses available in our daily lives, and we make sense of our choices in determinacy of what we know, and what we think we know. The structure of society, the discourses behind the line of sight, tells us what to do in a more implicit way than in the traditional structures. These structures are different from culture to culture; so

international students will have to learn the ones that apply to CBS and the Danish society.

As Foucault argues, with late modernity, the self comes to act on itself, with no need of external coercion. We do things because we think we want to do them, but, in many ways, society is behind our choices. This concept is quite similar to Kunda's (1992, refers to Etzioni's concept) *normative control*, which is exercised by the corporations through organisational culture to their employees. We became reflexive, we want to be autonomous, and we use those concepts to exercise surveillance and coercion.

From the traditional structures to the late modernity, power is no longer owned by the institutions, but power is exercised by us, by our social networks and also by formal institutions in which we take part. Power in this sense, is much more effective when it is less repressive, we work to be the kind of person that the dominant and available discourses conduce us to be. Discourses (Foucault 1969) are knowledge, but a specific form of knowledge. Discourses are ways of knowing, announcements of truth and the way in which they can be said and thought and how. They are verbal and nonverbal ways of organizing the world. Those that exercise power have discretion to determine what truth is, hence truth is an authoritative production, and it has no relation with its intrinsic validity.

Thus, we live in late modernity; we are reflexive and self-reflexive about the consequences that our actions may have. We believe we are autonomous, free when we take decisions, but still institutions and expertise direct our acts and the identities we shape in the social world. We are following discourses; the social reality determines our thoughts in a way that we still feel independent and autonomous from the structural settings. These changes have had an impact on the population of students and on the content of the curricula in higher education.

In this section, I have presented the present moment of history and the consequences of this moment to our identity construction. I have introduced

these concepts because I will work with some of them in my analysis and discussion. I believe that I need to present these concepts since they explain how the social world is shaped. In the next section, I present the effects of late modernity and the changes in society in Higher education.

### **Higher Education in Late Modernity**

The democratisation and the critical thought towards a more sustainable way of life, gave birth to a new trend within higher education, namely the Progressive University. It is mainly concerned in giving a place for a more inclusive and representative institution, responding to the discourses of widening participation and the learning society (Harris, 2008). This type of University is committed to overcome the legacies of the dominance, replacing a curriculum that is white, male and middle class for one that allows more diversity from different literatures than the mainstream. The problem of the Progressive University is the process in which diversity is incorporated in programmes, and how this diversity of contents is presented regarding mainstream theories. Moreover, in the frame of internationalisation of education, different students have different cultural backgrounds, which have to be incorporated in the curriculum design.

Progressive and alternative higher education institutions were quite popular in the 60s and 70s, but few of them could survive the reduction of public funding without losing some of their characteristic features.

The Progressive University is a facet of the neo-liberal model, where knowledge has been reduced to information. The neo-liberal University becomes strong during the 80s, as a consequence of neo-liberal politics in the ambit of education, which put into the centre of HEIs competitiveness, excellence and performance. Nowadays, universities and other HEIs must compete in the global market of education, as it can be seen in the increasing aggressively marketing strategies of the HEIs, in the growing of accreditation systems and excellence stamps in the field, or the pressure to publish in English word-class journals. HEIs are now selling a brand name and a logo, becoming entrepreneurs when establishing partnerships with the private

sector in order to generate income, research opportunities or knowledge transfer (Harris, 2008). The problem of the neo-liberal model is that there is a relegation of other dimensions of education in determinacy of the economic dimension.

### **Mobility and Internationalisation of higher education**

One of the characteristic communication dynamics of the late modernity is the capacity for mobility. The world has become much smaller since the low-cost companies came to the aircraft market, and since high-speed trains came to the picture. Nowadays, the cost of taking one year out or going for the weekend to Prague is accessible to a wider proportion of the European population than it was for two decades ago. In terms of mobility, boundaries are blurring among the Western countries and especially inside the European Union territory and the Schengen countries. We can see this in the labour market, but especially in education. Globalisation has particularly affected education. For one side, we are living a trans-nationalisation of education in the global picture, together with many regional agreements that incentive the mobility of students and staff within and between regions. However, at the same time that the boundaries are blurring, new ones are emerging because of economical reasons. All of these changes have helped to define what we call the internationalisation of education.

In the last two decades internationalisation has become one of the most common issues in the debate on Universities and other HEIs in Europe. Following Teichler, terms in the debate of education ending with “-sation” usually signal that there was a problem in the past and an opportunity for improvement supported by the trend in this issue, in this case internationalization. The problem is that globalisation of education was not a desirable concept in the academia, for it has many connotations that would led to misunderstandings or would transform the implicit into explicit. That is, globalisation is identified with economic globalisation, and for the educational field it is important to keep mastering their area and not be understood as part

of the economic globalisation. As Knight (2004) argues, Internationalisation is a consequence of globalisation. She defines Internationalisation as:

*(...) The process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service elements of an institution (Knight, 2004).*

This definition gives important insights for understanding internationalisation: it is a process, so it is dynamic and it keeps going and transforming; it is international meaning between nations, which refers to nation-states. But in the globalised world, national sovereignty is weaker than it was in traditional or early modernity. The Intercultural dimension expands the process of internationalisation between cultures, which do not necessary correspond with nation-states. Moreover, internationalisation is not a process limited to the students that come from other countries, namely external internationals (Jiang, 2008), but it is also manifested in the internal internationals, many immigrants that are residents in the country, but carry on a different culture. Both groups need to engage in a process of negotiation of identity and culture between the host culture and their own.

Knight's definition is maybe missing a more present role of the students; still it incorporates teaching, research and services of higher education institutions. Another missing aspect is what is consisting of the international or intercultural dimension, and is there only one? So the question is what is international education and why is so important nowadays?

Internationalisation refers to an increase of border-crossing activities, while conserving national identity. Another concept in relation to internationalisation that is included in the public debate is Globalisation, which refers to national borders getting blurred in one system structure; and Europeanization, which can be seen as a globalization or internationalization in the regional level (Teichler, 2004). The question here is why the educational process of border-crossing is referred as internationalisation and not globalisation?

The so called process of internationalisation, has grown much in the last 20 years, as the number of foreign students in Organisation for Economic



Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries has doubled to 1,6 million (OECD, 2004). Europe is the region that receives most of these students, concretely around 840 000, from which many are moving from one European country to another. This group favour mobility based on subsidised fee-paying. Still, the presence of fee-paying students is high. In 2001 for example 57% of all foreign students studying in the OECD countries were from outside the OECD.

A great pressure for internationalization in Europe emanates from the Bologna declaration of 1999, which aims to construct the European Area for High Education, with the purpose of making the programmes across institutions and nations in European countries comparable, together with the establishment of new supranational systems of quality assurance, and the mobility of students and research.

The Bologna process acts upon a European reality framed within the Lisbon agreement and the aim is to promote a knowledge society in the European space. The objective of the Lisbon agreement and the Knowledge society is to develop a European society, which bases its competitive advantage on a knowledge economy that can be exported and protected. This idea comes from the increase in productivity of the developing countries and the lost of competitiveness in production in the West. The Western countries need to outsource, but still need to maintain the wealth they have earned through selling ideas.

The HEIs got a prevalent role in shaping this knowledge society, since academic-based knowledge is expected to expand substantially. Part of building the new European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is enhancing lifelong learning and widening participation in education. In the last years, postgraduate education has increased, mining the prestige of undergraduate education (O'Donnell et al., 2009). A wider participation in HE and the emphasis of lifelong learning seems to have consequences in the diversity of the student population. The homogeneous group of students that finished their bachelor to continue directly to their masters in the same university is

vanishing in front of a much more diverse group, in terms of ethnicity, age, nationality, previous knowledge and expectations. This change is particularly noticeable in postgraduate education, whose transition has been quite overlooked in the educational transition literature (O'Donnell et al., 2009). At the moment, we have many different learners, internationals and nationals, diversity that can be an asset for the individuals' future engagement in work life.

On one hand, internationalization in education has many potential good results or aims. Some of these expected benefits are: knowledge transfer, learning processes and outcomes and inter/intra communication in the educational field. Referring to knowledge transfer, internationalization is a strategy that allows sharing information through media, cooperation in research and joint teaching/learning projects, transnational education and mobility of scholars and students.

The fact that there is mobility inter and intra institutions allows an exchange of knowledge and experiences that can help many new comers in the EU to develop their educational systems and avoid taking mistakes that they can be prevented of. Also, the body of knowledge that is created can be better integrated and used inter-institutionally.

Moreover, the fact that different cultures interact in the educational field can bring individuals to a much more comprehensive idea of the global world. Students, teachers, Technical and Administrative Personnel (TAP) and society for extension can develop a cultural sensibility that is going to become the real advantage for our competitiveness. Culture is valuable, and so is learning. Mixing both, we have a win-win situation both for the actors in internationalisation as for the societies. That represents a step on the direction of developing planetary citizenship through education (Haigh, 2008), which emphasises ethics, attitudes and behaviour more than economics. This idea provides the dream of internationalisation, what many would like to believe is happening, but research in internationalisation of higher education shows that it is actually globalisation that dictates practice. In the next section,

I will present the flipside of the coin, namely, the bad consequences of internationalisation of higher education.

### **The industry of Higher education**

Since the 80s higher education has been adopting theories, models, processes and evaluation mechanisms characteristic of the private sector. That is contemporary with the growing of the global market, and the adoption of neo-liberal politics by governments in the Western countries. For education, that has come to mean a reduction of public financial funding and a growing pressure for evaluating performance of HEIs, which brings accountability and its processes in vogue inside and across HEIs. Within this conjecture, universities look for autonomous funding resources, where the fees paid by international students became a new way of substituting the reductions of public funding (Jiang, 2008). The incorporation of higher education services in the General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) means that higher education has become a commodity that generates extra revenue for the universities in an autonomous way. This is highly contradictory with the view of education as a public good and a human right. Meanwhile, the OECD recommends not worrying about this, since the education policies in the OECD countries have been quite conservative, and no government have been taking initiatives that lead to the privatisation of education and the end of public subsidies and founding (OECD, 2004). As many authors have stated, the problem of a global market for education is not necessarily for the Western countries, but for those countries that lack a well-established HE system.

Behind internationalisation of HE is the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank (WB) and the OECD (Jiang, 2008). These institutions have a high impact and involvement in describing the content of internationalisation between nations. With globalisation, one might think that the opening of borders and economies would help competent individuals to pursue HE in other countries. The problem is that with OECD, WB and WTO behind the process, a lot of importance has been given to the economic dimension of

internationalisation, not as a form for extension of the equality in education but with the form of a knowledge economy. In the public debate and especially with the Lisbon Agreement, a lot of importance is given to developing a society that has a competitive advantage in knowledge, referred as knowledge society (Lisbon). In this sense, knowledge has become a way of wealth, both in terms of individual and societal wealth. Knowledge and education become something that can be sold in the international market.

Since these organisations are very influenced by western culture and values, the internationalisation of HE is fundamentally based in Western values, contents and accreditations. Without the protection of the national culture, the global market of HE can lead to standardisation of contents and homogenisation of education based on a set of western values. That is, the western countries have a predominant situation in the production of HE and standards that regulate its qualities. Since this HE is being imported cross-borders, the contents are basically standardised. For example, someone studying in Malaysia in the Nottingham University may not learn a lot about their culture and how to adapt it to the forces of globalisation, as someone from China studying in UK is unlikely to read Confucius. In this sense, the imposition of western curricula makes our 'global' culture much more poor, since we homogenise the discourses attributing value to them based in their applicability to the economic market. Universities are losing meaning in favour of information (Harris, 2008), meaning that now learners may take choices based on the stamps and accreditations that a programme has, and not the content in itself. The students are influenced by the knowledge economy in how they choose and what they choose.

Meanwhile, the European universities have progressively engaged in a strategy to develop competent mechanisms of attraction in the global educational system. Within this frame, students that carry out periods of their education offshore, have the possibility to gain many competences, among them academic achievement and linguistic and cultural richness, in other words, to be able to shake the old established perspectives when confronting with a different culture.

As it seems that internationalisation is everywhere, we can expect that students, both international and host students, will have an attitude regarding internationalization or its consequences, and that this attitude will affect their educational outcomes. Chapman and Pyvis (2005), analyse the attitudes of international students studying off-shore, and she point out that generally international students have a positive perception of participating in an international experience.

Students integrate a different body of knowledge and a particular way of learning depending on which culture they originate from, both in terms of national and HEIs culture. This knowledge and learning way is reaffirmed and contested in the new environment, and therefore reinterpreted. I will look at the construction of learning and its relation with identity and the presence and manifestations of the internationalisation discourse among postgraduate students at CBS.

In this part of the literature review, I have presented the field and time of my analysis. I have also introduced the roots to the issue of internationalisation, and two different sides of internationalisation of higher education. Along history, education has mirrored what has happened in society, being mainly religious when society was, going through secularisation together with society, and becoming more reflexive and aware of culture (Blasco and Zølner, 2009) in late modernity. Also the discourses available condition how we enact our reality. As individuals, we appreciate to be autonomous in our decisions, but mainly we take decisions within a context and we are influenced by this. One of those decisions is what we study and where we study it.

Internationalisation of higher education is a growing process in the Western countries. It includes an international dimension in the HEIs, even though it is difficult to find what that dimension consists of in the contemporary research. The process of internationalisation brings us many benefits, but we need to pay attention to the inconveniences as well. In the following chapter, I will present how CBS is adopting internationalisation in its strategy and

milestones, and how this fits with the definition presented in this section by Knight.

#### **V- The organization (CBS)**

Copenhagen Business School was established in 1917, and since 1965 it has been integrated as an institution of higher education in the Danish education system. Higher education in Denmark is free of charges for European students, and the Danish students get a monthly economic aid for studying (Statens Uddannelsesstøtte). The economic conditions and systems of loans help guaranteeing equality in Danish society, at least in relation to the explicit economic barriers for studying a higher education. Non- EU and Non-EEA students are required to pay a fee of 12,500 euro per year<sup>7</sup>. In 2008, CBS earned 14.5 million euro from student fees<sup>8</sup>, which represented 10, 8% of their incomes.

CBS offers 38% of its programmes in English and approximately 200 separate English taught courses. In the last years, the number of international full time graduate students has been increasing at CBS, from 1336 in 2006, 1678 in 2007 and to 1808 in 2008. The number of the proportion of European students has been increasing, while students from other regions<sup>9</sup> have been diminishing their presence (except Scandinavia). For example, in 2006 there were 54 students from Africa or the Middle East at the graduate level, whereas in 2008 there were only 39. As for the European students, in 2006 there were 288 students from the European countries at CBS, while in 2008 there were 468, which is almost the double.

Internationalization and international are very recurrent words in strategies and milestones at CBS. In 2008, CBS had more than 16,000 students and 75 visiting professors, and many “resident” professors were foreigners. From the 16,000 students, more than 6,000 are masters’ students. In 2008, 989

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<sup>7</sup> www.cbs.dk

<sup>8</sup> idem

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 4: Foreign students in Full-time studies.

masters' students were foreign students. The academic entry requirements for attending a graduate programme at CBS are having completed a bachelor programme with economics and business and passing an official English test.

In most of the international programmes there is an introduction trip, where all the students are invited to take part. This is an important arrangement, because it represents a perfect setting for a first contact with the co-students in a distended environment, where some older students introduce study techniques and other procedures of CBS and the programme in question. With this event a process of learning and identity construction begins, which will connect the students to CBS during the following two years, and which I assume will have consequences in the future of those individuals and in the way they relate to their academic, professional and personal lives.

### **CBS: Strategy and milestones: A discourse analysis**

For the last ten years CBS has had three strategic milestones: Internationalisation, Partnership with Business and the Learning University.

The learning University is based on the combination of the classic understanding of a University as a place of learning and knowledge production and the idea of the 'Learning organisation' of Senge (1990), which represent organisations that capacitate workers to innovate and do what they truly want to do, where the workers learn together to learn and involve in constant transformation, making the organisation much more dynamic. CBS is trying to develop the adequate environment for a joint venture of all its actors in a flow of information, innovation and transformation.

The frame for internationalisation of education is an increasingly globalised world, where international cooperation is necessary to produce research and education that meet the requirements of the business community. CBS will work with a strong national foundation for the international positioning.

Last but not least, CBS works for increasing the interaction with the business community, so there is an exchange of knowledge and research that ensures relevance at CBS.

Regarding Internationalisation of education, there is no definition of what that means in the strategy. International is referred to as an international positioning, international business schools, international study environment, accreditations and benchmarking, international journals, international competition, international exchange students, visiting researchers and fee-paying of non-EU students. If we take Knight's definition of internationalisation (2004):

*(...) The process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service elements of an institution (Knight, 2004).*

With the aim of answering the question in the introduction of what is really an international dimension, I attribute some content to the international dimension. Following the international part of the strategy of CBS, the international or intercultural dimension would include:

<i>Actors/Elements</i>	<i>Strategic ambits of internationalisation</i>
Teaching	<p>Strengthen the pedagogic and didactic expertise of lecturers.</p> <p>Develop linguistic qualifications of teachers to ensure efficient professional communication in both Danish and English.</p>
Research	<p>Develop a research environment that are or become of world-class standard.</p> <p>Compete for the best researchers both nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Strengthen PhD programmes.</p> <p>Cooperation with the business community in training of Business researchers.</p> <p>Publication in leading international journals.</p>
Service	International positioning and Branding: a world-class University.



	<p>Strategic alliances with leading international business schools and universities.</p> <p>Intensify cooperation with international business.</p> <p>Strengthen CBS' position in international rankings, given priority of participation in international benchmarking projects and accreditations.</p> <p>Reinforce HR. Improve administrative infrastructure.</p> <p>Develop an international study environment</p> <p>Develop linguistic qualifications of administrative staff to ensure efficient professional communication in both Danish and English.</p>
Learning (students)	<p>International exchange students: activities and accommodation. To promote an international study environment that integrates them.</p> <p>Compete for the best students both nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Increase CBS revenue from fee-paying students (involves increasing mechanisms of attraction and competition for fee-paying students)</p> <p>Develop linguistic qualifications of students to ensure efficient professional communication in both Danish and English.</p>

*Table 1. Internationalisation at CBS*

I have added the 'element' of learners in the table; since I believe that politics in education must consider the impact on learners and improve it, since that is what is the main function of education institutions, to facilitate learning for the students. I also believe that the word 'element' refers more to a part of a machine, not to the reality we find in Universities, where there are actors that take actions and have responsibilities and consequences. In this sense, the Knight's definition resembles an open-system machine (Watson, 2002), where there are some inputs, in this case the international dimension among others, and some outputs, elements, which are teaching, services and research. Inside the machine, there is just a black box, engines and motors that convert the inputs in outputs. In my opinion, Universities are much more communities of knowledge and practice, which are made by all its stakeholders and transform in the interaction with them.

In the table I have been writing down the ambits in which international is cited, pairing it to the actors that are mostly influenced by or responsible for the statements. In the strategy of CBS, which has 1908 words, 'international' or 'internationalisation' is cited 22 times, which represents a 1.15%. 'Learning' is cited exactly half of the times, 11, representing a 0,58%. For getting an idea, a word like 'the' is cited 105 times in the strategy document, which means 5.5%. The presence of 'international' is quite high in absolute terms, which is probably related to the importance that this is given inside CBS.

When CBS writes about international, it means that it wants to have teachers with high pedagogic and communicative preparation, wants to attract the best international researchers, aiming to publish in international leading journals, involving in international benchmarking and accreditations, carrying out relevant research for the international business community. Furthermore, the international students have also a financial dimension, since every non-EU student brings economical resources to the institution. For all these things, CBS is competing and collaborating in the 'international educational market'. As the table shows, the use of international has to do with competition in all spheres. It is about getting high performance to be a 'world-class' organisation, to attract the best students, researchers, staff and teachers. Could it then be that when we say international we mean competent or competitive with an international scope? It seems like we use international many times in our daily lives, but what does it mean? How do students understand being international? In the next citation from the Strategy, CBS describes its graduates as:

CBS graduates are internationally competitive by virtue of their research-based knowledge, innovative abilities, cultural understanding, and personal leverage.

In sum, internationalisation is intensive at CBS. There is a growing interest to attract the best professors, students and researchers, to publish in world-class journal and to compete in the global market of education. The content of internationalisation at CBS is comparable with competitiveness, being

international something that increases the competitiveness of both graduates and the institution in the global market.

In the following chapter I will present the results of my research, with special focus on international identity and learning.

## **VI- Findings**

### **Sample: International Students, who are they?**

I observed that many of the interviewed students (19/34) had lived in other countries apart from their home country already, so living in Denmark and studying at CBS wasn't their first international experience. As I mentioned before, we carried out 4 focus groups, one with only Danish students. In this focus group we had 6 participants, 3 enrolled in international masters taught in English and 3 enrolled in programmes taught in Danish. The intention of this choice was to delimitate what is international, seeing whether the discourses were similar to the ones of the 3 other focus groups. I found that the discourses of international by the three students enrolled in the international programmes were similar to the international students. I also carried out observation to see the levels of interaction between Danes and internationals in the canteen, the Thursday's bar and the study facilities at CBS. The result was that Danes in an international programme relate much more to internationals attending the same programme, than to other groups of Danes attending the Danish programmes. From my sample I define being international at CBS not as coming from outside the country, but being enrolled in an international programme.

### **International identities: what means being international?**

*I think my identity has changed the most and evolved into a more international mindset. (St15, focus2)*

All the students interviewed that were enrolled in an international programme were assessing important values to the fact of being an international student.

For the students being international is something hard to be taught, so the role of an international environment is very important to learn to be international, both in terms of teachers and fellow students, and the use of international materials and focus in the courses.

*I would say it is an international experience because of all the diverse contacts you have at CBS. Many students come from foreign countries and speak different languages. They work in different ways. The teachers come from various countries and have therefore very different backgrounds and experiences. It is also an international experience because it is a different way of teaching than I am used to. (St5, Focus1)*

*I see this as having an international outlook, not seeing the world from a Danish perspective but instead acknowledging the differences in countries. Usually difficult to 'be taught' but with international professors and students it comes naturally. (d28, focus3)*

From this quote, we can assume that the fact that the teacher is international gives credibility to the international environment.

For the students, the opportunity of taking an international degree was perceived as an investment (Chapman and Pyvis, 2005), both in personal development and in their career. Many students pointed out the importance of having international qualifications to increase their professional status in the labour market.

*My study programme is international which mean that I have become used to working together with people from other cultures. I might be more prepared for working in an international company because I know some of the advantages that it has to being with people from other cultures and some of the problems that can arise. (d27, focus3)*

*I like this programme. Especially the international atmosphere. We had a lot of the projects working with people with different backgrounds. It is more than learning the knowledge. I also practised a lot about how to*

*communicate with people and share ideas. My idea to study abroad is to be more 'international'. Therefore studying at this programme provides the chance and helps me think about my future study and career. (St14, Focus2)*

For these two students, having an international environment in the programme contributes to their preparation for the working life. They perceive being international as a positive asset, while no negative features of being international are mentioned.

Students highlighted different features of being international such as improving communicative skills in a non native language, developing cultural awareness, enhancing their sensibility to communicate and understand, thinking out of the box, being open minded, getting a broader perspective, getting different insights from people with different backgrounds, and changing their attitude about the different. The non-English native students highlighted the positive effects of having to confront the challenge of studying in a foreign language. They argued that they had the opportunity to improve their level of English and that would be a good asset on their CV.

*I think the biggest change to my previous studies is that I study completely in a different language. I always missed to have classes held in English and now I don't want it to be different anymore. (St16, focus2)*

*As for the new skills, it is mainly: a communication in a previously unknown language. (St20, focus4)*

Cultural awareness and sensibility have become increasingly important in business literature and practice (Blasco and Zølner, 2009). All of the students were aware about the impact that developing cultural sensibility would have in their future careers. Cultural diversity is seen positive among interviewed CBS students, and it is understood as something that prepares the individual to frame reality better. In the focus 3, we ask one student if cultural awareness was something that was thought explicitly in her programme:

*Cultural awareness is something we have been studying at my program. But I think it also comes naturally at CBS due to the possibilities to be a buddy or to go on exchange. (d31, focus3)*

Many students talk about overcoming the cultural barriers of one's own culture, or thinking out of the box when they refer to the benefits of an international education and identity.

*(The) international environment offered by CBS makes me more aware of cultural differences between people. I constantly learn how to deal with them. This kind of side-effect, ability to deal with people, makes me even more experienced.(St13, focus2)*

*It makes me become more open-minded with regards to dealing with people, with so many different nationalities we have to accept that other people are different and I would even say to embrace their differences. (St9, focus1)*

*International for me is thinking-out-of-my-own-country-box. By that I mean that I don't have to see everything the way my home country does. I'm more open to other cultures and the way they do it could be as good as the way we do it back home. Being international is enjoying other peoples company where ever they are from. I don't have to be with just Norwegians or Danes just because their culture is the closest to me. (St15, focus2)*

In sum, students are very positive about having an international identity. The international identity is shaped in the international environment of the programme, and it is acquired by forming part of the programme and not being from elsewhere. The international identity or content is difficult to be taught, but the role of the international teacher, international fellow students and international focus and content of the programme help to give credibility to the international nature of the programme. During the research, I was very concentrated on getting a concrete definition of what being

international meant, but I just got fuzzy definitions of being international, like, open-minded, embracing differences, cultural awareness, etc. Still, the degree of agreement between the students about what international meant was very high. The question remains unanswered: why is having an international identity something so positive and yet not concrete? I will continue to investigate this question in the discussion.

### ***The CBS identity***

The students talked about a typical CBS identity. Most of them identified themselves as being different from that identity, and as being individual in relation to a common identity. At CBS there are many social activities for the new students to get to know each other. The introduction trip is done in almost all graduate lines; furthermore most of the programmes have a committee that arranges talk nights, sporadic parties, Christmas dinners, etc. In addition, CBS proposes many social activities like fitness, sports, Thursday pub, case competition, conferences, seminars, networking days, etc. Each programme decides which kind of activities to do, so the social interaction across programmes varies a lot.

The international students interact mostly with international students and the Danes with the Danes. In this sense, there is not much interaction between the Danish programmes and the international programmes. The fact that CBS is a multi-campus university also affects the interaction between Danes and internationals. At the Dalgas Have campus, which is mainly a language campus, the interaction in the canteen and the open study zones between internationals and nationals, is more common than at Solbjerg Plads. Solbjerg Plads is mainly dedicated to finance and business. In the canteen of Solbjerg, the difference between English (or non-Danish) speaking tables and Danish-speaking tables is evident at first sight. The ambient is different, the clothing also, and the tone of the conversation. Of course, the biggest difference is that different languages and accents are being spoken.

Furthermore, at Solbjerg Plads there is also a clear culture by itself, since the more executive and economic programmes are concentrated there. The Solbjerg identity is more serious, formal, classic and elitist than the ones we find in the other campuses. I believe that when the students from my sample refer to the 'classic business student' they mean the 'Solbjerg Identity'. The issue of appearance as a source of identity emerged only in the Focus 3, with the Danish students. It was introduced by d31, and the other students engaged quite a lot in a discussion:

*Also how I have become more aware of how I appear, as student at CBS are very occupied with appearance (how they look and present themselves). (d31, focus3)*

*Especially at Solbjerg the students do dress up, even if they just have to study at the library. I have never witnessed another place where people 'look that good' and use a lot of time and money on clothes, not in Denmark or abroad. This puts a pressure on you as a student. Further, as it is a business school, it is also very important to look professional. Especially when participating in events like a case competition. (d31, focus3)*

*The Danes especially seek to look as if they have stepped out of a magazine. For me that does not constitute a creative learning atmosphere. I think most of the international students get quite shocked when arriving at CBS. Some of my international friends have told me that they find it difficult, because this makes it too expensive to study at CBS - they feel the pressure to buy clothes all the time. I know this can be considered a quite 'banal' (don't know the English word) point, but it actually makes me a bit ashamed to be a CBS student...(d31, focus3)*

*I think the Danes mostly do this. International students are most often surprised by how much attention is given to appearance. But of course they also get more used to this over time. Don't think there's a difference in appearance between students from different countries, but more*



*between students from different study lines, e.g. language vs. economics. (d28, focus3)*

*Don't you think it is individually? I mean, some studies may focus a lot more on appearance than other, which I think is quite normal. You see the same at Copenhagen University where the law students arrive in expensive clothes whereas the ones studying philosophy has a more relaxed way in clothing...(d32, focus3)*

*It is partly individual, but CBS as a whole also has this reputation, hence it is something that affects everybody studying at cbs. Luckily at my program it has been a bit more relaxed, but you still get categorized as one of those fancy CBS student when talking to students from other schools. At least that is my experience, and I would rather be categorized as an academic than a business student. (d31, focus3)*

This discussion was particularly interesting in terms of identity. Student d31 is quite concerned that the importance of the appearance between the students is corrupting the creative atmosphere that should be in the school. She feels pressed in a way by 'the rule of appearance' to spend more money in clothes, to fit the group. Still, she makes clear that she does not really belong to the dressed up group, since her programme (BADs) is more relaxed in the dress code. I talked with 3 international students of the sample about the issue of appearance and they recognised the difference between campuses and acknowledge that it was affecting them when choosing their clothes. Student d28 writes that the internationals may get surprised at the beginning, but they get use to that and adapt to the dressing code. Student d32 contributes to the discussion remarking that the difference is more between programmes and not about nationalities. Appearance is very important when trying to fit in. As individuals we manage our impressions and appearances in a congruent way to the idea we want the others to have from us (Goffman, 1959).

*Being a student at CBS has a lot of importance to my identity. For instance it affects how other people perceive me as a person. (d30, focus3)*

If I want the others to see me as a CBS student, I will manage my appearance, the way I express myself, in a congruent way to fit my strategic goal. Dressing like the others, we embrace the group identity, in this case CBS's identity or the programme identity. Feeling tuned with the others help international students to develop a feeling of belonging to their social circumstances, which is being at CBS. But still, some individuals of the sample pointed out the postmodern aspect of fragmented identities, as it was the case of d31 with academic vs. business student, saying that they did not see themselves as an archetype of the CBS identity:

*In general I would say that I see myself as a foreigner in Denmark in 2 ways. First, due to my nationality and Second with regards to being a student at CBS. I don't know how to explain it but when I refer to myself, I don't think of myself as a "CBS student", I think of myself as a student at CBS. Maybe this distinction is due to the fact that I was at CBS for the first time in 2005 as an exchange student and identified myself more with the international group. Now that I am back as a fulltime Master student, I probably automatically adopted this kind of distinction again... (St3, focus1)*

*I am probably more focused on my education than on the university/business school as a whole. To begin with I had a hard time identifying myself whit all this business talk, so after a while I just stopped trying. (d29, focus3)*

*I feel that I fit in my programme, but it is also far from a classic CBSprogramme (SOC.PKL)... I have been studying at RUC before I started at CBS and at the moment I have my elective subjects at KU so I probably do my best to make my own education, which I can identify with instead of identifying myself with one institution...(d29, focus3)*

For many students having a degree from CBS is a way to present themselves. The degree is seen as something attached to the person, something that can be showed to acknowledge the value that I have:

*I think in some way it gives more value to who I am. I don't have to defend what I am doing/studying all the time, because when I say "cand.merc.int" people say "oh, that sounds interesting", but when I said cand.negot they were like "oh..." and then they started talking about something else. So I guess it is both about status and job opportunities. (d27, focus3)*

*I totally agree about how to present yourself. You can get a Cand.Merc. many places in the north but your opportunities advance if you present yourself as a CBS student instead of Oslo Business School (an example). (d32, focus3)*

These students are conscious that what they are doing in the present is going to affect how they present themselves in the future, and the fact of being at CBS is going to put them in an advantaged position when competing for resources. Having an education is a form of accumulating institutionalised cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), and therefore it is an important feature for their identity, to define who they are and to manage their impressions in the social world.

*Status does matter... . But you can get a higher or just a good education in many ways these days. I have also been studying at a training college (pædagogseminariet). That gives you the opportunity to study at DPU, but I guess a lot of people might find that way less prestigious. (d29, focus3)*

When an individual take a choice, something is left out. The environment and the context in which individuals take decisions have an impact on the choice. The discourses available constrain the space to choose. Student d28 shifted his professional identity and his choices as a result of the discourses he was exposed in his studies at CBS:

*My identity is shaped is shaped by the environment around me and by the experiences I make along the way. Thus if my identity is dynamic I*

*have been affected by the things I've learned and become more a 'business person' than before. (d28, focus3)*

*When I started at CBS I wanted to work with economics. But over the time I got more interested in the social aspects of business (culture, identity etc.). I think this has something to do with the way that these areas are related at CBS, especially at sprøk/BLC. (d28, focus3)*

In sum, I found that Danish students seem particularly concerned with appearance, and that international students seem to notice this and adapt to it. Being at CBS is important for the identity construction of students, since they want to belong to the group. In spite of that, students want to keep autonomous from the identity archetype they see at CBS, they want to keep different and singular in the river of people. Appearance differences are particularly noticeable across programmes. Furthermore, having a degree from CBS brings identity to the students, for they can say 'I am a (name of the degree)'. Being at CBS is perceived as a source of prestige, and that is perceived as a source of cultural capital to obtain resources from society.

### ***Identity discontinuity***

All of the international students interviewed except one (25/26) answered that their main reason for coming to Denmark was to study at CBS. Only 6/26 acknowledged other reasons influencing their decision, like having a Danish partner or coming especially because they liked the city of Copenhagen.

International first year students experiment an identity discontinuity (Scanlon et al., 2007) when they arrive to Denmark, they change their physical setting, meaning that the access to the social communities that they are used to be part of transforms. Students that study abroad experiment a change within their social life, which affects their identity. This is stated in the research of Ujitani and Volet (2008), where the lack of interaction is caused by a lack of cultural understanding or as they call it, by the presence of socio-emotional challenges. Our students recognized this challenge:

*As an international student studying at CBS that means that I have to start building personal relations with new friends. That poses a challenge too. (St2, focus1)*

*I would definitely agree to what student 2 says. Especially with regards to becoming friends with Danes. Coming here as an international fulltime student is quite challenging. You don't belong to the 24/7 exchange student party scene and at the same time it is difficult to become friends with Danes as most of them already have their stable set of friends and assume you are going to leave again after 2 years anyways. (St3, focus1)*

*Living in Denmark also poses challenges of its own, since there is a different perception, but having an international mindset always helps to overcome barriers and see things from a different perspective. Finally, CBS is really international with a large network of corporate partners; thus, it is very competitive in Europe. As I was talking to my friends, I told them about the competitiveness of the Danish education system, its flexibility, and most importantly, the opportunities that it offers to international students. (St12, focus2)*

Within this context, students look for a feeling of belonging to a group that legitimates their everyday life practices. Most of the students agreed on that there is a difference between Danish students, exchange students and International full-time students. The five students who had been on an Erasmus<sup>10</sup> programme in Denmark before enrolling in the Master acknowledged that there was a different level of expectations and preparation for the different experiences. International full time students tend to embrace more the Danish culture than the exchange students. Many of the full time students interviewed were taking Danish classes and had intentions to stay after finishing their programme.

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<sup>10</sup> European exchange programme between Universities and other HEIs.

Many of the students interviewed attributed an important role to their decision to study at CBS to the reputation of CBS in the business world. The students believed that their experiences at CBS would make them “gain face”, which is explained as prestige and success in their future work life. Several students talked about the importance of the family in legitimating their decisions, and in backing up their experience. Moreover, studying an international graduate programme was attributed with a positive change of social position.

*(...) that I am able to study at a business school as CBS. Having lived abroad for a while already this is nothing new to me. Being able to tell my family, relatives and friends what I am able to achieve by following a masters at CBS counts for me more. It's about increasing my horizon, not sticking to one place and mindset and getting to know how other people think, act or behave first hand. (St17, Focus2)*

*For me it is quite important when telling people or companies back home that I'm studying at CBS because it is a well-regarded business school with a more international perspective than the business schools back home. This automatically reflects that it is a more international community. (St15, Focus2)*

*I would say that in the workplace, you definitely get a higher status if you have a graduate degree, and that translates into more responsibility and higher salary, in addition to the respect you get from your co-workers. Family wise, I come from a family of teachers and scientists with PhDs, PhD is like a family tradition, so they are happy that I am doing a graduate study, but they did not push me to do so, so I do not think my family was a factor. (St18, focus4)*

*In my family, grades of the chosen university degree are important, as they were always a good indicator of how successful my family members were in their future jobs. (st26, focus4)*

Family is an important factor in the creation of personal identity, and so are fellow students. At CBS group work is very common in most of the programmes. In the international programs, group work benefits are complemented with cultural benefits. Most of the students highlighted the impact that group work has on their personal identity creation.

*Study groups with people of different cultural background - that is a challenge each time we have to cooperate. I learn to seek for compromises. (St13, focus2).*

*I think having group work is very good because then you increase your skills as a team member and learn how to work with different people, and of course when you are discussing things in group you better analyze the problems and things because you get different ideas than yours (St24, focus4).*

Some of the students acknowledged the problems that group work entails, like communication, negotiation and understanding. But all in all, students were very satisfied with the results of working in groups.

*Learning in groups - some like it, some hate it, but it really helps as a learning method. (St6, focus1)*

*Since CBS teachers are encouraging us in group discussions, class discussions and teams to elaborate on projects it gives me the possibility to enjoy learning again. I missed that many times during my bachelor degree. That's why I came back to CBS after my exchange semester. (St16, focus2)*

*(Referring to new skills) group-working while writing projects and assignments. (I worked in teams in the past, but I was always starting from dividing the jobs and responsibilities and more or less kept the division to the end. The methods I encountered here at CBS seem to lack this definite division). (St20, focus4)*

*Group work usually leads me in unexpected direction, and boosts creativity by giving more choices in the process. (St20, focus4)*

*What I have also learned at CBS is the joy for learning. To be surrounded by people that want to achieve the same, is very inspiring. For example being in a study group has helped me very much! We all want to learn, so therefore we do it together by constantly discussing course material and writing summaries. (St22, focus4)*

In sum, international students experience an identity discontinuity when they move to Denmark and begin studying at CBS. They need to learn how everything works once again and to find their way in a new institution and society. Having family support and getting to interact with other students in the same situation makes that step easier. Reputation and prestige are important features when choosing where to study. Students identify themselves with the programme they choose, but they do not want to be seen as an archetype of CBS. CBS have multiple cultures, and the appearance of students is important to be identified in one of them. Making friends is important to feel tighten to the new context, but it is difficult in some cases. Group work is seen as something positive and a productive way of learning.

### ***Orientations to study***

A very important point in my research was to find out what motivated students to engage in learning. That was important because it represents a space where identity and learning walk together, because motivations are rationalised from identity and materialised in learning. Most of the students participating had a dominant intrinsic vocational orientation (Entwistle, 1987) to their programme, meaning that they aim towards being well trained and are concerned with the relevance of the contents of their future career.

*CBS gives us knowledge with real situations, and that makes me even more willing to learn and study my course material, so I could be able to apply it afterwards in my future employability. (St23, Focsu4)*



Students argue that it is important for them that the contents and the focus of their courses have a relation to practice and are aimed to enhance their professional skills.

*I try to assess what kind of skills I should develop in order to secure my future job perspectives. I think that CBS highlights that I can use the knowledge outside school, which was not the case at my old university. Learning process is affected by exchanging ideas and knowledge with other students (study groups) and often imitates the work life situation (case studies). When I decide what to learn I ask myself if there is a chance to apply this to the real situation. When I decide how to learn I merely ask the same question: will this particular way of learning something contribute/facilitate the learning process in my future job?. (St13, focus2)*

Furthermore, all students are oriented extrinsically to obtain a qualification, which they perceive as a value to their future.

*Sometimes can be obligatory courses that I don't find it interesting nor that will enhance my knowledge but in order to get my degree I need to pass the exam so then I have a "pass exam" attitude whereas if is something that is calling my attention I would definitely considered as a gain experience. (St11, focus1)*

As less salient orientations, several students showed a personal intrinsic orientation to their studies, which aimed to broadening horizons and was concerned with choosing stimulating courses or topics for self fulfilment.

*I also think that the subject needs to be relate it with a topic that interest me personally. In that sense I think it is nice that there is a wide variety of courses at CBS. (St2, focus1)*

Only one of the students in the focus group interviews acknowledged that her primary orientation to study was intrinsically academic, which means getting

stimulating knowledge, aiming to pursue a subject for the sake of getting to know more, and not in relation to future career.

*Since I don't really have very fixed expectations about my future career I guess I have tried to maintain an open and flexible approach towards studying and learning. Because of that I'm not interested in very specific knowledge that cannot be applied to different areas. (d29, focus3)*

A couple of students wrote that at CBS they could enjoy learning, which was not possible in their previous education institutions.

*For example, I feel more motivated for learning here at CBS because I'm constantly challenged by teachers and I'm surrounded by international students who are also very motivated for learning, and learning a lot!! (St8, focus1)*

*Since CBS teachers are encouraging us in group discussions, class discussions and teams to elaborate on projects it gives me the possibility to enjoy learning again. I missed that many times during my bachelor degree. That's why I came back to CBS after my exchange semester. (St16, focus2)*

This gives evidence that no matter how much motivation a student has to get a degree or to learn, the teaching and learning environment has an impact on this student's motivation and outcomes. Entwistle (2000, 2003) and Vermunt (2005) have been reporting the relation between personal characteristics, contextual characteristics and academic performance. They have their academic roots in psychological sciences and are connected with the Gothenburg School. Vermunt argues that the way students learn is a result of the interaction of the person with its teaching and learning environment. Still, this interaction is not free from uncertainty, meaning that many students have difficulties to understand how to enact their personal characteristics in the context of learning. In focus 4, we had a student who could not find a way to perform in adequacy to her motivation, that is she did not know how to

perform good even though she was highly motivated by the content of her programme:

*So a feeling that I experience in this process of change is, frustration. After every exam that went bad, I try to get over it, so that I can start from zero again when it comes to the next exam. But it costs a lot of strength. I do not want to give up, but for all this effort that I invest, it would be nice to get a gain from it, one day.*

*For the first time in my life, I am really interested in an area, which is why I chose my study program.*

*My parents always told me that as soon as I find my area of interest, I would do great (concerning my grades), just because I would enjoy studying more. This sounds logical to me, but as I can see Logic cannot always be applied one to one to the real life. And the longer it takes, for me to get successful with grades, the higher the pressure, that I feel on my shoulders. (St26, focus4)*

In spite of her perceived effort, the student cannot get the outcomes she believes that she deserves. She is feeling frustrated, because she cannot understand what is expected from her or how to perform in accordance to her motivation. She is feeling pressure to account to her parents; she cannot give them what she expects from herself. This student was the only one that expressed impotence in relation to the study context, an impotence that was undermining her self-confidence. Still, she expects that she will get successful grades in some point, so she is still fighting to make sense of the context and adapt to it. This student gives an example that outcomes in education cannot be described following an equation, as in:

Personal characteristics + Learning and teaching environment = Academic outcomes
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*Table 2. Academic outcomes*

It is not easy to understand what the problem is in the context of learning. Thus, it is not enough to perform assessment based on a large quantitative

analysis, for we need to understand the reality of the students, aside from proceeding with assessment techniques of the kind of 'one-size-fits-all'.

In sum, orientations to study are important to know which kind of students are in every programme. If we can get to know what motivates them, we may get an idea about how and what they want to learn. Motivation is both personal and contextual, but it is not a clear-cut relationship: it needs to be understood in every single case. When assessing or investigating learning and motivation to learn, it is important to keep in mind the diversity of students and perceptions of learning and performance. Each student interprets the context of learning, so there it is very difficult to describe or design it in absolute terms. As we have been seeing with learning, to design learning and teaching environments has to be done in a way that allows as much diversity of interpretations as possible, so more students feel welcome and safe to learn in those environments.

### ***Interpreting the teaching and learning in postgraduate level at CBS***

#### Approaches to learning

Students participating in the study had many strong opinions of what was desired or not in their context of learning. In the first focus group I asked the students directly about approaches to learning. Students made very clear that of course they wanted to learn 'for life' or with a deep approach, but the way things were organised at CBS, this was not always approach to adopt. Students highlighted that the exam pressure and the will to obtain a good grade could have a negative impact in choosing a deep approach to learn. Students managed time strategically, with the objective of getting a good grade, sometimes sacrificing the maximization of learning.

*In our study group, we all wanted to do well, and this made us help each other because we knew that we all wanted the same. However, sometimes the grade stress can make you study in a very concentrated way where you think about what to say in the 20 min. oral exam instead*

*of thinking about how the knowledge could be useful in the future. (d27, focus3)*

*I wouldn't call the frantic cramming of information into my head before exams real learning. It doesn't enrich me in any way; it just stresses me out and makes me wish I were on holiday. (St9, focus1)*

In addition, the quantity of work was also related negatively to the motivation to approach learning deeply. Several students acknowledge that a workload too big would reduce their motivation to engage in deep learning. Also, students pointed out that some materials were perceived as being irrelevant for them, which was also mining their engagement in the learning process.

*Sometimes ploughing through the long and (pretty much) pointless articles is draining! It doesn't make me want to keep reading. (St9, focus1)*

A couple of students suggested that the professor should motivate the students with examples and cases to which the students could relate to, so the interest of the students in the content of the course would increase.

*One way how to make students interested in what is thought is to show how this knowledge can be used in their lives, to show fancy examples sometimes (about stuff that everybody admires) Like tutor is good when he has a good contact with their students, so the material is good when it has a contact or just catches students to read it. (St24, focus4)*

Of course, not all students relate to the same cases. For example, st18 thought that the cases about IT and communication were not as relevant for her as other issues:

*One negative thing I notice, though, is that the industries discussed in classes are IT, communications, software, or energy. The companies are the same too, Apple, Nokia, Motorola, Shell, Microsoft, Google...it*

*makes me think that I will leave school knowing nothing about the other industries, and also that the only industries I should look for a job in are these few. As a female, I do not have the extensive background knowledge or interest to contribute effectively to class discussions. (st18, focus4)*

Curiously, out of 34 students, she was the only one that brought up the issue of gender in a classroom situation. I will extend the analysis of this comment in the discussion.

Furthermore, students recognized that they appreciated consistency between the different courses of the programme in order to have a coherent structure of what to learn. When students engage in learning, they invest resources in this process; therefore they expect to get some paybacks, as well as a structured and coherent learning. Similarly, students were displeased with professors that repeated what other professors had been explaining, it was perceived as a waste of time.

*A topic is really interesting when I feel it provides me with knowledge that I need and even more when it relates to other classes. I think it is great when you see that something you learned in another course/semester relates to what you learn right now. You see that it was actually necessary to learn it, even if you may have doubts about it before. (St5, focus1)*

*I feel I am not learning when I constantly have to repeat something that I already know. Repetition is good, but only to a certain degree! (St22, focus4)*

*I agree, professors from different departments do not talk to each other, so we end up hearing the same things in different classes. (St18, focus4)*

The approach that students adopted to learning was determined by many factors. They pointed out the pressure of the exams, the importance of the

content, the role of the teacher, and the diversity and lack of consistency between programmes. I will expand on those concepts in the next four points.

### *Exams*

Many of the international students have problems integrating or adapting to the Danish/CBS teaching and learning environment. This was specially an issue in relation to exam forms. CBS uses many different forms of examination, as multiple choice tests, group projects, mini projects, written assignments, computer exams that last 4 hours and can be open or close book exams, 24 or 48 hour exams, where the student has 24 or 48 hours to answer a question, individually or in groups, using all the material of the course, oral exams based on a synopsis and oral exams to assess group assignments. The students experienced many difficulties to understand the assessment criteria that lay behind the exams. As first year students at CBS, many of the students had never had an oral or group exam before, which meant a challenge for those students.

*Somehow I mostly got very good grades in the subjects which I felt that I learned a lot from. But once I had a subject which I learned a lot from but the level was very high and therefore the grade was not good. However I have seen many students being very disappointed about grades and maybe it is because they felt they were very strong in the subject but failed to perform (d33, focsu3).*

Students acknowledge that there was a lot of uncertainty regarding exam forms at CBS. There can be many causes for such an understanding, as cultural, institutional, and personal or from the teacher side. Still, this is another argument to exemplify the uncertainty that there may be in the teaching and learning environments. These contexts are interpreted; therefore it is difficult to give an impartial account of what they consist of.

*I have also discovered that grades at CBS do not reflect learning or effort, so now I have to find another way to measure progress. I used to*

*want to good grades for two reasons 1) to know that I have learned all that I am expected to learn and even a little more, and 2) for the sake of knowing that I am the best in my field, just like in competitions. Having seen the grading here, I know that a good grade does not mean I have excelled in learning, I can get a good one and still not know much, and I can receive a bad one and know more than the person who got a higher one. I am now searching for new ways to measure my knowledge. (St18, focus4)*

When talking about exam periods, time management and prioritizing are important processes in the preparation. Many students acknowledge that passing the exam was their first priority, but still most of the students acknowledged that it was easier for them to learn with a deep approach than with a surface approach.

*Studying to pass an exam is always important to me. So I don't see the possibility to choose a different study method? (St4, focus1)*

*Of course everyone studies wanting to pass, but is there another reason for studying apart from just exams? Also I guess if I find the subject relevant to life or the future, or something that interests me; I would be more likely to want to take something away from the course. (St9, focus1)*

*Learning for an exam is more difficult for me because of the purpose. The purpose of passing an exam is not so inspiring me than learning for real life activity. I mean, I would easier learn for a work purpose or a task that I have to fulfil in the future than just answering rhetorical questions (st4, focus1)*

*It is also a time issue and that you have to make compromises. Often if a topic is really interesting you would like to read another book or go deeper into a certain theory, but when should you ever have time to do that?? (st5, focus1)*



### *Diversity of programmes*

I have already presented some insights when I presented the issue of appearance about the big difference between programmes. As I mentioned in the methodology, I had access to a spectre of different programmes, which follow different internal directions of organisation. The strategy of CBS is only one, but one could think that the way it is translated into action lines within the institutes of CBS may not be exactly the same. For example, st15 was critic over the way of lecturing in his programme:

*The problem with some MSc courses is that they are more about quantity than quality. When you have 100 students in a strategy course you will never get the same discussions as in a class with 40 students. I believe that quality is about fewer students in classes and that's a major issue with learning vs. lecturing. (St15, focus2)*

The quantity of students in a class is an extended problem in the Western educational systems. Reducing the number of students per class is far too expensive to be a possibility in many cases. As we saw in the last subsection, it is difficult to engage in deep learning when we don't have any commitment from the teacher's side, when he or she does not know the names of the students or in which way they understand the content. If classes are too big, it is difficult to provide a discussion between students or engage students in critical thinking. Still, students in the LMS line felt far more comfortable with the class size than st15:

*It is true, now I can say I switched between listener position and participant one. I think the main factors in this process are the teacher, then the subjects that we are studying and also the other students in class. (St10, focus1)*

Actually, in the first focus I had only participants from the two lines of the MSc BLC programme, and in relation with the other programmes, those students were quite euphoric when talking about their teachers, classes and

programme in general:

*As an international student I also appreciate the “independent/open” way of teaching at CBS. This clearly affects me as a person. I am becoming more independent; I am more used to face discussions with people who have different opinions. I am also learning to structure my arguments in a better way. Argumentation is something that you use in your every day life, not only at university (St2, focus1)*

*There is so much going on at CBS and we have so many opportunities (seminars, conferences, presentations, student organisations, counselling, exchange, double degree programs) to chose from that these contribute to my personal development. For instance, it helps me to become more social, self-confident, open-minded and I’m very enthusiastic and curious, too. (St1, focus1)*

As I discovered with the issue of appearance, there is a small culture within each programme. Individuals make sense of reality in accordance with the discourses available. It is clear that the discourses available in the LMS are quite more positive than the ones in IMM or FSM.

#### *Role of the teacher*

All students agreed upon the importance of the teacher as a facilitator of learning. The teacher has the *responsibility in selecting the readings* (St3), *makes easier to understand certain topics* (St11, 23, 24), for she or he *has the capacity to make things simple* (St2), *challenges the student to learn more* (St2) as a *developer* (St9), *should engage the students in the course* (St13) *attracting their attention* (St24), *needs to be organised enough to be effective* (St25), *sets the basis for learning* (St5), *inspiring* (St5), *motivating and interesting the students to make them want to learn* (St9). *The good professor tries to help students grasp the concepts and theories discussed while at the same time challenging the students by asking them their interpretations* (St17), *should know the name of the students* (St15) and *care about them* (St

22, 24). They *should have good communicative skills* (St2, 5, 23, 24), because *the quality of learning depends much on those professors' personal abilities to teach* (St13, 22)<sup>11</sup>.

As it can be seen in the former paragraph, students give a very important role to the teacher, who *has the capability of changing the attitude of students about the course* (St3). In sum, the teacher is perceived as a crucial figure in the learning process, and it is seen as having a high degree of responsibility between the international graduate students.

### *Importance of content*

When I asked students about what engaged them in learning they also mention the content of the courses as an important factor. If the content of the course motivates them to engage more in the learning process, it is suiting their personal and professional identity. But the content of the programme could also change the identity of the students. This was the case of student d28:

*When I started at CBS I wanted to work with economics. But over the time I got more interested in the social aspects of business (culture, identity etc.). I think this has something to do with the way that these areas are related at CBS, especially at språk/BLC.*

*The more I know about something the more motivated I am to learn more. And because the economics topics were not very dominating at my bachelor I did not have the knowledge to sustain that interest. (d28, focus3)*

For this student, getting knowledge about a field that he was not focused on before; help him to see that it was something he would like to get a wider insight in. It is interesting to see how what we learn affect what we become, for it open our *space of possibles*. In the section 'Future expectations and

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<sup>11</sup> The citations in this paragraph are not exact, they are based on one student, but I also mentioned those students that meant the same.

strategic beings' I will elaborate more in the notion of strategic beings.

In sum, the structure and organisation of the programmes does not facilitate the adoption of a deep approach to learn. Students are conscious that a deep approach is more desirable, and they try to adopt it, but they encounter institutional barriers to adopt such desired approach, as exam uncertainty, lack of consistency within and between the courses, lack of interest for the examples, too large classes, among others. The role of the teacher is truly important to facilitate learning and the interest in the subject of the course is also relevant when engaging in learning.

### ***Defining and understanding the diversity of learning***

During my research, I was quite surprised to find out that the perception of learning of the individuals was very different depending on their origin. The clearest expression of that was the dichotomised view that US citizens and Eastern Europeans had about the CBS system:

*I can tell you that in my bachelor I was partly studying partly cheating because the things were so boring which I had to study, the exams were same or similar year to year so that you just take the easy way. Here in CBS I find the material interesting, the lectures useful so that you want to study and learn because you see that the knowledge you get will be useful in the future and what ever you learn makes you more intelligent, you become able to speak with wider audience and so on. Studying in CBS makes you broad minded- like think outside the box. (St.24, Lithuania)*

*Classes are different in a couple of ways: First, a lot less competition amongst the students. Back home, at a master's level, students push each other to do better – its friendly competition. Second, to me it seems the classes are a bit less structured, for all of my classes, I know there's group work, but don't have the info, deadlines, or what's expected of me as a student. Perhaps it's just the classes that I am taking, but the*

*syllabus that was provided wasn't very detailed about this information. At first I wasn't sure where to find it, but in talking with my group members, I came to realise this info just wasn't provided. Also, there is very little class discussion or debate. It's essentially just the teacher/professor talking to the students. Strategies and business models should be debated and pros/cons should be analyzed I think. Real world business requires quick analytical thinking. Lastly, the role of books and cases or theory verse real world. Here I have come to realize I don't really need to go to the lectures as its just a reiteration of the book. So why bother? At home, we have cases and data to analyze that builds off the theory (St25, USA).*

In these quotes, we can see two students that perceive fundamentally different the learning reality at CBS. IN one side, st24 is very positive over the knowledge she is getting, is enjoying going to classes and participating on them. On the other side, st25 finds the content not interesting because it is just repeating the book. She finds as well that the materials are too theoretical and there is not enough participation or need to attend the lectures.

Both students compare CBS with their previous learning experiences, and elaborate an opinion of the current system based on their previous one. Thus, learning is contained and influenced by the national context in which is embedded. The research by Kraugh and Bislev (2008) shows that business school teaching across countries reflects wellbeing indexes in their learning styles. For example, a democratic country will have a democratic culture embedded in their learning traditions. Another factor influencing learning is the equality that members have in society, which is also going to be reflected in the educational system of the country.

Several students compared their current experience with their previous ones, highlighting the positive or negative effects of the contextual features of the educational system and the consequences in their individual learning:

*It also affects me as a person in the sense that I have to get used to new teaching methods, different than the ones from where I come from. I believe that this makes me have a more open view towards new methods. It also allows me to compare and to critically analyse them. (St2, focus1, Spain)*

Following Marton and Säljö (1997), students who have previous experience from learning in other countries have more probabilities to be resistant to a reproduction strategy to learning, *they suggested that increased experience in formal education goes together with a development in conceptions and views people have about learning* (Vermunt, 1997). The student above, st2, was very clear about that, saying that the experience of learning in other ways made her more open towards new methods and more aware of what they consist of, comparing them and critically analysing them.

There were two main positions between students regarding learning at CBS: those that found CBS a place where learning was independent, active, dynamic, practical, critic, engaging, followed by a list of positive adjectives; and those that thought that learning at CBS was passive, very theoretical and too focused on the books and not reflected when using practical tools for learning. Together with the learning style, this second group would also criticise the organisation of the courses, the competition between fellow students and the ideology behind the teaching methods:

*Secondly, when analyzing these companies, areas might include more socialist or corporate responsibility topics; certainly areas that are outside the shareholder value strategies. (St25, focus4)*

I have to acknowledge that student 25 was a radical case in my sample. No other student had such non-reflected culturally bounded values referring learning styles and contexts. She was absolutely proud of her previous way of learning, and not really wanting to fit in the Danish system. Regarding the ideology, she believes that CBS includes unnecessary ambits of analysis when studying business, like socialist or corporate responsibility topics, which,

in her opinion, are outside the shareholder value strategies. At CBS, corporate social responsibility and stakeholder value are very important in most of the lines, and there are many theories to back up this view. Student 25 gives an example of the ideologically charge of education, and that somewhere in the USA, business is thought in way more straight forwards. For student 25, CBS was not a learning experience:

*Honestly, I haven't learned much here at CBS. It's all so theory bases and half of what we've covered in class has been a review for me. So either I am not paying attention because I've already covered a subject (but in much more detail) or it's so theoretical so as not to be practical, I let it go in one ear and out the other. (St25, focus4, USA)*

Student 18 was from Bulgaria, but took her undergrad in USA. Similarly, Student12 was from Romania and studied his undergrad in Canada. In addition, student 11 was from Dominican Republic and studied in an American university:

*Compared to my undergrad, I would say learning at CBS is more passive. Group sizes are large, so it can be intimidating to speak up in front of 100 people, and we are given no incentive to participate. I know we all should have the internal motivation, and in an ideal world we would, but some people just need to external motivation, like a participation grade that is then incorporated into your final grade, to give them that extra push they need to speak up. (St18, focus4, studied in USA)*

*The Master at CBS seems to be very theoretical in some aspects whereas my university degree was very applied, since the North American culture is more about knowing how to apply the concepts than knowing the theoretical background of the concept itself. (St12, focus2)*

*I'm very used to the American teaching system, which is totally opposite to the European system. For instance, the exam methods that CBS uses*

*it's been quite new/hard for me. Secondly, lectures material, they are selected texts sometimes written by the teachers or from a University, newspaper and so on. I'm used to have a regular textbook and in that base got all of my lectures. (St11, focus1)*

The other participants in my research who had been exposed to the North American education system were much capable of putting a perspective to their experiences, and not giving for granted that one system is better than the other. I asked student 18 what was working better for her:

*I would say the truth is somewhere in the middle. Some of the theories we discuss at CBS are so abstract that I know no manager out there will ever sit down and try to apply them. But then in the US, we get to see what works for different companies, but know nothing about the unifying principle behind it, so we do not know in which circumstances it can be applied again. The best would be to take some theories that are on the less abstract end of the spectrum, and then see how real companies apply them and discuss why they work or why they do not work. I want to know more about the industry, the companies, the brands, because at an interview that is what will help me get the job. The theories then will help me do the job. That is would like to see both theory and practice in the curriculum. (St18, focus4, studied in USA)*

For the students that had experienced the North American system, CBS is too passive, there is too little practice and the amount of readings and their degree of abstraction is too high.

All the European students were mostly satisfied with the way of teaching and learning at CBS:

*I have to say that the studying methods like being an active part of the class dynamics, made me gain some confidence in my capabilities to efficiently build new knowledge and to have critical discussions about it. I am saying that because of my French bachelor academic experience*



*which was a passive learning without having the possibility to question the theories/methods. (st19, focus4, studied in France)*

*I learn different now than earlier, because of the encouragement to speak my opinion and because the materials, at least in my opinion, is different than in my undergrad. I prefer the way I learn now, and I often think that if I could go back in time and learned the way I do now in my undergrad, I would have achieved even better results! Now I have also realized the importance of group work and how one should respect and maybe even elaborate on different opinions. I see myself being more reflected and that I have greater ability to put myself in other peoples' situations. (st22, focus4, Germany)*

*I think the asking of students' opinion is definitely more frequent at CBS than at my university at home. At home you already had kind of a 'package of opinions' through slides or in a compendium. In class there was much less discussion. We were much more trying to understand the opinion and the theories of the professors. Discussion took much more place in various group works. (St5, focus1, Germany)*

In sum, learning is clearly contextual and it is charged with ideology. My research confirms that learning is contextual, and that is affected by the national culture where it is embedded. Moreover, I believe that the fact that students can compare their experiences with other learning systems makes them more conscious of what it is good for them and what does not work.

### ***Future expectations and strategic beings***

Most of the students were clearly motivated to engage in learning for their future career. In this sense, students were encompassing their personal identity with their professional one. Thus, the perceived professional identities of the students have an impact on their engagement in the courses, and thereby in the way to approach learning. Students acknowledge that they

choose their courses strategically with the objective of being better prepared within their professional field.

*Sometimes can be obligatory courses that I don't find it interesting nor that will enhance my knowledge but in order to get my degree I need to pass the exam so then I have a "pass exam" attitude whereas if is something that is calling my attention I would definitely considered as a gain experience. (St11, focus1)*

*I would say I choose what to take based on interest, but also on how it can help me in my future career. I would love to be idealistic and "follow my heart" but money really does make the world go round. (St9, focus1)*

However, several students acknowledged that once they had chosen a subject for its relevance to their professional identities, they discovered that it was contributing to their personal interest, in addition to the enhancement of their career opportunities.

*For me being not that interested in finance, the course 'accounting and performance measurement' on my curriculum seemed like one of those courses which I had to pass but I thought would not contribute that much for the knowledge base I thought I needed for my life after finishing my masters. I had to change my opinion. Especially in times like now where finance issues have a large influence on all aspects of professional life it is actually very useful to understand (to some extend) the reasons/backgrounds of what is going on. (St17, focus2)*

*Sure some classes you just need to pass. But interestingly it sometimes happens that in the end you liked the class in the end although you had an 'I just want to pass' attitude in the beginning. Those are the classes with really inspiring teachers. (St5, focus1)*

That exemplifies the multiplicity of identities among the students. It shows how individuals are aware of the fluidity of their identities, in this case personal and

professional, that is defining their being. Students draw their academic path in the present based on their expected future careers. Professional identity appears to be a source of clarity, an element that simplifies the complexity of our daily lives and gives stability and continuity to our identity.

*I appreciate the structure of the programme not focussing on just passing exams and learning theories by hard but rather applying the theories to real-life cases and problems. This is important for me as I'm interested in a career in the sector of (project) management or consulting. Therefore I need to be able to connect the theories discussed in class to reality. (St17, focus2)*

*CBS gives us knowledge with real situations, and that makes me even more willing to learn and study my course material, so I could be able to apply it afterwards in my future employability (St23, Focus4).*

*I try to assess what kind of skills I should develop in order to secure my future job perspectives. I think that CBS highlights that I can use the knowledge outside school, which was not the case at my old university. Learning process is affected by exchanging ideas and knowledge with other students (study groups) and often imitates the work life situation (case studies). When I decide what to learn I ask myself if there is a chance to apply this to the real situation. When I decide how to learn I merely ask the same question: will this particular way of learning something contribute/facilitate the learning process in my future job? (St13, focus2)*

Although students take decisions based on their professional identity most of the time, and may take a course with the objective of passing the exams with good grades, their approach can change during the course of the subject, due to the content, structure or the professor.

*I think it pretty much boils down to the teacher. In one of my courses I really dislike the teacher, and so yes, my only goal in that class is to*

*pass the exam, but not for the other 3 classes I'm taking where I feel the teacher is trying to make the content relevant and interesting. (St9, focus1)*

*The most important thing that motivates is when you become interested in the issue. If you are interested, you will definitely remember what you have read for a very long time and will not miss any details what you study about. (St24, focus4)*

*My orientation to learn has changed mainly because of the different structure – complete focus on assignment (thus practical application of theories) – of my study. It is no longer enough to learn the theories by hard just for the exam day but I rather have to really understand them to be able to apply them. (St17, focus2)*

As I have mentioned before, identity cannot be taken for given, but it is a reflexive process that is interpreted by the individual. The student tries to understand “who one is”, “how one has become what one is” and “what one wants to become” (Taylor, 1989). In between all the interactions and complexities of the everyday life, individuals try to find continuity between these questions, and to draw a path for action. The curriculum of their studies has to encourage this reflective activity, and help them find clarity to define their path, give them insights to change their opinion and help them discover their strong sides and improve their weak ones. In this sense, curriculum development has to include class structures and teaching methods that engage the student in the learning process, and make them feel their responsibility in their learning. If the students are conscience of how they can include and take advantage of what they are learning in their professional identity, their motivation and engagement to learn will be stronger in many cases.

## **VII- Discussion**

### **Educational institutions and cultural capital**

Higher education Institutions are a very important part of modern societies; since they make sure that society has capable professionals to take over the control of power. HEIs are containers and transporters of knowledge. Knowledge is a form of wealth, and universities are seen as institutions that allow one to get a better position in society, in which one can acquire a higher status and better work conditions, as we can see in the analysis. Hence, HEIs are very important sources of social, economical and cultural capital for society.

Scanlon et al. (2007) argue that one reason to explain the prevailing of higher education is the tendency of the individuals understanding it as a source of cultural capital, so they want to engage in studying to obtain more symbolic power. From my sample I can argue that students may also engage in higher education in Business Schools for improving their symbolic power in terms of economic capital.

Universities and other educational institutions are legitimated to prepare new generations of professionals, who will take over the creation of the absolute truth and the authority that it signifies, and carry it on to the next. The reflexivity that characterises late modernity has questioned the ostentation of the absolute truth of knowledge by the traditional University, and with that its hegemony has been reflected upon and become more relative. HEIs are under pressures from many classes or parts of society to articulate their interest. These groups want to participate in defining what has to be learned, and at the same time try to give importance to their role in society, so they can assure their maintenance of power and influence. Knowledge is power, and HEIs have power to indoctrinate individuals in what is right or wrong. Thus, the individuals in the Universities exercise power through the legitimacy of scientific discourses and philosophical theories.

Bourdieu (1990) argues that the social class that controls the university is making sure that the mechanisms of assessment assure the perpetuation of their class in the institution, avoiding the extension to other statements in society. Of course the situation is very different than the 70s in France, but in many terms, the University system is still an elite system, which gives access mostly to the classes that are included in the spheres of power. For example, I have observed the ethnic representation at CBS, and it is clear that in the case of the Arabic and South-Asian collective, the representation is not proportional to the one of Danish decedents. It looks so old fashion to talk about classes nowadays, but the reality tells us that there is still a class and ethnic division in the percentage of participation in higher education. Therefore, I believe that the equality principle of access to university is not as universal as it could be expected.

### **Learning**

Even though learning is a process that has no beginning or end, it is embedded in a changing context, and it has some strategies and philosophies behind. At CBS, learning is seen as an interdisciplinary process with a high emphasis on practice. Learning is seen closely related with practice, in the sense that it is important that students can put what they learn in practice.

#### *Habitus-reflection:*

When we asked d31<sup>12</sup> about the explicitly of cultural awareness in her programme (business and development studies) it was curious to see how she wanted to reclaim an agency, an autonomy in the learning of the concept. We asked her why she used the words cultural awareness, which are very common in business literature. We saw that as an unconscious internalising of the literature. What d31 had done it was to internalise the concept of cultural awareness to her repertoire of what constituted her. As Foucault says, memory is very misinforming, and the relation of power and knowledge

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<sup>12</sup> See page 43.

is difficult to trace. Therefore, it is difficult for me to trace the difference between the agency and the indoctrination of the individuals.

St25<sup>13</sup> presents an example of a more deepened habitus. She was not able to see reality in a more flexible way. For her, the features of her education in her previous institution were the 'good ones'. Bourdieu argues that:

*Pedagogic work is a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training i.e. habitus, the product of internalisation of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after pedagogic work has ceased. (Bourdieu, 1990:31)*

Thus, teaching may have a dimension of indoctrination, for example students in the BADS programme believe that cultural awareness is an important dimension when doing business, but st25 from the MBA programme thinks that is not that important. Again, the importance of the information and knowledge transfer is very evident when we internalise values and claims of truth. Basically, if we believe and legitimise the sources to our information, we may take some statements as foundational in our narrations of the self.

Students talked about the importance of reflection in learning. For example, consistency between courses helped students apply and understand more fully the contents. Most of the students were quite conscious about how they learn better, what they understood as learning, what they learned better from or with, and so on. In this sense, students were quite self-reflective when understanding learning. Probably, the hypothesis of Marton and Sajlo about non-reproductive strategies to learning in students that have been learning in different systems may be adequate to my sample. I believe that the fact that students could compare and choose different learning 'cultures' makes them very self-reflected individuals in terms of learning.

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<sup>13</sup> See page 65-66-67.

*Feedback-feed-forward:*

Students talked about how the present experience was helping them to make sense of their previous knowledge and how that one was helping them understand present and future situations. For example, st12 talked about how she would understand the future working situations within management with reference to the knowledge she was acquiring of strategy. St2 explained me that the very different approach to learning in her previous HEI helped her frame the way to study here, so for her memorising was not a problem and now could enjoy being critic. All students have a positive perception of their feedback experiences and could see consistency with their future learning adventures, with the exception of st26<sup>14</sup>. St26 presented a very unique case to our sample, since she was the only one that expressed being affected by the learning methods in a very negative way. Her problem was that she could not understand how examinations function within her programme, and how she could become more strategic in terms of good grades. She could not understand how her high motivation in the courses could not be shown in the grades. St26 presented a misfit of information and feedback. She could not get to know who could help her and nobody told her what her problems in approaching learning were. When st26 tried to make sense of the situation, she could not find the line of feedback and forward, that is, she was used to use her past experience in a way that was not giving clarity in the present. Her interpretations of past experiences were confusing her in the new culture and the new educational system.

*Toil/ exuberance:*

Students were quite sensitive to their learning context when deciding if they were motivated or bored in classes and in engaging with learning. Some of the features that would move students to the toil part of the continuum were the teacher, the exams, the work group, the content, the amount of readings, etc. In this sense, the students in my sample were highly determined by the learning and teaching environment when deciding how to engage in learning.

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<sup>14</sup> See page 56.



On the other hand, learning is easier if students can see a practical use of the knowledge that was imparted in the class. I believe it is really important that the educational institution is aware of how much influence the teaching and learning environment have in the satisfaction and engagement of the students with the defying of the capacities the teachers have, the consistency inside the programmes, and in general, the teaching and learning environment. Students react and adapt to their context when learning.

### **The Figure of the Teacher**

*'The task of the teaching profession is thus to maintain and promote this order in people's thinking, which is just as necessary as order in the streets and in the provinces'. (G.Gusdorf, Pourquoi des professeurs?, in Bourdieu, 1970:70)*

The teacher is very important for the students. In this sense, it looks like the students observe learning in a very teacher-centred way, as the teacher can be a determinant for being bored or disliking the subject. From this perspective, the teacher is seen as an authority that delivers the right academic content to all students at a specified point in time. What students have to learn, and the way in which the teacher through instruction delivers the content to the students is defined beforehand and applied to all the students. This view is not encouraging the students to take ownership of their learning process, and it does not help them relate what they learn to their daily lives.

CBS is changing curriculum development from a teacher-centred perspective to a learner-centred perspective (CBS, 2009). That has as its main interest the development students. The syllabus and the teacher are only facilitators of students' learning processes. The central actor of the learning process is the student, learning is central and teaching is peripheral. Typical learner-centered principles give a dominant role to the student in relation to creation of knowledge, planning and structuring of learning processes, modes of investigation, innovation, etc. The teacher becomes a facilitator, who encourages, supports, supervises, and evaluates students' development.

From my sample, it can be said that it is not only the teachers that need to adapt to the new method of teaching and learning, but also students have to understand the different role attribution a learner-centered curriculum encourages.

### **Deep and surface approaches to learn**

After developing the concepts of surface and deep approach, Marton and Sajlo developed a 3<sup>rd</sup> approach, which they named 'achieving' or strategic approach to learn. This approach is mainly concerned with achieving high degrees through learning. For many (Ramsden, 1992) the strategic approach is understood quite like the surface approach but the objective here is not to reproduce knowledge but achieve the best results, implicitly said, with minimum effort. From my sample I find out that attributing one or the other approach to the learning process of individuals would be reducing the complexity that interacts in the learning venue. Individuals take mixed methods and approaches to learn, when they decide to learn; they don't act independently, but embedded in the context. The pressure and uncertainty of the exams make that students have to manage time and effort strategically, and the approach to learn is not surface or deep, but a mix between them that swings up and down constantly. Furthermore, saying that only some students are strategic would be not considering the nature of the educational system in the Western world, which attributes satisfaction and prestige to high grades. Of course all students would like to have the best grades, and act consequently when they engage in learning. In higher education, there are so many assessment procedures and taxonomies that have as an objective the assessment of learning styles, as *Study Process Questionnaire* (Biggs, 1987) and Entwistle's *Approaches to Study Inventory*. Supposing that those who develop and assess curricula are in willing to develop a context that favours a deep approach to learn, the structure -exams at the last of the semester, lectures with many students, powerpoint, etc.- is quite opposite to developing such approach.

## **Orientations to study**

Since the students participating in the research were volunteering, perhaps my study is biased to reflect the experiences of students with a particular orientation to education. I assume that there may be a relation between participating in CBS' activities and being professionally motivated or vocationally orientated. Accordingly, I believe that those who got a more personal or social orientation to learn would not volunteer for such a research, since they are not likely to share their story. Also, I think that a vocational orientation is quite dominant in a business school, while in humanities a more personal orientation would dominate. The fact that CBS is an institution with high prestige in the labour market may be the cause for joining this institution for many students when they are oriented to get a job. While, if someone studies literature, probably the little possibilities to find a job in editorials or literature festivals emphasises an orientation to learn the knowledge for the knowledge sake. Still, having studied at CBS is not a guarantee to get a job, regardless of what statistics say, which is a kind of absolute knowledge, one of those absolute truths that society tells us from the hands of expertise.

Still, some international students in my research regard having an international MSc from CBS as an investment in social and economic capital. Students buy the brand of CBS and its international contents, and believe that CBS is better than some other institutions to obtain a degree from.

## **Exams**

Academic tests are 'institutionalised models of communication' (Bourdieu, 1990:143) that communicate an archetype of success. The HEIs are organised under the Ministry of Education, which brings some constraints and lines of how to do things, and what is expected to keep getting financial support. Aside from this, HEIs also have many hierarchical stages that direct and dictate how things need to be done. The professor finally, finds a way to assess the performance of the students through a test, which is supposed to be objective. However that is unlikely, since the students do not have the

same background in evaluation forms or in the context that surrounds and affects the examination forms and goals. As Bourdieu argues, '*examinations (may) express, inculcate and consecrate the values linked to certain organisation of educational system*' (1990:143), and more specifically to the dominant culture in the determined context. For example in Spain during my undergrad, I was not able to write 'I' in any examinations, and it was a very risky option to take a critical stand in relation to any content of the syllabus. Here at CBS, students are encouraged to give their opinion and constructive critics on the content of the classes. For both cases, there is a political agenda behind that goes across all the hierarchical structure of HEIs.

Despite the hierarchical dependence of Universities, in relation to many other governmental institutions, Universities enjoy a particular relative autonomy, which may make the University more dependent on its own past and tradition as Durkheim remarked (in Bourdieu, 1990:145). Of course in the case of CBS the past is quite short, if we compare it to the Sorbonne or the University of Oxford.

When students arrive at CBS, they find a different institutional frame, where things are done in different ways than they have been used to. Examinations are an important part of the assessment in Universities, mostly in the frame of neo-liberal universities, it is difficult not to have a system of examinations that is based in objective principles that gives the same opportunities to all students in a class. Examinations are a form of limitation, of preventing those who are not prepared from evolving in the academic ladder. Still, the social and contextual situations of individuals are not equal, and as it can be seen in the analysis, the students face a lot of uncertainty when it comes to understand the assessing process behind the exams.

## **Identity**

### **Group work as a form of interaction and belonging**

Group work seems to be a legitimising form for participation in the learning institution. As learning is a social activity, the fact of having someone different around the student that is in the same circumstances as her/him, helps feeling engaged to the institution. Still, there are many ways of working in group at CBS and all around the world, and some obviously don't work as well as others. When st20<sup>15</sup> talked about his previous experience with group work, he talked about a definitive vision, as if group work is more flexible in his experience at CBS and therefore, better. This probably reflects his personal competences and experiences. Group work allows participation and engagement of the students to the community. It bounds students since it allows a shared ownership of knowledge. In this sense, learning through practice, which is what normally is done by group work, is the most adequate way to learn, interacting and putting the knowledge into practice.

Furthermore, learning in group work brings the opportunity to work in cross-cultural groups, facilitating the interaction between internationals and national students. Cross-cultural groups facilitate the integration of the international dimension in the learning practices of students. As it was mentioned in the analysis, the international dimension is difficult to be thought, since it is quite ambiguous. The interaction in groups allows an engagement of the students with the 'others' and represents a context for intercultural understanding and sense making.

### **Gender and Learning**

I did not ask directly about gender in the focus or interviews, and it was only st18<sup>16</sup> that mention the gender issue in the institution of CBS. She mention that as a female, she had no interest to participate in class discussions when they were talking about industries in the sectors of It, communications,

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<sup>15</sup> See page 53.

<sup>16</sup> See page 59.

software and energy, like Apple, Nokia, Motorola, Shell, Microsoft or Google. She argues that as a female, she has no background knowledge or interest in such companies or sectors. St18 is implying that our gender determines what we are interested in. This is quite an account of Freudian biological reductionism (in Lawler, 2008), which states that men and women are born in the world with no *gendered* identity, but the social structure and habits available in society make that we absorb the roles attributed for women and for men during our early socialisation and keep representing these roles throughout our lives. Many women would not agree that these companies are especially male oriented, but s18 perceive these companies with male interest, and not female interest. For me, it is an interesting distinction, because I would never relate Nokia or Google with male enterprises, but st18 gives an insight that the private sector is gendered, and that individuals may take choices of what to learn or where to work in determinacy of their gender. Therefore the labour market is segregated by gender, a segregation that is articulated by discourses in the society that perpetuate the relations of power that exist between genders. In this sense, we are far from letting behind the male-authority characterised of the early modernity.

### **Internationalisation of education**

*Prevailing 'systems imperatives' are not necessarily about human beings, society or indeed, the future. They are... power, control, economy, and efficiency' (Slaughter, 2000)*

There is a misfit between what the discourse of internationalisation is, what is done in practice, and finally, what the students understand by the term international. As it has been showed in the analysis part, internationalisation has a vague content both regarding the strategy and what students understand about it.

Internationalisation is a process that is supposed to educate the 'planetary citizens' of the globalised world. As the Haigh (2008) writes, referring to what OECD (2004) states:

*'Internationalised curricula aim to prepare learners to cope in a world that is multicultural, environmentally vulnerable and interdependent'.*

Internationalisation, as it is stated in its name, has to keep the sovereignty of the nations, who will be autonomous in defining programmes, learning strategies and contents to their national and international students. In the description of internationalised curricula by OECD, there is an emphasis in developing global citizens, citizens who learn international content in their studies and learn how to be sustainable in the global world.

For CBS a big deal of the content of international refers to international reputation of the institution as a measure of excellence, which enables the institution to attract more students, researchers and teachers. For many people, internationalisation of education is a way of assuring quality standards and an improvement of quality mechanisms. Also, international refers to the 'international people', the global citizens that live and work across national borders, namely the actors of the international dimension. My reading of the content of internationalisation in the educational field links the concept of international to competitiveness and *performativity*. Nowadays, HEIs have to be international to get a better position in competing for resources. Being international is being competitive in the global market and for HEIs keeping performance high together with the production of graduates backing up their competitiveness. Internationalisation means discursively global citizenship, intercultural capacitating, awareness and productivity and competitiveness in the globalised world.

Regarding the practice of internationalisation, there is no single edged tendency. On one hand, the exportation of western education can be seen as neo-colonial, but also as a foreign direct investment (FDI), since the western universities are exporting their knowledge and developing professionals that will have a better chance to be competitive in the global world (OECD, 2006). On the other hand, the high focus on getting economic revenues from the developing countries is sometimes mining the quality of the education that is exported (Blass, 2009).

Students see internationalisation as a change to get to know another culture and be together with people from all over the world. It constitutes an experience of diversity, of challenging and rethinking their basic assumptions, thinking out of the box, and finding similarities with people from other cultures and nations. For one side, it is a personal growth, and for the other, it is an investment for their future careers. As I stated in the analysis, students see being international as an asset to their professional identity, something that is going to get them in a better position because they are used to deal with cultural differences.

While the discourse of internationalisation and the individuals understanding of it is dominated by a cultural dimension, the practice is quite dominated by an economic dimension. Judging what the students say, some programmes at CBS have a real international component, and so the international dimension that Knight talks about is integrated into the curriculum. It was really positive to see how students were positive about being international, and how the fact of being part of an international programme was increasing their satisfaction in their learning environment. Some authors have been arguing that student satisfaction is positively related with student performance. That may be true for many of the participants in the research.

In sum, it looks like we are talking about different things at different levels. We have an international discourse, which is something that is integrated in the curriculum as a dimension of knowledge, it has cultural elements and it tends to global citizenship. On the other side, there is the internationalisation discourse, which has more to do with globalisation of the market and liberalisation of education. Internationalisation in this sense means exactly the same as globalisation of education. The governments and international institutions create the discourse of internationalisation, while the international discourse is created within academia and HEIs and students expand it. Keeping that division in mind, internationalisation does not look that contradicting, and it can and must be encompassed to maintain the autonomy of HEIs to be reflective towards the system and keep developing knowledge, not just delivering information.



## **International discourse vs. learning discourse**

Being an international student is perceived as something positive, an asset to one's life. All the students involved in an international programme agreed with this. But none of the students gave a clear, practical definition of what being international really means, and why it is so positive. They acknowledge that it is about being cultural sensitive, also that is an asset in the curriculum, but they did not elaborate in what that asset consisted of. They mention that they will be more attractive in the international market, since they can work with different cultures. But, what is learned within the international dimension is not clear. As d28<sup>17</sup> states, international is something difficult to be taught. It seems like international and internationalisation are very relative concepts, which can be interpreted and defined in different ways, but never completely. Therefore, international is also dependent on its context, but it is more ambiguous than other concepts.

I asked the students both to define international and learning<sup>18</sup>. When they defined learning all of them used different words, different approaches, but their definitions were much more concrete and in accordance to the literature review I had been carrying out. On the contrary, when I asked about international, the students used concepts more similar, making the definitions more alike, but still more abstract than the ones of learning. I believe that there is a relation with the power that a discourse have in society and the reproduction of it. While learning is a considerably solid discourse, which has been evolving quite slowly and consistently throughout early and late modernity, international is a concept that has been meaning many different things throughout history. International is an ambiguous concept, which has been defined and redefined in the last decades. Nowadays, for the students, international means having the opportunity to travel and to learn languages. Moreover, it means having a more exiting job, a higher salary and better conditions. Students do not say it like that, but it is implied in their stories. For the students, being international is a condition of modernity, something that is

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<sup>17</sup> See page 42.

<sup>18</sup> I included the codes for both international and learning in appendix 4 and 5.

going to make things a little better. The fact that the concept has had so many positive connotations throughout history seen together with the ambiguity of its meaning opens a space in the discourse where everything is possible. For my sample, international in the abstract level meant satisfaction and engagement in the concrete level of education. While learning was seen as something more external or mechanical, international was seen as something that constitutes identity.

### **VIII- Conclusion**

Through the roots of social constructivism and the late modernity I have taken the route of listening to the voice of the students as well as the institutional discourses that appear in their engagement in a Masters Degree programme at CBS. From this process of acquiring inside knowledge, I can draw some conclusions. The following statements need to be taken into consideration within the context of CBS and as an example of what the 34 students experience or wish to communicate as they were experiencing.

First of all, internationalisation has an effect on the opportunities for the students to study abroad and for their identities. International is an adjective and an identification variable that students take when engaging in programmes defined as international, and not in determinacy of their nationality. International has many positive connotations for the students; it gives many benefits, like an international identity and the opportunity to be in the vanguard of the business world. Being international, both in the personal and institutional level, is in fashion.

Students in the sample suffer an identity discontinuity when they move to Denmark, but they adapt quite fast to the new routines and practices. Since most of the students in my sample were Europeans, it would be interesting to analyse how a majority of other continents adapts to the reality in Denmark and at CBS. Students use different resources to develop a feeling of belonging, as group work, international communities, appearance, learn

Danish, etc. Students are mainly positive about internationalisation or the international dimension. One of their strategies to negotiate their identity in the internationalisation context is to attribute themselves with being international, which is perceived as a good asset.

Learning is contextual, and as such, affects the experiences of students, their identity construction, and their resources available to construct these identities. Learning in late modernity is reflexive; individuals like to see the consistency and apply the concepts and theories they learn into practice. International students are reflexive in what learning means, and they compare it to their previous experiences.

Group work facilitates learning in practice, a process that goes further from the content learning. The group is a source of identity, an instrument to make sense of the cultural reality and to understand diversity and make use of it. Group work is an integrative practice at CBS, it integrates students and is an opportunity to be reflexive with the reality of other cultures. The students in the sample agreed that learning in groups may take more time, but it has far more benefits than learning individually.

A shift in educational culture is taking shape at CBS with the change from teacher-centred to learner-centred curricula. This cultural change has to be maintained and nurtured, both in the academic and students side. Students still refer to teachers as having a big responsibility for their attitudes in the courses. Exams have to be redefined in the frame of internationalisation, with the aim to adapt to a diverse population, which understands performance in different ways. Unfortunately, exams were perceived as a source of inconsistency and ambiguity, and not as an adequate form to evaluate performance.

The education system has been mirroring societal features throughout history, and the present moment is not an exception. With an increasingly globalised world, the western societies are advocating for new ways to maintain their competitive advantage, and the relation between power and knowledge has brought the last one to play a determinant role in keeping the western

countries in an advantaged position. The internationalisation of higher education has a very important economic dimension, and national and international institutions protect it. When evaluating the internationalisation of education and considering its important economic dimension, it should not be overlooked that HEI have to keep maintaining and developing their principles of democracy, equality, and autonomy from the economic dimension. Internationalisation has to be both economical and cultural, and those are not exclusive characteristics. The curriculum must integrate the economic and the cultural dimension of internationalisation.

The distinction of international education and internationalisation of education is important when understanding what is going on in HEIs. In relation to the future evolvement of both concepts, it is suggested in this thesis that they grow more together, and that education policies and HEIs develop them both equally at least, so the economic dimension of internationalisation does not mean that the quality of education is diminished, and that the students engaging in higher education can really develop a global citizenship as a competence for the global labour market.

CBS is incorporating a real international dimension in some of the programmes; still, there is a long way to go for internationalising programmes that do not have a self-evident international dimension. The development of global citizenship is an important goal of the internationalisation process, and it has to be articulated in the strategy and the action lines of the programmes at CBS. Being internationally sensitive is an asset in the global market, so it is therefore that it has to be acknowledged in the strategy. As I presented in the analysis, the international dimension is a way of making graduates competitive in an increasingly globalised world.

The present study is just an attempt of making sense of the reality that international students encounter when they move to CBS, and how this is embedded in the international discourses of higher education. Further studies are needed continuing in this line, both extending the sample of the study and incorporating a longitudinal dimension of the students' perceptions.

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## **Appendix 1: Abstract**

Internationalisation has been a growing phenomenon in Higher Education in the last decades. Following statements of the OECD, this phenomenon will continue growing in the future. Internationalisation of Higher Education brings many benefits to the educational field, but still, it is important to research in how students are adapting to the changing context.

This thesis investigates the effects of internationalisation in students' identity and learning. Concretely, this study concentrates in the perceptions of international master students at CBS. Research has showed that students that go abroad see as a benefit the fact of being international (Chapman and Pyvis, 2006). However, international students suffer an identity discontinuity (Grimshaw and Sears, 2008) when they move to another country. They experience isolation at the beginning (Scanlon et al., 2007), and some have problems to adapt to the English language in the classes and to relate with others (Brown, 2008). The teaching and learning environment in the host HEI is very important for the completion of the education (Vermunt, 1997)

This thesis presents the results of an explorative, qualitative research. The research was constituted by a sample of 34 students at CBS, and it was done through focus group interviews and individual interviews.

The findings suggest that international students are very positive about being international; they attribute it to themselves as a part of their identity. Finding friends and colleagues poses a challenge at the beginning, but all the participants were very positive about group work as a way to learn and to get to know their colleagues.

Moreover, the students were very reflexive with their understanding of learning, and they acknowledge that they were constrained by many aspects of the teaching and learning environment when engaging in learning processes. Students preferred a deep approach to learn, but they were mainly strategic, using their resources and capacities to take the highest profit of their education, both in terms of learning and of grades.

As Knight (2004) states, internationalisation is about integrating an international and intercultural dimension in higher education, so students develop intercultural competences to respond to the increased globalisation of

the economic and cultural world. It is not clear though, how to integrate the international and diversity dimension in the concrete courses. In internationalised environments, it is more possible to encounter different cultural backgrounds, but this does not automatically mean the development of intercultural competences.

The author recommends that internationalisation integrates both an economic and a cultural dimension in the unfolding of the processes, so HEIs work together for developing planetary citizenship and a knowledge economy.

## Appendix 2: List of Participants

STUDENT	NATIONALITY	GENDER	AGE	STUDIES	YEAR	Q?	OTHER
St1	Hungary	f	24	LMS + CEMS	1	4	
St2	Spain	f	24	BADS	2	2	Exchange in DK
St3	Germany	f	25	ICM	1	4	Exchange in DK
St4	Germany	f	26	LMS	2	4	Exchange in DK
St5	Germany	f	27	ICM	2	2	Exchange in Argentina
St6	Russia	m	37	LMS	1	1	Married with a Dane
St7	Bulgaria	f	24	LMS	1	2	
St8	Norway	f	23	LMS	1	2	Exchange in Spain
St9	Singapore	f	24	LMS	1	2	
St10	Romania	f	23	LMS	1	4	
St11	Republican Dominic	f	24	BADS	1	4	Studied in US
St12	Romania	m	26	FSN (1)	1	2	studied in Canada
St13	Poland	f	28	BA	3	2	
St14	China	f	24	BA	3	4	
St15	Norway	m	25	FSM	2	2	
St16	Germany	f	26	LMS	1	4	Exchange in dk
St17	Germany	f	23	SOL[2] (+CEMS)	1	1	Studied in Netherlands
St18	Bulgaria	f	24	IMM[3]	1	2	Studied in US
St19	Bulgaria	f	32	LMS	1	1	BA in France
St20	Poland	m	33	ASP[4]	1	4	
St21	China	f	30		1	4	Studied in US, married with a Dane
St22	Norway	f	23	LMS	1	2	exchange in Spain
St23	Lithuania	f	23	Preparatory courses	1	1	
St24	Lithuania	f	23	Preparatory courses	1	1	
St25	USA	f	31	MBA	Exchange	2	
St26	Germany	f	24	ASP	1	2	
D27	Dk	f	24	ICM	2		Exchange in Spain and Germany
D28	Dk	m	24	ICM	2		Exchange in Germany
D29	Dk	f	28	CMSoc	2		
D30	Dk	m	25	CMPsych	1		Exchange in India
D31	Dk	f	25	BADS	2		Exchange in Germany
D32	Dk	m	24	CMJura	1		
I33	USA	m	31	MBA	Exchange	2	
I34	Mexico	f	24	IMM	1		Exchange in DK

[1] Finance and Strategic Management  
[2] Strategy, Organization and Leadership  
[3] International Marketing and Management  
[4] Asian Studies Programme

Table 3: List of Participants

### Appendix 3: Sample of webblog

13. **nygaardc Says:**  
November 26, 2008 at 11:53 am e

student9: could an interesting teacher make you "like" every subject?

14. **student11 Says:**  
November 26, 2008 at 11:53 am e

The subject, as student 3 said, sometimes can be obligatory courses that I don't find it interesting nor that will enhance my knowledge but in order to get my degree I need to pass the exam so then I have a "pass exam" attitude whereas if it is something that is calling my attention I would definitely consider it as a gain experience

15. **student5 Says:**  
November 26, 2008 at 11:53 am e

I think unfortunately it is often the \*exam passing\* that has the bigger focus. But I think this is something I experience less at CBS than at my home university where I often learned theories by hard work without really understanding them just to pass the exam. That worked actually pretty well for the exams but not for the gaining of deeper knowledge that sticks.

16. **student9 Says:**  
November 26, 2008 at 11:53 am e

Of course everyone studies wanting to pass, but is there another reason for studying apart from just exams? Also I guess if I find the subject relevant to life or the future, or something that interests me, I would be more likely to want to take something away from the course.

17. **student4 Says:**  
November 26, 2008 at 11:53 am e

Learning for life doesn't cost me much time whereas learning for an exam is hard work I would say

18. **student 2 Says:**

Figure 2: Sample from the webblog. Focus Group 1, Question 3.



## Appendix 4: Foreign Full Time Degree Students

### Foreign Full Time Degree Students

October 1st

	2006	2007	2008
<b>Undergraduate Programmes</b>			
Africa and the Middle East	44	37	40
Asia and Australia	31	34	37
Europe	194	217	190
Latin America	11	15	16
North America	9	12	13
Scandinavia	298	358	393
Other		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>689</b>
<b>Graduate Programmes</b>			
Africa and the Middle East	54	42	39
Asia and Australia	53	43	48
Europe	288	373	468
Latin America	27	32	24
North America	26	23	18
Scandinavia	295	343	392
Other	6	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>989</b>
<b>CBS Total</b>	<b>1.336</b>	<b>1.534</b>	<b>1.678</b>

Table 4: Foreign Full Time Degree Students at CBS.

Source: [www.cbs.dk](http://www.cbs.dk)

## Appendix 5: Code for International

Name	Comment, definition:
St2	<p><i>CBS enhance my openness towards other people since it is a very international school.</i></p> <p><i>As an international student I also appreciate the “independent/open” way of teaching at CBS</i></p>
St3	<p><i>It is mainly defined by a lot of different nationalities present at school, by the opportunity of communicating in multiple languages but also by not solely focussing on the Danish context.</i></p> <p><i>Coming here as an international fulltime student is quite challenging. You don’t belong to the 24/7 exchange student party scene and at the same time it is difficult to become friends with Danes as most of them already have their stable set of friends and assume you are going to leave again after 2 years anyways.</i></p>
St4	<p><i>I changed a lot regarding being open-minded. I experienced a lot of situations in which my nationality caused some weird questions. First they have offended me but after a while I learned to help people understand the history in a more detailed way.</i></p>
St5	<p><i>It also gives you the possibility to open your horizon on a more personal level, because you have such an international experience.</i></p> <p><i>I would say it is an international experience because of all the diverse contacts you have at CBS. Many students come from foreign countries and speak different languages. They work in different ways. The teachers come from various countries and have therefore very different backgrounds and experiences. It is also an international experience because it is a different way of teaching than I am used to.</i></p>
St7	<p><i>It makes me more open and more curious.</i></p> <p><i>It makes me more open to people and more curious of further reading.</i></p>
St8	<p><i>I really like the international environment at CBS, I’ve studied abroad before, but here it’s different. The fact of being 4 different nationalities in a study group of seven people in total, really appeals to me!</i></p> <p><i>I wouldn’t say that getting Danish friends is any problem. I think that in at least my program everyone is so internationally oriented that it really doesn’t matter what background you have or how long you’re staying...But that’s my own experience of course, and it could be that this is not the case in other programs...</i></p> <p><i>I completely agree with student10! It’s extremely interesting to see how culturally</i></p>

	<i>bounded some opinions are!</i>
St9	<p><i>I like that there are people from different nationalities in our programme, and everyone has an interesting background and story, so much so that when I ask where someone is from, the answer I expect becomes, "Do you want to hear the long or short version?"</i></p> <p><i>It makes me become more open-minded with regards to dealing with people, with so many different nationalities we have to accept that other people are different and I would even say to embrace their differences.</i></p>
St10	<p><i>It is helping me to develop my communication skills and gives me the great opportunity to study in an intercultural environment.</i></p> <p><i>I totally agree with student 5 about making you aware of yourself. Before I used to sit quietly somewhere in the back of the classroom but at CBS I am interested in discussions and I like to elaborate my own opinions.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding the international experience I would say that this is one of the best things happening here in CBS. It is interesting to hear the opinions of other students having different cultural background because it is giving you a wider perspective on a subject.</i></p>
St11	<p><i>Also the CBS people... peers wise, you get to know people from all over the world with so many different backgrounds, administrative wise, the people from the office, can really make you feel lost</i></p> <p><i>Categorizing Danish "new friends" can be sometimes be really hard, because I had good and bad experiences.</i></p>
St12	<p><i>It is different in that it is more international, broader context and also where it is all right to challenge existing theories, not just accept something at face value. (content)</i></p> <p><i>It changed since CBS is an international university with many different students from various countries, so it is a more enriching experience than my previous studies. (environment)</i></p> <p><i>As I was talking to my friends, I told them about the competitiveness of the Danish education system, its flexibility, and most importantly, the opportunities that it offers to international students.</i></p>
St13	<p><i>Study groups with people of different cultural background - that is a challenge each time we have to cooperate. I learn to seek for compromises.</i></p> <p><i>Last but not least: international environment offered by CBS makes me more aware of cultural differences between people. I constantly learn how to deal with them. This kind of side effect, ability to deal with people, makes me even more experienced.</i></p>

St14	<p><i>I like this programme. Especially the international atmosphere. We had a lot of the projects working with people with different backgrounds. It is more than learning the knowledge. I also practiced a lot about how to communicate with people and share ideas. My idea to study abroad is to be more 'international'. Therefore studying at this programme provides the chance and helps me think about my future study and career.</i></p> <p><i>There are a lot of benefits 😊</i>  <i>More influent with the foreign language, better understanding different culture, skills in intercultural communication...</i>  <i>All these will reflect in my future career, such as working in a multinational company.</i></p> <p><i>(About the international atmosphere)</i></p> <p><i>As an international full time student, I had spent three years here and will spend two more still at CBS. The more time I had, the more I can know about the country, the language and make friends. As my experience, when one try to apply for student jobs, companies are more willing to hire those will stay longer in the country.</i></p> <p><i>I agree that CBS is an international university. There are a lot of students coming from various countries. It is totally a different experience comparing my study before. The programme I am studying at is very applied. Theory is just one part. Knowing how to reply the concepts is equally important. Subjects, way of teaching and the form of evaluation influenced me how to learn.</i></p>
St15	<p><i>Studying at CBS makes me more reflected in an international perspective. As a big business school I feel there is more room to develop, as you want to develop, there are a lot more possibilities. At the same time when there are so many students you have to work more to stand out.</i></p> <p><i>International perspective is people and content.</i></p> <p><i>CBS is very international compare to other schools in Scandinavia and this is a major advantage. When there are a lot of international students there are more courses in English and different thoughts during classes. This makes CBS have a more international perspective on content as well.</i></p> <p><i>I have never been to a business school where the people can be so different as at CBS. With a lot of different people it is more likely that you will meet people which is not just like you all the time and this will be a part of your development.</i></p>
St16	<p><i>What the international community at CBS means to me in respect to my thoughts of a career, I don't know if I fully understand that question. But the educational surrounding of people at CBS means to me that I should be aware of the</i></p>

	<p><i>competition and that encourages me even more to learn in an efficient manner.</i></p> <p><i>My plan is to stay abroad and seek for a job in an international company.</i></p>
St17	<p><i>For me studying at CBS offers me the opportunity to enhance my knowledge and get to know a different culture as well as people.</i></p> <p><i>I think that national culture always influences the way of teaching. Take for example the familiarity of teacher to give classes in English. Some are open for it while others would rather like to stick to their mother tongue.</i></p> <p><i>I agree the number of international students does increase the level of competition. The reason for this I see in the fact that they bring along different experience or approaches to studying + different cultural backgrounds. But even studying in a class with mostly Danish students, I can't say that the competition to standing out is lower. Thus it's maybe also the ambition of the students themselves, which is important.</i></p> <p><i>I agree that studying abroad is also about being 'international' but for me it is also interesting to get to know the local (here Danish) culture and language. I think that by just sticking to the international community one misses out a lot what one can learn from the local culture.</i></p>
St19	<p><i>...in the beginning I was in panic about the schedules and buildings so that I felt so small and lost, but that was in addition to the shock to come and understand where I am and what is this country,</i></p> <p><i>So personally I had to reconstruct understanding about the rules, the way of doing in school...</i></p> <p><i>Now I am fine, two years later, after having been on exchange and switched to regular student, I feel like I know what's going on in class but still I learned that the exam process is a very random one and even if there are some rules it is a complete surprise each time how I will perform, a Russian roulette heeh</i></p>
St21	<p><i>To be honest, I never have been in a group work in CBS, which I actually miss that part a lot compared to my BA study in HHC. Most of the students have to work after class, not like in other countries; student's full time is only for study.</i></p> <p><i>Work during study is a good thing, only if the work is relative to the study; however, it's only easier for a Dane to find that relative work.</i></p>
St22	<p><i>I have also met a lot of people that I find quite similar to myself, which in a way verifies my own identity. I feel I am at the right place at the right time, with the right people and that gives me confidence.</i></p>
St24	<p><i>First, studying at CBS makes you much more broad-minded. I became interested in what is happening in the world today, much more than I was before. Being among intelligent people who seek for a lot makes you to increase your standards of intelligence and wish to gain even more knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>Also, studying in international environment makes you better in understanding people because of different cultures. You get used to different things and perceive them as a consequence of different cultures, while before that might had been a misunderstanding and mis-tolerating people. So attitude changes.</i></p>
St25	<p><i>I am not sure how it affects me personally. I think I have gained new international perspective on how another school studies business.</i></p>
D27	<p><i>My study programme is international which mean that I have become used to working together with people from other cultures. I might be more prepared for</i></p>

	<i>working in an international company because I know some of the advantages that it has to bring with people from other cultures and some of the problems that can arise.</i>
D28	<p><i>I see this as having an international outlook, not seeing the world from a Danish perspective but instead acknowledging the differences in countries. Usually difficult to 'be taught' but with international professors and students it comes naturally.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, I can identify to main reasons, 1) the professors are especially important - but also the fellow students. 2) The learning material, literature and cases should have an international focus.</i></p>
D31	<p><i>I've developed international awareness, become more reflecting about other backgrounds.</i></p> <p><i>Awareness about other cultures, people from other places within Denmark but also foreign students. At CBS you interact with people on a daily basis that do not have the same background as your self, this is unique I think</i></p> <p><i>Cultural awareness is something we have been studying at my program. But I think it also comes naturally at CBS due to the possibilities to be a buddy or to go on exchange.</i></p>

*Table 5. Code for international.*

## Appendix 6: Code for Learning

Name	Comment, definition:
St2	I would say that learning is a process where you acquire knowledge from different sources and make use of it.
St4	Learning to me is an interactive exchange of knowledge, experience and having the will to learn.
St5	For me learning takes place when I broaden my knowledge about a topic, heard different opinions, can relate it to what I knew before.
St7	Learning: an interactive process: exchange of ideas and knowledge under the guidance of a teaching person. An example would be a random lecture from this term.
St8	A dynamic process between several parts where one exchange some sort of information in order to solve a problem or reflect on a certain topic.
St9	I think learning is about coming away with a thought or idea that you have never thought about before in that way.
St10	Learning as an exchange game: teacher puts down knowledge, and the student puts down the effort to understand and give feedback.
St11	A double way process, where there's the provider of the information and there's the receiver.
St12	Learning could be defined loosely as new concepts, theories, ideas, etc. that have not been either studied at all before, or maybe just touched upon
St13	Learning at CBS means studying (by myself, not taking the knowledge directly).

St14	Learning is to gain the ability to learn new things.
St15	Is when you participate and have discussions and not only sitting in a lecture listening to what the professor. says. At the time the professor has to transfer theory into real life scenarios.
St16	Is when I start to think about a subject within my own perspectives and try to work around in my mind.
St17	Is about extending and adding to the knowledge, which I already have. Also challenging my ideas and triggering me to take a position.
St18	I define learning as obtaining knowledge, either tacit or explicit, that I can apply to practice. So that is why I need both the what and the how, theory and practice, to go together.
St19	Learning for me is understand something more about the what's going on around in the business, social universe and in the same time understand something more about who u are. The both processes are interlinked, otherwise it is not learning but just acknowledging and forgetting.  Learning is a long term process, as long as your life and so that the academic learning experience is an aspect of it, not an end.
St20	I define learning by a change, either in my knowledge, skills or the way I act in my life.
St22	Learning is an ongoing process where different parts exchange different information
St25	Learning is to absorb a subject and use the new information to then do something for the first time or to do it better.
D27	Learning is about setting new knowledge and skills in a way that you



	are able to use it in a future situation.
D28	I see learning as knowledge, turning lots of information into useful knowledge.
D29	Learning is a very individual thing. It is when you add something new or more to my personal skills, is when I commit myself.
D31	Learning is an explorative process, with no clear beginning or end. Often associated with trial and error.
D32?	I think learning is a multiple combination of information streaming.
I33	Being able to apply an experience.
I34	

*Table 6. Code for Learning*