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The Recruitment Agent in Internationalized Higher Education: Commercial Broker and Cultural Mediator / Anna Robinson-Pant and Anna Magyar

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Abstract

The internationalization and marketization of higher education has resulted in U.K. universities' increasing reliance on recruitment agents to boost international student numbers. This places agents and agencies in a position of considerable influence with regard to the educational choices that students make. These institutional and individual relationships have been investigated from a marketing perspective, contributing knowledge about the influence of recruitment agents on student decision making. However, this approach has limitations with regard to understanding the impact of agents on an international student's subsequent experience in U.K. higher education. The article suggests that theoretical work on mobility, migration, and ethnographies of communication, including the geopolitics of text production, can provide useful lenses for analyzing how agents help international students navigate the journey into and through U.K. higher education. The notion of

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“cultural mediator” is introduced to analyze the role played by agents alongside that of commercial broker. We argue that future research, shaped by these alternative theoretical perspectives, may help to bridge the apparent gap in understanding between those working in international offices and those involved in teaching in an internationalized university.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)