Article

International Education in Asia: The Changing Market

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Abstract

Given the rapid rise in recent years of British international education for local, rather than expatriate, students in Asia, this paper considers this fast-growing sector in the context of the history of British-style and English language education in Asia. Specifically using a post-colonialist framework as a means of critique of the notion of a British-style 'international education', it considers the challenges this new wave of international schools faces in terms of ensuring their curriculum and values are embedded in a local context. Using Asia alongside the West, as a reference point for curriculum planning and intercultural understanding, this paper then considers ways in which this new wave of schools can engage meaningfully with local as well as western contexts, reframing notions of 'global citizenship' in the process.

Keywords

International Schools, Curriculum, Community, Post-Colonialism, Third Space

Introduction

Rising living standards in China and South-East Asia have led to an unprecedented demand for high quality education, leading to rapid growth of the international school sector in the region (Bunnell, 2019; Kim and Mobrand, 2019). Equally, some Asian governments have seen such schools as ways to promote and develop the national education market, allowing local students to attend these schools, and in turn providing financial support or tax incentives to open international schools (Machin, 2017). Asia has been the biggest global market for international education for some time, 60% of students in international schools in 2016 being in Asia, a figure which has continued to grow alongside the economies in the region (Bunnell, 2019; ISC 2021). In turn, there has been a pronounced shift worldwide in the past few years from teaching expatriate to teaching local students, with 80% of students in international schools globally now from the host country, the international school sector increasingly representing the private school sector in Asia for the fast-growing middle class (Bunnell et al, 2020; Hayden, 2022; Kim and Mobrand, 2019; Mok, 2005; Rush, 2014).

One key difference in the current wave of international schools is the growth of a British model of education, as seen in the entry of the British private school sector to the international market.

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The current wave of new schools in Asia has included British private schools opening a significant number of campuses. British schools with multiple branches include Dulwich, Harrow and Wellington College. The British curriculum model is in fact now the most popular at international schools globally, with 40% of schools offering variants of the British national curriculum (possibly including at different age ranges other programmes such as those of the International Baccalaureate), increasing almost ten-fold between 2006 and 2020 (Bunnell, 2019: Bunnell et al, 2020; Machin, 2017; Staton, 2023). These schools in Asia are predominantly based in Mainland China, and the nations compromising the English-speaking trading-bloc, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Bunnell et al, 2020). Such schools broadly claim they aim to produce 'global citizens', who are 'internationally-minded', and ready for the 'twenty-first century world of work', with accreditation from a range of organisations including the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), the Council of International Schools (CIS), Cambridge Assessment International Education (CIE) and authorisation by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) (see for example Dulwich International College, 2022; Harrow, 2022; Wellington China, 2022).

The popularity of British international schools among local national parents can be seen as reflective of their desire for their children to go to universities overseas and become members of the global middle class, given the perceived cultural capital and education such schools are believed to provide (Bunnell 2019; Fahey and Ganguly, 2021; Poole, 2020; Rush, 2014). Equally, a 'British style' of schooling is particularly valued, these schools emphasising their 'Britishness' in their imagery and marketing (Bunnell et al, 2020). The rapid growth in the sector is also reflective of English being viewed as a language of power, representing as it does a 'hegemony of part western modernity' (Rush, 2014: 122), parents viewing an internationalised English language education as a route to entry of local and global elites (Bunnell, 2019; Kim and Mobrand, 2019). More broadly, Rush (2014) has discussed the growth of the international education sector in Thailand as 'colonisation by stealth', arguing that this new wave of schools propagates western and elitist narratives amongst local students through their curriculum and values.

Certainly, given the ambiguous space in which these international schools operate, post-colonial theory has a clear application to the field of international education, globalization being viewed as a continuance of many of the same dominant narratives as that of the colonial state, albeit with an emphasis on economic rather than political dominance (Amin-Khan, 2012; Hall, 1997; Stiglitz, 2002). As Dennis (2018: 199) argues, 'the pedagogic and the political are a continuity', colonialism being 'conceptualised as a Eurocentric process of expansion of a mode of knowing and representation, that claims universality for itself, derived from Europe's position as centre' (Escobar 2004, 217). This links to Spivak's notion of 'Imaginary Maps' dividing the world into the global North and global South, with a basis in economic rather than national boundaries, representing the spread of international capital, one implication being that these schools act as hubs of the values and aspirations of the global North, largely alienated within the local communities in which they are situated (Spivak, 1995). In this sense, in an educational context, the notion of an 'Imaginary Map' might become a metaphor for non-local curriculums brought into local contexts without sufficient consideration for local norms and values, the need for schools to carefully consider how they do this being one of the key focusses of this paper.

Post-colonial approaches to education 'are concerned with the effects and operations of colonialism, and how they are negotiated and challenged in decolonizing interventions in educational sites of curriculum and pedagogy' (Dennis, 2018 :16). From a post-colonial perspective the very notion of an 'international education' leads to questions about how far western narratives about 'international' that originated in western modernity, and organisations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations, are truly representative of the identities and diversities of the

colonial 'other' (Acharya and Plesch, 2020; Chen, 2010; Dunbabin, 1993; Petrucelli, 2020; Said, 2003). In this sense, the sector might be seen as propagating western narratives and identities within the regions in which it is active, implicating its stakeholders in the notion that 'the west is best' (Andreotti, 2011; Ayling, 2021: 1; Hall, 1992b; Rush, 2014; Waters, 2006). As will be argued in this paper, reflection around the implications of post-colonial theory must be a critical part of the educational model of this new wave of British international schools in the region, Chen arguing that 'globalization without deimperialization is simply a disguised reproduction of imperialist conquest' (Chen, 2010: 2).

More generally, the notion of what constitutes an international education remains contested, scholarship in the field having a relatively short history and remaining ill-defined, as seen in the overly broad ISC description of an international school as a school that offers an international curriculum taught in English (ISC, 2015). Earlier attempts to categorise international schools into 3 distinct types, depending on whether they are schools for expatriate students, have an ideological basis, or cater predominantly for local students (Hayden and Thompson, 2013) appear increasingly outdated in the context of a new wave of for-profit British schools in Asia aimed at the local market (Hayden, 2006; Machin, 2017). Certainly, the shift in the population of international schools from teaching globally-mobile expatriate students to teaching local students has led to increasing questions about what type of curriculum might be appropriate for these schools. In this sense, Hayden (2022: 228) has recently noted that 'to draw a distinction between the concepts of international education and national education will become increasingly less meaningful', one major question being how far the notion of international education is a useful one given the huge differences between a market which once existed largely to educate expatriate students, and one which now increasingly takes the place of the private education sector in Asia (Bunnell, 2019; Rush, 2014). Equally, as I will argue in this paper, this notion of 'international' remains nebulous, and if schools are to use the term, they need to consider how to make it meaningful in their context.

One particular difference in the current wave of international schools is the emphasis explicit in many on a British model of education, as seen in the entry of the British private school sector to the international market. Bunnell (2008) has defined such institutions as 'satellite colleges', noting 'the continued appeal of an exclusive, 'British-style' education based upon the notion of 'Englishness' appealing to the emergent middle-class', and the symbolic power they represent through their exclusivity and association with the British elite (Bunnell et al, 2020: 707). This remains a fast-growing sector as seen in the opening of new schools of this type in 2022-3 across Japan, India and Vietnam (see for example Wellington, 2022b; Rugby 2022; NLCS, 2022). The ideological basis for these schools has also been questioned, Gross (2023: 1) arguing that such schools have shifted 'from an ideological base to one of capitalism'. Meanwhile Bunnell (2021) has noted a 'react now and discuss later' approach to the most recent wave of international schools, the implication being that such schools having opened in rapid succession, thought now needs to go into their curriculum frameworks and links to the local community.

This wave of British 'satellite colleges' will be the key focus of this paper, in which I will argue that the new wave of British international schools need to be seen not only in the context of the pre-existing literature of what constitutes as international school, but also in the context of colonial education systems and western modernity, viewing this as a critical moment in the evolution of the demand for a British-style education by local students. In terms of methodology this paper will take a theoretically-based approach to these debates, outlining the debate through the literature, and proposing potential solutions. Historicizing the sector in western modernity and colonialism is an original approach to understanding the modern-day British international schools sector. Although there have been some attempts to use post-colonialism as a framework to examine international schools more generally (see for example Tanu, 2017; Rush, 2014; Kim and Mobrand,

2019), this remains an under-theorised area, and there has been very little consideration of the implications for the fast-changing market in Asia. Equally, although the notion of decolonising the curriculum has become a critical issue for educationalists in recent years (see for example Hughes, 2020; Dennis, 2018), there has been little focus explicitly on the international sector. This new wave of British schools also remains under-researched, despite some notable contributions in particular by Tristan Bunnell (see for example Bunnell, 2008; Bunnell et al, 2020).

I will take a broad approach to the notion of 'curriculum' in this paper, considering not only the formal academic curriculum, but also the broader pastoral and 'hidden' curriculum, with an emphasis on the ethos of these schools, and the role they have in fostering the identity of students within their communities. Equally, rather than focussing on specific countries, I will examine broad trends across these schools in the Asia region, with a focus on the school communities, and how they can ensure student identity is an explicit focus of the work they do throughout the curriculum.

As will be discussed, the rapid growth in this market, and links back to earlier forms of British-style education in Asia, mean that these schools warrant further interrogation, as a further development in the ever-evolving field of international education. This paper will begin by interrogating narratives about post-colonialism, explicitly in the context of conversations around the role of education in the colonial state, and the more recent development of the international education sector. It will then discuss implications of this history for the contemporary British international education sector in Asia, in essence examining the current state of play within this fast-emerging sector. Finally, using a positive lens of enquiry (Bunnell, 2014) it will examine the notion of decolonising the curriculum, and what this might tell us about future directions for this sector.

Post-Colonialism and the History of British-Style Education in Asia

Post-colonialist thought is preoccupied with modernity as the product of the interaction of Europe with the peoples that the European powers were conquering and subjugating, and dealing with the legacies of colonialism in the present day (Vera and Fuchs, 2011). Education is very much part of this, given the role that British schooling played in perpetuating the colonial state, Edward Said noting in *Orientalism*, 'the connection between a routine British classical education and the extension of the British Empire' (2003: 344). In the case of India, colonial education for local people, which aimed to produce an indigenous civil service, was 'totally dissociated from the child's everyday reality and milieu' rather representing 'the values and visions of colonial bureaucracy, the life of the local community finding no reflection in the school's curriculum or in its daily routine' (Kumar, 1991: 16). Missionary education also played a role throughout the British empire with an emphasis on both spreading the universal message of scripture, as well as educating children to read and write (May et al, 2014; Schwartz, 2019). Whilst the current wave of British international schools in Asia may be motivated primarily by profit rather than any colonial-era belief in the *mission civilatrice* (the colonial mission to educate colonised peoples), the notion of replicating a British-style education in a wholly foreign context with local students certainly might be seen to have colonial overtones, particularly when involving the British public (in other words, private) education sector which once trained British school boys to serve in the colonies (Turner, 2015). As will be further discussed, this paper will take the position that the current wave of British schools need to be historicized not only in the context of the pre-existing literature around international education with its focus on more traditional international schools, but also in the context of the British Empire. Whilst the former evolved either to the needs of European and American expatriates living with their families abroad and needing to educate their children locally (for example

Seoul Foreign School or Yokohama International School), or in synergy with the creation of global organisations such as the League of Nations (for example the International School of Geneva), the British imperial education system was focussed on bringing British-style English language education to local students, this bringing important historical context to this new wave of schools (Dittrich, 2016; Hayden, 2006).

Further to this, Homi Bhabha has described 'mimicry' as an essential feature of any colonial system, this concept relating to 'a complete assimilation of the indigenous population to the culture of their colonial masters in dress, behaviour, language and ways of thinking', albeit with an emphasis on only ever being able to imperfectly replicate the derivative imperial culture (Fischer-Tine, 2004: 230; Rush, 2014). Equally, Fanon (2008) has argued that colonial education systems merely allowed the colonised to imitate, rather than critically understand and interrogate the colonial structures in which they found themselves, their education merely allowing them to perpetuate the colonial state (albeit from the margins). The notion of 'mimicry' is of importance here as Asian parents seek to replicate a British educational experience for their children, one implication being that this will affect the ways students will perceive the world around them as they grow up, potentially inheriting the British world-view of their educators. Certainly, ways in which these schools foster a sense of student identity is a critical area of curriculum planning, and one which needs explicit consideration as will be discussed in this paper.

Foreign language education is also seen as a critical element of colonial education structures. As Fanon argued, 'mastery of language affords remarkable power', making 'the Negro of the Antilles proportionally whiter . . . in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language' (2008: 8). Indeed, Fanon argues that to speak in a language is to 'assume a culture . . . to support the weight of a civilisation' (2008: 8). Hence, British colonial education was predominantly through the medium of English. In colonial India, English language education was used by the authorities to train future Indian bureaucrats who would understand British administrative systems, and similarly in British settler colonies such as New Zealand, schools were set up which in some cases would educate European and local students together, albeit with the aim of creating a society in which local people would be incorporated into white society as inferiors (Mann, 2004; Swartz, 2019). Conversely, the colonial authorities were concerned about education through the medium of indigenous languages, as seen in a clampdown on Chinese language education in Hong Kong in 1913, due to concerns that Chinese language schools were promoting the idea of the territory as Chinese, or the promotion of English language education in Singapore over that in Tamil or Malay (Kim and Mobrand, 2019; Pomfret, 2015). Again, this plays both into debates around curriculum planning, not least in terms of how much time might be devoted to mother-tongue rather than English instruction, and also around the role that the local as well as English language plays in fostering student identity.

Within colonial education systems, character education was also seen as an explicit aim of schooling. High schools and colleges 'run on western lines' were supposed to serve as 'character factories' to transform a small native elite into useful subjects by inculcating in them the necessary 'grit' as well as the moral values prevalent in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Britain (Fischer-Tine, 2004). The idea of 'public spirit', selflessly fulfilling one's duty in the service of a larger community, was seen as a key element of this, alongside an emphasis on discipline and obedience (Fischer-Tine, 2004). This in turn was linked to perceptions of the inherent superiority of the colonizers, education making local students in the colonial education system equal by making them more civilised, this in turn legitimising British rule (Mann, 2004). The need to self-improve was also a wider aim of the political elite at home during this period, British schools aiming to prepare British students for leadership whether domestically or in the colonies, nine of the twenty-two viceroys of India being educated at Eton alone (Turner, 2015). Character education remains a feature of the current wave of British schools in Asia, Dulwich College, Harrow International and

Malvern College International all emphasising a values-based education for their schools in Asia, and advertising material from one Bangkok-based British satellite college in 2007 suggesting the quality of its programmes showed a sense of purpose that was perhaps an 'echo of the [British] Empire' (Persaud, 2007 in Rush, 2014: 125; see for example the websites of Dulwich, 2022; Malvern College, 2022; Harrow, 2022).

In turn, colonial education is linked to the evolution of British-style education for indigenous students in Asia. Certainly, the global links which came with colonialism were a catalyst for the first wave of demand for a British-style education in Asia, in the hope of entering the local middle class. This is seen in the demand for English language education in Singapore and Hong Kong (Pomfret, 2015). Raffles aimed to make Singapore a hub for education for local students, subsidising English-medium schools for local students from the 1870s, when out of some 3,700 boys attending English-medium schools, 2,000 were members of the Singaporean Chinese community (Pomfret, 2015). Similarly, in Hong Kong in the 1880s, it was estimated that almost half of all children between ages six and sixteen in the colony were in full-time English-medium education, Victoria College opening with an intake of 960 pupils in 1889, with three other English-medium schools following shortly afterwards (Pomfret, 2015). Alongside the popularity of these schools in Hong Kong, there was some concern that they might affect the identities of local students, one neo-Confucianist being concerned that such schools lacked the moral training necessary to develop students with the values required to understand Chinese civilisation, developing local identity and values arguably remaining a concern for British international schools in the present day (Pomfret, 2015). This emphasis on identity remains an important consideration for the contemporary international school sector, in terms of considering how students can be firmly rooted in their local contexts, whilst simultaneously developing a global outlook.

More broadly, the colonial education system was designed to maintain the colonial political system, as well as (and of more importance to this study) to give students a British perspective on the world around them, Tharoor arguing in his work on the influence of the British on India: 'One of the consequences of a colonial education was . . . the colonization of the minds of Indians by the languages, models and intellectual systems brought into our lives by the West, colonial peoples judging their societies by western intellectual and aesthetic standards' (2016: 199). Indeed, as is the case with the current wave of schools in Asia, British education was seen to confer 'cultural capital' on those who experienced it, defined by Bourdieu as 'the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body', encompassing language, accents and taste for 'clothes, drinks, sports, friends' and the way people carry themselves (1986: 243). In turn it facilitated entry to the colonial civil service system in British colonies, as well as to western business and society, cultural capital often being seen as synonymous with western cultural capital, particularly when combined with an international education (Mann, 2014; Tanu, 2017).

This notion of cultural capital and ways in which narratives around westernisation affect student identity remains a major question for the contemporary British international school sector. These new educational institutions have a critical role in promoting local as well as global identities, doing more than merely maintaining the current western-centric global order through their curriculum, or for that matter promoting British values or norms at the expense of local ones. Equally, the ongoing ambiguity around what constitutes an international education (particularly in a British context) is indicative of the continuity and legacy from this much earlier period, the different ways in which such an education has manifested itself in varied places and moments in history, as well as the ongoing need to understand and redefine what international education means in terms of the constantly evolving market. Next this paper will examine the implications of post-colonialism and the history of British education in Asia for the contemporary British international school sector.

British International Education in the Post-Colonial Context

Given the post-colonial context in which these schools operate, and for that matter the inheritance of earlier models of British education in Asia, explicit consideration needs to be given to the complex space these schools are coming to occupy. Whilst international and western-style education that originated around the turn of the 20th century privileged European and American ways of thinking, present-day Asian modernity is centred around Asian economies and ways of thinking, and international schools need to be cognizant of this as they consider their educational frameworks (Chang, 2010; Schmidt, 2009: Wang, 2018). Notions of internationalism in British schools are inevitably intertwined with notions of Britishness, this being seen as strongly desired by parents 'by virtue of its association with prestigious and traditional forms of education, access to elite social networks, the value of British educational credentials in the global marketplace, and the opportunity to become fluent in a dominant world language' in turn also 'deemed more desirable than 'international' alternatives' (Brooks and Waters, 2015: 226). Again, the notion of an 'imaginary map' is indicative of this shifting context and the need to constantly re-evaluate the needs and values of the schools and students, rather than merely depending on those which may have been appropriate in other contexts or time periods.

Indeed, as Tanu has argued in her ethnographic study of an international school in Indonesia, 'becoming "international" is not a straightforward, neutral process, or an antidote to social exclusivism. Being "international" is a complex endeavour that is embedded within national and transnational hierarchies' (2014: 595). Further to this, Tanu has suggested that the notion of global citizenship or cosmopolitanism these schools espouse 'has historical continuity with the colonial discourse of being at home everywhere in the Empire' (2017: 28). More broadly, the notion of global citizenship, associated as it is with western humanism and values, may be seen as representing western ideas about universalism rather than having a basis in Asian civilisation, implicitly suggesting a belief in the superiority of European or British theoretical and cultural achievements (Andreotti, 2010; Walker, 2011). Conversely, although the West has been influential and has become a part of the cultural resources of Asia, like anywhere else in the world it is a product of history and cannot claim universality (Hall, 1992b).

Ways in which this is articulated, alongside the British ethos these schools espouse, is an important consideration. Certainly, given the accreditation offered by organisations such as the Council of International Schools (CIS) and Council of British International Schools (COBIS), there is a need to be global in orientation. Dulwich College stresses how its students will graduate 'worldwise', while Wellington College emphasises students will be developed to 'understand and appreciate [their] place as global citizens' (Dulwich College International, 2022; Wellington, 2022). In a post-Brexit era, the globalist agenda of the UK remains ambiguous, as encapsulated in the statement of Prime Minister Theresa May at the 2016 Conservative Party Conference, that 'if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere', certainly having questionable implications for notions of Britishness vis-à-vis global citizenship. This is further complicated by the emphasis these schools place on Britishness and tradition, websites of many of the schools referring back to the history and tradition of their UK-based parent schools, one implication being that the culture of these franchises should have a large amount of commonality with the UK-based partners, rather than necessarily being centred within their own local communities (see for example the websites of Wellington, 2022; Brighton College, 2022; Dulwich College, 2022; Harrow, 2022).

Indeed, alongside their British ethos, such schools also need to find ways to understand and translate complex local cultural norms into their own contexts if they are to do more than merely perpetuate colonial stereotypes, civil society operating on different norms in Asian societies to

those in the West (Chen, 2010). For example, one study of Chinese communities in China and Australia examines how the concepts of *Guan* (care, governance, teaching and discipline) and *Xiao* (filiality, obedience and respect) are of use to educators working with Chinese students as opposed to more westernised values (Zhang et al, 2015). Equally, in the Philippines the concept of *paki-kisama* (getting along with the group) is a key societal value, but appears inconsistent with the notion of independence promoted by many international schools, it therefore being a challenge for schools to ensure that these values can be reconciled with their own outward-looking British ethos (Dunne and Edwards, 2010).

Equally, curriculum planning is a complex task when working with local students. With English as a 'language of power', these schools risk marginalising the local identities of the students in their schools. Given their link back to UK independent schools, this new wave of 'satellite colleges' have adopted a British-style curriculum, based around the UK curriculum below Year 9, before moving onto iGCSEs and A Levels (or in some cases the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme). In adapting an explicitly foreign curriculum in a local context, they are at risk of marginalising the students' national and cultural identity, Freire talking about the notion of 'cultural invasion', as 'an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture, who lose their originality or face the threat of losing it' (Freire, 2000: 152). Hence, through the curriculum British educators might be seen as perpetuating colonial norms, the implicit belief being the need to bring foreign understandings of progress and modernity to local students, with an emphasis on the enlightenment values underpinning global citizenship. A westernised identity in an Asian cultural context is in this sense a mis-imagined map which potentially leaves local students alienated within their communities and localised cultural contexts, this being one possible consequence of an international education which is not sufficiently rooted in local values and norms. In this context, Andreotti has discussed the notion of the need for a 'decolonised global citizenship', which is reflective of an ongoing critical engagement with decolonial theory and local values (Andreotti, 2010).

Arguably then from a post-colonialist perspective, this new wave of British schools are complex spaces, where localised identities are at risk of being marginalised in favour of western narratives around 'international', with English language and British values potentially perceived as superior to local cultural norms. Given the populations of these schools are now predominantly local rather than expatriate students, consideration needs to be given to how the curriculum and wider ethos can be developed to support their national identities, as well as before broader understandings of the implications of these developments as they seek to become cosmopolitan global citizens. Equally, the starting point for schools should be local values, before considering how these may interact with 'international' or British values, with a framework for education driven by the synergy between local values and more westernised values. This will be examined in the final section of this paper, which will examine debates around decolonising the curriculum, and possible implications for these schools.

Decolonising the Curriculum

In terms of these debates, the notion of decolonising the curriculum is an important concept when considering how to critically engage with discourse around colonialism and identity. This has been an area of discussion and focus (not to mention controversy) in recent years in the British education system, as seen for example in debates around what constitutes authoritative knowledge or how to centre marginalised voices (see for example Ahkter, 2020; Dathan, 2022; SOAS, 2022; Woolcock, 2021). Arguably, however, it has even more relevance for these overseas branches of British schools, given the explicitly post-colonial space they have come to occupy. Viewed as attempts to

interrogate and transform the institutional, structural and epistemological legacies of colonialism, schools would benefit by interacting meaningfully with this notion as a means of engaging meaningfully with localised, not merely western-centric or British, contexts (SOAS, 2022; Dennis, 2018). In his study *Asia as a Method toward Deimperialization*, Chen has specifically focussed on the importance of using Asia, rather than the West, as a key reference point for knowledge production, emphasising that only 'by multiplying the objects of identification and constructing alternative frames of reference can we undo the politics of resentment, which are too often expressed in the limited form of identity politics' (2010: 2). Certainly, in this sense it is a priority for such schools to consider how Asian values might interact with their own British-based value driven frameworks.

More broadly, the notion of 'international' has been defined explicitly in the context of the hybrid, explicitly moving away from definitions of universalism or cultural essentialism. Hall has argued that globalisation has caused national identity to decline as new forms of hybrid identity encompassing the national and international have taken its place (Hall, 1992a). Equally, Bhabha explicitly links an 'international' culture not with 'the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures' but with 'the inscription and articulation of cultural hybridity', suggesting the importance for a given school of understanding the complexities of what this looks like in their context (Bhabha, 1994: 35). Further to this, Bhabha has used the notion of the 'Third Space' to describe 'a liminal space which gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning', this representing a hybrid space between cultures, one implication being that this new wave of British schools has the potential to act as bridges between local and westernised ideas and values, developing new forms of identity and culture in the process (Rutherford, 1990: 211). Given the transnational nature of the educational exchange between Britain and Asian contexts, this might include a consideration of broader commonalities and differences, before reflecting on how these might be linked to a particular school context.

In turn, this hints at the difficulties presented by use of the term 'international' to discuss a particular school, curriculum or educational model, not least when in turn combined with the notion of 'Britishness' (Bunnell, 2022: Hayden, 2022; Kim and Mobrand, 2019). Indeed, this is reflective of the lengthy debates attempting to define international education, Bunnell's definition of it involving 'schools with a global outlook located outside of an English-speaking country delivering a non-national curriculum at least partly in English' is useful in that it incorporates sufficient ambiguity to include schools which are able to reflect both Asian and British contexts (Bunnell, 2019:1). From a school perspective it is critical that these new British international schools are able to define and articulate their curriculum and community in terms of how they meet the needs of their students and are reflective of their local as well as global context. This might start with considering local values and contexts and looking outward, rather than trying to fit in frameworks from directly outside the organisation. Equally, school culture viewed as the shared practices and understandings of a school community needs to be given space to grow and evolve, rather than being defined in a hierarchical manner by UK-based schools. This is indicative of the need to reflect on links between British and local contexts for British satellite colleges.

Further to this, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire has stressed the power of dialogue to overcome the issues around decolonisation, stressing the importance of dialogue both in terms of action and reflection, with an onus on 'unity, compassion, organization, and cultural synthesis' (2000: 125). Dialogue then is seen as a means of forging a new intellectual alliance, and a new community formed reflecting the needs and understandings of the multiplicity of stakeholders in schools and 'forged in the context of the new globalization' (Chen, 2010: 2). Certainly, this emphasis on dialogue needs to be seen in ways in which British international schools place an emphasis on intercultural communication and understanding at the centre of their communities, for example with the

use of the principles of intercultural communicative competence which emphasises the importance of ensuring there is a sense of collective vision and partnership. Certainly, Deardorff's model of intercultural communicative competence which focusses around Respect, Curiosity, Openness, Cultural Self Awareness and Culture-Specific Information, provides a means for the complex web of stakeholders in such schools to interact (Deardorff, 2006: 254; Poole, 2016). The emphasis on concepts such as these would potentially facilitate reflection and authentic dialogue with local cultural contexts, and in time help develop stronger and more meaningful community links. Equally, there needs to be explicit training to ensure British staff and administrators understand the cultural context in which they are operating, with an onus on them being culturally responsive to the needs of their students (Deveney, 2005).

The nascent field of DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice) should also be viewed explicitly in the context of decolonisation, Brighton College in Bangkok being awarded the inaugural ISC award for this category (ISC, 2022). Whilst it is broadly focussed, inclusive of areas as broad as neurodiversity and the politics of transgender studies, it is a concept which can also be used to critically engage with local situations and contexts, via an emphasis on diversity, intercultural understanding, equality and social justice (see for example BCSMIT 2022; ECIS 2022). Identity is the central focus of DEIJ, and schools need to ensure they develop appropriate frameworks to allow students to reflect upon local as well as broader overlapping identities. As a movement which developed around the Black Lives Matter movement, there also needs to be careful consideration of where there is synergy with local rather than merely westernised values and contexts, and how these critical principles can permeate school communities and beyond. Equally, although there is a growing recognition of the areas around decoloniality in schools, as seen for example in the Council of International Schools (CIS) moving away from terms such as 'host country national', and 'host country', this action needs to be initiated by the schools themselves on a grassroots level (Larsson, 2022).

Service to the community is seen as a major focus of normative models of international education, as for example in CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) in the IB Diploma or the CIS global citizenship framework (IBO, 2022; CIS, 2022). Based on the need to make meaningful links to community, this must continue to be a major priority if schools are to challenge rather than maintain elitist narratives both locally and globally. As Lillo Kang and McIntosh (2023: 1) argue, 'school service projects must begin with critical awareness to avoid unwittingly reproducing embedded inequalities', with an onus on them being grounded in actions in local communities, as well as benefitting the self. Arguably then, this new wave of schools needs to be creative in terms both of ensuring strong links to the local community and of developing a sense of empathy in students for the broader national and global communities. This might involve scholarships or bursaries for students who would otherwise not be able to afford tuition fees, student exchange programmes with local state-sponsored schools, or (as has been the case with the British independent sector in its home market) sponsoring local schools and academies to develop a genuine synergy with the local education sector. Equally, in terms of the formal curriculum, there needs to be an emphasis on developing empathy and intercultural understanding, Wasner (2016) arguing for the importance of a 'dialogic pedagogy' which goes beyond superficial service activities, empowering and engaging students in the world around them.

Ultimately, dialogue and reflection around decolonisation need to permeate communities long term, if cultural action is to be embedded. This should include links between these schools and their local communities, as well as more broadly between British satellite colleges in different contexts across Asia. Educators have a critical role in raising the awareness of how these colonial narratives are relevant to their context, acting in a responsive and pre-emptive manner, enabling students to understand their own identities as local as well as global citizens.

Next Steps and Areas for Future Research

'Like critical pedagogy, a decolonising education is one that exceeds the confines of the school, college or university to intervene in the reinvention of the world', argues Dennis (2018: 195). As this paper has argued, there is a need for the growing British international school sector to ensure they reconsider and recontextualise the curriculum to meet the needs of local students, if these schools are truly to operate as bridges between communities and prepare their students to be intercultural individuals, able to understand the shifting trends in the contemporary world in both local and global contexts. A truly internationalising education must do more than attempt to remake the world in the image of the UK, but rather provide an opportunity to reinvent the world as a place where peoples can come together on their own terms, without their own cultural values being marginalised by the universalist narratives around globalization. These new British schools need to be ambitious as they seek to reinterpret their curricula and values in light of specifically localised issues, in line with Spivak's call 'to bear witness to the specificity of language, theme, and history as well as to supplement hegemonic notions of a hybrid global culture with the experience of an impossible global justice' (1995: 196). In this sense, they need to create their own reimagined maps, instead of depending on those that may have been appropriate for home-grown or far-removed contexts.

This paper has focused on the relation between the contemporary British international school market in Asia and the origins of British-style education in Asia, this being an under-theorised area in light of the current wave of British international schools, and broader demand for a British-style education in contemporary Asia. These schools might be seen as both indicative of the very ambiguity of the notion of what constitutes an international education, adding another chapter to ever-broadening understandings of the term, as well as emphasising the ongoing need for international schools to reinterpret their values and mission statements in light of the circumstances and cultures in which they find themselves. More broadly, given this paper has argued that this new wave of British international schools needs to be seen not only in the context of the pre-existing literature on what constitutes an international school, but also in the context of colonial education systems, there can be little doubt of the importance of engaging with post-colonialism as a framework for considering how the British international school community can come to genuinely represent a progressive force to create a more equal, sustainable world. This should include engaging explicitly with the legacy of colonialism and Asia as a point of reference, rather than merely perpetuating British and Westernised narratives around internationalism. In this sense, they have the potential to contribute to the evolving definition of 'international education', by reinterpreting and redefining the meaning and scope of a British-style international education in an indigenous context. In turn, they also need to reconsider pre-existing models of global citizenship, and ensure they are relevant for the indigenous contexts in which these schools find themselves.

This area remains under-researched, and future research directions might include further studies of ways in which this new wave of international schools is affecting identity on an individual, community or national level. Such research might include a focus on understanding how student identities are fostered in a school context. In particular, this might involve the use of student voices and perspectives, current research around the role of post-colonialism in education predominantly being focussed on adult understandings of the term (such as the recent collection of essays by Lillo Kang and McIntosh, 2023). Equally, it could involve a further study into links and commonalities between earlier schools offering a British-style education in Asia to local students, and schools in the more recent wave. Further consideration could also be directed at the meaning of 'international', and ways in which this term can be used to both articulate and transcend local identities for students at international schools. This could include a longitudinal study looking at the perception

of alumni of British international schools that teach local students, particularly if the research is conducted from the vantage point of immersion in the adult world of their home society.

As a final word on transcending the national, Gandhi's movement against British colonialism has been seen as representing a universal force which was able to liberate in turn both the oppressors and the oppressed. Gandhi aimed to liberate India, and at the same time liberate England – there being a symbiotic relationship between the coloniser and colonised, as he sought to undo the desire to colonise (Chen, 2010; Nandy, 1994). The concrete implication of this recognition is that Gandhi's freedom movement ceased to be defined by a nationalist agenda: 'It redefined itself as a universalist struggle for political justice and cultural dignity'. (Chen 2010: 92). Could this be a model for British international education, moving forward?

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