

**‘A BIG MAC AND A COKE?’ INTERNATIONALISM AND GLOBALISATION
AS CONTEXTS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

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Abstract

International education is a contested field of educational practice involving the reconciliation of economic, political and cultural-ideological dilemmas, which may be identified as the competing ‘internationalist’ and ‘globalising’ perspectives. This paper discusses various approaches to internationalism, an ideology based upon international

relations, and globalisation, an ideology based upon the global spread of the values of free market capitalism. The theory and practice of international education are interpreted in the context of these contrasting ideologies.

Metaphors for international education

An interesting exercise at workshops and seminars is to invite participants to suggest metaphors for international education. They frequently propose ideas such as a window looking out on the world or a melting pot blending cultural differences. The first of these metaphors suggests that international education is a means of staying 'indoors', that is in one's own culture, but having perspectives on cultures in the world outside. The melting pot metaphor appeals to an aspiration to overcome cultural differences between ourselves and people from other countries but this seems to contradict views of international education as a means of acknowledging and celebrating human diversity. A metaphor which frequently provokes controversy and much lively argument is the view of international education as 'a Big Mac and a Coke'. This metaphor compares international education with globally marketed consumer products and draws attention to the idea that, although the goods may be similar in different parts of the world, the context in which they are consumed varies.

International education is ambiguous and contradictory. Forms of international education offer ways of having more intimate contact with the world and insulating oneself from it. It celebrates cultural diversity and tends towards the development of monoculture.

International education provides a framework for existential, experiential learning and it provides a framework for global certification of educational achievement, further extending the 'diploma disease' (Dore 1976). It encourages positive attitudes to community service and global citizenship and is used as a means of enhancing positional competition and personal economic advancement.

The aim of this paper is to discuss what international education might be, and to explore the economic and ideological frameworks which influence it. It compares different approaches to internationalism in education, including international-mindedness, and addresses the contrasting perspectives of internationalism and globalisation.

Internationalism and education

Leach (1969) identifies internationalism with the maintenance of relations between different countries, and describes three approaches to its application in the field of education:

- unilateral internationalism, such as a country concerned chiefly with the education of its own personnel away from home in a different country;

- bilateral internationalism, such as exchange between and among students of two countries, chiefly at university level; and
- multilateral internationalism, requiring funding from at least three national sources, no one of them dominant.

The British and American community schools in various countries may be identified with unilateral internationalism. It may be argued that the unilateral approach only promotes internationalism in a very limited sense because it leads to the development of schools with an ‘encapsulated’ mission of delivering the curriculum of one country transplanted in a different national context (Sylvester 1998). The opportunities for expatriate students to meet members of the host country community may be restricted for linguistic, cultural or political reasons. Such institutions may provide globally mobile expatriates with a means of ‘travelling in tunnels’ (Pearce 1999) by isolating their children’s educational environment from exposure to local culture.

Many of these schools are insulated ... by ‘cellophane walls’ from the national community in which they are located. For the most part, it is clear that overseas schools are devoted to preparing their students for rapid integration into the life of the nation of origin at whatever point their clientele goes home (Leach 1969).

Bilateral internationalism creates opportunities for exchange visits between students in different countries. An example is the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme that brings university graduates to work throughout Japan in state schools and government offices. However bilateral internationalism may also be limited in its scope; the outcome of the JET programme has been criticised as being ‘differential internationalisation’ because ‘to achieve greater international status, the Japanese feel they must concentrate on their relations with Western countries’ (McConnell 2000).

Multilateral internationalism in education may be found in schools ‘founded by joint action of two or more governments or national groupings’ (Leach 1969). Examples of such institutions are the international schools associated with the United Nations Organization (Walker 2000) and the European schools founded as a result of multilateral action of members of the European Union. However, the European schools ‘draw a sharp distinction between themselves and international schools. This is partly due to their position as pioneers in achieving inter-state financial backing and partly because they do not pretend to be more than European’ (Leach 1969). Furthermore, as Jonckers (2000) admits ‘these

schools do not allow everybody to benefit from them. They were founded for the children of parents working for European [Union] institutions, and only when there are places available can other children be enrolled’.

When Williams (1981) argues for an ‘international dimension’ in national systems of education, it is evident that an agenda for the promotion of international understanding and international-mindedness in the educational system of England and Wales is being discussed. As Leach (1969) points out, a distinction can be made between ‘international’ and ‘internationally-minded’ schools:

It would appear to be common practice in a number of places to regard an international school as one serving or being composed of students from several nationalities. This definition leads into hopeless confusion, however, when, upon reflection, one realizes that practically every school in such a cosmopolitan centre as London or New York includes a number of nationalities in its student body. Such schools are mostly state-financed national institutions. There are, in fact, a number of privately financed and some state-operated schools of an elite order in most developed countries which pride themselves on being ‘internationally minded’ and are, in truth, far more international in their orientation than the run-of-the-mill London or New York school. In most cases, however, the internationally minded ... is usually composed of students of one nationality, or mostly of one.

Hill (1994) argues that schools may promote an international ethos by ‘preparing students for global citizenship by building on the principles of tolerance, international co-operation, justice and peace’.

Leach’s approach to internationalism appears to be informed by the context of international relations, which is understandable because he was writing from his position in an international school associated with the United Nations Organization in the 1960s. Appeals to international-mindedness and international ethos are similarly grounded in the context of international relations; the world would be a better place if we could all get on with each other. An alternative to Leach’s perspective is to explain international education in a global sociological context that takes into account economic, political and cultural-ideological transnational practices (Sklair 1991). Sklair identifies an ideology which is ‘inclusively internationalist, and promotes the common human characteristics of all who share the planet’, and which is ‘best labelled’ democratic socialist feminism:

Its ideal of human comradeship is based on the belief that the survival of humanity is incompatible with capitalist exploitation, imperialism and the patriarchal nation-state.

However, Sklair observes that 'global capitalism produces the material conditions for socialism, but closes down the political and cultural-ideological space for it'. From this perspective, it is evident that the practice of international education will be shaped by the transnational practices which are identified with the processes of globalisation.

Styles of international education

Definitions of international education are dependent upon context. International education may be identified with:

- a transplanted national system serving expatriate clients of that country located in another country;
- a transplanted national system serving clients from another country;
- a simulacrum of a transplanted national educational system, for example the programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization, serving expatriate clients and/or host country nationals; and,
- an ideology of international understanding and peace, citizenship and service.

Many international schools, as well as an increasing number of independent schools and schools in national education systems, offer an international curriculum such as the programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization. However, it cannot be stated categorically that international schools are where international education (however that is defined) takes place uniquely, because an international school may offer an education that has no claims to be international. It has been argued that an international education may be experienced by a student who has not attended a school that claims to be international (Hayden and Thompson 1995).

The programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization may be considered to be a globally branded product. For many consumers of educational services, international

education enables the children of globally mobile expatriates to experience continuity as they move between countries. On the other hand, international education may also be viewed as a means of changing the world by increasing international understanding through bringing together young people from many different countries. This is a view of international education associated with the educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn, the founder of Outward Bound and the United World Colleges movement. Hahn was profoundly influenced by his involvement in the conduct of the peace negotiations on the German side in Versailles at the end of the Great War (McLachlan 1970, Peterson 1987, Sutcliffe 1991). His vision of education was based on a strong commitment to service, with an emphasis on experiential learning and 'character building' (Price 1970), but it was also an existentialist educational ideology whose appeal was to the moral development of the person.

As in all his educational ventures, Hahn was less concerned with the academic achievements of his students than with their attitudes, ambitions and perceptions; instead he focused his energies on the kinds of people who would emerge from his schools. He perceived youth to be surrounded by the decay of care and skill, the lack of enterprise and adventure, and the loss of compassion. He believed that 'the aim of education is to impel people into value forming experiences ... [and] to ensure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and above all, compassion.' In addition, his pupils were challenged by the physical stresses of athletics, by the exercise of patience in tasks of craftsmanship, and by an expedition on land and water (Bacon 1983).

This view of international education emphasises the personal development of the individual in affective rather than cognitive terms. In a case study of the United World College of the Atlantic, Rawlings (2000) proposes that:

International education is a transformative discourse which locates all fields of enquiry in a supra-national frame of reference and upholds the cause of peace.

This form of internationally-minded education, with its foundations in service and global citizenship, may be interpreted as a response to the existence of poverty and political oppression in the world, whereas other forms of international education may be interpreted as a response to emerging affluence and entry into the global consumer economy. It may

therefore be concluded that international education can be interpreted as being both an ideological and a pragmatic construct.

Pasternak (1998) identifies power as an important factor in the definition of international education as ‘an open system in the global village created by those elements in power positions in their societies in order to perpetuate their values’. This is qualified by the observation that:

the concept of an open system suggests some interaction with local communities but the knowledge, skills and attitudes models delivered are nearly always western European or North American in origin (Pasternak 1998).

This is a theme that will be explored below in the discussion of globalisation and international education.

McKenzie (1998) claims to identify, in a statement of aims of the International Baccalaureate Organization, five different meanings of the word ‘international’ comprising; non-national, pan-national, ex-national (as in expatriate), multinational, and transnational. He illustrates these meanings as follows:

‘international education’ refers to a system that is non-national, and therefore not subject to the requirements, standards, demands and orientations of a particular national system. ‘International understanding’, through the juxtaposition of its two words, seems broader than this. Here we have something more than the merely non-national; this type of sympathetic mutuality is pan-national, an enterprise that seeks to build bridges between countries. An internationally mobile community seems clear; the members of this community are those expatriates who can safely be said, for the most part, to be ex-national. When we come to the ‘international curriculum’ that is worked out through collaboration with national education systems we seem to be dealing with a phenomenon that is multi-national in much the same sense of the word as a comparative educationist might mean. Finally, an ‘internationally recognised’ secondary school qualification for university entrance suggests a concern with a transnational certificate, which will legitimately promote the educational aspirations of the children of the ex-national community by allowing them to cross educational borders with the same ease that a valid passport permits movement from one country to another (McKenzie 1998).

This analysis is imaginative and useful as an heuristic device, but one might take issue with McKenzie's definition of the 'ex-national' category as being a caricature of a more complex situation. The description of persons identified with the 'ex-national' category could be extended to allow wider participation by those other than expatriates. Would the participation of students from the host country in an institution offering international education identify them as 'ex-nationals' in their own country? Furthermore, where does this framework fit with respect to the phenomenon of globalisation?

Globalisation and international education

It may be argued that a problem with the development of an understanding of international education based on aims and intentions is that it is grounded in a subjective, philosophically idealist assumption that consciousness determines being. In contrast, one might argue for an approach to the study of international education that is grounded in the objective, philosophically materialist assumption that being determines consciousness. This is the difference between arguments based on internationalism and those based on the objective economic processes identified with globalisation. Whereas arguments about internationalism address the world as we would want it to be, arguments about globalisation address the world as it is. Arguments about internationalism are explicit about the values they promote, whereas arguments about globalisation may purport to be value-free, although they are laden with implicit values. Jones (1998) recognizes this tension between globalisation and internationalism, arguing that:

Globalisation is seen as economic integration, achieved in particular through the establishment of a global marketplace marked by free trade and a minimum of regulation. In contrast, internationalism refers to the promotion of global peace and well-being through the development and application of international structures, primarily but not solely of an intergovernmental kind. Despite important conceptual difficulties in formulating the case for internationalism and despite the world's patchy record of putting its principles into effect, the essentially pro-democratic logic of internationalism stands in sharp contrast to the logic of globalisation.

The history of international schools and international education appears to support Jones' perspective on internationalism. As was noted above, some of the earliest international schools, such as the International School of Geneva and the United Nations International

School New York, were founded in connection with the League of Nations and its successor body the United Nations Organization (Walker 2000). Internationalism in international education does appear to spring from international relations and the explicit need to foster an aspiration for world peace and understanding between nations. However, besides harbouring such internationalist aspirations, international education also appears to be part of the process of economic globalisation. Not only is international education influenced by globalisation but it also facilitates the spread of free market values. Indeed, the presence in a country of a school offering international education can create competition with the national educational system. Thus, it may be argued that the ideological underpinning of international education as it is currently practised constitutes a reconciliation of the dilemma between the contrary trends of cooperation through international relations and competition through economic globalisation.

On the other hand, such a view may present a false dichotomy between internationalism and globalisation because proponents of globalisation see the process as a force for world peace. Take for example the doctrine of 'the Golden Arches theory of conflict prevention' that no two countries, both of which have at least one McDonald's franchise, have ever gone to war (Friedman 1999). The bombing by NATO forces of Belgrade, which has at least one McDonald's outlet, may form an exception to this theory (Lloyd 1999) but in general the globalisation of trade has led to an unprecedented period without armed conflict - at least for some regions.

Jones (1998) discusses three patterns of globalisation comprising economic, political and cultural globalisation, which is a theme also taken up by Hayden and Thompson (2000) when they discuss market, political and social globalisation. Among other attributes, Jones identifies 'a deterritorialised religious mosaic' and 'deterritorialised cosmopolitanism and diversity' as features of cultural globalisation, alongside 'global distribution of images and information'. As a feature of political globalisation, Jones identifies 'an absence of state sovereignty and multiple centres of power at global, local and intermediate levels'. An argument may be constructed which sees international education, and those schools in which it is practised, as contributing to this 'deterritorialised cosmopolitanism and diversity' in which students in geographically dispersed schools share common experiences mediated through a common curriculum which is independent of the country within which they are presently located. Indeed, it appeared to be on the grounds of erosion of national sovereignty that Dr Nick Tate, of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England,

described the International Baccalaureate as ‘pushing globalisation one big step further forward’ in an interview in the *Times* newspaper in January 2000.

Another typology is proposed by Held *et al* (1999), who describe globalisation in terms of ‘the widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life’. According to them, globalisation can be thought of as:

a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions - assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact - generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power (Held *et al* 1999).

Three contrasting currents in globalisation are identified which are termed the hyperglobalist, sceptical and transformationalist theses. For the hyperglobalists, history and economics have come together at the end of the twentieth century to create a new order of relations in which states are either converging economically and politically, or are being made irrelevant by the activities of transnational business. Economic policies are determined more by markets than by governments and, in the economically developed parts of the world at least, the telecommunications media have facilitated the spread of globalised mass culture. We wear the same fashions and watch the same television shows while grazing on the same fast foods.

Usually, reports about this global web of logos and products are couched in the euphoric marketing rhetoric of the global village, an incredible place where tribespeople in remotest rain forests tap away on laptop computers, Sicilian grandmothers conduct E-business, and ‘global teens’ share, to borrow a phrase from a Levi’s Web site, ‘a world-wide style culture’. Everyone from Coke to McDonald’s to Motorola has tailored their marketing strategy around this post-national vision, but it is IBM’s long-running ‘Solutions for a Small Planet’ campaign that most eloquently captures the equalizing promise of the logo-linked globe (Klein 2000).

This hyperglobalist trend towards the formation of one single world order is represented in international education by those who see a system of education which transcends national frontiers. When one considers the educational needs of a clientele which is mobile, and with a high rate of turnover, it is clear that they expect international education to provide

continuity as they move from country to country. Like the providers of other globally branded products, schools offering international education must provide a reliable service throughout the world. The history of the International Baccalaureate Organization is intimately linked to the development of the United World Colleges movement whose aims may be interpreted as the hyperglobalist project of ‘fighting the Cold War by other means’ (Sutcliffe 1991). Thus international education, with aspirations as a force for creating a better world by overcoming national differences, may also be interpreted as an ideological construct which promotes hyperglobalisation. Yet this view is also ambiguous and apolitical because various critics of the hyperglobalist thesis argue either that it is an apology for the current dominance of neo-liberal free market capitalism, on the one hand, or for the spread of social democratic regulation of markets, on the other (Lloyd 1999).

The sceptical thesis draws a distinction between globalisation and the internationalisation of trade. Globalisation sceptics argue that historical evidence indicates that the world is not becoming a single market but that it is the development of regional economic blocs and the facilitation of trade between countries which has extended. For the sceptics, the economic era in which the Gold Standard between national currencies prevailed represents a far more globalised economic system than exists today. Internationalisation and globalisation are contradictory trends, since international trade is strengthened by the existence of nation states whose policies actively regulate and promote it. Of course, the formation of regional trading blocs results in two classes of countries; ‘insiders’ which are members of the blocs, and ‘outsiders’ which are not. The increasing internationalisation of trade between some countries has led to the marginalisation of others, notably the poor economies of the Southern Hemisphere. Against this analysis, the diffusion of international schools as encapsulated outposts of ‘other’ national cultures has led to the development of international education as a pragmatic response to economic circumstances where an institution serving a single national grouping is unviable. Globally mobile communities of workers from different countries must pool their educational resources.

To adherents of the transformationalist thesis of globalisation, reference to the economic marginalisation of whole countries is unjustifiable, since:

the familiar core-periphery hierarchy is no longer a geographic but a social division of the world economy ... North and South, First World and Third World are no longer ‘out there’ but nestled within all the world’s major cities (Held *et al* 1999).

Globalisation is a process that involves both integration and fragmentation. In many less developed countries, schools offering international education provide opportunities for the children of the socio-economic elite of the host country to turn their backs on their own educational system and embrace the values of the economically developed world. Many of these people may be identified as members of the transnational capitalist class (TCC) who:

see their own interests, and/or the interests of their nation, as best served by an identification with the interests of the capitalist global system, in particular the interests of the countries of the capitalist core and the transnational corporations domiciled in them. The TCC holds certain transnational practices to be more valuable than domestic practices (Sklair 1991).

International education may be identified as one of these 'transnational practices' assisting in the maintenance of the privileged position of the transnational capitalist class, both locally and globally:

One interpretation of the rapid expansion in many countries of the numbers of schools offering 'international' qualifications is that they are a response by local elites to a stiffening of the local positional competition on the one hand and a globalisation of that competition on the other. As more people gain local qualifications, those who can afford to do so seek a new competitive edge by taking qualifications that they hope will give them a local advantage. At the same time, it is hoped that these international qualifications will give access to a labour market that is becoming increasingly globalised - for the most advantageous occupations, at least (Lowe 2000).

International education and multiculturalism

It is evident that schools where international education is practised are frequently sites of multiculturalism, either because of the diversity of nationalities represented among the students or because of the synthesis of a 'third culture' from the collision between expatriate and host country cultures (Useem 1976, Langford 1998). However, in the memorable phrase of Zaw (1996), multiculturalism in education can be 'a substantial monoculturalism as to values, mitigated by tolerance of exotic detail' or what Mattern (1991) describes as 'the mix-and-stir approach to international education'. Klein (2000) describes the tendency of global branding of commodities to promote cultural homogeneity as 'mono-multiculturalism'.

It may be argued that schools in different countries which share a common international curriculum will also share common values. Teachers and students in schools offering international education may have plural national origins, which they express and celebrate in terms of national costumes food and festivals - the 'saris, samosas and steel bands' approach (Pasternak 1998) - but they may also show convergence in their educational values. This convergence of values identifies the participants in international education with the transnational capitalist class, either as members of that class or as its servants. The staff recruitment policies of the school may be expected to reinforce convergence between the values of the teachers and the organizational culture (Cambridge 1998). The above hypotheses are currently being tested by the authors with respect to the work-related values held by teachers in a variety of schools.

Conclusions: dilemmas of international education

International education is a contested field of educational practice involving the reconciliation of economic, political and cultural-ideological dilemmas, which may be identified as the competing 'internationalist' and 'globalising' approaches.

The internationalist approach to the practice of international education is founded upon international relations, with aspirations for the promotion of peace and understanding between nations. It embraces an existential, experiential educational philosophy which values the moral development of the individual and recognises the importance of service to the community and the development of a sense of responsible citizenship. Internationalist international education celebrates cultural diversity and promotes an internationally-minded outlook.

The globalising approach to international education is influenced by and contributes to the global diffusion of the values of free market economics. These are expressed in international education in terms of increasing competition with national systems of education. This is accompanied by quality assurance through international accreditation and the spread of global quality standards which facilitate educational continuity for the children of the globally mobile clientele. Globalised international education serves a market which requires the global certification of educational qualifications. This facilitates educational continuity for the children of the host country clientele with aspirations towards global and

social mobility. An outcome of globalised international education is global cultural convergence towards the values of the transnational capitalist class.

The 'internationalist' and 'globalising' approaches are rarely seen in their pure forms. International education as it is practised is a reconciliation of these contrasting approaches. Schools that offer international education appear to be heterogeneous because each reconciliation is unique to the historical, geographical and economic circumstances of each institution. Further study is required to describe and analyse how these interacting processes lead to the synthesis recognised as international education.

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