THE GLOBAL LANDSCAPE OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS. DEVELOPMENT TENDENCIES AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Anne Schippling

CIES-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa & Department of General Education at
Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg

Introduction

In the time of a growing pressure of globalisation and internationalisation on national education systems[262], it is difficult to define exactly what terms like international education or related ones like international schools mean. In this context, Murphy (2000: 6) pointed out: "No one has so far come up with a definition of 'international school' that does not exclude some schools which consider themselves international, and does include others which may not […]."

In her definition on schools that explicitly use the attribute "international" in their title, Hornberg (2010: 154) differed between the following types:

- International schools in the form of schools abroad with elements of private schools, that are founded by a country in another country abroad and that award the curriculum as well as the degree of the founding country.

- International schools in the form of private schools that offer the curriculum and the degree of the host state and that offer one or multiple foreign curricula or degrees.

- International schools in the form of private schools that offer international or foreign curricula or degrees (e.g., international baccalaureate).

- State schools that offer their students to follow international branches in addition to the national curricula and degrees.

In the following, general development tendencies of the international school segment will be presented in more detail. On the one hand, these developments refer to the growth and increasing differentiation of international schools. On the other, they refer to their form of education. In the second part, special focus will be placed on the international state of research on international schools. Further, research deficits will be shown. Finally, there will be a reflection on theoretical contexts [e.g., the concept of "transnational social space" developed by Beck (2000)] and to research perspectives to this research field.

Development tendencies of the international school segment

As no exact criteria exist on which schools are defined as international schools, it is difficult to determine their exact number. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that their number has been constantly increasing. Whereas in the mid-1960s their number was estimated at around 50, this had risen to about 1000 by the 1990s (Hayden & Thompson, 1995) and around 5200 in 2009 (Brummitt, 2009). The first school to use the attribute "international" in its title was the "International School of Geneva" or "École Internationale de Génève" founded in 1924 in Geneva. Mainly

children of diplomats or employees from organisations linked to the United Nations attended the school, which still exists and still constitutes one of the biggest international schools worldwide with three locations in Geneva and about 4000 students of all nationalities. Like the "United Nations International Schools" (UNIS) founded in 1947 by the United Nations in New York, the school acted as a model for international schools founded later.

After the Second World War, the number of international schools constantly increased and many were founded as parent-run cooperatives responding to a local need for such schools (Hayden, 2006). Two main explanatory approaches for this increase can be identified. On the one hand, there existed a normative motive for their creation which aimed at promoting an intercultural dialogue and thus at contributing to a better international understanding and to peace in the world. The understanding of education formulated in UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 is an example of the normative motive of founding these schools:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (UNESCO, 1948)

A cooperation began in the 1960s between the few international schools around that time and UNESCO, and also UNESCO organised the first international conferences for representatives of these schools. Another explanatory approach is located on a pragmatic level related to an increasing migration of highly qualified employees in global companies since the 1950s and the need for internationally compatible courses of education for the children of these employees. The two explanatory approaches do not exclude each other, but can rather be regarded as complementary.

What is fundamental in order to understand the field of international schools is the fact that there are a number of organisations of private companies partially recognised as non-profit organisations in the context of international schools, such as for example the International Schools Association (ISA) and the International Baccalaureate (IB). One object of the foundation of these organisations is the effort to standardise due to the variety of international schools, such as for example the introduction of an international curriculum or an internationally compatible higher education entrance qualification.

The number of schools can be determined by their memberships in these organisations. Thus, in 2003 there were 1569 schools worldwide following the IB curriculum in their formation, in 2008 they were already 2336 (Hornberg, 2010: 166) and presently 4267 (IB, 2015).

Besides the growing number of international schools, a further differentiation of this type of school can be observed. One example is the foundation of international schools in countries like China, Dubai and Thailand that copy in the form of so-called satellite "schools" (Bunnell, 2008) the model of English public schools such as for example Dulwich, Haileybury and Harrow in the respective countries by reconstructing the school buildings of the English original or imitating school uniforms. The first of these schools was Dulwich College built in 1996 in Thailand. These schools – by means of offering a "western" education – try to contribute to the reproduction of the social status of the families attending these schools (Bunnell, 2008). Furthermore, commercially orientated groupings of international schools are arising more and more, for example the Nord Anglia Group and Global Education Management Systems (GEMS) in economically highly developed areas like Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In this context one more line of development can be observed. The "traditional" international schools were established first and foremost for globally mobile families. These families represent a transnational elite characterised by the possession of "symbolic capital of education and language" which would "enable them to move freely, offering relatively easier access to border crossing and citizenship" (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002: 8). Ball and Nikita (2014: 82) call them a "global middle class" and a "burgeoning, mobile, post-national middle class who operate on a global scale".

A recently observable tendency is international schools not only being in demand by a mobile global elite, but also by non-mobile middle-class families, resident in the respective countries like in the case of the "satellite schools" (Bunnell, 2008). These parents want to give their children an advantage on the international education market by enabling them to attend such schools. On the one hand, these families expect an advantage by achieving

international degrees like the IB diploma in order to have for example better chances of accessing top international universities (e.g., MacKenzie et al., 2003). On the other hand, an English-medium education is said to improve employment opportunities in a global world market, which is also a reason why international schools are more and more in demand (e.g., MacKenzie et al. 2003; Hayden 2011).

Along with a more diversified student population of international schools and related expectations the educational forms and concepts of these schools are also changing. Whilst the "traditional" international schools claimed more the idea of an "ideological promotion of international peace and understanding", in the course of increasing globalisation and marketisation a shift can be observed towards a rather pragmatic education. This education aims primarily at preparing the children of these families for entry to a renowned university and for a high professional position, and is therefore contributing to the social and cultural reproduction of the mobile but also the non-mobile middle class (Vieira, 2003: 555ff.; Resnik, 2008: 148; Hayden, 2011: 221).

State of research on international schools and the research desiderata

Firstly, it can be observed that despite the increasing number of international schools worldwide and also related heightened public awareness, a research deficit can be identified especially on the level of empirical consistent studies.

Empirical studies, mainly with a quantitative-oriented research design, can be found mostly in the Anglophone space, where the research on international schools is more developed. The work of the research group at the Centre for the study of Education in an International Context (CEIC) at the University of Bath has taken centre stage since the 1990s. Its studies were based primarily on the results of questionnaires about the experiences and perceptions of school programs on the part of pupils (Hayden & Thompson, 1995, 1997; Hayden et al., 2000; Wilkinson & Hayden, 2010) and teachers (Hayden & Thompson, 1998; Hayden et al., 2000). In relation to the attitudes of pupils towards 'international education' it could be shown that their highest priority is the acquisition of an internationally compatible higher education entrance qualification, which indicates a strongly pragmatic orientation in relation to international education (Hayden & Thompson, 1997: 474ff.; Hayden, 2011: 219ff.) In this context, the acquisition of English language played a central role. In more recent studies Hayden et al. (2000) determined that pupils and teachers associated 'being international' with aspects such as 'international mindedness', 'second language competence', 'flexibility of thinking' and 'tolerance and respect for others'. Further, the perspective of the parents especially in relation to questions of school choice was investigated in these studies (MacKenzie et al., 2001, 2003).

Besides the empirical studies more descriptive studies can be found on the global landscape and development of international schools (e.g., Hayden & Thompson, 2008, 2011; Bates, 2010; Bunnell, 2014) and their curricula and aims (e.g., Hayden & Thompson, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Bunnell, 2012, 2015).

In other European countries the state of research on international schools is less developed. There are some descriptive works about the situation and development of international schools, educational aims, organisational forms and curriculum programs (e.g., Hornberg, 2010, Hallwirth, 2013) and also empirical studies, which focus on the perspectives of pupils of international schools in relation to their expectations and attitudes towards their educational path and the roles of family and peers (e.g., Macedo, 2009; Keßler et al., 2015) and the strategies of school choice of globally mobile parents (Forsey et al., 2015). Macedo (2009) investigated, in a qualitative empirical study, the construction of citizenship of young people at an international school in Portugal by analysing their expectations in relation to their personal and educational development and their ideas about future professionality. Keßler et al. (2015) studied the school program and the educational careers and orientations of young people at an international school in Germany in a longitudinal qualitative study and concluded that the there is a similar pragmatic orientation by the pupils in studying in an international context and an identification with the idea of world citizenship in the one hand, in the other, there can be found many differences in their educational orientations and perspectives (Keßler et al., 2015: 119-122). Forsey et al. (2015) focused on the strategies of school choice of globally mobile parents in Berlin analysing the online conversation threads about international schools in Berlin using an ethnographic design.

Further, some empirical studies can be mentioned which refer to international schools in areas outside Europe. In a quantitative study about international and public schools in Qatar, Kanan and Baker (2006) investigated the

educational and professional visions for the future of pupils. Song (2013) studied the social, economic and political context of international schools in South Korea and the development of these schools in becoming providers of 'global education' (Song, 2013: 136). In response to a research deficit on the children of non-mobile families who attend an international school within their own nation, Bailey (2015) confronted the research results of the analysis of the attitudes of children of host-country nationals in an international school in Malaysia in relation to the significance of international schooling together with opinions of their expatriate teachers towards this subject.

Taking an overview of the international state of research on international schools it can be summed up that, especially in the Anglophone space, some studies can be found about the spread and development, educational concepts, forms of organisation and curricula of international schools; but there is a worldwide deficit of empirical studies about international schools on the institutional level as well as on the level of the social actors in these schools. There is especially a need for longitudinal empirical studies, which examine for example the educational paths of young people at international schools or the development of their peer contexts in both, formal and informal settings (e.g., Krüger et al., 2015; Keßler et al., 2015).

Theoretical contexts and research perspectives

The research into international schools and their student body and related aspects such as the question of the mission and objective of international education that is able to give an appropriate answer to current social developments, the question of contents of international curricula or the investigation of an increasing influence of the network of non-state organisations around these schools like the International Schools Association (ISA), the International Baccalaureate (IB) or the European Council for International Schools (ECIS) comprise a rather neglected branch within Comparative Education until today. In this context, for example, theoretical concepts that would offer promising potential for the investigation of international school models are missing. Impulses come in particular from transnationalisation studies that up to now have rarely been applied in the area of school research (Krüger et al., 2015: 82).

International schools as "transnational spaces of education"?

Transnationalism considered as a research programme trying to analyse processes of a current social change has the main objective of overcoming the perspective of a methodological nationalism (e.g., Pries, 2010: 9-11). The paradigm of a methodological nationalism is based on the assumption that national societies and nation-states are "natural reference units" for the investigation of social phenomena. In contrast the research programme of transnationalism changes the perspective: The transnationalism in its stricter sense used here mainly focuses on those social phenomena and social relationships which extend above several local units in different national societies, which are relatively stable and which contain comparatively dense interactions (Pries, 2010: 10).

The borders of a nation-state as reference unit tend to blur within this new perspectivation and the focus switches towards cross-border phenomena, which can extend over several national societies. In the context of his research about work migration between Mexico and the USA in the 1990s, Pries (1996) developed the concept of "transnational social spaces".[263] The concept of space does not imply herein its traditional physical meaning of a location, but primarily designates relatively stable relationships between social actors which cross national borders.

Ulrich Beck (2000) in his reflections about "What is Globalization?" picks up the concept of transnational social space by Pries (1996, 2010) and states in this context: "[…] the approach centred in transnational social spaces maintains that something new is emerging: social contexts of life and action to which Here-and-There or Both-And applies." (Beck, 2000: 28).

The concept of a transnational social space aims at the level of transnational social practices of the actors, for example in the area of communication via the internet, which enable a social proximity of people without being geographically closed. If these practices have a high level of stability and intensity, so that they are a part of the

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[263] Here Pries (1996: 467) referred to the concept of social space of Pierre Bourdieu (1979).

everyday life, they could be named "transnational social spaces".[264] An example is a transnational family, whose members are spread across the globe, but who have in their life practice durable and closed relations and constitute, for that reason, a "transnational social space".

Because of the fact that the social actors in international schools such as pupils and teachers often belong to the globally mobile class characterised by transnational experiences in their social practices and move in transnational social spaces, the theoretical concepts of the research about transnationality could be profitable for a Comparative Science of Education dedicated to the question of international education (e.g., Teodoro, 2011).

In this context some first approaches exist which took up the concept of "transnational social space" and developed it for educational settings in the sense of "transnational social spaces of education". Adick (2005: 262ff.), for example, characterised this concept with the following features:

- transnational social spaces of education can arise "from down", which means from the life practice of social actors or "from up", which means the promotion of transnational providers of education;

- they function on the basis of already existing transnational convergences and promote more convergences;

- in transnational social spaces of education, cross-border processes of education are taking place;

- transnational social spaces of education are, in comparison to national or international spaces of education, non-governmental meaning not state-controlled, but organised "privately".

In relation to the research of international schools Hayden (2011) introduced and developed the concept of "transnational spaces of education" with reference to Beck's (2000) theory and his concept of "transnational social spaces". According to her, the international schools represent an answer to globalisation processes and "the aspirations of global knowledge workers for their children" (Hayden, 2011: 212).

Research perspectives

As shown before, in the area of the research about international schools especially empirical studies are missing, which investigate these schools and their environment in an institutional level, but also the perspectives of the pupils and their families and teachers of these schools.

In the following, some reflections will be developed about subjects and perspectives regarding the empirical field of international schools, where there is a special need for further research:

1. In the last few years the composition of pupils who attend international schools has changed. Besides the population of children of globally mobile families, there appears to be a group of non-mobile host-country nationals with a higher social-economic background, who intend to secure for their children a good position in a globalised world, providing them an international education with an internationally recognised diploma. Especially this new-emerging social group in international schools, their educational paths and their family and peer life, needs further research.

2. The growth of the segment of the international schools is accompanied by a stronger diversification of these schools. New international school models are emerging as the private groupings of international schools like the Nord Anglia Education or the Phorms Education. The heterogeneity of the field of the international school models is a domain for further research. Also fruitful as a research perspective are the different meanings of the term "international" associated with these different school forms.

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[264] Pries (2010: 29ff.) ideal-typically created two more levels of transnational phenomena characterised by a lower intensity and stability than the "transnational social spaces": the "transnational relations" and the "transnational networks".

3. Besides the changing population of these schools and the emergence of new types of international schools, changes in the educational forms and concepts, which characterise these institutions, can be also observed. Greater emphasis is given to the pragmatic dimension of international education, for instance to gain better access to the most reputed international elite universities. A further research about the educational concepts of these schools as "transnational spaces of education" could be fruitful. Questions are also emerging about the paradigm of an English-medium and Anglo-centric form of education and what this means for the cultural and linguistic diversity.

4. Another research perspective, regarding the rapid spread of international school models worldwide, is related to the possible impact of this development to the national education systems. What does it mean for the national education when not only families with a transnational background attend these schools, but also the privileged domestic groups who can afford this education?

5. Related to this question is a need of research on new forms of social inequality caused by the spread of international schools. Is there a danger, as Hayden (2011: 221) pointed out, of "a growing educational gap between social groups and thus to growing inequality in societies", caused by the growth of the sector of international school models?

6. A research deficit can also be found regarding the environment of these schools. There is, for example, a need of research about the influences if the network of the non-governmental, partly privately organised, as the International Baccalaureate (IB), International Schools Association (ISA) or the International School Services (ISS) on the development of the international schools. Also the relation of international organisations as the OECD or the UNESCO to international schools, including a historical perspective, is a research perspective for this field.

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