


Special issue: *IOE@120: critical engagement with educational and social thought, practice and development*

Research article

Education, decolonisation and international development at the Institute of Education (London): a historical analysis

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Submission date: 1 March 2022; Acceptance date: 27 April 2022; Publication date: 22 June 2022

How to cite

Unterhalter, E. and Kadiwal, L. (2022) 'Education, decolonisation and international development at the Institute of Education (London): a historical analysis'. *London Review of Education*, 20 (1), 18. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.20.1.18>.

Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-anonymous peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

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Open access

London Review of Education is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

Abstract

In this article, we review the process of building relationships around education and international development at IOE (Institute of Education), UCL's Faculty of Education and Society (University College London, UK). The analysis looks at how hierarchies linked to colonialism were inscribed in initial structures, and unevenly and disparately contested by students, staff and a range of interlocutors around the world over one hundred years. The article considers how this history shapes practice in the present and perspectives on the future. In describing and reflecting on processes for change, the article considers some of the questioning, discussion and new forms of relationship that are emerging as part of trying to develop an orientation away from a colonial past. Efforts to decolonise education have raised questions and actions associated with reimagining practice. We

reflect on what we have learned and unlearned from our efforts to promote decolonial, socially just alternatives.

Keywords decolonisation; coloniality; education and international development; Institute of Education; anti-racism

Introduction

In 1952, as part of a series of lectures organised to mark the Golden Jubilee anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Education (IOE), Sir Christopher Cox (1952: 60), the educational adviser to the Colonial Office, delivered a lecture celebrating the 'increasing importance' of the Institute's involvement with colonial education 'guiding and helping Colonial peoples to stand on their own feet'. Cox's lecture in the Beveridge Hall at Senate House was delivered with the Secretary of State for Colonies in the Chair. The event was a very public display of the close relationship between the university, the government and colonial education initiatives. Seventy years later, reflecting on decolonising teaching and research in our work from the Centre for Education and International Development (CEID) at IOE during events to mark the 120th anniversary of its foundation, we started to look closely at those colonial relationships: how they formed, whether they changed, and why. The history of this field of scholarship is marked by relationships of exclusion, hierarchy, epistemic privilege and silencing (Pailey, 2020; Sriprakash et al., 2020). In this story, lines of contestation have not always been easy to discern. The key role played by education practitioners and researchers in shaping colonial relationships in the interwar period, and the early aftermath of the British Empire, has begun to be studied (Kallaway, 2009, 2020a), but the continuation of forms of those relationships through the decades of radical challenges associated with new social movements, structural adjustment, the end of the Cold War and the influence of neoliberalism has not yet been fully examined.

Our reasons for beginning work on this longer history derives from a concern that discourses and practices that have marked education and international development as a field of enquiry require critical examination, rather than simple description or uncritical celebration. Exemplifying this process of change, seventy years on from Sir Christopher Cox's lecture, five CEID colleagues (Laila Kadiwal, Mai Abu Moghli, Charlotte Nussey, Colleen Howell and Lynsey Robinson) planned a Discussion Cafe on research we described as 'decolonial, horizontal and interactive'. Cox delivered his talk in a lecture hall emphasising the authority and prestige of the university and IOE. The CEID Cafe in 2022 was virtual and informal, and it was marked by reflective discussions on research collaborations that questioned many relationships between academic colleagues and students, and forms of engagement with policymakers, practitioners and participants. The two events, which indicate two different approaches to marking historical milestones, stand at very different ends of a spectrum, but they are not unconnected. The colonial relationships of the past have not disappeared; the decolonial narratives we are trying to shape were being voiced 120 years ago but were largely overlooked by those establishing disciplines and institutions.

In this article, we reflect on the history of IOE's particular relationships with colonial education and uneven initiatives for change, drawing out some pointers for future decolonial activities. Through this discussion, we engage critically with some of the history of our scholarly field, aiming to understand some of its dynamics and assumptions. We have developed this analysis to try to support thinking better about education and a future which overturns colonial relationships. These are associated with the subjugation of one area and its peoples by another, entailing particular formations of hierarchy, dispossession, exclusion and subordination. Decolonial efforts raise questions for 'reimagining' education, examining some of the racist and colonial worldviews that have shaped educational systems and practices. Our concern has been to try to understand some of the past in order to take forward change oriented towards CEID's goals concerning the 'contribution of education to social justice, equalities, peacebuilding, health and wellbeing' (Unterhalter and Oketch, 2021: n.p.).

The heightened attention to decolonisation in universities around the world in the past decade (de Sousa Santos, 2018; Langdon, 2013; Jansen, 2019) has prompted consideration of what it means to decolonise CEID's work. Given IOE's colonial history and uneven documentation over 120 years since its foundation of what changes were and were not made, there is much to be understood.

Decolonial critiques view international development as ‘a direct continuation of the civilizing mission idea ... constitutive and a necessary condition for the mere possibility of the colonial enterprise’ (Rutazibwa, 2018: 75). Activist-academic movements repeatedly call us out to make space for rigorous discussions of what ‘development’ means, how we conceive the binary between ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ and how we, based in one of the world’s most privileged educational institutions, position ourselves in relation to the global majority. This requires examination of our historical and contemporary scholarly and pedagogical practices, alert to the problem that our expressed commitment to solidarity and justice may reproduce coloniality, limiting possibilities for disruption of unjust relationships.

Methodology

Maria Manzon (2020) outlines four approaches to writing histories in comparative education, a field which partly intersects with education and international development (Bray, 2010; Little, 2010; Rao, 2016; Unterhalter, 2021). She notes that approaches may be intellectual, charting epistemological and methodological shifts; institutional, looking at particular programmes and institutional contexts; genealogical, mapping the adaptation of ideas of key thinkers; or discursive, looking at the framing of debates. We combine all four approaches, making explicit that, in addition, we draw from postcolonial, decolonial and feminist anti-racist scholarship, and insights generated from Terri Kim’s (2014, 2020) work on biographies and writing in and about comparative education as foreigners. Methodologically we have drawn on Unterhalter’s (2020) approach, termed ‘reflexive comparative education’, considering analyses formulated by our late colleague at IOE, Jagdish Gundara (2000, 2014), to combine insights from comparative education and education and international development, deploying methods that are ‘heterodox and multivalent, translocational, and critical’ (Unterhalter, 2020: 15).

Reflexive comparison and decolonial investigation require consideration of our positionality as researchers, problematising our social location, theories and method (Bhambra et al., 2018). Smith (2021: xiii) views ‘positioning as an ethical responsibility’. It is a ‘method of intellectual engagement ... inextricably connected to land, place, stories, context’, which refuses ‘a universal authority over experiences and people who can speak for themselves’ (Smith, 2021: xiii). Our perspectives are shaped by our classed, gendered, racialised, generational, geographical and diasporic locations, and the discussions which have evolved in writing this article, selecting archival material, conducting interviews and reflecting on decolonial initiatives in CEID.

Laila, who frequently finds herself as an object of research in the field of education and international development, is outraged by multigenerational inequities, epistemic violence and humiliation caused by Eurocentric narratives of progress. Her life experiences are described by social categories invested with material consequences: rural, urban, lower middle class, middle class, Indian, British, migrant, diaspora, woman, ‘women of colour’, lower caste, Gujarati, Muslim, speaks five languages other than English, but none have status documenting the field of education and international development. All these identities constitute an ‘enduring expression of colonial domination’ (Quijano, 2000: 1, as cited in Lugones, 2016: 15). She worked for over fifteen years as a development practitioner in India on projects which romanticised Western modernisation, portraying this as leading to a universal form of human progress. Her region is affected by civil unrest. Millions of Adivasis (‘Indigenous populations’) have been displaced by dam and mining ‘development’ projects (Xaxa and Devy, 2021). Laila’s social network and family are experiencing climate injustice. India is heading towards an anti-Muslim genocide (Genocide Watch, 2022). Meanwhile, Western powers and corporations attracted to India’s ‘enormous market ... have colluded with the Hindutva regime’s self-promotion as a bastion of development’ (Banaji, 2018: 333). Relative safety, as a lecturer working at IOE, affords her the privilege to speak up when many human rights defenders from marginalised backgrounds in India have been incarcerated (Amnesty International, 2020). For her, decolonisation is not a theoretical choice but a matter of survival.

Elaine’s position is one of privilege and anger at the continuation of the injustices which have produced and continue to reproduce the intersections of race, class, gender and locational inequalities. She grew up and was educated in South Africa under apartheid. Although her family was critical of those political injustices, the laws and racial divisions of the country helped secure her family’s income, wealth, educational opportunities and mobility. Elaine came to England to study in the 1970s and was active in the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and the African National Congress (ANC) in exile, where she worked on a range of education, women’s rights and gender projects while employed in teaching adult

education classes. From 1991, with the unbanning of the ANC, and the establishment of a democratic government in South Africa, she worked in universities on education and research initiatives, some in partnership with UN organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). She started work at IOE in 1992, initially on an insecure research contract, joining the EID academic group as a job share lecturer in 1995. She established an academic career, which became increasingly mainstream. Areas of her interest in gender and inequality have been personally linked with concerns for political and economic change, although she has written about the ways in which these ideas and the groups that promote them are always at risk of co-optation and disorientation (Unterhalter, 2017, 2022).

It can be seen from our biographies that we have come from places with some geographic and political distance from those who started work in our field at IOE. Sir Christopher Cox, termed by Clive Whitehead (2003) an 'imperial patrician' reformer, used his position in Whitehall, links with IOE, colonial and postcolonial administrations, to formulate a particular agenda. Whitehead (2003: 188) considered this entailed 'work with, rather than against, those in the indigenous population who were western-educated'. This article examines what that process of 'working with' comprised and how it changed over decades. We read this history through our biographies, which have been about contestations with many of these processes, drawing these into dialogue with archival documents, and selected interviews with key informants. Six in-depth interviews were conducted via Zoom, and further email exchange on points of detail took place in February 2022 with current or former staff teaching in the field of education and international development. Extensive archival holdings exist at IOE on the courses taught, research conducted and policy engagement in this field. This article takes a preliminary look at some of this material, which constitutes an extensive body of data, requiring further in-depth examination.

History

Table 1 presents the organisational location and changing name of the field of study of education and international development at IOE over 120 years. The Colonial Department was formally established in 1927, although there had been connections in this area in previous years, linked to teacher training, then the key focus of IOE work (Aldrich and Woodin, 2021). The initiative to establish the department was led by the director, Percy Nunn, and Joseph Oldham, Secretary of the International Missionary Council.

Table 1. Education and international development work at IOE: changing formulations (Source: data compiled from Aldrich and Woodin, 2021; Little, 2004; interviews with Angela Little, Carew Treffgarne, Peter Williams, Chris Yates, Pat Pridmore and Moses Oketch. EFPS School meeting reports, 2002–2012)

Period	Department/Group name
1927–1952	The Colonial Department
1952–1973	Department of Education in Tropical Areas
1956–1985	Department of Comparative Education
1973–1985	Department of Education in Developing Countries
1985–1995	Department of International and Comparative Education
1995–2002	Education and International Development Academic Group
2002–2014	School/Dept of Lifelong Education and International Development
2002–2012	School of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies
2012–2014	Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
2014–present	Education and International Development section in Department of Education, Policy and Society Centre of Education and International Development (CEID) formed 2017

The aim was to train teachers and support policy work of the Colonial Office's Advisory Committee for Native Education in Tropical Africa, later the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies. This mix of policy engagement with professional training, and the cross-disciplinary links with the London School of Economics, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and School of Oriental and

African Studies, was particularly novel, given the main focus of IOE at that time was on teacher training for London (Aldrich and Woodin, 2021; Kallaway, 2020a). (The distinctive orientation of the institutions of London University in the area of colonial social policy and practice appear an important component of the story, and they require detailed historical study.) Oldham's perspective on colonial relationships was complex, combining concern to work with colonial administrations on education, and some trenchant actions critiquing racism and forced labour in colonial settings (Bliss, 1984). The ways in which Oldham's critical ideas were or were not adopted requires more detailed investigation. Themes that have been researched highlight how the approach taken in the department was influenced by Fred Clarke, who was appointed director. Clarke's work in the 1930s had established a community of scholars associated with the *Yearbook of Education* and *Oversea Education*, identifying education as a key setting for former colonies to build modern societies (Kallaway, 2020b). Kallaway (1996: 253) notes of Clarke's particular contribution:

His prolific writings on the necessity for an education appropriate to the circumstances of modern democratic society, the nature of liberal values and 'ordered freedom', the need for universal secondary education, and the diversification of the curriculum to meet the needs of the modern world of work, represent a distinctive contribution to educational thought.

The ways in which this vision was supported by teaching and research at IOE awaits close examination.

In 1952, there was a shift in the name of the department from an unashamed reference to colonial relationships to a focus on a geographical space – 'education in tropical areas' (ETA). Later the name would reference a discursive space of 'developing countries' or 'international development'. The link with practice and work with teacher educators and administrators continued over the decades, with research becoming a more prominent feature of work from around the mid-1970s. Comparative education had been established as an academic discipline, with a professorial appointment of Joseph Lauwerys made in 1947, and a formal departmental identity, separate from ETA in 1956. From 1985 to 1995, in establishing DICE (the Department of International and Comparative Education), there was an attempt to dissolve the spatial and discursive relationships signalled by Education in Developing Countries (EDC) into a loosely formulated idea of 'international education' (Taylor, 2003). This area of work was connected with comparative education, prompting some later discussion, reflecting on this experience, of ways to combine different histories, methods and areas of study (Little, 2000, 2010; Bray, 2010). DICE is remembered as a period of tension, but it was also a period of heightened criticality and research in a widening ambit of concerns. From 1995 to 2002, there was a stand-alone academic group – Education and International Development (EID). Further restructurings after 2002 led to work on education and international development being distributed between larger organisational groupings, the School of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies (EFPS) and the School of Lifelong Education and International Development. These combined from 2012 into the Department of Education and Policy Studies, which had an education and international development section, loosely organising research and teaching. From 2017, the launch of CEID articulated a specific engagement with international development with a more explicit normative remit. From this location, some decolonial initiatives have been launched, as we describe.

The different names for the department, group, section or centre signal shifting relationships with both epistemic and political communities. The initial structure, as the Colonial Department, was both organisationally and epistemically enmeshed with colonial initiatives. Whitehead (1981) and Kallaway (2009, 2020a, 2020b) have charted how, during the interwar and postwar period, colonial and postcolonial states became increasingly interested in education, health and social welfare as areas for collaboration with mission organisations, and emergent political classes. Both colonial and postcolonial governments saw policy and practice in social development as a key site to intervene and shape a response to the growth of nationalism, socialism and totalitarianism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Colonial Department at IOE contributed to this work, training teachers, education administrators and teacher trainers. It participated in formulating British government policy. Departmental members, including Margaret Read who held the first professorial appointment in the field as Professor of Education with Special Reference to Colonial Areas and Lionel Elvin, Professor of Education with Special Reference to Tropical Areas, participated in some of the early work of international organisations, such as the New Education Fellowship and UNESCO (Aldrich, 2002; Clews, 2009; Kallaway, 2020b).

Much of the research, policy and practice work of these first decades is marked by formulations that do not engage with the injustices of colonisation. The ways in which this resonated with the

emerging discipline of comparative education requires some detailed investigation. Takayama (2018), in charting the history of comparative and international education at Teachers College in New York, draws out some links with colonial and imperial politics. A number of studies of the history of comparative education (for example, Cowen, 2009; Manzon, 2018; Epstein, 2018; Kim, 2020) note how the location and affiliation of particular individuals shaped the field of scholarship, while studies of the international organisations of the interwar period, such as the League of Nations, chart their initiatives to develop an international perspective through schools (Osborne, 2016; Li, 2021). What was distinctive about the IOE academics, such as Read, Mumford and Elvin, working in an emerging field and responding selectively to international organisation, awaits detailed study. Our preliminary review suggests that IOE's Colonial Department and EDT, nurtured a concern with state and non-state actors in education, the political-cultural interface of schooling, some distinctive features of the British Empire and the organisational formations which succeeded it.

Anthropologists played a key role in formulating the frameworks used in the early decades, drawing on their experience and perceptions of 'cultural contact' to advise colonial administrations (Kallaway, 2012). The politics of these relationships were rarely scrutinised. William Mumford, initially a superintendent of education in Tanganyika, before taking the post of lecturer in education for 'primitive peoples' in the Colonial Department in 1935 set this up as a sharp dichotomy:

although both the Europeans and natives pressed for more school facilities, they desired them for very different and mutually antagonistic reasons. The white man desired native education in order to train human tools for his economic and administrative machine and to make more efficient servants of the natives, whereas the natives desired the same education in order that they might attain an equality with and even challenge the white man in his own sphere. (Mumford, 1935 quoted in Kallaway, 2012: 428)

Margaret Read, a lecturer from 1939, worked closely with Christopher Cox and Arthur Creech Jones, Colonial Secretary in Attlee's postwar Labour government, drawing on a lexicon of ideas from Malinowski regarding the importance of culture contact. During the Second World War, she played a key role in promoting the concept of mass or non-formal education, later called 'community development', which she saw as crucial to colonial education policy, connecting schools and the communities (Read, 1950). Read (1950: 24) called for more studies of Indigenous learning traditions, and more studies of the English cultural tradition, noting the need for 'an informed confidence in our own cultural tradition which is certain of the contribution it has to give'. There is little critical commentary of imperial relationships in either her or Mumford's formulations. Racial inequalities, colonisation and the practice of unequal power were not scrutinised. John Lewis (1959: 12), who succeeded Elvin as Professor of Education with Special Reference to Tropical Areas, advocated using the good governance of education, and the culture it forms, as a bulwark against political disaster:

The political leaders of the new nations are particularly prone to the dangers of general suspicion and distrust and stand in particular need of integrity of purpose in their professional advisers. If, in the field of education, those who accept professional responsibility for policy, and its administration, fail in open mindedness and brave free discussion, then the communities they pretend to serve will rapidly find themselves on the slope which leads to aboriginal savagery and fratricide, instead of climbing the summit of civilised living in mutual confidence.

Here, histories of the economic and political relationships associated with 'the summit of civilised living' are not examined. The critical voices of scholars, activists and anti-racist and anti-colonial educators from the global majority, especially, from Black, Indigenous and People of Colour backgrounds, who were developing an analysis of education and decolonisation in that period, are not acknowledged. We are aware these identity labels are contested and problematic; we use them cautiously in this context to indicate the range of identities excluded, but we are also aware that coloniality is associated even with this naming process.

The changed name in 1952 – the Department of Education in Tropical Areas (ETA) – did not signal a questioning of this depoliticised presentation of education. As an Annual Report (AR 1951/52, quoted in Little, 2004: 14, emphasis added) noted:

The new title makes it clear that this Department has something to offer to all students of *educational problems* in tropical areas, where, *apart from* political relationships, there are *common elements in the economic and social conditions which are the background of educational advance*.

The field of study appears explicitly taken out of the political realm, to be understood as a response to education problems, familiar to all students. Lionel Elvin (1956: 15), who led ETA before becoming Director of IOE, considered Britain's loss of colonial power was to be mediated by 'continuance of an educational relationship'. This concern had been articulated in an IOE Jubilee lecture by the director, George Jeffery (1952: 100), who outlined the role of education to 'create binding forces within the Empire of a strength which no formal and political ties could assure'. Elvin (1956) formulated a position about the transition from colonial rule, asserting a confidence regarding methods for problem definition and solution. This suggests that the complexity of local, national and global relationships did not have to be understood as long as some feature of context – geographic, social, historical, constructed or romantically inflected – was noted:

Educational problems are the same everywhere; and they are always different, because the context is different ... for our compatriots who are going overseas those who teach here will need to continue to emphasise the relation between their work and its tropical context. For those who come to us from overseas we shall continue to give the best introduction we can to English education and to encourage them to see comparatively the problems that concern them at home. But more important still, it will be our privilege to try to share with both the heritage of educational wisdom of many civilisations and to do what we can to justify the hope that this may be a little enriched by what the British people have done when our colonial empire shall finally – I will not say have reached but achieved its end. (Elvin, 1956: 278)

While 'tropical areas' did not accurately describe the geographical location of all this work, it metonymically described somewhere that was not English, lay overseas, was subject to 'problems' and in need of enrichment by features of a British experience linked to colonial empire.

When he joined in 1972, ETA was, Peter Williams recalls, staffed primarily by White men who had worked in the Colonial Education Service or who had had connections with Christian missionaries. He notes they were 'rich in experience' and very devoted to their students, who were primarily teachers, head teachers or education administrators, aiming to take more senior jobs in ministries of newly independent states. Williams described his colleagues as largely focused on practice, and 'not very engaged' with the academic literature about education or development theory. Williams's own background was somewhat different, as he had worked on some of the economic and planning dimensions of mass education systems in education ministries of two newly independent governments, Kenya and Ghana, and written critically about how the World Bank related to those governments (Williams, 1975).

The change of departmental name to Education in Developing Countries (EDC), he recalls as being associated with a sense of 'things changing', establishing different relationships with newly independent governments, and a sense of opening up to international organisations, which were themselves shifting emphasis, including the World Bank, UNESCO and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Staff engaged in joint teaching with the School of Oriental and African Studies and collaborated with the mass distance education initiatives of the International Extension College. Some critical views were voiced regarding British government policy on aid and international student fees (Williams, 1984). Decolonisation appears, at the time, to be linked with political changes of putting government in 'local hands'. Staffing for short periods on certain courses at IOE was provided by academics from Kenya, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, but there was no strategy to diversify who was employed. Williams recalls that the expectation regarding staff appointments at that time was that nationals of newly independent states would be expecting to take senior positions in home governments and universities, rather than at IOE. There was no particular research strategy, but some projects were funded with aid from the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). At this moment, decolonisation was associated with the institutions of new states, rather than with a process of theory making or method or critical review of the continuation of colonial relationships in different forms, although work in other parts of IOE at the time, for example in the Centre for Intercultural Education led by Gundara from 1979, was starting to document how racism in British schools was linked with colonial relationships.

The political notion of 'developing countries' became somewhat neutralised in the blander idea of 'international education' associated with the formation of DICE. To what extent this was linked with some of the challenges emerging in the 1970s, which highlighted the uneven relationships of development is beyond our scope. From the 1970s, some academics in the Global North had begun to identify links between education policies, colonial relationships of social division and ideas of hierarchy and exclusion (for example, Carnoy, 1974; Said, 1978; Weiler, 1978; Kelly and Altbach, 1986). In this period, some IOE staff, working in the field of education and international development, engaged with theoretically informed research about development, raising questions about politics, power and exclusion. For example, Bray (2010) wrote about the politics of policy declarations on universal primary education when little support was provided for implementation, Bacchus (1990a) discussed the relevance of education curricula in 'developing' countries and Lauglo (1992) the orientation in vocational education. Bacchus (1990b), charting the history of education in the West Indies over many centuries of slavery, considered how to theorise relationships of dominance and dispossession. Hurst (1981, 1985) questioned the source of World Bank conclusions regarding quality education and explored the dynamics of democratisation and decentralisation. Thus, critical ideas and methods linked to history, economics, politics and the study of policy emerge as a space through which perspectives on decolonisation could be examined. While this was not unique to IOE, the publication of these works signals a shift in discursive frames.

The departmental staff profile changed, slightly, with regard to race and gender, but it was still primarily White and male. Very harmonious relationships existed with the ODA, where a number of staff had joint appointments. Thus, there were moves to think not only about education and different places (developing countries), but also some different perspectives (development studies). Angela Little delivered her inaugural lecture as Professor of Education (with reference to developing countries) in 1988. Her stress was 'the need for those domiciled in the North but who worked in and with the South to learn from the educational realities of developing countries' (Little, 2004: 30). Her phrasing stressed not so much the export of professional expertise, as had been evident in earlier inaugural lectures by her predecessors, but help, recognition and 'collective creation'. The goal she enjoined was to:

help students from developing countries to value their own country's experience and further the development of endogenous and national models of education. The existence and recognition of endogenous models in turn provide the conditions necessary for the collective creation of international knowledge and international models of education. (Little, 1988: 20)

The analysis being made was cooperative, rather than directly critical of mainstream structures of international development.

It was this ethos of an international web of relationships between North and South that partly characterised the EID academic group, which Little led between 1995 and 2002. In discussing the origins of the academic group's name, she recalled it was chosen partly for the resonance with development studies and partly because she was 'very keen that the education discussion and debate and teaching should go hand in hand with discussions about the meaning of development' (Angela Little, interview, 16 February 2022).

She stressed the importance of understanding and trying to express, through the group's name, the relations between the elements of an education system (for example, curriculum, teacher supply and education, assessment) and the overall purposes of education and its relation with societal 'development'. The notion of 'international development' reflected the complex and continuing educational and economic relations between the North and the South, while acknowledging the primacy of local and national relations between education and development goals. The departmental newsletter, published as *EID Review* from 1996 to 2001, expresses some of this, listing a wide range of research, policy and teaching activities across many different contexts, including collaborations with national and regional governments, local NGOs and projects focusing on teachers, HIV or language. The expansion of spending on aid offered new possibilities for research, as well as opening careers in international development. Students on MA programmes came, in greater proportions, from the UK and were younger. They included a larger number of women, and Black British students. A long-needed rebalancing of the predominantly White male staff profile began.

The critical debates of the 1990s regarding social movements, gender and globalisation led to intense discussions on how to frame and understand development, post-development and a range of inequalities, injustices and forms of dispossession (for example, Colclough and Manor, 1993; Rahnema

and Bowtree, 1997; Hamel et al., 2001; Kothari, 2005). What ethical and analytical resources, and what kinds of education partnership might be needed were themes that students and staff working in the EID academic group explored to different degrees in courses on gender, health and economics, and in different iterations of the core course. How to put these insights into practice, given many research and practice relationships funded by aid, was another locus of debate. There was a dispersed interface between theory, method, politics and practice, which may explain why terms such as 'decolonisation' were not deployed. Staff travelled extensively. But the power dynamics and relationships built through travel, consultancy or aid-funded research were not much discussed.

In 2002, the shift of some education and international development work into a department with sociology and philosophy of education (EFPS) deepened engagement with a critical scholarship on race, gender, intersectionality and inequality. Other staff moved to a newly created Department of Lifelong Education and International Development and began to document globalised economic relationships. A theme for further investigation is how much these moves into larger departments deepened or dissipated concerns with decolonisation.

Engagement with a wider range of disciplinary interlocutors may have prompted the launch of CEID in 2017, although concerns had been voiced for some years about the need to better support teaching, research and engagement work in education and international development. The CEID mission statement gave a central place to criticality, documenting injustices and specifying a broad set of relationships. Contentious terms such as 'developing countries' were dropped:

The Centre undertakes interdisciplinary research predominantly in and for Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific. Through our research and teaching, we consider how intersecting inequalities, hierarchies, exclusions, displacements, violence and conflicts affect education. Our distinctive research and practice entails work that is theoretically engaged, methodologically rigorous and critically reflexive about data and the contexts in which data are generated. (CEID, 2017: n.p.)

The statement outlines a broad understanding of education:

We understand education in its broader sense as a human practice, entailing relationships that are reproductive and transformative of political, economic, social and cultural contexts. We are interested in the connections and disconnections between different phases, spaces and forms of education, different disciplines, and local, national and international levels of analysis. (CEID, 2017: n.p.)

This signals a very different emphasis from the focus on education aims in the Colonial Department. The CEID statement is also much less straightforwardly confident regarding the potential of education in either colonial or postcolonial formations. It concludes with an aspiration to challenge and try to change injustice:

Our concerns are to promote quality education as a human right, a sustainable development goal, a peacebuilding framework, and a process for expanding opportunities, capabilities and freedoms. Our work on these themes documents the complexity of relationships and forms of understanding, and our normative concerns to address and try to change injustices. (CEID, 2017: n.p.)

What forms addressing and trying to change injustices has taken in CEID is beyond the scope of this article. Indicatively, it has been linked with initiatives in pedagogy, curriculum development and attempts at reshaping research relationships. We now turn to decolonisation, which is one aspect of this.

Decolonising and decolonial work

In the history we have set out, decolonising and decolonial work in education and international development appears to take three forms. First, there is a thread which has viewed decolonisation in limited terms as a process of establishing the education systems and relationships associated with postcolonial governments. This strand did not take up decolonial critiques (for example, Fanon, 1963; Rodney, 1972; Thiong'o, 1986), which look critically at epistemic forms and relationships and were

influential in many other disciplines. In this narrow view of decolonisation, the focus is on a particular *place*, often associated primarily with deficit, poverty, a 'learning crisis' or the need for 'capacity development'. Second, there is a thread which sees decolonisation and education as a process of addressing theoretically, methodologically or through data effects of colonial and postcolonial class formation, concentrations of capital and attendant intersecting inequalities. This sees decolonisation as expressed through *ideas*. For example in work Elaine has written, some co-authored with CEID colleagues, she has charted gender, race, ethnic, caste, class and intersecting inequalities resulting from policies and practices in postcolonial states and limits on education rights or capabilities. But it is rare for this work to look to global forms of economic, political or cultural inequality to explain these injustices (Unterhalter et al., 2012, 2013; Unterhalter and Dutt, 2001). Third, there are studies which see the decolonial as a more profound shift in naming Whiteness, identifying the consequences of a particular epistemic gaze and trying to shift power imbalances through different forms of practice. Laila's work, and that of other CEID colleagues, articulates this (Abdelnour and Abu Moghli, 2020; Kadiwal and Durrani, 2018).

The third strand, to which we turn now, sees decolonisation as a more profound shift in attending to the continuous epistemic, structural, economic, environmental, cultural and military violence that peoples face at the intersection of global/local processes. Andreotti (2006: 41) notes that if we neglect to consider these geopolitical imbalances, 'we may end up promoting a new "civilising mission"'. A decolonial approach questions whether mainstream education and international development are a new form of imperialism (Tikly, 2006; Andreotti, 2011, 2016). The perspective emphasises everyone's complicity and investments in harm, and it invites us to think 'otherwise' (Andreotti, 2011). The approach rejects the paradigm in which global and national elites determine the notion of universal progress in ways that serve the agendas of donors and eclipse other possibilities and epistemologies of progress and development. The concept of modernity/coloniality (Quijano, 2000; Dussel, 2002; Mignolo, 2011; Maldonado-Torres, 2011) views modern systems as 'inherently violent, exploitative, and unsustainable' (Andreotti, 2016: 27), with development initiatives linked with epistemic violence, racism, sexism and epistemicide (Spivak, 1988; Grosfoguel, 2013; Santos, 2014). Decolonisation is concerned to make spaces for subjugated peoples to contribute transformative knowledge and to demand reparations and global political accountability for justice (Rutazibwa, 2018; Pailey, 2020; Sriprakash et al., 2020).

Since the formation of CEID, work expressing all three forms of decolonisation has expanded. Initiatives explicitly invoking the third began partly in response to the Rhodes Must Fall movement in 2016, and the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, prompting conversations about decolonising the university. A focus on decolonial praxis includes a Decolonial Study Collective and Discussion Cafes with colleagues from other institutions. These use articles, podcasts, videos and poems to facilitate conversations. In 2021 the Alternative Histories of Education and International Development blog series was launched, aiming to go beyond a single story of development, exploring 'how some of the ideas in education and international development have evolved, changed and been contested in many parts of the world' (Unterhalter and Oketch, 2021: n.p.). This series, accompanied by staff and student discussion, formed a teaching resource. Students were invited to research historical and contemporary educators working in the field of education and international development who either challenged or reproduced social divisions. This approach to history and societies constitutes a very different orientation to that of early IOE academics in the field, who stressed relationships of 'cultural contact', rather than political contestation.

In 2021, student decolonial cafes discussed some situations of coloniality in teaching and learning on MA programmes, and how to try to resist them. A participatory approach, informed by Augusto Boal's (1985) 'Theatre of the Oppressed', Paulo Freire's (1972) 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and bell hooks's (1994) 'Teaching to Transgress' surfaced a need for 'unlearning', which entails 'an effort to forget your usual way of doing something so that you can learn a new and sometimes better way' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Unlearning highlights that all are undertaking a journey together, horizontally, dialogically, as co-unlearners, acknowledging our complicity in 'global and local unequal structures' (Kadiwal et al., in press).

Decolonial work raises questions of research method and partnership. Dalit (formerly 'untouchables' in the Hindu varna system) colleagues advised Laila that they no longer wanted to be objects of randomised control trials designed by elites. Instead of 'saving the oppressed', they asked, privileged populations should reverse their gaze, unpack how their accumulation, silence and complicity

may be directly linked to marginalised peoples' dispossession, silencing and oppression (Kadiwal et al., in press). This raises many issues for CEID research.

Decolonisation as praxis in teaching and research can be profoundly personally destabilising, while decolonisation by reference to places, or ideas, can remain at quite a surface level, without challenging or trying to change colonial relationships which establish hierarchies of knowledge and worth. In work on education and international development at IOE, there are examples of colonial processes and assumptions which require review. We need to look at which authors are selected for study and why, how modules are sequenced and problems framed, and how research impact is understood. We need to discuss whether our research promotes a 'White gaze' through which Whiteness and the West act as 'symbols of authority, expertise and knowledge' (Kothari, 2006: 14; Pailey, 2020). Some staff profiles and biographies illuminate material consequences of White privilege and taken-for-granted processes that need to change.

The idea of 'working with' members of Indigenous populations, suggested by Cox in 1952, casts a long shadow as that 'working with' has entailed limited questioning of the history of our work, and some of its connections with hierarchy and privilege. In concluding, 70 years on from Cox's lecture, we suggest some ways forward for our scholarly field and work in CEID.

Ways forward

The history we have charted is associated with many exclusions, hierarchies and unfinished projects for change. A key question is how we research, fund, collaborate and produce knowledge that does not reproduce coloniality, or overlook unspoken or unspeakable relationships. In reflecting on this process, Moses Oketch noted that our work needed 'a reset'. Our decolonial invitation is to collectively, in solidarity, rethink how we relate to the global majority (Rutazibwa, 2018). Decolonial methods in research and teaching offer us possibilities for being and knowing based on principles of 'relationships, connections, reciprocity and accountability' (Smith, 2021: xiv). This entails many difficult conversations, which require time and patience. A starting point could be to mainstream anti-racism. Professional development, capacity-building training and reflection sessions led by paid, expert, anti-racist educators from historically marginalised backgrounds could develop praxis on race, power and privilege. We could work towards mainstreaming 'race' and intersectionality in research and teaching, and approaches to working together.

There is a need to reimagine development and subvert its White gaze. Instead of development being the study of the racialised and marginalised 'others' who need 'saving', there is a need to study elites who claim to do development, identifying their assumptions, practices, methods, epistemologies and silences. Terminology needs critical interrogation. As Pailey (2020: 10) notes, there is a 'blasphemy of calling countries "developed" when they have systematically dispossessed and annihilated indigenous peoples or impoverished black and brown people'. Reversing the gaze invites a reflection on our positionality, privileges and complicity in relationships of injustice. We could ask: 'How are we ourselves as academics, implicated and complicit in the problems we want to address?' It is important to have a safe space for debate, criticism and counter-narratives to be heard and appreciated. One of the most challenging ideas of decolonising relates to our positionality and involves reflecting on our location in the geopolitics of knowledge production (Bhambra et al., 2018). In our fight for social justice, White development practitioners and scholars can take a stand to acknowledge how the racial hierarchy in this field gives them unearned privileges, which dispossesses non-White peers. Reflecting on our positionality is about questioning 'internal colonialism' and to 'check our privileges as researchers' (Smith, 2021: xvi). Critiquing this positionality has positive implications for students and a university. It makes staff and students 'humble knowledge practitioners open to dialogue with other perspectives' (Bhambra et al., 2018: 122).

A decolonial process needs to interrogate the claims of objective, singular, universal and taken-for-granted descriptions in many academic works in education and international development. The process of knowledge production and the ways in which a canon has come to be established need critique. In contrast to these exclusionary relationships, Smith (2021: 239) asks, 'what happens to research when the researched become the researchers?' Decolonisation entails 'a practice of sovereignty' (Smith, 2021: 285) and self-determination. Based on her decades of experience researching as a Maori scholar, she shows that, when those who have been objects of research are involved in setting their own research

agendas, a greater accountability to communities develops, a giving back in ways that are transformative. Smith describes a range of projects that recover histories, reclaim lands and resources, expand justice, enable self-determination, 'talk back', 'talk up', identify patterns of imperialism and racism, and forms of hegemonies. This involves renaming, representing, reparation, repatriation and sharing. It entails using our privileges to centre this process and amplify these voices on their own terms.

Decolonisation is not a universal template, and it takes place in many settings. In work on education and international development, we need to explore historical and contemporary interconnections and networks for change. Decolonisation is not a rejection of the West; it is not a rejection of advancements in knowledge and skills. It is not about insulating ourselves with a particular local way of knowing, or going back to some romanticised golden age. Our world has historically been interconnected, hybrid and pluralistic, and it remains so, as does our field of scholarship. Decolonisation is an exercise in recognising those interconnections, plurality and pluriversality, as well as acknowledging political and economic systems of unjust reproduction, imbalances of power, exploitation, discrimination, imperialism, omissions and processes of silencing.

Conclusions

This article has aimed to reflect critically on the history of the field in which we work, its institutional formation, key ideas and approaches to research and teaching. Focusing on the history of IOE, we have charted how academics were initially closely involved with colonial relationships, but generally silent on the dispossession, war and exploitation that shaped them. These initiatives need to be set in a historical context, and we have outlined uneven efforts to change relationships formed under colonial conditions. The analysis distinguishes three different forms of decolonisation. A focus on postcolonial states, education systems and practices has long been a feature of research and teaching in education and international development. This approach has tended to prioritise concerns with efficient education delivery and inclusion. A second approach has widened engagement with decolonising ideas and methodologies, including those problematising race and inequality, but has not attended with any depth to changing forms of epistemic practice and knowledge hierarchies. A third decolonial approach, starting to emerge, looks at the multifaceted consequences of colonisation and raises many issues about how we teach, do research and build solidarities, given the injustices of contemporary geopolitics. The discussion has surfaced many areas that need closer investigation, including how colonial relationships in education at IOE were established and sustained, what emphasis they had and why, who contested these and with what consequences. Connections and disconnections with anti-racist and anticolonial struggles to change education need to be understood. Starting to tell this story is our beginning to try to change some directions in our field of study. There is much still to understand, and to change. As Maya Angelou reminds us: 'Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better'.

Acknowledgements

This article draws on work over two years in CEID discussing decolonisation. Our thanks to colleagues, students and friends for insights that have helped shape our analysis. Thanks are also due to current and former staff – Angela Little, Moses Oketch, Pat Pridmore, Carew Treffgarne, Peter Williams, Chris Yates – who worked on aspects of education and international development at IOE, for formal interviews, which we recorded in February 2022, and for their help in locating key documents.

Our thanks to Mai Abu Moghli, Peter Kallaway, Angela Little, Jenny Parkes and Rosie Peppin Vaughan for looking closely at the detail, and for insightful comments on the draft manuscript.

Declarations and conflicts of interest

Research ethics statement

The authors declare that research ethics approval for this article was provided by the University College ethics board Review Reference REC 1591; Data protection registration Z6364106/2022/02/29.

Consent for publication statement

The interviews were conducted in accordance with approval for our project REC 1591 (Data protection registration no. Z6364106/2022/02/29). The authors declare that research participants' informed consent to publication of findings – including photos, videos and any personal or identifiable information – was secured prior to publication.

Conflicts of interest statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest with this work. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the authors during peer review of this article have been made. The authors declare no further conflicts with this article.

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