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Global Teachers, Australian Perspectives

Goodbye Mr Chips, Hello Ms Banerjee

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ISBN 978-981-4451-35-2 ISBN 978-981-4451-36-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-981-4451-36-9
Springer Singapore Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013947381

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Printed on acid-free paper

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Foreword

When I first faced a class in another country – Canada – I remember being very nervous about what the students would think of me, and uncertain about how I could speak with them. I had been teaching for 17 years at the time, so I was fairly practised at the trade, but this was new territory in every way. I soon learned one important lesson, that jokes don't migrate as easily as people do. Teachers' humour is very indexical! I gradually learned another and more hopeful lesson, that my different knowledge and style of thinking could be assets for the students, if we had the time and goodwill to make them so.

My teaching career has been in universities, not schools, but my experiences, then and in a later migration, have some overlap with the stories of travel and settlement documented in this book. It is a cliché to say our world is global, and much of the media and corporate talk about 'globalization' is, socially speaking, quite naive. Our world is also massively unequal, and those inequalities are constantly exploited for economic and political advantage. But new possibilities for movement and exchange are also created. The growing global mobility of school teachers is an important reality for our thinking about education.

This book challenges us to think in ways that educators usually don't. We are all familiar with ideas of multicultural education, and we mostly subscribe to a vague idea of international cooperation. These ideas are qualified by the fears whipped up by right-wing ideologues of 'border protection' and 'war on terror'. They are hardly soothed by businessmen's invocation of the 'global market' – since global market forces have become a major source of social anxiety. It's important then, as in so many issues, to pay attention to the real experience at the grass roots. We need to find out what actually happens in the lives of the people who are weaving the fabric of global society.

That is exactly what this book does. We hear the voices of teachers who have made the long trips and negotiated the informal barriers and the official barbed wire. We are introduced to the dilemmas of recognition, both formal recognition of qualifications and informal recognition of skills and experience. We see the interplay of race, gender, nationality, even class, not as abstract intersections but as dynamics through time, through life stories.

We learn, perhaps with a shock, that the meaning of being a teacher, the professional identity of teachers, cannot be taken for granted. This varies from place to place and is at stake in migration. We learn that the large-scale making of an internationalized labour force is an intensely human process. It is sometimes buoyant and successful, sometimes shattering in its consequences.

This book invites us to think afresh about the industrial consequences of labour migration in education. Those consequences include the working conditions of migrant teachers, the uses made of their skills and knowledge by schools and systems, and the questions of recognition and certification. On the evidence of this book, Australian school systems are not handling these issues well. With the ascendancy of neoliberal politicians and policymakers, introducing more intrusive testing systems and accreditation regimes, it is not likely that this will change soon.

A really important feature of this book is that the authors invite us to think *educationally* about the migration of teachers. This is not only about teachers' educational needs – something Australian education has mostly forgotten (in-service programmes were the first to go when the public sector funding squeeze came on). It's also about the educational resource that internationally mobile teachers represent for the school system generally and the children in their classes specifically.

Such teachers can be a tremendous resource in curriculum development (to the extent systems recognize teachers as participants in making curriculum, again something that neoliberal policymakers seem to hate). They can be a strategic resource in working with migrant children and multicultural school communities. Migrant teachers' own continuing overseas networks, one of the most interesting points documented in this book, can also be an educational asset for the school.

Finally, the book encourages us to abandon the 'cultural cringe', the habit of looking only to Europe and the United States for ideas and authority. The authors encourage us to take a much more global view of educational and social thought. There is, at present, an international movement that criticizes Eurocentrism in educational thought, the humanities and social science. This book not only joins that movement, it also shows a practical basis beyond the academic world, in the experience of growing numbers of teachers, for a more globally inclusive and more democratic view of education.

University of Sydney

Raewyn Connell

Acknowledgements

The authors of this book would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their help with the original project, including time, planning, data collection sites, feedback on survey design and construction, feedback on draft report, distribution of information about the project and funding to assist with employing invaluable research assistance.

Thanks for funding support go to the Australian Government Research Council, New South Wales Teachers Federation (NSWTF), New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (formerly New South Wales Department of Education and Training, NSWDET), South Australian Branch of the Australian Education Union (AEUSA), South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (SADECS), Western Australian Department of Education (formerly the Western Australian Overseas Qualifications Recognition Unit and Western Australian Department of Education Workforce Policy and Coordination Unit) and the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia.

Particular thanks to people in these organizations: Penny Carosi, Amber Flohm, Angelo Gavrielatos and Mark Goudkamp (NSWTF); Annie Hollander and Michael Smith (NSWDET); Lynn Hall and Sam Lisle (AEUSA); Cheryl Glenie, Susie Hank, Carmen Patterson and Glenys Thompson (SADECS); Andrew Doran and Mike Jones (Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development); Susan Arrowsmith, Glenis Bray, Claire Williams, Mark Dennison, Helen Gerrard, David Hardie, Chris Porter, Catherine Topping and Errol d'Rosario (Western Australian Department of Education Workforce Policy and Coordination Unit); and Paul Andrews (State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia).

The following research assistants are warmly thanked: Josina van den Akker, Guo Wei, Naome Reid, Katherine Watson, Helen Young and Yu (aka Catherine) Zhao.

Thanks also go to: the University of Western Sydney; the University of Technology, Sydney; and the Centre for Educational Research, University of Western Sydney.

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Abbreviations

AEU	Australian Education Union
AEUSA	Australian Education Union, South Australia
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEST	Department of Education, Science, and Training
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
ET	Emigrant Teacher
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ISLPR	International Second Language Proficiency Ratings
IT	Immigrant Teacher
LOTE	Language other than English
NESB	Non-English-speaking backgrounds
NSW	New South Wales
NSWDET	New South Wales Department of Education and Training
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers Federation
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTT	Overseas Trained Teacher
PEAT	Professional English Assessment for Teachers
RSMS	Regional Sponsorship Migration Scheme
SA	South Australia
SADECS	South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TRT	Temporary Relieving Teacher
WA	Western Australia
WACOT	Western Australian College of Teaching
WADoE	Western Australian Department of Education
WADTWD	Western Australian Department of Training and Workforce Development
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
UWS	University of Western Sydney

Chapter 1

Introduction

The title of this book, *Global Teachers, Australian Perspectives: Goodbye Mr. Chips, Hello Ms Banerjee*, requires some explanation. *Goodbye Mr. Chips* was a novel by James Hilton published in the 1930s about a shy, ageing but popular teacher, Mr. Chipping, in his final year at Brookfield, a fictional British public boarding school. The story has had a strong life in popular culture. Three films (1939, 1969 and 2002) were adapted from the book: the 1939 film starring Robert Donat as Mr. Chips is a black and white classic. The book also generated a 1939 radio play (with Laurence Olivier as Mr. Chips), a theatre production and a 1984 BBC TV series. *Goodbye Mr. Chips* has a number of meanings for the authors of this book. The first is that Mr. Chips represented education in the past, while global teachers represent education of the present and the future. The *Goodbye/Hello* of the title references the arrival (of immigrant) teachers and the departure (of emigrant) teachers, the swinging door of global mobility of the contemporary teaching profession. Of course not all departing teachers are male and not all arriving teachers are female. But teaching is a predominantly female profession and most globally mobile teachers are women. *Hello Ms Banerjee* captures for us this trend for global teachers to be women from increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds, and increasingly from Asia and Africa.

A teaching qualification and teaching experience is today a passport to global mobility. Today's teacher is a *global teacher*. The contemporary world is one of increasing mobilities, characterized by the global movement of capital, goods and services, information, culture and people: the age of globalization has become the age of migration. Many Western countries today are facing a growing shortage of professional and highly skilled workers. This is mainly a consequence of a decline in birthrates in the West, the retirement of many baby-boomer professionals and the strong growth of the services sector that characterizes the contemporary Western economy. More and more teachers are joining doctors, nurses, engineers and computer professionals in spending part of their career in another country. They are part of the growing tide of *immigrant teachers*. In Australia a young English couple teaches students aged 4–15 at Kandiwal School (www.kandiwalschool.com),

in a small remote Aboriginal community on the Mitchell Plateau, in the far north-western corner of Western Australia. A little further south-east in the remote heart of Western Australia, a teacher from Kenya works in a town set up by a large mining company and spends his weekends playing football and occasionally going pig shooting with the locals. This teacher was recruited by the Western Australian Department of Education at one of the many 'Job Expos' held in Dublin, London, Amsterdam or elsewhere. Further south, on Australia's vast west coast many immigrant teachers work in schools in Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. Over on the east coast, some 4,000 km from Perth in regional New South Wales, Science and Maths teachers from India and Malaysia teach in local high schools. Without these immigrant teachers there would otherwise be a teacher shortage, particularly in remote or 'hard to staff' schools. These global teachers reap the benefits of a multicultural society as they are welcomed and settle into a community with a thriving local Indian Diaspora. Many other teachers from Asia, Europe, Africa and North America teach in schools in Sydney, Australia's largest and most cosmopolitan city. These global teachers not only teach in another country, but also teach students from all over the world, another dimension of the phenomenon of the global teacher. In the South Australian outback, an immigrant teacher travels a 600 km return journey to work daily so that his wife does not have to live in a town that has cast them as outsiders, revealing that not all experiences are positive. Many other immigrant teachers work in schools in Adelaide, the state capital.

In Toronto, New York, London, Paris, Auckland and other global, cosmopolitan cities, global teachers are in demand. But they are also needed in schools in the Canadian prairies, the US Mid-west and the rural areas of Great Britain, France and New Zealand. Immigrant teachers are also in demand in China, Japan, Korea and Singapore, particularly for the teaching of English, the linguistic gold standard of globalization.

Australia has more immigrants than nearly every other Western society in the world today with one in four Australians born overseas. In recent decades young immigrants with skills and professional qualifications in areas such as education, health, and finance or information technology are given increasing priority to go to the top of the list of the one million people who inquire about immigrating to Australia each year. Like most immigrants, these immigrant professionals settle in Australia's large coastal capital cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane or Adelaide, the teaching professionals filling shortages in hard-to-staff schools and in curriculum areas such as Maths and Science. But Australia's regional and rural areas also need professionals to fill shortages, as the examples of immigrant teachers employed in remote areas of Australia, mentioned above, show. For professionals like teachers, global mobility is a swinging-door. Opportunities arise for immigrant teachers in a country at the same time that many of those countries' teachers are also moving abroad for global teaching opportunities. Just as a teaching qualification enables global mobility *into* Australia for overseas educated teachers, it also opens *outward*; providing opportunities for Australian educated teachers to fill the shortages in classrooms in Singapore, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Korea, Vietnam, Tonga, the Beru Islands, Fiji and elsewhere. Globalization of

education provides opportunities for unprecedented growth in Asian countries such as China and other multilingual speaking countries world-wide. Australian educated teachers add their intellectual labour in the growing demand for providers and purveyors of the English language, generated by the increasing global dominance of English as the *lingua franca* of contemporary globalization. These teachers, who we call *emigrant teachers*, comprise an important component of the one million Australians who work overseas, the mainly professional Australian Diaspora.

Around the globe today the Australian Diaspora rubs shoulders with the Chinese Diaspora, the Indian Diaspora, the Kiwi Diaspora, the Canadian and American Diasporas, the British and French Diasporas and many more. Many of its members are young professionals with teaching, medical, science, business or engineering degrees. Some will return home after one migration experience, others will move from country to country as opportunities and interests dictate. Most return home when they're children are old enough, although some stay away forever, becoming life-long expats. They are all part of the phenomenon called circular migration.

In this book we concentrate on the global mobility of teachers, the immigrant and emigrant teachers who form the contemporary cohort of what we call global teachers. These stories of the new mobilities associated with the teaching profession in the twenty-first century are a window into the increasing international movement of people, particularly young professionals, which will become more important in the twenty-first Century. One and a half centuries ago, unskilled male Chinese sojourners with no English-language skills sought manual labour in the goldfields of America and Australia. Today young Chinese teachers come to teach Mandarin in our schools. Sixty years ago unskilled and semi-skilled European workers moved *en masse* to an uncertain future in industrial jobs generated by the post-1945 industrial boom across the seas, in the settler immigration countries of the United States of America, Australia and Canada. Today globalization has seen these manufacturing industries move from developed Western nations to developing Asian and Latin American nations, transforming most Western nations to service-based economies where the new jobs require a high level of education and fluency in English.

Immigrant teachers and emigrant teachers are typical of the new migrant in the age of globalization today. There is international competition between Western nations for their services, complemented by increasing competition from fast-developing Asian and other non-English speaking countries for teachers whose first language is English. In this book we investigate the Australian experience of global teachers as a window into the way that education and migration increasingly intersect in shaping new mobilities. Understanding the global mobility of teachers in Australia today helps to understand the new Age of Migration while at the same time providing new insights into the Age of Education in an increasingly mobile world.

What motivates *immigrant* teachers to take the risky and costly move to a country at the other end of the world? What are their hopes, dreams and aspirations? And what is the reality? Are the experiences of immigrant teachers positive and are their dreams fulfilled? Or do they face institutional and societal barriers and prejudices that leave them with a bitter taste, regretful of their decision to teach in a new

country? Do they experience a warm welcome in the schools and communities in which they settle? Are their international teaching qualifications and experiences rewarded and utilised or do they face institutional and personal constraints and resentment in their new Australian classrooms? What stories do they convey to fellow teachers back home or in other countries about the experience of teaching in Australian schools? And what of their future plans? Will they stay, or will they go? What are their future national and international mobility trajectories?

And what about the *emigrant* teachers who join the Australian Diaspora in living and teaching in other countries? What are their experiences about qualification recognition? How are they received in their new classrooms by students, parents and other teachers? Is their experience positive or negative? What will be their future plans about global mobility? Will they return to Australian classrooms or continue their journey of global circular migration?

The global movement of teachers is an important issue for school education throughout the world, and the issues facing immigrant and emigrant professionals have been the subject of significant recent research in the past 5–10 years in countries such as Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and South Africa. In 2004 a number of countries in the Commonwealth agreed to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2004) in an attempt to address critical problems faced by national education systems and individuals alike and to prevent poaching of teachers from underdeveloped nations.

Although Australia is one of the nations that hasn't agreed to the Protocol, it has met with other Pacific nations, where a range of recommendations were made including transparency in recruitment, maintenance of professional status, ongoing professional development and a common framework of teacher qualifications, comparability and quality assurance. However, there is no national policy concerning the recruitment of overseas-educated teachers or how to manage their integration into the workforce once they arrive. Nor are there protocols to prevent 'brain drain' of emigrant teachers, or on how to best utilize the developed skills of those who have worked overseas and then returned to continue their careers in Australia. Yet, the federal government's education reform agenda is expected to address some of the recommendations, namely the mobility of teachers and the associated issues of recognition of certification and accreditation as well as the development of a National Curriculum.

Despite the importance of understanding and responding to the global movement of teachers in Australia, other than a few older and smaller studies (Han 2004; Inglis and Philips 1995; Kamler et al. 1999; Reid 2005) there is no comprehensive national study of the way that globalization is changing dimensions of the teaching profession. The Australian College of Educators (ACE 2001) carried out a national survey that provided a tantalizing glimpse into the diversity of the teaching force but there are a number of factors related to the diversity and movement of teachers that we still do not understand (ACE 2001). Some work has also been done on the specific contexts of individual states including Western Australia (Dunworth 1997; Jones and Soyza 2006) and Queensland (Bella 1999; Oliver 1998).

This book reveals the critical importance of recognising and responding to teacher mobilities in a context where teaching professionals are increasingly

accountable in what Power (1997) has called an ‘audit culture’. The voices of immigrant teachers in particular reveal the constraints to their practice and their capacity to be recognized, as a consequence of this culture of surveillance, accountability and standardization.

While the book investigates in detail the Australian experience of global teachers, this is within the context of the current state of play internationally. Australia is not alone in experiencing increasing mobility of its professional classes, in particular teachers. Global teachers in all countries of the world today share similar experiences of differential treatment, rights and expectations wherever they go. The international literature reveals that global teachers experience difficulties in negotiating the red tape of the migration and education bureaucracies. The difficulties of getting their teaching qualifications and experience recognized and adequately rewarded is a problem for all global teachers today, irrespective of which country they are in. Global teachers also experience difficulties associated with a racialized response to their culture, religion, accent or language, even those who are white and Western. Their professional identities undergo considerable change and in many cases mobility results in a downgrading of their status.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical and methodological approaches used in the project that underpins the book. However, since mobility requires change, and globally mobile professionals accept this fact, we critically utilise Bourdieu’s theory of reconversion (1984) to understand the strategies that teachers use in responding to pressures in order to make sense of and remake their professional identities. At the same time we are critical that Bourdieu’s key concept of cultural capital is employed in a mono-cultural way, unnecessarily limiting its power as an analytical tool for understanding the cosmopolitan underpinnings of the cultural diversity of global teachers and how these shape their experiences as teachers in the culturally-diverse classrooms in which they teach and the neighborhoods into which they settle. We argue that reconversion is not a matter of choice, since the tests of employability do not recognize the different capabilities of immigrant teachers. We make use of the concept of, and processes of, racialization in order to help understand and explain the key impact that cultural, religious and linguistic difference and diversity has on the global teachers’ experience.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 examine recent research into global teachers in Australia. Chapter 3 reviews current trends in permanent and temporary migration to Australia drawing on secondary data sources (census data; a longitudinal survey of immigrants in Australia) and primary data sources (a survey of 269 immigrant teachers in three Australian states). From this survey, it looks at their immigration experience, their experiences of teaching and living in Australia, their level of satisfaction personally and professionally and their future intentions. In Chap. 4 we draw on focus groups and in-depth interviews with immigrant teachers to provide ‘actuality’ and ‘voice’ to the experiences of, and motivations for, global teachers coming to Australia. In their own words we learn about their journey as an immigrant teacher; their stories in their new schools and communities. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the ways in which the process of gaining employment after a series of ‘testing’ processes is difficult for many internationally educated teachers. Chapter 5

presents an analysis of tests of internationally educated teachers' employability in New South Wales, parallel to language testing for migration, citizenship and asylum that can impede mobility. Chapter 6 presents internationally educated teachers' critiques of these tests as the basis for change. Chapter 7 looks at the experiences of immigrant teachers in Australian schools and Australian communities through the prism of racialization (Miles 1993) because of the markers of their 'immigrant-ness', or their difference when compared to non-immigrant teachers: their accent, the colour of their skin, their dress, cultural difference and their international teaching experiences.

Chapter 8 presents the experiences of our immigrant teacher counter-parts: Australian-educated teachers who teach in other countries, to remind us that the global movement of teachers for Australia is a two-way process. The chapter critically examines the theories used to understand the experiences of predominantly white global teachers to reveal their a-mobility and argues that new approaches are needed. In these chapters we note the necessity to convert capital for emigrant and immigrant teachers, the changing nature of what is valued by employers, and the ways in which English language capacity and cultural difference mediates potential difficulties for globally mobile Australian-educated teachers.

The final chapter reflects on the experience of global teachers in Australia and its implications for a better understanding of the important global mobilities that increasingly characterize the professional and personal lives of teachers around the world today. It reevaluates the theoretical concepts used to understand global teachers and discusses the implications of this study for education theory and migration theory. This concluding chapter also discusses appropriate policy responses to the growing global teacher phenomenon and the directions for further research.

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