CHAPTER 4

Indentured Labour and Colonial Education: A Comparative Reappraisal

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INTRODUCTION

How were the descendants of nineteenth-century indentured labourers educated? From a global historical perspective, one might approach this as a question of colonial mobility and settling beginning in the early nineteenth century, stretching into the age of high imperialism and setting the stage for the era of third world nationalism and decolonization. In line with recent scholarship in the field of colonial education, we can situate this question as how descendants of colonial labour migrants were integrated into colonial educational regimes (Swartz & Kallaway 2018, 362-67; Bagchi, Fuchs & Rousmaniere 2014, 1-10).

This positioning works exceedingly well for paradigmatic examples defined by intraimperial indentured transits, such as Guyana, Mauritius and Trinidad, where the colonial power in question was the same at both the majority of migrants' origins (British controlled South Asia) and the destination site. Yet, it becomes somewhat more complicated in interimperial cases, such as Suriname and Réunion, in which the majority of indentured labourers (also in these cases, South Asian) were putative subjects of another power (Britain, rather than the local provider of education, the Netherlands and France respectively), in certain instances well into the twentieth century. And it is insufficient in explaining transits to

two important Pacific settings of indenture, Peru and Hawai'i, which were sovereign states involved in nationalist education projects during the nineteenth century, and whose indentured migrants for the most part also came from sovereign states (China, Japan, Portugal). As Pierre Guidi (2018) has recently shown in the case of early twentieth century Ethiopia, colonial education occurred beyond formally colonized territories, though the coloniality of this education becomes complicated when considering education by non-Euro-American schoolteachers of children not racialized as White. The deeper one probes into the nexus between indenture and education on a global scale, the trickier the question becomes.

In this article, one can take this multiplicity as food for thought. While scholars are increasingly committed to recovering the global dimensions of indenture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the comparative analysis of institutional arrangements on site, such as schooling, remains nascent (Allen 2019). It is proposed that a comparative approach to the varying speeds of universal educational provision in sites defined by indentured labour migration reveals an underrecognized dimension of the history of mass education, in between the common binary of 'colonial education' versus 'citizenship education'. During the second half of the twentieth century, schools were seen as a major plank for recently independent states to rectify perceived challenges inherited from the colonial period, particularly ethnic discord and educational inequalities, usually with the intent of promoting a new multicultural, integrative or decolonized nationalism. Less appreciated, however, is the longevity of this perceived problem, which was quickly identified in various world sites soon after the initiation of extensive indentured labour migrations in the nineteenth century. In most settings, new diversities emergent from extensive indentured immigration raised questions about social cohesion, particularly surrounding language and emplacement, from the very beginning.

From the mid-nineteenth century, a minority of educationalists, policymakers and members of the colonial public consistently suggested universal integrated education as the most effective means of bridging intercommunity difference, with the stakes at least as

bio-political as they were benevolent. Yet the degree to which this policy was implemented varied according to the pre-existing characteristics of the site in question. The issue was not merely the amount of resources thought expedient by decision-makers in a certain place at a certain time to dedicate to education, usually in an inverse relationship to perceived social or political threats from (former) labourers. More often, it had to do with a perception of the state's differential obligations to specific groups, on the grounds of race, indigeneity, former experience of enslavement, relative duration of settlement, subjecthood and recent history of migration.

One can below by a theoretical reflection of colonial education as a category of historical and social scientific analysis since decolonization, before considering British colonial office educationalist Arthur Mayhew's comparative reflections on colonial education provoked by his stay in Hawai'i during the late 1930s. Building on Mayhew's perception of a connected history of imperial policies, one considers indentured migrants featured how in proposed programmes and actual education practices in settings of indenture within the British Empire and beyond. One focuses in turn on compulsory education, subjecthood versus citizenship, the particular distinction made in certain sites featuring indigenous populations, and language. Rather than offering a comprehensive analysis, one's objective is to indicate comparative dimensions for future studies of indenture and education to explore.

COLONIAL EDUCATION AS TOPIC: COLONIAL EDUCATION AS PROBLEM

The concept of colonial education has a shifting, contested and polemical history. In recent decades, academics have broadened the concept to serve as a more capacious category, though without the analytical potency of Marxist and postcolonial critiques of the 1970s. Walter Rodney (1972, 264), writing on African contexts, argued, 'colonial schooling was education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of under development'. Martin Carnoy (1974, 14) encapsulated

postcolonial frustration around the third world with what was perceived as the stratified nature of colonial education. In his evisceration of the civilizing mission, he argued that Western schooling arrived not for uplift but to promote imperialist domination, with schooling a crucial component of the expansion of the capitalist world system, which sorted children in hierarchical social roles reinforcing social relations of production and the transmission of economic structure from generation to generation.

George Beckford (1976, 31) defined the cultural logic of colonial education within his notion of the plantation system as a 'total institution', featuring highly centralized decision-making processes over relatively large areas, high numbers of unskilled workers, authoritarian patterns of management, the demarcation of workers from decision-makers by clear social and cultural differences and a rigid pattern of social stratification based on 'a caste system'. Carnoy (1974, 16-17) noted that limited social mobility was permitted, since 'Western schools were used to develop indigenous elites which served as intermediaries between metropole merchants and plantation labour'. Voicing the line of nationalist decolonization, the main 'success story of colonial schooling' lie in the development of a tiny cadre of nationalists who sought to disrupt the colonial fusion of capitalist forces on one side, and cultural imperialism promoted by education and Christianization on the other (Carnoy 1974, 16-17).

The notion of a consistent 'project' of cultural imperialism undergirding colonial education, otherwise termed the Carnoy thesis, was contested in the 1970s and 1980s on empirical grounds, with British-Kiwi education policy scholar Clive Whitehead (1988, 211-30) for instance arguing that no 'deliberate and sustained policy of cultural imperialism' could be identified in British colonial office policy on schooling, which was inconsistent and liberal throughout the colonial period. More analytically, the problem lies in the teleology of the argument that missionary endeavour with schooling was always in sync with the needs or desires of state power and capital. The Carnoy thesis in fact recapitulated a school of thought broadly promoted during the first half of the twentieth century by British educational policymakers, who

subscribed to the notion of the union between state and church as a foundational component of British government, in contradistinction to other powers, such as the US. This was a type of imperial self-stylizing that subsequent imperial historians, such as Whitehead, denied actually held true for different phases of imperial rule. The issue here is thus the historicity of the representation of colonial policy.

The case of British imperial educationalist Arthur Mayhew is instructive. During the summer of 1936, he joined education specialists and policymakers from around the world convened in Honolulu to participate in a five-week residential conference, co-organized by Yale and the University of Hawai'i and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Entitled 'Education in Pacific Countries', participants considered commonalities and differences in approaches to education adopted at sites across the Pacific. Serving in the capacity of Joint Secretary of the British Advisory Committee of Education, Mayhew had recently completed a report on education in the British Caribbean (1931-2), delivered lectures on British colonial education at Yale University (1934) and was on his way to conduct a report on education in Fiji (Whitehead 2003, 161). Reflecting on conversations with American specialists in Hawai'i and at Yale, Mayhew conceded that it was evident that the provision of education along ethnic lines in major sites of indentured migration had led to 'fissiparous effects'. Further, 'Distinctive school systems organized on a racial basis in areas such as Fiji, Malaya, or Kenya, raise questions which are difficult to answer and lay us open to the charge, plausible though unjust, that our policy is: 'Divide et impera' (Mayhew 1938, 33).

During 'frequent discussion of colonial problems with American educationalists in Yale University, Honolulu, elsewhere', he experienced recurring surprise 'at our deliberate encouragement of local cultures and languages, and at our apparent failure to recognize the unifying value of the English language and of English political and cultural traditions' (Mayhew 1938, 62). Further, he noted a basic difference in the position between the American separation of church and state and the British government's

grounding in their cooperative union. Noting that the US has rapidly marched into the Pacific and 'absorbed, within the last century, a greater variety of races than any other nation in history. . . . The task of unification has been imposed on it and perhaps the most important agency in this work has been the school' (Mayhew 1938, 62). Mayhew judged Hawai'i a distinctly American success story, though argued that perhaps Americans 'underestimated' the power of the unifying practices of 'good American citizenship' in settings lacking, as 'in America or Hawaii', 'families and communities leading instinctively, by tradition and not as a result of school training, the life of the good American citizen' (Mayhew 1938, 62-3).

To what extent do Mayhew's generalizations hold, either concerning British colonial education policy broadly or American influence in Hawai'i more narrowly? To consider this question, one is enriched by recent approaches to colonial education that study the relationship between state, capital and religious forces as contingent and shifting, along with notions of 'cultural imperialism' and 'cultural colonialism' as operative forces beyond state power or individual intentionality. In this sense, they develop Beckford's emphasis on how people in the 'lower strata of plantation society' equated education with the educational attainments of the dominant class (Beckford 1976, 200). What most can agree now about colonial education is that it reinforced perceptions of the cultural capital associated with metropolitan linguistic, religious and cultural affinities. However, it is somewhat dubious that schools were the most important mechanism in the cultivation of these perceptions, particularly given that most sites witnessed linguistic acculturation of migrants prior to the development of comprehensive primary school systems. Future studies thus must engage more carefully with non-institutional processes of acculturation.

THE CHILDREN OF INDENTURE AND COMPULSORY SCHOOLING LEGISLATION

Sites featuring indentured labour migration during the nineteenth century had, by century the end of the, some of the world's highest

literacy and schooling rates beyond Western Europe, the New World settler colonies and Japan (Venabot & Riddle 1998, 191-210). However, with the exception of Hawai'i, the children and descendants of indentured labourers lay largely outside the remits of primary educational systems until the twentieth century. Particularly in the Caribbean and the Pacific, expansive, if not comprehensive primary schooling systems were developed for population groups that preceded indenture. The ethnically and linguistically tiered educational systems that developed in the British colonies were a result of a non-concern with the education of immigrant children and a commitment to spending as little money as possible. Elsewhere, the issue lay mainly in the extent to which the children of indenture were perceived as permanent settlers or, in the case of Hawai'i and Peru, future citizens.

The grant-in-aid model defined practice in many locations, especially the British imperial context, whereby colonial administrations offered subsidies to privately-run schools, which in the long-term enabled significant growth in the proportion of students taught, though was never up to the challenge of providing universal reach. Setting the stage for the effective linguistic and ethnic segregation of education in most British colonies, religious schools as well as self-organized ethnic private schools operated in heritage languages, accessible mainly to children of some means with occasional scholarships for poorer children, were increasingly subsidized by the British administrations in sites from Malaya to Mauritius from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. It was not until the twentieth century that ethnic community groups were able to provide schooling at any significant scale. The supposedly cooperative union between state and church proclaimed by Mayhew was emblemised by the dominance of denominational schools. Even on the eve of independence, 51 per cent of primary schools in Guyana in 1966 were religious or denomination schools, and, like elsewhere in the British colonial world, secondary schools remained fee-based (Paul et al. 1986, 380).

Educational provision vastly expanded in the Caribbean after the abolition of slavery with the formation of emancipation schools. The main target was young Black freedmen, and the main goal

Christianization. The British government fell far short of delivering upon the 'liberal amounts' promised for the 'religious and moral education of the Negro population to be emancipated', and underwired the religious order-dominated educational landscape of the British Caribbean by having four Protestant missionary societies carry out the establishment and administration of the emancipation schools (King 1999, 13-22). Planters virulently rejected a colonial office proposal in 1836 to fund schools locally, and the expiration of the Negro Education Grant from the United Kingdom in 1845 led to the worsening of an already insufficient system. The effective racial segregation of emancipation schools and the much maligned maintenance of interconfessional rivalry in the provision of education led to a patchwork system of inconsistent quality and insufficient coverage that was decried throughout the century as exacerbating racial divisions and inhibiting the development of a common local culture.

Mayhew's observations in the 1930s that universal cross-ethnic schooling was a means of diffusing the tensions of diversity was hardly novel in the British imperial context; in fact, the added difference contributed by indentured immigration was perceived early on as a political problem by educational commissions sent from Britain as well as organized locally during the 1850s and 1860s. In 1851, the British Guyana Commission on Education, appointed by George Dennis, first inspector of schools for British Guyana, decried the lack of cohesion among the different races in the colony as a serious detrimental to local education and community life, exacerbated by the recent arrival of large contingents of Asian immigrants, whom he described as immersed in the 'grossest paganism' (Bacchus 1994, 36). The recommendation of the commission was for the establishment of common schools for the children of all the various groups, to be run by the state. In the light of heavy opposition by religious bodies as well as white planters and commercial elite fearful of tax increase and upwardly mobile non-Europeans, the Colonial Office overturned the recommendation (Bacchus 1994, 35-6). Various other commissions for other island contexts mid-century, particularly Trinidad, recommended state-run primary education to likewise no avail.

Specialists of education in the Netherlands and the Dutch Empire often note that compulsory education was legislated in Suriname for children between the ages of 7 and 12 in 1876, a quarter century prior to the metropole (Gobardhan-Rambocus 2012, 363). It goes less recognized that British Guyana passed a compulsory education law the following year. In both sites, compulsory education legislation was an extension of the emancipation school endeavours, and mainly targeted the Black population, with only marginal impact for children of Asian indentured labourer (van Stipriaan 1998, 65). In principle children of immigrant labourers children could attend ward schools, but very few did (Bacchus 1994, 66). Observers noted that South Asian parents were reluctant to send their children to Creole schools due to both ethnic differences as well as suspicion of Christian administration of most rural primary schools (Bacchus 1994, 66). Across the Caribbean, the reduction of subsidies in the 1860s and 1870s to schools opened for the education of freedmen led to a reduction of school attendance broadly. In Trinidad, it was only in 1890 when an ordinance was passed for the remission of school fees for poor children, which led to an increase in school attendance among children of the indentured (Bacchus 1994, 84).

In the Pacific, effectively universal basic schooling was secured for the indigenous population at sites of new Christian proselytization, on the initiative of native elites, who were fascinated with the power of writing, and ascendant confessions, who sought the propagation of the faith. In Hawai'i, American Congregationalists were the sect of greatest import and extensive mission-based schooling was developed during the 1820s and 1830s. In Fiji, this occurred in the 1860s and 1870s, principally by Methodists (Tavola 1991, 8). Enabled by the collaboration of native rulers, the extent of mission-run schools was impressive by global standards. In 1869, Fiji Mission Superintendent Clavert claimed to supervise 56,000 children at schools across the islands, mainly taught by Fijians or Tongans in a 4-year curriculum in the vernacular (Tavola 1991, 8-9). The implication of these pre-established systems for indentured arrivals varied in line with the different governmental and institutional histories of both sites. The government of the

Kingdom of Hawai'i passed compulsory educational legislation in 1841, and during the 1840s and 1850s took over most of the mission-run schools, thus operating by mid-century one of the world's most extensive state-run primary education systems. Contracts adopted by the Board of Immigration of the Kingdom from the initiation of indentured labour flows in the 1860s and 1870s guaranteed schooling for the children of indentured labourers.

Perhaps the first proposal for universal education made with indentured migrants in mind passed the colonial assembly of Mauritius in 1857. Ironically, it was one of the last sites to actually enact such a law. A commission of inquiry in 1855 recommended compulsory education for all children in Mauritius, disapproving of ethnically separated schooling in a parallel discussion to that occurring in the Caribbean (Bennett 2012, 16). The compulsory education ordinance of 1857 was however not confirmed because the British secretary of state objected that Indian attendance should only be optional, as the court of directors of the East India Company 'denied the right of the Colony to force a system of education upon Indian children from which their mother tongue was excluded' (Bennett 2012, 16). This contest between the EIC's (followed by the Imperial government) jealousy of maintained suzerainty over the descendants of South Asian migrants (or more charitably put, their commitment to securing their right to maintain their culture) played out with particular intensity in sites beyond the British Empire.

THE COMPETITION OF IMPERIAL NATIONALITY

For the two largest racialized groups of nineteenth-century indenture, South Asians and Chinese, competing or dual claims to subjecthood and nationhood had specific implications on the provision of education during the nineteenth century. Despite Suriname's compulsory education law, hardly any 'British Indian' attended school in Suriname prior to 1890 (van Stipriaan 1998, 74). Similarly in Réunion, the Dutch colonial government considered Indian indentured workers and their children to be temporarily resident foreigners whose responsibilities were limited to

those guaranteed in British approved contracts, which said nothing about education (van Stipriaan 1998, 65). The legislation of 1877 contained the clause that all children aged 7-12 were subject to it, including 'parents who have been, or will be, imported as immigrants', but the opening of four *koeliescholen* for the education of British Indian children in Hindustani in 1890 was prompted by complaints by British agents that no education was actually being offered up to that time (van Stipriaan 1998, 65; Choenni 2016, 58). Further appeals by the British, such as by agent general Barnet Lyon, for the opening of additional schools met with vociferous opposition by the Creole middle class in 1899 (Choenni 2016, 58). Javanese indentured labour migrations to Suriname began during this period; however, as putative Dutch subjects, Javanese fell more uncomplicatedly within the assimilatory regime and attended Dutch-medium schools, to the extent that such schools existed near their place of residence (van Stipriaan 1998, 74).

In Réunion, the British demand for the appointment of a protector over Indian contract labourers, which the British government claimed as its subjects, led to the abrogation of indentured migration in the mid-1880s (Vaxelaire 1999, 393-7). The crux of the matter was the right of British government agents to exert extraterritorial policy demands on French soil. For example, De Villèle, during an extraordinary session of the Réunion Chamber of Commerce on 18 December 1879, exclaimed that if Indians were to receive a British protector, then what was to stop other indentured groups from calling for a Chinese protector, a Malagasy protector, or a protector for Africans (Lucas 1986, 18-19). Planter promises to establish a school for the education of Indians in 1876 did not materialize, and the slow development of education for a child population increasingly based on descendants of indentured labourers mirrored patterns elsewhere. Provision during the nineteenth century remained the domain of religious orders, with the Catholic Church establishing a school for Indian Catholics in 1885. Despite the nominal equality of all persons born on the island as French citizens after the law of naturalization of 1887, no educational policy existed for the colony until the twentieth century (Ramsamy 2012, 331).

In Suriname, citizenship was not extended to the Suriname-born descendants of South Asian contract labourers until 1927 (van Stipriaan 1998, 65). The British conceit of the subjecthood of Indian indentured labourers and their descendants led to certain policy shifts, such as the establishment of a medical school in Paramaribo in 1882, after reports of high death rates amongst South Asian migrants (Gobardhan-Rambocus 2012, 364). In Hawai'i, citizenship through naturalization was possible for indentured migrants prior to US annexation. Jus soli also operated as the basis of citizenship for Hawai'i-born descendants of migrants. After annexation, jus soli was recognized as likewise conferring US citizenship, although despicably infringed for US citizens of Japanese descent during World War II internment.

Even where there was no question of competing subjecthood, the education of South Asians, stylized as British Indians, was largely neglected. Whilst the first estate school in Guyana for the education of immigrant children was not established in 1861, envisioned primarily for the education of East Indians, few Indians attended schools until the 1930s, despite the compulsory education law. There were moments of contradictory policy, such as 1890 subventions to planters to build secular schools for resident children, or the Swettenham Ordinance in the early twentieth century that exempted new South Asian indentured arrivals from being subject to compulsory education legislation. Yet in 1933, only 19 per cent of East Indian children were attending primary schools; this increased to 29 per cent in 1937. As noted recently by Mariam Pirbhal, low attendance rates at schools by Indo-Guyanese during the early twentieth century was due as much as to an unwillingness to submit to missionary education and a sense of limited occupational mobility as it was to colonial era judgements of 'insularity' or Indian indifference to the schooling of girls (Pirbhal 2009, 115).

Gender, as well as national citizenship models, played a pivotal role in the case of the Chinese in sovereign Peru and Hawai'i, where the question of educating Chinese youth for most of the nineteenth century was linked with the often politically explosive gender imbalance of Chinese labourers. That the great majority of

offspring of Chinese indentured labourers at these sites were with mothers of other groups meant that their accommodation at local schools until the nineteenth century followed the maternal line. The growth of Chinese language schools around the turn of the twentieth century followed onward free or bonded migration of Chinese individuals outside of formal indenture, including both men and women, and served mainly the needs of Chinese mercantile communities (López 2013, 112-17). These schools did not receive government funding in Peru and Hawai'i, as a (modified) version of citizenship education had been adopted in both sites in the nineteenth century. The situation was quite different in Malaya, where, in many regions, the Chinese population grew to become the majority. There, the development of Chinese-medium education occurred mainly through Chinese initiative, before being sponsored via subsidies by the British government in the early twentieth century (Watson 1993, 162).

FOREIGN LABOURERS OR PERMANENT SETTLERS?

The relative under-provision of education to descendants of indentured labourers centred around the idea of the impermanency of their settlement, particularly in the British Empire, the notion that the colonial government had greater obligations to indigenous or formerly enslaved populations. Two of the most diverse sites of indenture, Suriname and Hawai'i, developed integrative or cross-ethnic policies during the late nineteenth century upon the basis, though implementation was always haphazard in the case of Suriname. Within the British Empire, the fundamental distinction of policies was between colonies with recognized indigenous populations, namely Fiji and Malaya, and those without, the Mascarene Islands and, more problematically, the Caribbean. In 1887, educationalist John Russell described the education of white settlers and the indigenous in New Zealand and Fiji, though said nothing about arrangements for indentured migrants for the latter.

Impermanent settlement was dismissed as a mere conceit as early as the mid-nineteenth century. In 1865, the Secretary of State of

the Colonies wrote to the Governor of Mauritius that Indian children were likely 'to remain through life in the Colony' and that 'French dialect should be far better for them in every way than the language of the country of their extraction'. Further, with a parsimonious eye, the Secretary of State noted that since educational provision would be solely financed via local tax revenue, it had to be done in the language spoken 'by the majority of the tax paying classes of the Colony' (Bennett 2012, 26). Inspector of Schools Anderson, suggested five years' earlier, in 1860 that it was of no matter whether Indians, as temporary workers, could 'read or notate figures', as long as they could work in the fields dexterously (Bacchus 1994, 66). Generally, until the twentieth century, colonial administrations in the British Empire leaned towards the parsimonious side of the debate, which was to ignore the fact that some indentured migrant arrivals in the Caribbean and the Mascarene Islands were explicitly intended to be permanent residents.

Fiji was a site particularly marked by a duality in colonial governance between the perceived permanence of Fijian settlement and impermanence of Indian migrants. Even the most generous of observers judged the education of Indian contract labourers to have been 'basically ignored' until the early 1900s. Indian indentured labour migration began in 1879, five years after British accession in 1874 after the failed Cakobau Government (1871-4), which attempted to secure international recognition on the model of the Kingdom of Hawai'i. Labour contracts signed prior to British accession were declared void, leading to the declining presence of Fijians and other Pacific islanders as labourers, and the rise of a dual society in which most Fijians resided in ancestral communities ruled by local elites (Tavola 1991, 11). The Methodist mission school system for Fijians was doubly useful and economical for the colonial government, but effectively excluded descendants of South Asian indentured worker unwilling to convert to Christianity. The first schools for Indian children were established by the Methodists and Marists in 1898, and Anglican and Indian religious group schools were operating by 1916. Government subsidies only began in 1916, and as late as 1927, only 17 per cent of Indian children were attending primary schools (Ibid.). This shifted

in the 1920s and 1930s, paving the way for a reversal of relative educational fortunes, where Indians gained disproportionately over Fijians in the expansion of state education, particularly in the secondary sector.

The educational system that emerged in Fiji was tripartite; in Malaya, it was quadripartite. Unlike in Mascarene or Caribbean settings, the British policy in both sites was defined by an operating distinction between the indigenous and the displaced that resulted in a lack of state concern in the education of the descendants of indentured labourers until the twentieth century. In both Fiji and Malaya, British treaties with indigenous rulers guaranteed a special status to indigenous nations (Fijians and Malays particularly), defining each site as the 'homeland' of the specific group (Watson 1993, 150). A commission on the decrease of the native population argued in 1896 that Fijians should be encouraged to move to towns and taught in English for its supposed civilizing effects, but, in distinction to Hawai'i, this recommendation was not implemented (Tavola 1991, 11).

Even when it was obvious by the 1920s and 1930s that Malaya's demographics had been fundamentally altered by extensive indentured immigration, the colonial government took no steps towards achieving linguistic union either through monolingual (Malay) or bilingual (Malay and English) education, maintaining a tiered system of primary schools taught in racialized vernaculars. In an exemplary article in 1993, Keith Watson made the educational stakes of the new world produced by indenture clear for the contexts of colonial Malaysia and Singapore. 'Many territories only became racially mixed as a direct consequence of colonial intervention', which, as part of a British policy of 'unlimited immigration from China during the period 1890-1920' and 'encouraging indentured labour from India to work in the rubber plantations', led the population of the region to surge from 0.5 million in 1850 to 4.9 million in 1947 (Watson 1993, 147, 157). Like in many other contexts both within and beyond the British empire, the secondary schools were the only sites that functioned as integrative between races, taught with English-language curricula that redoubled cultural centrality in the metropole (Watson 1993, 157).

Community formation in certain sites featuring indenture witnessed the development of cross-ethnic identities that posited a division between metropolitan-oriented planters and locally oriented workers; however, these rarely fit perfectly onto nationalist visions of a duality between white planters and multiracial colonised groups. Attention to the experience of descendants of indentured migrants in colonial education reveals cleavages associated with different experiences of acculturation and site-specific claims to longevity of settlement.

LANGUAGE OF UNITY OR LANGUAGES OF DESCENT?

Questions of content and language at religious schools during the mid-nineteenth century was left to the church's discretion; towards the end of the century, the maintenance of vernaculars in British settings, in particular, became constitutive of a 'protective' policy. In the British colonies, instruction was provided in English, due to proximity with local creoles, but in Suriname, most abolition schools taught in Sranan Tongo due to most students' complete ignorance of Dutch, despite government directives providing for Dutch (van Stipriaan 1998, 64). While the aspiration was for universal coverage, for instance, as provided for in the Emancipation Law of 1862, this was not actually achieved (Gobardhan-Rambocus 2012, 363). Soon after the expiry of 'transitional periods' of restricted Black mobility off plantations (such as 'State Supervision' in 1873 in Suriname), governments in both British Guyana and Suriname enacted compulsory education laws with paternalist aims, targeted at keeping black children at schools and monitoring their parents' mobility (van Stipriaan 1998, 64-5).

The independent Kingdom of Hawai'i was exceptional in that almost all contracts of indenture guaranteed primary education to labourers' children, beginning with contracts with Chinese labourers made in 1865. However, given that the vast majority of Chinese migrants, as elsewhere, were single adult men, the question of ethnic plurality did not arise until the arrival of thousands of Portuguese school-age children in the Kingdom from 1878 until

the mid-1880s (Miller 2020). The crux of contention was one of language: the contracts guaranteed workers' children access to 'public schools', which were mainly taught in Hawaiian. As will be demonstrated elsewhere in an upcoming article, the resolution of this issue was ultimately transformative, as the ruling that Portuguese children, as 'Europeans', were entitled to English-language education set in motion a political debate on access to English-language education that resulted in the great majority of schools switching to English prior to US annexation. The nearly universal access to English-language education in Hawai'i disincentivized the development of private heritage language schools, exemplified by the comparative rarity of Portuguese language schools in Hawai'i during the first decades of Portuguese indentured migration than, for instance, British Guyana (Bastos 2018, 89).

In Mauritius' non-comprehensive pre-independence educational system, instruction was mainly delivered at primary levels in vernacular languages including Creole, with the use of English and French at more advanced stages. As noted above, the Colonial Office advocated the learning of Creole in 1865, but given that an estimated 71 per cent of school-age children received no education in 1885, this main site for the propagation of this language was not the classroom (Bennett 2012, 47). A Royal Commission in 1910 found that children of most Indian labourers spoke their mother tongue and Creole with proficiency, with the 'smattering' of French or English learnt at school soon forgotten (Bennett 2012, 29). Even as late at 1938, vernacular Indian languages were permitted in primary instruction (Bennett 2012, 29). During the 1940s and 1950s, the policy from London was to promote the use of English over French, even while recognizing that Creole was the dominant language of the people. Certain prominent Creoles, such as George Lefébure, perceived the push for English as unrealistic; proposing Creole-to-French education as the practical means of achieving universal literacy and greater schooling in a country on the path to nationhood (Lefébure 1949, 28-9, 45). The contest between English, French and Creole overshadowed the under development of education on the island. Even in 1947, only 53.8 per cent of Mauritian children aged 5-14 were attending school, as

primary education was not compulsory and secondary education was not free (Lefébure 1949, 34)

The so-called 'Assimilation Policy' or 'Dutchification' of Paramaribo-born H.D. Benjamin, Inspector of Schools and of Jewish descent, sought to decrease the prominence of Sranan Tongo, without much success (Gobardhan-Rambocus 2012, 364). In 1919, the Second Conference on Colonial Education was held in the Hague and debated the question of where separate schools should be opened for 'Dutch-Indians' (Javanese), 'British-Indians' (South Asians) and Chinese. Benjamin and three Dutch advisers, each authored responses, which were all against separate schools, but for different reasons. Two of the Dutch advisors feared that separate schools would foment ethnic division and be ineffective in defeating Sranan Tongo. The other argued that separate education was not ideal, but as long as rural education was not improved, that it was better to be conducted in mother tongues so as to promote Christianization. Benjamin, relenting in his assimilatory policy, thought it productive to have Asian children acquire literacy in their home languages, as he was convinced that these languages would eventually die out, and that literacy would pave the way for preference for Dutch rather than Sranan Tongo (van Stipriaan 1998, 74-5).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, it has been sought not merely to remind the reader of generalizations about the development of colonial education according to the parameter of imperial space, which would have been immediately familiar to the likes of Mayhew. Rather, it is to reflect on government reactions to a specific afterlife of indenture, the education of large cohorts of individuals in diverse settings where they possessed neither claims to indigeneity nor privileges of membership in the ruling class. This is a sort of education difficult to typify. It was neither the education of 'natives' nor of co-national 'labourers', but of a student population simultaneously racialized as displaced and subordinate.

In several sites with comparatively comprehensive educational systems around 1900, including two of the most prominent sites of indenture beyond the British Empire, access was increasingly stratified during the 1920s and 1930s along linguistic, geographic and racial lines. Remarkably, there was something of a convergence to the British policy of which Mayhew voiced anxieties. The case of Hawai'i and its shift from universal to linguistically segregated government education after US annexation, with the development of the English standard school system after 1924, evidenced merely the colonial education pattern in reverse, that is, the application of colonial educational strategies of segregation in place of unitary citizenship education (Meller 1948, 1-7). Access to 'English standard schools' was determined by an initial entry exam in correct English pronunciation; the effect was a parallel school system not formally divided by race, but which created selective, White-majority school populations in locations where they were greatly outnumbered by Hawaiian and labour migrant-descended students. In Suriname, rural schools, mainly attended by Indian and Javanese children, were converted to Limited Elementary Education (BLO) schools during the 1920s and under the administration of Governor Kielstra (1933-44), those with over 90 per cent Asian student population were transformed into 'dessa schools' with even more limited curricula (van Stipriaan 1978).

Across the tropical world, in settings marked by indentured diversities, the colour of education was marked by the local racialization of labour, sometimes split between migrant and indigenous, but always distinguished from the metropolitan 'core' population. And the challenge post-independence proved to be far greater than merely substituting the former reference culture for a local one, whether ethnically particular or pluralistic. It mattered not if it was truly British policy to 'divide and rule', as Mayhew contested. Surviving divisions, deeply imbricated in the racialized history of education in sites featuring indenture, constantly reared the question of *who* exactly was to rule the class.

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II

POST-SLAVERY AND POST-INDENTURE IDENTITIES