Race, Whiteness and Internationality in Transnational Education: Academic and Teacher Expatriates in Malaysia

Abstract
The expansion of transnational education has diversified the destinations and mobility patterns of academic and teacher expatriates (i.e., education expatriates). Emerging literature have explored white Anglo-Western expatriates' experiences of racism and racialization in non-white majority settings, but these are not usually analysed alongside that of less- and non-white expatriates. This article does so by drawing from qualitative interviews with forty racially diverse education expatriates in Malaysia to explore differential experiences in work, immigration and everyday life. It investigates expatriate experiences at the intersection of race, nationality and skin colour, and where relevant, the interconnections with gender, age, class and religion. It critically examines how education expatriates respond to their hierarchical position(ing)s within the dominant racial logics of (white) Westernness in postcolonial Malaysia. A translocational positionality approach offers valuable intersectional insights into the racialized processes that stratify education expatriates' experiences of (dis)advantage and capital convertibility in contingent and contradictory ways.

Keywords: translocational positionality, racism and racialization, white privilege, transnational education, academic and teacher expatriates, capital convertibility

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Introduction

The expansion of transnational education where education from institutions in one country is delivered to students in another has diversified the destinations and mobility patterns of academic and teacher expatriates (i.e., foreign/(im)migrant lecturers and international school teachers; see Koh and Sin 2020).[1] This new trend disrupts their traditional flow from the Global South to select advanced Western countries that form the core of the global knowledge system. Indeed, strong demand for education expatriates in transnational education institutions in Asia and the Middle East has facilitated new and multi-directional flows in/through these regions (Kuzhabekova and Lee 2018; Ortiga et al. 2019). Emerging literature have explored the education expatriates' experiences of racialized (dis)advantage in the host countries; though largely focused on white Anglo-Westerners in non-white majority settings (Appleby 2014; Tarc et al. 2019; Wang and Chen 2020; exceptions see Hickey 2018; Lowe et al. 2016). These experiences are not usually analysed alongside that of less- and non-white education expatriates (i.e., individuals who do not fit the traditional image of the white Anglo-Western and native English speaking education expatriate). Less- and non-white expatriates are commonly relegated as the lesser expatriate in their host

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[1] In this article, we refer to the two groups as "education expatriates".

countries, placed more as an (im)migrant by virtue of their race, nationality and/or skin colour. There is a need to also consider how they experience and challenge their ascribed positions. An integrated analysis involving both white, and less and non-white expatriates is important to reveal the racism and racialization that lead to and reinforce this uncritical binary of expatriate/(im)migrant, and bring attention to the wider diversity of education expatriates that exists in transnational education.

This article addresses the gap identified above by using Anthias' (2008) concept of translocational positionality to explore the differential experiences of racism and racialization among diverse white, and less and non-white foreign lecturers and teachers in Malaysia. Translocational positionality was originally used to explore processes of migrant identity construction and belonging by linking social positions (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity) with social positionings (e.g., discourses, practices, regulatory regimes). It emphasizes agency-structure dynamics where individuals define, contest and are ascribed social positions through their interaction with social forces across locations (sites and social relations). We extend and adapt the concept of translocational positionality to transnational education by giving focus to the structures and practices of racism and racialization which shape and are shaped by education expatriates, and which impact on their cultural capital accumulation and validation. This adds contextual and intersectional depth to Bourdieu's (1986) influential concept of cultural capital, commonly used in education literature to explain class-based privilege among the economically advantaged.

We argue that translocational positionality is useful to uncover racialized intersectional processes that stratify expatriate experiences of (dis)advantage and capital convertibility across locations. To support this argument, we discuss findings from qualitative interviews with forty racially diverse education expatriates in Malaysia. Locating their voices primarily at the intersection of race, nationality and skin colour, and where relevant, the interconnections with gender, age, class and religion, we examine the extent to which they accept and/or challenge hierarchical discourses and representations of expatriates within the dominant racial logics of (white) Westernness in postcolonial Malaysia. Using transnational positionality to explore the experiences of white education expatriates alongside that of their less- and non-white counterparts, we lend insights into education expatriates' unequal and shifting position(ing)s as they interact with structures and practices of race-related ascription, inclusion and exclusion in work, immigration and everyday life. This adds nuance and complexity to education expatriates' experiences of and responses to racialized (dis)advantage, and the impact on the value of their capitals.

Malaysia provides a good context to examine experiences of racism and racialization in and beyond transnational education. As a leading transnational education market, Malaysia has been attracting and hosting growing numbers of academic and teacher expatriates (Bailey 2015; Richardson and Wong 2018; Wilkins and Neri 2019). However, its aspirations to be a global and regional education hub are marred by highly stratified and politicized social and educational landscapes where race is one of the fundamental basis for differentiation and exclusion (see Daniels, 2014; Kandale, 2018), a legacy of British colonialism to a certain extent (see Koh, 2017). This provides an opportune context to examine how diverse education expatriates interact with persistent and new forms of racism and racialization that manifest in transnational education, giving rise to variegated experiences of (dis)advantage and capital convertibility. Academic and teacher expatriates in Malaysia share fundamental similarities. They are given the same expatriate visa status (Table 1) and possess cultural capital such as a global orientation that is valued by internationalizing educational institutions in Malaysia. They are generally middle-class professionals, provided with special benefits such as relocation allowances and free or subsidized housing and education for their children that are not usually given to local employees (i.e., the expatriate package). Despite their class privilege relative to most migrant groups, they are still subjected to racialized hierarchies which frame different and unequal experiences of (dis)advantage

among them. Examining academics and teachers collectively can shed light on the global and local structures of racism and racialization that transcend into transnational education, with wide reaching impact on institutional and everyday life.

In what follows, we frame the discussion of race, racism and racialization around how the transnational education sector, especially in non-white majority and postcolonial contexts, has institutionalized the prioritization of whiteness and associated capitals (e.g., linguistic, cultural). We build on our argument that Anthias' (2008) translocational positionality framework can offer crucial and new insights into the diverse and contingent ways that education expatriates experience, challenge and negotiate their position(ing)s within racialized hierarchies. Drawing from the participants' narratives, we illustrate their intersectional and shifting (dis)advantages across work, immigration and everyday contexts.

Race, capitals and translocational positionality

We understand "race" as a social construct and a mode of categorization that is utilized, intentionally as well as unintentionally, to ascribe certain behavioural and cultural characteristics to individuals based primarily on their phenotypic appearances (Kandale 2018). Race as a "category of difference" (Gabriel 2015, 783) prescribes and structures an individual's position and worth within power relations. We define "racism" as the internalized belief in the superiority of a certain race, country/nationality and related identifiers over others. We see "racialization" as the cumulative formal and informal processes by which race is co-constructed by structures and agencies (Miles and Brown 2003: Small 1994), and where global racial logics intersect local logics (Bhattacharyya et al. 2002).

Importantly, we see race as a legacy of European colonialism that has persisted and been renegotiated across social systems and spaces based on a global racial order of white supremacy (Grosfoguel 2004). This global order positions countries along a racial hierarchy on the basis of inequalities in terms such as economic power, technology and knowledge production (Christian 2019, 173). The logics of white supremacy sustain the belief that white persons are the embodiment of superiority in terms of progress, value and worth (Fanon 1986). They are constructed as polar opposites of non-white (e.g., darker-skinned non-European) persons (Daniels 2014). Knowledge of this racialized binary extends to transnational social fields - including transnational education - as mobile individuals make sense of and negotiate their placements along the continuum of whiteness and otherness across countries in the world system (Kim 2008).

Indeed, there is an uncritical ascription of privilege to and preference for white bodies with properly accented English in non-white majority countries (Lan 2011). As a result, individuals who fit the embodiment of whiteness are often prioritized and preferred over those who do not (Jenks 2017; Wallace 2017). However, the implicit assumptions of (white Western) privilege that are often associated with the label "expatriate" obscure and flatten the racialized, gendered and classed experiences of disadvantage that individuals may face (Hof, 2020; Liu and Dervin 2020). Indeed, in and outside of work settings, all expatriates – including those who might be typically associated with white privilege – are subject to powerful yet non-unitary discourses of race and intersectional positions (Leonard 2008, 355; Winders 2020, 184). Decades of migration flows and interracial marriages have produced racially ambiguous persons who defy easy categorizations into the white/non-white dichotomy (Song 2020). The intersections of their racial/ethnic phenotype with other dimensions (e.g., gender, class, religion) bring further complexity to their position(ing)s in racialized hierarchies. There is therefore a pressing need to examine the mechanisms and experiences of racialization (Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss 2019) beyond fixed and dualistic assumptions of race, skin colour and regional/national origin, within and beyond transnational education.

Institutionally, the logic of white supremacy has also led to the prioritization of a white, Anglo-Western version of internationalized transnational education over other alternative (but equally salient) versions in countries building a knowledge economy. This privileging in turn stratifies education expatriates' abilities to convert their cultural capital into economic (e.g., job offers, work visas, promotions), symbolic (e.g., authority, credibility) and social (e.g., networks of opportunities) capitals (Bourdieu 1986). While cultural capital "is not exclusively a resource for Whites" (Wallace 2018, 468), the way that institutional structures recognize and equate cultural capital to "whiteness" in transnational education perpetuates global and national racial inequalities. It is therefore pertinent to go beyond the celebratory push toward the internationalization of transnational education, and consider how race, racism and racialization are intertwined into institutional efforts to internationalize. This important task advances more equitable recognition of diverse education expatriates' experiences in transnational education.

While commonly applied to international including transnational education contexts, Bourdieu's rather deterministic linkage of cultural capital in objective (e.g., books), embodied (e.g., knowledge, skills, dispositions) and institutionalized states (e.g., qualifications) with class reproduction lacks a consideration of race and intersectional position(ing)s. It does not explain variations in success and failure in (re)producing social advantage across borders (Sin 2016). Crucially, structures of racism and racialization in each context shape the ease of capital conversions. As Winders (2020, 184) notes, race is "a fluid social force whose form is malleable across time and space". Mediated by racial and power logics that are specific to location, an individual's use of capital may result in privileges and advantages in one context, but disadvantages in another context. There is no clear and definite way to predict the success of capital conversion and mobilization as racial and power logics are not static – their interpretation requires attention to shifting and situated contexts (see Hof 2020).

To better examine the variegated ways through which academic and teacher expatriates negotiate their (racialized) positions and capital conversions, we turn to Anthias' (2008) concept of translocational positionality. Anthias (2008, 5, original emphasis) explains that:

> The concept of translocational positionality addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions. ...it moves away from the idea of given 'groups' or 'categories' of gender, ethnicity and class, which then intersect..., and instead pays much more attention to *social locations and processes* which are broader than those signalled by this.

In other words, transnational positionality offers an analytical lens that transcends groupist categories (e.g., race, gender, class, migrant, expatriate) and the limitations of fixity, singularity and closure that often accompany these categories (Rattansi, 2005). It places emphasis on the *interactions* between processes (e.g., racialization) that are tied to and shaped by geographical, cultural and social contexts. Importantly, it traces and connects processes across sites and social relations which exert influence on the phenomenon being examined. Translocational positionality approaches race as one of the "*categories in place*" (Anthias 2020, 32, original emphasis) where its meanings – and, therefore, its values - are ascribed and constructed by structures and agencies in relation to context.

Anthias' (2008) translocational positionality allows for a more nuanced and located understanding of racism and racialization in transnational education, and what they mean for the transferability of cultural capital. It takes into account the possibility that one's racial and other social positions can gain meanings and value that cohere and/or clash as geographical, cultural and social borders are crossed. Transnational positionality thus allows for a consideration of how resources (e.g., cultural, economic, symbolic and social)

embedded in social position(ing)s can be capitalized and (re)produced in another context. It shows how (racialized) resources, derived from intersectional position(ings), carry different use and exchange values across locations. This provides an improvement to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in explaining practices of social differentiation in different international education contexts.

As we have indicated earlier, Malaysia provides a good context to examine stratified experiences of racism and racialization in transnational education, given the presence of ingrained racial hierarchies and racial ideologies in institutional and everyday life. The institutionalization of race in contemporary Malaysia can be traced back to the "divide and rule" strategy utilized by the British colonial administration in then Malaya (Abraham 1983; Hirschman 1986; Koh 2017). During British colonial rule between the late 18th to mid-20th century, diverse ethnicities amongst the Malayan population (including indigenous and immigrant populations) were arbitrarily conflated into broad racialized census categories (Hirschman 1987).[2] Furthermore, the systematic division of labour by race and class resulted in the establishment of a racial hierarchy where white Europeans (i.e., administrators and plantation owners) were positioned as superior to non-white locals (e.g., Malay administrative assistants and peasants, Chinese coolies in tin mines, Indian coolies in rubber plantations). Daniels (2014), amongst others, noted that white supremacist ideologies and socio-culturally constructed racial categories have persisted in postcolonial Malaysia. As we will show, this ingrained racial order has continued to shape the position(ing)s of white and non-white (as well as less-white) individuals in contemporary Malaysia.

Methodology
This article is based on a larger study exploring the transnational education experiences of academic and teacher expatriates in Malaysia. We define academic and teacher expatriates as individuals who have relocated overseas (self-initiated and assigned) for an extended duration and who are primarily engaged in teaching and/or research roles in higher education institutions and international schools. We conducted semi-structured interviews in greater Kuala Lumpur and EduCity (Iskandar Malaysia, Johor) in 2018-19. These are regions with high concentrations of private higher education institutions and international schools known to recruit expatriate staff.[3] We used convenience and snowball sampling as the primary sampling methods. This involved recruiting participants based on their availability, reachability and referrals from earlier participants. Where possible, theoretical sampling was used as a secondary sampling method to select further participants that would add to the development of theories, explanations and interpretations (Mason 2017). For example, preliminary findings pointed to the salience of race, nationality, gender and career stage in framing unequal experiences of academic and teacher expatriation. This led us to seek out participants (from developing countries, racial minorities, early career and women with caring responsibilities) who were not as readily accessible than the predominantly white, male and senior lecturers and teachers in the early sample.

The eventual sample consisted of twenty-five academics and fifteen teachers in early, mid- and late-career stages. There were 22 males and 18 females, aged between the early-30s and the mid-60s. They come from twenty-one countries of origin across Asia, Europe and the Americas. Importantly, some participants are mixed-race, dual citizenship holders, or have partners from different ethnic/national origins. Furthermore, most participants have

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[2] For example, the 1881 Straits Settlements census listed "Aborigines", "Achinese", "Boyanese", "Bugis", "Dyaks", "Javanese", "Jawi Pekans", "Malays" and "Manilamen" as separate ethnic categories; but by 1891, these ethnicities were classified as "Malays and other Natives of the Archipelago" (Hirschman 1987, 571).

[3] We focused on the private sector as it is the main employer of education expatriates (usually through job advertisements and secondments).

extensive migration/expatriation experiences.[4] This mix of characteristics reflects a wider diversity of academic and teacher expatriates in Malaysia than is commonly captured in existing literature (e.g., Bailey 2015; Richardson and Wong 2018).

Academic and teacher expatriates are considered temporary labour migrants in Malaysia. They are typically employed on the Employment Pass, under three categories depending on their salary and the duration of their employment contracts (Table 1). Their visa category determines whether they are allowed to sponsor their dependents' residence in the country. Notably, their dependents are not allowed to work. As we will later show, the academic and teacher expatriates' status as temporary migrants in Malaysia shape their position(ing)s as "othered" staff members in their employing institutions.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

There are methodological complexities in researching and writing about race, racism and racialization. As Gunaratnam (2003) emphasized, such research might essentialize race, thereby reproducing the very power relations that we seek to question and dismantle. To mitigate against presumptions about racial commonality and distance, we adopted two strategies. First, we were reflexive of our own identities and positionalities and how they informed our research inquiry and the researcher/participant relationship. We are two UK-educated, racial minority female academic researchers who grew up in Malaysia but with multiple migration histories in our respective adult lives. Our experiences in transnational education enabled us to relate to some degree to our participants as they keenly and spontaneously spoke about commonly shared issues such as the imperative of mobility and the precarity of short-term contracts. However, in other instances, they saw us more as outsiders than insiders (Ryan 2015) such as when foreign lecturers spoke cautiously about unfavourable treatment which denied them research funding. We faced linguistic racism from a few native English speakers such as when it was asserted that the term, academic expatriate, "does not exist; it's Manglish"[5] and when the second author was corrected on how her name should appear in English.

Second, we refrained from attaching quick, reductive racial labels and categories to the participants. We use the terms such as "Western","non-Western" and "Asian" in accordance to the participants' own understandings and portrayals of their position(ing)s vis-à-vis other education expatriates in Malaysia. We found that their self identification as "Western" or "non-Western" largely reflects the racialized hierarchies of immigration in Malaysia, with "Western" signifying nationals from advanced Western countries and regions (e.g., Australia, Canada, the UK, the USA, West Europe), and less- and non-"Western" signifying nationals from countries in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. However, as we will discuss later, the "Western"/"non-Western" dichotomy does not reflect the participants' diverse position(ing)s. In particular, there were "Western" participants who, on the one hand, did not fit expected images of Westernness (in terms of white physical appearance, race, nationality and linguistic dispositions); and, on the other hand, could not fully pass as "non-Western".

Racialized hierarchies of differentiation
Many of the participants recognized that racialized hierarchies of differentiation exist in Malaysia where expatriates from advanced Western countries are given better visa conditions, employment opportunities, and recognition and acceptance over other groups. This advantage is attributed to a common assumption that "Western" expatriates have cultural capital such as authoritative knowledge and skills, native English proficiency, and

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[4] The participants came to Malaysia for work, adventure, study, familial and personal reasons that will be the focus of a future paper.
[5] Colloquial and pidgin variant of Malaysian English.

bodily and linguistic dispositions associated with the West (e.g., accent, appearance) that are regarded as superior in Malaysia. The continued prevalence of a colonial mindset in the former British colony (Daniels 2014; Koh 2017; Sin 2013), coupled with the wider Western hegemony in the global knowledge production system, reinforce the position of "Western" education expatriates as highly desirable.

Jacob, a teacher of mixed European and African descent, recognized that as a UK national, his national origins granted him the privilege of Western whiteness although he is not visibly white. The cultural and symbolic power derived from being born and raised in an advanced Western English-speaking country gave immediate legitimacy and authenticity to his teaching-related cultural capital when transferred to Malaysia, enabling a straightforward capital conversion into jobs, income and recognition. By contrast, he observed how a Filipino colleague, "technically an expat," was seen by parents and his school's human resource department as a "local teacher" due to the perceived inferiority (economic, cultural and physical) of the origin country and its people. This observation echoes Lowe et al.'s (2016) findings in which parents at an Indonesian private school questioned the professional and subject competence of Filipino expatriate teachers on the basis of nationality. Jacob's experiences of racial privilege were echoed by June, a white UK lecturer: "I'm… seen to be a higher level status compared to ...colleagues from other parts of the world [with] more research experience ...I'm given a higher status simply because I'm white." Her white race and appearance gave her bodily cultural capital that brought immediate acceptance and higher status despite her relatively lower amounts of research-related cultural capital.

Nonetheless, there were instances where the "non-Western" expatriates felt that they were racialized positively in terms of their cultural capital. Chen Yang (Chinese national), for an example, gained instant trust from the Chinese overseas university branch campus he worked for in Malaysia due to an implied racial and cultural fit: "Because my nationality is Chinese...I [am] given more opportunities, and even [the] privilege to work as a [member of the] management team". His race and nationality would likely shift in value if he were employed in the many Western-centric institutions in Malaysia. The examples discussed so far demonstrate the less than linear transfer of racialized cultural capital to different contexts that Anthias' (2008) translocational positionality framework helps to explain..

For the most part, the dualistic and unequal division between "Western" and "non-Western" education expatriates is commonly imagined and reproduced within employment and immigration practices in Malaysia. Ahil (Indian national) shared that "Western" teachers at his school had stronger negotiating power when discussing salary and benefits terms compared to "Asian" teachers who he believed were more disposable and dismissible. Similarly, Reeza (Iranian national) observed a hierarchical division of lecturers at her university where the "Europeans" were seen to "have better education backgrounds" while the "Asians" like her did not. Reeza felt that this prejudiced and discriminatory ordering of lecturers was uncalled for as "non-Western" lecturers could hold elite "Western" cultural capital, similar to a point Daisy (white South African national) made:

> ...people [were] a little bit surprised… when I tell them that I have a
> masters degree from ...Cambridge… I'm used to it: you think I'm from
> South Africa so I've got a third world education and qualification – which is
> not true.

Daisy also encountered differential treatment in terms of her work visa compared to teachers from traditional Western countries with strong colonial and cultural links to Southeast Asia. While her "Western" colleagues were given two-year work permits and contracts, she was told "it wasn't that easy to ...convince immigration" to allow [South African teachers] two-year working permits." Her employment agents advised that "in Southeast Asia, as a South African I will find it ...more difficult [to secure employment] because of where I come from" as

"expat teachers from the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA" are preferred. By contrast, in China "it's a lot easier for an English speaking teacher to get ...a visa, to get a job." Translocational positionality (Anthias 2008) shows the different contextual valuing of her cultural capital: being "English speaking" could more easily translate into job offers and work visas in China but less so in Southeast Asian countries. Her nationality was racialized more in Malaysia, overshadowing her embodiment of "Western"-ness (native English language proficiency, "Western" qualification and white appearance).

Everyday encounters
Racialized hierarchies of differentiation also extended into everyday encounters, materializing in negative (e.g., racial profiling by the police and housing agents) and positive (e.g., acceptance) ways. Police road blocks were cited by some participants as memorable experiences of racialization. Being white or passing as local was easily equated to law abidance. By contrast, those who were not seen as white or local were "being made into a stranger, the one who is recognized as 'out of place,' ...whose proximity is registered as crime or threat" (Ahmed 2012, 2). Rafael (Filipino national) recounted an occasion when the police were "blocking the car behind and ...looking for black people"[6] but he was let through "maybe because my complexion is similar to Malay." Judy (US national) recalled being "pulled over by the police and the guy didn't bother to deal with me, he waved me on" which she believed was due to her being white. Joseph, a white American, got past security checks easily by "just giving a smile, my ID and they [police] are most likely not going to harass me or try to shake me down."

Interestingly, some "non-Western" and non-white participants confessed to enjoying higher degrees of individual freedom and lesser experiences of othering in Malaysia. Coming from Iran, a more conservative Muslim country, Reeza appreciated her freedom away from strict religious, cultural and gendered regulation of her bodily practices and activities. She found that, in Malaysia, she was subjected to less rigid and fixed ideas of what a Muslim woman should or should not do: "you can be yourself... you can do whatever you want and nobody is going to judge you." Through mobility, she gained more space for individual expression and choice, including the freedom to drink alcohol (prohibited in Iran) and not complying with the Hijab dress code.

These examples demonstrate that academic and teacher expatriates' positionalities are not fixed. In one location (geographical and social), they may occupy a lower and more disadvantaged position; in another, they may enjoy a higher and more advantaged position. The translocational positionality lens enables us to visualize the relative positions of (dis)advantage that the participants occupied as a result of their transnational education led mobility. Indeed, "lives [are] located across multiple but also fractured and inter-related social spaces" (Anthias 2008, 15). It is within this interplay of locality and mobility that positionalities attain "*contradictory* effects" (ibid., original emphasis). As racialized bodies travel across geographical, social and cultural contexts, race and its associated capitals attain values and meanings that are differentially valorized by institutions and individuals. These variegated outcomes inform individual expatriates' understandings of their position(ings) and agency in transnational education, as we next explore.

Whiteness, internationality and complicity
In the institutional push towards internationalization, many "Western" participants were positioned as the "poster" personnel for educational marketing purposes. Here, their "whiteness merely functioned as a token, a trophy" (Hof 2020, 11), subjected to gaze and objectification. June (UK national) was conscious that she had "been invited to marketing events ...to be the token white person." Judy (US national) related that she was occasionally

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[6] Dark-skinned migrants tend to be singled out and are subject to racial profiling by police authorities in Malaysia (Daniels 2014; Kandale 2018).

"thrown into the classroom" and expected to be "the dancing monkey, the white person" in live action, exhibiting the (Western) internationalized status of her school. This made her feel that the specific substance of her cultural capital, her teaching experience and individualized "dispositions of the mind" (Bourdieu 1986, 243) did not matter in the eyes of her audience: "I get used [by the school] …because I glow white, not because of my credentials or experience." Her skin colour held (physical) cultural and symbolic capital signalling valued (albeit stereotypical) roles and competences.

Indeed, at an international school education fair in Kuala Lumpur, we observed that most schools were represented by white "Western" teachers. Noticeably, they maintained their native English accent and did not code-switch to suit the largely Malaysian audience. In fact, some schools proclaimed to inquiring parents that their teaching staff were "100 per cent native [English] speakers." All these support Phan's (2016, 122) observations that white "Western" education expatriates in Asia tend to be "used as a marketing tool and as a safeguard of quality" by their employers. White "Western" expatriates are thus objectified and portrayed as embodied agents of "internationalization." This image of "a white person teaching sells in Malaysia" (Pero, Italian national) as it is most valued by fee-paying local parents and students who believe that an English-medium, "Western" international/transnational education is key to social reproduction and mobility (Sin 2013). So strong is this belief that the number of local students at international schools in Malaysia exceeds the number of foreign students (Soo 2019).

However, equating internationalization to physical white presence and a Anglo-Western-centric curriculum and instruction is problematic, as Pero criticized:

> Here I somehow tick the idea of internationalization because [I'm seen] as white and I speak English, although I always tell them, "You call me *Mat Salleh*,[7] white, but I'm not British, I'm not English, I'm Italian."

The drive to project internationalization at his university has led his race and nationality to be lumped under the generic category, white Westerner. In reality, Pero had a darker-skinned appearance. Just like some other "Western" non-native English speaking participants (e.g., Dutch, French, German), he spoke English in a foreign accent. There was no significant evidence to suggest that these participants' accents[8] were racialized negatively and as far as their institutions were concerned, they passed as Anglo-Western and represented the "international faculty".

Here, the translocational positionality framework (Anthias 2008) sheds light on the contradictory shifts of race and its associated values. Pero, by virtue of his European nationality, attained the position of a "Western" academic expatriate in Malaysia. Despite his less-than-white appearance and linguistic dispositions, he has been co-opted into the commodification and reduction of Western expatriates' diversities that serve racialized, neo-colonial and neo-liberal capitalism pervading transnational education (Phan 2016). Although he disagreed with an Anglo-Western centric version of internationalization, the dominant racial hierarchy within Malaysia's transnational education landscape still benefited him economically and symbolically. This dilemma echoes that of Savva's (2017) participant, a British international school teacher with teaching experience in China, Africa and the Middle East. Recognising the contradictions between his belief regarding equality and the reality of Western privilege that he was accorded and partook in, Savva's participant exemplifies the

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[7] White Westerner in colloquial Malay.
[8] While Malaysians value a native English accent (especially British and American), they do not pay particular attention to or are not necessarily able to distinguish between different accented English linked to "Westerners".

"Western" teacher expatriate who "continues to enjoy the benefits of being an Anglophone citizen at the very pinnacle of the hierarchy he denounces" (2017, 583).

As we next illustrate, it is in this way that many of the participants became complicit in reproducing the dominant racial status quo in transnational education, however reluctantly. A contributing factor to their complicity – or, more accurately, the lack of agency to resist – is their status as temporary migrants in Malaysia, which in turn circumscribes their position(ing)s as "othered" staff members in their institutions. Another contributing factor, as Pero put it, is that "we're so entangled into those things [i.e., an Anglo-Western centric transnational education that positions "Western" education expatriates as superior to other teaching staff] that we don't realize there is something wrong at the foundation of this." In the same way as Bhopal (2018, 22) argues that white privilege benefits white individuals "whether they like it or not", we argue that "Western"-ness and/or whiteness benefit "Western" education expatriates in non-white majority and postcolonial transnational education contexts whether they call out their own privilege or not.

Indeed, all the participants agreed that white expatriate privilege exists in most of Malaysia's transnational education institutions. Generally, the white "Western" participants were uneasy with uncritical (racialized and classed) assumptions of their superiority. However, they found that their attempts to transcend the entrenched racial hierarchy did not materialize into any meaningful changes. Jack (UK national), who was referred to as "boss" by the on-campus cleaning and security staff, made repeated and conscious efforts to "break that 'them and us' barrier" such as bringing in coffee for his colleagues and emphasising that "we're all part of one team" and "where I come from does not matter." However, he found that his efforts ran up against an "ingrained" postcolonial, patriarchal and ageist culture that positioned him as superior. This pressured him to assume the position of "ambassador" of his country of origin, over-performing characteristics which are institutionally and normatively linked to Western-ness, whiteness and middle-aged maleness, such as being the leader, the expert and the academic talent.

Similarly, as a white expatriate in a senior management position, George (Australian national) faced the expectation to be the unquestioned and faultless authority at work:

> ...it's almost like everyone is willing to accept you and ...your ideas, and
> really not being challenged at all... I might have an idea to do something
> for a particular strategy, and it's just an agreement from
> everyone. ...You've got to be pretty sure of what you are doing, because
> you can't bounce the idea off someone and expect to get an open answer.

These examples show that the white "Western" participants benefited from racial, nationality and skin colour privileges; but with the privileges, also came discomforts. There is pressure to perform and live up to stereotypical representations, and a certain loneliness and frustration of being seen as the know-all and be-all. While Bhopal (2018, 19) has argued that whiteness conferred privileges upon individuals and groups "through [usually obscured] institutional structures and (un)conscious actors", the participants' reflexive acknowledgment of their white privilege shows more self-consciousness of this process if not always resistance. The white "Western" participants' translocational positionality (Anthias 2008) in a non-white majority and postcolonial country has, to some extent, heightened their awareness about their racialized privilege (as well as disadvantage). This was similarly the case for middle-class Canadian international school teachers in Tarc and Tarc's (2015) study: mobility to the Global South and the disorienting shifts in power and social dynamics compelled them to confront their privileged but contingent position(ing)s in between elite parents and students, and the economically disadvantaged local workers.[9]

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[9] Also see Cranston (2017) on British expatriates in Singapore.

Many less- and non-white participants in our study straddled the blurred and ambiguous positions between expatriate and "other" which complicated the conversion of their educated-related cultural capital into instant recognition and acceptance. Being "white and Russian", Elena's less than clear-cut positionality complicated any easy categorization of her as a (white) Western expatriate. Similarly, Miguel's (Malay-speaking Argentinian national) multiple positionalities confused people who could not place him at either side of the Western/other (local/Asian) binary. Daisy (white South African) recounted how her white physical appearance caused doubt among her curious students about her race and nationality: "[They] asked me why am I not black...in their visual minds, it doesn't make sense that I'm white and I'm from South Africa". Entrenched racial stereotypes of her white appearance took initial attention away from other aspects of her whiteness (certified English teaching skills), in ways that did not affect participants from traditional Western countries which were better known to Malaysians. This reminds of the contingent and contradictory (Anthias 2008) experiences of racialized (dis)advantage in transnational education where cultural capital is at once valued and devalued.

The diversities embodied by education expatriates are not fully acknowledged in Malaysia. Instead, they have been othered as foreigners, which posed limits to their full participation at work. They tend to be valued by their institutions primarily for their symbolic appeal and status that correspond with the brand image of transnational education (Phan 2016). While the knowledge and views of those who are in senior management positions seem to matter more than others in accordance to their positions within institutional hierarchies, ultimately, they are seen as outsiders who should not meddle in key decisions and affairs. Pero's narrative captures this sense of institutional exclusion that expatriates face:

> ...they let you go up to programme director but there are certain things
> that they won't share with you. Like when it comes to the core business
> things …[or] the final decision of an important thing, you will not be
> included. You are expatriate. ...you don't have any say on that.

"Western" and "non-Western" participants' status as the foreign "other" in Malaysia is essentially institutionalized through fixed term work contracts that are contingent on regular visa renewals. As we have highlighted, the duration of their work visas is determined by a racial hierarchy that differentiates between acceptable and less acceptable nationalities. The constant racialized judgement and regulation they faced in institutional, symbolic and everyday forms remind them that they are, after all, temporary residents in Malaysia who are at best, conditionally accepted and included.

In these cases, translocational positionality (Anthias 2008) allows us to understand how racialized cultural capital facilitated the participants' access to relatively advantaged positions within their institutions; yet simultaneously positioned them as racialized "others" who were not permitted to fully belong. Ultimately, they were "perpetual noncitizens… [whose] rights to full [participation] and contribution to social, economic, cultural, and political life [in Malaysia] are perpetually partial, discounted, and restricted" (Koh 2020, 236). This extends to, and includes, the transnational education context where their racialized cultural capital was differentially utilized and commodified but never fully rewarded. Indeed, racialized cultural capital (white Westernness and other forms) "grants privileges only in certain contexts and seldom becomes actionable capital" (Hof 2020, 13) when there are structures in place that curtail its full deployment.

Conclusion
This article has explored racism and racialization in transnational education in terms of the differential experiences and capital convertibility of a diverse group of white, less- and non-white education expatriates in Malaysia. The article has extended and adapted the concept

of translocational positionality (Anthias 2008) to uncover race-related hierarchies and divisions that stratify transnational education experiences. Its key contribution lies in highlighting the intersectional and context-based racialized position(ing)s of academic and teacher expatriates, complicating a deterministic class-based approach to cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) and the dominant but reductive white (Western)/non-white (non-Western) binary in internationalization discourses. We argued that racism and racialization in transnational education are connected to differentiation across sites and social relations, and in interaction with structures and agencies, produce varying and unpredictable degrees of privilege and disadvantage.

The participants' narratives suggest that white privilege and the uncritical classification and appreciation of white bodies and other white markers are still very much alive in postcolonial Malaysia. Based on their narratives, we find that there are two key forms of racism and racialization involving academic and teacher expatriates in Malaysia. First, the enduring legacy of colonial racism (Daniels 2014; Koh 2017) is carried into the transnational education workplace and immigration, legitimizing and equating Western countries and whiteness to expertise and internationality. This, in turn, renders "non-Western" education expatriates into lower positions within racialized hierarchies and processes such as employment and work visa applications and renewals. At the same time, the higher positions accorded to white Western expatriates come with discomforts such as the pressure of positive stereotypes, and the awkwardness of local reverence of them. Second, "racism [and racialization] are transmitted in routine practices [that are normalized]" (Essed 1991, 10) and in turn internalized. Even when racism and racialization are experienced and recognized by the participants, their default reaction was acceptance or tolerance, thereby becoming complicit in maintaining the status quo. However, there are exceptions to the prioritization of white Western cultural capital in transnational education. The article pointed to how non-white, "Asian" expatriates could be rewarded for locally and regionally related cultural capital (e.g., assumed racial and cultural fit with the non-Western institution). Nevertheless, the internationalization of education has not brought about a fundamental change in institutional and societal responses to racism and racialization: race continues to underwire academic and teacher expatriates' stratified experiences of work, immigration and everyday life.

The participants come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. However, the existing institutional and societal frameworks in Malaysia are ill-equipped to recognize the diversity that they bring with them. We argue that this is a missed opportunity, for Malaysia and other host countries that are promoting a white, Anglo-Western version of internationalization that is rather inequitable, unbalanced and essentialist. A narrow and racially biased pursuit of internationalization obscures and disregards the contributions and richness that all education expatriates can offer, regardless of their race, nationality and skin colour. Most importantly, a binary logic that places individuals into discrete racial categories with implicit and explicit assumptions about their value and worth does not tally with promises of a truly international education, commonly featured in educational marketing (Phan 2016).

There is a need to explore continuing and newer forms of racism and racialization brought about by the internationalization of education, particularly the selective and hierarchical commodification and regulation of the bodies and mobilities of academic and teacher expatriates. White, "Western" education expatriates are not always in a position of privilege and they too, like less- and non-whites are racialized in ways that might disadvantage them. In a reverse way to Western/Asian racial relations commonly documented in Western countries, Asians in a predominantly Asian and non-white setting can also racialize white Westerners (Groves and O'Connor 2020; Liu and Dervin 2020). The different articulations and shades along the continuum of whiteness and non-whiteness captured in our findings show that race, racism and racialization are not fixed and static, nor do they conform strictly to colour and geographical binaries (see Gonzalez-Sobrino and Devon 2019; Song 2020).

The fluidity and dynamism of race, racism and racialization have to be understood in detail to inform a more equitable and inclusive restructuring of eduscapes where diverse academic and teacher expatriates can actively contribute and be valued.

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