

“Studying the Nexus of Symbolism and Cross-Cultural Agreements: A Conceptual Framework”

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DSU-ISCAP Exchange

- Delaware State University, the historically Black educational institution in Dover, has entered into a partnership agreement with ISCAP in Porto, Portugal. With roots going back to 19--, ISCAP is one of Portugal's most respected universities. It is located on a ---acre campus that includes a view of Porto's downtown skyline and the Hospital area

Collaboration Purpose

- Under the agreement, there will be student and faculty exchanges between Delaware State University and ISCAP. In addition, there will be research collaborations and other academic activities that are shared by the two universities.
- This presentation explores collaboration and its historical development

Myna German

Three Models of Exchange

Student Fee Structure and Identity

New University Identity	Strong	Old university- based and new-strong	<i>Old is strong- New is weak-</i>
	Weak	Old is weak-new strong	<i>Both are weak Student defines self Through other means Of identity</i>
		High	Low

The evolution of hybrid identities

- Despite long-standing and persuasive arguments of those who endorse the desirability of the new university model in exchange, the idea of two-university identity *per se* is experiencing a kind of “renaissance” with more people choosing actively to *integrate*, rather than *assimilate* or *submerge* into the new university. DSU did an exchange with Beijing Sport University around the time of the 2008 Summer Olympics. The students paid their fees to DSU, which created “shell” courses for them.

Nature of contracts

Home-based tuition:

A contract was made with the new university, allowing DSU to pay them for language lessons for the students and fees

The money and ability to give grades remained with the old institution. This allowed for currency translations and differences in the economy and tuitions. Faculty at DSU had students write papers upon return and collaborated with Chinese faculty in the lessons to get their feedback.

Shifts in the Paradigm

Home-based registration and fees
Student pays fees at home-country institution



Student maintains close contact with old institution and does not acculturate in new institution, although attending events and classes, making new friends. Structurally tied to old institution

New institution-based program
Student pays fees to new country institution



Grades are transferred back exactly as they appear on new university transcript, often through clearinghouse at another US-based university

Our example was a student doing Semester at Sea in a program sponsored by Univ of Connecticut

What happens when there is no clearinghouse and no ability to translate transcript due to a different system

This is most problematic area in international education

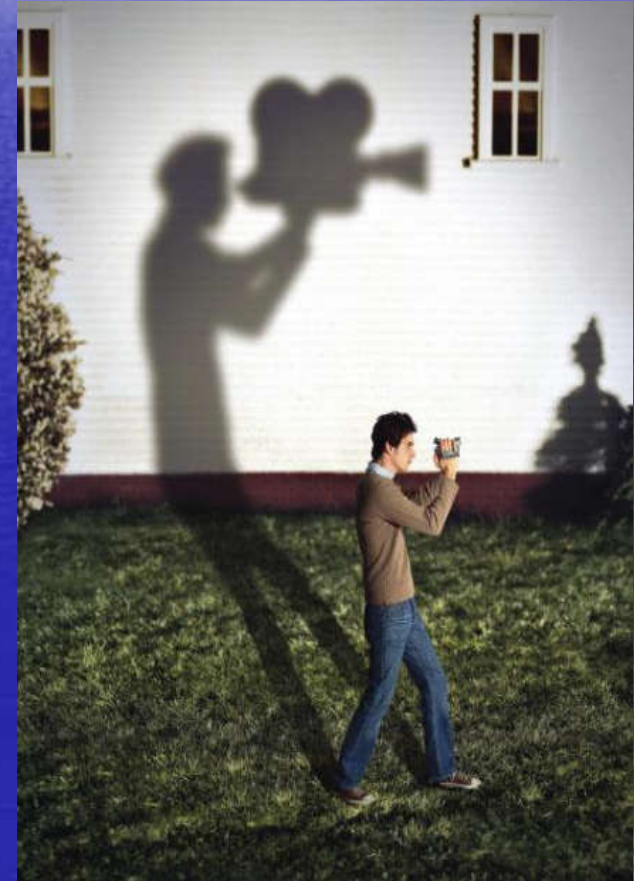
, “neither fish nor fowl”

The “myth of return” becomes more vivid

- As propagated in *The Gilgamesh Epic* or Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero’s Journey*, those returning from international study abroad see the birth-city in a new light
- Example: students going to Portugal or China transfer international skills back and knowledge of the world to fellow students; continue friendships through email, prompt two-way visits

The Search for a Suitable Paradigm

- New relevant and nuanced paradigms are needed to understand our “globalized” world (Toffler, 1980; *The Third Wave*; Schmookler, 1995, *the Parable of the Tribes*)
- We have to accept that powerful mass media and globalization forces create the need for new exchange models to accommodate all levels of experiences with global study



Social networks and student travel and exchange

- Social networks act as intermediaries between the self and the more “macro” processes, such as (politics, law, , and “nation-statehood”) that control our circumstances
- Activity in the networks – or meso-level of existence are facilitated by the Net
- Even in the new place, exchange students are linked with similars elsewhere through digital contact
- Digital exchange afterwards allows info on social conditions and economy to flow back and forth
- Some of the travel and exchange may be in either direction, now that the students and professors are linked digitally
- Student research in the new university can prompt collaborative faculty research

Faculty exchanges change the workplace

- Student and faculty exchange creates new work teams for projects linked digitally;
- Payment issue more prominent in faculty exchange—which university pays the travelling professor?
- Aneesh (2006) found one Indian team that “worked on a project with five teams in Tokyo, Singapore, Sydney, Beijing, and Arlington Heights” (2006:77).

Communications and two-way migration change labor conditions

- *Beneficial Brain Drain* (Di Maria and Stryszowski, 2009)-- workers can acquire technological skills abroad which can be profitable for their home country once the assignment is over (as cited in Bielenia-Grawinai, 2011)
- Will there be a “brain drain” in reverse from the developed world institutions to the emerging economies? Will global professors trained in the U.S. for instance migrate back to developing countries or are they here to stay? Many high-tech students come to the USA from India; but will they go back ever and transfer the knowledge?

Will developing world governments continue to fund exchange if it leads to a "Brain Drain?"

Research likes to look at the success stories in the new land, when professors and students study abroad and stay

But what is the effect on the economy at home, because their travel goes against the prevailing myth structure: at the end, the hero returns home, but this hero decides to stay and build a family in the new place

Better exchange agreements encourage movement in both directions

- When DSU sent students to China for their Olympics internship, in return we hosted five Sports Management students from their host university to ours. An ideal arrangement would have had us swapping students with no fees exchanged, but this was impossible due to the timing and the relative differences in tuition. In the end, it was felt best to have all students paying tuition to their home school

The Nature of Global STUDENT Flows

- When the students came to the US, the Chinese students were able to pay room and board at the US-economy rate, but not tuition. As a result, they wound up taking language lessons at a low payment rate and doing internships on campus in the Sports Information Office
- Global cultural flows have five dimensions (Appadurai, 1990): *ethnoscapes* (flow of people), *technoscapes* (flow of technologies and machinery), *finanscapes* (flow of capital) *mediascapes* (flow of images and information) and *ideoscapes* (flow of ideas, images and ideologies)
- Globalization occurs through cultural flows, interactions and exchanges (Featherstone, 1990)
- “Global culture” is *constructed*; an “invented” or “imagined” community (Smith, 1990)

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- While many more people are likely to come into contact with more than one culture, not all will necessarily seek cross-cultural contact or immersion; they will be:
 - Culturally bounded individuals who consciously regulate their exposure to new cultures
 - Cosmopolitans who seek to be engaged and changed by the contact

Student and professor-travellers tend to:

- “Develop, maintain and re-create” transnational social networks through spontaneous, interactive and real-time flow of information (p. ix)
 - Offer “glimpses” - virtual and vicarious, though realistic, explorations into other worlds
 - Facilitate entry into the global job market in both countries of study or placement;
 - Help other ex-patriates in new host country to maintain their sense of identity (Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010) by hosting events and inviting them, bridging adult and student cultures in both communities

Digital equity and inequality

- Countries with less Internet usage have higher emigration rates than most destination countries which tend to have higher levels of access to technology
- Less than 1 in 3 people around the world have Internet access (Internet World Stats, 2010)
- Lack of equal access may lead to feelings of exclusion and isolation; at the same time, some may choose not to stay “connected”. We cannot assume that ICTs uniformly affect all migrants

“Electronically Present but Physically Absent . . .”

- In their classic article on the computer as a communication device rather than a calculating machine, Licklider and Taylor (1968) introduced the idea of “de-territorialized” communities bound by common interests, not time or space
- Today’s communication technologies involve the virtual but disembodied presence of the person creating new realities where we are “electronically present but physically absent” (Lijtmaer, German & Banerjee, 2011)

Implications for Culture & Community

- Distinctions have been stressed between countries having ***borders*** (geographical territorial limits or geopolitical boundaries) and cultures having ***frontiers*** (socio-cultural limits)
- The Internet has been described as “the new harbor” like the “emblematic” Ellis Island in the US) - providing a window on the new imagined life ahead and the interactive link to life back home
- Creation of the “hyperspace” of social identities (Kearney, 1996)

Levels of Analysis

- Three main levels of inquiry and analysis:
 - Micro-level (where the unit of study is the individual)
 - Meso-level (group or social network)
 - Macro-level (society and culture)
- The level determines the choice of theory, concepts and research design, methods and tools (Rich, German & Banerjee, 2011)
- Social network analysis is becoming central to the study of international migration and social movements (Buzzi & Megele, German & Banerjee, 2011)

The Researcher's Dilemma

- Operationalization: Navigating Thickets of Terminology
 - How to decode and operationalize terms such as *hyper-reality, cyberspace, virtual community, digital nomads, cyborg identity, etc.?*
- Subjects or Participants and Artifacts
 - Choices to be made about who, what and how to study; for example, capturing oral and written autobiographical narratives of those who leave or those who stay behind; or content-analyzing fictional depictions of the many facets of the migration experience

The Way Ahead

- Consensus on need to move from “thick description” to addressing more coherent and enduring questions
 - Three promising areas for empirical inquiry:
 - “Space, place and nature of embeddedness”
 - Variable consequences (both positive and negative)
 - Comparative studies of internal and external migration (Lewitt & Jaworski, 2007)
- No “single exclusive” path; instead, multiple pathways provide unique challenges of their own

Issues in Migration Studies

- How to “place”, “map” or “position” diaspora studies within academia - clearly an interdisciplinary area. The labels change depending on whose perspective or discipline is involved (Pereira & Banerjee, 2010)
- Agreeing about nomenclature/ lexicon
 - Diaspora studies perceived as study of European diaspora in European academic institutions (i.e., inherent eurocentricity)
 - Study of Asian, African, Caribbean, Latin American diasporas called migration studies
 - Movement and settlement of people covered within historical studies, post-colonial studies, geography, social studies, anthropology, arts, economics or politics. These disciplinary areas overlap.

Issues - 2

- Understanding: What constitutes a diaspora? ongoing discourse in academia - fluid, organic, evolving
- Definition: undefined boundaries – terms used include migrant, transnational, hybrid identity, divided, creole, etc.
- Chronology: “South Asian diaspora” is a relatively new concept in Scandinavia in spite of old colonial and other connections (such as Norway’s maritime links with the Indian Ocean and use of Indian seamen on Scandinavian ships)
- Mechanisms: seasonal migration, labour migration, economic migration, refugee and forced migration, multiple migration and implications for identity and assimilation/ integration

Issues - 3

- Gender: What constitutes a diaspora community? Female Lithuanian sex workers in London? Male Gujarati businessmen in the Cape Verde islands?
- Agenda: Who defines a community and for what purpose? National or local government, academia, arts, business?
- Perspective: spatial, home, host, etc.
 - Is “home” in the host community in Europe or North America or the country of diaspora origin?
 - This may depend on who is asking the question and who is answering it

Need for a more critical approach

- The reasoning (or agenda) for studying South Asian diaspora in Europe – because of institutionally perceived failures in integration? Who defines the criteria and are these criteria stagnant or mobile?
- Importance of studying successes as well as failures to assimilate or integrate as well as varying levels of integration
- Importance of placing the diaspora (community) under study at the center of a study structure – asking them to “tell it like it is” – *emic* vs. *etic*?
- Importance of diaspora (community) voice within the study framework in the form of oral histories, recorded interviews, personal testimonies, or ethnographic self-study. All voices are situated and speak from a specific background

Defining diaspora and empirical data

- Defining the diaspora community – in terms of generational make-up, time spent away from original homeland/ in new adopted homeland, class, gender, other socio-cultural variables
- Importance of avoiding “blanket” or generic terms based on colonial political constructs with regards to South Asian communities in Europe (preferring specific terms such as Gujarati Vainya or Punjabi Ramgharia Sikh instead of Indian, Sindhi or Punjabi Muslim instead of Pakistani)
- Questioning the empirical data within methodology of study:
 - Do official figures present the real size and nature of particular communities?
 - Sometimes sub-groups (e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, over-stayers) may have a big socio-political impact on the diaspora; in other cases, entire communities are “invisible” within the framework of official statistics; in other cases, we need to recognize who is speaking for visible groups or on behalf of them

Points to consider further

- Realizing that reliable empirical data may not be available or difficult to collect or collate for social and anthropological diaspora studies
- Need to bring theoretical thought into what are often practice-based research, thereby allowing for the questioning of theoretical models
- What happens when a diaspora ceases to be one and becomes assimilated to the point of being part of the national framework?
 - For example, when does an Irishman become Irish-American or simply American?
 - Some of the literature suggests that by the third generation, the assimilation is almost complete
- Realization that a basic critical interdisciplinary framework is required for the study of diasporas

A framework for migration studies -1

- Mapping concepts
 - Migration occurs over a specific time period and in a specific manner or pattern
 - e.g., Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Arab/Persian Gulf; male migrants in Zanzibar in 19th and 20th centuries; Goan seamen and contract clerical workers in early 20th century British East Africa
 - Axis One - time/ Axis Two - notions of society - fluid constructs
 - Important to map these from a community perspective and take into account their preferred narratives

A framework for migration studies -2

- The length of time they have lived in the host country (e.g., fifth generation Guyanese Indians consider themselves distinct from Indians in India)
- Societal definitions and constructions
- Size of the diasporas, numbers of out-migration and emigres
- Notions of distance from place of origin - internal and international migration
- Layered segments can be used in charts

Five important questions to pursue

- Who migrated?
- When did they migrate?
- How did they migrate?
- How far did they migrate?
- What is/are the best way(s) to study them?
- This critical framework would serve to cross disciplines of study, it is centered within the community and its terms of reference and not on external references

An audio-video example

- http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/stefana_broadbent_how_the_internet_enables_intimacy.html
- **Speaker Stefana Broadbent: Tech anthropologist**
- Stefana Broadbent watches us while we talk (and IM, and text). She is one of a new class of ethnographers who study the way our social habits and relationships function and mutate in the digital age. **Why you should listen to her:**

An audio-video example

- Stefana Broadbent, a cognitive scientist, **has spent decades observing people as they use technology**, both at home and in complex workspaces such as air-traffic control towers. She looks at the way we use our brand-new tools, and at the evolving practices for each tool (for instance, you might phone your mother, but text your spouse; IM with a co-worker, but tweet among friends) that speak volumes on the way we think about our relationships. Using traditional and evolving ethnographic practices in her work, most recently for Swisscom and now as a Fellow at the new Digital Anthropology department at University College in London, she has made some surprising findings. Did you know, for instance, that **many of us now write to our friends more often than we talk to them**? Or that even the most hardened road warriors prefer to do "real" work at their own desks?
- "She does not only feed you with plenty of data indicating new trends; she also goes deeper by connecting them to higher-level issues ([such as] cognitive psychology). "*Pasta & Vinegar blog*"