GLOBAL CULTURES

ENGAGING DIASPORAS AROUND THE WORLD IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Compilation by

Palina Louangketh and Anna Slatinská

UNIVERZITA MATEJA BELA V BANSKEJ BYSTRICI

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Matej Bel University, Faculty of Arts
In cooperation with
Idaho Museum of International Diaspora

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Anna Slatinská

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Collection of Articles

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

With nearly 5,500 miles between us, you might ask, how did a U.S.-based organization, Idaho Museum of International Diaspora, in a rural state like Idaho intersect with Matej Bel University, a higher education institution in the heart of Central Slovakia – Banská Bystrica? More specifically, how did Anna and I meet? Let's take you on our *learning* journey of *discovering* our common connections and *exploring* creative pathways for our partnership rooted in cultural and diaspora topics. To do so, you will need some background information – i.e., past and historical contexts – of the importance of storytelling as a foundation to the cultures of those who have been displaced – the diasporas – from their origin homelands. The diaspora human journey stories across history and timelines of catastrophic events provide us with accounts of their remarkable lived experience of survival, resilience, and renewal as they resettle in their new host countries and cling on to their beloved cultural norms and traditions. I am a product of this diaspora phenomenon.

My family's 2-year journey of uncertainty from a small Southeast Asian land-locked country of Laos – a war torn country resulting from the American Secret War in Laos – inspired the birth of a special cultural and diaspora museum, Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID), with none like it in the world. The IMID was founded on the remarkable harrowing human journey stories of involuntarily displaced peoples ("diasporas") and the unique circumstances that have shaped the narratives of their lived experience around the world. My vision for its purpose was grounded in the realization that diasporas find solace through their cultures and community connectedness in the face of uncertainty and ambiguous loss. No words can entirely capture the depth and breadth of their loss across the spectrum of the diaspora journey. More too often, they become silent stories living in the shadow of their silhouettes waiting to be released.

The IMID honors the human journey realities of diasporas, connects people and communities to diverse cultures globally, and celebrates diaspora cultures of past and current through creative opportunities. Today's cultural and diaspora museums play a vital and pivotal role in illuminating and connecting their stories and existence in a new environment. In parallel to the work of the IMID, Anna's path to learning and discovering global competency models of practice in higher education institutions intersected with a presentation related to internationalizing university curriculum design that I delivered at a public diplomacy congress in Donostia / San Sebastian, Spain in July 2021. The timing could have not been more ideal for this fortuitous opportunity that brought us together. The stars were aligned. Anna's work to further a global skills training initiative for teachers, translators, and interpreters at the Faculty of Arts at Matej Bel University (MBU) and my presentation introducing IMID's Global Diaspora Curriculum – launched and taught at Boise State University Honors College – that integrated diasporas and their human journey stories in the classroom setting planted a seed in August 2021. This seed sprouted and created more pathways for partnerships in which IMID's Global Leadership Council was formed in January 2022. Collaborative opportunities further enabled a larger scale project that ultimately resulted in the development of this eBook, *Global Cultures: Engaging Diasporas Around the World in Diverse Contexts*, two years in the making.

This larger scale project, facilitated by the Global Leadership Council, took the form of IMID's inaugural multiday global conference, Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement – cohosted by IMID, MBU, City of Banská Bystrica, and MBU Faculty of Arts in the heart of Slovakia, Banská Bystrica. Held in September 2023, our conference engaged participants in learning how museums can play a critical role in shaping and showcasing the cultures of diasporas; learning from cross-sector leaders and practitioners who invited dialogue about the newly created diasporas in global context; discovering how we are connected by understanding diaspora from different perspectives (sociological, psychological, political, intercultural, educational, etc.) and taking into consideration the past–present–future of diasporas; and exploring opportunities and partnerships to impact positive changes. The conference design and flow follow the IMID business model of examining past and current trends to anticipate and plan for future scenarios, which encapsulates the IMID's three principles of learn, discover, and explore. These same concepts and design flow – from past to current and planning for the future – in the context of connecting the community to cultures and engaging with diasporas, through the role of cultural and diaspora museums in partnership with academic institutions, are the pillars for the eBook design, contents, and its position as foundational for the next phase in our work to expand internationalization of university curriculum design.

In conclusion, Anna and I owe a debt of gratitude to several scholars, professionals, and practitioners who have gifted their time and expertise to contribute their work of literature compiled in this eBook. To IMID's Global Leadership Council, we are grateful for the opportunity to take this journey with you. To MBU and MBU Faculty of Arts, thank you deeply for gifting us with your partnership and venue spaces to turn a vision into reality. To City of Banská Bystrica, the experience in your beautiful city will forever stand solid as a foundation for more adventurous innovative partnerships to come.

Palina (Boise, Idaho, U.S.A.) and Anna (Banská Bystrica, Slovakia)
October 16, 2023

Foundations of a Diaspora Cultural Museum:
Idaho Museum of International Diaspora

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Abstract

People around the world have been displaced since ancient times. This phenomenon has continued through the ages and remains in active state in today's complex world across various regions of the globe. Unfortunately, today's world affairs and climate scenarios including natural disasters have created situations for people and communities to become displaced from their homes and homelands. This phenomenon is referred to as *diaspora* – the dispersion of people from their origin homelands (Cohen, 2008). Diaspora also refers to an individual affected by diasporic events – e.g., war, political, economic, climate, religion, etc. – that result in a small group or an entire population leaving their homelands. For many, the easiest and safest place to resettle is often the neighboring country; however, many spend years and sometimes decades in their journey before finally resettling. Countless stories of the human journey remind us of the common thread shared by humanity – *hope* for a better life.

The Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID) is a diaspora cultural museum founded in 2018 with an extraordinary potential to connect people and communities across the globe to cultural heritage of past and current in unique ways. As the world's first and only diaspora multicultural museum, its existence is rapidly gaining global visibility. The IMID represents a foundational model to highlight global stories of the human journey in diaspora context through a safe learning environment that celebrates origin cultural heritage.

Keywords: museum, diaspora, cultural, culture, foundations, Idaho, global, international, human journey, lived experience, story

Manifesto of Founder, Dr. Palina Louangketh

My name is Palina Louangketh, a former refugee from Laos. My family's two-year journey of uncertainty from Laos – a war torn country resulting from the American Secret War in Laos – inspired my vision to develop a special one-of-a-kind museum founded on the harrowing stories of the human journey and unique circumstances that have shaped the narratives of diasporas around the world. I call this the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID – pronounced 'eye mid') and its purpose honors the human journey realities of diasporas, connects people and communities to diverse cultures globally, and celebrates diaspora cultures of past and current through creative opportunities. "Diaspora" simply means to scatter about (White, n.d.); however, its meaning has incredible depth as it represents the human journey story of those who have been involuntarily displaced from their origin homelands (Cohen, 2008).

The harrowing and remarkable stories of diasporas resonate across cultures as they take us on a journey of survival – human struggles, resilience, and perhaps renewal. Stories of lived experience impact our emotional awareness and awake our sense of compassion. These powerful narratives through innovative learning platforms will enable the IMID to influence a positive community transformation and inspire a movement of additional international museums in countries that have diaspora resettlement.

Introduction

Founded in June 2018, by Dr. Palina Louangketh, and based in Boise, Idaho in the Northwest region of the United States of America, the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID, pronounced 'eye mid') – an independent non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Idaho in February 2019 – is the world's only diaspora multicultural museum. The IMID defines "diaspora" – a word rooted in Greek origin that means to scatter about (White, n.d.) – as the involuntary displacement of peoples from their origin countries or homes.

Dr. Louangketh and her family's 2-year journey of uncertainty as refugees from Laos inspired her vision – the IMID – to deeply explore an innovative approach that will foster a community of relationships. Her family's lived experience as refugees fleeing from Laos – from one refugee camp in Thailand to another in the Philippines – and experience as new Americans during the

resettlement journey in Idaho, U.S. in 1980s inspired her vision for an innovative multipurpose cultural museum approach to honor the human journey on a global scale. As both the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the IMID, her passion and commitment to honor the human journey story globally through a *diaspora* cultural museum lens advanced the work of the IMID into academia. She designed a trilogy of upper division university courses – Cross-Cultural Voices of Diaspora, Cross-Border Voices of Diaspora, and Cross-Culinary Voices of Diaspora – and launched them within the IMID's Global Diaspora Curriculum (GLC) framework in which she launched, in partnership with Boise State University Honors College, in fall academic semester of 2019.

Diaspora definitions vary from a defined term to a broad representation of displaced populations specific to a defined timeline or historical event. For the IMID, diaspora encompasses those who are not only of refugee and immigrant backgrounds in historical, recent past, and current contexts (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora, n.d.). Diaspora also includes those who have been displaced resulting from human trafficking, adoption, and homelessness, and climate on a domestic or global level. The IMID's journey, from vision to formation of its existence as a nonprofit corporation, developed as nascent project with incredible energy to bring global and cultural communities together in special ways. Today, the work of the IMID, through its body of leadership in Idaho and spanning across various regions of the globe has advanced the vision of its founder, Dr. Palina Louangketh, across the nation and other areas of the world. The IMID represents an innovative approach to a multipurpose multicultural diaspora museum that will preserve the realities of the human journey through stories and art platforms and connect people from all cultural backgrounds – across all generations – to celebrate diverse cultures in very unique ways.

Statement of Need

The mission of the IMID is "to influence positive community transformation" across communities around the world. To do so, the IMID brings visibility to the raw realities of the lived experience of diasporas and honors the traditional cultural heritage and evolving cultures of peoples in both the host (i.e., country of resettlement) and origin countries. This is done in partnership with community, national, and global partners across many industry sectors through various platforms

such as exhibition, documentaries, community events, partnership activities, and educational programs – i.e., conferences, workshops, university curricula, cultural classes, etc. "In a changing world sustained by clamor, change with the times inform a new approach for more openness, pragmatism, and shared involvement to address issues that impact people, communities, and nations" (Louangketh, 2018). Through partnership and volunteers, the IMID aims to become a relevant force in the influence of positive community transformation. These partnerships will foster the mindsets of future generations by serving as a resource to support the dynamics of modern society and urban change.

Why Idaho?

Idaho has had a well-known legacy of hate dating back to the arrival of the white supremacist leader – Richard Butler from California – in the 1970s when he moved into the Northern Idaho region (Zahler, n.d.). Butler's influence created a racist encampment in Northern Idaho unmatched across the nation (Zahler, n.d.). Annual hate summits were held in Northern Idaho and by the 1990s, Idaho-based Aryan Nations launched one of the first hate Web sites (Zahler, n.d.). The unfortunate truth is that *hate* exists in all regions of the world, and what makes Idaho the perfect home for the IMID is Idaho's history with racism. According to the Idaho Office for Refugees (n.d.) – one of three Idaho resettlement agencies, Idaho was one of the first cohort of states across the U.S. to pilot the refugee resettlement program of 1975 in which IMID founder, Dr. Louangketh, and her family came to Idaho through the agency's resettlement program.

The human migration will continue into the future experienced throughout the world and create shifting narratives that evolve over time as told by different voices. The IMID has identified 223 countries of origin and distinct peoples into Idaho over its history (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora, n.d.). Although the IMID does not yet have a brick-and-mortar structure, it remains active in the virtual space and through collaboration with partners to host and support community events and activities. Its ongoing work to connect communities to cultures from around the world has emerged several opportunities that have propelled the IMID's visibility across many regions of the world. As the steward of the world's collective cultural heritage, the IMID becomes the anchor institution for preserving the integrity of the human journey stories on a global scale. It will

provide meaningful and authentic information to multigenerational learners of all backgrounds not just in Idaho and across the U.S., but around the world.

Idaho has welcomed refugees since the enactment of the 1975 Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program in response to the need for all states to participate in the resettlement of refugees fleeing the overthrow of U.S. supported governments in Southeast Asia (Idaho Office for Refugees, n.d.). Throughout history, their stories of the human journey as refugees to becoming new Idahoans have evolved from suffering and lingering uncertainties to having hope for a quality life and faith in the support from their Idaho communities. The human journey of today's refugees from all over the world into their new homes in foreign places and their harrowing experiences are not so different from the refugee arrivals back in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Collectively, their transition from the past into a new way of living – a new life in Idaho free from persecution – instills hope towards the future. Preserving the history of refugees as new Americans – new Idahoans – in a museum is a critical step to further promote the rich history of Idaho giving back to its people of all cultures, all races. With 123 countries of origin and distinct peoples into Idaho over its history, Idaho provides the perfect environment to host a multicultural museum founded on the concept of diaspora. As an international museum of diaspora, the IMID will not only capture the stories of Idahoans with diaspora pasts, but also stories of the human journey from around the world.

Goal and Objectives that Connect Global Communities

The IMID's three core objectives support the museum's overarching goal of *connecting people and communities to the cultures from around the world*.

The importance of defining the past to understand the origin story of harrowing lived experience grounds the first objective: Preserving the raw realities of the human journey resulting from the exodus of people from around the world not just to Idaho but other host states within the U.S. and host countries. Their journey of survival brings their path to living in the current state with hope as they navigate through the nuances of their new resettlement in the host country or region. This new journey reflects the IMID's second objective: Sharing the incredible human journey stories of diasporas from around the world in a way that inspires positive changes throughout global communities. Lastly, grounded in having faith for a better future supports objective three:

Featuring the creative integration of diasporas' origin cultures and traditions into the host country's culture resulting in a unique cross-cultural transformation (Storti, 2001).

For diaspora cultural groups represented in the IMID, the museum becomes a beacon of inspiration and source of pride. For those who may not identify with a specific culture, the IMID serves as a hub for learning and education – to learn and experience histories, accomplishments, and cultures of diverse people (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy, 2007). The IMID's non-traditional museum business model, programs and offerings, and important activities enable its relevancy as an international diaspora cultural museum. It has emerged as an important relevant resource to communities and strategic alliance to global partners. The non-traditional innovative business model enables experiential learning opportunities in unique ways to help bridge the knowledge gap about the global diasporic human journey in past, current, and future contexts. The IMID's vision – to inspire an international movement of diaspora museums – can only be achieved through strategic partnerships.

IMID Framework

The foundations of the IMID as a diaspora cultural museum are grounded in the IMID's core guiding principles – *learn*, *discover*, and *explore*. Those with curious minds look to the IMID to learn about the human journey stories from around the world in diaspora context, discover their own personal connections to history and cultural heritage, and explore their role as an active member of the community and relevant topics through the IMID's educational and cultural programs no matter where they live. The IMID represents a source of pride for the peoples of those cultures and for those outside the cultures, it serves as an anchor for inspiration and educational resources from around the world where visitors will learn about the histories of peoples and their human journey stories – their struggles, accomplishments, and contributions as a member of society in their host countries.

The IMID will not only serve its purpose in the traditional museum role including the collection, preservation, and research of cultural objects and materials of current and historical importance, it also provides a multipurpose space under one structure in which to carry out its mission, objectives, and core values.

On February 7, 2020, the IMID and University of Idaho College of Art and Architecture (CAA) entered into partnership to design the IMID's complete structure – architecture, interior architecture, and landscape architecture including art and design, digital technology, and additional innovative design features and elements. February 2020 marks the initial phase of the design – the visioning process. The leadership teams of both organizations convened to learn about Dr. Louangketh's multidimensional vision that inspired the birth of the IMID as a multipurpose diaspora cultural museum and the breadth of the CAA's international experiences and expertise.

Research of Diaspora, Cultural and Immigration Museums

Diaspora references the exile of Jews in Biblical times (White, n.d.) and the Holocaust diaspora survivors, African diaspora of the slave trade era, Native American diaspora of indigenous peoples forcibly displaced from their homelands on domestic soil, early pilgrims from Europe into America who fled persecution or desired a better life, genocide, domestic and transnational adoptees, human traffic and victimized diaspora, and many other forms of diaspora. The collections that any museum maintains and manages for galleries, exhibits, and other educational purposes do not exist for the sole purpose of satisfying its customer segments' curiosity alone (Arinze, 1999). While the information contained in the collections serve as a tool for knowledge, it also provides rich information for specific and broad research purpose (Arinze, 1999). To that end, standing up a museum on any level requires research, and the breadth of research will depend on the extent of the anticipated innovation of its services, features, and offerings (Ciecko, 2019). In the context of the IMID – an innovative international-level museum focused on diaspora and the breadth of the human journey, the research involved to help inform and guide the development of the IMID in various phases from the birth of the vision to its next phases in its development journey require research of additional emerging innovative modern museums.

A small number of diaspora-specific museums worldwide exist with a wide range of other museums that remain historical in nature – i.e., history museums. The number of museums specific to diaspora include the Museum of African Diaspora in San Francisco; Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfusot in Tel Aviv, Israel; and EPIC Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin, Ireland. While these three museums provide rich histories of the human migration in the context of

diaspora, they focus only on a specific population and not multiple diverse populations under one institution. Active research through interview surveys of museums, led by Western University in London, Ontario, Canada, lists a current number of 69 diaspora and immigrant museums across the globe (Western University, n.d.). This number will only increase as the research team continues the ongoing research to identify active diaspora and immigration museums globally. The IMID remains the world's first and only international-level diaspora museum that represents research findings of 123 countries of origin and distinct peoples in Idaho over the state's history (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora, n.d.).

According to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (2014), more than 35,000 museums across the U.S. remain active. This number has more than doubled since the 1990s' estimate of 17,500 museums (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2014). As advances in technology become more integrated into the core of museum operations, offerings, and overall design, the world has experienced an increasing surge of museums worldwide as they are an essential part of the cultural landscape in any given geographical location and provide vital educational opportunities. In the U.S., the role of museums influence change and growth in the educational, economic, and social contexts (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2014). When compared to the neighboring country – Canada, the Canadian Museums Association lists over 2300 museums and similar institutions across Canada (Harvey & Lammers, 2015). Across Europe, over 15,000 remain active (Network of European Museum Organisations, n.d.) with Russia at over 2300 (Russia.ru, n.d.). The Network of European Museum Organisations (n.d.) explains that European museums are forums for dialogue across Europe, sources of employment, partners in the European Information Society, resources for life-long learning, and guardians of the European collective cultural heritage.

The rise of mega-museums has particularly taken roots in the Middle East (Downey, 2015) and China (Shepard, 2019). China's boom of mega-museums resulted from their cultural initiative – from nearly 350 in 1978 to over 5,100 in 2019 (Shepard, 2019; Duron, 2020). China's museum surge over the past two decades has been an astounding accomplishment with new museums opening and operating daily – e.g., 451 new museums were opened in 2012 (Shepard, 2019). China's National Cultural Heritage Administration established a 2016-2020 goal of building one

museum for every 250,000 people by 2020 (Shepard, 2019). Although impressive, many of these vanity projects have local city leaders locked in competition with mismanagement of funding for programs, which result in empty museums throughout China (Chua, 2019; Zuo, 2019).

Museum experts of varying backgrounds have identified 42 notable museums from around the world that represent remarkable works of art in their respective architectural designs and innovative offerings (Kim, 2017). This brings into question, what is the role of museums in the 21st century? The answer begins with the question, how does the IMID remain relevant and competitive? Education and learning opportunities represent some of the most essential roles of the IMID. Furthermore, to remain relevant, the IMID works collaboratively with practitioners and professionals not only in the cultural and historical space, but across various industries and topics as they relate and impact human migration.

Conclusion

As an innovative diaspora multicultural museum, the IMID highlights and communicates the human journey story across all diaspora contexts through special programs and offerings. With 123 countries of origin and distinct peoples into Idaho over its history, anchoring the IMID in Idaho is a strategic move. IMID's business model provides a pathway for connecting people and communities to cultures across the globe. In comparison to the mass immigration of Europeans into America in historical times, today's diasporas and their hope for a new life often parallels the motivations that influenced the earlier pilgrims to leave their own homelands for America. For people like the refugees, regardless of homeland origin, seeking safety for their family and escaping persecution and war become a matter of life and death in which the President of the Liberian United Association of Idaho emphasized, "nobody wants to be a refugee" (Paye, 2018).

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"Remembering Forward": The Importance of Preserving Individual and Collective Memory Artefacts

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Abstract

The study entitled *"Remembering Forward": The Importance of Preserving Individual and Collective Memory Artefacts* focuses on the role of individual and collective memory (in contrast with historical and cultural memory), applied to the traumatic experience of Slovak immigrants to North America and Canada. Following the research of Jan and Aleida Assmann (1999), we hold the position that artefacts of individual memory (such as letters, photographs, memoirs and recorded oral histories) help to shape and preserve collective memory, shared by the diverse body of migrants, immigrants and expats, their families and descendants. They further create "cultural memory", which represents a contrast to historical memory, which is often lacking significance for the present-day museum visitor. On the other hand, cultural memory, according to Aleida Assmann, is a form of "living memory", that has survived various eras, long after individual and collective memory has ceased to exist. The difference between individual, collective, cultural and historical memory has been demonstrated via semiotic analysis of famous diaspora photograph *Lunch atop a Skyscraper* (1932). Best practice in presenting historical and cultural memory artefacts has been documented on the example of Kasigarda, from the Museum of Slovak Diaspora in North America, located in eastern Slovakia. The research results clarify the role of cultural memory in modern museum management, aimed at presenting the cultural consciousness of communities and nations.

Key words: Kasigarda, diaspora, museum of diaspora, individual memory, collective memory, historical memory, cultural memory, "living memory"

Introduction

The concept of memory and its functions and storage vehicles (such as material artefacts, i.e, photographs, excavations, etc. and non-material artefacts, i.e, stories, legends and myths, to name

a few) has been attracting people since ancient times, and has drawn attention in academia since the beginning of the previous century, especially after the rise of the postmodern tendency towards pluralism. Confino notes, “People are sometimes ready to die for their version of the past, and nations sometimes break because of memory conflict” (p. 1400), as could be said to be sadly evidenced by the current Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Certain traumatic experiences, such as the Holocaust, communism, and immigration, need a clear methodological tool for investigation, so as to avoid the risk of reductionism and oversimplification. Therefore, modern scholars from a variety of fields attempt to re-invent historical and cultural premises, namely the connection between the past, the present and the future. We would like to extend the existing discourse and analyze the role of individual and collective memory in constructing what Aleida Assmann (2018, p. 16) called “living memory”. Attention will also be paid to diverse artefacts of “living memory”, representing vehicles carrying the past. Alluding to another of Aleida Assmann’s thoughts, we have entitled the research “Remembering Forward,” as we would like to explain the importance of diaspora museums in preserving “living memory”, showing how historical, collective and individual memories of immigrants co-exist and co-create each other, and what role they play in history and in myth-creation.

1.1 Theoretical contexts: Lerngedächtnis vs. Bildungsgedächtnis

German cultural scientist Aleida Assmann explored the concept of memory in her philosophical and anthropological monograph entitled *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (1999; English translation *Cultural Memory and Western Civilisation: functions, media, archives,* 2011; Czech translation *Prostory k vzpomínání,* 2018). She also analyses various manifestations and storage vehicles of memory, based on Holocaust memory studies. She followed the research of the Israeli cultural historian Alon Confino, who explored the memory of WWII in Germany and the wider world (Confino, 1997), and later also the research of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (2009).

In considering the anthropological focus of the process of remembering, Aleida Assmann emphasized the major contribution of the empirical philosopher John Locke (1632–1704). Locke

was among the first who anthropocentrically redefined the role of Man as an active creator of events and focus of efforts. Following Locke's philosophy, Man (meaning: human being; note: JJ) is no more a mere recorder of events but becomes an active element in the process of remembering. He or she selects, suppresses, and creates memories via the context of the present time and space; he creates what Assmann calls "reminiscences" (Assmann, p. 300). Such active understanding of the concept of memory inevitably functions out of the framework of historical objectivity. Unlike facts, reminiscences can be subject to forgetting, discontinuity, plasticity, even false memories, and contrafactual confabulation (Ibid., p. 300). Qualitatively, Assmann distinguished between *Lerngedächtnis* and *Bildungsgedächtnis*. *Lerngedächtnis* denominated memory gained by learning data, usually based on historical memory artefacts, such as documents, excavations and statues, to name a few representative artefacts. These artefacts may be objectively evidenced. However, they often represent memories, closed in "air-tight containers" (Assmann, p. 16), without any meaning or connection to the present. On the other hand, *Bildungsgedächtnis* (true knowledge, built on education and understanding of "cultural memory" (explained further below). Assmann (pp. 16 – 20) also explored various ways of social formation of memories, i.e., how memories are stored and preserved in societies. She established the taxonomy of three types of memory:

1. Individual memory is a type of memory which lasts over one's lifetime. It is evidenced by intimate and personal vehicles, such as scars, photographs, souvenirs, etc.
2. Collective memory is a type of memory which spans over three generations (usually from 80 to 100 years). It is evidenced by personal vehicles (photographs, souvenirs, etc.) and also non-material vehicles, such as stories.
3. Cultural memory is a type of memory which expands over historical eras. It comes into being after individual and collective memory is forgotten. Its vehicles are myths, legends, stories, various aspects of language, etc. Cultural memory is also a "living memory", i.e., a type of memory, sharing meaningful contexts of the story behind the artefact.

"Living memory", however, functions very differently from historical memory. To further explain the concept of "living memory", Assmann (p. 20) suggests the metaphor of an "attic", where various objects (i.e. memories) are disorderly scattered around. Unlike artefacts of historical memory, they are not conserved in "airtight space" of institutionalized memory storages (i.e.,

museums, built on 19th century conception, as "storages of objects"), but displayed, exposed to various forms of preserving and deterioration, and ready to be called to our attention or sink to dust. Vehicle-wise, "living memory" can be transmitted by material artefacts (i.e., photographs), as well as intangible vehicles such as feelings and traumas. Confino adds, traumas include a broad spectrum of psychological representations, such as syndromes, neuroses, repressions, obsessions and pathologies, (Confino, p. 1396).

One could justly ask, what is the value of "truth" within the framework of "living memory". To illustrate her point, Aleida Assmann introduces the term, "the memory's truth" (p. 22), and supports it with reference to the story of a Holocaust survivor, who remembered the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945, and the four chimneys being blasted and torn down. However, historical records (including the Auschwitz official web-page; Auschwitz, 2022) register only one chimney that actually exploded. For the concept of historical memory this inaccuracy is a flaw. However, for the concept of "living" memory, such a mistake is irrelevant. The survivor wanted to grasp the general desire for total destruction of the hated symbols of the crematorium, which built foundations of the myth of general hatred towards the symbols of concentration camps. The message of such memory is much more important than minor technical inaccuracies. Assmann agrees, "living memory" may not always be accurate in every technical and objective detail. However, its aim is to create an identity of the event (Assmann, 2018; Pecníková, Pondelíková, Mališová, 2021) or, a myth, grasping the overall atmosphere and the meaning of the event. In this, "living memory" functions similarly to the "truth" of fiction. Literature (as understood by Marxist and historical critics) also attempts to grasp the *Zeitgeist*, or some generalized truth of an era or society. For understanding Charles Dickens, for example, the difference between overpopulated, crime-ridden, and smog-soaked Victorian industrial cities, and rural and relatively unspoilt countryside, is much more relevant than minor inaccuracies in his descriptions of milking techniques. To further clarify the differences between individual, collective and cultural memory, Assmann (pp. 18 – 24) sets clear distinctive criteria. Not every individual memory becomes a collective memory. Individual memories need to be "officially legitimized and institutionally constructed" forms of collective memory, e.g., by films and media, urban legends, and similar vehicles carrying the memory of the past. In the following subchapter, we will demonstrate how

individual, collective and cultural memory contribute to the myth-creation, based on the iconic photograph of New York, known as *Lunch atop a Skyscraper* (1932).

1.2 *Lunch atop a Skyscraper* as individual, collective and cultural memory artefact

Lunch atop a Skyscraper (see photo 1) is perhaps one of the most iconic photographs of 1930s Manhattan, New York. It was plausibly called "a piece of American history" (Johnston, 2022).

Photo 1. *Lunch atop a Skyscraper*. Source: Rockefeller Centre Archives.

Lunch atop a Skyscraper is a staged promo photograph, taken on September 20, 1932, during the construction of Rockefeller Center, showing 11 workers comfortably snacking without visible safety harnesses on a steel beam on what seems to be the 69th floor, 260 metres above the street level. The photograph was taken during the heights of the Great Depression, when unemployment peaked at 24%, during the times of Prohibition (Ó Caláin, 2012). In 2016, *Time* listed the photograph among one hundred "most influential photographs of all time" (*Time*, 2023). Among the reasons for its popularity may be that it represents the very "cultural fabric" of New York: immigrants, now "common-man superheroes", doing "extraordinary things", as Séan Ó Caláin, the author of the 2012 documentary film *Men at Lunch*, put it (Ó Caláin, 2012).

Semiotically, the photograph constructs several myths of America:

1. It stresses the myth of "otherness" of the New World, showing a supermodern city, densely crammed with skyscrapers, the absence of countryside and greenery, and unbelievable height. The viewers felt distance, otherness and a certain alienation from the "American" lifestyle, so different from the one in Europe, or in rural Slovakia.

2. The photograph very clearly points out the myth of America as a "Land of opportunity", where the impossible becomes possible. One cannot fail to notice the ease with which workers lunch, read and rest on the top of the construction. These impressions (there were many similar photos taken, marketed and sold as postcards) were further fueling the myth of America as a land of opportunity, where one becomes an "Amerikán" (the one who lives in America, in the "American" way, note: JJ), living his or her American Dream.

3. Finally, the photo also perpetuates several other myths, e.g., the myth of friendship and cooperation and also the myth of America as a land, built on such ideals. In the center, we see a community of diverse immigrant workers, coming from all corners of the world, probably speaking different languages and very little English, united by the project of the construction of what was formerly known as RCA building.

The photograph, however, plays a significant role not only in general history of immigration to America, but also in particular history of the Slovak diaspora. It perpetuates the myth of skilled and hard-working Slovaks, coming from no-name villages and building the most remarkable world metropolises, such as Budapest, Vienna, Shanghai and New York, popular in Slovakia.

From the point of view of vehicles for memory storage, *Men atop a Skyscraper* very illustratively combine individual, collective and cultural memory of the early years of New York rise to a megapolis.

The memory of eleven men at lunch first served as an individual memory: memory of the men sitting, snacking and resting on the beam, which later entered the individual memory of their family and fellow villagers back home. Although the identity of the workers (except for two; Rockefeller Center Archives, 2023) is not evidenced, many workers asserted to be the ones atop a skyscraper. In Slovakia, the artist and documentary film-maker Ivan Popovič claims ironworker number eleven on the very right to be his grandfather, Gusti Popovič from Vyšný Slavkov. The photograph was shot on September 20, 1932, and a couple of weeks later, Gusti sent this postcard home with the

now famous text in East-Slovak dialect: “So this is how we’re building America. Do not worry, my dear Marishka, as you can see, here I am with my bottle.” (transl. by JJ). Ivan Popovič remembers the postcard and accompanying letter in one of his family albums, now lost. Despite the story being unevidenced, it became an individual memory of Gusti Popovič and later of his relatives, who took the story as “true” and placed the photograph on the tombstone of Gusti (see photo 2).[1]

Photo 2: Gusti Popovič’s tombstone with the photograph *Lunch atop a Skyscraper*.

Source: Vondráček, 2022.

The true identity of the ironworkers is not of utmost importance for the concept of “living memory”. The story of a fearless immigrant worker became so popular, it had entered the collective memory (of Gusti’s, or, alternatively, Sonny’s relatives and fellow workers). However, this collective memory became so popular and known among Slovaks at home and abroad, it actually created a myth, long after the individual memory of Gusti Popovič and collective memory of his fellow workers and family ceased to exist. The story turned to a myth, fueling cultural memory of immigrants as keystone of New York development. For the myth, the true identity of the ironworkers was irrelevant; the memory’s truth lay in the immigrant contribution to the rise of

[1] Many people claimed recognition of their ancestors in the photograph. In 2003, *New York Post* requested readers to recognize their ancestors and many people claimed the men to be their relatives. Unfortunately for Slovakia, one of them was the grandson of Pat (Sonny) Glynn, an Irishman, who, based on face similarity, claimed man no. 11 to be his grandfather (Ó Caláin, 2012).

one of the world's megapolises. The photograph served as a tool in the institutionalization of memory and thus, secured itself the role of a "living memory".

1.3 Changing role of diaspora museums: from storage of artefacts to presentation of ideas

We have already noted that common definition and understanding of the function of a museum is built on the 19th century concept of a museum as a storage of interesting and valuable objects (Merriam Webster, 2023). However, the postmodern tendency towards pluralism not only accelerated what Aleida Assmann called the "crisis of museums" (Assmann, 2018), but also brought up the idea of museums as vehicles, preserving and interpreting material aspects of society's "cultural consciousness" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023).

Diaspora museums often display artefacts, connected with trauma, that integrate a lot of emotional context and subjective points of view, alongside the objectively grounded evidence. We hold the position that, in terms of diaspora, historical memory is equally important to cultural or "living memory", as it is a rich source of contextualized and emotionalized information about the past. However, the researcher and the museum visitor should be aware that "living memory" has a different function, vehicles and aims than historical memory. What is more, it does not have to be objectively "true", but ought to possess what Assmann called "the memory's truth" (Assmann, 2018).

The Museum of Slovak Diaspora "Kasigarda" (see photo 3) opened in June 2023 in the small village of Pavlovce nad Uhom in the East Slovakia, which was almost depopulated due to massive immigration to North America. The museum serves as an example of good practice in how contextualized presentation of individual, collective, and cultural or "living" memory can be presented.

Photo 3: Museum of Slovak Diaspora “Kasigarda”, Pavlovce nad Uhom, Slovakia.

Photo 4: “Kasigarda”: Interior. Source: Martin Javor.

The museum, located in an authentic immigrant house, invites field trips and on-site research, and features storytelling and analysis of oral histories, as a part of modern, experiential pedagogy and intercultural education (Pecníková, Slatinská, 2016). The house now hosts a unique exhibition of various mundane and sacred artefacts of pre- and post-immigration life, tracing the lives of common immigrants, such as the folk costumes they brought with them as they travelled with, or which they nostalgically treasured, personal photographs (women and children in folk costumes as well as photographs of anti-Russian invasion protest marches of Czechoslovaks in New York in 1968), badges, uniforms, passports, advertisements for voyage to America (including the White Star Line advertisement), ship boarding passes, instruction manuals on how to behave in America, dictionaries, union membership cards, sports clubs memoranda, religious unions membership cards and busts and statues, and much more besides. In October 2023, one of the interactive exhibitions will be dedicated to the famous *Lunch atop a Skyscraper* photograph, the urban legend of Gusti Popovič, as well as to the rise of the myth of (Slovak) immigrants building world metropolises. Thus, via creating personalized installations, visitors will learn, explore and understand the roots and implications of the myth of “lunch atop a skyscraper”.

Conclusion

In order to understand how the past affects the present and the future, it is essential to monitor (1) what, and (2) how societies remember. The study presented here analyzed the role of modern

museums in construction and preservation of the past. Diaspora often encompasses traumatic memories, remembered by individuals and communities differently (Rošteková, Badinská, Javorčíková, 2019). Moreover, historical recordings of events may focus on their objective evidence, whereas individual and collective memories record emotions, which are often equally important to "facts". Therefore, the shift from the traditional role of a museum as a container of isolated artefacts towards "an attic", offering a wider spectrum of artefacts, documenting not only historical memory but also various artefacts of individual and collective memory is inevitable to avoid the "identity crisis" and stagnation of museums. Myths are also important to grasp the complex experience of immigration, as remembered by individuals, groups and communities, long after individual memories are forgotten. Museum visitors may get a more objective and complex view of how specific memory was evolving and reaching new valences of memory´s truth. Aleida Assmann was among the first who clearly set the difference between *Lerngedächtnis* and *Bildungsgedächtnis* (memory gained by learning data, based on historical memory artefacts and "living memory", that, due to its emotional intensity, has survived over centuries).

Diaspora museums need to record not only individual or historical memories but also the process of their evolution, called "social formation of memories" (Halbwachs, quoted in Confino, p. 1399). This process includes broad social, political, ideological and cultural contexts of memories, co-creating society's cultural consciousness (Confino, p. 1400). In other words, diaspora museums should not only trace a memory but also "evolution of memory to myth", especially in the case of diaspora stories and oral histories. To embrace a myth, it is important to preserve not only artefacts of *Lerngedächtnis* but also of *Bildungsgedächtnis*. Both help to get a contextualized and meaningful view of the past, especially in the case of diaspora. Moreover, "living" memory can be used as a source of orientation for the present and the future, as "to remember the past is to work on the future" (Assmann, 2018). To conclude, museums should serve as sources of living, not of fossilized or airtight-conserved memories. In that way, they will generate the potential for attracting youth interested in their past, disclosing roots of preconceptions and prejudices, and gain a fairer and more inclusive view of the world.

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Development Possibilities of the Slovak Diaspora in France: Socio-Economic Overview

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Abstract

Migrations are part of human civilization development and are related to changing living conditions. The integration of migrants into society in a new country takes place at the socio-economic, civic-political, and cultural levels, and affects the cultural, ethnic and national identity of the individual. Members of the same national, ethnic, or religious community in a foreign country thus create natural diasporas that help preserve the traditions, cultural specificities, and values of their homeland. Slovaks living abroad are no exception and form diasporas in more than 25 countries of the world. In this context, the aim of the paper is to identify social and economic possibilities of supporting the Slovak diaspora in France. To achieve the goal, we analyze secondary data collected from 2019 to 2023. We find out that the support of the Slovak diaspora in France is focused mainly on educational activities and support of children and youth. However, financial assistance to support activities has been decreasing since 2020. Our findings are formulated as a case study, the aim of which is to bring closer the current state of the Slovak diaspora and outline possibilities for their improvement in the future.

Keywords: Diaspora. Identity. Migration. Slovaks. Society.

Introduction

Human migration is characterized by crossing a country's territorial borders to obtain permanent or temporary residence. Human migration is also influenced by the search for better living conditions, the search for a new home in another country or continent, or to change political, climatic, or religious conditions (Pecníková, 2017, 9) set in the home country. These reasons lead an individual or group of populations to leave and emigrate. According to data from 2015, in the

period from 2000 to 2012, approximately 5% of the population emigrated from the Slovak Republic, and a half of them was under the age of 30. Impacts of migration include expansion diffusion, relocation diffusion and cultural influences (Pecníková, 2017, 11). Expansion diffusion is characterised by the preservation of cultural features and specificities related to the origin of migrants moving from place to place with migrants. Conversely, relocation diffusion transfers cultural features and specificities regardless of the origin of migrants (they relocate to a new location, they bring their ideas, and cultural traditions such as food, music, etc.). In the case of cultural specificities, indigenous traditions, signs and symbols that reflect the historical tradition, culture and specificities of a given community are adapted.

We refer to the transfer of cultural specificities and habituation to new cultural aspects (Maden, 2006, 58) as inclusion. Inclusion contributes to closing gaps between identities and personalities or acceptance of marginalised groups. Inclusion can manifest itself in the migration of populations from rural to urban areas, or from remote regions to economic and communication centres. Azarya (1988) states that state responses to migrant integration vary widely, from support to political adjustments, from repression to reconciliation.

In this context, diaspora refers to people with a common background who have permanent or temporary residence beyond the borders of their homeland. Diasporas can be divided into new and old. Old diasporas have usually long-standing cultural ties to the original land and new diasporas being mostly made up of relocated immigrants (Gevorkyan, 2022, 1523). However, the term homeland does not only refer to a sovereign territorial unit, but can be a real, symbolic, religious or territory under foreign control. Subsequently, members of the diaspora are identified on the basis of national, religious or ethnic affiliation.

According to Safran (1991, 83), the diaspora is characterized by preserving collective memory, idealizing the homeland, harboring traditions, and reinforcing the idea that members of the diaspora should work together for the revival, prosperity and security of the homeland. However, diasporas can make a positive contribution to home countries (religious and ethnic communities) in terms of knowledge transfer, creation of educational activities or support of scientific and technological cooperation. Slovaks living abroad also form diasporas that can be identified and

socially and economically supported. For this reason, the aim of the paper is to identify the social and economic possibilities in a case study of the Slovak diaspora in France.

Identity and diaspora formation

Human identity consists of two components, namely collective belonging, and individual characteristics. In general, identity includes patterns of behavior, a set of basic life values, ethical norms, or adherence to cultural practices. Migrants arriving in a new cultural system may apply these cultural patterns because they are an affective part of them. On the other hand, the majority society (Azarya, 1988) may not be tolerant of these manifestations, which may interfere with working life or be in conflict with society and its tradition.

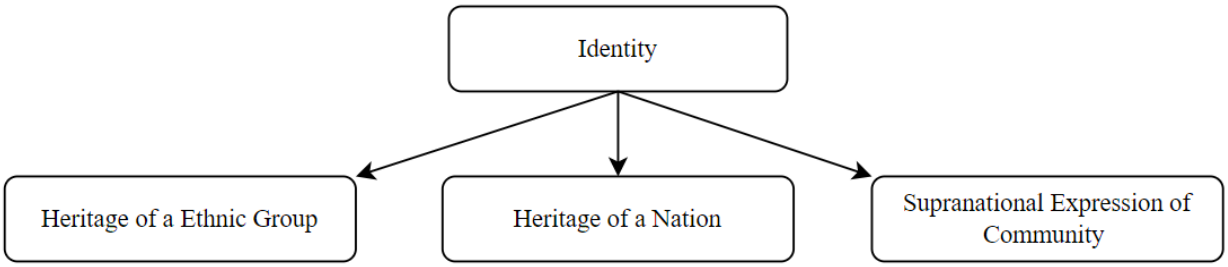

Figure 1 Three Levels of Identity

Source: own elaboration according to Abou (2011)

Abou (2011) distinguishes identity on three levels (Figure 1), the first level being formed by ethnicity characteristic of language, religion and territorial delimitation. The second level is characterized by national consciousness. It is an association of people governed by state bodies with executive, legislative and judicial powers. The presence of a third level of identity is not the rule. It is characterized by ethnocultural environment, i.e. the interconnection of cultural, ethnic and national identity, which is reflected in the predominance of powers for members of a community that exhibits specific features.

Thus, the identity of the individual influences the emergence of diasporas and their persistence. Individuals are free to decide where to live and choose groups of people with values cultural patterns they feel familiar with.

Slovak diasporas abroad

Looking at Slovaks abroad, we distinguish between old members and members of the new diaspora. Especially new diasporas are important for the future development of the home country. The state is trying to increase their wish to return home and use their know-how to modernize Slovakia. To do this, it uses various tools and supports the organization of events that strengthen relations with the diaspora and develop networks with Slovaks living abroad.

New diasporas are people who have left for economic or professional reasons in recent decades, or students and trainees whose short stay abroad has been converted into permanent emigration for professional or private reasons. Diasporas can enrich home countries in several ways. For example, they can help mitigate the effects of brain drain, attract talent to boost investment in business and science and technology cooperation, as well as foster links between beneficiary and source countries.

The active involvement of members of the new diaspora with the aim of mutual exchange of experience, education or presentation of their work leads to strengthening not only knowledge transfer, but also cooperation. This can be supported by types of events, for example: conferences, seminars, workshops, trainings, summer schools, webinars, discussions, etc.

Such new diasporas characterize not only people from Slovakia, but we encounter them in many other cases. Members of the diaspora identify themselves or are identified by others - inside and outside the homeland - as part of the national community of the mother country, and as such are often invited to participate, or are involved, in matters relating to the country of origin. Some of the mentioned features of the diaspora, namely dispersion from the country of origin and the persistent relationship to the homeland conditioning ethno-community consciousness and solidarity, are also mentioned in the approach of the classical diaspora theorist William Safran (1991). Very often, these people are active in issues that concern their country of origin and, due to their expertise, are considered experts from abroad.

The table below provides an overview of the representation of Slovaks in selected countries of the world according to official statistics. It is obvious that most Slovaks choose countries such as the USA, Great Britain, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, and Spain as their destination.

Country	*Frequency*	*Year*	*Interval*	*Country*	*Frequency*	*Year*	*Interval*
Bahrain	58	2022	< 1 000	Australia	5 413	2016	5 001 - 10 000
Kuwait	107	2022		Belgium	5 860	2019	
Brazil	177	2022		Israel	8 000	2020	
Qatar	185	2022		Nederland	9 000	2022	
Estonia	201	2021		Italy	9 014	2021	
Russia	324	2010		Ireland	9 717	2016	
Portugal	324	2020		**France**	**9 768**	2017	
New Zeeland	408	2018		Spain	12 350	2021	10 001 - 50 000
Iceland	449	2022		Switzerland	20 581	2021	
Slovenia	472	2021		Germany	58 235	2018	50 001 - 100 000
Finland	639	2020		Canada	72 285	2016	
Luxembourg	882	2019		Great Britain	129 290	2022	100 001 - 500 000
Cyprus	946	2011		USA	654 150	2019	> 500 001
Sweden	3 081	2022	1 001 - 5 000	***Median***	*429*	-	-
Denmark	3 435	2020		***Average***	*35 184*	-	-
Norway	4 974	2022		***Sum.***	*1 020 325*	-	-
Legend: ***Frequency*** - the official number of Slovaks in the country; ***Year*** - year of official census; ***Interval*** - number of Slovaks in interval expression; ***Sum.*** - sum total.							

Figure 2 Official numbers of Slovaks abroad

Source: own elaboration (2023), data retrieved from https://www.uszz.sk/krajania/

Slovaks as autochthonous populations can be identified most in the Czech Republic, Austria and Serbia.

Country	*Frequency*	*Year*	*Interval*
Poland	3 240	2012	1 001 - 5 000
Croatia	4 758	2012	
Ukraine	6 700	2012	5 001 - 10 000
Romania	13 654	2012	10 001 - 50 000
Hungary	14 677	2021	
Serbia	52 750	2012	50 001 - 100 000
Austria	63 621	2020	
Czechia	162 578	2021	100 001 - 500 000
Mode	*14 166*	-	-
Average	*40 247*	-	-
Sum.	*321 978*	-	-

Figure 3 Official numbers of Slovaks as autochthone community

Source: own elaboration (2023), data retrieved from https://www.uszz.sk/krajania/

Slovak diaspora in France (case study)

As Slatinská (2015, 19) points out, diasporic identity is associated with increased mobility of people in a global scale. In terms of the number, the Slovak diaspora in France in composed of less than 10 000 people. France is a country that does not lead in the ranking (figure 2), yet mutual relations have been developed since the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic. The first agreement was signed in November 1993 and concerned youth exchange, cooperation in the field of sport.

The Slovak diaspora in France is very diverse. We would like to present one very remarkable example – that of Margaretka, which is based in Paris and helps to develop activities aimed at strengthening and preserving Slovak identity also in the French environment.

Margaretka Paris

Margaretka Paris is a Slovak weekend school, kindergarten, and children's folklore ensemble. It was established in 2014 and emphasizes traditional Slovak culture. It applies the total immersion method, i.e. non-translation method, complete immersion in Slovak language. Courses are provided according to the state educational programme of the Slovak Republic, and according to Slovak textbooks valid in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The aim is to help parents in multilingual education and develop children's interest in Slovak culture and traditions.

Margaretka is the most important organization that promotes the bilingualism or plurilingualism for children from mixed partnerships (Slovak-French) living in France. In addition to educating children, it also brings together their parents, which creates a very good basis for preserving Slovak culture and identity. Here are some examples of specific events from their list of activities over the last two years:

A) Meeting with Slovak children's authors and their works: Gabriela Futová, Veronika Šikulová and E. J. Groch, with illustrator L. Pál in a literary discussion.

B) A workshop with Czech historians and artists on the 100th anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia.

C) A discussion on UNESCO monuments.

D) In May 2022, French-Slovak actress Jana Bittnerová rehearsed the correct artistic performance of poetry and prose with children.

E) A major history project in the school year 2022/2023 in Margaretka was the educational project of the non-profit Czech organization Post Bellum entitled *Stories of Our Neighbors*. Pupils had a task of filming memories of the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia, digitizing photographs and creating a radio, television, written reportage or documentary.

F) A discussion with Eva Schwebel, author of the book "*Don't Come Back*," who emigrated to France in 1968.

G) A guest lecture of Anna Plassat from UNESCO who introduced Czech and Slovak children to selected Slovak and Czech heritage inscribed on the UNESCO list.

As we can see from the examples, this was a very wide range of activities carried out in recent years. Socially, these activities aimed at promoting, supporting, and maintaining Slovak culture in the world are very valuable for the Slovak diaspora in France. On the other hand, Margaretka is financially dependent on support from the European projects, thanks to which it can finance many of its development activities. As we can see in figure 3, allocated financial support for all diaspora-related, cultural activities in France was € 16,500 in 2022, and during the current year is only € 9,500.

In addition to these indicators, state support is also important for diasporas, which is reflected in the level of subsidies. In the table below we present the support for selected countries by year.

Year		***2019***	***2020***	***2021***	***2022***	***2023***
Country	***Code***	***€***	***€***	***€***	***€***	***€***
Czechia	CZ	173 650 €	141 150 €	86 440 €	121 850 €	156 600 €
Austria	AT	5 400 €	20 850 €	14 900 €	12 350 €	14 400 €
Serbia	RS	257 800 €	393 800 €	278 820 €	520 500 €	666 240 €
USA	US	42 400 €	59 400 €	24 700 €	38 500 €	40 300 €
Great Britain	GB	39 400 €	105 600 €	103 970 €	119 550 €	118 950 €
Canada	CA	31 950 €	55 800 €	63 300 €	33 150 €	33 800 €
France	**FR**	**27 900 €**	**37 100 €**	**33 000 €**	**16 500 €**	**9 500 €**
Hungary	HU	95 150 €	155 600 €	124 100 €	132 900 €	188 200 €
Romania	RO	97 700 €	220 600 €	128 700 €	420 650 €	488 600 €
Germany	DE	15 450 €	33 200 €	33 700 €	42 700 €	34 100 €
Switzerland	CH	5 800 €	20 600 €	17 100 €	13 100 €	17 300 €
Sum.	-	792 600 €	1 243 700 €	908 730 €	1 471 750 €	1 767 990 €
Total (all dotation at year)	-	986 150 €	1 764 550 €	1 122 530 €	1 471 750 €	1 772 149 €

Figure 3 Official financial support for Slovaks abroad

Source: own elaboration (2023), data retrieved from https://www.uszz.sk/krajania/

Conclusion

Based on ongoing research on the new Slovak diaspora in France, we find that maintaining the Slovak identity and culture as very important for the community. Many respondents told us that Slovak language, folklore, and culture (whether literature or theatre) are of great importance to them. Many also appreciated the fact that it is possible to connect to events online, as not everyone can come in person, either due to lack of time or due to transportation.

The Slovak diaspora in France is developing even though its financial support is undersized. Its members cultivate Slovakia's positive reputation , or rather act as intercultural mediators who introduce Slovak culture not only to the French, but to others living in France and elsewhere. Those who have been introduced to Slovak culture through the activities of Slovak diaspora networks often express surprise and interest in the richness of Slovakia's culture and identity.

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Meeting in the Middle - Generational Needs and Opportunities

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Abstract
This article traces the Basque Diaspora in Boise, Idaho. It highlights the global context that brought the Basques to the American West and traces the contextual needs and opportunities of three generations. From the boarding houses of the immigrant generation to the Basque Centers of the second generation, from the development of the Basque Block to the building of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, the institutions that each generation built provide evidence of what they most sought during those times. The article concludes by identifying how museums; and particularly the Basque Museum and Cultural Center in Boise Idaho, the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration, and the Smithsonian Institution offer the immigrant group and their country of origin opportunities to meet in the middle. Both sides gain perspective of how each expresses their ethnic identities.
Keywords Basque. Diaspora. Museum. Generation. Identity.

Introduction

The sound of the txistu (Basque flute pronounced cheasto) echoed throughout the Great Hall - Registry Room at Ellis Island as the dancers and musicians performed. In this immense space with its enormous arched windows, Immigration Service officers processed as many as 5,000 immigrants a day in the early 1900's (Ellis Island 2013). Over the years, thousands of Basques passed through this hall. For some, the trip to America was enough and they made their home in New York, but most continued on to the American West where they worked in the sheep industry or in the Basque boarding houses that sprang up to meet the needs of these itinerant herders.

That day, February 6, 2010, the hall was empty of immigrants; instead, officials from the Basque Government, Basque singer Amaya Arberas, representatives from the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, the Oinkari Basque Dancers, and the Biotzetik Basque Choir - all from Boise,

Idaho - and a handful of travelers connected to these groups made up those present. Why were they there? They gathered to inaugurate the Ellis Island Museum exhibit "Hidden in Plain Sight: The Basques." (Euskal Kazeta, 2020)

Basque Government officials had encouraged the Basque Museum to submit a proposal to Ellis Island. Patty Miller, the organization's Executive Director received notice on May 30, 2008 that the museum's proposal had been accepted. The exhibit highlighted the unique origins of the Basque people and their language Euskera, traced their migration throughout the world, and focused especially on those that immigrated to the United States, particularly to the American West. Guillermo Echenique, the Secretary General of Foreign Relations of the Basque Government along with Patricia Lachiondo, President of the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony. Koitz Foncillas, a former president of the New York Basque Club stated, "It was impressive" to see such a celebration of Basque culture, in the hall where so many immigrants were once processed. Another participant stated, "I got goosebumps hearing the music echo through the hall and thinking about all of the Basque immigrants that passed through here." That evening all of these groups from the Basque Country and Boise celebrated with a dinner and dance with music by "Amuma (Grandma) Says No" a popular Basque American band from Boise. (Euskal Kazeta, 2020)

This example typifies a "meeting in the middle" experience for these two groups, in this case quite literally. Besides traveling to a central location physically, the exhibit in the Ellis Island Museum represents the Basque Government and the Basque Diaspora's ability to work together on a common project to highlight and celebrate the Basque culture. Tracing the experience of how they got to this stage provides the historical context necessary to understand this event, and how it met the needs of both groups despite their often-diverse expressions of Basque identity today.

Who are the Basques and how did they end up in the American West?

Evidence points to continuous human occupation from at least the Cro-Magnon era in the Basque region of the Pyrenees Mountains. Estimates identify the Basques in the northern part of Spain and southwestern France from at least 5,000 to 3,000 BC which makes them amongst the oldest permanent residents of Western Europe. Divided by the border between Spain and France

established in 1659, Basques today refer to the four historical territories in Spain as Hegoalde (the southern side) and Iparralde (the north side) to identify the three provinces in France. Although not definitively proved, Basque anthropologists have found human skulls in local caves that they claim to have Basque features, and blood type studies have revealed an unusually high proportion of Rh-negative blood type. These characteristics support the argument of a long, continuous occupation in this region. Nevertheless, it is Euskera, the Basque language without clear links to any other Indo-European language, which most sets aside the Basques (Douglass, Bilbao 1975: 10-11). Most recently, an archaeological find of the bronze "Hand of Irulegi" significantly challenges what was previously believed about the Vascones. This tribe from the late Iron Age inhabited areas of northern Spain prior to the Romans and scholars hypothesize that their language may have been an antecedent to Euskera (Jones, 2022).

Despite this historic connection to the region, Basques have a long history of leaving it. Basque whalers hunted in the Bay of Biscay since at least the 7th century. As they went further in fishing expeditions, they eventually came ashore at Newfoundland; evident by linguistic and archaeological evidence discovered there that dates to the second half of the 16th century (Hadingham 1992: 34-42). From making up a significant portion of Columbus' crew, to colonizing and missionary efforts in what would become Mexico, Uruguay, Colombia, and Venezuela, Basques played an important role throughout the history of settlement in the New World. For example, Francisco de Ibarra founded the northern Mexican province of Nueva Vizcaya, naming its capital after his Bizkaian birthplace, Durango. While having a long family presence in Venezuela, the ancestors of the well-known liberator of South America Simon Bolivar hailed from the Basque region (Douglass, Bilbao 1975: 72).

By the 1800s, Basques featured prominently in the Latin American sheep industry, particularly in the pampas of Argentina. As word got out about the discovery of gold in California in 1849, Basques sailed north to take advantage of this opportunity. Few ended up focusing on mining; instead, they focused their efforts on the more stable livestock industry, which helped feed the thousands of people flocking to this region. Over time, the Basques gradually migrated to take advantage of opportunities throughout the American West. Their success spurred family and friends from the Basque Country to cross the Atlantic. Chain migration created a pattern of

settlement; French and Navarrese Basques established themselves in California while Spanish Basques, predominantly from the province of Bizkaia, settled in Nevada and Idaho (Bieter and Bieter, 27).

Generational differences in opportunities, needs and the corresponding institutions and organizations that they built.

Basque immigrants tended to stay together when they arrived in the American West. Together they worked hard and built business partnerships, constantly looking for new opportunities to improve their financial situation. Most of them arrived young and single and if they married, did so with fellow Basques. The vast distance from home meant that they forged strong friendships and relied on each other for help and support. Although none had worked in transhumance herding as they would in the United States, they came from an agrarian culture that measured self-worth through hard physical labor, which matched well with the American work ethic. Almost all arrived with the idea of returning to the Basque Country after having saved some money. Some did. Many, however, chose to stay. Those who stayed created opportunities and choices for those that followed (Bieter and Bieter, 4). This generational story unfolded with each age group building organizations and institutions that met the needs of their time, and which set the base for those who followed. This essay uses examples from the Basque community in Boise, Idaho as a case study.

The Immigrant Generation

"The first Basque immigrants brought Old World values to new, faraway places, including the principles of community (auzoa) and communal work (auzolan)" (Douglass, Zulaika 2007: 224–227). These values meant that they often built networks that relied on each other to be successful. The first generation built institutions to meet their practical needs for food, shelter and support in times of trouble. For example, Basque boarding houses (Ostautak in Basque) sprang up throughout the American West to serve the needs of Basque herders when they first arrived in America and while in town during the winter months. These 'homes away from home' served as a place where herders could eat home cooked Basque food, catch up on news from the Basque Country and enjoy being with fellow Basques in town and out of the hills. "For us, it was heaven…the closest thing

to home," one herder recalled (Bieter and Bieter, 45). The boarding houses also offered an opportunity for Basque women immigrants to work as domestics. Consequently, many first-generation Basques met their spouses there. They became known as "marriage mills" and often served as the reception location for the newly married (Basque Museum & Cultural Center "Ostatuak" 2015; Laxalt 2018: 130-131).

Besides boarding houses, immigrant Basques built other institutions to meet their needs. In 1908, a group of Basques established La Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos (Society of Mutual Security) to meet their medical necessities. Open to Spanish and Basque males who paid dues, they received full medical coverage, compensation if they were unable to work and even funeral expenses when they passed. Additionally, recognizing the challenges of working in the hills and being alone for so much time, the mutual aid society set aside funds for "passage back to the Basque Country for any member who became permanently disabled in an accident or mentally disturbed from herding sheep." As evidence of its success in meeting their needs, "between 1908 and 1960 the association's 1,050 members received $425,000 in aid" (Bieter and Bieter, 48). Later, Basque women formed two mutual aid organizations of their own - La Fraternidad Vasca Americana (1928) and La Organisación Independiente Sociale (1933) which provided financial assistance similar to the Socorros Mutuos and served as social organizations (Euskonews & Media, 2002).

Sports opportunities and spiritual practices also spurred Basque immigrants to build other institutions that allowed them to maintain these practices from the Old Country. In Boise, Basques built four frontons (handball courts) although only one still exists and remains open today. In 1912, the Anduiza family built their Hotel and Fronton as one building. They had rooms for borders across the front and down the side of the building, with the kitchen and dining room in the basement. The rest of the space was a covered handball court, with an area approximately 35ft. x 105ft. that was used for handball games and dances (Historical Marker Database 2022).

Basque immigrants in Boise also build their own Catholic Church, The Church of the Good Shepherd. Blessed by Bishop Gorman on March 2, 1919, Father Arregui, a Basque priest brought over to minister to the Basques in Idaho, reminded the congregation that they shared blood "that ran in the veins of St. Ignatius of Loyola" and encouraged them to follow the path worthy of your blood and race, as you are doing at the present. He acknowledged that the church "as an ornament

to this hospitable city … and a joy and satisfaction to your parents who live on the other side of the broad Atlantic." (Bieter and Bieter, 63) (Paseman 2014: 48-63; St. John's Parish records).

Along with building the church, immigrant Basques began to be buried in a section of Boise's Morris Hill Cemetery (St. John's Catholic Church, Sections 4 through 13: records). An anthropologist once identified the three most important symbols for a Basque community as a church, representing faith; the cemetery, representing traditions; and a handball court, representing a vibrant outdoor life (Becoming Basque, 72). The Basques in Boise had all three. The second generation grew up with these institutions and some would continue into the next generation. However, others would be lost, a sign of the assimilating times and the new opportunities and needs of the second generation as they came of age.

The Hyphenated Generation

The second generation grew up as Basques at home and Americans outside of it. Their immigrant parents modeled a strong work ethic and family values. They wanted for their children more opportunities than they had. Many of them also realized the power of education and its ability to create lucrative careers. The combination of the work ethic and solid values of their parents provided a strong foundation for a successful life in the United States. Many second-generation Basques enjoyed careers as managers, bankers, lawyers, and entrepreneurs. In the process, they became more American They were not alone; many immigrants across America experienced the hyphenated life and felt the need to assimilate during the World War II era, one of the great Americanizing periods.

Basque immigrants rarely expounded on their challenging experiences growing up in the Basque Country and what prompted them to leave. Instead, they wanted their children to focus on a brighter future. The Basque language, spoken almost universally by the first generation, was often gradually lost by the second, as the children learned English in American schools. Some Americanized their names, moved away from Idaho, and married non-Basques. Others married Basques and never left their ethnic communities. The majority settled somewhere in between. A dance organized by Basques demonstrates the hyphenated experience of the second generation.

When the Basque band on one end of the dancehall took a break from playing music, the American band began playing on the other end (Bieter and Bieter, 73-76).

The hyphenated experience resulted in fewer explicitly Basque institutions being built by the second generation. Instead of boarding houses, they began building their own homes. Rather than play handball in the frontons, second generation Basques excelled in American sports such as football, basketball and baseball. They began to attend dances with American music instead of the Basque dances of their parents. While most of their parents started working in the sheep industry or entities that supported it, the second generation set their sights on work that allowed them to stay in town and professions that offered greater financial security. A relative dearth of new institutions typifies the experience of growing up during the Americanizing period between the 1930s into the post World War II era.

Nevertheless, some of the second generation did preserve Basque traditions through dances, picnics, and sporting events, and this kept certain cultural traditions alive and set the stage for the third generation (Bieter and Bieter, 73). The culmination of these efforts to maintain Basque culture and community resulted in Basques building the Euzkaldunak Basque Center in 1949 (Euzkaldunak, 2023). Fittingly built on what had been the garden of the Uberuaga Basque boarding house on Grove Street in downtown Boise, the Center became the hub of Basques gatherings. Since most Basques no longer lived in boarding houses, they instead gathered at the Basque Center for meals, dances, to play cards and socialize in their own building. This anchor institution continues to today. However, many more Basque organizations and institutions sprang up around it, a symbol of the resurgence in Basque identity that few predicted.

The Ethnic Generation

The third generation, the ethnic generation, developed during a period of immense change in the United States. During the 1960s and beyond, it became increasingly popular to be from somewhere, to have an identity that set one apart instead of the bland, vanilla culture of the day. A preservation movement by a number of third-generation Basques in Idaho proved true a theory proposed by sociologist Marcus Lee Hansen: “What the children [of immigrants] wish to forget, the grandchildren want to remember.” Whenever any immigrant group reaches the third

generation, he wrote, “a spontaneous and almost irresistible impulse arises' ' that brings together different people from various backgrounds based on one common factor: “heritage – the heritage of blood” (Hansen 1959, 31).

This resurgence of ethnic identity spurred the third generation to build more organizations and institutions than the first and second generation combined. Far removed from the sheepherding days, this generation relied on creating these associations to maintain their Basque identity, oftentimes in symbolic ways. Examples of these organizations include the Oinkari Basque Dancers. Founded in 1960 by a group of young mostly second generation Basques, they traveled to the Basque Country and met a dance group there. When they returned home, they started a group and named it after the one they met in the Basque Country. Since their founding, the Oinkaris have represented the Basque community in Idaho, at Basque festivals throughout the United States, at conventions, World’s Fairs, in Washington D.C. and even in China. Since the first group went over to the Basque Country, the Oinkaris have returned to their ancestral land on four different occasions.

The Oinkaris only represent one example of institutions and organizations built since the 1960s. Many more exist. Basques in Boise gathered to create: the Biotzetik Basque Choir; an Ikastola, a Basque pre-school taught in Euskera; they established Basque markets and restaurants on the Basque Block, formed a Basque Studies Program to study Basque language, history and culture at Boise State University and established a semester or yearlong immersive experience through the University Studies Abroad Consortium in the Basque Country. Basques formed social organizations such as Aiztan Artean (Between Sisters) that gather for dinners and opportunities to enjoy each other's company. After being dormant for many years, in the 1970s a group of Basques cleaned out the old Anduiza Fronton and games began to be played again. Today, men and women play games throughout the week and festivals provide opportunities to invite players from the Basque Country and other Basque communities in the West. Boise State Basque Studies even brought over the well-known Basque soccer team Athletic Bilbao and they played a friendly game against Club Tijuana. The list of institutions, organizations and accompanying activities goes on and on. However, perhaps nothing represents the resurgence of Basque identity more than the once-every-five-year Jaialdi Basque festival celebrated on the Basque Block in Boise. Jaialdi

("festival" in Basque) grew out of a large Basque festival in the 1970s and the desire to build on that by bringing Basque from across the American West, from South America from the Basque Country and other locations where the Basques in the diaspora have settled. Since the first Jaialdi in 1987, the festival continues to grow with an estimated 40,000 people in attendance. With its postponement in 2020 due to the pandemic, the 2025 festival promises to be larger than ever (Bieter and Bieter, 121-124).

The Basque Block and the Basque Museum and Cultural

Amongst all that the third (and now fourth and fifth) generations built, the Basque Block best exemplifies the organizations and institutions that typify the ethnic generation. Dedicated in 2000 and located on Grove Street in downtown Boise, the Basque Block builds on the boarding houses that have existed in that location since the early 20th century. Two of those, the Cyrus Jacobs-Uberuaga house and the Anduiza Hotel and Fronton now serve as preserved buildings where visitors can take tours such as at the Jacobs-Uberuaga house or they can tour the Anduiza fronton and watch a game. Additionally, the Block includes a Basque restaurant Leku Ona (The Good Place), Bar Gernika - a Basque pub and eatery, The Basque Market where patrons can enjoy pintxos (tapas), paella, and a number of other delicious dishes. They also can purchase imported foods, wines, and other items from the Basque Country. Euzkaldunak (The Basque Center) remains on the corner and continues to serve as a gathering place for monthly dinners, card playing, hosting receptions, and offering space for the Oinkaris and the Boiseko Gazteak (Young Basque Dancers) to practice and perform (Basque Museum and Cultural Center, 2023).

Alongside the Basque Center lies the Basque Museum and Cultural Center (BMCC). As described by its website, "The Basque Museum & Cultural Center was established in 1985 as a small museum in the historic Cyrus Jacobs-Uberuaga House at 607 Grove Street. Located in scenic Boise, Idaho, the Basque Museum & Cultural Center provides a look into the heritage of the Basque communities not only in Idaho, but in the American West." Its mission is to preserve, promote and perpetuate Basque history and culture. As the museum drew greater interest, donor numbers and amounts increased which allowed the museum to purchase the building next door. There they built an exhibit space, classrooms where the Basque language and other topics

are taught, and a library for reading and research. The BMCC includes an extensive oral history collection, records and tapes, artifacts and photographs and offers regular programming throughout the year. The BMCC provides critical community education, events and activities for all ages and backgrounds (Basque Museum and Cultural Center, 2023).

Museums, Diaspora development, and connecting the old and new

What does it mean for an immigrant group when it reaches the stage of building a museum? Is the culture dead or dying and all that is left are artifacts and remnants? Or does the Museum offer new opportunities for expression of identity and a way to move forward? Ancestors of immigrant groups, especially those where immigration has ceased, are often backwards looking. They tend to hold a nostalgic view of the past, the Old Country and the way things used to be. However, time moves on and cultures that adapt can continue to thrive. The BMCC meets the needs of a broad spectrum of the community in Boise and provides examples of how a culture can bring diverse ages and groups together. They do so in the following ways.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage: One of the primary purposes of immigrant museums is to preserve and celebrate the cultural heritage of that group. They house artifacts, documents, photographs, and other items that are of historical and cultural significance to the group. By doing so, they ensure that the traditions, stories, and customs are not lost over time.

Identity and Recognition Building: A museum can serve as a symbol of the immigrant group's presence and contributions to the host country. It helps establish a sense of identity and pride within the community and promotes a deeper understanding of their history and experiences among both their own members and the wider society.

Education and Awareness: Immigrant group museums provide an opportunity for people from different backgrounds to learn about the culture, history, and experiences of the immigrant community. This can help break down stereotypes, reduce prejudice, and foster greater cultural understanding and appreciation.

Build Community and Integration: Museums can offer opportunities for a large number of members of the community to get involved. While membership in the Basque Center requires

demonstration of Basque ancestry, the BMCC is open to all and its members, volunteers and attendees at events include people of all ages throughout the community.

Intergenerational Connection and Cultural Exchange: Immigrant group museums can help bridge the generational gap by allowing younger generations to learn about their heritage and the experiences of their ancestors. This can be crucial in maintaining cultural continuity within the community. These museums often engage in cultural exchange programs, collaborations with other institutions, and outreach efforts. This can lead to greater cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation. For example, the BMCC worked with the Bosnian immigrant community as they first came to the city and now that group enjoys their own facility.

Tourism and Economic Impact: Immigrant group museums can also have economic benefits, attracting tourists and contributing to the local economy. They may create jobs and stimulate business development in the surrounding area. Alongside the Center on the Grove Convention Center, the BMCC is ideally located to draw tourists and visitors to Boise. In summary, when an immigrant group builds a museum, often a multifaceted endeavor goes beyond mere preservation of artifacts. It can serve as a powerful tool for preserving cultural heritage, promoting understanding, and fostering community cohesion (ChatGPT, September 9th, 2023 based on an AI response to "What does it mean for an immigrant group when they build a museum?").

BMCC Collaboration with Museums in the Basque Country

Collaborations with museums in the Basque Country represent one of the ways that the BMCC has carried out its mission to preserve promote and perpetuate Basque culture. These sharing of resources, ideas, and exhibits represent ways that museums can connect countries of origin with host countries. They also can demonstrate the diverse sectors of the Basque Country and how that played out there and in the Diaspora. For example, in 2000 the BMCC worked with Euskal Museoa/Museo Vasco to bring the Eulalia Abaitua Historic Photographs exhibit to Boise. The next year the two institutions worked together to bring "Kanpoko Etxe Berria: Home Away from Home", an exhibit highlighting the immigrant experience from multiple perspectives. In 2007, the BMCC worked with Untzi Museoa in Donostia and the Oceanographic Foundation of Gipuzkoa to get images for an exhibit titled "Basque Whaling: Daring & Danger on a Distant Shore." Three

years later the BMCC again worked with Euskal Museoa/Museo Vasco to display the exhibit "Euskaldunen Pilota Jokoa: The Basque Game of Pilota", during the Jaialdi Festival of 2010. In 2018, the BMCC collaborated with Museo Marítimo Ría de Bilbao to bring the exhibit "Estereoskopiko," to Boise. The next year the Basque Government helped fund the early research for an exhibit titled the "Basques in California." The exhibit opened in Bilbao at Euskal Museoa/Museo Vasco in the fall of 2019. This is the only exhibit of the BMCC that has been sent to the Basque Country. It is currently at Euskal Herria Museoa in Gernika. Finally, the BMCC currently features an exhibit titled "Hemingway and Euskal Herria (the Basque Country)", a traveling exhibit from Euskal Herria Museoa in Gernika (Amaya Herrera, message to author, September 8th, 2023).

Meeting in the Middle- Ellis Island and the Smithsonian Museum

On two different occasions, in 2010 with the Hidden in Plain Sight Exhibit at Ellis Island and in 2016 at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Basque: Innovation by Culture, organizations and institutions from the Basque Country and the Basque Diaspora in the United States collaborated to create exhibits and demonstrations of Basque culture. From men's and women's weightlifters to bertzolariak (Basque improvisational singers), from cheesemakers to Basque language teachers, from iron workers to a long list of musicians and dancers, at least 100 participants from the Basque Country and an equal number from the Basque Diaspora in the US came together for the largest expression of Basque culture at a festival in the United States. Over one million visitors attended the festival (Smithsonian Folklife Festival, 2016).

As indicated by the title, the seven-day exhibition highlighted Basques ability to innovate. Exhibits demonstrated how Basques were some of the earliest European explorers and whalers to the Western Hemisphere and the continued impact this has had on the culture such as its culinary influence. For example, "bakaiao (salted cod), piperrada (pepper-based sauce), and marmitako (tuna and potato stew)." The Basque discovery of iron ore in their mountains that helped spur the Industrial Revolution provides another example of their ingenuity in industry. More recently, their ongoing success in the cooperative movement and today's car-part manufacturing, sustainability energy efforts, and transportation and engineering further support

their ability to be creative. Despite this ongoing push forward, Basques maintain strong cultural roots. Approximately one million people worldwide can speak Euskera despite predictions of its impending extinction. One of the oldest European communities, Basques continue to maintain their identity in an especially fast and on-going globalizing world (Smithsonian Folklife Festival, 2016).

This tension of maintaining the past while looking forward highlighted at the Folklife Festival well describes expressions of the Basque culture in the Basque Country and among the Basque diaspora. While diaspora immigrants generally continue to look back, events such as these at Ellis Island and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival inspire both groups to look forward. Attendees from the Basque Country are amazed that there are Basque speakers, dancers, musicians, handball players, and artisans in the diaspora. At times overlooked in their own country, they see themselves in the diaspora. For diaspora Basques, they realize both the roots of their culture and the need to adapt to move forward. This synergistic energy allows both sides to grow.

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The legacies of war: From Laos to Ukraine, examining the parallels, lessons and importance of the role of museums in history preservation and activism

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Abstract

There are many negative legacies of war in impacted regions throughout the world and these consequences of war will endure for decades and have far-reaching impacts in all aspects of life. Weapons of war left behind like landmines, grenades and other explosives are not only physical reminders of past conflicts but these unexploded ordnance (UXO) will threaten the lives of civilians and their environment until they are destroyed and removed. War also leaves invisible scars that haunts those who experienced the war directly and descendants after through generational trauma. This paper will examine the parallels and lessons of the wars in Laos and Ukraine in three main areas: harm to civilians, environment and the impact of trauma. The final portion will offer one way that Legacies of War (Legacies) partners with museums to preserve history, pay homage to victims of war, and influence advocacy.

Keywords: Cluster Munitions, War, Trauma, Advocacy.

Cluster munitions and other Explosive Remnants of war current use in Ukraine

On July 7th, the Biden administration announced it was sending Ukraine hundreds of thousands of rounds of artillery (Clark 2023), including cluster munition (Stone and Bose 2023), each one of which has 72 grenade sized submunitions. We know from our experience in SE Asia that about 10-30% of these submunitions will fail to explode when Ukraine fires them in the war. The grenades will contaminate the countryside for months, years or decades to come — posing a deadly risk to farmers and children in particular.

Because of this long-lived threat, 120 countries have banned the use of cluster munitions. This is also why the White House decision to export these weapons generated more opposition than any other weapon shipment to Ukraine (Fortinsky 2023).

At the same time, Ukraine's counter-offensive against Russian forces is raising awareness about the issue of landmines (Khurshudyan and Hrabchuk 2023) — both anti-tank and antipersonnel mines, the latter of which were widely outlawed in the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. Dense Russian minefields are taking out Ukrainian tanks and APCs (Graves, n.d.) as well as foot soldiers.

As a result of the war, one-third of Ukrainian soil (Konovalova 2023) is already polluted with unexploded ordnance (UXO) and mines, and that is before Ukraine uses its vast new arsenal of cluster munition artillery shells. The presence of explosive hazards have existed in Ukraine since 2014 when the first invasion of Ukraine happened. Most of these explosive remnants of war (ERW) are scattered in rural communities, hidden in waterways, fields and areas used by farmers.

Ukraine sits in Europe’s most fertile agricultural regions and has been called one of the “breadbaskets” of Europe. The threat of UXO will hold rich agricultural land hostage, leading to a decrease in farming and an increase in food insecurity. Ukraine is a huge producer of wheat and this will take a toll on the global food supply chain.

Aside from the economic costs, the toll on human lives in this war is devastating. As civilians unwittingly come across concealed explosives, casualties continue to rise. According to HALO's data, nearly 1000 civilians have lost their lives due to UXO since the war's inception, and the actual death toll is likely even higher, considering unreported incidents. The daunting and time-consuming task of clearing UXO faces significant obstacles due to limited resources and ongoing conflict. Rural communities live in a perpetual state of insecurity that will persist for decades after the war.

The situation becomes so dire that even farmers are forced to undertake the risky task of clearing their fields of ordnance, as professional demining teams from Ukraine's emergency services are overwhelmed and unable to cope with the scale of the problem. Besides the human tragedy, environmental concerns loom large. UXO explosions can lead to soil contamination and the destruction of ecosystems, posing a significant threat to long-term agricultural productivity.

While Ukraine has captured the hearts and minds of the world over the past year and a half with its heroic defense against the Russian invasion, what will happen once the war is over? If the cases of Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan are any indication, once the war ends Ukraine will fall off the media radar, and funds to clear this deadly mess and return the land to peaceful and productive use will be deemed too expensive.

Legacies, currently chairs the U.S. campaign to bring the United States into the ban on both of these weapons —landmines and cluster munitions. We were chosen to play this role because we have waged a successful campaign over the past 20 years to force the U.S. Congress and successive U.S. administrations to provide funding to clear cluster munitions and landmines from the U.S. wars on Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Since our founding in 2004, we have successfully persuaded Congress to support demining efforts, civilian mine and UXO awareness education and assistance to mine and UXO victims in those countries. We moved the U.S. funding to support this work in Laos from $3M per year to $73M (Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam) for 2023.

What are cluster munitions?

Cluster munitions are small and may be delivered by air, ground or even sea. They're launched from their canisters opening up mid-air and dispersed over a wide area - about 5 football fields, scattering tens or hundreds of submunitions filling the area with dangerous shrapnels when they explode on impact.

Cluster munitions **do not have a targeting mechanism** and thus cannot tell the difference between a *small child or an enemy combatant.* They have been proven to be an ineffective weapon on the battlefield but a deadly weapon proven to kill or maim innocent civilians due to their high failure rate that leaves "duds" laying dormant in or on the ground waiting to be set off by an animal wandering or a curious child. They do not have a self-destruct system.

Cluster munitions have an appearance of a toy ball, with unique ridges and colors, making them attractive to a child. **Globally, civilians account for 97% of casualties with over 60% being children when the age is known.**

Cluster munitions that did not explode on impact becomes an unexploded ordnance or UXO. These UXO that are left behind will not only harm humans and animals but cause pollution to the

environment as well by disrupting the soil structure and releasing harmful toxins like TNT once they detonate.

Current Human Impact

During my last trip to Laos in 2022, I had the opportunity to meet and hear Yong Kham's story ("Through the Eyes of Father Yong Kham" 2023) while visiting a demining site in Sepon, Laos, last fall. At that time, Mr. Yong Kham was 64 years old.

I learned that he and his family endured the nine-year air war waged by the United States from 1964-73. Most of his childhood was spent in a muddy, foul trench or dark cave to avoid death. He was injured during one of the bombing raids by a cluster bomb. He survived it, but two siblings were not so lucky. Cluster munitions claimed their lives in the trench.

Decades later, in 2003, his eldest son, Tong Dum, was fatally killed by cluster bombs while collecting wood and scraps. His life was just getting started at the young age of 21.

Children are the most at risk

In February 2021, **2 children were killed** after finding a "bombie" (name given to cluster bomb in Laos) that ***they thought was a ball.***

This happened near their school in Vientiane Province.

This particular incident is tough as this was an area that my father once worked in and a district that my siblings and I went to school in - likely the same paths that I walked.

Sera & her brother, Bay Koulabdara, at their childhood school. Vientiane, Laos 2019

Laos: 50 years and counting

Laos is the most heavily bombed country per capita in history. From 1964 to 1973 in efforts to destroy traffic along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the U.S. dropped more than 2.5 million tons of ordnance across 580,000 bombing missions—equal to a planeload of bombs every eight minutes, 24 hours a day, for nine years on Laos. This year marks the 50th year since the last American bombs were dropped and according to the Lao PDR's National Regulatory Authority, less than 10% of these munitions have been destroyed. While annual casualties have dropped to under 50 by 2022, close to 60% resulted in death and over 40% of the victims are children. Globally, 50% of all casualties of cluster munitions accidents that occur happens in Laos.

The legacies of war left scars in many forms. Displacement is one of them - between 1975-1995, **3 million people from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam left their contaminated homeland and fled to the United States.** Starting a new life in a new country is traumatic and full of challenges.

Parallels & Lessons: Laos & Ukraine

Dangers to civilians:

UXO are insidious killers, lurking in the shadows and waiting to claim unsuspecting victims. Civilians, mainly children, often bear the brunt of this threat. As they go about their daily lives, tilling fields, walking along paths, or seeking shelter in damaged buildings, they inadvertently stumble upon these deadly remnants. The results are devastating, causing injuries and fatalities that shatter families and communities. The fear of stepping on a hidden explosive permeates daily life, causing psychological distress and inhibiting mobility, economic activities, and social interactions.

Environmental impact:

Beyond its impact on human lives, UXO wreaks havoc on the environment. Explosions caused by these devices can lead to soil contamination with toxins like TNT, rendering vast areas unsuitable for agriculture and posing risks to food security. The toxic substances released from UXO detonations infiltrate the air, soil and water, polluting natural resources and endangering local wildlife. The destruction of ecosystems disrupts the delicate balance of nature, leading to long-term consequences for biodiversity and ecological stability.

Trauma:

The psychological toll of living in areas infested with UXO is immense. Constant fear and uncertainty plague the minds of civilians, generating a state of perpetual anxiety known as "psychological minefields." The trauma experienced by witnessing or surviving UXO-related incidents leaves lasting scars on civilians and their communities. The stress and grief associated with the loss of loved ones and the fear of further casualties create a collective mental health crisis that can endure for generations.

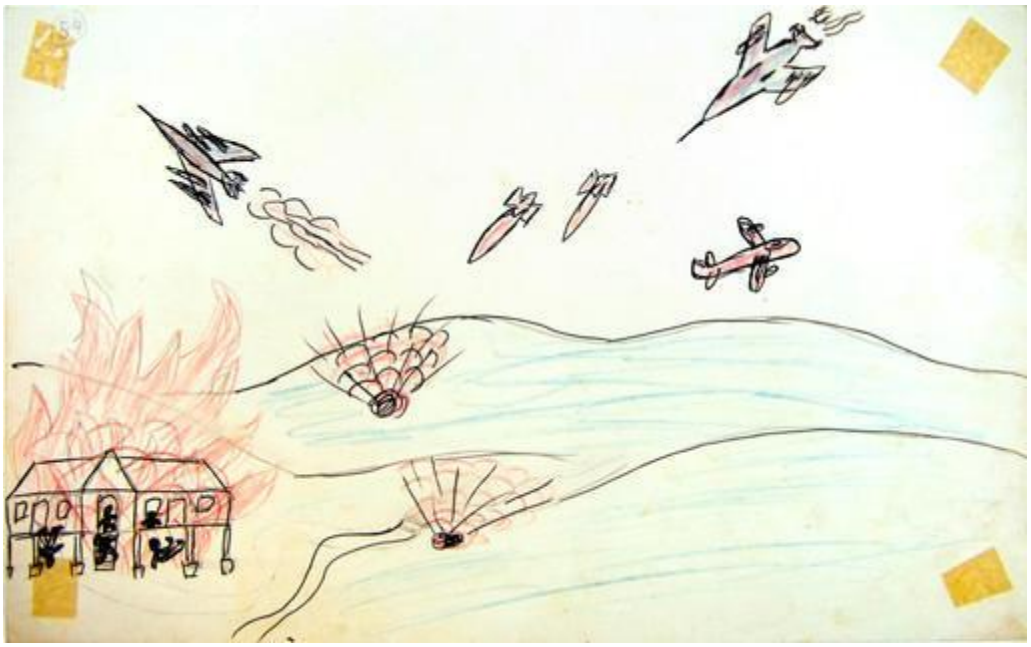
Role of Museum in the preservation of history, storytelling, and activism

Like the war in Laos 50 years ago, the war in Ukraine will come to an end. When this happens, the people of Ukraine will be faced with many questions. Some of these questions will be, how do we remember the lives of the valiants who are no longer with us? How do we move forward and rebuild? The solutions will vary and evolve as time progresses. I offer one example of how Legacies partners with museums and educational institutions as a way to preserve history, share real experiences and inspire advocacy.

Legacies inherited the only primary source documentation from the American Secret War in the United States called The Originals (Cooper, n.d.). The Originals are a collection of illustrations and testimonies created by survivors fleeing the 9 year bombing in northern Laos in Xieng Khouang Province. Unlike the war in Ukraine, the war in Laos operated in secrecy and did not benefit from media coverage or social media exposure. Instead, much of what we know are from referencing declassified CIA documents, firsthand accounts and primary sources like The Originals.

These illustrations and testimonies demonstrate the violence of warfare. The images of blood and death are contradicted by the memories of the scenic and peaceful village life these survivors once lived. Scenes show farmers tending to their rice fields, monks praying at the temple, women going to the market and children playing in the schoolyard. The drawings reveal that these memories of their peaceful life are abruptly halted as they become tarnished with violence, death and loss. They capture the very moments when their lives and society were forever altered.

The most haunting of these image is #37, depicting a school being bombed. The caption, written by a 16 year old child, reads **“The school was hit and burned. There were many people in the school who died. But I didn't know who because I wasn't courageous enough to look. I was afraid that the airplanes would shoot me.”**



Legacies partners with museums and various educational institutions to showcase these images and testimonies as an authentic way to preserve this part of American history so it is not lost and its lessons not forgotten.

These illustrations have traveled across the United States and have been displayed in places like the United Nations in New York, the Dayton Peace Museum, The Center for Lao Studies in California, and many more locations. Smithsonian Air and Space Museum (2024-25) as well as the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (2025) have all made commitments to showcase The Originals as well as other war artifacts like bomb castings and repurposed items.

Education is a form of activism

As an organization that is founded by the diaspora community from Laos, our perspective on this particular part of U.S. history, The American Secret War, 1964-73) is unique and important to have. The narrative should be written and told by the refugee and immigrant communities and their descendants. This protects the integrity of the story and allows those whose lives are impacted the most to have a voice and a stake in how the legacies of war should be resolved. It's part of the

healing journey that leads to empowering the community to take a collective action through storytelling.

In addition to creating our own online library (Cooper, n.d.), we have found the partnership with museums and educational institutions to be one of the most successful ways to advance our advocacy. History like the American Secret War in Laos is not taught in schools in the United States. When it is available in books, articles and other educational pieces, it rarely includes authors from the impacted communities. Our organization aims to change this and take it a step further by turning education into activism.

Reputable museums and long standing educational institutions are spaces that are well visited, vetted and can offer organizations like Legacies validation of our history and narrative. This increases our audience and garners more support for the types of actions that we want to inspire. For Legacies, this means more Americans becoming aware of the problem of American bombs left behind and provides a clear solution of how they can take action to be helpful by introducing them to Legacies' work.

Legacies is very strategic in our partnership with museums and other institutions. One of the guidelines that we follow is to always be a co-creator of the contents and language used in the exhibit. We also include a "call to action" within each collaboration, an educational event and members of the diaspora community involvement.

Conclusion

Efforts to address the threat of UXO involve demining operations, which are not only challenging and resource-intensive but also carry significant risks for the personnel involved. The process is often slow, leaving impacted communities in limbo for extended periods, amplifying the suffering and perpetuating the cycle of insecurity.

To tackle the issue comprehensively, coordinated efforts are required on multiple fronts. Governments, other key stakeholders and NGOs must work together to support clearance operations, provide assistance to affected communities, and offer mental health support for those traumatized by the presence of UXO. Furthermore, the root causes of conflicts leading to UXO

contamination must be addressed to prevent further devastation and loss of life. Only through sustained and collective action can we hope to mitigate the dangers of UXO, restore peace of mind to civilian communities, and protect the environment from the lingering remnants of war.

The intention of this paper, especially those who will work in resolving the legacies of war in Ukraine and beyond, is to offer a glimpse into the work and experiences of Legacies. Like the estimated 60 + countries that have had contamination or currently impacted with ERW, Ukraine will need much help to heal and move forward. My hope is for us to learn from the successful activism led by Legacies for UXO clearance efforts, mine risk education and victims assistance in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam so that we can inspire more support for global humanitarian demining efforts.

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PhotoVoice in the Classroom: Notes From the Field

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Abstract

Photovoice is an established participatory visual activity where community members capture images and create photo captions to share individual and community strengths and challenges. During a Photovoice workshop held with Ukrainian students at Matej Bel University (MBU), in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, in May 2023, participants learned the best practices for taking photographs, used the hands-on printing process of cyanotypes and learned how to share their stories to help others learn from their experiences. Two photography professors specializing in documentary photography and working with marginalized communities in collaboration with social workers and educators working directly with Ukrainians living in Slovakia led the workshop. Ukrainian students worked in small groups and captured images using selected prompts. The students then created images with the new techniques they learned from the lecture, printed digital negatives, and created photographic prints using the hands-on historic cyanotype process. Participants wrote image captions for their selected photograph based on the prompts and made connections through group sharing and discussing their images. This project could have a meaningful impact and help successfully advance the strategies to resettle Ukrainians.

Keywords: Photovoice, Cyanotypes, Participatory Action Research

Introduction

Photography is a powerful tool that transcends language, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, health conditions, and socioeconomic barriers. Photography tells a story; it is readily available and has the potential to create social change and healing through group sharing and discussion. Photovoice is an established participatory technique where community members capture images and create photo captions to share individual and community strengths and challenges. The individuals impacted by these challenges examine their experiences through the photographic lens

and make connections through group sharing images and discussing possible solutions to their challenges. Final images and stories are disseminated locally, nationally, and globally through exhibitions and online platforms. Photovoice has the potential to benefit anyone but is often used with marginalized groups to record their often-overlooked experiences and perspectives on social issues.

Project Objectives

Our objectives have four significant stages: planning, implementation, dissemination, and reporting. As an interdisciplinary team, our objectives include:

- Understand issues within the community through planning and individually through group dialog.
- Strengthen partnerships by implementing the project with local, national/international institutions, and community-based organizations.
- Implement a formative evaluation part way through the program to identify areas of improvement needed.
- Disseminate the project results to engage with community members and policymakers locally, nationally, and globally.
- Improve programs and policies for displaced people by offering possible solutions created in collaboration with project participants.
- Implement a summative evaluation to assess the overall success of the program.

Workshop leaders followed the Photovoice Statement of Ethical Practice and Core Principles of choice, creativity, partnership, sustainability, and cultural sensitivity listed on the photovoice.org website as of July 14, 2023. Participants were given the choice of what they wanted to photograph and print and could withdraw at any point in the workshop.

Through lectures, participants were inspired to use their creativity and a hands-on approach during the editing and printing process with an openness to subject matter and topics. Workshop leaders formed connections with the Ukrainian students through a partnership with their professor Anna Slatinska, PhD., Faculty of Arts, MBU, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. The twelve students who participated in the workshop were first-year undergraduate students studying at MBU, specifically

at the Faculty of Arts, teacher training programs, and the Faculty of Political and International Relations. Sustainability was built into the overall project through training faculty members at MBU for five days in May 2023. All the materials necessary to continue the cyanotype process were left behind at MBU to continue the cyanotype process during the second phase of the Photovoice project in September 2023 during the 2023/2024 new academic year and beyond.

As a component of the cultural sensitivity Photovoice Core Principles, participants maintain the copyright of all their images and stories, and project facilitators are permitted to use their images and stories for educational purposes only. Since Photovoice is essentially a type of participatory action research, it can also be used as a qualitative research method, as an assessment tool, as a way of gathering data, and as an evaluation tool, as described on the Community Tool Box website accessed on July 14, 2023.

In this hands-on Photovoice workshop developed to enhance hard and soft skills, participants learned from documentary photographers who work with marginalized communities in collaboration with social workers and educators working directly with Ukrainians living in Slovakia. Through lectures and examples of other documentary photographers, Ukrainian students learned the best practices for taking photographs and how to share their stories to help others learn from their experiences. The project has the potential for meaningful impact to develop global competencies and global skills of students, ranging from critical thinking skills, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital skills. The project can also help successfully advance the strategies to resettle Ukrainians in Slovakia.

Understanding Visual Literacy

In preparation for the hands-on photography component of the workshop, leaders presented a lecture on understanding the essential visual elements that make up an image. They discussed composition, perspective, the quality/direction of light, the interactions of different colors, and black-and-white photographs. Photographic examples and comparisons of each visual element strengthened the participants' understanding. Workshop leaders showed well-known documentary photographers' work to stimulate what is possible with photography and inspire participants to

push themselves creatively. Ukrainian students were loaned a point-and-shoot digital Canon camera and guided through the steps for photographing in the field.

Figure 1. Andy Bale, Art and Art History Instructor at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, United States, demonstrates using a point-and-shoot camera.

Developing Prompts for Photovoice

Creating a prompt for participants to capture images is essential to any Photovoice project. Workshop leaders Andy Bale, an Art and Art History Instructor at Dickinson College, and Jon Cox, Associate Professor of Art and Design at the University of Delaware, prompted participants to create images inspired by their collaborative project *Arrivals: What's Left Behind, What Lies Ahead*. A description of the project found on idarrivals.org was accessed on July 17, 2023. "Survival, resilience, and renewal are the common threads woven through the narrative of the human journey. *ARRIVALS: What's Left Behind, What Lies Ahead* shares the compelling stories of refugee, immigrant, and Native American diasporas that are foundational to our culture and help us to create a shared future. Through intentional dialog and the lens of a large format camera, participants invite us into their personal lives. They share their reasons for leaving their homelands, their challenges, their arrivals, and the losses of what they left behind. By sharing these firsthand accounts, this exhibition seeks to inspire engagement within every community."

Ukrainian undergraduate students at MBU in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, were asked to select a partner and capture images using the following prompts.

- How did you feel when you arrived in Slovakia from Ukraine?
- What did you leave behind in Ukraine?
- Who do you want to become? What lies ahead for you after leaving Ukraine?

Creating Photographic Images

Participants were allocated one hour to capture the prompts listed above and given a Visual Literacy Emojis card to help them remember the various elements that make up an image. Using an Emojis card helped reduce misunderstanding of the topics presented because of the language barrier. Ukrainian students worked in pairs to develop concepts and photograph each other when their concept required a portrait.

Figure 2. Visual Literacy Emojis card depicting using the camera vertically or horizontally or a frog's-eye view versus a bird's-eye view.

History, Selecting, Editing, and Printing Images

Workshop leaders downloaded digital images onto a computer, and each participant selected their favorite images to print using the Cyanotype process. Architects and engineers used the cyanotype process, invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842 into the late 1900s, for making copies of drawings and plans commonly known as blueprints. (Saska 2010) The cyanotype process combines two chemicals, potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium citrate, in equal parts. The solution is then applied to the paper using a brush, sponge, or glass coating rod to make the paper light-sensitive. In the past, photographers would have used glass or film negatives placed directly on top of the coated and dried paper. Ukrainian workshop participants used a more contemporary approach by

creating large-format digital negatives in Photoshop from digital point-and-shoot cameras and printing the negatives on a high-quality transparency film.

Participants then followed the photographers of the past by placing the digital negative on top of the coated paper and then exposing them to direct sunlight or under an ultraviolet light source for a certain number of minutes, depending on the density of the negative and intensity of the sun. The exposed paper is placed in a tray of tap water for the development process, and a few drops of hydrogen peroxide can be added to speed up the oxidation process and intensify the cyan color of the image.

Figure 3. Workshop participants are developing an exposed cyanotype in a tray of water.

Figure 4. An ultraviolet lamp exposes the image during cloudy or rainy days when sufficient sunlight is unavailable.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

PAR is an approach to inquiry that has been used since the 1940s. It involves researchers and participants working together to understand a problematic situation and change it for the better, accessed on the website www.participatorymethods.org on July 21, 2023. The reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by an understanding of history, culture, and local context, and embedded in social relationships. The process of PAR should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives. (Baum et al. 2006)

Workshop leaders employed PAR by prompting the Ukrainian students with the following questions. How did you feel when you arrived in Slovakia from Ukraine? What did you leave behind in Ukraine? Furthermore, who do you want to become? Students responded with images and reflective captions to understand why they left Ukraine, what they left behind, and their paths in their future careers and personal lives.

Figure 5. Title: *Feel of Dance* "I believe in myself. I believe that one day the world will know about me, and I will tell about myself, my path, my feelings, and views through creativity." ~ Liana Yevtushenko

Caption Writing and Group Discussion

Participants gained valuable experience sharing their stories and images in a safe space by giving and receiving constructive feedback from their peers. The final cyanotypes will be included in the exhibition held during the global flagship conference titled: *Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement,* held in the Slovak National Uprising Museum in Banská Bystrica between September 20th - 23rd, 2023, as well as in the main gallery in the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica from September 18th - 22nd, 2023 for all conference attendees to experience and open to the general public.

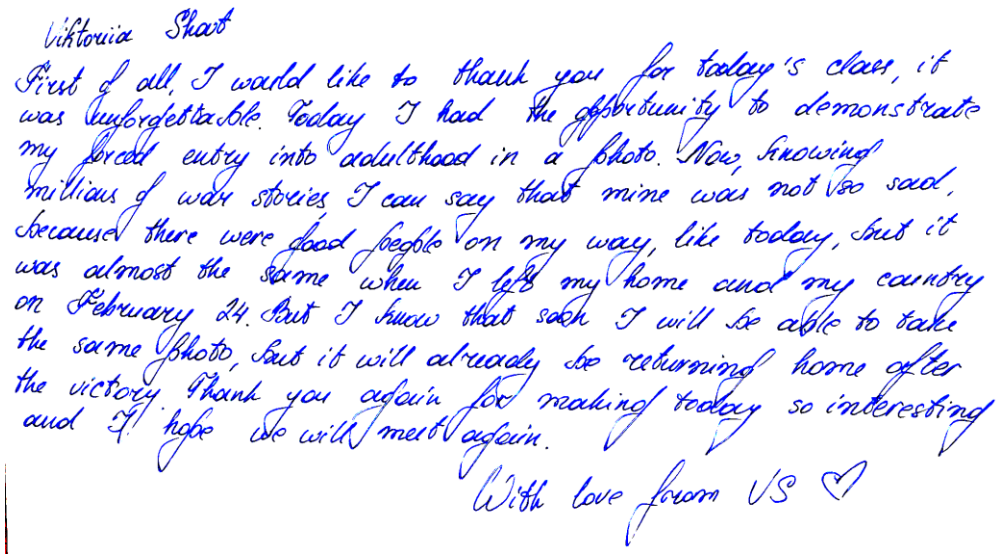

Figure 6. A Ukrainian student who participated in the workshop wrote this photo caption.

Disseminating Results

Printed images were displayed during the workshop in an informal setting for immediate participant feedback using a close line and close pins. The setup time was minimal, allowing the group to connect to share experiences.

The images created by workshop participants will be displayed in the public art gallery in the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, in a more formal setting during the *Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement* conference in September 2023. There are also plans to display these images internationally in connection with the traveling exhibition, *Arrivals: What's Left Behind, What Lies Ahead*.

Figure 7. Cyanotype images in an informal display using a close line and close pins.

Conclusion

In this article, we have explained a hands-on photographic workshop utilizing a participatory action research method called Photovoice with Ukrainian students enrolled in teacher training programs at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. Participants were challenged to learn the basics of visual literacy, practice the historic photographic cyanotype process and respond to prompts to give meaning and context to their images. Participants embraced the experience by implementing soft and hard skills resulting in hand-printed cyanotypes, written captions reflecting upon their selected prompt, and engaging in discussions with their peers and workshop leaders. A workshop leader can adapt the design, amount of allocated time, and prompts for capturing images for almost any type of group. Workshops can be completed in as little as three hours or extended to an entire semester or even longer, depending on the audience and desired results. A list of

resources is supplied below for individuals interested in conducting a Photovoice project independently.

Resources for educators to implement Photovoice in their classroom

In this section, we have provided several resources to assist teachers in developing their own Photovoice project in their classrooms. Photovoice can be a valuable method to engage learners in English as a second language and English as a foreign language context. Teachers interested in using Photovoice are encouraged to review the https://photovoice.org/ website for best practices in working with marginalized communities.

Your complete guide to cyanotype printing

https://www.gathered.how/arts-crafts/guide-to-cyanotype-printing/

Supply list adopted from the website theartofeducation.edu, accessed on July 14, 2023.

Cyanotype Kit

- Transparency film (available for various printers, including laser and inkjet)
- Watercolor / alternative process paper
- Paint brushes, sponges, and glass rod for coating paper
- A mixing cup, a shot glass, or a disposable cup
- A large piece of glass to sandwich your emulsion with your large negative before exposing it to ultraviolet light
- Paper towels
- Plastic gloves
- Apron
- Goggles or glasses, protective eyewear is recommended in instances of splash
- A plastic tablecloth / protective material for the surfaces you plan to work with

Writing Captions

1. Select the image you would like to caption. What is it you would like to tell the reader?
2. Using the main idea of the picture, write a simple sentence or two that sums up everything happening in the scene.
3. Add to the sentence(s) where this is taking place. Keep it short and be descriptive.
4. Add some detail. Describe the picture's main "character(s)," or throw in an interesting fact or statistic that complements the topic.
5. What is happening in the picture? Add action words to entice the reader.
6. Check for any spelling or grammatical errors.

Photovoice Statement of Ethical Practice

https://photovoice.org/about-us/photovoice-statement-of-ethical-practice/

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Idaho Center for the Book

Idaho Film Collection

Idaho Museum of International Diaspora

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The Dynamic Tapestry of Engagement: Arts, Culture, and Media in the Irish Diaspora

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Abstract

This paper explores the pivotal role of arts, culture, and media in engaging with the Irish diaspora. We begin by tracing the historical evolution of Irish diaspora issues, followed by a critique of Irish government policies in comparison to other countries. Emphasizing Ireland's unique strengths in diaspora engagement, we delve into the significance of arts, culture, and media in this context. Furthermore, we explore how Ireland can further enhance its diaspora engagement by embracing new media technologies. Finally, we conclude with five key learnings that other nations can consider when engaging with their own diaspora communities.

Keywords: Culture, Arts, Media, Irish diaspora, Media Technologies.

Introduction

The Irish diaspora has spread its roots far and wide, creating a vibrant global community of Irish descendants. Over the centuries, millions of Irish people have emigrated, driven by factors such as famine, economic hardship, and political upheavals. This dispersion has fostered a deep connection between Ireland and its diaspora, fueled by shared heritage, culture, and identity (Moody and Martin, 2001).

A Historical Perspective on Irish Diaspora Issues

The Irish diaspora has played a significant role in shaping global societies. From the Irish diaspora in the United States to communities across Europe, Australia, and beyond, the Irish have left an indelible mark. Irish immigrants have contributed to diverse fields such as politics, literature, sports, and the arts, making their presence felt worldwide.

The historical perspective on Irish diaspora issues is a journey marked by waves of emigration, driven by complex social, economic, and political factors. The Irish diaspora has its roots in centuries of migration, with significant waves occurring during specific periods in Ireland's history.

Early Migrations: Early Irish migrations were driven by various factors, including land disputes, clan conflicts, and invasions. From the early medieval period onwards, Irish people began to settle in other parts of Europe, particularly in Scotland and northern England, leading to the establishment of Irish communities abroad (Moody and Martin, 2001).

The Great Famine (1845-1850): One of the most significant and tragic chapters in Irish diaspora history was the Great Famine. This period of mass starvation and disease forced millions of Irish people to flee the country in search of better prospects and escape the devastating conditions at home. The majority of Irish emigrants during the famine years settled in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Moody and Martin, 2001).

The Post-Famine Waves: The Irish diaspora continued to grow after the famine years, with subsequent waves of emigration during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Economic opportunities and political instability in Ireland, coupled with the pull of industrialization in the destination countries, led to further migration to the Americas and other parts of the world (Moody and Martin, 2001).

Irish in America: The United States became a primary destination for Irish emigrants, and by the late 19th century, the Irish had established a significant presence in major cities like New York, Boston, and Chicago. Irish immigrants faced discrimination and hardships but also played vital roles in the labour movement, politics, and the development of American culture (DFA, 2020).

Irish in the United Kingdom: Emigration to the United Kingdom, especially England and Scotland, also increased during the 20th century. Irish communities formed in cities like London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, where they faced challenges related to assimilation and integration while preserving their cultural identity (Brockie & Walsh, 2008).

Irish in Australia and Canada: Australia and Canada also attracted substantial numbers of Irish immigrants seeking a new life and economic opportunities. Irish communities formed in these countries and contributed significantly to their cultural, political, and economic landscapes (Brockie & Walsh, 2008).

Post-World War II Emigration: In the post-World War II period, economic challenges in Ireland led to further emigration, albeit on a smaller scale than during the 19th century. Many young Irish people sought employment opportunities abroad, especially in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other English-speaking countries (Moody and Martin, 2001).

Changing Reasons for Emigration: As Ireland experienced economic growth and stability from the late 20th century onwards, the reasons for emigration shifted. While some still left for economic reasons, others pursued educational opportunities or sought adventure and exploration (Brockie & Walsh, 2008).

Diaspora Connections: Throughout its history, the Irish diaspora has maintained strong connections with Ireland. The descendants of Irish emigrants have preserved their cultural heritage through music, dance, language, and traditions. Many Irish-American and Irish-Australian communities, for example, continue to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and other Irish festivals, fostering a sense of Irish identity and heritage (DFA, 2020).

Contemporary Diaspora Engagement: In recent years, the Irish government and cultural organizations have recognized the value of diaspora engagement. Initiatives, such as The Gathering in 2013, aimed to encourage the return of the diaspora to Ireland for cultural events and to strengthen ties with their ancestral homeland (DFA, 2020).

As we can see then, the historical perspective on Irish diaspora issues is characterized by a complex interplay of social, economic, and political factors that have driven waves of emigration from Ireland. The diaspora's legacy is marked by a vibrant global community that has preserved and celebrated Irish culture and identity while forging connections that endure across generations and continents.

Irish Government's Historical Approach to Diaspora Issues

While the Irish government has for a long time acknowledged the diaspora's importance, there have been criticisms of its policies. Some scholars argue that historically the government focused primarily on financial contributions from the diaspora rather than nurturing cultural and social ties. Moreover, the lack of a coherent diaspora strategy sometimes hindered the country's ability to fully capitalize on its global network of Irish connections.

There are several areas where the government's policies have faced scrutiny and where improvement had been called for. The following are some of those issues:

Emphasis on Financial Contributions: One of the primary criticisms of Irish government policy was its focus on financial contributions from the diaspora. While seeking investment from the diaspora is essential, this emphasis has sometimes overshadowed the importance of cultural and social ties. As a result, some critics argue that the government's engagement with the diaspora has been transactional, rather than fostering a deeper and more meaningful connection (Hickman, 2020).

Lack of a Coherent Strategy: The Irish government's approach to diaspora engagement has often lacked a clear and comprehensive strategy. While there have been initiatives and programs targeting the diaspora, they have not always been part of a unified and long-term vision. A coherent strategy is crucial for sustaining engagement and ensuring that efforts are well-coordinated and impactful.

Focus on Traditional Diaspora: The Irish government's attention has historically been directed mainly towards the traditional diaspora, particularly those in the United States and the United Kingdom. While these communities remain significant, the global nature of the modern diaspora demands a more inclusive approach that considers the diversity of experiences and backgrounds of Irish descendants worldwide (Hickman, 2020).

Limited Engagement with Younger Generations: The government's engagement efforts have not always effectively reached younger generations of the diaspora. Many young people of Irish descent have limited direct connections to Ireland, and their interests and values may differ from previous generations. The government have been called on to prioritize innovative strategies that resonate with younger diaspora members, including those born and raised outside Ireland (Hickman, 2020).

Limited Cultural Programming: While there have been many cultural initiatives and events organized by the government and cultural organizations, some critics argue that more can be done to promote Irish culture and heritage globally. Enhancing cultural programming can help strengthen the diaspora's connection to Ireland and foster a sense of pride in their Irish identity (Miney, 2014).

Strengthening Ties beyond Festivals: The government's support for Irish festivals and gatherings worldwide has been positive in promoting Irish culture and community, particularly through events like St. Patrick's Day celebrations. However, the engagement efforts should extend beyond annual festivals and focus on sustained interactions and relationships with diaspora communities throughout the year (Miney, 2014).

Lack of Political Representation: Some members of the diaspora have expressed concerns about their limited representation in the Irish political system. While the Irish constitution permits voting rights for citizens abroad, logistical challenges and limited awareness of these rights have hindered active participation. Expanding political representation for the diaspora could enhance their engagement with Irish affairs. The current Programme for Government contains a commitment to hold a referendum on extending the franchise in presidential elections to citizens resident outside the state (Hickman, 2020).

Coordination with Other Departments: Diaspora engagement often requires coordination across various government departments and agencies, including those responsible for culture, trade, and foreign affairs. Ensuring effective collaboration among these entities can strengthen the impact of diaspora policies and initiatives.

In conclusion, the Irish government's historical approach to diaspora issues has shown commitment to engaging with Irish descendants worldwide. However, there have been areas that required improvement, such as diversifying the approach beyond financial considerations, adopting a comprehensive strategy, reaching out to younger generations, and expanding cultural initiatives. By addressing these critiques, it has been suggested that the government could strengthen its relationship with the diaspora and create a more inclusive and meaningful engagement.

Global Ireland 2025 -Irish Government's Current Policy

To address the challenges outlined, Global Ireland 2025 is the Irish Government's current diaspora policy. It is an initiative that aims to shape Ireland's global outlook for the present and future generations. This aspiration has been a long-standing dream for Ireland, as its people have always strived to be good citizens of the world. This commitment to global engagement dates back to the

foundation of the State, with leaders like Michael Collins envisioning Ireland as a shining light in a dark world.

Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Seán Lemass later emphasized the importance of Ireland's role in a greater Europe, the United Nations, and the wider world, recognizing that Irish people are citizens of the world beyond their own nation. With Global Ireland 2025, Ireland seeks to increase its global impact through various measures such as opening new embassies and consulates, strengthening existing missions, investing more in agencies like Industrial Development Authority, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia (Food Board) and Tourism Ireland, promoting Irish culture worldwide, building new air and sea connections, and welcoming more international students to Ireland.

The urgency for such global engagement stems from the transformative effects of technology, shifts in geopolitical and economic power, turbulence in the global trading environment, and the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union. In the face of these challenges, the Irish government believes comprehensive multilateral responses are essential on issues like climate change, security, tax in the digital world, and migration.

Global Ireland 2025 highlights Ireland's outward-looking and globalized nature, its growing exports and attractiveness for foreign investment, a vast diaspora of over 70 million people, and its renowned culture and heritage. However, it acknowledges that Ireland's international presence has room for growth, given the increasing complexity and unpredictability of global relations.

The strategy aims to double the scope and impact of Ireland's global footprint. It seeks to advance strategic international objectives, diversify and grow exports and inward investment, strengthen engagement with the diaspora, promote Irish culture, and support foreign policy goals such as international development and peace.

Global Ireland 2025 outlines specific commitments, including the establishment of new embassies and consulates in several countries across different regions. The initiative aims to strengthen Ireland's presence in the European Union, the United States, the Asia-Pacific region, North and West Africa, and the Middle East and Gulf region. It also aims to enhance Ireland's digital footprint and publish a White Paper on International Development to reaffirm its commitment to aid.

The benefits of Global Ireland 2025 include an increased impact on shaping EU policies and budgets, support for Irish arts and culture internationally, diversification of foreign direct investment and export markets, and growth in the tourism sector.

The vision behind Global Ireland 2025 is to seize the opportunity to become a voice for peace, multilateralism, security, free trade, sustainability, and social justice in the world. Ireland aims to be at the heart of the common European home and a nation that contributes positively to global affairs (DFA, 2020).

Ireland's Unique Strengths in Diaspora Engagement

Ireland has undoubtedly excelled in certain aspects of diaspora engagement. For instance, the Irish government's funding support for cultural initiatives and exchange programs has strengthened connections with the diaspora. Additionally, Irish cultural festivals held worldwide foster a sense of community among the Irish diaspora, promoting cultural exchange and understanding.

Ireland possesses several unique strengths that have contributed to its success in diaspora engagement. These strengths have enabled Ireland to foster strong connections with Irish communities worldwide and have played a significant role in preserving Irish culture, heritage, and identity beyond its borders. Some of Ireland's key strengths in diaspora engagement include:

Strong Cultural Identity: Ireland's rich cultural heritage is a cornerstone of its diaspora engagement strategy. Irish culture, including music, dance, literature, language, and traditions, holds a special place in the hearts of the Irish diaspora. The government and cultural organizations actively promote Irish culture globally through festivals, concerts, exhibitions, and language learning initiatives. This celebration of cultural identity fosters a sense of pride among the diaspora and strengthens their emotional ties to Ireland.

Extensive Global Network: The Irish diaspora is spread across the world, forming extensive networks in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and beyond. These diaspora communities serve as vital bridges, facilitating connections and interactions between Ireland and its descendants. The global presence of Irish expatriates has created a web of relationships that provide numerous opportunities for engagement.

Grassroots Engagement: Ireland's diaspora engagement efforts extend beyond government initiatives; they also include grassroots organizations and community-led initiatives. Cultural groups, Irish dance schools, language classes, and various Irish clubs operate in many countries, allowing the diaspora to actively participate in and shape their connection with Ireland. This grassroots engagement builds a sense of ownership and belonging among the diaspora members, as they play a direct role in preserving their heritage (DFA, 2020).

Cultural Diplomacy: Ireland effectively employs cultural diplomacy as a means of engaging with the diaspora. The government supports and promotes Irish artists, musicians, writers, and other cultural ambassadors abroad. Events such as Irish film festivals, traditional music sessions, and literary exchanges bring Irish culture to a global audience, strengthening the bonds between Ireland and its diaspora (Culture Ireland, 2022).

Economic Opportunities and Investment: Ireland has positioned itself as an attractive destination for investment and business collaboration for the diaspora. Through initiatives like the Global Irish Economic Forum, the government seeks to tap into the expertise and resources of the diaspora to benefit Ireland's economy. By providing opportunities for the diaspora to invest in Ireland, the country deepens its economic ties and encourages a sense of ownership and stake in Ireland's success (DETE, 2022).

Emotional Connection and Homecoming Initiatives: Ireland has successfully leveraged the emotional connection that many members of the diaspora have with their ancestral homeland. Events like The Gathering in 2013 invited the diaspora to return to Ireland for special occasions, fostering a sense of belonging and providing a platform for reconnection with family roots (McWilliams and Murray, 2018).

Irish Citizenship and Dual Citizenship: Ireland's approach to citizenship allows those with Irish ancestry to claim Irish citizenship, enabling them to connect with their ancestral roots more closely. Additionally, Ireland permits dual citizenship, making it easier for the diaspora to maintain ties with both their country of residence and Ireland (DFA, 2020).

Therefore, Ireland's unique strengths in diaspora engagement lie in its strong cultural identity, extensive global network, grassroots initiatives, effective cultural diplomacy, economic opportunities, and emotional connections. By leveraging these strengths, Ireland has been

successful in fostering a sense of belonging among its diaspora and building enduring connections with Irish communities worldwide.

A Comparative Analysis: Ireland and Other Countries

It can be argued, in contrast to Ireland's approach, that other nations with large diaspora populations, such as Israel and India, have implemented more comprehensive and successful diaspora engagement strategies. These countries have actively nurtured cultural and social connections, leveraging arts, culture, and media as powerful tools for engagement.

A comparative analysis of Ireland's approach to diaspora engagement with that of other countries provides valuable insights into possible strengths and weaknesses of different strategies. Here, we examine how Ireland's policies and practices differ from those of other nations with significant diaspora populations:

Israel: Israel is a noteworthy example of a country with a very strong focus on diaspora engagement. The Israeli government sees its diaspora as an essential part of its national identity and considers Jewish communities worldwide as an integral part of the Jewish nation. To foster these connections, Israel offers numerous programs, such as Birthright Israel, which provides free trips to Israel for young Jewish adults, encouraging a strong bond between the diaspora and the country. Additionally, Israel maintains active cultural, educational, and business exchanges with its diaspora, leveraging these connections for mutual benefits (MDA, 2023).

Ireland's approach to diaspora engagement is less extensive than Israel's. While Ireland has recognized the significance of its diaspora, it has not established as many dedicated programs or initiatives to actively engage with Irish communities globally.

India: India has implemented comprehensive and effective diaspora engagement strategies, particularly through its Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). India has invested in cultural diplomacy, promoting Indian arts, music, dance, and language worldwide through various events and festivals. The government also facilitates the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) program, granting certain benefits to people of Indian origin, encouraging them to maintain strong ties with India (Bhattacharya and Sachdev, 2021).

While Ireland has made efforts to promote Irish culture abroad, India's approach would appear to be more systematic and far-reaching. The Indian government's investment in cultural diplomacy and citizenship programs for the diaspora serves as a model for Ireland to consider enhancing its own diaspora engagement .

Italy: Italy has adopted a legal framework to foster diaspora connections, exemplified by the Law on Italians Abroad, which outlines policies to support Italian communities globally. The Italian government offers language and culture courses to descendants of Italian citizens, encouraging them to maintain their heritage and connection to Italy. Additionally, Italy actively organizes cultural events and festivals to promote Italian culture and identity (Caldarini, 2020).

Ireland can draw inspiration from Italy's approach, particularly its focus on language and culture courses for diaspora members. Although very successful initiatives have been promoted through Fulbright and government sponsored courses in European universities, encouraging greater Irish language learning and cultural exchanges could deepen the connection between Ireland and its diaspora.

Canada: Canada's diaspora engagement strategy focuses on fostering strong ties with Canadian citizens abroad and leveraging the diaspora's networks for economic and cultural benefits. The Canadian government supports networking events, mentorship programs, and business initiatives to connect with its diaspora and promote bilateral relationships (Schwanen, 2019).

While Ireland has made efforts to encourage economic connections with the diaspora, Canada's approach demonstrates a more proactive stance in leveraging diaspora networks for mutual economic growth and cultural exchange.

Scotland: While Scotland is a part of the United Kingdom, it has developed its own distinctive diaspora engagement strategy. The Scottish government supports cultural organizations and events that celebrate Scottish heritage, including the Homecoming Scotland initiative, which encourages Scots around the world to visit their ancestral homeland. The Scots take much of their inspiration from the Irish approach (Scottish Government, 2023).

Ireland can still however learn from initiatives and projects that form part of Scotland's efforts to position diaspora engagement.

While Ireland has taken steps to recognize the importance of its diaspora, it could benefit from adopting elements of other nations' more comprehensive and proactive approaches. By embracing additional targeted cultural diplomacy initiaives, promoting more comprehensive Irish language learning, and leveraging the diaspora for economic and cultural growth, Ireland can further strengthen its connection with Irish communities worldwide and enhance diaspora engagement in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

The Vital Role of Arts in Engaging with the Irish Diaspora

The arts have been instrumental in preserving and celebrating Irish identity within the diaspora. Irish music, dance, literature, and theatre act as bridges that connect generations of Irish descendants to their roots. For instance, the success of Riverdance showcased the power of Irish dance to captivate global audiences and rekindle interest in Irish heritage. The nomination of Irish language feature film “An Cailín Ciúin” (The Quiet Girl) for Best Foreign Language film at the 2023 Oscars also gave unprecedented status to Irish language and home grown film production on the worldwide stage.

The arts play a vital and multifaceted role in engaging with the Irish diaspora, acting as a powerful bridge that connects Irish descendants with their ancestral homeland and heritage. The arts have the unique ability to evoke emotions, tell stories, and preserve cultural traditions, making them an effective tool for diaspora engagement (DFA, 2020).

Here are some key aspects of the vital role of arts in engaging with the Irish diaspora:

Cultural Preservation and Transmission: Through music, dance, literature, and visual arts, the Irish diaspora can maintain and transmit Irish cultural traditions and identity across generations and continents. Traditional Irish music and dance, such as jigs, reels, set dancing and céilí dances, are practiced and performed in Irish communities worldwide, ensuring the preservation of centuries-old cultural expressions. Grassroots organisations such as Comhaltas have been pivotal to the spread of these initiatives (Culture Ireland, 2022).

Nostalgia and Emotional Connection: Irish arts have a powerful way of evoking nostalgia and emotional connection among the diaspora. Listening to traditional Irish music or reading Irish literature can transport diaspora members back to their roots, instilling a sense of belonging and

emotional attachment to Ireland. Bands such as the Chieftains, De Danann, Clannad & many more have been important ambassadors in this regard (DFA, 2020).

Celebration of Irish Heritage: Irish arts serve as a celebration of Irish heritage and a source of pride for the diaspora. Festivals and events that showcase both traditional and contemporary Irish music, dance, theatre, and literature create opportunities for the diaspora to come together, celebrate their shared identity, and deepen their connection with Ireland. Irish in Britain and The Ancient Order of Hibernians amongst others have fostered this celebration of heritage (DFA, 2020).

Identity Formation: For many members of the Irish diaspora, the arts are essential in shaping their Irish identity, even if they are several generations removed from Ireland. Engaging with Irish arts fosters a sense of belonging and cultural continuity, contributing to the development of a strong and lasting Irish identity (DFA, 2020).

Cultural Exchange and Collaboration: Arts provide a platform for cultural exchange and collaboration between Ireland and its diaspora. Irish artists, musicians, and writers often travel to diaspora communities, participating in festivals, workshops, and performances. Similarly, diaspora members contribute to the cultural landscape of Ireland, enriching the nation's artistic diversity. Culture Irleand play an important role in supporting such initiatives.

Strengthening Diaspora Communities: The arts act as a unifying force within diaspora communities, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds who share a common Irish heritage. Local Irish cultural festivals, music sessions, and dance groups foster a sense of community and camaraderie among diaspora members, promoting a vibrant Irish cultural scene worldwide. Millwaukee Irish Fest is probably the largets event of it’s kind outside Ireland, but festivals big and small can be found globally (DFA, 2020).

Tourism and Homecoming: Arts and cultural events can serve as significant attractions for tourism and homecoming initiatives. The diaspora is drawn to visit Ireland for events such as traditional music festivals, literary gatherings, and theatre productions. These homecoming experiences deepen the diaspora's connection with Ireland and provide opportunities for them to experience their heritage in its authentic setting (DFA, 2020).

Digital Engagement and Global Reach: In the digital age, arts content can be easily shared across borders, allowing the Irish diaspora to participate in cultural events and celebrations from anywhere in the world. Social media, streaming platforms, and online performances have expanded the reach of Irish arts, ensuring that the diaspora remains engaged and connected (DFA, 2020).

We can see then how the arts play a central role in engaging with the Irish diaspora, providing a powerful means to preserve cultural heritage, celebrate Irish identity, evoke emotions, and foster a sense of community. By embracing and promoting Irish arts both within Ireland and among its diaspora communities, the connection between Ireland and its global Irish family is strengthened, creating a shared cultural heritage that transcends geographical boundaries.

The Significance of Culture in Diaspora Engagement

Irish culture goes beyond artistic expressions; it encompasses language, customs, and traditions. Organizations like Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Conradh na Gaeilge and the Gaelic Athletics Association (GAA) play a pivotal role in promoting Irish culture and language worldwide. Embracing the richness of Irish culture fosters a stronger sense of identity among the diaspora and strengthens their ties to Ireland (Culture Ireland, 2022).

Culture acts as a dynamic force that connects individuals with their ancestral homeland and fosters a sense of belonging and identity. The role of culture in diaspora engagement goes beyond preserving traditions; it is a conduit for building strong, meaningful relationships between the homeland and its dispersed communities. Here are some key aspects of the significance of culture in diaspora engagement:

Identity and Belonging: Culture forms the bedrock of individual and collective identity within the diaspora. For Irish descendants living far from Ireland, engaging with Irish culture helps them understand their roots, history, and heritage. Cultural practices, language, music, dance, and customs act as touchpoints, reinforcing a shared sense of belonging to a common cultural heritage (Culture Ireland, 2022).

Emotional Connection: Culture evokes strong emotions and sentimental ties to one's homeland. Engaging in cultural activities or witnessing cultural expressions can trigger feelings of nostalgia

and connection, especially for those who have grown up with stories of Ireland or memories passed down through generations. This emotional connection strengthens the sense of kinship with Ireland (Culture Ireland, 2022).

Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power: Cultural diplomacy serves as a potent tool for fostering mutual understanding and building positive relationships between the homeland and the diaspora. By promoting its culture globally, Ireland can exert soft power, influencing how the diaspora perceives the country and its values. Cultural diplomacy can help shape positive narratives and counter misconceptions, ultimately fostering a positive image of Ireland within the diaspora (DFA, 2020).

Community Building: Cultural events and activities bring the diaspora community together, creating a space for social interactions and the exchange of experiences. Festivals, language classes, traditional music sessions, and cultural workshops act as hubs for Irish descendants to bond, share stories, and celebrate their shared heritage. Diverse communities such as the LGBTQ+, the Black & Traveller Irish can also be embraced in this way. These community-building efforts strengthen ties between diaspora members and facilitate collaboration on shared interests (Hickman, 2020).

Cultural Exchange and Enrichment: Diaspora engagement promotes a two-way cultural exchange. As the diaspora experiences and embraces Irish culture, they, in turn, introduce elements of their adopted cultures to Ireland. This exchange enriches Ireland's cultural landscape and helps the homeland to remain open, diverse, and receptive to the influences of its global family (Zeng and Xu, 2021).

Preserving Cultural Heritage: The diaspora's active engagement in Irish culture helps preserve and revitalize cultural heritage. Language preservation efforts, traditional arts, storytelling, sporting and culinary traditions are sustained and transmitted across generations through the participation and enthusiasm of the diaspora. This contributes to the resilience and continuity of Irish cultural heritage Culture Ireland, 2022).

Tourism and Cultural Tourism: Culture plays a central role in attracting the diaspora back to Ireland for visits and homecoming experiences. Cultural tourism, encompassing music festivals, literary events, theatre productions, and historical sites, provides opportunities for the diaspora to

immerse themselves in the richness of their heritage while contributing to the nation's economy and cultural vibrancy (Zeng and Xu, 2021).

Cultural Resilience: Engaging with culture provides the diaspora with a source of resilience and strength, particularly during challenging times. In times of crisis, diaspora members often turn to their cultural heritage for comfort and a sense of stability, reaffirming their connection with Ireland and their diaspora community (Hickman, 2020).

It's clear that culture holds profound significance in diaspora engagement, serving as a unifying force that transcends geographical distances and forges connections between Ireland and its global Irish family. By recognizing and nurturing the power of culture in diaspora engagement, Ireland can foster a deeper sense of belonging and shared identity, while embracing the diverse contributions of its diaspora in shaping the nation's cultural narrative.

The Transformative Role of Media in Diaspora Engagement

Media platforms have revolutionized diaspora engagement. Social media, in particular, has become a powerful tool for connecting with the Irish diaspora and facilitating conversations on shared experiences and heritage. Additionally, the use of artificial intelligence and extended reality opens new possibilities for immersive cultural experiences, allowing the diaspora to reconnect with Ireland from anywhere in the world.

The transformative role of media has been instrumental in reshaping how Ireland connects with its diaspora worldwide. Media platforms, both traditional and digital, have revolutionized communication, allowing real-time interactions and information exchange between Ireland and its dispersed communities (DFA, 2020). The transformative impact of media in diaspora engagement can be understood through the following aspects:

Global Reach and Instant Connectivity: Media enables instantaneous communication, breaking down geographical barriers and facilitating connections across continents. Through social media, websites, and online forums, Ireland can reach out to its diaspora and vice versa, providing a platform for real-time interactions and exchanges of information, stories, and experiences.

Diaspora News and Updates: Media channels serve as vital sources of information for the diaspora, keeping them informed about developments in Ireland, including cultural events,

economic opportunities, and national news. Access to reliable and up-to-date information fosters a stronger connection between Ireland and its dispersed communities, enhancing the diaspora's sense of inclusion and belonging.

Cultural Promotion and Awareness: Media platforms play a pivotal role in promoting Irish culture and heritage to the diaspora. From streaming traditional music performances to showcasing Irish dance and art, media helps disseminate Irish cultural content to a global audience. This exposure not only enhances cultural awareness among the diaspora but also nurtures a sense of pride in Irish identity.

Language Learning and Preservation: Digital media provides innovative avenues for language learning and preservation efforts. Online language courses, language exchange platforms, and interactive language apps enable the diaspora to engage with the Irish language regardless of their geographic location. This contributes to the preservation of the Irish language and fosters a stronger connection with Irish cultural roots.

Virtual Cultural Events: Media facilitates virtual participation in cultural events and festivals, enabling the diaspora to engage in Irish celebrations from afar. Whether it's a live stream of a music concert, a virtual tour of an art exhibition, or an online storytelling session, media platforms create opportunities for the diaspora to participate in Irish cultural experiences from anywhere in the world.

Community Building and Networking: Social media platforms serve as hubs for diaspora communities to connect, share experiences, and form networks. Groups, pages, and forums dedicated to Irish culture and heritage provide spaces for diaspora members to interact, collaborate on projects, and support one another. This digital community building strengthens the sense of community and collective identity among the diaspora.

Strengthening Political and Economic Ties: Media plays a significant role in promoting political and economic engagement between Ireland and the diaspora. Government websites, online investment portals, and virtual business forums facilitate interactions between diaspora entrepreneurs and Irish industries, fostering economic partnerships and investments.

Virtual Homecoming Experiences: Digital media has opened up avenues for virtual homecoming experiences, allowing the diaspora to reconnect with their ancestral homeland from a distance.

Virtual tours of cultural landmarks, historical sites, and natural landscapes enable the diaspora to experience Ireland's beauty and heritage virtually.

From real-time communication and information exchange to virtual cultural experiences and community building, media platforms have opened new possibilities for engagement, fostering a stronger bond between Ireland and its dispersed communities. Embracing digital media's potential, Ireland can continue to innovate its diaspora engagement strategies and cultivate a dynamic relationship with the diaspora in a rapidly evolving media landscape .

The Role of Emerging Immersive Technologies

Artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and extended reality (XR) have the potential to significantly enhance this transformative role of media in diaspora engagement. These emerging technologies offer innovative ways to connect with the diaspora, provide immersive experiences, and personalize interactions, creating more meaningful and impactful engagements (Brescia-Zapata, 2021). Here's how each of these technologies could contribute to diaspora engagement:

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI can enhance diaspora engagement by providing personalized and interactive experiences. AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can assist diaspora members in navigating information, answering questions, and accessing resources related to cultural events, language learning, and heritage preservation. AI can also analyze data and user preferences to offer tailored content and recommendations, ensuring that the person receives relevant and engaging information.

Augmented Reality (AR): AR overlays digital content onto the real world, creating interactive and immersive experiences. For diaspora engagement, AR can be used to provide virtual tours of Irish landmarks, museums, and historical sites. Users can explore these sites from their homes, feeling as if they are physically present in Ireland. AR can also enhance cultural events by overlaying digital elements, such as subtitles or historical context, during performances or exhibitions, making the experience more inclusive and informative for the diaspora.

Virtual Reality (VR): VR can transport the diaspora to Ireland virtually, offering them an immersive and interactive experience of Irish culture and heritage. Through VR, the diaspora can

participate in live cultural events, attend traditional music sessions, and virtually visit their ancestral towns and villages. VR technology can also facilitate virtual language classes, providing a unique and engaging way for the diaspora to learn and practice the Irish language.

Extended Reality (XR): XR is an umbrella term that encompasses AR, VR, and mixed reality (MR). XR experiences can combine digital elements with the real world, providing a seamless and interactive blend of both. For diaspora engagement, XR can be used to create collaborative experiences, enabling the diaspora to interact with Irish artists, musicians, and cultural practitioners in real-time. XR also enables shared experiences, allowing the diaspora to connect and celebrate Irish culture together, regardless of their physical location.

Digital Cultural Exhibitions and Events: AI, AR, VR, and XR technologies can be combined to create digital cultural exhibitions and events. For example, a virtual Irish dance festival can be streamed in VR, with AR overlays providing historical background and context to the performances. AI-powered chatbots can facilitate real-time interactions and Q&A sessions with artists and performers during the event. This combination of technologies enhances the engagement value and makes the event accessible to a global audience (Naguib, 2013).

Personalized Content and Recommendations: AI can analyze data from diaspora members' interactions with media platforms to deliver personalized content and recommendations. For instance, an AI-powered platform can curate cultural content based on users' preferences, ensuring that they receive content aligned with their interests. This personalization fosters a stronger connection with the diaspora, as individuals feel more engaged with content tailored to their preferences.

Digital Language Learning Platforms: AI-driven language learning platforms can offer personalized language courses for the Irish language. AI can adapt the curriculum based on individual learners' progress and provide feedback to improve language skills. Augmented reality can further enhance language learning by overlaying translations or pronunciation guides in real-world settings, allowing the diaspora to practice the language in everyday scenarios.

As we can see, these technologies offer new and immersive ways for the diaspora to connect with Irish culture, experience Irish heritage, and engage with Ireland in innovative and personalized

ways. By embracing these emerging technologies, Ireland can deepen its engagement with the diaspora, create lasting connections, and preserve its cultural heritage for generations to come.

Adapting to Changing Demographics and Technologies

Adapting to changing demographics and technologies is crucial for Ireland to maintain strong connections with its diaspora communities and effectively engage with the next generations of Irish descendants. As demographic shifts occur, and new technologies gain more widespread acceptance, Ireland must evolve its diaspora engagement strategies to remain relevant and accessible. Here are some key considerations for adapting to these changes:

Understanding Shifting Demographics: Ireland needs to continually monitor and understand changes in the demographic composition of its diaspora. As older generations pass on, younger generations with different cultural backgrounds and experiences are taking their place. Recognizing the diversity within the diaspora and understanding their unique interests and needs is essential for tailored engagement efforts.

Targeting Younger Generations: Engaging with younger generations of the diaspora requires a digital-first approach. Social media, online platforms, and interactive content are essential for reaching and connecting with younger Irish descendants. Developing digital campaigns that resonate with their interests and values will foster meaningful engagement.

Leveraging Social Media and New Media Technologies: Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are powerful tools for engaging with the diaspora. Ireland can leverage these platforms to share cultural content, host virtual events, and facilitate real-time interactions with the global Irish community. Additionally, exploring new media technologies like virtual reality, extended reality, and artificial intelligence can create innovative and immersive experiences for the diaspora.

Online Language and Culture Learning: Promoting Irish language learning and cultural education online can help preserve Irish cultural heritage and encourage a sense of belonging among the diaspora. Interactive language apps, virtual language classes, and digital cultural workshops can be more accessible and attractive to a broader audience.

Virtual Cultural Experiences: Virtual tours of Irish landmarks, museums, and historical sites can provide diaspora members with immersive experiences from afar. Digital exhibitions, storytelling sessions, and live streaming of cultural events offer opportunities for the diaspora to engage with Irish culture and heritage in real-time.

Utilizing Artificial Intelligence and Chatbots: AI-powered chatbots can provide personalized information and support to the diaspora, guiding them through various aspects of diaspora engagement, such as citizenship queries, travel information, or cultural resources. These AI assistants can enhance the efficiency and accessibility of diaspora services.

Collaboration with Diaspora Networks: Engaging with existing diaspora networks and organizations can facilitate outreach to different segments of the diaspora. Collaborating with diaspora-led initiatives and cultural associations allows Ireland to tap into grassroots engagement efforts and build a strong sense of community among the diaspora.

Government Commitment and Investment: Adapting to changing demographics and technologies requires ongoing government commitment and investment in diaspora engagement. Establishing dedicated departments or agencies focused on diaspora affairs can help ensure long-term and coordinated strategies to engage with the diaspora.

Data Analytics and Insights: Leveraging data analytics and insights can provide valuable information about the diaspora's preferences, engagement patterns, and areas of interest. This data-driven approach can inform more targeted and effective engagement strategies.

Adapting to changing demographics and technologies is vital for Ireland to maintain meaningful connections with its diaspora and ensure continued engagement with the next generations of Irish descendants. Embracing digital platforms, new media technologies, and personalized approaches will enable Ireland to reach a broader and more diverse diaspora audience while preserving its cultural heritage and fostering a strong sense of belonging among the global Irish community.

Five Key Learnings for Engaging with Diaspora Communities

Engaging with diaspora communities is a vital aspect of nation-building and cultural preservation. For countries like Ireland, with a rich history of emigration and a vibrant global Irish family, diaspora engagement is both an opportunity and a responsibility. Through various initiatives,

governments and cultural practitioners seek to connect with their dispersed communities and foster a sense of belonging and cultural continuity. In this context, we can identify five key learnings that can guide other countries and organizations in effectively engaging with diaspora communities. These learnings drawn from the Irish context offer valuable insights for any nation seeking to build and strengthen connections with their diaspora.

a) Embrace Cultural Diversity: Recognize and celebrate the diverse experiences of the Irish diaspora to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging. Recognizing the diverse experiences and backgrounds of diaspora members, countries can tailor their engagement efforts to be inclusive, welcoming, and relevant to all segments of the diaspora.

b) Support Grassroots Initiatives: Encourage and invest in local diaspora-led initiatives that promote cultural exchange and engagement. Preserving and promoting cultural traditions, music, dance, language, and storytelling play a vital role in cultivating a strong sense of identity and belonging among the diaspora.

c) Harness the Power of Digital Media: Leverage social media, artificial intelligence, extended reality, and other digital tools to create immersive and interactive diaspora experiences. By harnessing the power of social media, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, nations can reach a broader and more diverse audience, offering personalized and immersive experiences that resonate with the next generations of diaspora members.

d) Collaborate & Build Strategic Partnerships: Create opportunities for organisations and businesses to actively contribute to Ireland's cultural dialogue and development. Working closely with existing diaspora networks, cultural organizations, and grassroots initiatives fosters community building and facilitates innovative projects that celebrate shared heritage.

e) Be Adaptable & Flexible: It’s important to develop a comprehensive, long-term diaspora engagement strategy backed by political commitment and financial support. But as demographics change, and technologies evolve, nations must continuously adapt their strategies and approaches to remain relevant and effectively engage with their diaspora communities.

By heeding these key learnings, countries can foster a dynamic and enduring relationship with their diaspora, celebrating shared heritage, and embracing the diversity that enriches their cultural tapestry. Through strategic and innovative diaspora engagement, nations can build bridges that

connect their homelands with their global communities, creating a stronger, more united, and vibrant cultural legacy that spans borders and generations.

Conclusion

As we can see, the Irish diaspora is an intricate tapestry woven with the threads of history, culture, and heritage. Arts, culture, and media play a vital role in engaging with this global community, nurturing connections that span continents. By learning from Ireland's successes and challenges and embracing emerging technologies, nations around the world can foster stronger bonds with their diaspora communities, enriching their cultural heritage and identity for generations to come.

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Basque diaspora: a new narrative for new diasporas

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Abstract

The paper presented below aims to bring an initial approach to a new reality of the Basque diaspora that is in practice unknown. Fundamentally, the approach to the analysis of the Basque diaspora has been carried out from a historical perspective. This entails the predominance of a romantic, nostalgic and often idealized vision, but nowadays other diasporic realities have emerged that have little to do with the typologies that have characterized the universe of the Basque diaspora. The motivations behind the emergence of these new realities have been scarcely analyzed. It is a pending analysis that requires a scientific rigor that allows for idealized and complacent views to be overcome

Keywords: Basque Diaspora. Emergence. Culture. Diplomacy

Introduction

This article aims to incorporate a new view of the Basque Diaspora that completes the predominant vision. Far from the stereotypes that prevail in the existing opinions on the Basque Diaspora, new typologies emerge in the universe of the Basque Diaspora, many of them unknown and demanding greater attention from academics and analysts. Without pretending to replace the role played by the historical diasporas, the new diasporic realities are called to play a determining role in their relationship with the Basque Country. These new realities are influenced by causes and motivations totally different from the historical ones. While we witness the eternal debates on the possibilities for survival of realities that suffer in the natural integration in the host societies, the

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new realities, without supplanting them, contribute other energies and ways of understanding belonging to the diasporas that necessarily enrich the universe as a whole. Devoid of the emotional charge of those of yesteryear, their contemporary interpretation serves as a complement to stop the risks of decline and decadence that come with a story that had its moment and meaning in certain historical contexts. Certain inertias run the risk of not focusing adequately on a phenomenon that, far from disappearing, is experiencing an unprecedented boom in these early years of the 21st century.

But the challenge in this 21st century is to overcome inertia and delve into the little-explored potential offered by the reality of the 21st century Basque diasporas. From the Basque institutions (the Basque Government has a specific department to manage all public policies towards the diasporas) and protected by law, there has been a systematization of actions and programs for a long time in relation, above all, to the Basques who somehow organized in structures such as the Euskal Etxeak. In parallel, however, a new reality of Basque men and women has been born who have emigrated to all corners of the world for reasons radically different from those that motivated the departure of generations of Basques in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The extensive network for delegations of Basque companies in every corner of the world, the university, and academic possibilities available to Basque students, the opening of borders and many other elements articulate a new scenario that requires a renewed strategy. The old formulas are little use for a new world that obeys very different parameters and logic.

In this extremely changing context, we find ourselves with the difficulty of identifying this new typology of emigrants who do not feel the need to form part of the structures that have largely supported the Basque presence abroad. The emotional attachment of the new diasporas is substantially different from that of historical diasporas. The normality and naturalness of the link with the land of origin characterizes the new relationships and this requires an adaptation in the strategy and in the public agendas.

To do so, however, we must first understand the complex reality of diasporas. This text will be structured as follows: In the next point, the context and logic that has driven the phenomenon of diaspora will be discussed. In the third point, we will discuss the paradoxes of diasporas and the relationships they maintain with their country of origin and the community that lives there. Finally,

in the concluding section we will briefly talk about the Basque case in order to summarize the main ideas of the text.

Context and logic of the emergence of the diasporic phenomenon

With all the nuances that should be pointed out, the role that diasporas have assigned to themselves has appealed frequently to the realm of the symbolic. They have also set themselves (the Basque case is no exception) as guardians of the national identity essentialism that, as a consequence of the modernization processes of the land of origin, would be threatened. Diasporas, in short, would be in charge of maintaining the essences of that which configures the framework for understanding a form of identity. It is not trivial that in times of difficulty and distress the diasporas have played a significant role in the emotional support that the countries of origin have been in such great need of. Feeling the relief of compatriots who, from a geographical distance, empathize with the suffering and hardship helps to endorse a role that is not very tangible but extremely crucial.

There is also no doubt that beyond this mediating role between the symbolic and the emotional, the contribution of diasporas today is understood in broader terms. For example, the diaspora has now been endowed with more tangible monetary value, in the form of foreign currency returns that many diaspora communities have contributed substantially to the economic revival of many countries.

It could be said that as a sign of normalization of the diasporic phenomenon and the efforts to standardize different national experiences, today each of the countries that make up the international community aspires to have an influential diaspora with the capacity to act on multiple fronts. A proliferation of incipient diasporas is taking place (Sheffer, 2023). A phenomenon that has surpassed the once foundational diaspora club, and that also obeys another type of reasoning. A change in rationality that as Gabriel Sheffer argue “have grown out of voluntary rather than imposed migration, and therefore they definitely do not regard themselves and should not be regarded as exiles” (113).

The approaches in this new scenario also change substantially and the analysis must be based on a set of nuances that break with the static scheme that has characterized decades of approaching the phenomenon. The new diasporas are made an unmade as a result of both voluntary and forced

migration. They are now fluid, mobile, and suffer serious dilemmas concerning loyalties to their homeland and to their host countries (116).

Overcoming the classic criteria that have characterized the diasporic phenomenon, and according to other circumstances and reasoning, there has been a spectacular growth of a phenomenon that, far from slowing down, shows an enviable health and potential. There is no doubt that migratory movements are inherent to humanity and from this point of view we must reject the idea that we are facing a contemporary reality. However, Covid and the rise of nationalist, populist and autarkic formulas have given rise to misunderstandings and hasty conclusions. In this context we must try to clarify the migration phenomenon as a whole and also the peculiarities of diasporas.

In that sense, certain phenomena of the present accelerate transnational movements. There is undoubtedly a triggering factor in this new unstoppable scenario. Today's much discussed and debated globalization has sharply accelerated migratory flows, which, far from being mitigated, will clearly increase in the near future. Globalization is unstoppable and beyond the nuances of each diasporic reality, flows will grow in a geographical space that has been considerably reduced. The planet has shrunk, and this explains why the motivation for departures is based on a diversity that requires a very fine line to avoid falling into a succession of clichés.

This framework, which has emerged in a forceful manner and is not expected to weaken in the near future, is, however, going through turbulences from which it is difficult to escape. The long list of autocracies that are weakening the seemingly unbeatable model of liberal democracy may lead us, perhaps hastily, to think that we are returning to the closing of borders and a paralysis of our incessant movements.

Although the autocrats' dream is synthesized in the advantages offered by the Western lifestyle and liberal democracy, there are many who make up the group who have been left behind by the rhythms and demands posed by globalization; this has inflamed many of the populisms that today shape the social and political scenarios of many countries on the five continents.

Another factor that should be pointed out is the attraction caused by large cities. ‘Mega-cities’, ‘world cities’ or “global cities” that attract migrants who are link to global cultural, economic, and trade networks. The Basque Country is not immune to this reality (Sassen-Koob 1990: Prevalakis 1998). The Basque Country is also suffering from the loss of generations of young people who

migrate to metropolitan cities around the world. The irruption of the covid seemed to question a model that goes hand in hand with globalization and also explains the explosion of the diaspora phenomenon.

This is the thesis defended by authors such as Edward Glaeser (2011) who, far from predicting doom and gloom, predicts a continuity in the triumph of cities. Not even covid, which seemed to plunge cities into a spiral of crisis, appear to be a phenomenon that is going to stop the phenomenon. In this regard, it is not always necessary to look for the cause of deviations in factors of an economic or political nature.

In the wide range of motivations, the migratory departures that subsequently shape the realities of the diaspora can be attributed to motivations of a psychological nature; not necessarily to the need to eat. The need for personal growth, the pressing needs of daily life, the search for new horizons, there are many reasons that would explain the current flows and those that are inexorably approaching. The consequences of the climatic disaster may lead to new flows with unpredictable results. It also happens that in relatively developed environments and where there are no major conflicts, a story can impose itself and this produces an irreversible effect that nothing can oppose. In the end, all countries have assumed a reality that, if we adopted a pessimistic approach, could lead us to fatalism. Understanding it as an indication of the failure of a country that is falling apart. But not because of a lack of attractiveness or because there is a lack of opportunities. In other words, there is not an extremely urgent need to seek alternative employment in other territories. It is more the consequence of a narrative that ends up imposing itself as a framework and to which the opposition to it is predicted to be of little consequence.

Argentina is the paradigm of a country where, for a significant part of society, there is no other alternative than the Ezeiza airport. The Ezeiza Syndrome (Galdós, 2022) would thus show the defeat in a country that, having resources and immense potential, has not been able to generate a suggestive and convincing story for a large part of its fellow citizens. Mostly young people who see alternative but to look for their life projects outside the country.

The case of the Basque Country, although far from the magnitude of the Ezeiza syndrome, shows some similarities that should not be overlooked. Basque society, characterized by its high social and economic development and remarkable political stability, is beginning to suffer the effects of

a narrative that has effectively infiltrated significant parts of its society (Galdos, 2018). Stability does not cancel out emotions and therefore the need to go abroad.

However, in contrast to this fatalistic position, another type of story also emerges that seeks and proudly shows the positive side of the migratory processes. In short, the advantages of having a presence abroad that should even be seen as a source of pride. In this way, the pendulum swings in the opposite direction. The approach is as follows: faced with a phenomenon that can hardly be hindered ("you cannot put gates to the field"), we reverse the approach.

In any case, many of the investigations carried out point to a consolidation of a framework that resembles the scheme that Michael Sandel breaks down in his latest book: *The tyranny of merit*. The winners and losers that Sandel identifies could be extrapolated to the reality of diasporas: the former are those who, wherever they are, in whatever conditions they are, have left the country and are part of the privileged and winners.

In this first case, leaving the country has become a synonym of status and social triumph. As long as this narrative prevails in the social imagination, there will be little hope that the attempts at progress that both prosperous countries and those societies that are developing are trying so hard to achieve (and here there is no room for distinctions). On the losing side, based on a terrible communication strategy and, above all, the absence of a country strategy, the framework has been installed in which whoever stays is associated with failure and this opens wounds that are not easy to heal.

Be it the story of the winner, be it that of the loser, if we stick to the data of 2019, we should count more than 272 million people who for various reasons swell the ranks of migration (Edmond 2020), in other words, according to UN data, 3.5% of the world population resides in a country other than the one in which they were born (Cull, 2022), which explains the growing importance of diasporas in the field of international relations.

The data clearly show that the group of countries once characterized by policies towards their respective diasporas has widened. It is no longer the select and reduced group that in our imagination was perfectly identifiable and recognizable. The expansion has been unstoppable and by extension each of the countries that today make up the international community incorporates their diasporas as active agents in international strategy. In this landscape, new realities and

diasporic communities will take shape, some of them numerous, others made up of sporadic individuals; but in any case, all countries will increasingly rely on people who, beyond regulated procedures, will represent their country, region, or city of origin.

What do diasporas bring to the 21st century? What do we expect from diasporas?

The role that diasporas can play is a field to be explored and of which states and non-state actors are not yet aware. Ignorance of theoretical concepts should not lead us to the erroneous conclusion that the moment a new one arises it materializes by itself. However, it is relevant to acquire knowledge of new phenomena since these can give us the keys to action.

Liam Kennedy (2022), one of the great experts in diaspora diplomacy, argue that the current boom in diaspora diplomacy, as a growing field of practice and research, is due to the "refashioning of the world in which forces of globalization have led to an increasingly complex interdependence and accelerated movements of people, capital and information" (1). In this sense, although diasporas and immigrations have always been a part of human history as well as a factor in international relations (Cull 2022), what is new is its increasingly frequent use as a term, a fact that must be placed in the late twentieth century. This is reflected in the growth that has occurred in the world of academia in relation to research on the diaspora. As Kennedy argue:

"by the 1980s, there was a nascent but growing field of diaspora studies in academia and in the policy sector we begin to see a growing interest in state-led diaspora engagement. That new policy interest would really begin to take off in the 1990s due to three related factors: first, the forces of globalization were unleashed with the ending of the Cold War; second, the onset of a technology and communications revolution that radically changed norms of human interaction; and third, the new ideas about global governance and development that saw a shift from development conceptions of aid to a focus on human capital" (215).

But, above all, the mere use of diasporas as agents in diplomacy and internationalization strategies widens the field that historically had always been hermetic and not very inclined to accept agents that disturb the order established by the old orthodoxy of classical diplomacy. Moreover, and this is another novel element, it opens up possibilities and opportunities to realities that do not respond to the scheme of nation-states.

The growth in diasporic policies that states are developing can be explained, in the first place, by the encounter that has taken place between diaspora and public diplomacy. This last phenomenon also turns out to be a new element. Both have found a space where their interests converge and have decided to combine their strengths and potentialities. The incorporation of the diaspora as a decisive instrument in public diplomacy is the novelty that changes a field that existed but with few exceptions. Behind this discovery lies the flourishing of the rise and strengthening of the diasporas.

Within this general framework, more specific fields have subsequently emerged, such as sports diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, city diplomacy or diaspora diplomacy. All of them, by the way, are interrelated and should be analyzed from a joint perspective. Let us take for example the field of sports diplomacy, still in a very incipient phase. The Basque Country is possibly one of the unique cases in the world that has a different and suggestive story that would allow it to develop an ambitious strategy of sports diplomacy. The existence of the Jai-Alai, a magnificent ambassador of the Basque brand in five continents, the long list of autochthonous sports with an important international projection or the policy followed by the Basque soccer teams are elements that characterize the Basque Country's sporting heritage and therefore the axes of its diplomacy. In this specific field of public diplomacy, the diaspora also plays a key role. In the case that concerns us, the Basque diaspora in the United States has been, is, but above all could be the catalyzing element of a whole strategy that in this case has sport as a differentiating axis.

This circumstance serves to highlight, once again, the capacity of diasporas as agents in the articulation of public diplomacy. this also leads us to understand that the articulation of public diplomacy is a process that takes time even if those who have played a role have not been aware of it. The process of articulating an increasingly systematized policy has taken place in a laborious manner and there is still room to explore. A space that possibly ends up consolidating diasporas as actors with a relevant role in public diplomacy.

The systematization of the diaspora as a diplomatic agent has not gone unnoticed by anyone and all governments of all types have joined an increasingly powerful current. The transition to politics, which in many scenarios is still in an incipient phase, dates back not very far in time. As Nicholas Cull (Cull, 2022) points out, it all began as a historical phenomenon, something that belonged to

the realm of historians, all bathed and characterized by a descriptive perspective. From this correlation of facts, a new field is configured that ceases to be of interest to historians and academics, fundamentally from the same field. The leap is defined by Cull under a very eloquent title, "from history to policy". It all starts by becoming aware of an existing reality and from there, possibilities that could bring benefits on the way to gaining influence, positioning and relevance begin to be considered.

The casuistry is very varied, in any case, and the examples (although at that time there was no awareness of a systematized policy) that we could cite date back to the Second World War. Let us take the example of the International Diaspora Engagement Alliance (IDEA), a project conceived and launched during the time of Hillary Clinton, then at the helm of the Secretary of State (Cull, 2022). That program allowed members and institutions representing different diasporas settled in the United States to invest and develop in their countries of origin.

First, the vector of communication comes into action; the moment in which the potential of the diaspora as a qualified loudspeaker for a cause and interests is glimpsed. The paradigm of the Jewish Diaspora is possibly one of the most eloquent cases. However, As Svenja Gertheis (2016) have pointed out, the relationship between the Israeli governments and the Jewish diaspora is complex as well (1-2). Another great example would be the classes that the British Council's Home Divisions established during the World War II for Polish, Czech and other refugees.

n any case, everything is summarized in a very simple and graphic way. The role of the diaspora could be defined as a transmission belt between two poles, the host country, and the country of origin (Cull, 2022). In this sense, profiles far removed from the way of understanding and exercising diplomacy can be determining agents in positioning countries or cultures that seek, in certain circumstances, the encouragement of the host countries (11).

Nevertheless, the awareness of the role played by diasporas varies between different countries. This awareness, or the absence of it, determines the strength of the policies that are carried out. In the first place, and this is a fact that should be established as a criterion from the outset, there are very active and dynamic diasporas. On the contrary, there are others that, without being aware of their role and importance, barely reach a minimum level that would rule out the need for

evaluation. Therefore, when diasporas are analyzed and when policies are proposed for it, would find ourselves with a typology of many active and passive diasporas.

But not only the diasporas are diverse. Faced with the existing reality (every country has diasporas, whether proactive or passive), the countries of origin are divided also into a very diverse typology. On the one hand, countries that, due to a very pronounced internalization of this reality in their memory and cultural tradition, have activated policies with resources and a clear political will. This has allowed them to become relevant models. Not only that, but they have also opened the way for those who still today manage the possibilities that emerge from a reality that day by day is introduced with more force into the agendas of governments and institutions. However, as Liam Kennedy (2022) pointed out, even if it is true that the general interest that is perceived is concretized in the growth of responsibilities and political structures related to diaspora issue, "the growth in government ministries and agencies dedicated to diaspora affairs is by no means universal as certain countries and regions have much greater interest than others with emigrant communities" (1). On the other side, therefore, are those countries that little by little are becoming aware and trying to identify their diasporas. Finally, there are those states that have no awareness of the realities and potentials of diasporas.

However, in general, there is a predominantly optimistic and positive vision about the benefits that a systematized policy to promote diasporas and their activities can bring. A vision that borders on idealism. An extremely complimentary approach to everything that comes from diasporas. But, in the emergence of the role of diasporas, there are risks that have not been sufficiently measured.The triumphalism that characterizes the excessive praise that countries give to their diasporas has collateral effects that may end up unbalancing the fragile balances on which many of these countries are based.

The unanimous narrative that today shows the group of countries that have minimally structured diaspora policies is based on a pride in the diasporic that is sometimes disrespectful towards those who remain in the land of origin. The obsessive tendency to draw the landscape of a successful diaspora, free of any conflict or contradiction that necessarily exists in any scenario, deepens the loss of self-esteem and motivation that part of society feels in the current circumstances.

In general terms, we are witnessing therefore a general tendency to depict a successful diaspora that frequently achieves counterproductive effects. In the first place, distortions occur in relation to perceptions and expectations that each one of us maintains regarding their life projects, whether of a personal or collective nature. An in-depth analysis must be made of the notable decline that can occur in the motivation to face the vital future of those who have decided to remain and who have ultimately decided not to join the ranks of the diasporas. It is also worth considering the opening of emotional gaps inherent to the eternal comparison between the two human groups that make up the balance: the successful ones that make up the diasporas and those who have decided to bet on remaining in the closest environment. Reinforcement, excessive flattery and the triumphalist tone may end up eroding the balance that must prevail. The fragility on which this balance is based is always a risk that exists and that, as a society, we must be aware of.

In this sense, it is also worth pointing out a fact that is sometimes overlooked and should be placed at the center of the analysis. Relations between diasporas and the land of origin are far from idyllic (Sheffer, 2003). Even the abuse or the manipulative use of the diaspora (Sheffer, 2003) can portray a radically different reality that is insistently projected. On many occasions, the countries of origin are places where the values of tolerance and respect for democratic values are substantially more developed and more solid than in their respective diasporas.

In this way, sometimes, the abysmal distance that exists between the two realities, that of the diaspora and that of the origin, which have also taken different paths, causes disturbing dysfunctions that generate irreparable damage in the will to try to make the most of an impulse action. This occurs, above all, when in the land of origin an opinion of rejection, boredom and opposition to what is happening in their respective diasporas emerges. That is way diasporas are allies of public diplomacy but can be disruptive as well (Dolea, 2019).

Conclusions

In the complexity in which we are living, and in the face of the enormous challenges we face as citizens and as a society, the ultimate question is whether redoubling our commitment to develop specific diaspora policies is worth the effort. What is the benefit or harm of promoting certain

actions and strategies? What is the point of our presence at a conference in Slovakia in which the diaspora is the central theme?

Everything depends on balance. The Basque Country is a good example of how the success of diasporas depends on having an equally successful land of origin. We know of cases of very prestigious diasporas that somehow represent realities that have not developed in the same proportion as their representations abroad. The imbalance produces dysfunctions that are never beneficial.

The Basque Country today happens to be one of the most advanced societies in the world. From the economic, cultural/linguistic and social point of view, the leap that the Basque Country has made in the last decades must be highlighted. Many eyes around the world have focused on the Basque model as a case of analysis. It also disproves the relevance of a feature that is sometimes pointed out as an obstacle in the modernization processes of a country. If we take into consideration its territorial dimensions, it does not occupy a very extensive space, nor does it happen to be a territory rich in resources.

But, in spite of all the difficulties, from the 1960's, the Basque Country has initiated a path of economic, social and cultural growth (the model of its cooperatives is a model that is studied in five continents) that has led it to occupy leading positions in many fields used to measure the degree of societies' development.

The success in the normalization of the Basque language deserves to be highlighted for its uniqueness. It is a language that does not belong to the great linguistic families of the world and that in a few decades has gone from being a persecuted and forbidden language to a language that today is used in all the academic offerings of Basque universities. In times of globalization and pragmatism, as happens in many parts of the world, the choice to abandon Basque and to prioritize the use Spanish and English could have been made.

That is way, we Basques have a story of resilience that has allowed us to grow economically as well as to save our culture and demonstrate that it is possible to compete in the world against great powers with a small language. The success of our cooperatives cannot be understood without the survival of the Basque language. When we stop fighting for the small things that seem not to meet

the criteria that today characterize developed societies, those of us who are small disappear as a community, we stop being relevant and we become inconsequential.

Undoubtedly, a country like the Basque Country must count on those who for various reasons have decided to live outside the geographical delimitation of the Basque Country. Many things depend on all the people who make up our Basque diasporas. The future of the Basque language, of the Basque culture, and of our influence in the world will depend to a great extent on the work of our diasporas in the world. All in all, Basque society adopted a strategic decision that today can be said to have been the correct one. A successful comprehensive project that covered all areas of the nation.

In the future we will have to develop strategies that respond to the challenges of the present and those to come. In this regard, demographics, the absence of babies and the generational change is one of the most pressing. A challenge that, like the rest of Western societies, we must face without delay. The challenge of social and gender equality cannot be underestimated either. Also the integration of those citizens who, like our diaspora, have decided to leave their country to settle, in this case, in ours.

All these challenges, which are urgent, require a consensual response. A response in which Basque citizens, those of the country of origin and those of the diaspora must participate as another asset. Lean in and everyone pull in the same direction. To do this, of course, the heterogeneous communities of both origin and diaspora must be treated as what they are: complex communities, but with immense potential.

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Internationalizing University Curriculum: Integrating Global Cultures and Diaspora Stories

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Abstract

As the world grapples with changing societal perspectives concerning human migration ("diasporas"), the responsibility to foster foundational understanding toward a more globally connected civil world in the 21st century is critical and relevant across higher education institutions. The IMID's public diplomacy model, by way of leveraging the higher education platform, aims to connect communities and individuals to cultures from around the world. This model approaches the curriculum design using a three-concept model of past, current, and future topics in cultural and diaspora contexts. The IMID's public diplomacy approach harnesses the human journey story with the aim to ignite a global movement that challenges conventional thinking about the impact to communities resulting from human migration. The integration of this approach evolves the traditional curriculum by way of internationalizing university curriculum design that will further examine the relationship dynamic of the coexistence of established and new cultures.

Keywords: Curriculum. Diaspora. Higher education. Internationalization. Internationalizing. Museum. Refugee.

Introduction

Engaging teachers and students in higher education about the complex dimensions of the cultures of peoples who have migrated from their origin country and resettled in a host country requires a special approach. The Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID) defines "diaspora" – a

Greek origin word that means to scatter about (White, 1998) – as the involuntary displacement of peoples, children, and families from their origin countries or homes. Founded in June 2018, by Dr. Palina Louangketh – a former refugee from Laos, the IMID is the world's only diaspora multicultural museum. The IMID's public diplomacy model leverages the education platform to connect communities and individuals to cultures from around the word. It uses a three-concept approach – past, current, and future, which will be discussed in this article through the internationalization of university curriculum design. The reforms of higher education across many countries, since the 1990s, introduced the concept of internationalizing the curriculum, particularly in the higher education system (Huang, 2006, 521). *Internationalization* occurs by integrating an intercultural dimension at the international or global level into the design of the university curriculum (Knight, 2008). Through Louangketh's vision to connect communities to cultures of the world, she designed the IMID's Global Diaspora Curriculum (GDC) involving a set of three courses in which she launched and taught two of the three at Boise State University Honors College: Cross-Cultural Voices of Diaspora and Cross-Border Voices of Diaspora. The third – Cross-Culinary Voices of Diaspora, she launched through the IMID's Culinary Circle of Cultures initiative, which will not be discussed in this paper. Cultures, how they are practiced and understood, change over time and across generations, which invite dialogue and discourse on the approaches to integrate this philosophical understanding into the classroom through the curriculum design.

Internationalization of Curriculum

Evangelia Fragouli (2020) explains internationalization of curriculum as "building capacity for the university to work with a diversity of backgrounds." Teaching an internationalized curriculum will deepen the students' engagement in their learning experience through internationally informed research and materials that will foster higher levels of cultural competencies (Fragouli 2020). This paper discusses curriculum reform through integration of internationalization and the role of the IMID as a diaspora cultural museum in the design of higher education curriculum from a cultural competency lens. Additionally, this paper details the intersection of an internationalized curriculum using the collaboration model between IMID and Matej Bel University (MBU) in

developing the IMID-MBU Internationalizing Global Cultures and Diaspora Curriculum (IGCDC) project.

Many authors and higher education institutions across the world have varying degrees of definitions for what it means to *internationalize* higher education. The term internationalization or internationalize, in the context of a higher education purpose, ranges in definitions from broad to specific that started to emerge in the 1990s and early 2000s as the concept of internationalization took roots in literature (Huang, 2006, 521; Bond, 2003, 2). Its integral role informed varied practices among universities and colleges. The 1990s gave birth to a new reform era in higher education across many countries when the conceptualization of internationalizing university curriculum surfaced in literature across Canada and many European counties (Huang, 2006, 521; Bond, 2003, 2). The collective definitions suggest internationalization as a process of integrating an international or global dimension in the functions and operations of post-secondary education – i.e., higher education, and in some literature, a role in the classroom environment (Knight, 2008; Bond, 2003, 2-3). The term internationalization and its conceptual meaning in higher education became an all-encompassing vernacular to also represent concepts such as "globalization, interculturation, and international education" (Bond, 2003, 2).

As the 21st century unfolded with many innovative developments and opportunities for both faculty and students, higher education underwent many changes – both innovative approaches in teaching and learning and the challenges they present. The pace in which the world continues to rapidly evolve in this era of information, advances in technology and globalization informs the way higher education evolves its approaches to fostering a learning environment about "today's interdependent world, and the rich, diversified heritage it contains" (Blai Jr., 1993, 291). Technical training, skills, diversified knowledge, and immersive learning opportunities are all important components that will better prepare students to apply in their social, civic, and career obligations (Blai Jr., 1993, 291; Acun, 2011). The design of a curriculum to incorporate elements that offer students a more diverse dimension of learning in today's world requires integration of diversification of cultural perspectives from a more global lens. Internationalization of curriculum design plays a role in evolving traditional learning models – i.e., the curriculum.

Idaho Museum of International Diaspora Approach

The IMID's approach to internationalizing curricula in higher education, through its GDC, aligns to the museum's three foundational core guiding principles – learn, discover, and explore (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). These same principles parallel notions of past, current, and future states. *Learning* about the human journey stories – lived experience of those who have been displaced – from around the world in diaspora and cultural contexts helps ground learners about the past and historic perspectives (Louangketh, 2020). *Discovering* the connection between learners and their own personal journey to appreciating history and cultural heritage represents the current state of awareness. This represents the student's elevated emotional and cultural intelligence and active sense of awareness and understanding about how they are connected as one human to another by way of learning about the lived experience of diasporas (Louangketh, 2020). Lastly, the future state starts with an *exploration* of the learner's role as an active member of the community and relevant topics through the IMID's educational and cultural programs – no matter where they live – to realize how their role might help to inspire connection and dialogue in meaningful ways (Louangketh, 2020).

Curriculum Definition and History

Unlike the varying definitions of internationalization, the term *curriculum* has more clarity resulting from an extensive body of work that helped define the term (Bond, 2003, 4). However, paired with internationalization, curriculum takes on different meanings (Bond, 2003, 4). According to Daniel Tröhler, the history of education as an academic field was developed by scholars in 19th century Germany, mainly trained in Lutheran theology and/or German philosophy (Tröhler, 2019, 523). History of education as an academic genre rooted in 119th century Germany spread into France and later into English-speaking areas across the world (Tröhler, 2019, 523). However, the history of curriculum as a field in academia emerged predominantly in the United States of America (U.S.A.) resulting from a more reformed "Calvinist culture" (Tröhler, 2019, 523). Curriculum, as a field of study, was not plausible in the mid-20th century (Baker, 1996, 105). This phenomenon emerged relatively recently "in Western contexts of schooling and studies of schooling" resulting from the reform processes across higher education systems in English-

speaking countries like England, U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Baker, 1996, 105). This era created a paradigm shift in the learning process that in some ways reflect the challenges over mass education that dominate the agenda and design of curriculum history studies (Baker, 1996, 105). This new emergence manifested from a concern related to what was accepted as knowledge of historic timelines, events, and places in conjunction to people and society in general (Baker, 1996, 106). These concerns generated a variety of interpretations and discourse that add to existing complexities. These include "binding knowledge, social groups and schooling" (Baker, 1996, 106). These complexities contribute to the history of education, - understanding what was taught in schools and why context plays a critical role" (Baker, 1996, 106).

Whereas the genre of the history of education emerged in Germany, the history of curriculum studies remained confined to the English-speaking world (Tröhler, 2019, 523). In the U.S.A., the curriculum served as a "core public educational or instructional means" to create, promote, and foster knowledge and learning integration at a national level (Tröhler, 2019, 523). The curriculum served as a tool to aid the reinforcement of national citizenship in times of change and uncertainty (Tröhler, 2019, 524). So, where did the word "curriculum" come from? The word *curriculum* is derived from its early Latin origin that means to run a race akin to a marathon with both start and end points, routes, signage with directions, coaches and supporters, and various resource stations along the race (Foundations of Curriculum). The word perhaps now makes sense in the context of academia and how a particular field of study has a defined intentional start and end, course lessons and assignments, research opportunities and learning materials, support from the instructor, quizzes, and exams as structured by the curriculum. The transfer of knowledge by way of curriculum design advances the internationalization of the learning process (Bond, 2003, 4). This implication, and in the context of the GDC as a comprehensive cross-cultural and cross-border (i.e., national borders) learning program, positions the GDC as similar, not just to an ordinary race, but rather, a full marathon – intrinsically comprehensive. The collective definitions suggest internationalization as a process of integrating an international or global dimension in the functions and operations of higher education, and in some literature, a role in the classroom environment (Knight, 2008; Bond, 2003, 2-3).

Both the GDC teacher and students will engage in an immersive learning environment aligned to design of the GDC. Its intentional design aims to foster the relationship between the two cultures of the *teacher* and *student* in the curriculum (i.e., running a marathon) journey and beyond. The IMID's GDC model guides strategy for internationalizing a curriculum and informs programmatic feasibility of the integration of cultural, diaspora, and global skills elements in the curriculum design of academic professionals including future teachers, and in non-U.S. countries – translators and interpreters (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). Teachers and students will gain higher levels of emotional and cultural intelligence. Furthermore, internationalizing curricula will enhance their cultural competency and responsiveness to advance public diplomacy in connecting communities to cultures in an ethical foundational manner. The culture of an ethnic population, as practiced in their origin country, will vary in how it is practiced in a different country by the same ethnic population. The levels of resources and access to such resources like technology, cultural foods, cultural centers, faith institutions, etc. will have an impact on the longevity of the practice of a culture. How culture is preserved, practiced, shared, and celebrated across generations and the cultural community will also impact the practice of origin cultures. Additional factors for this variation ranges from differences in geographical location – e.g., those originating from an island with tropical humid climate to resettling in a land-locked region with colder dryer climate – to the genuine desire of the individual, family unit, or cultural community to honor and practice the cultural traditions in a new environment.

Throughout history, many universities across the world have experienced variations of reforms. These movements and many other factors gave rise to different types of higher education institutions spanning from public and private universities to ivy league schools. As the world became more accessible, the 1990s gave birth to another kind of reform in the higher education system across many countries (Huang, 2006, 521). The era of internationalizing university curricula in higher education played an increasingly important role in today's globalized world (Huang, 2006, 521). Integrating the concept of internationalization into the curriculum will result in a more effective learning model that will prepare and equip students with the global skills necessary to navigate the changing world with constantly evolving paradigms.

Idaho Museum of International Diaspora's Global Diaspora Curriculum

Mentioned earlier, the IMID's GDC encompass three courses: Cross-Cultural Voices of Diaspora, Cross-Border Voices of Diaspora, and Cross-Culinary Voices of Diaspora. These were designed and launched in 2019 as part of the IMID's strategy to internationalize university curricula with global cultures and foundational learning theories in cultural context by way of integrating human journey stories of diasporas through their lived experience of survival, resilience, and renewal. The Cross-Cultural Voices of Diaspora course launched in the fall semester 2019 at Boise State University Honors College as a pilot project and enrolled upper division students. The Cross-Border Voices of Diaspora course followed the next term in the spring 2020 semester. The course proved to be popular among students resulting in a waiting list of students. In fall semester 2021, the IMID's GDC launched as a pilot project at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia that provided a foundation for the development and launch of the IMID's inaugural signature global conference, a congress-style conference – Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement – held in Banská Bystrica on September 20-23, 2023.

The GDC engages students in immersive experiential learning about the human journey in past and current contexts. It also provides a learning environment about the future trajectory of evolving global societies and how environmental trends might impact how systems are designed to support the changing landscape of a more globalized, intercultural, and accessible world. The GDC recreates the learning ecosystem where faculty will not always serve in the traditional role of "teacher," but also as a mentor and coach to the students with more of a hands-off approach as students engage in their own inquisitive learning journey to produce a product (e.g., class assignment) for submission. Often, these assignments align to a local, national, international issues or needs in cultural and diaspora contexts that might suggest a solution. Change with the times require today's faculty–student interactions to also evolve that align with new models of learning (Hainline, Gaines, Feather, Padilla, & Terry, 2010, 7). The faculty role as a 'teacher' can no longer be one dimensional and also must evolve organically through interactions with students that include the role of mentor and adviser (Hainline et al., 2010, 7). The learning ecosystem model of the GDC also involves diaspora communities and cultural practitioners in global context. The

curriculum creatively integrates and invites diaspora and cultural storytellers, leaders (local, national, and global), and practitioners across industry sectors from various parts of the world into the classroom to engage both faculty and students in immersive learning. This focused intention elevates the student's global knowledge, skills and ability to apply into practice – i.e., exercising high levels of emotional and cultural intelligence.

The IMID is a non-profit corporation in the U.S.A. headquartered in Boise, Idaho. Its mission, "to influence positive community transformation," guides the work of the IMID at the foundational level to impact systems design, particularly the learning ecosystem in the higher education context (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). The IMID's vision, "to inspire an international movement of diaspora museums," is grounded on the foundations of public and cultural diplomacy – citizens and communities connected through cultures in meaningful and intentional ways (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). The IMID represents a source of pride for the peoples of those cultures and for those outside these cultures, it serves as an anchor for inspiration and educational resources from around the world where visitors will learn about the histories of peoples and their human journey stories – their struggles, accomplishments, and contributions as a member of society in their host countries (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora).

IMID-MBU Internationalizing Global Cultures and Diaspora Curriculum

In collaboration with MBU Faculty of Arts to evolve the IMID's GDC to align with MBU's interest, the IMID-MBU Internationalizing Global Cultures and Diaspora Curriculum (IGCDC) project emerged in 2022 following the successful pilot launch of IMID's GDC in fall 2021 at MBU Faculty of Arts. Baseline work and research were conducted to examine feasibility of the curriculum as an ongoing program. This body of work resulted in the integration and alignment of the IGCDC project to national and regional public diplomacy priorities of Slovakia that would contribute to Slovakia's ongoing efforts to support human rights and foster a culture of tolerance and inclusion of minorities in Slovakia; encourage and promote women's empowerment; and promote cross-cultural understanding by supporting highly specialized English language learning across universities in Slovakia (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 5). The IGCDC represents a foundational model that creates a pathway for innovative learning in the classroom setting. As the

IMID highlights the trials and tribulations of the human journey in special ways that invite critical dialogue on an international level, the work of MBU through the IGCDC program will accelerate its platform as a scalable sustainable model for additional initiatives and projects centered on the human journey in past, current, and future contexts.

The purpose of a cultural and public diplomacy project – i.e., Internationalizing Global Cultures and Diaspora Curriculum (IGCDC) – aims to advance a global cultures and diaspora curriculum program. The delivery approach of the program involves combined experiences and expertise of the IGCDC faculty – a core group of multidisciplinary multinational experts from academia, cultural organizations, public and government sectors, and non-profit organizations (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 2-3). The IGCDC program has a three-fold goal: strengthen the higher education system, enhance education in cultural and public diplomacy, and advance international public diplomacy priorities (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 2-3). The program adopted the IMID's definition of diaspora inclusive of both historical and current contexts (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). The human journey story and lived experience of diasporas worldwide serve as a foundation for creating this special curriculum program in which IGCDC faculty and partnering organizations will convene, serve as subject matter experts, and infuse a global dimension into the curriculum design.

The IGCDC project is positioned to advance a global curriculum program designed to assess, research, and navigate emerging global topics in the context of past and current human journey story platforms of diasporas – those who have been displaced from their homelands. The audience of this learning opportunity that will be delivered by IGCDC faculty includes *participants* from multisectoral industries (professionals and practitioners) and *learners* – i.e., teachers, translators, interpreters, and students of Matej Bel University (MBU) and additional schools (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 2-3). The critical role of cultural and diaspora organizations – i.e., museums – is important in fostering public diplomacy as a foundation for global dialogue across all generations and industry sectors. The human journey story from around the world represents a beacon of hope towards unity. Sharing and learning from the lived experience of diasporas allow IGCDC faculty and learners to deepen their understanding of how connected humans are (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 2-3). This interconnection between diasporas and the broader community fosters a peaceful

and more compassionate relationship to inspire future generations to model after (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 2-3).

Modeling the IMID's GDC, the IGCDC will enable cross-cultural immersion of IGCDC faculty and learners in emerging topics of today's global cultural and public diplomacy priorities (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). The learners will learn skills and tools from IGDC faculty to navigate the realities of the world as a borderless complex environment that requires transformational thinkers and doers with high levels of emotional and cultural intelligence (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 3-4; Acun, 2011). IGCDC faculty will leverage the GDC model of integrating diaspora human journey stories to engage learners in critical thinking and dialogue about the evolving cultures of diasporas in past and current contexts (Louangketh & Slatinská, 2023, 3). Drawing from the perspectives of multiple generations in both origin and host countries, IGCDC faculty and the audience will dialogue on how change with the times influences evolving cultural behaviors in both origin and host countries. The IMID's intentional role in collaborating with MBU Faculty of Arts resulted in a pilot to test the feasibility of IMID's GDC model at the Faculty of Arts in the fall of 2021. In early 2023, the IMID GDC evolved into the IMID-MBU IGCDC project that served as backbone program to launch IMID's inaugural global congress – Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement – on September 20-23, 2023 in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, co-hosted by critical players including MBU, MBU Faculty of Arts, and City of Banská Bystrica. During the month of September 2023, preliminary activities included a cultural human journey story exhibition – Arrivals: What's Left Behind, What Lies Ahead – curated by Katarina Balúnová, professor and curator in the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica and facilitated by professors Jon Cox (University of Delaware) and Andy Bale (Dickinson College) to showcase the individual yet integrated lived experience of the diaspora journey of survival, resilience, and renewal – all in alignment to the IGCDC program.

The September 2023 congress – Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement – brought together participants and speakers across various parts of the world including IGCDC faculty and additional academic professionals, museum professionals, leaders across cultural and diaspora institutions, government sector, and organizations across industry sectors working with refugees and

immigrants. Day one of a 4-day congress grounded the participants on the foundations of museums, cultural identity and diaspora (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). Speakers engaged participants in learning how museums can play a critical role in shaping and showcasing the cultures of diasporas (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora).

Day two enabled experiential learning opportunities including guided cultural tour in various parts of Banská Bystrica and diaspora museum tour of the Slovak Uprising National Museums as an immersive learning experience with the impetus to discuss how language and cultures shape our perspectives. This provided an interactive opportunity for participants to learn from cross-sector leaders and practitioners and invite dialogue about the newly created diasporas in the global context (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora).

Speakers and practitioners in day three engaged participants in global skills training. Participants engaged in a more interactive learning environment to discover how we are connected across the world and in local communities, understand diaspora from different perspectives (sociological, psychological, political, intercultural, educational, etc.), and take into consideration the past-present-future of diasporas (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). The program for day three of the congress engaged participants in learning more about diaspora in broad global context through creative learning models to elevate their levels of emotional and cultural intelligence and cultivate cultural identity (Idaho Museum of International Diaspora). Day four concluded the congress with an informal wrap-up to explore opportunities and partnerships in the next phase of the IGCDC program. The wrap-up involved a facilitated discussion on the application of the skills and knowledge of the congress participants – both speakers and audience – resulting from this congress in the context of their respective professional and academic roles and within their fields or sectors. Participants shared and discussed their gained experience and understanding of new or different approaches to apply new knowledge and honed skills in practice that will result in an accelerated path to adopting the IGCDC in academic institutions.

Conclusion

Following the 2023 Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement congress and later in 2023, MBU will publish an online study manual to serve as an academic toolkit for future higher

education teachers, translators and interpreters to support their navigation of diaspora- and culture-related topics. This piece of work will provide the foundation for the continued work to launch additional literature pieces to support the IGCDC that will align with the IMID's annual congresses. Internationalizing university curriculum at the university level is a strategic practice across the world today (Marantz, Amit, & Leask, 2020, 39). Each institution has its own set of different rationales and purposes that influence the internationalization across various areas and functionalities of the university (Marantz et al., 2020, 39). Both the IMID's GDC and IMID-MBU IGCDC programs are intrinsic to cultural and public diplomacy. The IGCDC program design is inspired by the IMID's GDC model – a set of uniquely designed courses to engage learners in critical thinking and dialogue about the evolving cultures (past, current, and future) of diasporas in host and origin countries. The IGCDC program goals will strengthen the higher education system, enhance education in cultural and public diplomacy, and advance international public diplomacy priorities. Collectively, these goals facilitate intellectual, social, cultural, behavioral, and emotional experiences through sharing and experiencing the human journey story – the lived experiences of diasporas in origin and host countries (International Affairs Office). The structure of the 2023 congress – Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement – in past, current, and future contexts and its set of cultural and diaspora topics aligned to the structure of the IMID-MBU IGCDC and its goals. This innovative public diplomacy model experienced also during the 2023 congress helped advance the expansion of the IGCDC in additional higher education systems.

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Slovak minority environments abroad and their forms of education with emphasis on the use of elements of traditional culture

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Abstract
The environments in which Slovak minorities live are specific, above all, in the diversity of their existential conditions. From these conditions also follows the diversity of the individual community existential needs – and for the education of their youngest members. In the years 2019-2022, during the Erasmus+ project, we have identified several educational needs based on the fact that in the enclave forms of minority communities, the natural mother tongue of the youngest members of the ethnic minority is the local dialect of the community in which the children grow up. That is why we focused on the possibilities of using elements of traditional culture as a motivational factor for arousing interest in further education in the literary Slovak language.
Keywords: Slovaks living abroad, elements of traditional culture in education, ethnic self-identification, ethnic tolerance, and didactic materials.

Introduction

In Slovakia, there is still very low awareness of the fact that there are more than 2 million Slovaks living abroad. The Matej Bel University Methodological Centre for Slovaks Living Abroad is the only specialized workplace in Slovakia whose activities are specifically focused on the education of the younger generation of our compatriots, as they are also unofficially called. In the presented paper, I will try to briefly summarize the results of my more than 12 years of active work in the Slovak communities living abroad at this workplace. Given my expertise, I will use examples primarily from the issues of ethnology, more precisely elements of traditional culture.

The most recent migration wave of Slovaks abroad is linked to the period after 1989 when social changes made legal departures and returns possible. These compatriots usually live in diasporic

communities and, more or less, are dedicated to maintaining their “Slovakness” through Slovak schools, associations, or church activities. On the contrary, the earliest migration wave consists of Slovaks who left the territory of today's Slovakia 200 or 300 years ago. They migrated within Hungary at the time and settled in the so-called Lower Land, i.e., the southern regions of historical Hungary. Only after the establishment of independent states after the First World War did the Slovaks of the Lower Land become Slovaks living abroad. It was this large group of our compatriots who originally lived in enclave communities. Still, through the effects of inevitable assimilation, diasporic forms are gradually becoming more and more important in the Lower Land as well. It is the identification of progress and principles of the life of an ethnic minority transitioning from enclave to diasporic form that can also help younger diasporic environments. That is why I have decided to present my paper on the example of a specific group of the Slovak Lowland minority.

Slovaks in the Lower Land

At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, economic and social processes were taking place in the territory of present-day Slovakia. These processes resulted in a large-scale migration of members of the Slovak ethnic group to the so-called Lower Land. This migration occurred in connection with the end of Ottoman rule in southern historical Hungary (Kmeť 2012, 9). The causes of emigration to the Lower Land included: economic losses caused by soldiers from different sides of the conflicts, lack of fertile land in the mountainous areas, famine in some years, increasing economic oppression by the landlords and the state, as well as the religious oppression of Protestants (Kmeť 2012, 11). Immigrants had an abundance of fertile land and pastures in the vast lowland regions - at least in the first (1690-1711) and to some extent also in the second, most intensive phase of migration (1711-1740). In addition to Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Romanians, Serbs, Bunevians, Croats, Bulgarians, Czechs, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Roma, and others settled in the regions of the Lower Land (Kmeť 2012, 13). A brief abstract of the extensive historical findings of Professor Kmeť from the Department of History of the Faculty of Arts of Matej Bel University indicates the scale of this migration, which was directly documented by Pavol Jozef Šafárik in 1826. According to him, out of the total number of 1.8

million Slovaks living in historical Hungary, approximately 450 thousand colonists lived in the regions of the Lower Land (Kmeť 2012, 34).

The development in the colonized areas of the Lower Land also had an interesting course from the ethnologist's point of view. Immigrants from several regions of Slovakia met in the new settlements. Numerous diversities in their language, as well as in their material and spiritual culture were related to this. Since in the traditional folk environment, an important condition for the normal, conflict-free, and trouble-free functioning of the village community is the uniformity of its cultural adaptation, processes of cultural convergence took place in the Lowland Slovak villages, that is, the equalization of existing cultural differences and the formation of a new cultural homogeneity. Lowland modifications, numerous variations, and specificities of the traditional folk culture of the Slovak islands were born in this area (Botík 2011, 17). Even today, Slovaks in the Lower Land can identify the specific cultural characteristics of individual Slovak localities. Primarily because each minority community, due to its relative insularity, retained its elements of traditional Slovak culture - and at the same time it was developing under the influence of the other surrounding ethnicities, which were different in each of the locations. For example, in the district of Kovačica in the Serbian region of Vojvodina, Slovak, Romanian, and Hungarian municipalities are located next to each other.

However, it is not only for the Slovaks of the Lower Land that foreign Slovaks have played an active, creative role in the creation of new authentic cultural traditions, specific only to the respective group of Slovak emigrants. Such newly created cultural expressions and values are the result of the synthesis of the individual components of Slovak national culture (spoken and literary language, traditional, professional, and popular culture), as well as cultural models they have acquired in the processes of adaptation and acculturation in their new homeland. The cultural peculiarities that formed in individual enclaves or communities of foreign Slovaks can be described as a kind of ethnic or national subculture (Botík 2011, 20). "The ethnic subculture of foreign Slovaks is a marginal product; it is like a link between the culture of the mother ethnic group and the culture of the community of the newly settled country. It is also a facilitator of progressive acculturation, as well as a channel through which expatriates can participate in two ethnic or national cultures. The ethnic subculture played a significant role in the life of foreign

Slovaks by gradually introducing them into the cultural system of the newly settled country while preserving their culture individuality. In the first generation (and some of the subsequent generations), for the expatriates the mediating function of the ethnic subculture played an essential role. At this stage, it included the cultural property of the mother ethnic group in all areas of the expatriates' everyday life. A classical dual culture first appears in the second generation at the earliest, and in some situations only following a gap of several generations, when institutions with diverse missions participate in the processes of socialization and acculturation. The family is this community, where the original culture content is preserved. There are also ethnic schools, church congregations, and various associations. Finally, the institutions of the surrounding–majority nation, such as the school, generational, neighbourhood, local, professional, and other groups or communities, the mass media, the military, etc., are also active at this stage. Through the activities of these institutions, the expatriates gain access to both cultures and thus knowledge of the codes of both cultural systems. In the third generation, or after many generations, most of the socialization institutions already belong to the culture of the society of the new homeland. The influence of the family is limited only to the period of early childhood. Most national institutions become useless at this stage because the expatriates are already integrated and absorbed by the society of their new home country." (Botík 2011, 21-22)

Syncretism is the most essential and defining attribute of ethnic minority culture. It is represented in all components of ethnicity (Botík 2011, 24). Syncretism, represented by the Slovaks of the Lower Land, took place in several periods. In the initial settlement phase, Slovaks from different regions arrived to these new settlements, thus creating syncretism. In a minority situation, being of Slovak origins was becoming important and the importance of the original regions from Slovakia was being lost. In further development, syncretism gradually occurs in the context of the surrounding majority ethnic group. From the moment of permanent settlement in the new homeland, processes of ethnocultural change and gradual alignment of the minority with the majority society began to operate in the cultural and ethnic development of the members of the ethnic minority. It is thus evident that minority culture, which was formed under conditions of ethnic division, is characterized by a syncretic character. In minority culture, three kinds of culture are represented: 1. the culture of the mother ethnicity, 2. the culture created by the members of the

minority in the conditions of the new homeland, 3. the culture of the surrounded different ethnic community (Botík 2007, 15). At the same time, however, there is also a tendency that we refer to in the proposals for updating educational forms in a foreign environment. This is a tendency that is characterized by features of a strong ethno-cultural persistence and is most clearly manifested in the retention of cultural assets acquired in the original homeland - i.e., in the preservation of elements of the original ethnicity and their specific features (Botík 2007, 15).

One of the most important components of the process of ethnic self-identification is the mother tongue. Its loss cuts the ties of the minority with the culture of the mother ethnicity. Ethnic subculture ceases to be an everyday necessity for members of the minority. It is increasingly taking on a symbolic, emotional, or intellectual value. As a result, it moves from the social (minority) to the intimate (family, personal) sphere of life. The former multi-layered ethnic consciousness has been narrowed down to a consciousness of origin only. The former mother tongue ceased to be an indicator of ethnic identification. Its function has been limited to only very fragmentary manifestations of cultural or collective memory. This brought the original minority ethnicity to the final stage of the assimilation processes. Bilingualism has already lost its justification and monolingualism of the language of the majority society has taken its place. And with it, often a change in consciousness of ethnicity. The existence of the former minority has become a historical category (Botík 2011, 27-28).

Local dialect in the role of the mother tongue of the minority

Based on the principles of ethnic minority life just briefly outlined, we have identified a difference at multiple levels between the variants of the Slovak language in 2019-2022 in the minority environments we have studied in Croatia, Romania, and Serbia. The literary Slovak language is used in the education of Slovak minorities in individual countries, but at the same time it accepts the conditions of its own country - and that is why it differs from the literary Slovak language codified in Slovakia. At the same time, this official Slovak language in the individual countries is not used in common communication in local communities. There, local dialects are used. Nevertheless, the use of the official version of the Slovak language in each of the countries contributes as a stabilizing factor that serves as a communication stream between the literary

Slovak language in Slovakia and the local dialects of the Slovak minority (Drugová - Uhláriková 2021).

Let's take an example from the situation in Serbia. In this country, the minority Slovak language is used as the official Slovak language, which is found in official communication, and it functions as a supra-narrative means of communication. This is a form of language that differs from the dialectal form of Slovak. There are two tendencies in the current development of the official Slovak language in Serbia: the first is to respect the codification in force in Slovakia, and the second is to respect the domestic linguistic situation. As a result of these two tendencies, an official Slovak language is developing in Serbia, which is based on the codification applied in Slovakia, but at the same time, due to the influence of a different socio-cultural and linguistic situation, it also acquires some specific characteristics. The official Slovak language in Serbia is enriched with dialectal elements specific to the local colloquial variety compared to its model in Slovakia and is maintained at cultural-artistic and other social events (Drugová - Uhláriková 2021). The initial assumptions just described, which were based on authentic knowledge of Slovak minority environments in Croatia, Romania, and Serbia among the active participants of the project, were subsequently verified by questionnaire research in 2021. We asked about the use of the Slovak language in the home environment, with an emphasis on the difference between the literary Slovak language and the local dialect. We also enquired as to education about the dialect – whether it is included in the Slovak minority education of individual countries, and if so, in what way. Responses to the questions were mostly in the form of a choice of five options. However, we asked for some of the answers to be descriptive in order to get as much specific information as possible. A total of 67 respondents completed the questionnaire (Croatia 19, Romania 21, Serbia 27). Respondents were divided into age groups: 4 respondents were under the age of 25, 32 respondents were between the ages of 26-50, and 31 respondents were over the age of 51. 39 teachers responded to the questionnaire, 19 were group leaders and 9 respondents were teachers who were also group leaders.

Our research has identified an increased level of interest among the older generation in preserving the Slovak language as a carrier of Slovak traditions for younger generations - even outside their own families. In response to the question of what means can be used to strengthen

the care for the mother tongue in a minority environment, respondents mentioned the family, the school, also the personality of the teacher, followed by clubs, ensembles and extracurricular activities. They also repeatedly stressed the possibility of contact with Slovakia. I would just like to remind you that we are talking about environments where Slovak ancestors arrived 200-300 years ago and it is not rare that, for example, children come to Slovakia for the first time in their lives for educational events organized by our Methodological Centre for Slovaks Living Abroad. This is a diametrically different situation compared to the newer diasporic forms in Western Europe and overseas, where children come to Slovakia to visit their grandparents regularly.

We also received interesting answers to the question as to what extent teachers perceive the connection between the natural maintenance of the mother tongue and the degree of ethnic self-identification of the child educated by them. Older generations of teachers take this relationship for granted and reach for rather more conservative forms of motivation. These are, however, in stark contrast to the current development of the younger generation and generally do not reflect the inevitability of assimilation processes and their current advanced stage. That is why we have included in the outcome of the project such examples of didactic materials that will naturally lead the teacher, and consequently their students, to the understanding of the confirmed facts that language and culture are characterized in all conceptions of ethnic theory as the most frequently occurring and the most important components of ethnicity and ethnic identity (Botík 2007, 10).

At present, in the Slovak minority environments of the former Lower Land, the official Slovak language is used in colloquial speech only by a small group of intellectuals, and at the same time, it is also used in the educational process. Here, however, we encounter a problem: in domestic communities, children usually speak the local or regional dialect, which thus becomes the real mother tongue. This mother tongue is different from the official Slovak language of the country - and at the same time, bilingualism with an emphasis on the language of the surrounding majority environment is becoming more and more topical. Based on these findings, we came up with the idea of using the local dialect of individual communities in the educational process of pre-school and younger school settings as a motivational tool for subsequent interest in the official forms of the Slovak language in the home country as well.

We also asked this question to the respondents of our questionnaire, who confirmed that they do not currently consider the use of local dialect elements in the educational process to be sufficient. Up to 90% of teachers in practice consider it important to use and explain the old, receding local dialect which is linked to past works, customs, and traditions. More than 90% also consider it appropriate to use the still naturally existing elements of family and annual customs of their Slovak environment in the educational process (Drugová 2021, 149). We consider this result as confirmation of the assumption that in the traditional minority communities of the former Lower Land, elements of traditional culture are suitable for use in the educational process as a motivating factor for interest in education in Slovak schools. We are talking about a principle that is included in the subject of regional education in schools in Slovakia, and which is currently absent in Slovak foreign minority education, or which depends solely on the activity of the teacher.

These results, as well as and other findings, were summarized in the Erasmus+ project into didactic materials, which are freely available on the website of the Methodological Centre of Matej Bel University for Slovaks Living Abroad. The didactic materials address three areas, as requested by the project partners from minority backgrounds. In Romania we worked with folk song, its possibilities in the classroom and topics for its use. In Serbia, we assessed the possibilities of local dialects and dialectology, and in Croatia, we outlined the possibilities of presenting Slovak minority culture as a motivating factor for maintaining interest in ethnic self-identification (www.mc.umb.sk).

Culture as a motivating factor of ethnic self-identification

The role of culture as an important element for self-identification is important in general - but its importance is multiplied in ethnic minority settings. A member of an ethnic minority encounters otherness in a heightened way in an other-ethnic environment. Otherness and the sense of difference in group identity seem to have two different kinds of poles. On one hand, it manifests itself in an awareness of one's difference, which is also met with misunderstanding. The other side of group identity, a kind of counterbalance to misunderstanding from others, is feelings of self-worth that are accompanied by a constant reaffirmation of identity. In these contexts, it is usually pointed out that individuals are aware of the reality of their past, as well as the content of their

group identity, but the only way in which memories can be refreshed and identity can be affirmed is through contact with those for whom the relevant realities are equally significant (Botík 2011, 78). And it is precisely this role that he can fulfil, and often precisely fulfils, the possibility of presenting Slovak culture in the environment of the home countries of our minorities. Every collective identity corresponds to a certain cultural formation that creates and reproduces it. Culture is the medium through which collective identity is built and maintained in the succession of generations (Botík 2007, 10). At the same time, however, the cultural identity of each social group must first and foremost be felt and presented, otherwise, it may become a museum piece, a tourist attraction - and such a culture will face the threat of possible extinction (Slušná 2006, 23).

From my findings so far in my active work with Slovak minorities abroad, I dare to say that various forms of cultural presentation in minority environments are emerging at a time of advanced assimilation. An example is found in Croatia, where I am witnessing "live" progressive assimilation, which is also evident in the gradually decreasing number of pupils whose parents enrol them in Slovak classes. At the same time, Slovak is now taught only as a foreign language even in those localities where Slovak classes were opened only a few years ago. That is why representatives of Slovak minority institutions in Croatia consider it important to maintain Slovak self-identification through a quality presentation of culture.

However, the forms of presentation in expatriate environments "lag" Slovakia by a couple of decades. They are still perpetuated through the nostalgia and pathos that were close to the older generation of teachers and cultural workers. That is why the assistance for setting up more appropriate forms of cultural presentation on the stage became a required part of our project from the Croatian side. The results of our project also confirm that there is still an increased level of interest in the presentation of elements of traditional culture in local environments. It is the traditional culture that is identified as the strongest bond of the system of relations between the national community and the culture of the mother tongue (Divičanová 1999, 203).

In the 2021 questionnaire, the respondents formulated their needs in the field of scenic presentation. They required that more detailed research be carried out, which is confirmed by my experience over several years. Although traditional environments suitable for the research of traditional peasant culture are rarely found in Slovakia anymore, traditional peasant culture is still

vividly remembered in authentic Lowland environments. This traditional form is also the one that can be used as a motivation for interest in Slovakness by the aforementioned older generations of teachers in the Lower Land communities, and which is still attractive enough for the youngest children.

The questionnaire results also included a request for collaboration with experts in the preparation of scenic presentations. In this respect, I dare say that ethnological science in Slovakia owes a great deal to its compatriots. The last Slovak ethnologist who focused more extensively on the issue of the Slovak diasporas was Professor Ján Botík, whose findings I actively use in my paper. Nowadays, we are also witnessing attempts to apply the results of ethnological research in the Lower Land for their use in tourism. However, from our point of view, in the reality of the lowland communities, this has not brought the understanding that my colleagues had hoped for. The result then, was an artificial skipping of important developmental stages. Representatives of conservative views in the communities of the former Lowland persistently adhered to theatrical forms. Increasingly, those forms of "help" that try to artificially "export" culture from Slovakia - without knowledge of authentic Lowland forms, and therefore without their embracing - are also harmful to the environment of Lowland stage presentations.

The respondents also criticised the available textbooks for being uninteresting. Until 1989, the policy of then Czechoslovakia towards compatriots abroad was based on Slovak minority education, which our governments also undertook to support based on intergovernmental agreements. At that time, the forms of support were directed towards the provision of official textbooks from Slovakia for minority education abroad. However, this practice has ceased to be appropriate, firstly due to the innovation of legislation in individual countries which means that minority school systems must follow the curricula of their home country - and these do not usually correspond with the curricula in Slovakia. In recent years, however, we have come much more strongly to the realization that each of the minority environments is very specific. Their specificity arises from the diversity of their location in different multiethnic settings, from their historical development, and from many other important social, societal, cultural differences. That is why we have clearly identified, above all, the need for freely available online educational materials and didactic aids that will enable and help the active teacher to create didactic materials that reflect the

direct needs of the pupils they are teaching. Some of these materials were created by the completed JaSom project, others are being prepared by the ongoing MySme project.

Ethnic tolerance

Another finding of my active work with Slovaks living abroad is the knowledge that the environment of the ethnic minority - at least as I knew it in the regions of the former Lower Land - is, or could be, an example of ethnic tolerance. I was led to this conclusion by the statement of the young respondent: '*I am also a member of a minority and I want my surroundings to understand me and behave respectfully towards me*' (Research 2017). At the same time, the environment of Slovak Lowland minorities can also be an example where elements of cultural pluralism and multiculturalism have been living naturally for a long time.

Cultural pluralism assumes that no culture is exalted above another and that members of cultures respect each other and do not offend members of different cultures or hinder the development of other cultures. Knowing the facts from which difference arises removes the fear and apprehension of cultural otherness (Slušná 2006, 23). Therefore, a required competencies of a citizen, but also of the public, is tolerance. If members of groups feel and respect each other's cultural boundaries and different ways of life, socially and culturally distinct groups and communities do not need to dogmatize or ideologize their boundaries (Slušná 2006, 15). The minority environments of the former Lower Land are full of examples of cultural pluralism and tolerance of difference. For example, the Kovačica district, which I mentioned earlier, has five official languages and other language are tolerated and accepted in everyday life. Naturally, the inherent elements of culture - both traditional and contemporary - are also related to the other language(s). These environments have been accustomed for generations to tolerate a different dress, a different way of life. They are a confirmation of the fact that the persistence of culture, of cultural diversity, but also cultural identity of the most diverse cultural communities lies in their everyday creation and consolidation in social interactions, routines, in practices. (Slušná 2006, 16). The life and environment of Slovak Lowland communities also prove that the processes of identification and identity formation as well as the processes of recognising the equivalence of diversity, always have an internal structure. Their components, and coordinates, with the help of which we can describe a given form and the

determinants that evolve together with the changes in the historical-political situation (Slušná 2006, 16).

In support of this, I also present another result of our questionnaire research: out of a total of 67 responses, 55 respondents indicated that they agree (37 times) or more than agree (18 times) with the statement that self-identification in an ethnic minority environment can lead to stronger tolerance towards surrounding ethnic minority groups. In practice, we see confirmation of this result in the current situation in Serbia.

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The Ethos of Diasporic Cultural Heritage in ESL Classroom Discourse: A Crucial Agenda for Education

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Abstract

In today's multicultural and interconnected world, English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms are on the front line of embracing diversity. This paper underscores the crucial agenda of incorporating the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage within the context of ESL education.

Drawing upon scholarly research and theoretical frameworks, the study identifies effective strategies and approaches for integrating diasporic cultural heritage into ESL classroom discourse. The paper presents practical strategies, such as integrating culturally relevant materials, implementing oral histories and storytelling, and encouraging dialogue around cultural diversity.

Furthermore, by actively engaging with diverse cultural perspectives and narratives, students can develop a global mindset, respect for diversity, and the ability to navigate intercultural spaces effectively.

In conclusion, intertwining the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse is a crucial agenda for education. This agenda aligns with the principles of social justice, promotes cross-cultural understanding, empowers students to navigate multiple cultural identities, and equips them with the necessary skills for success in a globalized world.

Keywords: Diasporic cultural heritage, ESL education, cultural diversity, ESL classroom discourse, global mindset

Introduction

In today's increasingly globalized world and cosmopolitan society, the notion of cultural heritage holds immense significance. As societies become more diverse, it becomes essential to explore and embrace the lavishness of cultural heritages and the rich tapestry of multiculturalism,

particularly within educational settings. This paper delves into a crucial agenda for education by examining the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom discourse.

The ethos of diasporic cultural heritage encompasses not only the tangible elements such as language, customs, and artifacts but also the tangible aspects, including collective memories, storytelling, and cultural practices. It is through these elements that individuals connect with their roots, maintain a sense of identity, and transmit their heritage to future generations. Recognizing and valuing diasporic cultural heritage within ESL classroom discourse enables students to develop a strong sense of self-esteem, cultural pride, and cross-cultural understanding.

However, despite the evident benefits, the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage is often overlooked or undervalued within ESL classroom discourse. This paper aims to highlight the importance of addressing this oversight and emphasize the need for a crucial agenda that integrates diasporic cultural heritage into ESL education. By doing so, we can create inclusive learning environments that recognize cultural diversity, nurture students' identities, and further intercultural competence.

Aim of this Study

The paper reflects on the work in progress and addresses the important issues of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL education. The study focuses on how diasporic cultural heritage is represented, understood, and utilized in the context of ESL teaching and learning. This paper seeks to shed light on the potential benefits of embracing diverse cultural backgrounds and narratives within the ESL classroom discourse and educational environment. It explores how diasporic cultural heritage can serve as a bridge between students' home cultures and the ESL classroom, creating a cross-cultural learning experience.

Research Objectives

This paper addresses the important issue of enhancing diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse which might smooth the path of intercultural communication and communication behavior. Based on the nature of the study, the following research objectives were defined:

i) To explore the representation and integration of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL education.

ii) To investigate the impact of incorporating diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse on students' identities, sense of belonging, and cultural awareness.
iii) To propose practical strategies and pedagogical approaches for effectively incorporating diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse.

Literature Review

The integration of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classrooms has gained increasing recognition in the field of education (Agnew, 2005; Banks, 2016; Gholami, 2023; Tomlinson, 2013). By synthesizing existing knowledge and theoretical perspectives, this review aims to establish a foundation for understanding the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage and its potential impact on ESL education.

Diasporic Cultural Heritage and Identity Formation

The connection between diasporic cultural heritage and identity formation has been extensively explored in the literature (Cohen, 2008; Hall, 1990; Holland et al., 1998; Gsir and Mescoli, 2015; Tölölyan, 2007). Research suggests that incorporating students' cultural backgrounds in ESL classroom discourse promotes a positive sense of identity and belonging. Jandt (2020) stresses that knowing another's cultural identity helps a person understand the opportunities and challenges that everyone in that culture must deal with. Studies by Lee (2003) and Phinney (1990) showed that accepting one's cultural heritage positively influences identity construction and self-esteem, and engagement in the learning process. The concept of "third space", coined by Bhabha (1994) also helps understand how diasporic identities emerge in the ESL context. According to Bhabha, Third Space Theory defines the individuality of each person or context as a "hybrid". Hybridity is an in-between space that might help anyone surpass the strangeness and exotism of cultural diversity.

Thus, the integration of diasporic cultural heritage provided a platform for students to explore their own identities while simultaneously fostering a sense of belonging within the classroom. By valuing and celebrating diverse cultural perspectives, educators promoted a more inclusive and tolerant learning environment.

Representation of Diasporic Cultural Heritage in ESL Materials

ESL textbooks and instructional materials often underrepresent diverse cultural perspectives (Pennycook, 1998). He discusses the impact of cultural imperialism on language teaching materials. Norton and Toohey (2001) emphasize the need for culturally relevant resources to promote cultural appreciation. In this connection, Garcia-Sampedro (2018) considers cultural heritage as a resource for English as an additional language learner. McKay (2003) advocates for the integration of authentic materials reflecting diverse cultures. Accordingly, (Kubota, 2004) also points out that it is necessary to teach a foreign language and the culture of this language as it equips students with new cultural perspectives. Tan and Mante-Estacio (2021) according to their research, found that when students read texts that represent their background knowledge, it makes a positive effect on their comprehension. This view is supported by Feger (2006) who posits that culturally relevant texts enhance students' participation in reading and evolve students' feelings of self-efficacy. Moreover, Freeman and Freeman (2004) elaborate further and state that when teachers use culturally relevant books, students are motivated to read more because culturally relevant books are associated with their own lives. Thus, incorporating culturally relevant materials into the curriculum helps students feel more connected and engaged with the learning process, as they can relate to the content on a personal level.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching has emerged as a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the integration of students' cultural backgrounds in the learning process (Aceves and Orosco, 2014; Castagno and Brayboy, 2008; Chang and Vieska, 2022). Culturally relevant teaching claims that students cultivate a culture of integrity as well as academic excellence. Ladson-Billings (1995) highlights the importance of linking schooling and culture. She articulates that culturally relevant teachers employ students' culture as a vehicle for learning. Hammond (2015) elaborated on forefront neuroscience research which provides an avant-garde approach to developing brain-consistent culturally responsive instruction. She found that culturally responsive teaching facilitates upgrading students' information-processing skills and enhancing cognitive functions with the help of cultural learning tools. Gay (2018) posits that culture is essential to how all

learning takes place. Moreover, she goes further and argues that students might perform better on multiple measures of achievement when teaching is processed through students' own cultural experiences. Thus, by tailoring instruction to students' cultural backgrounds, educators can create an inclusive and empowering environment and facilitate meaningful connections between students' cultural heritage and the curriculum.

Language Learning, Cultural Exchange, and Intercultural Competence

The integration of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classrooms offers unique opportunities for language learning and cultural exchange. Kramsch (1993) regards second language teaching from a cultural viewpoint. She states that its central objective is to teach the cultural context of discourse in the target language, rather than to teach the traditional four Language skills and culture as a fifth component. Studies by Arianie (2017) and Ekawati (2019) have shown that incorporating authentic materials from students' cultural backgrounds enhances language acquisition, as learners engage with meaningful and contextually relevant content. Through sharing personal stories, traditions, and cultural practices, students develop intercultural competence, gain a deeper understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and challenge stereotypes. Byram (2021) also assumes the development of intercultural competence helps students navigate between cultures effectively. Teaching diversity prepares students to effectively deal with multiple cultural and social contexts, promote positive cross-cultural interactions, and become global citizens (Gladushyna, 2021).

Challenges and Considerations

While integrating diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse brings numerous benefits, educators face challenges in its implementation. Studies by Poedjistutie, Mayaputri, and Arifani (2021) and Rodriguez (2014) have identified potential challenges such as social-cultural changes, limited resources, language barriers, and cultural differences among students. Addressing these challenges requires careful planning, professional development for teachers, and collaborative efforts between educators, families, and communities.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this research have provided insights into the impact of integrating diasporic cultural heritage on language learning, intercultural competence, and student experiences.

This study underscores the importance of integrating diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse. The results demonstrate that such integration has a positive impact on language learning, intercultural competence development, and students' sense of belonging. By embracing students' cultural identities and creating opportunities for them to explore and share their heritage, educators can improve language acquisition, promote intercultural understanding, and nurture a positive classroom ethos.

The ethos of diasporic cultural heritage refers to the values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and shared experiences of a dispersed group of people who maintain a connection to their ancestral culture. Those customs and traditions are preserved and passed down by diaspora communities often across generations and geographical boundaries. Within the context of ESL (English as a Second Language) education, incorporating the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage can have several practical applications to enhance the learning experience, promote cultural diversity and understanding, and create a more inclusive and meaningful educational environment.

Practical Implications for ESL Classroom Discourse

Diasporic Cultural Heritage and Museum Education: Diasporic cultural heritage and museums are valuable resources and sociocultural sites in ESL teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning do not only take place within the classroom. Diasporic cultural heritage and museums create a vital educational environment as they provide students with a real and positive experience and connection with places, people, and events. As a result, they learn how to appreciate artifacts, and historical and cultural objects, value diversity, gain new knowledge and skills, how maintain cultural heritage, and participate in cross-cultural communication. Moreover, by using cultural heritage materials, teachers can open the door for the development of students' language, cultural, museum, and visual literacy skills, and develop new vocabulary. Teachers can offer their students different learning opportunities that encompass linguistic, emotional, aesthetic, intercultural, and interactive experiences. They should encourage students to get involved in

meaningful discussions, creative, enjoyable, and rewarding activities. Students can make a variety of catalogs, videos, and posters, write essays, and share their personal stories. By incorporating diasporic cultural heritage and museum education into the ESL teaching and learning process, teachers can help students improve and deepen their understanding of their own cultural identity and the unique experience of other people.

Culturally Relevant Content: ESL teachers can introduce ESL learners to literature, music, art, and historical narratives from their own diasporic cultures. By doing so, learners validate and celebrate their cultural backgrounds, making the learning experience more engaging and relevant.

Language Learning through Heritage Languages: Many diasporic communities have their languages distinct from the language they are learning. Teachers can incorporate heritage language components in ESL instruction for those students who still speak their ancestral language. This can facilitate language learning, preserve their cultural identity, and lead to improved self-esteem and academic performance.

Cultural Projects and Presentations: Cultural projects allow students to research and present on topics related to their diasporic heritage. This could involve traditional cuisines, festivals, historical figures, or any aspect that holds significance to their cultural background. Such projects foster pride and ownership in one's heritage while improving language skills.

Storytelling and Oral Traditions: The importance of storytelling and oral traditions within diasporic cultures should be emphasized. Many diaspora cultures have rich storytelling traditions. Teachers can encourage students to share personal stories or folktales from their heritage, promoting language fluency, vocabulary expansion, and cultural preservation. This also helps create a platform for cultural exchange and empathy-building.

Celebrating Cultural Events: Acknowledging and celebrating important cultural events and holidays from various diasporic backgrounds within the ESL classroom fosters a sense of community, respect for diversity, and a deeper understanding of each other's cultures. When students showcase their traditions, customs, and artistic expressions, this not only validates their cultural identity but also promotes tolerance and appreciation of diversity among all students.

Integrating Cultural Practices into Language Learning: Using cultural practices, such as traditional songs, dances, or games to teach language skills helps integrate these practices into ESL lessons and makes learning more enjoyable, and helps students retain new language concepts.

Engaging with Diasporic Communities: When teachers facilitate interactions with local diasporic communities through field trips, guest speakers, or community engagement projects, this provides students with real-life exposure to their heritage culture and enhances their language learning experience. Community involvement strengthens the connection between students' heritage and their language-learning journey.

Addressing Identity and Hybridity in ESL Classroom Discourse

Discussions about the complex identities of diasporic individuals, their feelings of belonging, and the hybridity of cultures that occurs through migration can be encouraged by teachers. This helps students build self-awareness and empathy toward their peers.

Language Proficiency through Cultural Context: Teachers could teach English language skills through the lens of diasporic cultural heritage. Traditional stories, proverbs, or idioms from students' cultural backgrounds are rather effective approaches to teaching grammar, vocabulary, and language usage. Such approaches provide a meaningful context for language learning and encourage students to embrace their heritage.

Critical Thinking and Cultural Analysis: Students are to be motivated to critically examine the impact of diasporic cultural heritage on identity, belonging, and social dynamics. Analyzing the interplay between culture, language, and society can deepen students' understanding of themselves and others.

Global Perspective and Empathy: Diasporic cultural heritage can be used as a springboard to discuss global issues and challenges faced by diaspora communities worldwide. This approach fosters empathy, cultural awareness, and a broader understanding of the global human experience. It also equips students with valuable skills and perspectives that are essential in a modern interconnected and multicultural world.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the ethos of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse and emphasized its crucial agenda for education. The ethos of diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classroom discourse holds immense significance and potential for transforming education. The study has shed light on the impact and significance of integrating diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classrooms, as well as the implications for language learning, intercultural competence, and student experiences.

The findings of this study highlight that integrating diasporic cultural heritage enhances language learning by creating meaningful connections between students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It fosters motivation, engagement, and linguistic confidence among students. By incorporating culturally relevant materials and activities, educators facilitate vocabulary development, language acquisition, and improved oral and written communication skills.

Furthermore, the study reveals that integrating diasporic cultural heritage empowers students by validating their cultural identities and providing a sense of belonging within the classroom. Sharing personal stories, traditions, and artifacts enhances students' self-esteem, confidence, and overall well-being. When students' voices and experiences are acknowledged and respected, they become active participants in their language-learning journey. The implications of this study emphasize the need for educators to embrace culturally responsive pedagogy and provide ongoing professional development to effectively integrate diasporic cultural heritage in ESL classrooms. By equipping educators with the necessary training, resources, and guidance, educational institutions can create an inclusive and enriching learning environment that prepares students for a globalized world.

This paper emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development and support for educators to effectively integrate cultural diversity into their teaching practices.

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Research and Innovation Agenda in Cultural Heritage (SRIA) in the Context of Slovak Minorities

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Abstract

The image of Slovak culture would not be complete without the culture of national minorities living in Slovakia, and, indeed, by the contribution to Slovak culture by Slovaks living abroad. The aim of the study is to describe the legislative anchoring of national minorities in Slovakia and to describe the museums of national minorities. Moreover, it focuses on the role of these specialised institutions, whose wide-ranging activities help to understand and expand the knowledge base of the multicultural, multi-ethnic nature of Slovak culture. The study also reports on the current research on the Roma Community in Slovakia.

Keywords: national minorities, identity, national minority museums, Roma

Introduction

Slovakia, situated in the heart of Europe, has been the scene of migrations for several ethnic groups that have passed through it throughout history, as well as the place of colonisation for various ethnic groups that have permanently settled on its territory. Migration and colonisation have left a significant impact not only on the country's demographic characteristics but also on its settlement patterns and the nature of its economic and cultural development. Slovakia has never been monocultural, but has instead been influenced by several cultural factors (Darulová and Koštialová, 2010).

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The topic of our paper can be viewed from several perspectives. One of them is the theoretical-methodological concept of identity; the second one is the issue of national minorities in the context of legislation, and last but not least, contemporary research on national minorities. While each of these approaches appears to be of primary importance, with consideration to the scope of the paper, the first part focuses on selected concepts of identity. The second part describes recent statistical surveys on ethnicity, the possibilities of preserving and developing cultural identity through national minority museums in Slovakia, and the third part reports on current research on Roma in Slovakia.

Selected concepts of identity

In the professional literature, there are a variety of approaches to exploring identity. Social scientists agree that identity is neither a "thing" nor a "trait". It is not something one has or does not have. Identity refers to the process of identification. It is the product of people's social relationships and actions. Identities are now seen as fluid, multidimensional, and personalised social constructs that reflect socio-historical determinants. It is also widely believed that people may have multiple identities because of the different roles they occupy in society (Surová 2020). These include personal, collective, gender, confessional, professional and other identities, which develop and change during the human life cycle, as well as in the context of modernisation and globalisation. The process of globalisation forces all cultural communities to undergo an individual process of self-reflection and reinterpretation of their own cultural identity (Foltínová, 2011).

Cultural identity is a complex of features characterising the identity and distinctiveness of cultures, their mutual influences and their impact on the formation of socio-cultural structures. Cultural identity represents a circle of certainties, a basis for communication and an offer for cooperation. In contrast, the loss of identity has always meant the disappearance of a community, usually through a gradual dissolution in a foreign cultural environment (Darulová and Koštialová, 2016). Cultural experience determines the "self-identity" or "essence of the self" expressed through representations that can be understood by oneself and others. Identity as essence denotes tastes, beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles. On the other hand, the anti-essentialist concept argues that identity is a process of "becoming" and consists of elements of similarity and difference (Barker 2006, 75).

V. Bačová (1996), who developed the concept of identity in social psychology, distinguishes between the primordial and instrumental basis of identity. The primordial basis is formed by what comes from the givens of a person's social existence: family relationships, mother tongue, neighbours, people of the same nation and race, customs and traditions. The instrumental basis is determined by a person's belonging to those communities that bring them utility, economic and political benefits.

Every cultural identity should have a certain core, which could be an awareness of its own historicity and authenticity. In the ethnological dimension, it is also an issue of one's own cultural heritage, which is an important part of cultural identity and one of its defining factors. The diversity of cultures and cultural heritage is an irreplaceable intellectual and spiritual wealth of humanity. The protection and preservation of diversity of culture and cultural heritage should be actively promoted as an important aspect of human development. However, if cultural heritage in general and the cultural heritage of national minorities have no real value to people in meeting their needs, they will naturally disappear. Authenticity, which is directly linked to cultural identity, is an important part of protection.

Cultural identity as the core of minority life is the basis for the preservation of cultural heritage. The authenticity of cultural resources lies in the identification, evaluation and interpretation of their values. However, in the context of historicity, it may represent a diverse, often contradictory selection and reflection of myths, historical events, ancestors. Members of an ethnic group are presented as people who share a certain essence, i.e., something essential, hidden, identity-defining and passed from generation to generation. Belonging to an ethnic group, caste, clan, etc. means to have a shared identity that is the product of an essence: something that is passed down through generations, is the cause of external characteristics and behaviour, and is not immediately observable (Darulová and Koštialová, 2016). Modern theories (Brubaker 2002) argue that ethnicity, race and nationality exist only in our conception, interpretation, representation, categorisation and identification, i.e., they are not real things in the world but only perspectives of looking at the world (cited by Hlinčíková 2009, 82).

National minorities and national minority museums

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic is the basic legal regulation of the rights of national minorities in the Slovak Republic. The most important international treaties protecting the rights of national minorities, which the Slovak Republic is bound by and which take precedence over laws, are the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (signed in Strasbourg on February 1, 1995) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Framework Convention does not contain a definition of the term "national minority" as there is no universal definition agreed upon by all member states of the Council of Europe. From a legal point of view, defining belonging to a national minority is one of the most complex issues in the legal protection of minorities. Nationality refers to ethnic groups to which the majority nation living in the same state grants a political and legal status in the interest of preserving their ethnic character, as well as their cultural and ethnic self-realisation. According to Article 34 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, minorities living in Slovakia have the right to develop their own culture, to establish and maintain their own educational and cultural institutions. National minorities also have the right to preserve their traditions and create their identity through institutions (national education, textbooks in the national language, cultural and socio-political associations, cultural institutions – e.g., their own theatre, professional folklore ensemble, radio and television broadcasting[7], their own periodical press or publishing houses). On the basis of this right, some minorities have also taken the opportunity to establish national museums as specialised institutions focused on the collection, professional processing, preservation and subsequent presentation of collection items, through which the development and culture of the nationality are documented and presented. The latter, along with the culture of Slovaks, is a part of the cultural heritage, that testifies to the development of society, art and education.[8] Museums of national minorities are included in the organisational structure of the Slovak National Museum (SNM) as museums of specific focus with a special ethnocultural mission. They are centres of research, documentation, acquisition and presentation of the history and culture of national minorities, as

[7] The editors of RTVS nationality broadcasting in Košice currently provide broadcasts in the following languages: Romany, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Czech, Polish, German.

[8] The Declaration of the Slovak National Council on the Cultural Heritage Protection (No. 91/2001 Coll.)

well as educational and consulting centres. They contribute to the cultural image of Slovakia and these centres are a testimony to its multiculturalism and multiethnicity. Through their exhibitions, educational events, and projects, they provide information about life, traditions and interethnic relations and at the same time have the opportunity to eliminate manifestations of intolerance, xenophobia and unhealthy nationalism (Darulová and Koštialová, 2010).

Museums of national minorities have developed either from older institutions – they have a longer tradition and cover those national minorities which are connected with significant historical events in Slovakia (colonisation, organised migrations) or were among the most numerous in Slovakia. Other national minority museums have been established only in the last decade and are either a reflection of ethnic processes (e.g., Ruthenian museums) or a result of the efforts of ethnologists to collect, document and present the specifics of the history and culture of an ethnic/national minority (e.g., Roma museums).

Today, the Slovak National Museum is responsible for the administration and operation of eight museums of national minority cultures. Slovakia's national minority museums are listed below in the chronological order of their inception

SNM – The Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník (founded in 1956)[9];

SNM – The Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava (established in 1994). The newly established part of the Museum of Jewish Culture is the Holocaust Museum in Sereď, which was opened in 2016;

SNM – The Museum of Carpathian German Culture in Bratislava (established in 1997);

SNM – The Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia in Bratislava (established in 2002);

SNM – The Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia in Martin (established in 2004);

SNM – The Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia in Martin (established in 2004);

SNM – The Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia in Devínská Nová Ves (established in 2006);

SNM – The Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov (established as an independent museum in 2007).

[9] The Museum of Ukrainian Culture was formed as a separate museum of the national minority of Ruthenians and Ukrainians. In 1964, the name of the museum was changed to the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník. Since 2002 it belongs to the organisational structure of the SNM as an independent specialised museum.

The activities of museums of national minority cultures are primarily aimed at preserving and developing the identity and traditions of national minorities, educating about the Slovak multicultural context, and thus aim to create a space for understanding and accepting different cultures. However, it should be noted that they also serve as a link between the ethnic group's home country and Slovakia and cooperate closely with compatriot associations as well as other museums abroad. They also play an important role in such specific forms of tourism as ethnic or compatriot tourism. Although their missions are similar in many aspects, these museums have their own specifics in terms of acquisition, as well as exhibition and exposition activities, due to their history and culture. The activities of ethnic minority museums have been brought together in the unique Museums and Ethnicities Project. On the basis of this project, museum presentations on common themes approaching traditional culture have been taking place since 1995. Until now, joint exhibitions on the themes of weddings, crafts and fairs, building and housing traditions, customs related to death and burial, food and eating, childhood and youth have been organised (Darulová and Koštialová, 2016).

An overview of the ethnic structure of the population living in the territory of Slovakia is provided by regular censuses which were conducted every ten years (from 1880 to 1910) dating back to the Austro-Hungarian period. Further censuses took place in 1921 and 1930 and in the post-war period in 1950 (the results are only indicative). Regular population censuses have been conducted from 1961 to the present.

According to the latest Census of Population, Houses and Flats conducted in 2021, the population of Slovakia is 5,449,270 people. Answering the question “What is your nationality?”, 83.8 % of the total population, representing almost 4.6 million permanent residents, declared Slovak nationality.

	Nationality 2021		**2nd nationality**		**1st and 2nd nationality**	
	in total	%	in total	%	in total	%
Hungarian	422,065	7.75	34,083	11.13	456,148	8.4
Romany	67,179	1.23	88,985	29.06	156,164	2.9
Ruthenian	23,746	0.44	39,816	13	63,562	1.2
Czech	28,996	0.53	16,715	5.46	45,711	0.8
Ukrainian	9,451	0.17	1,586	0.52	11,037	0.2
German	3,318	0.06	5,255	1.72	8,573	0.2
Moravian	1,098	0.02	951	0.31	2,049	0.0
Polish	3771	0.07	1,511	0.49	5,282	0.1
Russian	3,245	0.06	4,871	1.59	8,116	0.1
Bulgarian	1,106	0.02	446	0.15	1,552	0.0
Croatian	967	0.02	1,034	0.34	2,001	0.0
Serbian	1,084	0.02	792	0.26	1,876	0.0
Jewish	596	0.01	1,242	0.41	1,838	0.0

Source: The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities (own processing)

600 000 inhabitants declared themselves as belonging to national minorities, i.e., 10.8% of the total resident population.

The second most frequently reported nationality (after the Slovak one) was the Hungarian nationality. More than 422 000 people or 7.75% of the total number of permanent residents declared themselves to be Hungarian. The Roma nationality was declared by more than 67 000 people or 1.23% of the total number of permanent residents. Less than 29 000 people declared Czech nationality, which is more than half a per cent of the population with permanent residence. Less than 0.2% of the population declared other nationalities. Almost 23 000 inhabitants of Slovakia declared themselves to be Ruthenians. Less than 10 000 inhabitants reported Ukrainian nationality in the census and more than 3 000 reported German nationality. The population also declared Jewish, Polish, Moravian, Russian, Vietnamese, Bulgarian, Croatian, Serbian, Romanian, Albanian, Austrian, Greek, Silesian, Chinese, Italian, Korean, as well as English, French, Turkish, Iranian, Irish and Canadian nationalities.

Based on the first nationality data only, the minority population has decreased since the 2011 Census. In order to get a complete picture of the ethnic composition of the Slovak population, for the first time in history citizens were given the opportunity to indicate their belonging to another nationality by asking the question "Do you also declare another nationality?" (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic). While a large number of experts and specialists were positive about the possibility of respondents having opportunity to express multiple national identities, some critical voices did object. Minority representatives, however, no longer had to choose one exclusive identity, if, in reality, they could feel a sense of belonging to both their minority community and the majority community or to multiple minority communities (Chudžíková, 2022).

In total, on a national level, 306.2 thousand people, i.e., 5.6% of the permanent resident population, declared belonging to another nationality. As an additional nationality 55.5 thousand people declared Slovak nationality, 39.8 thousand people declared Ruthenian nationality, 34.1 thousand people declared Hungarian nationality, 89 thousand people declared Roma nationality and 16.7 thousand people declared Czech nationality. The largest number of people in the second place stated the Roma nationality – there were 88,985 of them, which is 29.1% of people with two nationalities. Another large group reported Ruthenian nationality as a secondary nationality

(39,810 people or 13% of respondents with multiple nationalities) and the Hungarian nationality (34,089 people or 11.1% of people with multiple nationalities) (the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic).

It is clear from the first census results, that the possibility to express multiple national identities has led to an increase in the number of people who feel they belong to a national minority. According to Alena Holka Chudžíková, on the basis of both current and past census data, it is possible to consider that such a methodology enabled a better expression of actual experiences. In the past, many citizens who also felt a connection to minority nationalities tended to declare Slovak nationality for various reasons (e.g. fear of stigmatisation). Some may have claimed another nationality in order to support minority rights, even though it was not their "only" identity. When it became possible to declare multiple nationalities, the total number of each national minority representatives mostly increased (Chudžíková, 2022).

The census results could also be the main basis for the creation and enforcement of the first-ever separate law on support for members of national minorities, which also opens the discussion about cultural or school self-governance (Rafael, 2022).

On Roma research

It is not easy to track the demographic development of the Roma[10] in Slovakia. According to experts, their census numbers lag far behind the real situation. This is reflected in the low level of identification of Roma with Roma nationality or the low willingness to declare belonging to the Roma nationality. In 2011, 105,738 people identified themselves as Roma, while currently, only 67,179 have done so. However, if we count those who declared Roma nationality in both the first and second nationality questions, the number is much higher – 156,164 (more than half: 88,985 declared Roma as their second nationality) (Szalay and Kerekes 2022). One of the most important databases on Roma communities in modern times, the 2019 Sociographic Mapping of Roma

[10] Roma issue is quite well represented in anthropological writings in Slovakia (in the recent period, for example, Belák and Madarasová-Gecková, at. all 2018; Botík 2007; Hruštič 2020; Mann 2000, 2006, 2007, 2008; Podolinská 2014, 2017; Podolinská and Hruštič (eds.) 2015; Vašečka (ed.) 2003; Zachar-Podolinská 2021; Zachar-Podolinská and Hruštič 2021)

Communities in Slovakia (known as the Atlas of Roma Communities)[11], indicates that there are about 440 thousand Roma living in Slovakia.[12] The difference between the census results and the Atlas data is based on a different methodology (Mušinka 2019; Mušinka and Matlovičová 2015). According to one of the authors of the Atlas, Alexander Mušinka:

The Atlas is not interested in how many people in Slovakia declare to belong to this nationality. It is interested in how many people in Slovakia are considered to be Roma by their surroundings and how they are treated. The reason for the lower number of Roma in the census than in the Atlas could be, for example, the fact that some Roma feel more Hungarian, Ruthenian or Slovak. Many people, for instance, do not think or live in an ethnic context. It simply does not matter to them. Another reason could be the fear of being labelled as *Roma*" (Gehrerová and Kerekes, 2022).[13]

Even compared to the international situation, as a proportion of the national population, the Roma population in Slovakia is one of the highest in Europe. A. Jurová even states that it ranks first in the number of Roma per state population (Jurová, 1993).

National minority representatives and their communities are often closely historically linked to specific regions. An interesting fact is the settlement of the Roma minority in the territory of Slovakia in the form of a diaspora, i.e., dispersed. However, there are territories with a high number of Roma inhabitants, especially the districts of Spišská Nová Ves, Poprad, Rimavská Sobota, Lučenec, Rožňava, Prešov and Trebišov.

Roma communities have long been of interest to the study of anthropologists in Europe and the Americas, which can be explained by the expansion of their migratory communities, especially in the last two centuries (Stewart 1997; Gay y Blasco 1999; Budilová and Jakoubek 2009; Sutherland 2017). In earlier literature, Carpathian Roma were often compared to archaic and preliterate societies characterized by oral transmission of knowledge (Hübschmannová, 1999). The imperfect, incomplete adaptation of the Roma to the agricultural and industrial culture of Euro-

[11] The first Atlas of Roma Communities was published in 2004, the second in 2013, and the third mapping of Roma communities was carried out in 2019.

[12] Available online: http://www.minv.sk/?atlas-romskych-komunit-2019&subor=347372

[13] Opinions of Alexander Mušinka published in the article Koľko je na Slovensku Rómov? Medzi atlasom a sčítaním je stále veľká priepasť (Gehrerová and Kerekes 2022).

American cultural models, and discrimination from the majority society, created alternative strategies for Roma life (Gmelch 1986; Stewart, 1997).

The research on Roma culture was broadly based on the recognition that the world is changing and that research questions, approaches, methods and reporting need to reflect this continuous process. The main research areas were: identity and perception, values, and ethics. According to the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020 (SRIA), the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and the Global Change, the following research questions seem reasonable when developing a reflective society:

- *What are the consequences for cultural heritage in the light of demographic changes as well as changes due to conflicts or rapid development?*
- *How might this change over time?*
- *Who is capturing the cultural heritage that is being created today?*[14]

The search for alternative strategies to agricultural and industrial attachment to particular environments has led several authors to compare the actual culture of the Roma to the culture of the *bricoleurum* (Lat.) (Okely, 1983). However, the apparent flexibility in actions, acting and thinking in the present, continuous improvisation, and adaptability (Acton et al., 2000) may be an actual adaptation of Roma to the acceleration of time and stimuli from the outside world. Jakoubek and Budilová (2004) have more systematically addressed the environmental anthropology of the Roma and the Roma way of life. In doing so, they anthropologically uncovered something of pre-agrarian and pre-industrial relations to nature, which are, after all, like all actions, full of contradictions and positives. The leitmotif of the relationship to nature is the overall belief of the two main actors of adaptation in Europe - the peasants (majority) and the gatherers (Roma), and the hostile relationship between the two. This hostile relationship is similar to the hostility between the agricultural and transhumant shepherd communities in the Balkans (Sanders 1954; Campbell 1962; Jakoubková-Budilová 2019).

Culturally distinctive, marginalized groups often maintain ethnic or religious endogamy that works as a result of both segregation from the side of the majority society, and an internal wish to keep

[14] For more details see http://jpi-ch.eu/wp-content/uploads/2156_JPI-Cultural-Heritage.pdf

the community “intact” (Jakoubková-Budilová, 2020). The fact is that endogamous Roma communities, today, identify themselves often differently inwardly, but retain a cultural distinctiveness in both Europe and America (Okely 1983; Paloma Gay y Blasco 1999; Williams 2003; Miller 2010; Sutherland 2017), among other things, with respect to their relationship to nature and the environment.

In order to understand the functioning of, and the relations between Roma and non-Roma populations, a course of field practice for students of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and Charles University in Prague has been implemented for a long time. Students have the opportunity to practice field observations, interviews, questionnaire collection and advanced testing in 3 localities of the Gemer-Malohont region. During the 20 years, they have obtained more than 100 research reports, 5 scientific studies, 2 theses, and 2 documentary films. The studies on the cultural heritage of Roma were based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, with quantitative data forming the main component of the study and qualitative data mainly used to interpret the results of the quantitative data analysis. A graduate film in visual anthropology dedicated to the living intangible cultural heritage of Roma by Peter Nuska, *Rooted Musicians from Klenovec* (2021), was screened in 2022 during the European Ethnografilm Festival at the Club de l'Etoile in Paris.

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Centropa HerStories Project and the importance of female voices in history

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Abstract

The following article will introduce Centropa activities which focus on the HerStories project. The project focuses on the 20th century experience of female Jewish Holocaust survivors. The article will briefly introduce the project itself and its goals, while contextualising project activities in the general framework of Centropa activities. The article will discuss the importance of personal stories (and limitations) in holocaust education and importance of female voices for diverse representation of World War II. experiences in Europe. The project itself does not focus exclusively on the Holocaust, but goes far beyond it, bringing the pre-war and post-war female stories into the classroom. The project aims to create a link between current research trends and history education, addressing the lack of comprehensive multilingual material for the teachers in Central and Western Europe.

Keywords: Holocaust, Jewish History, Female experience, HerStories, 20th century.

The Methodology for Collecting Testimonies - Centropa

Centropa is the oral history non-profit organisation established by Edward Serotta in 2000. The organisation´s unique approach to 20th century Jewish history is reflected since the very beginning in the methodology of materials collection. All of the interviews in the Centropa database are accompanied by family pictures. Centropa conducted about 1230 interviews with Holocaust survivors who stayed in (or returned to) 15 countries between the Baltic and the Aegean (from Estonia and Russia to Greece and also Turkey) after World War II. The aim of the organisation is

[15] The author is a project coordinator for Centropa activities in Slovakia and Czech Republic. She actively participates on the creation and implementation of the project HerStories and educational materials and therefore introduces the project from the insider's perspective.

to preserve the Jewish memory, which means Jewish historical experiences, from this region and to disseminate created materials to the widest possible audience.[16] The interviews were all conducted based on the standardised methodology[17] between 2000 and 2009. The database consists of interviews and includes over 25 000 family photos. From its very beginning, the project's focus was on the whole, 20th century life-stories of the interviewees, not just on their holocaust-related experiences. Therefore, the material also covers Holocaust survivors' pre-war and post-war experiences, including information on survivors' lives following the fall of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The full statistics for each country, with the number of interviewees and interviewers are available on the Centropa Webpage.[18]

Interviews with both male and female interviewees are part of the database, with the majority of interviewees belonging to the middle class before the war. The diversity in the level of religious observance is not strong. There are no interviews with orthodox Jews, since the mostly religiously observant people migrated from the region after the communist regime was established there. In Austria, which was not influenced by communism, no orthodox Jews wished to be interviewed for the database. However, this does not mean that there are no experiences of orthodoxy, as people's degree of religious believe transformed through their life, some of them growing up orthodox or becoming more orthodox later in their life.

Methodology of female testimonies selection

For the HerStories project,[19] four Centropa testimonies were selected from the above mentioned database by the historians and educators. These are the accounts by Vera Varsa-Szekeres (Hungary), Ludmila Rutarova (Czechia), Katarína Löfflerova (Slovakia) and Rosa Rosenstein (Germany). Since the project also intends to present female experiences from various geographical

[16] Centropa. n.d. "About Centropa." Accessed August, 15, 2023. https://www.centropa.org/en/about-centropa-0

[17] Internal methodological guide used by the Interviewers (in English). Eszter Andor, Dora Sardi, Nicole Javor, Edward Serotta. n.d. "Interviewer's workbook 3.0." Accessed August 15, 2023. https://www.centropa.org/en/media/64640/download?inline

[18] Centropa. n.d. "Full Report." Accessed August 15, 2023. https://www.centropa.org/en/media/64642/download?inline

[19] All the outputs of the project will be freely available on the project website: https://her-stories.eu/en

locations, the stories of Lisa Pinhas (Greece), Rosl Heilbrunner (Spain) and Irena Wygotzka (Poland) have been added to the Centropa stories.[20]

The stories have been selected from the databases of individual institutions based on common criteria, to create a coherent body of material suitable for educational purposes. The project itself was created, in order to give more space to the female voices in Jewish history and make them accessible to the wider public, especially to high school students. Therefore, the gender of the narrators played a key role. In line with Centropa educational methodology, only stories with existing photo documentation were chosen. Since the focus of the project is on interviewees' whole 20th century experience, and not just the Holocaust period, narratives covering this time scope were selected. The geographical location of the stories' origin is always the last country of residence of the narrator and, simultaneously, it is the country where the project partner institution is active. The close proximity between the location where narrator's story took place and the students who are taught this story, intends to make educational materials more relatable and accessible for them. The selection brought diversity in cultural traditions, with both Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions represented. The level of religious observance in which they were brought up also varies among the narrators, with some having grown up in orthodox households and others in secular ones.

While all of the witness accounts are mapping whole life story of female protagonists, the manner in which the narratives were documented differs. Centropa material has been collected during interviews with survivors. However, Lisa Pinhas wrote her biography herself. She was one of the first female survivors in Greece to do so, primarily as a response to the fact that mainly male experiences were being published at the time. Rosa Heilbrunner's story was published based on the letters and documentation discovered after her death by her daughter Dory Sontheimer.[21] This diversity in materials allows students to work with variety of primary sources. Moreover, thanks

[20] The consortium of partners is represented, apart from Centropa, by The Jewish Museum of Greece, Mozaika (Spain), Galicia Jewish Museum (Poland), Jugend- und Kulturprojekt e.V. (Germany) and associated partners EDAH, o.z. (Slovakia), Kurt and Ursula Schubert Centre for Judaica Studies, Palacky University Olomouc (Czechia).

[21] Rosa Heilbrunner's story was published in two books, both released in Spanish and Catalan:
Sontheimer, Dory. *Les set caixes*. Angle Editorial, 2014. and Sontheimer, Dory. *La vuitena caixa*. Capital Books, 2017.

to the translation of shortened versions of all of the stories, the educational package allows students to easily access geographically and culturally distant female experiences.

The narratives are structured in line with the following main sections:

- growing up and family background,
- Holocaust and war experiences,
- Liberation and post war experiences.

These main sections are further divided according to the important live-events of the main protagonists.

The stories have been edited and include no mention of sexual violence or detailed depictions of violent death, dead bodies, nudity or other material which might not be suitable for the minors. The materials have been compiled in this way as an educational resource pack available for students and teachers. The reason for that is in line with the aim of the educational webpage - to create a space, where students could safely wonder even without pedagogical guidance. The project methodology builds on many recommendations for Holocaust education, which considers distressing images as potentially harmful to the students, rather than an effective educational tool.[22]

Importance of Personal Stories

According to the Yad Vashem, the Holocaust is one of the most well-documented events in human history. However, the scope of documentation poses a serious challenge for educators when deciding which documents to use in their classroom and in what way. It is best to learn about the

[22] For more details about how to work with holocaust testimonies and also educational guidelines see:
IHRA. 2019."Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about Holocaust." Accessed August 15, 2023. https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/educational-materials/ihra-recommendations-teaching-and-learning-about-holocaust
Yad Vashem.n.d. "Using Testimony in Holocaust Education - A Learning Environment. "Accessed August 15,2023. https://www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/use-of-testimony.html UNESCO.2017. "Education about the Holocaust and preventing genocide: A policy guide." Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248071/PDF/248071eng.pdf.multi
For more detailed analysis of the usage of the 'shock factor' in the Holocaust education see:
Lenga, Ruth-Anne. "Seeing Things Differently: The Use of Atrocity Images in Teaching about the Holocaust." In *Holocaust Education: Contemporary Challenges and Controversies*, edited by Stuart Foster, Andy Pearce, and Alice Pettigrew, p.195–220. UCL Press, 2020. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv15d7zpf.16.

Holocaust from a combination of diverse sources, among which survivors' testimonies are extremely important. Utilisation of the Jewish personal documents (testimonies, letter, diaries) in the classroom offers added value, since these documents allow students to hear the personal voices of victims of the persecution. In the context of Holocaust education, these personal voices enhance the effectiveness of the learning process.[23]

Personal stories in the classroom are an effective tool in connecting macro-historical and micro-historical or Alltagsgeschichte narratives together. On the example of personal stories, the macro-historical events became more tangible for students, re-humanizing the victims, fostering a closer understanding of their suffering and delivering a moral message. They constitute an exceptional resource for education which helps make textbook facts and figures more relatable. They **also help students to learn how to work and use primary sources in a critical way.**[24]

It is also important to be aware of the limitations of personal stories and to prepare students to work with them. Personal stories only show the individual experiences and therefore proper historical context must be offered to the student. The possible factual errors must be addressed by proper explanation, since the stories are not told by the professional historians, but only show the fraction of reality these women experienced. Additionally these stories were recorded following a significant time delay from the period when the events they describe actually occurred. [25]

This challenge was addressed by the detailed review of narratives used in project by the international team of historians and the use of extensive footnotes, which offer explanation to address possible mistakes. To support teachers further, the educational package also contains methodological instructions to help them use the narratives in their classrooms effectively. The methodology focuses on working with ego-documents, personal stories and female stories in the context of history education.[26]

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[23] Yad Vashem. n.d. "Using Testimony in Holocaust Education - A Learning Environment." Accessed August 15, 2023. https://www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/use-of-testimony.html

[24] IHRA. n.d. "Teaching About the Holocaust Without Survivors." Accessed August 15, 2023. https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/educational-materials/teaching-about-holocaust-without-survivors

[25] Michalska, Larysa. 2016 "Witnesses to Polish-Jewish History." Krakow: Galicia Jewish Museum, p.8-9.

[26] The methodology has been developed by the historians from Galicia Jewish Museum, based on their extensive experience with work with the holocaust survivors and Righteous Among Nations whitens meetings organised in the museum for educational purposes. The methodology will be available on HerStories.eu.

Female experiences – focus on holocaust

All European Jews, regardless of their gender and age, were condemned to death by the Nazis, but the experiences of men and women differed significantly, as did their understanding of the situation they found themselves in. These differences resulted from gender determinants.[27] In order to broader our understanding of the Holocaust and bring to the general historical narrative the topics, which had been previously ignored (such as gendered experiences, issue of class, social status, among other) Judith Tydor Baumel argues, that mediums of oral history and autobiographies serve as the best tool.[28]

The first significant attempts to investigate and describe the specific fate and experiences of women during the Holocaust dates back to the early 1980s. Extensive research on the Holocaust had previously been carried out, but were mainly concerned with male experiences. The *Women Surviving the Holocaust* conference in 1983, organized by Joan Ringelheim and Esther Katz, was the groundbreaking event where scholars and survivors were offered a platform to ask *Whether* and *How* gender mattered in Holocaust research.[29] The conference opened the way for further research and many important works in the 1980s and 1990s followed. [30]

In one of the first publications concerned with the female Holocaust experiences, *Women in the Holocaust: Different Voices* (1993), edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, the editors describe their anthology as a joint response to the questions: *'Where were the women during the Holocaust?'* and '*How do the particularities of women's experiences in the event compare and contrast with those of men?*' Thus, the analysis of the historical narrative has broadened and the

[27] Kaplan, Marion. "Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust?" *Jewish Social Studies* 24, no. 2 (2019): p.37–39. https://doi.org/10.2979/jewisocistud.24.2.05

[28] Baumel, Judith Tydor. "'You Said the Words You Wanted Me to Hear but I Heard The Words You Couldn't Bring Yourself to Say': Women's First Person Accounts of the Holocaust." *The Oral History Review* 27, no. 1 (2000): p.17–18. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3675505

More on utilization of the female oral history and autobiographies in holocaust research see: Baumel, Judith T. "Gender and Family Studies of the Holocaust," Women: A Cultural Review 7, no. 2 (1996): 114-124.

[29] Kaplan, Marion. "Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust?" *Jewish Social Studies* 24, no. 2 (2019): 37–39. https://doi.org/10.2979/jewisocistud.24.2.05

[30] Among the most important pioneering authors are Vera Laska, Joan Ringelheim, Carol Rittner, Myrna Goldenberg, Dalia Ofer, Judy Baumel, Marion A. Kaplan and Sybil Milton. Second important conference *International Workshop on Women in the Holocaust* directly linked to the establishment of the research on female Holocaust experience was organised in 1995 by Dalia Ofer and Leonore Weitzmann at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

inclusion of the individual's perspective and subjectivity at the core of Holocaust historical analysis has gained legitimacy.[31]

With the development of gender studies in all parts of Europe and increasing acceptance of the historical and contemporary presence of women — both as subjects in history and as subjects writing history, the situation has significantly developed. The topic of female and gendered Holocaust experiences is not new to the research community anymore. Yet, based on the experiences of academics in this field, many other fellow academics, as well as broader society, often are still unsympathetic and indifferent to the topic of female perspectives and experiences in history.[32]

While within the research community, exploring female voices and gendered historical experiences is no longer a novelty, the situation in school systems might be different. Within European schools' curricula, the status and quality of women's history is variable. While some countries have made women's history a legal requirement within the school curriculum, others are only beginning to introduce it. In all European countries there is a shortage of resources to support the teaching of women's history at school level.[33] And it is mainly up to teachers, especially in the countries where studying female experiences in history curricula is not obligatory, to decide whether and how to introduce this subject into their classrooms. This situation is already recognised by some institutions and scholars who offer teachers across the Europe materials which help include female voices in modern history teaching.[34]

In the continuous effort to bring diversity of voices into the historical narrative, the HerStories project also serves as a contribution, aiming to create a link between the established historical research and school education and address the lack of practical tools for teachers.

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[31] Ofer, Dalia. "'Will You Hear My Voice?': Women in the Holocaust: Memory and Analysis." In *If This Is a Woman: Studies on Women and Gender in the Holocaust*, edited by Denisa Nešťáková, Katja Grosse-Sommer, Borbála Klacsmann, and Jakub Drábik, p. 3–5. Academic Studies Press, 2021. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv26rrb42.6.

[32] Nešťáková, Denisa, Katja Grosse-Sommer, Borbála Klacsmann, and Jakub Drábik. "Introduction." In *If This Is a Woman: Studies on Women and Gender in the Holocaust*, edited by Denisa Nešťáková, Katja Grosse-Sommer, Borbála Klacsmann, and Jakub Drábik, p. xv. Academic Studies Press, 2021. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv26rrb42.5.

[33] Ruth Tudor, Elena Osokina, Philip Ingram. *Teaching 20th century women's history: a classroom approach. A teaching pack designed for use in secondary schools*. Council of Europe Publishing, 2000.

[34] See an example: Andrea Peto, Waaldijk Berteke. Teaching with Memories. *European Women's Histories in International and Interdisciplinary Classrooms*. 2006. ffhal-03197606f

The stories of the female survivors have been carefully edited for the HerStories project, in order to make them accessible for minors. However, the unique female experiences are still present and highlighted in the Google Classroom platform materials. They aim to serve as a base for the discussions in the classroom and make the female experiences visible for students.

To illustrate, among the topics which appear in the stories and which are included in the educational materials, and which are specific to female Holocaust experiences, are:

- the cases connected with pregnancy (Rutarova story) and struggle with the pregnancy at the end of the war (Vera Varsa Sekeres),
- childcare and strategies for child survival (Rosenstein story),
- female roles in crafting strategies for family protection (Löfflerova on saving husband and father, Heilbrunner),
- using femininity as a bargaining mechanism (Rutarova story - case of Dina in camp).The issues connected with the body, central to female experience, is also present (Löfflerova, Pinhas - hair loss and shaving), pitying of women post-war (Rutarova and the experiences of having tattoo from camp), or issues connected with looks (Szekeres Vera Varsa - clothes, their quality, bullying based on dress) just to mention some of them.

The most important topics highlighting female pre-war, war, and post-war experiences will be presented in a comprehensive educational platform, in order to make them accessible to educators for class work.[35]

Project outline

The HerStories project is a response to the EU call for funding proposals under the programme "Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV): European Remembrance (TOPIC ID: CERV-2022-CITIZENS-REM)". The duration of the project is from January 2023 until December 2024. The consortium of partners from seven countries participating on the HerStories project, brings together professional historians, educators and other experts in the fields of Jewish Studies and Education from across the EU. As a main output of the project, an educational website is developed

[35] The platform design was taken from successful project Kaleidoskop der jüdischen Erinnerungen, developed and tailored for the needs of teachers in Germany. Available online (only in German): https://kaleidoskop.centropa.org/

where all the created materials will be available for free in several languages, including German, Greek, Polish, Slovak, Hungarian and Spanish/Catalan together with all the materials available in English. The variety of languages used is in effort to ensure the easy access for educators and teachers.

Female stories are adjusted into digestible one- and five-page versions available in all above-mentioned languages. The biographies included in the project are always available in their entirety in the language of the country from which they originate. In some cases, they are also in other languages. The stories are accompanied by the visual materials (interactive maps and photos) to make the material more accessible to students. All stories have been reviewed by the historians, in order to ensure not only their historical accuracy but also their accessibility for students at different stages of learning and of various cultural backgrounds.

Each story will be accompanied by the educational activities on Google Classroom platform developed by each partner (see footnote 6) and available in the language of the biography. The activities on the Google Classroom platform will be accompanied by the methodological texts and exercises for the students to engage them in more in-depth work with the historical narratives. In order to assure the usability of this tool in the classroom, minimum of six teachers (one from each country) will be participating on testing out project activities in their classroom and contributing with the feedback to the development of the platform. Moreover, teaching materials will be presented to the professional educators and teachers during the teacher-training seminars and feedback will be collected. Based on the real-life experiences and testing, the platform will be adjusted to suit teachers' needs.

It has already been mentioned that a teachers' training seminar is to be held in each country, in order to offer teachers the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of local Jewish history in general, and of the importance of the female Holocaust narratives in particular.

Furthermore, seminars for 25 students will be held in each country, where the students will be familiarised with the female Holocaust stories using informal educational methods. Part of the project is also an exhibition presenting the life stories of seven women, which will be displayed in school or other public places. Students could also engage in the project by participating in student competition. The project aims to encourage students to take a hands-on approach and actively learn

about their local Jewish history. Therefore, they will be encouraged to create video walking tours, or work with the oral history interviews, in order to actively explore their local Jewish heritage.

Conclusion

Bringing the female historical experience into the history means to bring the plurality of voices. However, while the research and the discussions among academics regarding the female Holocaust experience are already well established, they might remain separated from the knowledge of the general public. The danger of creating a picture of history delivered through the male experience will be continuously present if sufficient educational materials are not created and made accessible for the teachers and students in their languages.

The HerStories project offers a platform where female voices could be heard in comprehensive and user-friendly way. The platform offers the tools for teachers to bring these narratives into their classrooms. It makes personal experience easy to incorporate into the curriculum, and makes microhistory of not only Holocaust, but also pre-war, post-war and communist period, accessible. Moreover, with passing of time and Holocaust survivors leaving us, Holocaust education experts are facing the challenge of not having witnesses personally present to tell their stories and to educate the youth. It is important to look for the solution for this challenge. [36] The digital platforms might be the answer to the question how to bring personal narratives closer to the young people without witnesses being directly present.

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[36] For more on subject see: Gray, Michael. (2014). The Digital Era of Holocaust Education. In: Contemporary Debates in Holocaust Education. Palgrave Pivot, London.

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Umami Teaching - Building Resilience and Connection in Pedagogy and Student Life though Life-Centered Pedagogy

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Abstract

Since the COVID-19 pandemic many college students have been suffering from ADHD, depression, and anxiety. Teachers are spending additional hours with students talking with them about their state of mind and accommodations. This reality has dramatically altered the way educators teach and engage with students in higher education. When COVID-19 hit, we, the authors of this article, were co-teaching a course titled "Noodle Narratives on the Silk Road: A Cultural Exploration of China and Italy through Noodles." We initially designed our course as an interdisciplinary writing class that compares the culinary traditions of China and Italy. We soon realized just how connected food and eating are to the human experience and had a powerful pedagogical epiphany–our class could help our students live a healthier, more meaningful, and more resilient life! Since the summer of 2020, we have taught our courses based on the principles of what we call "Life-Centered Pedagogy" to help students process course topics and world events outside class as well as gain insights into ways of living a meaningful and resilient life. This article talks about the origins of "Life-Centered Pedagogy," its founding questions and principles, and how we implemented it into our noodles class.

Keywords: "Life-Centered Pedagogy," resilience, noodles, Italy, China

Introduction

Perhaps even earlier, but definitely after COVID-19 arrived, we began to notice a change in our student body. An increasing number of our students were suffering from ADHD, depression, and anxiety. We were spending additional hours with students talking with them about them–not their academics, not their grades, not even their goals for the future–but about their immediate state of

mind and accommodations. They were overwhelmed and sometimes didn't see their own value. They wondered how they would survive this pressure. Many of them felt ill-prepared, not good enough, unable to compete with their peers, or just plain depressed. The fallout from COVID-19, combined with a million other events and pressures since, continues to challenge them.

These realities have dramatically altered how we teach and engage with students in higher education. Just as the best chefs throughout history have been forced to reconsider ingredients and cooking processes during famine, droughts, pestilence, and world crisis, only to discover the changes they made had led to something altogether new and exciting, educators, too, have had to make substantial changes to our course design and content, which have inspired richer, more diverse practices that build resilience and connection.

When COVID-19 hit, the authors of this article were co-teaching a course titled "Noodle Narratives on the Silk Road: A Cultural Exploration of China and Italy through Noodles." We initially designed our course as an interdisciplinary writing class that compares the culinary traditions of China and Italy, but over the years the content focus has evolved into one that also incorporates literature, creativity, and storytelling. We look at food, cooking practices, and shared ingredients as important and often undervalued vehicles of cultural memory, communal identification, and cultural cohesion. Our class goes deep into the noodle's cultural significance to see how it has integrated itself into the symbolism, storytelling, literature, and cultural DNA of China, Italy, and our students' own countries of origin or their newly transplanted locations away from these countries.

Over the years and through our teaching, we have come to realize that everything about food and eating is intrinsically connected to the human experience, and thus, our physical, social, and emotional health and well-being. But it was only during the pandemic that we had a powerful pedagogical epiphany–our class could help our students live a healthier, more meaningful, and more resilient life! Since the summer of 2020, we have revised and taught our courses based on the principles of what we call "Life-Centered Pedagogy" to help students process course topics and world events outside of class, as well as gain insights into ways of living a meaningful and resilient life.

Principles of Life-Centered Pedagogy

Our online course is often offered over a period of six weeks during summer sessions at Emory University. It is a four-credit class with two 75-minute synchronous sessions per week. The course content is divided into four thematic units. Unit 1 (week 1) engages students in the study of anthropological methods of food studies, aiming to build a theoretical foundation for the cultural exploration of Chinese and Italian food. Unit 2 (weeks 2 and 3) is an introduction to Chinese and Italian food, where students read about Chinese and Italian culinary history and discuss the family traditions and social rituals manifested in food. Unit 3 (weeks 4 and 5) involves a closer examination of the noodle, i.e., its history and evolution in China and Italy, noodle variations, and its relationship with nature and society. We also study literary works about food and food memoirs from China and Italy. Finally, unit 4 (week 6) is the highlight of the course, showcasing student research on a food-related topic of their choice with infographics and presentations. Throughout the course, we aim to apply the principles of Life-Center Pedagogy in course design, content presentation and processing, assignment requirements and policies, and student-teacher interactions.

In the design of our pedagogy, we ask a set of key questions that reflect the special challenges our students face and have faced, questions that are geared toward making a difference in the lives of our students. They are as follows:

1) Who are our students? What do they bring with them to our classroom? How do we help them integrate their whole selves and experiences into the course and the larger world on a deep and meaningful level? What traits and behaviors should professors demonstrate in their teaching to minimize risk, nurture self-care, and foster connection?

2) How do we create a community of learners who grow together in a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment that embodies honesty, authenticity, and vulnerability, and leads to the development of competence, confidence, and resilience, both as individuals and as a group?

3) How does our class allow our students to create a process of positive change that starts with them, moves into their own classroom community, and then outward into the world?

Our initial questions helped us to develop a set of pedagogical principles for our Life-Centered Pedagogy. They are as follows:

Principle #1. Instructors must develop an empathetic understanding of students' needs and the pressing issues of the world. Instructors need to be observant, ask the right questions, and scaffold student experiences to help them cope with individual and world events that impact their lives.

Principle #2. Curriculum and pedagogy must uphold a strong image of our students and the good they are capable of accomplishing. Curricular design must support learning styles, flexibility, choice, transparency, and opportunities in order to connect, reflect and create in an equitable, inclusive, humane, and personal way. Pedagogical approaches should aim to create a resilient community of support, compassion, empathy, and cultural understanding.

Principle #3. Life-Centered Pedagogy begins with the individual students and their needs, and moves beyond student needs to their community and the world itself. Through critical engagement with ideas and experiences that might differ from their own, students learn to value diverse perspectives and develop new life-skills that transform the individual and lead to positive changes in our students, their communities, and the world.

Putting Principles of Life-Centered Pedagogy into Practice

More than "Getting to Know Students" - Establishing a Trusting and Emphatic Teacher-Student Relationship to Foster Personal Growth and Community Building

The first principle of Life-Centered pedagogy is a call for instructors to develop an empathetic understanding of students' needs in the context of pressing world issues. They must be observant, ask the right questions, and scaffold student experiences to help them cope with individual and world events that impact their lives.

The process of Life-Centered Pedagogy begins long before classes actually start. We make an effort to know our students early on and use all the information they share with us pre-semester to guide our course-planning process.

- Email and announcements on Canvas.

Our first announcement/email serves as our first moment of connection with our students. We welcome them enthusiastically into the course:

"Dear Noodle Narratives Students,

Welcome to the class! We are eager to work with you next week on one of our favorite subjects:

noodles! In this class we will cover so many topics that are relevant to today's world, including the anthropological and cultural perspectives that unite all of us around eating and sharing food. We are eager to begin working with you."

A week before class begins, we distribute a confidential questionnaire to ask about the cities they live in, their time zones and travel plans over the duration of the course, their access to technology, and what struggles or difficulties they anticipate. This information helps us recognize their individual challenges and needs in order to set up accommodations swiftly and accordingly. For instance, we create student groups based on their time zones and adjust assignment deadlines for those who are traveling internationally. We use the Index of Learning Style Questionnaire, which assesses the four dimensions (active/reflective, sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, and sequential/global) of the learning style model formulated by Richard M. Felder and Linda K. Silverman, so we may better teach to their learning styles.

Teaching online allows us to interact with students in their own surroundings – in their bedrooms, their cars, accompanied by their favorite stuffed animals and pets. We are able to really see them, not just as students in a class, but as whole human beings in their own environments, and we are able to quickly build a rapport with them as a result. From the very beginning, we communicate that our students can always count on our support. We do so repeatedly throughout the semester in different ways – through email check-ins, in-class chats, over synchronous Zoom sessions, by announcements on Canvas, in post-class conversations, etc. During every class we utilize the first five minutes of our Zoom session to check in and connect with them. These seemingly trivial gestures have a rather significant impact on our students – they feel valued, supported, and are more prepared to stay on task and engage.

Incorporating Equity and Inclusiveness into Curriculum and Learning Activities to Empower and Connect Students

The second principle of our Life-Centered Pedagogy accentuates the importance of empowering students through teaching and learning activities and by building resilient communities. We continue to ask ourselves: How do we create a community of learners who can grow together in a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment that embodies honesty, authenticity, and vulnerability,

and leads to the development of competence, confidence, and resilience, both as individuals and as a group? In other words, we believe our curriculum and pedagogy should uphold a strong image of our students and the good they are capable of accomplishing. We utilize techniques that support learning styles, flexibility, choice, transparency, and opportunities in order to connect, reflect and create in an equitable, inclusive, humane, and personal way.

Inclusive Planning - Syllabus

A syllabus is more than just a checklist or collection of policies and procedures. In *The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach* (2008), O'Brien et al. state, "A learning-centered syllabus requires that you shift from what you, the instructor, are going to cover in your course to a concern for what information, tools, assignments, and activities you can provide to promote your students' learning and intellectual development" (O'Brien, Millis, and Cohen 2008, xiv). A life-centered syllabus is "learning-centered" in the sense that it focuses on our learners and conveys basic course information and expectations to ensure their academic success. However, it goes a step further - students are not only learners, they are whole humans, and our syllabus lays out the foundation for a course that aims to leave a mark on how they live their lives, fully and beyond our classes.

- Adopting a warm, welcoming, and supportive tone of voice

Research (Harnish, Richard J., and K. Robert Bridges. 2011) has demonstrated that the tone of a syllabus has a direct impact on student perception of the teacher and the course. In our syllabus we adopt a warm and supportive tone, and this reinforces to our students that we care about them, are willing and happy to help, and are part of their support system. For example, during the pandemic our syllabus stated, "This summer is unusual in that the pandemic is still lingering and you have just completed a challenging academic year. We want you to know we appreciate your interest in taking the course, and we will do our best to foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment for you all." Throughout the syllabus, we often use the pronoun 'we' to refer to teachers and students. We show flexibility in our attendance policy. Regarding participation, our syllabus states, "We encourage you to contribute to our class discussions in a meaningful way. Please write and participate in a manner that helps us to learn who you are. The more we know about you—how

you learn, what you are passionate about, what inspires you—the more we can tailor course materials to fit your interests and thus allow you to explore what you are passionate about at deeper levels."

- Articulating long-term learning goals beyond the immediate course-level objectives

An important goal of our course is for it to have a positive impact on the lives of our students to bring about change. To this end, we included the following learning outcomes on our syllabus: "Develop ideas for healthy meals that are informed by diverse culinary practices from around the world that we can all cook in our dorms, apartments, or houses" and "Identify principles and strategies for living a healthier, more meaningful, and more resilient life." These goals underscore our life-centered approach and help shape the direction of this course. We circle back to these goals every time we meet on Zoom. We assign reading reflection essays and peer feedback assignments to focus students' attention on them. We include a mid-term cooking project that engages students in reflection on the meaning of food in their culture, communities, and lives.

- **Offering a variety of assignments and mediums to reach every student (UDL)**

Our assignments and mediums are varied, which makes it possible for us to reach our students through multimodal lenses and allows them to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways. Course assignments include: 1) icebreaker videos on Flip, 2) short reflective essays and peer feedback on the discussion board on Canvas, 3) posting of questions about readings on the discussion board on Canvas, 4) mid-term cooking project with recipes, photo illustrations, and essays, 5) quizzes in multiple-choice format on Canvas, 6) group oral presentations, and 7) final paper and infographic presentations. We present course materials in different formats for the purpose of increasing the options of student representation and engagement. In addition to written texts, we included documentary films, instructional videos, recipes, food blogs, infographics, etc. To make our syllabus more accessible, we upload a video introducing ourselves, the course, and our expectations to accompany the written syllabus. We include a "Diversity and Inclusion Statement" and an "Equity Statement" at the top of our syllabus, immediately below "Instructor and Course Information." This sets the tone of the course by highlighting our goal of making our courses inclusive, approachable, and equitable to all students.

Curriculum and learning activities

Our students are diverse in many aspects. They come from many regions of the United States as well as countries such as China, South Korea, India, Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Peru, just to name a few. Naturally, we tap into our students' rich linguistic and cultural knowledge when designing course curriculum and learning activities, so students feel valued, connected to each other, and inspired by each other. Our readings include chapters from academic books, research articles, selections from cookbooks, food blogs, and memoirs, films about food and food experiences, as well as poems and stories by Chinese and Italian writers. We mix low-stakes assignments–often writing and group assignments that are marked as done/not done–with high-stakes graded assignments to accommodate different learning styles and preferences, integrate flexibility, and ensure academic rigor in our classes.

Returning to the second principle of life-centered pedagogy, we adopt a "plus-one" approach whenever possible by simply adding alternative options to allow students to engage with the content in the way they prefer. For example, students may "speak up" during class by talking, messaging in the chatroom, or typing on shared Google Docs. For all writing assignments, students choose their own topics and areas of focus and we provide suggestions and feedback. Offering flexibility and options while maintaining course rigor is a crucial component of our life-centered classroom because it acknowledges learner autonomy, builds trust between teachers and students, and empowers students to learn in their own way.

Transformation from the Classroom to the World - Actionable Ideas to Enhance the impact of Our Course on the Lives of Our Students, and Beyond

The third principle of our Life-Centered Pedagogy aspires to bring about transformations through resilience and community building. We ask the question: How do our classes allow our students to create a process of positive change that starts with themselves, moves into their own classroom community and then outwards into the world? Delving deeper into ways of creating impactful change, we echo the concepts outlined by Transformative Language Learning and Teaching (TLLT) experts. According to Betty Lou Leaver, TLLT "in its essence, causes the learner to change in some way – thinking, behavior, acceptance of the other, values, mindset, and/or emotion"

(Leaver 2021, 16). The learning outcome of TLLT is not to have the right answers, nor to simply gain proficiency as in communicative language teaching. Rather, it is to create "personal change" (Leaver 2021, 15).

Incorporate Critical Reflection, Self-Reflection, and Critical Discourse In and Out of the Classroom

"Reflection" is a widely used term in academics. It involves the process of thinking deeply and seriously about our views and actions. Critical reflection goes a step further. When we critically reflect on our own beliefs and actions, or course materials, we may use perspectives different from our own to examine our assumptions, compare various viewpoints on an issue, search for roots or causes, identify problems, or offer informed solutions. This process leads to changes in how we view ourselves and our place in the world, how we think about a subject, as well as how we react to happenings around us.

Critical thinking and self-reflection begin with identifying and examining our own beliefs and assumptions. This process can be intentionally incorporated into discussion-based class sessions. For example, unit 2 of our noodles class is an introduction to Chinese and Italian culinary traditions. We ask our students the question: *What was your pre-reading knowledge/assumptions about Chinese and Italian food? Did the readings expand/alter your conception of Chinese and Italian food cultures? If so, please explain.*

One topic that came up in our class involved the concept of starch in Italian food. When watching the movie "Big Night," we witnessed the conflict of two Italian brothers, co-restaurant owners who had differing opinions about service. One brother wanted to only serve traditional Italian dishes. The other was all for changing the recipes and customs to better mirror American expectations and practices. When our students discovered that offering bread during an Italian meal was an American rather than Italian custom, they were shocked. We asked our students what had led to their belief that bread should be served with every Italian meal. We probed them to consider what else about their assumptions could be incorrect. We asked what cultural beliefs could have provoked the more traditional character to react so strongly when a customer ordered two starchy dishes. Students researched online to learn more about Italian meal composition. They

discovered the health benefits of limiting the amount of starch served during a meal. In the end, they lamented upon learning that Italian cuisine had changed to fit tourist expectations, now often offering bread.

Reflective journal assignments are frequently used to aid students in evaluating their belief systems as well. In groups of three, we often ask students to read each other's work online and provide written comments and feedback. Given our students come from diverse cultural, ethnic backgrounds and different academic disciplines, this assignment gives them access to life experiences, knowledge, and values that are not the same as their own. In one class, a Chinese student from Shanxi shared that her grandparents celebrated her birthdays by making *mianxiangquan*, a huge circle-shaped bread that is decorated on the surface. Her grandfather would place the bread on top of her head and then the family would share the *mianxiangquan* in a celebratory ceremony. This food ritual, being a local custom, was new to all class members, including us and many of our Chinese students. One group member wrote, "After reading your examples, it occurred to me that the circle might be a unifying theme among these different foods. Longevity noodles, which are wound in a circle, round bobo' buns, and the donut-shaped *mianxiangquan* are all circles. In Mandarin, the word for circle is *yuan* (圓), which is part of *yuanman* (圓滿) which means a long and fulfilling life. Therefore, circular shapes are a metaphor for longevity."

Promoting Positive Changes through Intentional, Meaningful, Life-Centered Learning Activities

In our course, we press our students to develop new perspectives on well-being, new outlooks on life, and new ways to become more resilient. We believe our course is well suited to do just that. For one thing, our subject matter itself is about the exploration of different culinary traditions. What's more, our students bring to the classroom rich and diverse experiences and ideas. This is why our cooking project has become the capstone activity in our life-centered approach to this class. For this project, our students prepare a dish that is meaningful and comforting to them during the pandemic, reflect on its historical, cultural, social or personal significance, and present their

work in class. By engaging in the process of cooking, researching, and writing, we hope they will gain in-depth knowledge about the dish and its broader significance – its ingredients, cooking methods, tastes, aroma, texture, history, symbolic meaning, etc. Furthermore, by building a collection of recipes and reflective essays, we provide opportunities for students to find new inspiration in order to make changes in their own approaches to food and eating.

Overall, the project has been a meaningful and positive learning experience. Our students' have confirmed that cooking has emotional and mental benefits - it is indeed therapeutic and calming. According to our student, Haley, "I found the rhythmic chopping of the ingredients to be quite therapeutic and grounding in a time where eyes glaze over at the news and seemingly nothing feels real. The sizzle of meat on a hot pan and the smells wafting through the house not only remind me to be present, but they are also so reminiscent of times filled with hugs, joy, and laughter; times unfamiliar with masks and social-distancing."

Overwhelmingly, we discovered that making noodles connects our students to each other, to their families, to their friends, to the countries we study, and to their countries of origin. This is perhaps the most salient theme in their reflection essays. As Javier states, this project gave him the opportunity to "put myself in the shoes of my grandmother and realize how much I appreciate the time and love she would put into the meal."

Create a Public Platform to Amplify the Impact Our Students Make in their Communities and in the World.

After witnessing positive changes in our students, we wondered how our students' work and experiences could become accessible to others. We decided to create a website for our course called Pandemic Noodles to house the work of our students. This site is a digital representation of our community, an additional place from which we may learn about, with, and from each other. This website has changed us. We continue to cook our students' recipes and often share photos of our culinary creations with the class. Our students do the same and are delighted to have access to recipes that are simple and easy to make in college dorms or apartments. The impact of the website doesn't stop there. Our students often share the URL with their families and friends on social media. Parents are able to see their children's work on the website as well as their own family

dishes, which are now appreciated by people of many ethnic and culinary backgrounds. Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC), the only major daily newspaper in Metro Atlanta, published an article about our course. Then in August 2020, our class and the website were introduced in an article in SupChina.

Over and over again, the stories of our students have resonated with the experiences of others. In difficult times, whether it be famine, pandemic, wars, battles to preserve civil rights, or natural disasters, food "is family, childhood innocence, vulnerability, tradition, and a way to relate" (Love 2020). The act of cooking is an expression of love, healing, and perseverance. Through these stories, the voices of our students became part of the national narrative, one that gives us all hope and new ways to cope. To sum it up, Life-Centered Pedagogy is about amplifying the impact of our educational endeavors, valuing diverse human experiences, and helping our students become more connected and resilient. Everyone has a story to tell, and by valuing our students' voices and stories in our courses, we can all move toward a better version of the self and world.

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Enacting Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy: A Practical Instructional Framework for Multilingual Newcomers

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Abstract

This chapter discusses Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (CLR), making a case for the value of a practical SINC framework designed to help educators new to working with multilingual newcomers make effective pedagogical decisions. The framework guides educators to increase learner access to the target language, and simultaneously leverage learners' assets and prior experiences by applying four core principles: Scaffolding, Inclusion, Noticing (of language), and Connecting. To illustrate the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of the SINC framework in context, I describe a short-term, summer program for newcomer women in Southeastern Michigan that resulted from a collaboration between Eastern Michigan University and a local refugee resettlement organization.

Keywords: Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, Cultural capital, Refugee-background students, English as an Additional Language, Community-engaged learning

Introduction

I recently observed an English as an Additional Language (EAL) tutoring session offered to a small group of newly arrived, refugee-background immigrants in Southeastern Michigan. The tutor, who was a pre-service teacher, presented a worksheet aimed at practicing English prepositions, modeling their use with realia around her (e.g., The pen is *under* the desk; the pen is *on* the desk). The four students who participated in the session correctly repeated the various sentences about pens, desks, and books, and completed the worksheet. The tutor was supportive, smiling gently, and praising students enthusiastically when they succeeded in plugging in the correct preposition in the fill-in-the-gap exercise.

After the session was over and the participants were readying themselves to leave, an organic conversation about the new school year unfolded. One of the newly arrived refugee-background learners ('newcomers' hereinafter) in the group shared that her daughter was very nervous about getting lost in the school because the building seemed so big! The conversation was lively, with participants eagerly asking questions about the tutor's child and where she went to school.

This informal, post-lesson encounter stood in sharp contrast to the very structured linguistically-oriented session that had just transpired. All five of the participants seemed considerably more involved in the conversation. More English was used among the participants during the six-minute post-lesson conversation than during the actual 60-minute tutoring session. The teacher-to-student dynamic that characterized the lesson transformed into a much more equitably distributed conversation; it turned out all of the participating newcomers had at least one child starting school in the new school system the following week.

Reflecting on the two contrasting encounters—a structured lesson with a narrow linguistic focus on one hand, and an unstructured, yet engaging, conversational lesson on the other – a novice teacher or tutor may wonder which option constitutes a more sound approach to working with newcomer learners. Language education scholars would likely say that neither of the two approaches can be seen as particularly effective in the above-described form, although both include elements that can positively influence the immigrants' developing language and foster their identities as efficacious, multilingual, multicultural, globally aware individuals. The next section will help educators understand which elements of effective pedagogy for working with multilingual newcomers hold the biggest promise in working toward culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) instructional goals.

Enacting Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Language Instruction with the SINC Framework

On the theoretical level, CLR education recognizes the privileges and constraints embedded within learners' and teachers' personal, cognitive, sociopolitical, and economic realities, and turns that recognition toward a pursuit of equity and justice. On the practical side, CLR involves attending to both multilingual learners' cultures and languages and leveraging them for academic learning

(e.g., Zhang-Wu, 2017). *Culturally responsive* educators are aware of differences in students' contexts and common societal and rhetorical differences across cultures; they value integration of culturally relevant texts and media in the curriculum, and they pursue strategies for effectively navigating instruction with culturally diverse learners to the benefit of all learners. *Linguistically responsive* educators value multilingualism, think critically about the intersections of language, identity, culture, and power, and know how to develop newcomers' target language competencies in ways that are additive rather than reductive. To address both the need of newcomers to acquire a new, target language and learn about the new culture while affirming and nurturing their home cultures and languages, 'culturally *and* linguistically responsive' educators know how to balance the need for *access* to the new linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills with the respect for *assets* that participating students bring to the table (Tomaš & Shapiro, 2021). Access can be achieved through intentional pedagogical decisions around scaffolding instruction, creation of opportunities for peer interaction, and the noticing of language (Shapiro et al, 2023), while assets are best drawn out and leveraged through making connections to students' backgrounds, capacities, and aspirations.

Increasingly, language education programs, including Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs, have focused on making CLR more salient across coursework. Similarly, many well-established language education models strive for CLR, offering professional development to teachers working with multilingual learners (e.g., SIOP, CLIL). The existing options can, however, feel overwhelming to less experienced educators who find themselves, often unexpectedly, working with newcomer learners. The SINC framework provides a practical entryway to working with multilingual learners whereby educators are guided to address Scaffolding, Inclusion, Noticing (of language), and Connections in their instruction. In developing this practical framework, I was inspired by the work of Shapiro et al. (2023) and Yosso (2005), among others.

Scaffolding

Pedagogical scaffolding is a hallmark of effective teaching. Effective teachers are effective scaffolders: they know how to break down difficult texts, explain concepts clearly, exemplify

rules. They know how to use visuals and multimedia to support comprehension and help learners express ideas. When communicating with newcomers, they know how to modify their speech without sounding condescending or unnatural. Effective teacher-scaffolders support their clear, explicit, verbal instructions with visual instructions, and use informal assessments (e.g., learners' look of confusion) as signals to restate, rephrase, or reteach information. They also know how to draw upon gestures and movement to communicate and rely on positive classroom routines to create learning-conducive environments. (For more on scaffolding, see Gibbons, 2002; Lucas et al., 2008).

Inclusion

Inclusion extends interaction by attending to students' agency and participation during learning activities more deeply (for a comprehensive overview on inclusion, see Hunter, 2023). Unlike interaction that can involve relatively superficial engagement among participants (e.g., comparison of quiz or homework answers in pairs), inclusion prompts educators to continually think about who is engaged, disengaged, silenced, or excluded, and how to remedy such situations. It guides us to reflect on instruction, asking questions such as: Which learner identities are (and are not) included in the course materials? To what extent do interactive activities account for personality differences, educational differences, and neurodivergence? What opinions and perspectives are amplified, mediated, and silenced? How can collaborative activities be structured to maximize multilingual students' learning? How can we help learners conceptualize and work toward success in language learning?

In the context of working with newcomers, the overall sociopolitical climate determines much of how inclusion is enacted across various educational systems. At the whole school/institution level, inclusion can best be demonstrated through initiatives aimed at understanding and welcoming newcomers, celebrating diversity, and promoting positive attitudes toward immigrants (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012) and fostering effective relationships between school stakeholders and newcomer families. At the classroom level, teachers can implement inclusion-centered approaches by thinking carefully about strategies for differentiating instruction for learners at different proficiency levels and providing multiple task options to reflect students' unique personalities,

learning preferences, and neurodiverse profiles. They can also look for ways to recognize newcomers' global educational backgrounds and account for newcomers' cultural and religious beliefs and needs such as making room for prayer during instructional time, ensuring a level of physical distance during interactive activities that involve students of different genders, and allowing time to develop agency and voice.

Noticing

Noticing important features of the target language and practicing language in manageable, systematic ways has also been shown to facilitate instructed language learning (Schmidt, 2001). Teachers use different strategies to help their language learners notice language. Some rely on textual enhancements such as highlighting or bolding selected language items. Others like to highlight essential vocabulary and colloquial expressions in a word bank. Still others increase the frequency of key language by prompting learners to strategically review and recycle language items. Learners can also be guided to notice language through self-correction by keeping and reflecting on an error log. Regardless of what noticing strategies are put in place, learners benefit from multiple meaningful practice opportunities focused on selected language. A rule of thumb for vocabulary learning, for example, is that learners should encounter a new word or phrase 8-20 times to notice and solidify their understanding (Dronjic, 2019). Varied practice of a manageable number of meaningful linguistic items is especially important for newcomers, many of whom come to the host country as emergent learners of the new language.

Connecting

Scaffolding, inclusion, and noticing make connecting possible by creating a learning-conducive, affirming environment of multilingual newcomers. In other words, without these three components in place, a teacher may struggle to find ways to connect with emergent, newcomer learners. Connecting can be effectively realized through the application of Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model that includes linguistic, familial, social, aspirational, navigational, and resistance capital, as is detailed below.

1. **Linguistic capital**: Yosso (2005) sees one's linguistic capital as an ability to communicate in multiple languages or language varieties. Recognizing this ability as a form of learners' "capital" does not mean that teachers must speak their students' home languages in order to connect with them. Rather, they can tap into their students' linguistic capital by simply finding out about the languages the newcomers speak and assuring them that their multilingualism is valued. Teachers can also utilize oral storytelling and invite newcomers to translanguage (for more on storytelling, see Kendrick et al. 2022; Strekalova-Hughes and Wang, 2019; for more on translanguaging, see García, 2013; Park and Valdez, 2018). Even simply encouraging students to share ways of saying "hello" in the different languages they speak can serve as a way of connecting with them in linguistically affirming ways.

2. **Familial capital:** This form of capital involves engagement with and commitment to one's family and extended community. Refugee background newcomers are greatly impacted by their families and home communities; they often deal with a great sense of loss that may or may not be mitigated by the use of technology as they seek to remain in contact with the loved ones left behind. Many newcomers also send remittances to the families in their home countries. Still, as Liscio and Farrelly (2019) and Shapiro (2019) show, families are also a source of support, strength, and pride for newcomers. Drawing upon this type of cultural capital, teachers can connect with their learners by using family-oriented topics in their instruction, encouraging newcomers to share news, major family events such as weddings, photos, and achievements of their families. Teachers can also talk about their own familial relationships to increase rapport and build trusting relationships. If newcomers resettled after escaping an armed conflict, caution should be exercised in case of past trauma (e.g., death of relatives).

3. **Social capital:** Many refugee background newcomers spend years, if not decades in refugee camps or living in unstable conditions in the nations that temporarily house them before resettling in a host country. One's ability to handle (often unexpected) departure from a home country, life in a refugee camp, processing center, military base, or other suboptimal living situations, and subsequent resettlement in a new country requires skills in forming, maintaining,

and leveraging social networks. Language teachers, volunteer tutors, and class peers often become part of newcomer learners' social circle, as do members of spiritual and religious institutions that newcomer students may belong to. To connect with students in ways that capitalize on their social wealth, teachers need to foster relationships inside the classroom via selected topics and activities. They can invite successful immigrants from the community to share their experiences and include other less formal opportunities to socialize such as potlucks and field trips to local parks, farmer markets, museums, universities, and libraries.

4. **Aspirational capital:** Connecting with newcomers at the aspirational level is intuitive for teachers because so much of what we do revolves around helping others realize their dreams and goals. Many resettled newcomers want to improve their command of the language of the country to which they have immigrated with the goal of securing stable employment. Hence, providing newcomers with instruction that directly points them to a pathway to jobs or higher education can be very motivating. The newcomers with children often share their hopes that their children will succeed academically and professionally. Educators can cultivate this "culture of possibility" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78) by helping newcomers track and evaluate their learning and professional goals, engaging them with career consultants, and ensuring that parents have the information and resources they need to support their children in the new academic and social environment.

5. **Navigational capital:** Most newcomers, especially those with a refugee background, demonstrate considerable resilience and skill associated with navigating an incredibly complex and confusing immigration process. This experience typically positions newcomers well to continue to make sense of complex systems, be it educational settings, employment, housing, or health care. Educators can tap into the newcomers' navigational capital by creating instructional activities aimed at unpacking complex processes and sharing strategies for dealing with common challenges. Similarly, it can be beneficial to expose newcomers to other successful immigrants who can share their journeys navigating life in the host country. This can be accomplished by inviting guest speakers or visiting local immigrant-owned businesses. Once sufficient trust has

been established, teachers can also sensitively engage newcomers in deeper conversations around navigating socially and racially unjust systems.

6. **Resistance capital:** Informed by the work of Paulo Freire (1970), resistance capital involves knowledge and skills "fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Shapiro (2014) offers an illustration of resistance among adolescent refugee-background newcomers from several African countries who walked out of their high school to protest the publication of an article that reported on the students' low test scores. As a result of this test report, the affected students experienced increased alienation and racism in their school and local community. Using their voices to protest, talking with reporters, and sharing their own lived experiences with school administrators helped these youth resist the deficit-oriented discourse, creating a counter-story for their experience and potential. Educators can tap into the resistance capital by sharing positive stories of descent and protest, thus cultivating newcomers' agency to make decisions and challenge problematic and unjust policies and procedures.

In addition to these six forms of cultural capital, educators may also seek to connect with newcomer students by leaning into their "altruistic capital" as described by Rogers and Anderson (2019) and Shapiro (2022). Altruistic capital is linked to both familial and resistance capital as it prioritizes the needs and goals of others and collectively addresses injustice. To illustrate, one Yemeni woman in Southeastern Michigan, an immigrant who is still learning English herself, chooses to guide more recently arrived newcomers to use the bus, access food pantry, and other systems so that they can better access assistance and move more confidently through the city.

This prosocial type of cultural capital, along with the six types of cultural capital formulated by Yosso, echo the aspirations of CLR language education that seeks to create collaborative, community-oriented, productive, and equitable instructional spaces and activities for all. To accomplish this, CLR can strategically draw upon the four concepts (scaffolding, inclusion, noticing, and connecting) that form a practical SINC framework designed to help educators be "in sync" with their newcomer learners (Tomaš, 2021). Keeping these elements in mind as we plan and deliver language instruction balances out access and assets as we strive to teach in CLR ways.

Applying the SINC Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Framework in a Summer Program for Newcomer Women

To illustrate how the SINC culturally and linguistically responsive framework can be enacted in working with newcomers wishing to develop additional language capacities, I will describe a summer program for mostly Afghan women that resulted from a collaboration between Eastern Michigan University and Jewish Family Services, a refugee resettlement organization in Southeastern Michigan. The program utilized a community engaged approach which brought together university students and community stakeholders in a mutually beneficial endeavor. In our context, this mutuality was operationalized through university-enrolled pre- and in-service teachers providing free English instruction while benefiting from gaining practical experience working with local newcomers. The participating newcomers benefited from receiving free language support, instructions, and childcare for their children, as well as an opportunity to expand their social networks. They gave back by engaging with pre- and in-service teachers who were studying to work with EAL teachers.

Most program English learner participants had emergent literacy in target language and limited prior schooling and literacy in their home language. Per information from the collaborating refugee resettlement organization, the group included women from both the traditionally Sunni Pashto-speaking Pashtun people and the traditionally Shia Hazara people (speaking a dialect of Dari) as well as other ethnic groups, some which may have long-standing conflicts with each other. To ease any tensions involving the varied backgrounds, we decided to build the program around the universal concept of food as a unifying cultural tradition across linguistic or religious groups in a nation.

To help 'bring everyone to the table' in a way that would be inclusive of the participating women from different regions of Afghanistan, and specifically of the women with limited or interrupted prior educational backgrounds, we decided to build the program around a cooking demonstration. This framing also allowed us to disrupt the traditional teacher-to-student dynamic. The in-service teachers who were tasked with leading the program designed four days of preparatory in-class instruction and one day of a student-led dish-making demonstration in the university's professional kitchen. This fifth day was the moment when the tables were turned the newcomer learners became

teachers, and the university-based TESOL teachers became the students. This instructional shift helped us step out of simply interacting with the newcomers in a traditional teacher-to-learner fashion. Instead, we were able to establish a more democratic, inclusive space as we looked for authentic points of connection. The main activities implemented during the week-long program included:

- *Community building activities*: Newcomers and teachers walked around the classroom completing a food-centered, visually scaffolded "Find someone who" activity (e.g., Find someone who likes spicy food; find someone who makes their own bread, etc.).
- *Vocabulary building practice activities*: Newcomers learned and practiced vocabulary chunks and oral presentation skills needed for the cooking demonstration. They also wrote down the recipe for the dish they were preparing to demonstrate.
- *Genre analysis activitie*s: Newcomers analyzed a teacher-prepared cooking demonstration. Learners also analyzed (and eagerly critiqued) a YouTube demonstration of an Afghan dish similar to the one they planned to make for the professional demonstration. They were guided to notice what makes cooking demonstrations effective.
- *Collective action activities*: Newcomers agreed on a dish they wanted to demonstrate to the attendees, made a list of necessary tools and ingredients, and chose parts of the demonstration they were willing to lead.
- *Cooking demonstration*: Newcomers took turns during the cooking demonstration explaining why they chose the specific dish to demonstrate and what ingredients and steps were needed for the dish. Attendees, who included the teachers and various university and community stakeholders, watched the demonstration and tried the dish.
- *Reflection activities*: Newcomers, teachers, and other community stakeholders reflected on the final demonstration and program overall, sharing their highlights and suggestions.

Throughout the program activities, we were intentional about connecting to the participating newcomer women's cultural capital. For example, we drew upon their linguistic capital by learning greetings in Dari and Pashto, including videos with Dari captions, and inviting some of the more

advanced English speakers to translanguage with their peers when explanations in English fell short. We provided positive reports on the efforts and achievements of the women's children who participated in the concurrent children's program, thus nurturing the familial capital. We created informal feedback opportunities to engage the aspirational capital by soliciting ideas about future initiatives that could facilitate these women's wellbeing and professional growth. Their social capital was also evident. In fact, the participating women reported that one of the biggest benefits of the program was being able to meet other Afghan women and children in the host community! In addition to *connecting* (C in the SINC. framework) to the Afghan women's cultural capital, we also drew heavily upon the first three components of the SINC framework as well. Specifically, we *scaffolded* instruction by using visuals, multimedia, realia, speech modifications, etc. We worked to amplify *inclusion*, be it through think-pair-share, differentiated support, peer supported collaborative activities, teacher-learner role shifting, and translanguaging. The oral tradition of sharing cooking knowledge and the physicality involved in the collective production of food were all more inclusive of newcomers than more traditional lessons would be. We helped the participating newcomers *notice* language by targeted language practice activities (e.g., fill in the gap vocabulary activities, pronunciation practice, and listening, speaking, and writing tasks).

Conclusion

The CLR framework described in this chapter involves four concepts important to working with multilingual newcomers: *Scaffolding*, *Inclusion, Noticing*, and *Connecting* (SINC). These foundational concepts can perhaps appear rudimentary when compared to other, more robust CLR models such as SIOP (Kareva & Echevarria, 2013) or CLIL (Coyle, 2007). However, it can be argued that the simplicity of this CLR framework is its strength. Oftentimes, teachers, tutors, and volunteers find themselves working with newcomers without sufficient or recent TESOL teacher education or relevant professional development. The SINC framework provides a practical entryway to working with multilingual learners whereby educators are guided to include scaffolding, inclusion, language noticing, and connections in their instruction.

Although *connecting* (C) is listed as the last component of the framework (mostly to make for a memorable SINC mnemonic), it is, arguably, the core of effective work with newcomers,

immigrants, and diasporas at large. Without meaningful connections to our students' cultural capital, our work with newcomers communicates that the dominant, majority languages and cultures are more worthy than others and that assimilation is the only way to successful integration in a new community. In contrast, instruction built on connections honors learners, their histories, and communities, nurturing the development of their multilingual, multicultural identities, and promoting an affirming view of themselves as efficacious individuals who have a lot to learn *and* teach others.

The implementation of the SINC framework with multilingual newcomer learners does not necessitate large-scale initiatives such as the summer project described in this chapter. Indeed, the scaffolding, inclusion, noticing, and connecting principles are present in most effective activities or lessons for emergent learners. To illustrate, a CLR teacher or tutor can approach lesson design by first finding a point of connection to the learners, drawing on newcomers' cultural capital. Once a topic that is meaningful and relevant to the newcomers has been identified, the tutor can think about how to help learners notice and practice key language within that topic in ways that are scaffolded and inclusive.

In reflecting back on the preposition-focused tutoring session described in the opening vignette, a tutor can connect to the learners a little more authentically, for instance, by drawing upon newcomers' aspirational capital. In this case, the newcomers attending the session had school-aged children who were about to start an academic year in a new school system. To begin the lesson with a scaffolded, inclusive activity, learners could consider various photographs of schools around the world and pick one that seemed the most culturally familiar, pointing out aspects they recognize. The tutor could then present a short video of a typical school day in the host country, pausing throughout to support the information from the video with explanations and opportunities for clarifications and questions. Learners could be guided to notice and practice manageable, useful language chunks (e.g., prepositional phrases--go *to* the restroom/ nurse's office/principal's office, stay *in* the classroom, eat *in* the cafeteria, go outside *during* recess) rather than being presented with a decontextualized, and seemingly random compilation of prepositions. A follow-up think-pair-share speaking activity scaffolded with a visual organizer and/or translation would help

newcomers clarify their new linguistic and cultural understanding, and express opinions about which aspects of the typical school day in the host country may be (un)familiar to their children. Finally, the lesson could conclude with learners and teacher sharing a dream or goal they have for themselves and/or their children for the school year. It is my hope that utilizing the practical SINC framework described in this chapter can help guide educators, other professionals working with newcomers, and newcomer learners themselves toward both personal and professional aspirations.

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INDEX

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