Diaspora, internationalization and higher education

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Diaspora: the great shift

Traditionally, the term 'diaspora' (from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) referred to the dispersion of the Jewish people from ancient Israel. It had a pejorative connotation, associated with Jewish punishment for disobeying divine laws and decrees and was defined broadly by (traumatic/forced) dispersion leading to 'exile' and continued longing for an idealized homeland and 'return' to it (Cohen, 2008). Over time, the term began to be used more widely, and particularly in situations which aligned with these types of criteria (e.g. the Armenian, Greek and African diaspora) (Tölölyan, 2012).

In the period of state formation and the birth of nationalism (Hobsbawm, 2012), diaspora became connected with a form of insider/outsider, an individual or group that should be feared for their dual loyalties, and stubborn resistance to assimilation into a national religion, language, and identity. Diasporas were the subject of restrictive laws, state control and alternatively tolerated (often for their diaspora networks and professional acumen e.g., Armenian and Jewish merchants) and marginalized (e.g., deprived of citizenship, freedom of movement, access to education or professions). Suspicions of diaspora communities were often stoked by nationalists (or communists, e.g. the Soviet Union) spreading fears of the 'enemies within' and diasporas serving as fifth columns. This was often in spite of attempts at assimilation into the 'host' society (e.g. Chinese and Japanese in America, Daniels [2011]; Jewish Germans, [Mendes-Flohr, 2008]). Overall, then, diasporas were viewed with considerable suspicion and hostility by the state and nation-building project.

The ways in which diaspora communities have been viewed and treated by the dominant group within a nation are however not universal. For example, in settler colonies, the relationship between diaspora and indigeneity, as it relates to the dominant national narratives, is much more complicated. Although indigenous populations share with diaspora groups the hazards of displacement, usually through colonial expropriation of their ancestral lands, the differences between their histories of displacement have resulted in very different political and cultural projects (Coleman, 2016). Resistance to settler colonial exploitation has also affected the formation and politics of diasporas, for example, among Africans who were taken to the Americas as slaves. As Gilroy (1993) has noted, this history of abuse created the conditions in which an aspirational transnational diaspora emerged as 'the black Atlantic'. The history of colonialism has also resulted in routes of mobility through which diasporas have acquired their distinctive forms, with politics that affect both their country of origin and the places where they have settled. Tony Ballantyne (2006) has, for example, shown how the Sikh diasporic identity from the late eighteenth century through the early twenty-first has been constructed in response to the momentous social changes wrought by colonialism. Span and Sanya (2019), likewise, have documented the historical role of education in African diasporas both before, during and in the aftermath of enslavement; they detail how Africans used education as a means of liberation and to

advance themselves in their new homelands. The historical impact of empires and colonialism is thus a vital long-term factor underlying many of the varied types and experiences of diaspora communities studied in this special issue.

With the advent of contemporary globalization, its emphasis on global markets and connectivity, a greater demand emerged for 'intercultural skills', global competencies and networks. No longer were national knowledge, cultural, economic and social capital the exclusive paths towards prosperity. The advantageous nature of such global networks and skills, for both individual and national competitive advantage, saw a shift occur in which diaspora became associated with a desirable form of cosmopolitanism which emphasized both dispersion (no longer exclusively traumatic) and connectivity (to a homeland, but more broadly, communities and people around the world, and circuits of migration and mobility). The falling cost and ease of international travel, combined with technological advances in communications, compressed space and time (Castells, 1996) lowered the barriers between home and abroad. The globalization of international mobility and migration and transnational cultural flows have enabled the formation of new diaspora identities, shifting boundaries and hybridizing cultural processes (see Appadurai's concepts of 'scapes' (1990; 1991). The increased movement of people, no longer solely from homeland to host land, but rather circuitous, with frequent visits between home and host lands, created, sustained and diversified diaspora identities.

In tandem, many (nation) states began to see the usefulness of diasporas in pursuing their own foreign relations and enhancing their global economic competitiveness. No longer was full assimilation required for national belonging; rather 'multiculturalism' was encouraged which emphasized the coexistence and tolerance of myriad cultural traditions. People who may at one point in time have felt pressured to assimilate into a national, ethno-cultural, or religious identity of the country of residence (losing heritage languages, customs, values) could now easily stay in contact with their homelands, families and communities, and in some cases even hope to return. The intensive processes of contemporary globalization characterized by interconnectedness and interdependence have changed the conditions of diaspora formation and perpetuation, and its perceived value for individuals, communities and states. Of course, not all diaspora communities were valued by society and states in the same way and there is a critical literature about the positional value assigned to different groups (e.g. Koinova, 2018). Although the COVID-19 pandemic and tensions, particularly between China and the 'West' (see Yuan et al., 2020) , have spurred increasing racism and nationalism, many of the pejorative views of diaspora have been muffled. Overall diasporas are increasingly portrayed as a prized object of states and an integral part of cherished individual and communal hybrid identities.

This shifting view and increasing relevance of diaspora in the age of contemporary globalization has triggered a surge in diaspora scholarship and theorization across the humanities and social sciences, particularly in the fields of Migration, Human Geography, Political Science, Cultural Studies and increasingly in Education (e.g. Gholami, 2017; Kim, 2020; Rizvi, 2017; Shirazi, 2019). Within this intellectual movement, British universities have served as important bases for diaspora theoreticians including Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Robin Cohen, Steven Vertevec, Maria Koinova, Claire Alexander, Heike Jöns and Elizabeth Mavroudi to name a few. This increased focus on diaspora has seen its meaning broadened not only by academics, but also policymakers, and national and supra-national institutions – each indicating divergent perspectives on the subject (Bamberger, 2021).

Despite attempts by some scholars to limit the use of the term (e.g. Alexander, 2017; Butler, 2001; Cohen, 2008), it has come to encompass diverse groups of people who claim a tie to both their homelands and host lands including: highly-skilled migrants; refugees; expatriates; and religious and

ethnic minorities amongst others. To the traditional idea of dispersion due to trauma, has been added a more generalized conception of 'dispersion' (Brubaker, 2017); given the ease of travel and information and communications technology, binary views of homeland/host land are increasingly challenged, and networks and circuits more often invoked; homelands are no longer viewed as merely static, physical places, but rather, as symbols of identity, and important cultural discourses (Gilroy, 1993; 1997). These views indicate the myriad definitions of and approaches to diaspora that have taken hold over the past decades, which frame different perspectives on what diaspora is, how it can be studied and used as an analytical device.

Overall, the expansion of diaspora scholarship has reflected the expanding use of post-modern perspectives and theories, with considerable expansion of diaspora scholarship since the 1990s representing a move from diaspora as a static and essentialized notion of dispersed groups, maintaining distinctive identities to 'an indicator of an identity in flux' (Delano & Gamlen, 2014, p. 44). While there is considerable debate about what (e.g. forms of dispersion; relations with host lands; cultures created) and who (e.g. individuals, the group, homeland/host lands) define a diaspora, in contrast to other terms such as 'immigrants', the term diaspora implies a degree of attachment and association with a homeland and alludes to hybrid identities, allegiances and cultural practices (Brubaker, 2005). In sum, there has been a renaissance in diaspora theorization across fields of scholarship. It is likely to continue because the contemporary conditions of global mobility and connectivity are likely to prevail, despite the new travel and other restrictions created by the Covid-19 pandemic. These new theorizations provide fertile ground for rethinking internationalization in higher education.

Internationalization in higher education

Internationalization is one of the key features of contemporary higher education. While scholarship abounds on different forms of internationalization (e.g. curriculum, research collaborations), Buckner and Stein (2020) indicate that the major focus has been on mobility – particularly of students and academic staff. Rizvi (2011) has shown how international mobility of students has, in recent years, been increasingly framed within the precepts of neoliberalism and market rationality. Bamberger (2020) argues that this mobility is often framed as the rational pursuit of 'cosmopolitan capital', a form of competitive and positional advantage that is associated with being accustomed to travel and foreign cultures, having international social networks, and possessing prestigious credentials (Bühlmann et al., 2013; Igarashi & Saito, 2014). For academic staff, this may extend to the cultivation of international academic networks and research funding, boosting individual advantage and positional worth in the increasingly stratified globalized higher education system (Kim, 2017).

However, the literature tends to assume that higher education credentials from the Global North are universally desired (for their largely economic returns on investment) and that economic and competitive considerations are a priori driving factors in international student/faculty mobility and migration. This approach also does little to explain different trajectories of mobility (e.g. regional, horizontal mobility; North-South trajectories) (Teichler, 2015). Recognizing the limitations of this approach, HE scholars are searching for more nuanced and sophisticated theoretical lenses to analyze mobility, increasingly shifting towards a research agenda which views mobile academics and students in processes of 'becoming,' connecting HE with complex processes of self-formation, that entail multiple, interwoven intentions and identities that include but go beyond rational economic concerns (e.g. Bamberger, 2020; Kim, 2021; Marginson, 2014; Tran, 2016). Within this emerging literature, scholarship has revealed the existence of international student mobility along diaspora trajectories (e.g. Cyprus [Statistical Service, 2016]; South Korea [Kim, 2011]; China [Jian, 2017]).Recent empirical

work has recognized the importance of the pursuit of not only cosmopolitan capital but also ethnic identity capital in diaspora identities through international student mobility (Bamberger, 2020). Diaspora has also been shown to play a role in creating international research collaborations, in which feelings of shared culture, language, religion and (in the Israeli case), politics, have spurred connectivity (Bamberger, Morris and Yemini, 2019; Fernando and Ospina, 2016).

In addition to the emerging role of diaspora identities and connectivities in spurring international mobility and collaboration, diasporas have been the subject of an increasing awareness of states (Gamlen, 2020; Gamlen et al., 2013), particularly in their potential role in knowledge production and economic development; and the ways in which higher education can be used to create, maintain and perpetuate diaspora bonds, in an attempt to create patriotic overseas citizens. Although not necessarily a new phenomenon (see e.g. Bamberger, 2020; Symonds, 1986), in the past decade, China, Israel, India, Singapore, Morocco, and South Korea – among others - have initiated policies to strengthen strategic relationships with 'their' diaspora through higher education. These growing trends connect national and institutional diaspora strategies, with the aspirations and identities of mobile academics and students. These themes indicate the topical nature of diaspora in addressing the major contemporary themes in internationalization research. At the same time, diaspora theorization has expanded and thus provides tools to move beyond the 'mobility' theme in internationalization, which focuses on the movement of people, ideas, programs, institutions, etc.; it focuses on movement, connectivity, identities, agency and control. In this way, 'diaspora' provides a potentially powerful frame for interpreting the main themes of internationalization. Thus, diaspora is both a topical issue and important theoretical lens in contemporary international studies in education in general, and in higher education research in particular.

Bamberger's (2021) review of the field indicates that although there is growing scholarship on diaspora and higher education, the literature is fragmented between those concerned with 'knowledge diaspora' that focus on national and institutional diaspora policy and practice (e.g. evaluation, implementation and improvement); and those that focus on the identity processes and experiences of diaspora individuals. Moreover, 'diaspora' – is loosely connected to internationalization in higher education research, despite the clear connections with internationalization at the system, institution, and individual levels. Scholarship which aims to connect these areas and analyses the implications of diaspora for internationalization in higher education is sorely lacking. Thus, the theme of diaspora within the academic literature on internationalization in higher education is still at a nascent phase. Against this background, this special issue (SI) aims to open new avenues of thinking about some of the major themes of internationalization in higher education, and represents the first exploratory effort to focus on the nexus of diaspora and internationalization in higher education.

The papers

Given the exploratory nature of this SI and in line with the scope and aims of *British Journal of Educational Studies*, the contributions address the topic from a variety of disciplines (e.g. sociology; cultural geography, history; philosophy; political science) and draw on diverse theoretical lenses and empirical settings and sources. This rich variation allows for greater understanding of the different dimensions of diaspora and its interlocking relations to internationalization in higher education to be explored in this SI. While some of the papers directly engage with the United Kingdom (e.g. Rensimer) and shed light on the role of British universities in internationalization, many of the articles implicitly indicate the United Kingdom through the patterns of mobility described, often from 'Global South' to 'Global North' and the attraction of Euro-anglophone international higher education. This implication

allows deeper thinking about the role of the United Kingdom in fostering diaspora relations through higher education, both at home and abroad, and on individual and system levels, including enduring legacies and logics of colonialism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

The conventional approaches to international higher education are often premised on the nation-state as primary actor to connect diaspora and higher education in orchestrating internationalization. Kim and Bamberger challenge such a presupposition by separating 'nation' and 'state' and with a critical appropriation of diasporic subjectivity and institutions from a comparative historical perspective. Their paper begins by providing the conceptual apparatus of ethnonational diaspora, ethnic nationalism and ethnic internationalism in line with the geopolitics of the early 20th century. It illustrates Koreans in the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945) and Jews during the period of British Mandate for Palestine (1920-1948) as stateless 'ethnic nations' without territorial sovereignty. Both cases indicate that diasporic subjectivity and institutions contributed to international higher education as independent of the ruling state's agenda. The conventional Western world views entail a pejorative understanding of ethnic nationalism as if antithetical to internationalism. This article refutes this assumption. The Korean and Jewish cases illuminate the overlooked and neglected aspects of the connections between ethnonational diaspora, ethnic internationalism and international higher education, which relied on sources outside the ruling states. These historical case studies entail noteworthy implications for contemporary 'human geopolitics' (Gamlen, 2020), within which it is important to understand mutations of diaspora and evolving diasporic subjectivity and connectivity in the internationalization of higher education.

In his paper, Fazal Rizvi shows how the contemporary definition of diaspora, which emphasizes complex and dynamic strategies of creating and maintaining transnational ethnic networks, is consistent with the neoliberal understanding of internationalization of higher education. He argues that this understanding of internationalization encourages students to recognize the importance of existing diaspora networks, and in creating new ones, through which it might become possible for them to realize their personal and professional goals within an increasingly transnational economic space. Using data collected through interviews with the Indian and Chinese alumni of Australian universities, Rizvi shows how their education in Business Studies steers them towards an ideological outlook associated with a market view of the world, evident most clearly in the ways in which the notion of global employability is used to define their curriculum, often couched in the self-actualizing language of enterprise and entrepreneurialism. This outlook encourages the formation of new diaspora networks, in light of a range of perceptions about the importance of networks within the global economy, in facilitating transnational regimes of business activities.

Brooks and Waters analyze the internationalization strategies of four authoritarian states - Singapore, China, Kazakhstan and Russia - and through an analysis of the policy strategies used to enforce return of international students, endeavor to avoid diaspora formation. This paper strengthens claims by Bamberger (2021), that despite the programs and discourses of such supranational institutions as the World Bank, UNESCO and OECD, diaspora formations are not always viewed favorably. Indeed, states may prefer to forego the oft-touted advantages of diaspora networks in order to have 'talented' nationals at home (e.g. scientists, engineers, doctors). This paper provides insight into how authoritarian states are both using international higher education to further their strategic goals for national development – and the strategies employed to ensure student return. This echoes diaspora literature, that connects totalitarian states with a tendency to actively discourage diaspora engagement and to more often brand diaspora members as 'deserters' and 'traitors' (Gamlen et al., 2013); it expands upon this through revealing the strategies states employ to entice international students into returning to the homeland.

Han and Tong examine how the People's Republic of China (PRC) aims to deploy Chinese students overseas, defined as a 'diaspora in the making,' in the service of its soft power.. They argue that such students are at the nexus of two overarching PRC strategies of soft power: the deployment of the vast Chinese diaspora and internationalization of higher education. Through a study of Chinese international students, state policies/institutions and political speeches, they identify and examine the strategies of an authoritarian state's use of international students as 'ambassadors' and concern that they may fall prey to 'Western' values – or, from the point of view of some Western countries – spies/infiltrators. Han and Tong demonstrate the significant efforts (authoritarian) states may expend to create (through years of ideological and political 'patriotic' education), monitor and control (in part, through dedicated embassy departments, alumni groups and student associations) their international students. While this study focuses on the PRC, there are likely many other states with similar aims and strategies in place.

Rensimer focuses on transnational higher education and particularly international branch campuses (IBCs), in which it is the institution rather than the student which is mobile. Through a study of South Asian diaspora students attending British IBCs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Rensimer demonstrates that British IBCs serve as perceived arbitrators of cosmopolitan capital which both advances their employment prospects within the UAE (and hence, continued residency) and opens doors for future mobility. The choice of IBC attendance is made at the nexus of precarious residency status and a narrow neoliberal social contract with the state in which all services are provided through private markets. In this way, (British) IBCs, are implicated in both perpetuating the limited social contract between these 'impossible citizens' and the government, and Rensimer argues, constitute a component of diaspora governance.

Oldac and Fancourt explore the relationship between existing diaspora and new diaspora as a result of international student mobility (which taken together they dub the 'total diaspora'). Based on a study of Turkish international students in Germany, a country with a large, established Turkish diaspora, they argue that the existence of a diaspora both provided support and challenges for Turkish international students, which likewise impacted on their decision to stay in Germany or return to Turkey upon graduation. In particular, while international students were grateful to receive assistance upon arrival, they quickly set about trying to distinguish themselves from the established Turkish diaspora. Social media were instrumental for the Turkish international students in creating this distinction and setting themselves apart within the total diaspora, allowing them to create their own community identity which aimed to largely create a separation within the 'total diaspora' – those of working-class guest workers, and themselves as elite international students. This distinction was particularly desirable as students felt that German society carried considerable stigmas about the Turkish community. In this way, Oldac and Fancourt challenge the assumed cohesion and homogeneity of diaspora, with a particular emphasis on divisions along class, and the impact of 'host' discrimination and stigmas.

In her paper, Karen Lillie investigates elite young people's transitions to international higher education. Based on a study of a diverse set of elite students at the Leysin American School in Switzerland, she explores these students' future higher education aspirations and intentions. She argues that due to racism in many highly sought-after destinations (e.g. United Kingdom, United States) that despite their economic wealth, mobility for these elites produces *challenges* to their privileged social status. This complicates much of the literature around elite mobility as a form of status perpetuation.

In order to navigate this situation, and preserve their elite status, students activated their diaspora networks. She demonstrates that although diaspora communities are often associated with serving as a form of support for marginalized 'others' (e.g. often economic migrants, refugees), that elites strategically connect with such communities for status maintenance. Lillie argues that this extends our understanding of the work that diaspora communities perform, and that they should also be recognized for their role in the preservation of privilege across borders.

Taken together, this SI represents the first collective and sustained thinking on the role of diaspora in internationalization in higher education. Beyond the individual empirical contributions, each paper opens new avenues of thinking about some of the major themes of diaspora and internationalization in higher education: mobility and connectivity. We invite scholars to engage with these ideas.

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