Study, Work and the Effects of Culture

Studier, arbete och effekterna av kultur

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Abstract

This paper is about culture, cultural meeting in a new place or organization, and also about identity and how identity takes form with the help of culture. The information is gathered from three informants, and their information is connected to research in those areas; culture, globalization, identity, study and work. With the information that I will get through interviews with my three informants is to help explain if there are differences and similarities. I go through how these three individuals think and act in their meeting with a new place’s culture. I use that information to find ways to make it easier to go and work or study abroad, and be prepared that culture differences will occur, and hopefully this paper will give some insight into how to deal and cope with these problems.

Abstrakt

Den här uppsatsen handlar om kultur, kulturmöten, identitet, studier och arbete. Informationen är tagen från tre informanter, och den information jag fått från dem kopplar jag ihop med undersökningar inom dessa områden (kultur, globalisering, assimilation, identitet, studier och arbete). Det är för att hjälpa mig se och visa likheter och skillnader mellan mina informanter berättelser. Jag går igenom hur mina tre informanter tänker och agerar när de möter en ny plats kultur. Det här är då för att se om det kan bli lättare att arbeta eller studera utomlands, för att vara beredd att skillnader kommer att uppstå, och med hjälp av den här forskningen hoppas jag att svaren kommer ge en insikt i hur man enklare kan hantera dessa problemsituationer.


Nyckelord: Kultur, Globalisering, Studier, Arbete och Identitet, Transnationalism Integrering, Creolisation.
Prelude

I want to start off by sincerely thanking my mentor Åsa Nilsson Dahlström who has been very supportive in my study and research, and also given me very good counselling and have been patient with me.

I would like to give my second thanks to my informants, without you three my research would not have been able to take form, so I thank you deeply as well. Lastly, I want to thank all those who have listened to me ramble about my research and who has shown interest in it; it has helped me want to continue and go through with it, and the fact that what I research seems to hold peoples interest is amazing.

I have chosen to do my research about these subjects; culture, globalization, transnationalism, integration and creolization, identity, study and work, because I have also travelled and moved to a new place where I started to study, which was a great experience for me. Hence why I wanted to see how other people act and think when in similar situations and how they have dealt with the problems that they faced when moving.

This study is also for future references for employers to see how important it is to take in to consideration that people might see problems different. This is also the reason why I want to work in a global environment with different kinds of people, with different sets of values and backgrounds. In doing research about people that move through different places with different cultures I also wanted to see how people - different from my own background - acted in the similar situations as I had been in. By studying my informants answers I hope it will help me see how both they and I think about similar problems and how they solved it or if they did not manage to do so. My curiosity of how people act from different backgrounds is the idea and thoughts behind this research.
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Starting point
This paper will look at culture, transnationalism, integration, tourism and creolization, identity, study, work and the effects it might have on people working or studying abroad. Also, how my informants look at terms culture, identity, assimilation, how working and studying in a different country has been and if that has had any effect on them in the way they think and act.

Purpose
I started this research because I wanted to see how people think about culture and its effects on studying and working in another country and how my informants define the term culture. By looking at my own experience and other people’s experiences in the same kind of situation, I want to help map out if there is a similar way of thinking around the world, even if we are of different cultural background.

The purpose of this research is to find out how “culture” is defined and described by my informants, and what experiences they have of working and studying in a different society.

Limitations
My limitations I have in this paper is that it is not gender sensitive in the sense that all my informants are male because they were the first to respond to my invitation to be interviewed. I have not been able to meet two of my informant’s eye to eye do to geographical reasons and have only been able to talk to them through means of Skype which might hinder me to pick up and notice key notes in their speech do to no being able to see body language or their eyes.
**Method**

I have chosen to interview my informants and have asked them for information of how they see culture. I add anthropological theory to explain what they are talking about and to understand their information and also their behavior.

Without my informants help I could not have made a more in-depth research about how my informants as individuals act or think when they move to a new place or work in a different place with a different setting and context.

To get more to the core of what my three informants think about the subject culture, I will add terms to help explain what might have affected them and use theories from globalization, transnationalism, integration, creolization and identity.

I prepared a semi structured interview guide in case my informant’s stories halted or slowed down. I also used this guide to not lose track of the subject at hand. When I started to interview my informants they gave me time and a lot of information about their time as students and worker in another place. In my interviews my informants reflected of what they had done in different situations. They were very open and had no problem telling me about their time abroad and that enabled me to use follow up questions.

Interviewing my informants as a method I will now explain a few things why it is a working method for my research. I have three informants they all have something to tell. With interviewing them I try to get as close to the story/information of what my informants tell me, letting them talk about their experience. I am well aware that using questions that I have chosen is partly leading my informants.

My informants all have something to tell about their own experience and by reflecting on their experience and then answering my questions will give me a great insight in what they have been through and that is my empiric data that will help me build my research.
When moving abroad; cultural variation in the world is no longer the same and anthropology has always had an interest in recording thoughts, activities, relationships that goes on in humanity in different contexts and places (Hannerz 2010, p.546). If my informants have been effected by moving abroad, we will see. Moving abroad is something that all my three informants do, two of them Chris and Sean represent in this paper more the part of trying to live and study in another country, both of them stayed in Sweden one year and the other two years.

Brian in this paper represent; International business and the diversity of cultural values, beliefs, habits and traditions had a much larger impact on internationally operating organizations then was first believed so management of organizations had to do significant adjustments of how to run these businesses (Holden 2014, p.181). Brian represent himself and how he acts or think when working in such an environment and with that help describe international business environment more in-depth.

The Informants
This research is based on my three informant’s experiences, which all have different backgrounds. All my informants are made anonymous these names that I am using are not their real names.

Brian is a male in his 50s from Sweden he works in a global company, where he has duties which include working abroad. He has been on long term stays on contract in other countries, and he also does shorter business trips abroad. Among the informants, Brian’s perspective represents him as a working agent in this research. Brian as an agent represent meeting other people from different cultural background in work related situations.

Chris is a male who is around 25 years old, he is from Taiwan and he chose to be an exchange student and went to Sweden for two years, to study at a university. Chris has not started to work yet and his experiences in this research represent him as an agent coming from a different culture, and of studying and living in Sweden.
Sean is a male, who also is around 25 years old, from Japan, and he also went as an exchange student to Sweden where he stayed for one year to study at a university, and now he is back in Japan. He has taken an internship in a Japanese company, so Sean’s experiences represent school and some insight in working environment of Japan.

I found these three informants by asking friends to ask around within their social circles to find people who work or have studied abroad for a longer period of time. I was hoping for four but one person declined and did not wish to be interviewed this happened in a late stage of my study so I chose to continue with only three informants.

The Interviews
I had one meeting face to face with one informant Brian, and I asked that informant if I could record our conversation, which he consented to. With the help of recording the conversation I was to be able to go back and listen to what was said during the interview.

Two of my informants Sean and Chris had moved back to their respective countries, one to Japan and one to Taiwan, so their interviews were done over Skype. Both informants gave their consent to be recorded which again enabled me to go back and listen to what was said during the interview.

There are problems that might occur when using interviews and some are that since I am interviewing the person my question and body language may affect the informant’s answer which would cause bias. Brian has moved back to Sweden recently, Sean and Chris has both moved back to Japan and Taiwan, when I interviewed them they had been back home for some time. The biggest problem here was time difference in managing to interview Sean and Chris and also with equipment working and recordings being saved. I was lucky and had no problems with the equipment.

I then transcribed my texts of the interviews and let my informants read them through to see if there was anything they wanted to add or take out from our conversations. I have chosen to translate all text into English to give two of my informants who cannot read Swedish a possibility to read the complete research they have been a part of when it is finished. My
informants have all read through their own stories transcript before using that information in this paper. I have chosen to make this paper in English rather than in Swedish since most of the information and interviews have been in English. I also believe that making this research might help others in similar situations or if someone wishes to do more research in this area.

**Ethics**

I have chosen to keep my informants anonymous since that is their wish, so I gave each informant a new name. I have also left out any personal data which might reveal their identities. My informants have been informed that their participant in this study is voluntary and that they could cancel their agreement at any time before my presentation of this paper. My transcriptions were made anonymous as well.
Theoretical background

These upcoming chapters are to explain the terms of culture, identity, transnationalism, integration, and creolization. I want to explain these terms with theories in short in these sub chapters. Then continue to explain them more in-depth in connection with my informant’s information.

Culture – a social Construction

The first term that I want to explain is culture. It is widely used in media today and people often speak about culture. But what is culture and how to best describe it? There is a lot of research in this area I have chosen to use the perspective of culture as a social construction.

Hendry (2008, p.20) has said that culture is a social construction of ideas within a society, and cultural norms help people organize their worlds through classification and ascribed values, for instance what is good and what is bad, how members of society are supposed to act and what is right or wrong.

Learning of what is right or wrong leads us to the next part of what is created in our social construction. Norms and classification systems are learned early in life, as part of socialization processes. Although norms are social constructions, they are often perceived as given by nature. The naturalization of norms as ‘the only way of doing things’ are challenged when a person meets someone from another culture, with a different set of norms (Hendry 2008, p.36-37).

People do not only classify their worlds, they also ascribe meaning to the classifications, and create values. Some things that are difficult to place in a classification system, or have fallen out of place, can be marked as ‘taboo’, to be treated with caution. Taboo is something within a society or group that is either forbidden or dirty/unclean, and something to be wary about. Taboos can be said to be people’s way of handling uncertainties by marking them as dangerous. Because taboos too are social constructions, taboos differ between cultures, places, societies and time periods (Hendry 2008, p.38).
Identity

The second term I want to explain is ‘identity’. My research is about how my informants see culture and how they define it. In order to do so as my informants are people that have an identity, I wish to explain identity and how it is connected to culture. By showing the connection between identity and culture I can explain and see if changing places will have an effect on a person’s identity.

A person living in a place will be influenced by the culture of that given place, and depending on the group the identity of the person will also change, even if only temporary. Identity is not static, as one might be led to believe, but might change with external changes such as migration (Eriksson et al, 2011 p.231).

Identity like culture is very often spoken of as static and stabile entities, but in reality they are social constructions and are therefore changeable. Culture and identity also has a complex relation, in the sense that people belonging to ‘a culture’ often are regarded as sharing a collective identity, whereas all individuals, who share that ‘cultural identity’ also have their own individual identity. The group identity, based on ideas of a shared culture, and the individual identity, which is the result of socialization as well as personal development and change, influence each other and change over time (Eriksson et al, 2011 p.231ff).

Collectively shared identities as well as individual identities are often rooted in place and ideas of origin. Although identities are movable, with the people who carry the identities, there are also often notions of ‘being in the right place’ or ‘being out of place’ when talking about feeling comfortable or uncomfortable with being in a certain situation or place. Despite the increasing number of people migrating to work, study or just survive most people feel an attachment to a place (Mendoza & Morèn-Alegnet 2012, p.762-763). Culture, identity and place are interconnected and may explain people’s experiences of migration. The attachment to place may be based on dependence, but it also often has emotional dimensions, as part of one’s identity (Mendoza & Morèn-Alegnet 2012, p.764ff).
**Being Abroad**

Being abroad can mean a lot of different things. I will in this chapter go through different terms as ‘integration’, ‘creolization’ ‘hybridization’, ‘transnationalism’ and ‘tourism’. I have chosen these terms to explain how people from different cultural backgrounds might act or see differences when living in another place. I have chosen to not go deeper in to one of these terms because the main reason for choosing different terms is that I want to show more of a general and large setting of what being abroad might concern. The research and answers of my informants will give more depth to these terms.

There are several terms on what one can use to study these phenomenon’s I will help explain some of them here. When it comes to transcultural meetings in today’s world we do not only have a migrating working force there are a lot more tourism as well (Hendry 08, p258-259.) My informants can in some ways be seen as tourists since they do have a date set for when going back home, but in many senses they try to go beyond just watching differences the host countries culture and try to integrate and learn from the people they meet.

Integration is a two way process with cross influences from the people belonging to the majority culture as well as the people from the minority culture. Integration process requires the people of the minority culture to accept the rules and ways of the host country without giving up on their own rules and ways. Integration is a process where the people of the minority culture take something in from the people of the majority culture to become a part of it but to keep their identity (differencebetween 2014ff).

Creolization can today be used to study interactions and identity formation and allows us to better distinguish different historical processes and social contextualization’s and enhance our understanding of contemporary process of interactions in postcolonial societies and beyond. With the world getting smaller in a sense of that technology has made it easier for travel and keeping contact studies of contemporary interactions are more common and creolization can help understand both historical and contemporary varieties of social and cultural interaction and also the process of identity formation (Knörr 2010, p.734ff).
Knörr (2010, p.735) believes that is a mistake to use creolization interchangeably with transnationalism and hybridization. There are differences of course in how the terms are formed and explained. Transnationalism refers to the socially bound ties across national borders (Knörr 2010, p.735). Hybridization is a term picked from zoology were the process of mixing characteristics, and in people hybridization represent the cultural change (Knörr 2010, p735).

**The Experience**

In these following chapters I tell my informants stories to demonstrate their views and thoughts on what they went through being abroad. My three informants explain how they perceive culture and how moving abroad affected them. I want to add and clarify that my informants do not represent their host society nor all aspects of business environment, these chapters are based on my informant’s stories. I have used my informant’s information stories, followed with theories that will explain certain terms and have certain terms used to explain how my informants might see situations. I do this in order to give a more in-depth explanation to how people act or think when they start to live or work in a different place.

**Sean**

Sean explained that for him, “Culture is closely related to identity for me but culture is also a comprehensive term for me. And closely related to identity, religion and organizations or groups of people.”

Sean talks about the globalization, and that people from different cultures are meeting in more frequent ways. And with people or organizations who are moving more towards a globalization will make or demand changes of the people in a specific culture.

Globalization describes the transnational flow of people, goods and ideas, but does not exclude the importance of the regional and the local (Lewellen 2002, p10-11). The local, the regional and the global levels are interconnected, and at the same time the local places and the regional areas may keep some of their characteristics. It is thus possible to continue to talk about cultural differences between different parts of the world, despite the
interconnectedness of almost everything. People are travelling as never before to other parts of the world, and with the multinational corporations and the increase in migration for work, studies or just survival, there are new demands for the migrants to adapt to the culture and society they enter into (Lewellen 2002, p.125-126).

Sean speaks about people from different countries or organizations who behave differently as they are brought up in different cultures and that they all emphasize different things as being normal, and what is wrong. But with globalization these things do still appear, but an example Sean gives is that if he goes to America he can go into a city and find Japanese restaurants and eat food in a Japanese fashion.

My informant Sean tells me he wanted to go to a place that was unusual for Japanese students, as most of his student friends stayed in Japan or those who went abroad chose an English speaking country. He chose Sweden because it is different from English speaking countries, from his perspective and because he wanted some changes and broaden his horizon. Sean says that he wanted something unique. So Sean chose a place (Sweden) which he knows is different and has a different cultural setting with norms that are not familiar to him.

Going on there is; creolization in history has been used as a term for representing a difference from being born in a new country to address that they are different from the people from their home countries, this was often seen in colonial nations or in slaves taken from their home countries (Knörr 2010,p.732). My informants are not born nor slaves in a new country but they are not of the country they are staying in. Sean is different and might feel different or be treated different in some contexts just because he is not Swedish. Sean starts of by being different and wanting to see something that is different from what he is used to. Sean represents himself and in some context his Japanese heritage while being in Sweden, even if that is something he himself does not think of.

My informant Sean speaks about going to a Swedish university because it was different and he wanted to try something else that was different from his Japanese University. Sean speaks about how he thinks schools in Japan are standardized, that they are using the same methods
in school and preparing for work. To stay in a Japanese school and find a job and work for that same Japanese company for many years would be expected of him, says Sean.

After a while in Swedish school Sean said he found a much larger diversity not just in how people thought about their future jobs but also the age differences in school. In Japanese universities the students are about the same age. Sean said he made friends with people older than him that he went to the same classes with. These differences in diversity were very positive. Because Sean was able to talk with classmates who actually had practical knowledge of work, he said. Creolization; even if groups of people claimed differences they created their own new norms and classifications and in the context of where they create their new identity new connections are made and with that changes in culture and their social environment can be seen (Knörr 2010, p.733). Going to school in a Swedish university Sean managed to create new networks of stable relationships that might benefit his future work and new friends to seek information from, that he would not find at home in his Japanese university. In Japan Sean only went to school with students who had the similar experiences as himself, he felt he grew more in meeting a more diversity of people genders and ages.

Sean says one of the biggest differences between the ways of studying in Japan and Sweden are the methods used. In Japanese universities you go to class and listen to your professor and after class you go home or to the library and study by yourself, they have very little work or homework that is based on group works he says.

There are many universities in Japan that are working towards making their schools more international, but this has proven to be difficult because most universities have little English speaking staff, and many Japanese universities still have very few international employees and exchange students. Even in the subjects that have a high status and rank high on international scores, the seminars or lectures are almost always in Japanese. It is often mandatory for exchange students to know or learn Japanese but also learn basic knowledge about the Japanese culture in order to be able and allowed to study at a university in Japan. By adding these Japanese courses it might create big differences between exchange students and the Japanese students. It can also create a difficulty for the Japanese students if they wish to study or work abroad since their foreign language abilities are poor. But good scores from
a high education within a Japanese university often leads to a job inside Japan (Akiyoshi 2010, p.127-128ff). Many Japanese universities focus on individual strength and can create competitions on grades and scores for finding the best student(s) and the studies are based on individual work, this is from my own experience and other friends from Japan.

It is hardly surprising, then, that many Japanese people stay and work in Japan, because there are a lot of jobs and the pay is often good if you have a degree from a university. However, the lack of international experience and language abilities can also create problems when meeting new business partners or wanting to expand outside Japan. Sean mentions similar things when talking about work in Japan.

In Sweden the education is much higher when it comes to the practical knowledge or that is what Sean thinks. He thinks about the way Swedish students study and have discussions, questioning and speaking their opinions in class helps with using the information they acquire in a more practical way.

Sean mentions that working in groups consisting of classmates and having further discussions and by working together it is easier to learn more since the information you get is told from different points of views. When Sean speaks of the way Japanese universities work that the education is hard and good, but there are few cases where you work in a similar practical way such as group based work/studies. Sean says that the education and the study models in Japanese and Swedish are different but that they are both good in their own way. Intercultural integration is a movement of people that becomes a global fact, a fact that regards all people, it allows for cultures to exchange stories, languages and different needs to be discovered. But movement of people does not only allow for change or helping people understand different views. It can be problematic and hard to overcome or share these differences (Contini 2013, p.1820ff).

Sean talks about as the most difficult change is the language. In Japan it is Japanese in lessons, here in Sweden you talk English or Swedish, even if he can speak English it is not on the same level as the Swedish students he says. The language background between English and Japanese is quite different, which is hard to overcome at first but Sean worked hard and
felt that it was good for him, in the end it was easier. Here Sean used his new found network and asked for help in speaking English and even Swedish to help himself understand more and to learn faster both in school and outside of school.

After studying in Sweden for about one year Sean returned to Japan to finish his studies and as I spoke to him he had also started an internship in a new company. When we started to talk about the differences in a new company and his study, Sean says he sees a difference in working in a new company which is not as homogenic as the bigger Japanese companies which often have a very strict organization culture.

The negative effect of this is if the organization creates a really strong organization culture, where new ideas are not welcome, which in turn will hinder the organizations’ development (Jacobsen & Thorsvik 2008, p.137,139). Sean mentions the friends that he knows and studied with have been hired by a Japanese company and are expected to work there for a longer period of time. Sean sees a change in that when he thinks of globalization with markets changing and because the Japanese population is decreasing it will become more important to hire and it will become more important to hire staff from other countries and turn to different markets.

When I started talking to Sean he says that he has started to see more diversity in Japanese companies in that more foreign people has started to work in these companies, which Sean had not thought that much on before. When I ask Sean about studying abroad and if he talks with friends and students about how much it has helped him, Sean says he thinks it is a good experience to travel and study abroad. Sean says that he is talking to students about that it was a positive experience and that learning about another country and that culture helps broaden the mind and how to look on things with different eyes. Sean do see some problem with this, and mentions that it is still hard to find work if you do not use or have an understanding of the Japanese working culture. Sean still thinks that going abroad is good and that it gives the possibility see things with different eyes. By going abroad for study or work also offers more choices for the future in terms of career opportunities and promoting intercultural understanding.
Sean’s perspective is that in Japan the companies are very homogenic but he is also starting to see a change even though from his perspective it is a small change. Chie Nakane and Ruth Benedict have a model that describes Japan based on a vertical society. Group social competition that are dynamic between factions of an organization and between organizations of the society. Predominant social relations in Japan are diffuse, hierarchical, dyadities. These vertical interpersonal relations makes social groups exclusive, internally ranked activity units, so that the structure of Japanese society is based on the characteristics of its constituent social groups. This theory is built around the stem-family of traditional Japan (Kelly 1991, p.398-399ff). Critics against this model have been Befu, Mouser and Sugimoto. They describe a conflict in Japan, between group, individual growth and group solidarity, self-interest with/or against collective interest and personal expression with social conformity. By gaining the former comes to the expense of the latter in this case. Groupism is but an ideology to Befu et al. pressed by the elite and only accepted by most people whose motivation are private interests (Kelly 1991, p.399ff). These models gain the people in the top or at the expense of another part as Befu et al. says.

Sean thinks that by going abroad and study or work can help oneself to see more than what exists at home. You can have a wider choice of what you would like to work with, since many of his friends chose a company while they were still in school. By looking for more choices Sean thinks that a lot more people can chose work that they would like to do instead of finding work that has good pay but they might not actually enjoy.

Chris

Chris responded to the question what is culture for you? By saying; “What culture is, for me? It is how people think, act, talk, write, their behavior. All this is culture, and it is different depending on the area of where the people live.”

Chris believes that a place’s culture is different, depending on where people live and where they come from, culture is according to him helping or making people behave different, and that this affects how people become or act. He talks about the Internet and the feeling that it
has helped a lot with opening the world up for different people, it does not matter who it is as long as the person has the right means to access the Internet. With the Internet as a new information- and communication technology the world for some people have become smaller, communication is made easier and the chance to study or work abroad has become a bit easier. The internet has enabled people to come in contact with new places and their culture.

My informant Chris talks about the choices he made for his studies, and how different they were in comparison with his student friends. They chose to go to an English speaking country, so by choosing Sweden he took a country he knew nothing about beforehand. Something Chris saw as an opportunity, and an advantage towards other students. When he sought to find information about Sweden he used the Internet as a source of information and he also talked to some of his seniors that had studied in Sweden. So Chris chose a place which he knew were different and had a different cultural setting with norms that were unfamiliar to him.

Creolization and the process that involves indigenization and ethnicization implies that essentialization of identities from the emerging creole group is not only associated with specific cultural characteristics but with specific common ancestry and heritage as well (Knörr, 2010, p.733). My informants are working or studying they meet people from the host country. When looking at integration people who meet make exchanges of not only commodity but also cultural exchanges, how they do certain things differently or ask about how do you do this certain thing? With creolization it will be easier to study this group that is seen as a different group. If they are seen as a different group it will affect how they are met and from that context my informants build their new contacts/networks and social environment.

My informant Chris takes up the same things as Sean about language with the difference that in Taiwan the lectures he attends are in Chinese and in Sweden they are in English. Chris also points out that it was hard at first but that he got into it quite quickly. Another big difference he talks about is the way lectures are attended in Taiwan; Chris says that they are obligatory
so the students are forced to go to all lectures and that many students go there with some reluctance.

Chris speaks of what how the subjects students choose may not be entirely up to the students. He tells me that because many students are supported financially by their parents, they decide what occupation their child will study for. The Chinese cultural ideology of family member’s mutual responsibility and obligations create strong links to the core family which is harder to break (Lee 2000, p.5). Most parents, Chris says, choose a subject that will get their child an occupation that will earn a lot of money when they start working. The process is made easier with the Taiwanese cultural ideology of family which is taken from the Chinese and similar to the Japanese stem family (Lee 2000, p.5ff).

In the Taiwanese universities there are some students who see their years as students as a way to explore and see what careers are available and interesting for them. Some students do not know what to choose, but this is often not a problem since the subject or career is chosen for them, by their parents or an older role model or by a teacher from a previous school. When a student has found a subject that is interesting their motivation and results get better. The universities give the students opportunities to search and try for a career that might suit them, and by looking at the labor market they have a chance to get higher results, to have a better chance to get an employment within a career of their choice (Yii-Nii 2010 p.194ff).

With other family members deciding what education to take is one reason and another is lectures being obligatory, many students sleep during lectures in protest Chris says. Students do not talk to the professors in the same way as students and professors do in Sweden. He continues with professors hold the classes and the students take notes. Chris says it is a big difference, in Sweden the way that a student’s talk and can question their professors. If Chris asks a question in Taiwan on a lecture to his professor, the professor will say that he is stupid and have not listened during his lectures. Taiwanese universities has been influenced by Chinese models but must also acknowledge a Japanese influence. Japanese colonization of Taiwan in 1895-1945 had a large impact on much of Taiwanese life (Hsin-Ling et al 2006, p.829ff). By adding the information of how Japanese schools are from the previous chapter. Both Sean and Chris share a similar school environment in Taiwan and Japan...
The teaching methods are quite different between Taiwan and Sweden. Chris likes the Swedish methods more, being able to use groups to work with and the possibility to ask questions to the professor in order to learn more. Chris feels like the practical use of the theories they study becomes easier to understand or use, it is not just a book that he has to learn and memorize from. That is usually how we do tests in Taiwan Chris tells me, in Sweden he is allowed to use the books during tests. He thinks it is not if you can memorize the formulas, but how you use them or if he is able to describe how to use the formulas in a practical way that is important. That is a big difference between Swedish and Taiwanese exams that Chris thinks is very positive. When it came to the difference in that some classes are not mandatory he noticed that students in Sweden where much more enthusiastic about going to lectures and class.

Chris says that after having been an exchange student in Sweden he has changed his views; if he had stayed in Taiwan he would have taken a job at a company in Taiwan. However, now when Chris has seen how Swedish students study and by meeting older classmates who have worked in Sweden he has also learnt about that work hours and pay is different here then back home.

Chris wishes to work in Sweden or somewhere else abroad after school. He tells me about the challenge for him is the language, but Chris thinks that is something positive as well as he can speak English and Chinese and that many companies today work with Chinese companies.

By building Chris’s network of information based knowledge and by making friends if he chooses to come back to Sweden and to work Chris has a bigger chance of success since he has support from his established network here. With friends and with his credentials he hopes that he will have an easier time getting a job in Sweden.

One thing Chris is worried about is his parents because the government in Taiwan does not have a pension system as there is in Sweden. He must go back to Taiwan if they become ill or when they become too old to work to help and take care of them. Chris wishes for them to be healthy so that he can work abroad for a few years. When asked about if Chris thinks working
abroad and within other cultures would give him disadvantages when searching for a new job in Taiwan, he says that he believes it could help him get employment easier.

My informant Chris talks about identity in relation to how he has understood the Swedish identity, and as a student from Taiwan he believes he does not have the freedom as a Swedish student has. Collectively shared identity, norms and values, which in turn can be based on for instance religion, ethnicity, sexual preferences or gender, but also corporate membership, can have a strong impact on individuals and their behavior, whether they belong to the host society or have just migrated there (Leve 2011, p.513). He talks about that many students in Taiwan are still economically dependent on their parents, which makes it harder for them to argue with their parents. The difference is that Swedish students by getting student loans, studying and then being able to earn money, they can become independent from their parents and develop their own identity.

Chris mentions again that the government does not have a retirement system like in Sweden and that it is up to the children to support their parents when they can no longer work. So he sees a big difference in how to create his own identity between Taiwanese culture and how Swedish people can create their own identity within their culture.

When talking to Chris he says that being an exchange student and learning about another culture has affected him in a positive way. We talked about if he would recommend being an exchange student to other students, and Chris says that he has already started doing that. He talks about how it helps to actually experience a different culture and live in a different society.

When asked about how Chris prepared himself before moving and how he collected information about Sweden he says that reading books and searching for information online are good tools to gather information. However, in order to get a full understanding about a new place, Chris says, you have to move to that place or otherwise your knowledge will only be theoretical. It would be more difficult to learn about cultural norms and practices without having experienced them yourself.
Brian

Brian thinks that culture is hard to describe, but one way to explain it is that in a specific area, culture is a way for people to learn, act and behave according to that specific place. Within this specific place culture works to let people know and use it as reference for a way to act, what is okay, and what is not okay.

Brian works in different parts of the world with people from different cultural background and he mentions that it is important to have or create a basic knowledge of how people behave in different cultures. With this knowledge it is often easier to interact with the people living there.

To understand how other people work becomes easier if Brian puts himself into their position and try to understand them through their point of references, in that specific area and how the people who works in that environment behave, this is to stay away from breaking taboos.

In creating ‘taboo’ and what is different between people of different cultures has to with that culture for many people is about traditions that define individuals as belonging to one group, based on such features as a common language, dialect, food preferences, and style of fashion in a way that can be predictable (Markowitz 2004, p.330). Previously, ‘culture’ was often used to refer to ‘a society’ or, more recently, with ‘ethnicity’. It was often talked about ‘cultures’ as distinct and stable entities, which could organize people. But ‘cultures’ have never been completely distinct from each other or stable, and with globalization the concept of ‘culture’ has become even more loose and difficult to define (Markowitz 2004, p.329-330, see also Fischer 2009, p.25, Bercovitch & Foulkes 2012, p.26 and Busch 2012, p.9-10).

When internationally organizations started to come up there was not as many as it is today, it was important to start investigating and find tools to help explain behavior and how to find middle grounds for international organizations, so by studying cross-cultural differences and how people behaved it became easier to explain and come up with methods and solutions for these different problems (Holden 2014, P.181). This study is referred to as cross-cultural management "It describes organizational behavior within countries and cultures; compares organizational behaviour across countries and cultures; and perhaps, most importantly, seeks to understand and improve the interaction of co-workers, clients, suppliers, and alliance
partner from different cultures and countries and cultures." (Holden 2014, p.182). Within these different organizations it was complex for any outside party to come in and work taboos were common. And when talking to Brian and asking him how he prepares.

Brian says that it is important to be prepared, but most often it is hard to find all the information you need on the internet. In some cases the company Brian works with holds seminars for employees to teach them about the country they are about to work in. Brian mentions that this is more for the people that are going to move to a new country and work there for long periods of time. There might not be a seminar if the work is only for a few days or weeks in a new country, unless there is something very unique about the situation in that country or place.

Brian continues with that when it comes to preparing for a new country the best things to do is look at the information available on the Internet, but also to see if you have colleagues or friends that have been in that country. The important part here is that the people you to talk to have relevant experience so that their advice can help him solve the problems he might face, Brian says.

Brian also explains that it is important to pay attention to cultural differences, and also not assume that you understand everything. It is important to not put yourself or the counterpart in any unnecessary conflicts.

Brian takes examples from the USA and Asia. In the USA they are much more direct than in let us say Sweden, in Sweden it would come out as blunt or brusque, but for an American this is a normal behavior. In some Asian countries Brian have noticed that you have to save face and if there is something that needs to be discussed you discuss this with that person after the meeting is over and in private.

Brian continues with that it is up to oneself to be prepared and it is vital for a business trip where there will be negotiating, so there will be less misunderstandings. Depending on the country and place the negotiations are different and that is why preparations are needed and
important. Where Brian works breaking a taboo might have negative consequences to his negotiations which is why it is important to be aware of the cultural norms in the host society.

The transnational perspective, the immigrants are considered as social actors that within the resources and the restrictions given to them in the context they are, the immigrants make choices and start projects, they define objectives and try to achieve them (Contini 2013, p.1820ff) examples of that are work or education.

Brian says that the more places you work or visit, you will get more experience from different places and with more experience from different peoples cultures, it will be easier to adapt to a new cultures rules and norms. In doing so it will be easier to build confidence and be more assured in the work you are about to do. Business can be explained as more than a singularity it is a form of human endeavor that is richly diverse in both organizational and institutional dimensions. Globally integrated business systems have grown very frequent and they reach to humanity in communities all around the world (Baba 2012, p.23).

Brian goes on that it is easier to generalize about European cultural homogeneity, when talking to a colleague from Asia, whereas when talking to a European colleague, you become aware of the cultural heterogeneity of the continent and you have to take these differences into consideration when you are doing business.

There are cultural differences on a daily basis that global companies must deal with and Brian says that it is important, to have a local offices to help manage these cultural differences between staff and customers who are from different places. Reasons are also that the increasing power of business in society encourages diffusion of business-oriented rules that affects norms and construction into society and academia. So today organizations are not studied in isolation from other social phenomena (Baba 2012, p.23-24ff).

Local offices play a key part in improving intercultural understanding, and Brian often works in places without a local office. Brian says that it is through his interaction with the people he is working with that helps him to learn about local norms. In organizations today, it is very common to learn about how an organization really works by studying its organization culture.
By looking at if the employees/students within the organization share the same values and norms. If the employees can create a standardized work ethic, which will make it easier for staff/students to get along and work faster or better in a structural way (Jacobsen & Thorsvik 2008, p.132-133ff).

It is important for Brian to be attentive when he is working in an unfamiliar place, he needs to use his skills and experience to not fall behind in negotiations. By watching and learning Brian can play by the rules of the place he is working in, which makes it easier to build networks that can turn in to future assignments.

Brian does not go as far as to fully integrate on his shorter working trips, but he copy’s things in his new place of work by watching the people he works with to help him to understand and to know how to work himself. Brian says he does not feel any change in his identity with working in different places, but says that it has helped him to develop new skills and to pay attention to other people. He says he has not changed as a person but he can understand other cultures better. Brian’s skills include being able to mimic or imitating other people’s actions and to learn how to behave properly.

"New institutional theory specifically is an approach which suggests that organizations such as businesses are socially constructed and “involved in an arena of social or cultural production and the dynamic relationships among them” (DiMaggio 1979:1463)." (Baba 2007, p.24).

Brian mentions that if you work in a lot of different cultures it will be easier in meeting a new culture. With meeting more cultures Brian thinks that it would minimize the culture differences that might occur in meeting a new culture. Brian provides an example of his argument: When working in England he had Sikhs in turbans and Muslims who prayed during working hours, in Sweden he does not see that in his office. Brian thinks that this is because England has been a multicultural country for a longer period than Sweden and because of that, it is a more natural occurrence in England, whereas Sweden still has some work to do in accepting similar cases.
Brian reflects on himself and that the more cultures he meets the better knowledge he gets
and that he will be able to use that knowledge when meeting a new culture or a new situation
in his work. Because there are differences between cultures and by knowing that and to not
take the standards and norms of the culture you have been brought up in, you start to see that
a behavior that is not acceptable there is a normal thing in another culture. Brian also says
that it is important not to abandon one´s own cultural references, but to have an open mind
about others’, in order for international work to function smoothly.

**Discussion**

This study is about how my informants see culture and define culture. All three of my
informants are from a background with the opportunity to choose to study or work abroad.
All three of my informants have higher education in another position they might have made a
different choice of where to go to school or maybe not even moving abroad.

To first mention my informants can be seen as long term tourists or in some of Brian’s case
short term. In some aspects my informants might think themselves tourists in the new place.
However they are trying to adapt and make use of the new skills they earn from participating
which might differ from actual tourists. My informants might not see themselves as tourists at
all but if that view is projected on them they might have felt or seen different behavior from
the people they have encountered. It is an aspect that I think is worth mentioning to someone
who wishes to do further research in this subject.

With the increase in movements it is believed that the world would become more
homogeneous, but it has caused an effect in the opposite direction as many local cultures
have instead chosen to claim or defend their culture more fiercely to explain the difference
between them and others, creating a more heterogeneous society (Mazarella 2004, p352). For
example Sean says that Japan still have a strong hold on their working culture and it is
something worth considering when moving abroad, how outsiders are treated and met.

My informants have told me about how they felt when living abroad and how these changes
in place have showed them other ways to work or study. They do not feel that their stay
abroad have changed their identity. However, they feel they have more tools to use when encountering people or a problem appears.

Brian, Chris and Sean have all expressed in different ways that by working or studying with others in a different culture has helped them understand more or not to judge as fast on what seems to be odd or acceptable from their own perspective.

According to my informants, people do not need to change their identity or their cultural background when moving abroad to work or study. But my informants suggest others to be open minded and understanding of the people who live there and have different standards and norms, that these people might act different. To watch and learn from the people you work or study with is important. I can agree one some terms but I cannot agree that people who spends time with other people to not have an effect on once identity or how we see ourselves. Especially if there are fundamental differences in what is the norm of how we act and what is considered acceptable. If I can talk with someone I might not change my beliefs but by accepting and learning new classifications or how to solve problems will have some effects on me as a person and my identity. Even if I myself might not notice it until much later or a certain situation appears.

There is nothing new with people being different or that our behavior is more often than not complex. I want to say this all the evidence I have gathered from my informants points to that by being open minded and wanting to reach a goal it is easier to share or explore new things, like what my informants have done in different senses and context.

International business environment as people and culture are not static we may think that we are or that our culture is. Our behavior becomes even more transparent when we start working with people who do not come from the same place and share the same culture as we do. Examples of that two of my informants are not used to group assignments, this could have caused a lot of trouble if they wished to work alone. In Brian’s case it is to understand how his counterpart acts in order to find common ground to continue negotiations or make the deal. All three of my informants when they stayed abroad have not used their mother tongue they have used English which is a second language to all three. Using a second language also opens up difficulties in understanding or misinterpretations.
Today it is even more important or imminent to study international organizations because there are a significant larger number of them today and the international business are still growing. It is ever important to study cultural exchanges in international organizations to see how people act in different contexts (Holden, 2014 p.181-182). It is hard to do and follow everything that is new, there will never be a map or solution to all problems. But by adding more information and research to the subject it will work as guidelines and help to create better working environments where there are differences in cultural value.

I agree that the terms creolization, transnationalism and hybridization are different. But to not be used interchangeably I am not fully certain. Using these terms will to help describe meetings of people in a globally interconnected world.

Intercultural encounters are increasing because of the increasing of globalization, although globalization does not imply cultural merging. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the field of intercultural encounters (Dragnus 2007, p.54-55) it will be easier to help map out and explain why and how people or organizations interact with each other.

Following anthropology and having focused on my informant’s view of culture, anthropology is challenged to go beyond and study people from different cultures and how they coexist with people from other cultures. Through ethnographic encounters are part of understanding dynamic processes of cultural production and transformation. Ethnographic encounter focus on the cross-cultural and relational dynamics of how people live their daily lives in response to meeting people from different cultural background (Faier & Rofel 2014, p.364ff)

To continue this research it would be interesting to see if there is a difference between the genders. For further research women should be included to see if they experience things differently than what my informants have. Another point in following this research is to focus on encounters between people how did it go and what happened in both good and bad encounters.
Summary
My three informants have all been through different stages and preparations as they worked or studied abroad. In Brian’s case it is his work, in Chris and Sean’s case they chose by their own accord a new place to study in that they knew was going to be different.

They all made their own preparations before going to the new place. For Sean and Chris the preparations where harder since they are less experienced than Brian. Even so the adventure of moving to a different place made them enthusiastic.

Brian talks about friends and negotiations, which makes his network bigger and Brian’s opportunities for future assignments increase. Brian also talks about being able to understand how the people he works with act and behave in order to find common ground to work on. Both Sean and Chris have made friends and as Sean said he met a diversity of people in Sweden that he would not have met in Japan. Sean and Chris have both started to gather their experience and they have said that they wish to work abroad after school. Chris and Sean’s stay in Sweden has helped them to start a wider network outside of their home country.

There are a lot of things to consider when moving to a new country. Language for one, but also norms systems and school or organizational systems might be different from what they are used to.

Brian is the one who talks most of looking at how other people work in the new places he comes to, to mimic or copy in order to fit in. He needs to understand for his negotiations or partnerships to work. Sean and Chris don’t talk about copying, but in their studies they do accept and like the system of group assignments and more open discussions with their professors in school. My informants have by spending time in a new country have encountered different systems of learning. They now see other ways of doing things and that is a means to develop their skills for future work.

Chris, Sean and Brian’s information gives answers that through curiosity and wanting to learn and discover new possibilities. People need to be open minded and sometimes take a step
back in what they initially think is normal or correct and look at the people around them. Learn from the people you work with. Being curious and by taking in new variations of systems will make it easier to adapt. By being able to adapt to new situations will make it easier to create networks within the new organization. Making the stay in a new country easier.
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