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What is This?

Disclaimers, dichotomies and disappearances in international business textbooks: A postcolonial deconstruction

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Abstract
In this article, we draw on a postcolonial sensibility to deconstruct how culture is discussed in mainstream international business textbooks. Through this deconstruction we show: (1) how the initial disclaimers that call for cultural sensitivity can be seen as pointing to the opposite of what they claim, which leads us to question the cultural sensitivity notion from ethical and political standpoints; (2) how the cultural dichotomies that form the core of the discussions always tend to silence the suppressed 'other' features on each side, which leads us to point to the much more ambivalent nature of culture and the hybrid spaces that can be created through cultural translation; (3) how (colonial) history is conspicuously absent from the arguments about 'cultural' underdevelopment and thus haunts the text. We conclude the article by suggesting the development of alternative types of international business textbook material on culture.

Introduction

Underlining the too widespread underestimation of cultural differences by managers, international business (IB)—and international management (IM)—literature[1] problematizes culture as a critical factor for global competitiveness. Because of this alleged increasingly pressing need, many IB/IM textbooks claim to be taking the cross-cultural challenge seriously. Does this mean that the much lamented 'parochialism' (cf. Wong-MingJi and Mir, 1997) no longer prevails in this academic discipline? On the contrary, a recent critical review of the field (Jack et al., 2008) suggests that the

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'parochial dinosaur' (Boyacigiller and Adler, 1991) lives on: the apparent interest in culture does not prevent the IB/IM analyses from remaining largely Anglo-Americano-centric.

In order to illuminate the nature of cultural analyses within IB/IM literature, recent research (e.g. Fougère and Moulettes, 2007; Jack and Westwood, 2006; 2009; Kwek, 2003; Westwood, 2001, 2004, 2006) has drawn on postcolonial theory to show that many of the most prominent works within IB/IM studies (especially Hofstede, 1980) can be seen as characterized by a (neo) colonial, orientalist worldview. An interest to look at how 'culture' is discussed in IB textbooks has also recently emerged, as notably shown in Tipton (2008). Similarly to Tipton, we contend that one of the effects of these textbooks is to mould the next generation of managers into a common western-centric pattern. We see postcolonial theory as potentially providing insightful lens for examining power relations concealed in this literature largely constructed from a central (western) position that views the rest of the world as periphery. But while Tipton's (2008) study focuses mainly on errors related to facts, interpretations, definitions and applications of theory, our aim is to deconstruct, with a broadly postcolonial sensibility, the discussions on culture found in mainstream IB/IM textbooks. By 'postcolonial sensibility', we mean that we draw, like some previous critiques of IB/IM discourse (e.g. Fougère and Moulettes, 2007; Kwek, 2003), on the insights of Said's (1978) 'orientalism' but also on the critical reading of Said from Young (1990) and, in line with other recent postcolonial works within critical management studies (e.g. Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Özkakazanç-Pan, 2008; Westwood, 2006) on other, less dichotomous articulations of postcolonial theory from Spivak (1988a) and Bhabha (1994). We aim to go beyond the postcolonial discourse analyses of IB/IM from Westwood (2001, 2006), Kwek (2003) or Fougère and Moulettes (2007) by adopting deconstructive tactics that, following Derrida (1967), are meant to unsettle IB/IM texts by emphasizing the importance of the notion of 'supplement'.

Our intention here is not to provide a neutral view. We are critical of the guise of neutrality found in mainstream IB/IM textbooks, as it silences and suppresses alternative views; we explicitly wish to point to the other side that is silent and/or suppressed. In particular, as teachers and researchers of IB/IM, the main aspects that we find highly problematic in this literature are the tendency to establish 'scientific' correlations between culture and (under)development without a problematization of colonial history and the discursive dichotomization of the world between a 'modern West' and a 'backward rest' (see Fougère and Moulettes, 2007). This does not mean that the authors of IB/IM textbooks are the objects of our critique: the power effects of IB/IM can be seen as the result of a powerful discourse that is reproduced more than as an expression of the authors' intentions. When we pick particular extracts from the textbooks, it is to serve a clearly stated aim, and we see these extracts as exemplary of the general patterns found in virtually all the textbooks. When at some points we raise the absurdity of what we encounter through our deconstruction, we do so because we feel this is revealing of problematic patterns in IB/IM, not in order to criticize the authors themselves. For such a deconstructive work, it is important to note our situatedness and position ourselves as two academics who are from different Western European countries (France and Sweden), who both have lived for longer periods abroad, although only in other Western European countries (Nordic countries, France, Switzerland), and who have travelled to the rest of the world as Western Europeans.

In the following two sections we introduce some theoretical discussion of: (1) orientalism and how a postcolonial perspective on education can inform a study of IB/IM textbooks; and (2) deconstruction and how it can be combined with a postcolonial perspective. We then proceed to a presentation of our research process and the research tactics we use to expose three main patterns we find particularly ripe for deconstruction in the textbooks. Our deconstructive analysis follows, dealing with these three patterns: (1) how the initial disclaimers that call for 'cultural sensitivity'

can be seen as pointing to the opposite of what they claim; (2) how the cultural dichotomies that form the core of the discussions always tend to silence the suppressed 'other' features on each side; and (3) how (colonial) history is conspicuously absent from the arguments about 'cultural' under-development. In a final section we look for a way forward and propose suggestions for what alternative IB/IM textbooks could look like.

Orientalism, education and international business textbooks

Postcolonial theory broadly attempts to investigate the effects of the colonial and neo-colonial encounters between the West (mainly European former colonial powers and North America) and the non-West and their current influences on the economic, political, ideological and cultural spheres (cf. Ashcroft et al., 2004; Prasad, 2003; Young, 2001). This perspective owes much to Edward Said's (1978) Foucault-inspired discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972, 1977) of orientalism which enhanced our understanding of the historical process of colonization and of the Occident's constitution of the Orient. Postcolonial studies not only examine colonial history and the western endeavours to gain control of non-western territories but also problematize the power relationships between centre and periphery (Aizenberg, 1999; Mishra and Hodge, 1991) and, for instance, the current representation of cultural differences along imperialist lines. It is our contention that such neo-colonial power relationships between centre and periphery appear clearly in the representations found in those western-produced IB/IM textbooks that are aimed at a global audience. That is why we see postcolonialism as a useful lens for examining the power relations concealed in 'global' IB/IM textbooks.

As highlighted by scholars like Said (1978), Spivak (1988a) and Bhabha (1994), colonialism was one of the most profound and significant experiences that shaped western people's perception not only of non-western people but also, and perhaps mainly, of themselves—as well as the non-western people's perceptions of themselves. As argued by Said (1978), the imperialist powers needed to create the Orient as an 'Other', in order to define themselves as centre. Succeeding in this endeavour required a colonial strategy which systematically led colonized people to understand themselves as the inferior and backward Other. The orientalism discourse (Said, 1978) has been characterized by a 'starkly dichotomous view of "the Orient" and "the Occident"' and 'essentialist statements about the former' (Prasad, 2003: 10). Similarly IB/IM textbooks reproduce assumptions about national culture constructed by cross-cultural management scholars like Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars (1993). A colonial mindset is discernible in the binary opposition and hierarchical ordering of nations constructed by these scholars, dividing the world between a developed, modern and rational West, and a non-West with its underdeveloped, traditional and mystical population (e.g. Fougère and Moulettes, 2007; Kwek, 2003; Westwood, 2001, 2006).

Education has certainly been one of the most important (however insidious) vehicles of colonialist appropriation (cf. Altbach, 2004) and in the wake of globalization it is now being transformed into new shapes. Colonial educational systems were oriented towards the training of an administrative elite along metropolitan values, which helped the colonizers to stay in power. Today, the influence of western educational systems is overwhelming in most developing countries (Altbach, 2004), where the elites often contribute to the western political and economic hegemony. As they spread all over the world, business schools and IB/IM courses can be seen as pivotal in this contemporary neo-colonial apparatus, as 'managers around the world are increasingly socialized, *qua* managers, via the machinations of US-centred MBA programs and the like' (Westwood, 2001: 244). Irrespective of where IB/IM courses take place, the literature usually chiefly consists of Anglo-American textbooks, which have become a significant means for the global training of the managerial corps.

A great deal of criticism has recently been targeted towards the view of (mainly national) culture articulated in mainstream IB/IM literature. Most interestingly from the viewpoint of the present article, a number of recent critiques have reflected on IB/IM from a postcolonial perspective, whether relatively implicitly (Ailon, 2008; Sliwa and Cairns, 2009; Tipton, 2008) or very explicitly (Case and Selvester, 2000; Fougère and Moulettes, 2007; Frenkel, 2008; Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Jack and Westwood, 2006, 2009; Kwek, 2003; Özkakazanç-Pan, 2008; Westwood, 2001, 2004, 2006). Several of these works explicitly informed by postcolonial theory have focused on the question of representation: drawing mainly on Said (1978), examining how IB/IM discourse can be seen as characterized by orientalism (e.g. Fougère and Moulettes, 2007; Kwek, 2003; Westwood, 2001). Some of the main findings in these works relate to how IB/IM literature ignores, homogenizes, essentializes and exoticizes the Other and how its scientific analysis of culture establishes correlations that are used as explanations for political and economic inequalities between developed and developing countries. These findings and the characteristics of IB/IM textbooks as systematically analysed by Tipton (2008)—including documented problems with facts, interpretations, definitions and theories—constitute a basis for our deconstructive approach: we do not engage in a systematic discourse analysis of IB/IM textbooks here but build on these previous works.

Other works (e.g. Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006; Özkakazanç-Pan, 2008; Westwood, 2006) have more extensively complemented the Saidian approach based on a binary division between West and East—for which Said (1978) has been much criticized (see e.g. Bhabha, 1983; Loomba, 1998; Young, 1990)—with insights from Spivak (e.g. 1988a, b) and Bhabha (e.g. 1990, 1994) allowing for a better understanding of the inherent ambivalence that characterizes (neo)colonial discourses. One of Frenkel and Shenhav's (2006) arguments is that IB/IM scholarship has had to acknowledge the importance of cultural differences as a result of the resistance and opposition of the Other against the imposition of western management practices: in this sense, IB/IM literature 'should be seen as a hybrid product that was purified to become part of [Management and Organization Studies]' (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006: 869). Westwood (2006), seeking to reconfigure research practice in IB/IM, draws on Bhabha (1994) in order to show how postcolonialism provides analytic tools to study 'the interpenetrations, the "third spaces", the negotiations, the resistances, the indiginisations, the hybridisations' (Westwood, 2006: 107) that characterize international business theory and practice. Similarly, Özkakazanç-Pan (2008), suggesting research avenues for studying IB/IM with a postcolonial lens, urges us to think in terms of identities and management practices that become hybrid as a result of the translation and implementation processes of western theoretical tools in non-western contexts. In line with these works underlining the ambivalence of (neo)colonial discourses, we want our deconstruction to go beyond dichotomies, drawing on the insights of Bhabha and Spivak too. Bhabha and Spivak, who have both been deeply influenced by Derrida (1967; 1981a, b), also provide us with a possibility to articulate the link between postcolonial theory and deconstruction.

Deconstruction and postcolonial theory

We must recognize that, within the familiar philosophical oppositions, there is always 'a violent hierarchy'. One of the two terms controls the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), holds the superior position. To deconstruct the oppositions is first … to overthrow [*renverser*] the hierarchy (Derrida, 1981a: 36).

Deconstruction is an approach that is usually associated with the works of French philosopher Jacques Derrida. In *De la Grammatologie* (Derrida, 1967)—which we mostly focus on here in order to introduce deconstruction[2]—Derrida focuses our attention on western ethnocentrism,

through what he calls 'logocentrism'—meaning that human experience is centred around an original 'logos', i.e. the ancient Greek concept of 'reason', which can be understood as imposing its (rational) rule and closure on texts, human beings and nature, through its embeddedness in the central concepts of writing, metaphysics and science (1967: 11). In Derrida's view, it is as a result of logocentrism that texts can be seen to be structured around binary oppositions—such as 'external/ internal, image/reality, representation/presence' (1967: 50)—in which one term (here, the latter) dominates the other.

Through analyses of the texts of Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Lévi-Strauss, Saussure, and Rousseau, Derrida (1967) challenges the domination of logocentrism in western thought and its claims to authenticity. It is from these arguments that Derrida develops the strategy of thought he calls deconstruction. Derrida's aim is to identify logocentrism within the traditional linguistic system and to demonstrate that language is inherently ambivalent. To undermine the singular and dichotomized meaning of *différence*, Derrida (1967) introduces the term *différance* (created from the French verb *différer*) as a neologism which, while referring both to *differ* and *defer,* highlights the ambiguity hidden within the language system, where all signifiers can only be defined through the use of—and often in opposition to—other signifiers, which leads to their meanings being *deferred*. To Derrida, thinking in terms of *différance* makes it possible to see the opposition of presence and absence, as the terms contain in themselves their own negation, which they rely on for their meanings: '*différance* produces what it forbids, makes possible the very thing that it makes impossible' (1967: 206).

Further, Derrida (1967) insists that a text is not complete without its 'supplement'. This is also rooted in a polysemy in French: the word *supplément* can have the same meaning as the English noun 'supplement' but can also derive from the verb *suppléer* (to make up for). A problem that Derrida sees in (western) metaphysics is that it relies on 'excluding non-presence by determining the supplement as *simple exteriority*, as pure addition or pure absence' (1967: 237). In Derrida's articulation, the logic of supplementarity instead refers to the way in which each term *contains* its opposite. His proposed way out of logocentrism and the closure of knowledge that it entails is to recognize the supplement as part of the text. This is what we propose to do in this article through different deconstructive tactics.

Deconstruction and postcolonial theory can be seen to cohabit well in several ways. First, Derrida's life and *oeuvre* have been deeply marked by his childhood in colonized Algeria and his critique of western thought could itself be seen as postcolonial (see Young, 2000). Second, it can be argued that a deconstructive perspective on orientalism is a more fruitful basis for delivering critique and conceptualizing resistance than Said's (1978) own stance, because understanding the logic of supplementarity inherent in orientalist representations allows one to see the West as being in 'dislocation from itself' (Young, 1990: 139), as the Orient, which is appropriated by the West through these representations, is 'something inside that is presented, narrativized, as being outside'. Third, Derrida has been deeply influential on several of the most prominent postcolonial theorists, especially Spivak (e.g. 1988a, b) and Bhabha (e.g. 1990, 1994). In particular, Spivak (1988a) sees the postcolonial intellectuals as inherently in a deconstructive position since they are using First World theory to articulate Third World resistance, thus being both inside and outside the West. Both Spivak and Bhabha have drawn on the logic of supplementarity to produce their anti-binary articulations that reject logocentric closure: to them, translations of western concepts into non-western contexts may entail the creation of supplementary spaces that can become a resource as a basis for resistance. The notion of 'supplement', in the context of this article, thus proves particularly relevant in two main ways: first, it makes it possible to show how western cultures reject disavowed parts of themselves on the Other, and how they can thus be seen as 'in lack' and 'in

dislocation'; second, it allows for pointing to possible supplementary strategies and alternative articulations of IB/IM texts.

Deconstruction has been used a great deal in organization studies (e.g. Boje, 2001; Cooper, 1989; Jones, 2003; Linstead, 1993). A number of works have been criticized for not following 'Derrida's cautions about the dangers of reducing deconstruction to a method by boiling it down to a simple set of rules' (Jones, 2003: 40), while other critiques have targeted the relativism that they see as entailed by deconstruction (e.g. Feldman, 1998). Although we have been inspired, for developing what we call our 'research tactics', by some of these organization scholars (e.g. Calás and Smircich, 1991; Martin, 1990), our deconstructive strategy is fully adapted to our object of study. Keeping our argument in mind, namely that the way culture is presented in international textbooks is reminiscent of colonial discourse, we attempt to unsettle the established hierarchy in these texts.

Research process, more particular aims and research tactics

We initially selected five IB/IM textbooks to analyse (Deresky, 2006; Hodgetts and Luthans, 2003 [newest edition Luthans and Doh, 2009]; Holt and Wiggington, 2002; Rodrigues, 2001 [newest edition Rodrigues, 2008]; Woods, 2001). These were popular IB/IM textbooks, easily accessed in both our work environments, explicitly written for a worldwide audience and each including a lengthy discussion of culture. We considered these textbooks to be both revealing of broad patterns in IB/IM literature—based on our experiences as teachers and researchers of IB/IM—and influential enough for serving as empirical material for our exploratory study.

Both of us read these five books attentively, focusing on the discussions of culture contained in them. We initially read the books with a 'Saidian' lens, which entailed looking more particularly at 'conspicuous absences' in the representation of non-western as opposed to western cultures and the value judgments embedded therein. Those absences that struck us most in the discussions on culture were (1) the general lack of reflection on colonialism, (2) the general lack of historical discussions, and (3) the almost complete absence of Africa. We also looked for ethical tensions, paradoxes and mismatches in the comparisons between western cultures and non-western cultures.

We then refocused our study on those three patterns that we identified in the five textbooks as being particularly ripe for deconstruction: (1) contradictions between initial disclaimers and the core of the discussions on culture; (2) dichotomous, essentialist, western-based descriptions of the Other inviting mirror images; and (3) passages 'haunted' by (conspicuously absent) colonial history. With these three patterns—each associated with a particular deconstructive tactic—we do not mean to be exhaustive in discussing what we may see as problematic in the textbooks. Rather, we see them as aspects of the texts that we can unsettle through our deconstructive approach: these are patterns in which 'the supplement' becomes conspicuous either by its surprising inclusion or by its very clear exclusion, which invites us to discuss the ways in which it is part of the text.

We then verified if these patterns do characterize most mainstream IB/IM textbooks: we examined 12 more books (Ball et al., 2008; Cavusgil et al., 2008; Czinkota et al., 2005; Daniels et al., 2007; Ferraro, 2006; Griffin and Pustay, 2005; Hill, 2007; Morrison, 2006; Peng, 2009; Rugman and Collinson, 2006; Wall and Rees, 2004; Wild et al., 2006) more 'deductively' since we focused on verifying that similar patterns can be found in them. We believe that our final sample of the 17 books most accessible to us is almost as 'representative' as Tipton's (2008) sample of 19. We found that the three patterns were identifiable in all 17 textbooks[3]. That such striking similarities would be found across such a big sample of mainstream IB/IM textbooks is not so surprising in the sense that mainstream (largely American) business and management textbooks have been

historically characterized by a remarkable isomorphism due to the very constraining framework of university and business legitimacy set in the United States during the Cold War (see Mills and Hatfield, 1999).

We can now describe the three main research tactics through which we implement our deconstructive analysis in order to show:

1. How the initial disclaimers that call for cultural sensitivity can be seen as pointing to the opposite of what they claim. We do this by rewriting one passage where such disclaimers are put forward and make them point to the opposite of what the author actually writes through either simply removing (or adding, depending on the case) a negation or making slightly more elaborate changes (such as replacing a word by its antonym), and then show how these rewritten sentences are closer to what the authors actually do in the remainder of their text. This enables us to question the seemingly benevolent 'cultural sensitivity' notion, both in ethical and political terms.

2. How the cultural dichotomies that form the core of the discussions always tend to silence the suppressed 'other' features on both sides of the dichotomies. We do this by writing a mirror version of a cultural description, pointing to an other side which symmetrically represents western cultures as those that are exotic and limited to certain essential characteristics, thereby making the suppression of the 'other' features conspicuous by its absence. This allows us to point to how the orientalist accounts found in IB/IM textbooks lead to a western culture in need of regeneration (Young, 1990).

3. How (colonial) history is conspicuously absent from the arguments about 'cultural' underdevelopment. We do this by slightly altering one of the few extracts where underdevelopment and history are discussed and writing a new version designed as if the author was fully explicit about colonial history and its consequences on both culture and (under)development. This helps us show how IB/IM text(book)s are haunted by colonial history.

Deconstructive analysis

Our analysis is structured according to the three patterns and the tactics we associate with them.

Disclaimers and cultural sensitivity

> A large number of courses and textbooks are devoted solely to the study of comparative management practices in different cultures, and trying to cover the topic in a single chapter is clearly going to result in a relatively brief summary of key theories. Nonetheless it is included here because the author believes that students need to understand the importance of cultural empathy to business success (Woods, 2001: 10).

From this citation, it is clear that the author establishes a strong link between the need for 'cultural empathy' and a number of 'key theories'. From such a statement one would be led to imagine that these theories would have more to do with how to develop cultural sensitivity than with simple, ready-to-use knowledge about different national cultures. Surprisingly, they (whether one refers to Hofstede, 1980; Javidan and House, 2001; Lewis, 1996; or Trompenaars, 1993) turn out to be mostly dealing with the latter. Nearly all authors are cautious when introducing these models. In most of the 17 books, there are disclaimers as to the limitations to the relevance of such research on national culture—in only three cases did we not identify clear disclaimers (Czinkota et al., 2005; Rodrigues,

2001; Wall and Rees, 2004). However, if there are so many disclaimers before the description of these models classifying national cultures it is also because they are the main general theories that the authors refer to about culture. It almost seems as though whatever is written as initial disclaimers can be read as meaning its opposite. Let us for instance explicitly turn some sentences around in the extract, Alternative version 1 (original on the left, opposite version on the right).

Alternative version 1

- … cultures are not monolithic … What is more, the cultural heritage, and interpretation of it is highly individual, and so it cannot be assumed that two different people from the same country will behave in similar ways or have common beliefs …
- The separation of cultural issues from economic and political is complex, as all three factors interact to influence views and beliefs
- Defining the degree of difference between cultures is not straightforward because recognition of differences is a subjective issue
- As the level of international trade and travel increases, cultures become increasingly intermingled and this cultural confusion may dilute the significance of national cultures … (Woods, 2001: 72)

- … cultures are ~~not~~ monolithic … What is more, the cultural heritage, and interpretation of it is highly **collective**, and so it can~~not~~ be assumed that two different people from the same country will behave in similar ways or have common beliefs …
- The separation of cultural issues from economic and political is **simple**, as all three factors **and their impacts can be clearly differentiated**
- Defining the degree of difference between cultures is ~~not~~ straightforward because recognition of differences is a**n objective** issue
- As the level of international trade and travel increases, cultures become increasingly **distinct** and this **enhances** the significance of national cultures … (our opposite version)

It is clear that no IB/IM textbook author would explicitly write the text on the right; most authors include disclaimers along the lines of those on the left. But when it comes to the models they use (especially Hofstede, 1980, which is presented at length in every book), they directly contradict all of the points that are put forward in these disclaimers, and in our view the text on the right is much more congruent with the understanding of national culture that a model like Hofstede's entails. Beyond a reading of these contradictions as fatal flaws in the texts, we see more ambivalence in what constitutes an appropriate study of culture than the authors otherwise suggest. What is perhaps most surprising to us in these texts is that the supplement is explicitly present: cultures are dynamic, and then they are static; national cultures do not imply behavioural patterns, and then they do. The logocentrism that characterizes the models classifying national cultures—favouring static features over dynamic changes, overall patterns over individual particularities, etc.—is undermined by the disclaimers that raise the dominated term as representing the 'real' nature of culture.

Why do the texts call for such 'care' in 'comparing cultures' (Woods, 2001: 72) if what they later advocate totally contradicts the initial disclaimers? Probably because the call for cultural sensitivity can be seen as the one argument that can make IB/IM cultural discourse look ethical. Indeed, the textbooks are zealous in preaching the need for 'cultural sensitivity' (e.g. Czinkota et al., 2008; Deresky, 2006; Holt and Wiggington, 2002), 'cultural awareness' (e.g. Cavusgil et al., 2008; Daniels et al., 2007), 'cultural literacy' (e.g. Czinkota et al., 2008; Ferraro, 2006; Griffin and

Pustay, 2005; Hill, 2007; Wild et al., 2006), or 'cultural intelligence' (Peng, 2009). Deresky (2006: 82) presents cultural sensitivity as 'a critical skill for managing people and processes in other countries … that is, a working knowledge of the cultural variables affecting management decisions'. The view put forward is thus quite utilitarian: the value of cultural sensitivity is to be understood in terms of the benefits it can bring for management decisions, as in the following example, where the 'multicultural manager' is introduced as follows (Rodrigues, 2001: 31, 2008: 27):

> You cannot motivate anyone, especially someone of another culture, until you have been accepted by that person. A multilingual salesperson can explain the advantages of a product in other languages, but a *multicultural* [our emphasis] salesperson can motivate foreigners to buy it. That's a critical difference.

Being a 'multicultural' salesperson has value to the extent that it allows more to be sold. In a sense, the western interest in cultural sensitivity has always had such utilitarian aims: as Westwood (2001: 253) puts it, 'the old anthropological project of bringing the Other under the gaze of the Western scientific apparatus [was meant to make] it amenable to the machineries of categorization, tabulation and order', in other words, manageable. This historical understanding shows how issues of power, domination and 'management' have always lain at the heart of the cultural sensitivity question, as formulated by western scholars.

In addition, cultural sensitivity often seems to be equivalent to a willingness to accept anything as long as there are business opportunities, as in the following example (Deresky, 2006: 79–82):

> Foreign companies have had mixed success in Saudi Arabia, due in large part to how well they understood and adapted imaginatively to Saudi customs … Saudi Arabian sanctions seem harsh to many outsiders ... For example, the government publicly beheaded three men in early 2002 for being homosexuals … In spite of contrasts and paradoxes, foreign companies find ways to be highly successful in Saudi Arabia (Daniels et al., 2004).

> This chapter's opening profile describes how an understanding of the local culture and business environment can give managers an advantage in competitive industries. Foreign companies—no matter how big—can ignore those aspects to their peril. Such differences in culture and the way of life in other countries requires that managers develop international expertise to manage on a contingency basis according to the host-country environment … According to numerous accounts, many blunders made in international operations can be attributed to a lack of cultural sensitivity … *Cultural sensitivity*, or *cultural empathy* [emphasis in original], is an awareness and an honest caring about another individual's culture. Such sensitivity requires the ability to understand the perspective of those living in other (and very different) societies and the willingness to put oneself in another's shoes.

Judging from the use and commentary of this 'opening profile', it seems as though the idea of cultural sensitivity can be used to mean not only that the 'locals' should be understood in their own terms, according to their own cultural values, but also that when some local practices strongly contradict with what has been established within one's own society as basic human rights, it may be better, for the sake of business, to choose to ignore these issues altogether in order to avoid 'blunders'. The notion of cultural sensitivity thus becomes convenient in order to justify business practices that would be unacceptable in a liberal context but can be claimed to be imaginatively adapted to certain authoritarian foreign contexts. Again, the utilitarian aim is clear here; but beyond the cynicism of such a position, what may be most striking from a close reading of the text is the tension between the alleged ethical posture of 'an honest caring about another individual's culture' and the ends-justify-the-means business rationality.

Appropriating a certain cultural relativism, IB/IM authors sometimes superficially draw on a language somewhat reminiscent of a postcolonial worldview, which can be seen as an attempt to neutralize the subversive potential of the postcolonial critique. This again shows some of the power effects of using disclaimers and referring to cultural sensitivity or cultural awareness: it legitimizes the position of authors from the culturally sensitive West as those who have the first and last word on 'scientific' descriptions of culture. This confirmed authority contributes to western domination because it allows the language and categories developed in the West to be those that are deemed appropriate in discussing culture; in particular, the overwhelming focus on national cultures serves to reproduce western domination because the very notion of nationhood has been imposed by the West on the rest (Bhabha 1990; see also Frenkel, 2008).

In sum, the use of disclaimers and the focus on cultural sensitivity/awareness can be criticized from both ethical and political angles. From an ethical viewpoint, the implied reliance on an unconditional caring for the Other is in obvious tension with the inherently utilitarian business rationality. Relativism of the cultural sensitivity kind as described in IB/IM textbooks is merely a way to not engage, to not *relate* with the Other, while still trying to take advantage of the opportunities business exchanges provide. By sometimes indulging in a mild 'self-critical Eurocentrism' and posing as though they tolerantly accept radically different cultural values, IB/IM textbook authors contribute to 'abandon[ing] the Other altogether in the name of non-interference' (Radhakrishnan, 1994: 309). From a political viewpoint, this means that disclaimers and the focus on cultural sensitivity contribute to silencing the Other. We do not want to overstate the intentionality in this; to some extent the authors reproduce a discourse that has become legitimate and appropriate. What we see as undeniable is that this discourse has certain power effects and perpetuates the domination of western management knowledge.

Dichotomies and the suppressed sides

Authors such as Kwek (2003) and Westwood (2006) have shown through their discourse analyses that there are clear orientalist tendencies in the discussions of culture found in IB/IM literature, and our reading of IB/IM textbooks confirms this diagnosis: dichotomies between western and non-western (often eastern) cultures abound. What is interesting is that in the process, even though it is usually 'the non-West' that is stereotyped most obviously and crudely, the depiction of the West can also become, through a mirror effect, a highly stereotypical one. This is indeed one of Said's contentions that orientalism is also a matter for the Occident to construct its own identity in opposition to an 'Other'. Taking this argument further, Young (2000: 200) shows how this 'oriental other's only identity comes from its relations to the West, and not surprisingly turns out to be nothing more than a mirror in which the West sees the rejected and disavowed parts of itself'. In Young's (1990: 139) reading of Said, this leads to 'the West's own dislocation from itself, something inside that is presented, narrativized, as being outside'. In this sense, the Orient that is depicted in orientalist writings should be seen as part of the identity of the West—not the East. Similarly, in IB/IM textbooks the dichotomies between the central West and the peripheral non-West represent the latter as characterized by those features which are suppressed, rejected and disavowed in the West, as we set out to show below through different examples and one mirror version.

Let us propose a first mirror version where some of the hierarchy is reversed, the West being put in a more peripheral role than usual. In one of the very rare attempts in IB/IM textbooks to discuss issues connected to the idiosyncrasies of African cultures, Rodrigues (2001; 2008) introduces 'the African thought system (*Ubuntu*)'. Alternative version 2 is our proposed mirror version (right) of the original text (left).

Alternative version 2

Just as there is no totally homogeneous thought in other regions of the world, such as Europe and South America, there is no totally homogeneous thought in Africa. There is in fact a diverse sociocultural, linguistic, and historical composition among the African nations. However, as is the case in the other regions throughout the globe, there is an underlying pan-African character that results from a unique geographical, historical, cultural, and political experience. Therefore, Africans can be identified by certain characteristics in their daily lives. Just as there is an Asian thought system (*Confucianism*), for example, there is an African thought system—*Ubuntu*. One important characteristic of *Ubuntu* is a high degree of collectivism—unity of the whole rather than the parts is emphasized. Thus, similar to *Confucianism*, the individual is strongly connected to the group. Hence, *Ubuntu*, too, emphasizes suppression of the self-interest for the sake of the group's needs … therefore, in general, managing people in organizations in Africa is likely to require a substantially different managerial approach from the one used in many of the organizations in America, Sweden, and Denmark, for example. This means that, in many organizational situations in Africa, a reward system emphasizing group achievement is often more effective than a reward system emphasizing individual achievement. (Rodrigues, 2001: 21, 2008: 21–2, with two slight modifications)

Just as there is no totally homogeneous thought in other regions of the world, such as **Africa** and **South Asia**, there is no totally homogeneous thought in **Europe**. There is in fact a diverse sociocultural, linguistic, and historical composition among the **Europe**an nations. However, as is the case in the other regions throughout the globe, there is an underlying pan-**Europe**an character that results from a unique geographical, historical, cultural, and political experience. Therefore, **Europe**ans can be identified by certain characteristics in their daily lives. Just as there is an **Americ**an thought system (***Self-actualization**ism*), for example, there is an **Europe**an thought system—***Εγωισμός***. One important characteristic of ***Εγωισμός*** is a high degree of **individual**ism—unity of the **parts** rather than the **whole** is emphasized. Thus, similar to ***Self-actualization**ism*, the individual is strongly **disconnected from** the group. Hence, ***Εγωισμός***, too, emphasizes suppression of the **group's** interest for the sake of the **individual**'s needs … Therefore, in general, managing people in organizations in **Europe** is likely to require a substantially different managerial approach from the one used in many of the organizations in **China**, **Swaziland**, and **Lesotho**, for example. This means that, in many organizational situations in **Europe**, a reward system emphasizing **individual** achievement is often more effective than a reward system emphasizing **group** achievement. (our mirror version)

Now, one needs to imagine that the text in Alternative version 2 is the only half-page (out of 671 pages) devoted to Europe in a whole IB/IM textbook subtitled *A Cultural Approach* in order to put it into context[4]. It is rather doubtful that a future manager, in the prospect of 'managing people in organizations in Europe', would learn enough about what s/he would need to know in this short text. Whether this sounds credible is of course not the main issue here. But we feel that through this short, absurd text, it becomes clear that the stereotyping of the Other and their depriving of any cultural subtlety can (and does) easily backfire: 'we' lose as much as 'they' do. The lack that characterizes Europe in the passage above is substantial: 'community' is completely suppressed, just as 'the individual' was in the original text. Our mirror version thus makes the complete exclusion of the supplement obvious.

Some of the other dichotomies that are most recurring in the textbooks relate to: logic vs. emotions—for example, 'Do not appeal solely to logic, for in Japan emotional considerations are often more important than facts' (Hodgetts and Luthans, 2003: 61); secularism vs. religion—for example, 'in Middle Eastern countries, Islam is a very important influence within societies, but in Western societies which are predominantly Christian, the social significance of religion is declining rapidly' (Woods, 2001: 71); and reason vs. superstition—for example, 'The solar eclipse of October 1995 was seen most prominently in Thailand, where superstitions gained as many headlines as the eclipse itself' (Holt and Wigginton, 2002: 289). Regarding the latter, the exoticism—and cultural backwardness—of such an emphasis on 'superstitions' is strongly implied.

What is also implied, but in an even more indirect way, is that, as there is neither room nor voice for rational Orientals, there is none either for superstitious Westerners. Should we understand that there is no superstition whatsoever in the West? Rather, our interpretation is that it is suppressed in modernistic management discourses, as a weaker side that it is not desirable to show—i.e. 'the rejected and disavowed parts of [the West] itself' (Young, 2000: 200). The same goes for 'emotions'. Is it that the Westerners' emotions do not have any impact on their actions? One citation from Hodgetts and Luthans (2003: 109; Luthans and Doh, 2009: 149) may be quite telling here: 'Arabs often act on the basis of emotion; in contrast, those in Anglo cultures are taught to act on logic'. This comparison is clearly not valid, since the former term of the comparison refers to (alleged) actual actions, while the latter is about what people are taught. However, whether deliberate or not, this logical flaw—which in (IB/IM) theory we should not expect from 'Westerners'—may be seen as quite revealing of emotions being suppressed, in education in particular, in 'Anglo' contexts, not about the absence of emotions. Another example relates to relationship- as opposed to work-orientation: in Hodgetts and Luthans's (2003: 567) anecdote about an American trying to establish business contacts in Colombia, the hero, seemingly not understanding that developing a relationship with potential business partners may be important, feels completely disoriented by the fact that his Colombian counterparts spend the entire first day chatting about irrelevant issues without 'getting down to business'. In these few examples, a western lack becomes conspicuous: Westerners can be seen as deprived of the right to be superstitious, emotional or relationship-oriented, and in a sense are essentialized in as crude a way as the Other. The myth of the 'total western subject' who is characterized by rationality and individualism is thus exposed: the Westerner is shown to be in need of the supplementary values (one could write '*supplément d'âme*') of the Other. The non-West thus becomes a sort of 'pharmakon' (see especially Derrida, 1981b)—i.e. both poison and cure—for the West: as Young (1990: 140) puts it in his discussion of orientalism, [the Orient] also 'represents a therapeutic for the lost spiritual values of the West, offering hope for the regeneration of Europe by Asia'.

The disappearance of (colonial) history

There are very few explicit discussions of history and colonies in the IB/IM textbooks we have studied—colonialism, in this 'anthropologically insensitive blend of ahistorical, apolitical and 'phallocentric' recipes' (Case and Selvester, 2000: 12), is usually left unmentioned. As Mills and Hatfield (1999: 49) have shown, it is part of the genre of management textbooks to be narrowly focused on 'a supposed underlying rationality and a need for organizational efficiency', while a consideration of historical 'political and socio-economic influences on the development of organizations' tends to be excluded in order to create a 'purified canon' (Frenkel and Shenhav, 2006). There are some books where history is mentioned though; in particular, in Woods (2001) a role is assigned to it. We propose an alternative version of Woods's discussion making the importance of

colonial history explicit in those parts where too much has been said for the omissions to not become conspicuous. In the more explicit version (right) we have not removed anything from the original text (left); we have only added the bolded passages (see Alternative version 3).

Alternative version 3

History colours the present and nurtures the future. The distribution of wealth across the world today is a consequence of several thousand years of economic change The countries which are economically powerful and rich in technology, versus those which are relatively poor, can look to history for an explanation of their position. Geography and topography also play significant roles, but there is a school of thought which suggests that the merchant venturers of the past, who raided the treasures of the Spice islands and helped to found empires, set in motion an economic tide which has blown inexorably in favour of certain nations. Wealth has been generated by enterprise—collecting together economic resources and exploiting the principle of comparative advantage—so that the few original game players such as the Hudson Bay Company can be viewed as the corporate ancestors of familiar twenty-first-century names such as Daewoo, Sony, Adidas, Akzo Nobel**,** and Nestlé. (Woods, 2001: 17–18)

History colours the present and nurtures the future. The distribution of wealth across the world today is a consequence of several thousand years of economic change **and exploitation of nations by others in the name of a civilizing mission**. The countries which are economically powerful and rich in technology, versus those which are relatively poor, can look to history for an explanation of their position**: they were on the right side of colonization, colonizing others rather than being colonized**. Geography and topography also play significant roles, **if only in attracting more efficient exploiters of resource-rich areas,** but there is a school of thought which suggests that the merchant venturers of the past, who raided the treasures of the Spice islands and helped to found **colonial** empires, set in motion an economic tide which has blown inexorably in favour of certain nations. Wealth has been generated by enterprise—collecting together economic resources and exploiting the principle of comparative advantage—so that the few original game players such as the Hudson Bay Company **and the British East India Company** can be viewed as the corporate ancestors of familiar twenty-first-century names such as Daewoo, Sony, Adidas, Akzo Nobel**, Royal Dutch Shell, Halliburton** and Nestlé. (our more explicit version)

The additions in the text of Alternative version 3 do not alter its meaning in any way, they just spell out some of the things that are left out and seem to 'haunt' the text (see Derrida, 1994). The very fact that there are, in the original text, all the elements to blame colonialism for worldwide economic and political inequalities, and that at the same time colonization/colonialism is not mentioned, makes this haunting particularly strongly felt. While this extract is not typical of IB/IM textbooks since most of these tend to avoid explicit discussions of history, it is consistent with the western historicism that permeates IB/IM literature—and particularly 'the idea of development and the assumption that a certain amount of time elapses in the very process of development' (Chakrabarty, 2000: 23). As Case and Selvester (2000: 13) argue, IB/IM texts '[owe] much to the legacy of ... a colonial gaze and a logic of exploitation' whereby 'the route to progress for those cultures duly invaded should mirror that of Europe's own "progressive" history'. In IB/IM textbooks, focusing on 'scientific' accounts of the present situation can be claimed to be sufficient as a culture being

'developed' is seen as a symptom of a historical process that went 'right'. This western-centred perspective on history is problematic also because, while 'produced in relative, and sometimes absolute, ignorance of the majority of humankind', it claims to 'embrace the entirety of humanity' (Chakrabarty, 2000: 29). Logocentrism is at the core of the western social scientists' views of their approaches as the only ones that can claim universal applicability: this was expressed for instance by Husserl at a lecture in Vienna in 1935, where he argued that European thought can produce 'absolute theoretical insights' due to its status as '*theoria* (universal science)' as opposed to the oriental '"practical-universal" and hence "mythical-religious" character' (as cited by Chakrabarty, 2000: 29). This type of universalism has always been an instrument for the West to express its superiority over the rest, and it clearly permeates the textbooks in both their vision of a global audience and their unproblematic—or non-existent—discussion of global history.

As discussed above, while colonialism may haunt all the textbooks in many ways, there is hardly ever an explicit reference to colonization. One important exception is found in Wild et al.'s (2006: 159) discussion of 'mercantilism' which mentions how 'mercantilist nations acquired less developed territories (colonies) around the world to serve as sources of inexpensive raw materials and as markets for higher-priced finished goods'. The authors later (2006: 159) add that 'the mercantilist and colonial policies greatly expanded the wealth of the nations using them' and thus provided 'a source of a nation's economic power that in turn increased its political power relative to other countries'. This is as close as we get to a problematization of the impact of colonization on international business, but remains a short (14 lines) description. The other exceptional cases where colonization is (very briefly) mentioned in the 17 textbooks present it either just in passing—as when Morrison (2006: 208) points out that 'colonial administrations also used forced labour in various parts of the world, in construction work and mining, for example'—or then in a rather positive way, as it is claimed to have allowed for the 'diffusion of legal systems' (Daniels et al., 2007: 103) and 'government and financial infrastructures capable of attracting trade and foreign investment' (Holt and Wiggington, 2002: 41).

Contributions to a way forward: towards alternative IB/IM textbooks

After analysing our three deconstruction themes above, we now discuss what we see as our main contribution, i.e. what we come to understand when we recognize the supplement as part of the text through our three deconstructive tactics.

Pattern 1 shows that very contradictory statements between ontology—what culture *is*—and epistemology—how cultures can be studied and known—are acceptable in IB/IM textbooks, which contributes to an unacknowledged ambivalence (e.g. cultures as *both* dynamic and static). Ironically, the disclaimers making ontological claims about culture point to the shortcomings of an otherwise dominant logocentrism—and its hierarchies favouring 'static' over 'dynamic', 'definite' over 'ambivalent', etc.—when dealing with knowledge about cultures. In addition, the call for cultural sensitivity/awareness is not coherent with the overwhelming reliance on essentialistic models of national cultures, and can thus be argued to hide both ethical tensions (between an honest care for the Other and utilitarian aims) and political asymmetries (as Westerners retain the first and last word about what constitutes cultural sensitivity, thereby silencing the Other).

Pattern 2 shows how certain cultural characteristics attributed to other cultures can be seen as suppressed in those cultures they are contrasted with. Thinking in terms of 'supplement' helps us understand the importance of 'the Other in us'. Without this understanding, the dichotomies not only hierarchize national cultures as belonging either to the 'developed and modern' West or to the 'undeveloped and backward' rest, they also suppress a number of human characteristics that tend

to be present everywhere, such as emotions, a spiritual dimension or a need for community; counterintuitively, the West is shown to be in need of regeneration from the non-West, and non-western subjects involved in international business appear potentially empowered by their possibilities to draw on both sides and create supplementary spaces. IB/IM textbooks can indeed be expected to produce hybrid identities of non-western employees and managers mimicking western ways of managing—thereby furthering western hegemony but also, potentially, subverting it through their own singular translations of the western IB/IM canon.

Pattern 3 exposes colonial history as a supplementary explanation for characteristics of different countries and regions: it is virtually completely absent from the textbooks and can be seen to strongly haunt the text as a missing link between culture and (under)development.

We believe that our deconstructive approach thus contributes to existing critical and postcolonial analyses of IB/IM literature, through a number of novel insights, among which we would emphasize (1) our analysis of disclaimers, (2) our articulation of the ethical and political tensions related to cultural sensitivity/awareness, (3) our identification of a western lack, and (4) our understanding that colonial history haunts IB/IM textbooks.

We agree with Jack and Westwood (2009: 295) when they advocate more support for the publication of local textbooks that would also draw on non-western thinkers in different parts of the world. But we also believe that aiming for a change in the canon of IB/IM textbooks is desirable, and now turn to our suggestions for new types of discussions on culture within IB/IM textbooks-to-be, focusing on the three problematic patterns. Regarding Pattern 1, the main problematic aspects consist of the ethical tensions and the political asymmetry, which in turn contribute to an incoherence between the alleged aim (developing cultural sensitivity) and the proposed means (relying on models classifying national cultures). The ethical issue can be addressed through a clear separate discussion of the utilitarian ethic that characterizes business, and then, in the discussions of culture, a reflexivity on what type of ethics is at stake (e.g. involving a radical, unconditional openness towards other cultures) and how this may conflict with utilitarian business ethics. The political question entails attempting to give voice to non-(purely)western accounts of IB/IM (see below relating to Pattern 2), as well as to explicitly discuss the impact of colonial and neo-colonial relationships on the development of international business (see below relating to Pattern 3). Once the texts are made ethically and politically reflexive enough, they can also be made more coherent. We suggest that, rather than using initial disclaimers pointing to the non-monolithic and dynamic nature of cultures only to later contradict these disclaimers by focusing on 'stable' national cultures, the authors should instead strive to demonstrate how ambivalent culture is *as a conclusion* to their different illustrations, involving several cultural layers, as well as hybrid subjects and organizations.

As for Pattern 2, we propose that the descriptions of particular national or regional cultures should be written in dialogue or multi-voiced conversation, in line with Spivak's (1988b) aim to speak *with* rather than speak *for* the Other—who in this case would not be the Third World 'subaltern' but the already hybridized non-western subject involved in IB/IM as practice and/or theory, speaking the western language but possibly in a way different enough to contest logocentric closure. Involving two (or possibly more) scholars who have extensive experience in the cultural environment in question but who relate to it differently (for instance, but not necessarily, as local and non-local) could be an interesting way to lead to a fruitful dialogue through 'authentic encounter' (see Case and Selvester, 2000: 16) and give a sense of 'polyphony' (see Clegg et al., 2006), although it could also run the risk of reproducing dichotomies. We suggest two main ways to address this potential problem. First, a great deal of reflexivity from both/all scholars would be needed. This means that when the scholars mobilize some essentialistic categories in their efforts

to position themselves and relate to each other, this essentialism should be consciously presented as strategic from the beginning, along Spivak's (1988a) view that we should be self-conscious, explicit and vigilant when relying on essentialism for particular purposes. In addition, the scholars involved should be able to relate to the Other not only across cultures but also across research paradigms as well as ethical and political divides.

Second, the text to be written should not be an attempt to produce closure but instead take the *form* of a dialogue/conversation. The dialogue form itself allows progression beyond dichotomies, in two main ways: first, cultural assertions from one viewpoint can be relativized and complemented by responses from another viewpoint, which helps to better understand the complexity and ambivalence of cultural experiences and the fact that there can be different truths about culture depending where one positions oneself; second, translations from one perspective to another can allow for the creation of supplementary spaces, and this is the point we now elaborate upon. It is true that there is a risk in a western/non-western dialogue in that it may lead to the mere reproduction of western knowledge, as the non-western scholar is compelled to inhabit western structures and speak the western language (Spivak, 1993). On the other hand, Bhabha (1994) shows how these dialogues involving translations through a 'third space' may lead to new, hybrid cultural representations, as in his example of 'the vegetarian Bible' (see Bhabha, 1995). It is possible to imagine that such representations could directly emerge from the dialogic dynamics between the scholars, and/or that these dynamics could lead them to reflect on examples of inter-cultural interactions that have led to hybrid organizational arrangements, including in their own personal experiences. These dialogues would be singular events (and would need to be explicitly acknowledged as such), whose outcome could be neither planned, nor managed, nor *closed* along the lines of traditional western closure of knowledge. Thus, if all participants scrupulously indulge in reflexive efforts to position themselves, we see this type of dialogue as potentially faithful to what both Spivak and Bhabha call for in terms of alternative ways of writing that may unsettle logocentric knowledge production.

Finally, addressing Pattern 3 will require discussing the impact of colonial and neo-colonial relationships on the development of international business. This means discussing history but also today's exploitative relations between (mostly western) transnational corporations and the people involved in their local operations, or upstream in their supply chain, in developing countries. While it is beyond the scope of this article to specifically discuss sections of the textbooks that are not focused on culture, it is clear that when culture is presented in such a way that it legitimizes such exploitative relations, it connects to other problematic issues in the IB/IM canon and in particular the lack of ethical and political problematization of 'typical' IB/IM cases. A more general recommendation for alternative IB/IM textbooks would thus be to enable different possible readings of cases, based on different cultural values, but also different ethical standpoints or different political positions. One way to enable such different readings which we have experimented with in our own teaching (with rewarding results) has been to write mirror versions of mainstream IB cases, transposing the depiction of a big foreign investment in a developing country to a developed country context, inviting reactions from students from the latter country about how patronizing and possibly imperialistic the whole case sounds to them. For this type of experiment to work the different case versions should not be included in the textbook—because students should not know that the case is a mirror version when initially asked to work on it—but could be provided as additional material for lecturers. Other ways we have experimented with include role plays involving different stakeholders, for which students need to understand not just different cultural values but also different interests and different assessments of positive and negative externalities.

As a conclusion, the position of lecturers of IB/IM should be seen as pivotal in the much-needed change in the canon of IB/IM education, as lecturers can (1) freely choose more alternative textbooks, thereby indicating to publishers that different ways of representing IB/IM are increasingly valued, (2) develop new approaches to IB/IM cases in their courses, and (3) draw on their teaching experiences to write their own textbooks, including discussions of culture that emphasize ambivalence and address the ethical and political tensions that characterize the representations found in today's mainstream IB/IM literature. In a global business environment where emerging economies are increasingly influential, it is imperative that educators strive to break the Westerncentric knowledge production and expose IB/IM students to alternative perspectives that help to understand non-Western views and the (positive and negative) transformative possibilities they bring.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. In the remainder of this article, we refer to IB/IM as the disciplinary boundaries between the two are not always clear, and the discussions of culture found in textbooks labelled as IB and IM tend to be very similar.
2. When quoting *De la Grammatologie* here, we use our translations of the original French text, and the italic emphases are from the original version.
3. There remain, of course, differences between the books, and there are some that are more to our liking than others. But it is beyond the scope of this article to state which textbooks we consider to be 'better'; what is important here is that all three broad patterns are traceable in every book.
4. Among all 17 IB/IM textbooks we have read for this analysis, there are only five where there are short texts totally or partly devoted to 'Africa' (or a part of Africa) in relation to culture: Ball et al. (2008), Ferraro (2006), Luthans and Doh (2009), Morrison (2006) and Rodrigues (2001; 2008).

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