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Abstract
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Keywords
international, human resource, management, SIHRM, research, practice, teaching

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Representing Strategic International Human Resource Management: Is the Map the Territory?

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This paper has not undergone formal review or approval of the faculty of the ILR School. It is intended to make results of Center research available to others interested in preliminary form to encourage discussion and suggestions.

ABSTRACT

This paper is focused on the emergent field of strategic international human resource management (SIHRM). We suggest that SIHRM is becoming an integrated intellectual map in terms of: (1) the typologies created; (2) the language used; and (3) its pedagogy. Does the way in which we articulate SIHRM assist theory development or enact intellectual imperialism? Or both? It is argued that, by exploring the implications of SIHRM for theory, research, practice and teaching, we may raise awareness of current deficiencies and unanswered questions. Do we need to set a new course, or at least make explicit our navigational assumptions?

> Any analytically structured narrative, and the particular theoretical approaches and research programmes that it facilitates, excludes and marginalizes at the same time that it includes and frames (Reed, 1996: 49).

The globalization of business increases the requirement for understanding ways in which multinational enterprises (MNEs) may operate effectively (Sundaram & Black, 1992). A major aspect of this understanding is based in the emergent field of strategic international human resource management (SIHRM) (Schuler, Dowling & De Cieri, 1993; Taylor, Beechler & Napier, 1996), a field that has developed through the extension of human resource management (HRM) to international human resource management (IHRM) and now SIHRM. In this paper, we examine and critique the development of SIHRM in the context of calls for greater integration in its theoretical and research emphases.

THEORY DEVELOPMENT

It is timely to examine the nature of theory development in the field of SIHRM, and we do so in two ways. First, searching for guidance in this matter, we note Bacharach's (1989) comment that "theorists rarely state their assumptions" (1989: 498), and Alvesson and Willmott's (1996) recent reference to the work of Habermas in describing management as a colonizing power. Alvesson and Willmott define colonization as "the way that one set of practices and understandings, which are strongly associated with the instrumental reason that is dominant in the organization and management of complex systems, comes to dominate and exclude other practices and discourses" (1996: 105; see also Power & Laughlin, 1992). In this paper, we examine and critique the unstated assumption that SIHRM is a colonizing force, joining not only the territories of human resource management and organizational strategy, but also extending those territories into international domains and doing so through the definition and teaching of a new language and conceptual vocabulary.

Second, we note that Bacharach distinguishes theory and description, suggesting that: "The primary goal of a theory is to answer the questions of how, when, and why, unlike the goal of description, which is to answer the question of what" (1989: 498). He distinguishes three "modes" of description: categorization of raw data, typologies, and metaphors, and suggests that metaphors, for example, "may well serve as precursors to theories" (p. 497; cf. Diesing, 1971; Morgan, 1986). In contrast, we draw on the metaphor of mapping not as a

means for *developing* SIHRM theory, but as a means for *describing* the growth of its typologies to date and for depicting the limitations of current representations of SIHRM's territory.

Several more recent reviews have also paid attention to the subject of theory building. For example, a discussion in *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1995, Volume 40) was aimed at producing "stronger theory" (Sutton & Staw, 1995: 371) despite difficulties in definition of a theory and differences in views as to whether 'good theory' provides covering laws, enlightenment or narrative (DiMaggio, 1995). In the same issue, Sutton and Staw (1995) suggested that lists of variables or constructs are not theory as "[a] theory must also explain why variables or constructs come about or why they are connected" (1995: 375). However, Weick argued that such lists might merely reflect the early stages and "interim struggles" of the theory building process (Weick, 1995: 385, citing Runkel & Runkel, 1984). In this paper, we examine two influential typologies and descriptive lists of SIHRM, and suggest that although SIHRM theory building is in an early stage, values apparent in the extant literature are worthy of attention.

Current theory building in SIHRM is based on two clear assumptions. First, there is a widely held assumption in the international business literature that multinational enterprises "require special theory-building efforts in order for researchers to comprehensively understand this organizational form" (Sundaram & Black, 1992: 752). Second, several authors have argued that the available theories are inadequate (Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Schuler et al., 1993; Taylor et al., 1996). For example, international business theory and research has been dominated by "neoclassical [economic] theory of the firm with institutional elements" (Buckley, 1996: 8). In response to this, SIHRM researchers have called for theoretical development that integrates a variety of perspectives.

A Postmodern View of SIHRM

However, in this analysis, we take heed of the postmodernist critique of the notion of the grand narrative. Under postmodernism, notions of essentialist foundations are rejected on the grounds that foundations and master narratives present not only the security of a dominant view but also the precariousness of false certainty (Alvesson & Deetz, 1996). Postmodernists challenge rather than accept foundations, often using "carnivalesque" and ironic forms of writing to show "disdain for attempts to legitimize claims of theoretical supremacy" (Martin & Frost, 1996: 612; see also Alvesson & Deetz, 1996; Hardy & Clegg, 1997; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997). Under this view, a theoretical field does not necessarily 'develop' as "a linear tale of progress" (Martin & Frost, 1996: 612; see also Burrell, 1992), and is instead constituted

through discursive practice and presented as “little narratives”, as “partial interpretations which can be patched together in search of understanding, but equally fragmented again to be put into another theoretical collage” (Czarniawska & Sevon, 1996: 3). Thus, postmodernists “warn against any totalizing narrative” or “attempt to provide an all-encompassing explanation” (Stablein, 1996: 509), arguing that grand narratives are “sentimental illusions” (Schultz & Hatch, 1996: 540, with reference to Lyotard, 1984). Perhaps a pertinent and timely warning to the field of SIHRM is the suggestion that postmodern theorizing problematizes the concept of integrative theory ‘development’ and “rejects the very notion of a common *ground*” (Stablein, 1996: 509; our emphasis).

The metaphor of mapping the terrain of a particular “intellectual landscape” (Martin & Frost, 1996: 616) is in current usage across organizational studies (Clegg & Hardy, 1996; Hardy & Clegg, 1997; Koza & Thoenig, 1995; Whipp, 1996), where both the terrain and its representation are often contested territory (Burrell, 1996; Martin & Frost, 1996). In contrast, there has been very little contestation in the evolution of SIHRM. Indeed, we suggest that SIHRM is becoming an integrated intellectual map (cf. Kilduff & Mehra, 1997; Van Maanen, 1979); a terrain depicted by bipolar dimensions (e.g., convergence-divergence; global-local; integration-differentiation) that are being crafted and refined to form a basis for theory, research, practice and teaching. Are such dimensions examples of over-simplification and separation of the indivisible? (Burrell, 1996). Does the way in which we articulate SIHRM assist theory development or enact intellectual imperialism (Hassard, 1993a)? Or both? In this paper, we examine the evidence for and implications of these questions in terms of: (1) the typologies created; (2) the language used; and (3) the pedagogy of SIHRM. In doing so, we take heed of the warning that what matters most is that “we should not subscribe to the seriousness of the progress narrative, for its assumption of unitary and linear progression only serves to suppress the possibility of a multitude of alternative voices” (Hassard, 1993b: 128, with reference to Lyotard).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The field of SIHRM (e.g., Milliman, Von Glinow & Nathan, 1991; Schuler et al., 1993; Taylor et al., 1996) emerged from HRM, which recognizes the importance of people in relation to financial and physical resources. The assumption is that this recognition will lead to improved utilization of human resources, congruent with organizational strategic objectives (Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills & Walton, 1984). HRM is, therefore, based on an

understanding of comprehensive policies which govern human resource practices (Schuler, 1992).

An early extension of HRM was the inclusion of attention to cross-cultural issues (see, for example, Laurent, 1986). Since then, the broader consideration of HRM in multinational enterprises (Dowling, Schuler & Welch, 1994; Edwards, Ferner & Sisson, 1996; Teagarden & Von Glinow, 1997) has been defined as IHRM. While HRM is relevant within a single country, IHRM addresses added complexity due to diversity of national contexts of operation and the inclusion of different national categories of workers (Tung, 1993). A major aspect of IHRM research has been concerned with co-ordination across national borders via the cross-national transfer of management and management practices (for example, Gregersen, Hite & Black, 1996). A related area of research has developed in comparative HRM research (Brewster, Tregaskis, Hegewisch & Mayne, 1996). In parallel with (and not unrelated to) the internationalization of HRM has been the increasing recognition of the importance of linking HRM policies and practices with organizational strategy in a domestic (single-country) context (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Wright & McMahan, 1992).

The context in which much IHRM is considered is, therefore, that of multinational corporations. *Multinational enterprise* (MNE) or *multinational corporation* (MNC) are the generic terms used to describe such corporations in most of the international management literature. An MNE, for example, has been defined by Sundaram and Black (1992: 733) as:

> any enterprise that carries out transactions in or between two sovereign entities, operating under a system of decision making that permits influence over resources and capabilities, where the transactions are subject to influence by factors exogenous to the home country environment of the enterprise.

Bartlett and Ghoshal (1992) have identified *transnational* enterprises (TNEs) as having three major characteristics: substantial direct investment in foreign countries (typically around 25% of sales); active management of those operations; and those operations forming integral parts of the enterprise both in strategic and in operational terms. Thus, TNEs may be viewed as the most complex or sophisticated form of MNE. Research into new forms such as strategic collaborative networks and international new ventures is further extending our ability to traverse the subtleties of the international management terrain (Jarillo, 1995; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994; Wolf, 1997).

As researchers and practitioners have paid increasing attention to the strategic nature of IHRM and the implications for organizational performance (Caligiuri & Stroh, 1995), we have witnessed the emergence of SIHRM, which has been defined as:

> human resource management issues, functions, and policies and practices that result from the strategic activities of multinational enterprises and that impact the international concerns and goals of those enterprises (Schuler et al.,1993: 422).

Just as definitions of the organizational unit (MNE/TNE) are undergoing revision, so the definition of SIHRM is developing and encompassing new elements (see, for example, Festing, 1997). An increasing number of articles have addressed SIHRM issues (see for example, Wright & Ricks, 1994), although empirical work remains sparse (Edwards et al., 1996).

Mainstream Criticisms of SIHRM Research

If we commence by examining the state of SIHRM development from within the mainstream rather than from without, the picture is clouded, but clearing. While the first generation of SIHRM research has been atheoretical or mono-theoretical, we are beginning to see the use of integrative, multi-theoretical approaches, strengthened by recent research (Festing, 1997; Hannon, Hwang & Jaw, 1995; Taylor et al., 1996). If this development were to continue, we might start to see possibilities for further theoretical extensions, informed perhaps by the 'planned innovation' compared with the 'environmental adaptation' perspectives (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; cf. Donaldson, 1995). Taylor et al. (1996) suggest that such steps may assist both researchers and practitioners of SIHRM, and so from this, mainstream, perspective, theory development is assessed more in terms of its *inclusions* than exclusions (Chia, 1997; Reed, 1996).

In the context of our discussion of whether or not integrations are 'progressive', or even possible, it is important to review the reasons *why* theoretical integrations have been promoted. One reason is that the international and comparative management research field, and more specifically, IHRM research, has received criticism on several grounds that are also pertinent to SIHRM. Major limitations are that much of the research has been descriptive and lacking in analytical rigor; *ad hoc* and expedient in research design and planning; self-centered in the sense that the existing research literature is frequently ignored; and lacking a sustained research effort to develop case material (Kamoche, 1996; Redding, 1994; Schuler & Florkowski, 1996).

In addition, many studies in the field of SIHRM suffer from small sample size, low response rates, and have been restricted to quantitative analysis (Peterson, Sargent, Napier &

Shim, 1996). There are particular opportunities both to improve the validity and reliability of survey measures (a single HR manager is often the sole respondent for each MNE represented in a sample), and to develop case work based on ideographic techniques and emic concepts (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Schuler & Florkowski, 1996; Teagarden et al., 1995). There appears to be a need to raise the focus of SIHRM research from the specifics of expatriation and other practices, in order to investigate variables at multiple levels and relationships between them.

While these recommendations may be of value for future research directions, a major challenge for development of SIHRM theory development and research is to overcome the ethnocentrism of one's own perspective and experience. While certain theories, research methods, and practices may be applicable and effective in one cultural setting, changes to suit local requirements are inevitable for transfer across cultures and international applications. Thus, one's own criteria for theory development will affect any assessment of the 'progress' of SIHRM.

Colonial (and Post-Colonial) Considerations

In this paper, we suggest that revisiting and refining of theory, definitions and research should occur in the context of theoretical developments in related fields. For example, the field of management strategy, now so important to SIHRM, has itself been the subject of critical re-interpretation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Knights & Morgan, 1991; Whipp, 1996). Alvesson and Willmott comment that strategic management is a senior management activity and it occurs "as a condition and consequence of wider, institutionalized forms of domination" (1996: 132). Indeed, access to strategic territory has become a contested source of power, "a number of occupational or functional groupings… competing to establish supremacy over the area of strategic discourse" (Knights & Morgan, 1991: 265). If they succeed, they engage in *strategy talk*, where

> The term 'strategic' is bandied around to add rhetorical weight, misleadingly one might say, to managerial activity and academic research projects….Like other discourses that have a colonizing impact, by weakening alternative ways of framing issues and assessing values, its effect is to close rather than open debate (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996: 133).

In surveying SIHRM we may be witnessing the intersection of intellectual and geographical imperialism and colonization, an intersection warranting further exploration here. For example, Alvesson & Willmott (1996) argue that strategy talk has masculine connotations,

an issue also raised by Calas and Smircich (1993) in their analysis of the consequences of globalization. Within SIHRM, we note that gender discrimination has also been an issue in expatriate selection and career development, excluding women on the basis of "myths" concerning sex role stereotypes in host countries (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Egan & Bendinck, 1994; Haskell, 1991; Rossman, 1986).

In addition, the terrain of SIHRM has been dominated by expatriate management concerns, to the exclusion of other interest groups (Vance & Ring, 1994) and issues such as transnational industrial relations. Within the area of expatriate management, and in recognition of the fact that many expatriate employees are relocated with their spouses and children, a number of terms have emerged in research and practice to refer to these 'additional' expatriates. One of these terms, the *trailing spouse*, usually refers to the wife, as over 90 per cent of expatriates in USA, Australia and Europe are male. Usually, the spouse/partner cannot get a work visa, or is not expected to work – or do 'real work'. In the United States, for example, the trailing spouse may receive a 'J2' to his/her partner's 'J1' visa, and although it is possible to work under a J2, strict limits are applied. The psychological implications of such change in the social status and self-identity of the expatriate have been well documented (e.g., De Cieri, Dowling & Taylor, 1991; Harvey, 1996). Thus, despite the opening of SIHRM's *definitional* territory, the voices and values heard may well be those of the explorers and senior managers rather than those of stakeholders such as the blue collar workers who are 'left behind', trade unions, or those being explored.

Calas and Smircich (1993) allow us to recognize that gender problems in/with this field go beyond those of the trailing spouse. Extending the notion of colonization beyond the geographical and discursive to the epistemological, these authors have recently considered postcolonial possibilities as a means of including positions that might otherwise be relegated to the margin of romanticized or oppressed 'other' (Calas & Smircich, 1996). Relevant here is the overall neglect of host country nationals in research. In particular, SIHRM literature and research has been dominated by consideration of the importance of the expatriate assignment, particularly the training and preparation of soon-to-be expatriates at the expense of the host country work force (Vance and Ring, 1994). Despite its espoused incorporation of strategic variety, SIHRM may be repeating the imperialism of IHRM:

> Indeed, there seems to be an underlying view that IHRM is all about the selection and deployment of expatriate managers to distant lands, providing

them with a survival kit on how to fit into 'strange cultures' and finding something for them to do upon their return. (Kamoche, 1996: 230)

In the following sections, we describe the representation of SIHRM and suggest that it has taken little heed of such discussions, and to some extent still reflects the view that "all that is needed is to take account of 'local' circumstances while formulating global, integrative strategy and then simply act on what the corporate center perceives to be good for the subsidiary/unit" (Kamoche, 1996: 232). We draw attention to three aspects of the 'marking out' of SIHRM: The nature of its typological mapping, or its *representation and separation*; The definition and precision of SIHRM vocabulary to enable communication among speakers of the language of SIHRM, and issues of *translation*; and the further extension of SIHRM through management training and university teaching, where we return to the implications of its *colonization*.

SIHRM TYPOLOGIES: ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION AND SEPARATION

In many texts and introductory courses, SIHRM is a terrain characterized by bipolar dimensions (e.g., convergence-divergence; global-local; integration-differentiation). Indeed, an imperative for SIHRM and the realization of MNE goals is the balance of often conflicting needs of global co-ordination (integration) and local responsiveness (differentiation) (Doz & Prahalad, 1991; Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986; Ghoshal & Nohria, 1989; Martinez & Jarillo, 1991; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994; Welch, Fenwick & De Cieri, 1994). These dimensions have received a great deal of attention in SIHRM research and practice. They stretch around the landscape like lines of latitude and longitude, and the importance of their successful navigation is frequently emphasized by SIHRM researchers. Against this background, the particular nature of various SIHRM territories is represented by typological [topographical] mapping, and our first focus is on the vigor with which typologies have been utilized and created by SIHRM researchers, teachers, and practitioners in their efforts to depict the intellectual terrain (e.g., Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1992; Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979).

The most enduring typology in SIHRM-related research is that of Heenan and Perlmutter (1979), who developed a typology of *MNE headquarter orientations towards subsidiaries*, based on how executives in organizations *thought* about doing business around the world. This perspective has also been called *MNE strategic predisposition*. With specific regard to the implications for IHRM, the typology is often referred to as *MNE international staffing orientation* (Dowling et al., 1994). This typology has been through several incarnations (cf. Diesing, 1971), and is now usually described as identifying four types through "the EPRG

Profile": *ethnocentric, polycentric, regiocentric* or *geocentric* (Chakravarthy & Perlmutter, 1985; Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979).

An *ethnocentric* approach reflects a belief that the management techniques of one's home country are superior. The major implication for SIHRM is that parent country nationals hold all key management positions. A *polycentric* staffing approach decentralizes human resource management to each national location, resulting in host country nationals occupying key management positions in the local units, while parent country nationals occupy positions at enterprise headquarters. A *regiocentric* staffing develops regional staff for key positions anywhere in that region (the region being defined by the MNE), while a *geocentric* approach is one where the 'best' people are sought for key positions throughout the enterprise, regardless of nationality (Chakravarthy & Perlmutter, 1985).

Another typology which has been well-utilized in research and practice is that developed by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1992). These authors constructed a typology of *four strategic mindsets*: *international, multinational, global*, and *transnational*. An *international* mindset occurs where decisions related to foreign operations are often opportunistic, and is most likely to be found in firms with products developed for domestic market, then sold abroad, or using technology transfer from parent company to offshore. *Multinational* mindsets are evident in MNEs with national units that are highly responsive to local needs and where organizational strategy is often poorly co-ordinated between national sites. *Global* mindsets are found in firms with products created for world markets made in highly efficient plants. Key strategic decisions (and even operational decisions) are usually made at corporate headquarters (see also Morrison, Ricks & Roth, 1991). The *transnational* mindset combines global co-ordination and local sensitivity. Transnational firms aim for a balance of global integration and local differentiation, and have intensive organization-wide coordination and shared decision making. The term 'headquarters' is immaterial; transnational firms develop 'centers of excellence', and networking is extensive in these firms.

The authors of both typologies clearly stated that no one type was more efficacious than another, and we also stress their particular point that "one firm can occupy more than one cell of a typology" (Edwards et al., 1996: 24). Some writers argue that these predispositions and mindsets represent evolutionary stages in the development of an MNE, with geocentric and transnational being ideal forms. However, the existence of a truly geocentric or transnational organization remains subject to some debate. Until there is more rigorous empirical testing of anecdotal data, its existence as a topographical 'peak' remains an

unconfirmed myth. Therefore, it is not surprising that attempts to establish the link between both "ideal" forms have been inconclusive. Kobrin suggested this "entails an unwarranted teleological assumption of an evolutionary path whose end point (both positively and normatively) is a transnationally integrated firm organized globally with geocentric managerial attitudes and policies" (1994: 495-6).

Whether a typology is descriptive or prescriptive, it is worth remembering that all typologies are (only) a form of representation, and that problems with typologies include their static nature and their reduction of complexities to one or two dimensions. Kobrin, for example, was unable to answer "the question of how an organization develops a geocentric mindset" (1994: 507). Kallinikos (1996) defines representation as implying "the proactive bracketing, selection, perception and investigation of particular and limited aspects of the world", suggesting that "[p]erception is always guided by conception" (1996: 39). Hence, citing Van Maanen's (1979) argument that the map is not the territory, Clegg and Hardy suggest that "[w]hen we map we miss" (1996: 677). If a typology can be considered a list of classifications, Weick argues that the tacit messages are 1) items not on this list are less critical than those on it, 2) the more items on it which are "activated, and the stronger the activation of each, the more determinate is the relationship", and 3) causation is assumed to be simultaneous and not sequential (1995: 388).

Consequently, we feel that it is perhaps worth considering the enduring influence of these typologies; where such typology development might lead us, what we see, and also what we do not. What is left unsaid? Who is left unheard? Is the terrain perhaps less solid than expected? Such an approach focused on developing a categorical scheme to cover the determinants of internationalization does not, based on one empirical examination, equate to an explanation of internationalization (Sutton & Staw, 1995). At best, it represents an "informative precursor to theorizing"; the beginnings of a theory (Weick, 1995: 388). Perhaps we need to be more aware of issues of representation, for our conceptual categories, like our measuring instruments, produce rather than reflect "the dimensional reality of the measured object" (Hardy & Clegg, 1997: 87).

Our focus relates to the primacy of headquarters orientations and mindsets in these SIHRM typologies, and to the question: Whose mindset? Whose predisposition is it in the first place? Conceiving of an organization as having a strategic *mind*set, even where there is an ongoing consensus between members of the organization about the attitudes towards multinationalization, seems problematic (cf. Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Silverman, 1970).

Presumably the predisposition is that of a head office, however minimal its role, still 'holding on' to that strategic function and thus to the center of power. In particular, the EPRG framework is predicated on home-country attitudes and beliefs reflecting assumptions about the extent to which foreigners and/or compatriots are competent and trustworthy to make key decisions about how international business should be conducted. The EPRG framework was developed based on a decision analysis by an expert panel of senior executives from (mainly United States) multinational firms.

Thus, it is the elite who can take the strategic *overview*, and "[e]ngineered, top-down meanings are intended to replace bottom-up meanings which employees and consumers bring from the lifeworld" (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996: 106). However, it is noteworthy that such elevation of strategy and those who make it has been somewhat leveled by theorists' consideration of notions of logical incrementalism (Quinn, 1980) and emergent strategy (Knights & Morgan, 1991). Just as Foucauldians privilege the genealogical over archaeological (Burrell, 1996), and just as culture studies can no longer claim to surface or excavate 'deep' assumptions (Linstead & Grafton-Small, 1992; see also Burrell, 1996), strategy is no longer understood as emanating from a rational planning process or even from a predisposition. While some SIHRM writers are beginning to voice this view (cf. Festing, 1997; Pucik, 1997), mainstream researchers seem reluctant to move from their standpoint. Perhaps it is time for SIHRM theorists to consider critiques of logocentrism in addition to those of ethnocentrism,[1] and, at the risk of mixing our metaphors (cf. Wolfram Cox, Mann & Samson, 1997), we suggest that SIHRM typologizing should perhaps now extend beyond the mind, beyond the head, beyond the predisposition or personality orientation of its planners (cf. Kumra, 1996; Martin & Frost, 1996).

In this context, it is perhaps worth noting that Burrell (1996) is critical of notions of separation, likening them to 'anatomization', in which the body (of knowledge) is divided into its component organs and marked or wounded by "incised lesions on the body of organizational life" (1996: 645). There is concern that such separation silences, mutilates and even kills the subject of its inquiry (Clegg & Hardy, 1996; Burrell, 1996; Hardy & Clegg, 1997). Is SIHRM guilty of the same crime on a global scale? Has the focus on the typological slashes and on the global-local and integration-differentiation lines oversimplified the terrain of SIHRM and emphasized fixed mind*set* locations rather than mind*ful* journeys, even if we maintain the mental imagery? We suggest that the use of Cartesian positions (cf. Burrell, 1996) has particular implications for a field of research which is inherently 'international' and which

encourages construction of inter-organizational networks and boundaryless organizations. Has the typologizing of SIHRM reduced the subtlety of a more graduated Cartesian map (cf. Donaldson, 1996), or is the typologizing of different organizational configurations a helpful orienting and explanatory endeavor (Delery & Doty, 1996; Doty, Glick & Huber, 1993; Miller & Mintzberg, 1983)?

In the preceding section, we have analyzed this progress in terms of the representation of SIHRM, in terms of both the categorization of SIHRM into descriptive core dimensions and typologies, and the extending theory bases for explaining and understanding those typologies. We now examine growth of SIHRM from a different perspective again, that of the development and refinement of SIHRM as a language with its own definitional distinctions.

THE LANGUAGE OF SIHRM

Denotation, Demarcation and Definitional Distinctions

In this section, we discuss the development and translation of SIHRM as a new language in management studies (cf. Abrahamson, 1996; Czarniawska & Sevon, 1996). Like all others, the language of SIHRM has its own vocabulary. In this respect, the field of SIHRM has followed the example set by international business research in developing and utilizing jargon that ranges from aphorisms to abbreviations. For example, "think global, act local" has been widely adopted as an aphorism reflecting a transnational mindset. This is sometimes supported by the hybrid ‘glocal’, or ‘glocalization’ (Parker, 1996). While the terms ‘global’ and ‘globalization’ have been central to the development of SIHRM research and practice, there remains debate about definition and implications. For example, we note that many US-based researchers and practitioners (mis-)use ‘global’ when actually referring to ‘transnational’ issues (cf. Pucik, 1997).

Mindful that definition and precision are required to enable communication among speakers of the language of SIHRM, we suggest that denotations also guide the SIHRM field and act as powerful tools of demarcation. Indeed, language is far more than a means of transmission of underlying thought (Cooper, 1989: 482); “a word is not a thing but an artificial symbol … language structure still objectifies words and encourages word magic” (Chase & Chase, 1954). Similarly, and also relevant to the discussion of centralization-decentralization above,

> Words are turned into labels by frequent repetition in an unquestioning mode in similar contexts, so that a possible “decentralization, why?” will give way to

"decentralization, of course!" and therefore decentralization will become what we happen to be doing in our organization" (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996: 32).

An example of such repetition without question has been seen in the literature on 'expatriate failure', which has perpetuated the assumptions that (i) the individual (not the MNE) is at fault and (ii) that failure rates are high. Harzing's (1995) recent trek through the expatriate literature suggests that these assumptions were based on unreliable guesses made in the 1960s, with little subsequent validation. It is refreshing to see that Harzing's work has sparked off new debate on this topic (Forster, 1997).

Within the vocabulary of SIHRM, it seems possible to differentiate between purposeful nomenclature and capricious jargon. Such differentiation appears a matter of *connotation* rather than *denotation*. For example, Czarniawska & Joerges (1996) criticize the essentializing of the adjectives "local" and global", arguing, for example, that "global" is not "total", nor is it "above" or "beyond" local (1996: 22; see also Parker, 1996). Much has been written about 'culture shock', a term borrowed from the field of cross-cultural psychology that refers to the experience of psychological disorientation by people living and working in cultural environments radically different to that of their home. Culture shock may hinder the expatriate's ability to adjust to the new conditions, and several researchers have investigated and articulated the psychological adjustment process of relocation (e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1991a; Richards, 1996). Perhaps the major difference between 'culture shock' and other labels used in SIHRM research and practice, is that the former has received fairly consistent definition, is intuitively appealing and is understandable even to the uninitiated.

In contrast, it is not difficult to imagine that many of the other terms require initiation into the 'SIHRM frequent flyers' club before sense can be made of the jargon[2]. For example, also widely used, and confusing for the uninitiated, are terms that refer to employee categories in MNEs: PCN, HCN, and TCN. PCN (parent country national) refers to a person of the same nationality as the MNE headquarters. HCN (host country national, sometimes called local national) refers to a person of the same nationality as an MNE subsidiary. TCN (third country national) refers to a person of a third nationality, employed either in the MNE parent country or in an MNE subsidiary. Of course, the term 'SIHRM' itself may be intimidating or confusing to 'outsiders' since both the abbreviation and its extension as 'Strategic International Human Resource Management' are far from self-explanatory.

Changing Terminology: A Living Language?

There are also some changes in SIHRM terminology that reflect our developing understanding of the connotations and implications of terms in the extant literature. For example, as much of the research has focused on expatriation, several labels have been applied to employees in MNEs who are transferred for work purposes. These labels include expatriate, inpatriate, transpatriate, and repatriate. Expatriation may include the transfer of parent country nationals, host country nationals, and third country nationals who are employees of an MNE (Dowling et al., 1994). Expatriate relocation involves the transfer of these employees - and often their families - for work purposes, between two country locations and for a period of time that is deemed to require a change of address and some degree of semi-permanent adjustment to local conditions. Hence, an *expatriate* is someone living (and perhaps working) in a host country, while remaining a citizen of one's home country. The label '*repatriate*' is applied to any of the above when they go home after an overseas assignment.

Further, an *inpatriate* is a HCN or TCN relocated to the parent country headquarters (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992), and we note that use of the word 'inpatriate' implies an ethnocentric orientation. A *transpatriate* is a PCN, HCN, or TCN (i.e. anyone) transferred on an international assignment in a transnational firm (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992). Another term, which has caused headaches for SIHRM practitioners, is '*going native*' – a term that would not be considered politically correct in most organizations. Going native denotes what happens when an expatriate becomes "too comfortable" in his or her international assignment location, or develops behaviors that do not 'fit' HQ expectations.

Translation Troubles

Indeed, the subject of expatriate relocation highlights several problems of translation in SIHRM. These problems occur not only at the experiential level of *spoken* language, but also in consideration of practical concerns such as the translation/calculation of remuneration relativities where, for example, expatriates from different countries in the one host location may be paid different amounts (Reynolds, 1986, cited in Dowling et al., 1994). In addition, SIHRM researchers endeavor to overcome the subtleties of deciphering the conceptual and functional equivalence of measures such as survey instruments (McGaughey, Iverson & De Cieri, 1997) and need to address the many methodological problems inherent in much of the extant international business literature (Cavusgil & Das, 1997; Nasif, Al-Daeaj, Ebrahimi & Thibodeaux, 1991). Furthermore, Cavusgil and Das (1997) note the need to address *within-*

country cross-cultural differences, noting, for example, that India has several official languages and numerous dialects.

This reminds us that the 'map' of SIHRM has been drawn at the inter-national level, ignoring the subtleties and shifts of the intra-national terrain. We need to take care here to recognize that the map need not be a "static formulation" (cf. Schultz & Hatch, 1996: 542), and that the role of the translator or map-reader is more than one of conduit (cf. Putnam, Phillips & Chapman, 1996). Most relevant to such recognition is to our third area of discussion: the pedagogical implications of the mapping of SIHRM.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this section, we examine ways in which the language, theoretical and empirical developments of SIHRM have influenced management educators, and we comment both on the content of *what* is transmitted (and omitted) through the mapping of SIHRM, and on the processes of *how* that transmission takes place. While there is a need for "knowledge transfer", or content-based delivery of SIHRM constructs, we raise concerns about the oversimplification of SIHRM subject matter in efforts to 'assist' students' and practitioners' comprehension.

Mapping as Diffusion of Content

In any discipline, pedagogical choices concerning content and processes are never independent of the values of those who make them (Freire, 1970). Indeed, the concept of "mental maps" provides a useful metaphor for describing the invisible landscapes (Stea, 1967) that reflect the values and filtering biases of their holders (Gould & White, 1986)[3]. Defined as a cognitive orientation incorporating the spatial properties of distance and location (Kaplan, 1973), a mental map defines what we see as close or distant, and as central and peripheral in our teaching choices.

More broadly, distinct and differing traditions have developed in European and United States organization theory (Koza & Thoenig, 1995). Within any one country, such differences may alter over time. For example, Chanlat (1996) notes that in Quebec, the teaching of management has changed from the discovery of American management in the 1960s to the translation of American thought into French in the 1970s, and to the emergence and development of management à la quebecoise in the 1980s, including "an original current of thought based on knowledge of human and social sciences and observation of the concrete reality of Quebec business firms" (Chanlat, 1996: 122).

In contrast, cultural values of the United States have continued to underlie international business research over most of the past twenty-five years. This may well be "a matter of research following practice" (Wright & Ricks, 1994: 699):

> In the postwar era, the success of American multinationals provided a significant impetus for international business research. Thus, the issues and countries studied were those that were most relevant to American firms, American perspectives and American managers. Systematic efforts to study non-US-related sites were not undertaken (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991: 264).

Within U.S. journals, there has been little attention to issues relevant to SIHRM. For example, Adler (1983) surveyed twenty-four journals over a ten-year period (1971-1980), and found that only 4.2% of the organizational behavior articles published in top-tier U.S. journals encompassed cross-cultural or international issues. Similar results have been reported by other researchers (e.g., Godkin, Bray & Caunch, 1989). Over time, this "American influenced" research became institutionalized and stored in the collective "mental map" of international business scholars. As the development of a discipline involves diffusion of knowledge through pedagogical activities, academic journals are a major channel for the diffusion of SIHRM. Since "published research forms the foundation for future research, signals about acceptability and appropriateness of locations are transmitted to prospective authors" (Thomas, Shenkar & Clarke, 1994: 685).

A significant proportion of international business research is published in a few 'purely' international journals. As the lead journal for the Academy of International Business (AIB), the *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS) has been an important channel introducing academics and practitioners to the intricacies and complexities of international business for two-and-a-half decades (Morrison & Inkpen, 1991; Okoroafo & Brunner 1990). "Thus, it is reflective of the pace and progress of international business research" (Thomas et al., 1994: 677). Thomas et al. (1994) analyzed the country coverage of JIBS over the 25 years of its existence, finding "a substantial expansion in the journal's geographic reach over the years, but also a somewhat narrow "mental map", with many countries and areas receiving only minimal coverage" (1994: 675). In addition, we note the rather patronizing tone of Boyacigiller & Adler's (1991: 700) remark that "[l]eading edge international business research is coming now from scholars based in Europe, and increasingly, in Asia".

Journals are therefore guardians and gatekeepers of the territory from which pedagogy draws: "They are responsible for updating existing mental maps and creating new ones"

(Thomas et al., 1994: 685; see also Sutton & Staw, 1995). The development of new journals and encouragement of alternative channels is desirable and necessary for dissemination of information. The proliferation of HR-related internet home-pages and discussion sites (such as those targeting researchers, HR practitioners, and expatriates) sites extends the territory of SIHRM into cyber-space (Jarvenpaa & Ives, 1994) and provides fairly democratic channels for voicing a variety of questions and issues. However, it is not only access to content that is important, for there are always human choices that differentiate the accessible from the accessed. Such choices are perhaps most visible through the processes of teaching SIHRM to the novice voyager.

Critical Teaching as Process

In this analysis, our intent is not only to criticize but also to raise awareness of possibilities for theory development, research and teaching of SIHRM. This purpose is in line with the recent suggestion by Prasad and Caproni (1997), who wrote that:

> Focusing exclusively on unmasking patterns of oppression and hegemony can leave students, scholars, and managers in a state of cynical pessimism….The use of critical theory in the management classroom also often meets with institutional resistance in the form of standardized curricula, student hostility, and administrative suspicion. Nevertheless, our personal experience has taught us that critical theory has much to offer the management classroom and therefore may well be worth the effort. More than anything else, it encourages students and practicing managers not to take organizational "realities" at face value (Prasad & Caproni, 1997: 289).

One means of doing this is suggested by Grey, Knights and Willmott (1996) in their discussion of an approach in which both teachers and students reflect critically on management knowledge, and in which teaching "becomes an activity that points to continuities and discontinuities between students' experience and bodies of literature" (1996: 101). However, we suggest that such reflection may be difficult where the subject matter is that of SIHRM and where the student group is not a group of experienced senior managers. In any other group, and including classes comprising students of differing nationalities, it may be difficult to move beyond the level of discussing cross-cultural stereotypes, communication norms, and the importance of 'managing diversity' (Hostager, Al-Khatib & Dwyer, 1995 cf. Ramsey & Calvert, 1994). However, in the teaching of SIHRM issues of distance do not only

relate to *physical* geography but to the elevation of the content matter to international and strategic, and hence hierarchically remote matters.

Thus, the content of SIHRM may limit its pedagogical possibilities. Due to the colonization of strategy talk, SIHRM may well be foreign territory where the experiences discussed are those of, if not the teacher or trainer, then the guest speaker who plays the role of the experienced traveler or adventurer, telling stories of the journey, of adventure and misadventure as a means of appeal to the (supposedly) naive audience (cf. Jeffcutt, 1994). Or, maybe not. Perhaps we should allow for new possibilities, not only in the topics we cover but also in the way we cover them and in our forms of assessment (e.g., writing 'letters home', choosing gifts for those who have assisted our passage). We should not leave it to the guest speaker to present and represent something a little too presumptuous, too provocative, and too risky for the mainstream curriculum or class coordinator to cover.

Cross-Cultural Training as inoculation: A re-presentation.

As one example, let us consider an unconventional approach, or re-presentation, of cross-cultural training (CCT). Indeed, the major focus of training related to SIHRM has been CCT programs that are designed to educate employees, usually in the pre-expatriate phase, in the key cultural values and behaviors of the host country (Harrison, 1994).

As usually presented, CCT has been advocated as important in developing 'effective interactions' with HCNs as strange people from strange lands. CCT is positively correlated with expatriate adjustment and performance: effective use of CCT, and the effectiveness of pre-departure preparations in all areas of staffing and maintenance, has implications for the success of the expatriation and repatriation process (Deshpande & Vishwesvaran, 1992).

Models for CCT (eg Harrison, 1994; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986), including methods of immersion versus passive learning, provide examples of the teaching technology of SIHRM. For example, Harrison (1994) has offered a prescriptive model of the structure and sequence of CCT. The first two steps relate to general orientation, and the next two steps relate to specific development of the individual. Empirical testing and evaluation of this and other CCT models is scarce in the literature (cf. Deshpande & Vishwesvaran, 1992), but the apparent reasoning behind CCT is that it raises sensitivity to and tolerance of 'others', avoiding or reducing the chances of unpleasant (or worse) encounters. In this sense, CCT can be viewed as a means of prophylaxis and, in particular, inoculation against '*host* country nationals', invoking images of *biological* colonization in addition to the geographical and discursive senses of colonization discussed above.

Rather than train for or teach about CCT as (implied) inoculation, we can consider other models. If we move beyond the 'safari mode' of taking the uninitiated out of the classroom on a 'Cook's Tour' into SIHRM territory, we might shift attention from the expatriate to the HCN. We could take heed of Linstead's (1996) comments that social anthropology proceeds by a methodology of 'ethnographic immersion', and of his suggestions for a pedagogy that seeks to develop the manager as anthropologist that includes "becoming receptive to others and otherness" (1996: 22). He cites the example of an exercise that involved briefing and discussion sessions to allow 'actors' to take on or feel 'inside the skin' of a particular employee role. Leaving biology aside, we suggest that it is also important to examine pedagogical implications of such suggestions for the teaching of SIHRM given the predominance of Western educational techniques such as experiential learning and participative discussion; techniques which may be much less effective for non-Western learners (Vance & Ring, 1994). We might learn again from Calas and Smircich (1996), who identify post(colonial) feminist deconstructions of colonial stories and testimonial writings from the perspectives of those whose voices are not otherwise heard.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In his discussion of mapping the intellectual terrain of management education, Kallinikos (1996) argues that:

> Management implies and reproduces compartmentalization and fragmentation as a means of mastery and control. For, in order to be managed, the totality of physical and social processes, whether within limited instrumental contexts or in society as a whole, needs to be broken down into narrow domains that can be inspected, measured and handled ….A critical examination of what is subsumed under the notion of management demands the consideration of both phenomena and the explication of their relationship (Kallinikos, 1996: 37; see also Chia, 1997; Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff, 1991).

We must question our actions as educators in the field of SIHRM. We need to develop awareness of our role as definers, disseminators of information, and researchers in the field. We hope that, by exploring the implications of SIHRM for theory, research, practice and teaching, we may raise awareness of current deficiencies and unanswered questions. Such questioning and reflection is necessary for the mapping of SIHRM. Do we need to set a new course, or at least make explicit our navigational assumptions?

As Bacharach suggests, “there may be a *fine line* between satisfying the criteria of the internal logic of theory and achieving a creative contribution. A good theorist walks this line carefully” (1989: 513, our emphasis). Given the recent problematizing of both human resources management (e.g., Legge, 1995; Townley, 1994) and of management strategy (e.g., Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Knights & Morgan, 1991; Whipp, 1996), we are not really charting new territory here. And if our voyage is not necessarily by land, it is perhaps time to broaden our metaphorical repertoire. SIHRM may benefit from description through new metaphors or extensions of those we have been using here. Perhaps, for example, we might consider expatriation in new terms, such as sabbaticals with accommodating colleagues, or extended stays with distant relatives. In this paper, our intent is more to comment on the *placement* of lines and to introduce the *non*-linear as a playful means of raising our serious concern that the domain that we are mapping should extend beyond that of the managers representing an (ethnocentric) head office. If SIHRM is to become post-colonial, let’s hear more not only from those who are ‘placed’ but also from those who are displaced.

Which leads us to the question: Why are we doing this? Why have we pursued this irreverent tack? Hardy & Clegg (1997: S14) advocate theorizing that is nomadic and “ranges across the territories of intellectual life”. If we are to be nomadic rather than colonizing, we can feel freer to draw from postmodern and critical theory to raise awareness of and reflection on our responsibilities in facilitating the development of SIHRM research and teaching. Ultimately, in mapping SIHRM, authors and teachers are shaping a moral and not only an intellectual territory (Gilligan, Ward, & McLean Taylor, 1988; Gowler & Legge, 1996). What matters most is that we continue to recognize and articulate this responsibility.

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[1] Cooper (1989) uses these words to describe Derrida's term 'logocentrism':

> Texts normally rest on the (usually unexamined) assumption that language is a means for the communication of thoughts. Consequently, thoughts take prime place and language is seen simply as a vehicle for the transmission of thought. Derrida calls this mental strategy 'logocentrism' since it centres human experience around the concept of an original 'logos' or presupposed metaphysical structure (e.g. mind, soul, reason, etc.) that validates and gives meaning to human activities….Logocentrism is …a structure with a fixed centre or point of origin that also censors (i.e., to 'centre' is also to 'censor') the self-errant tendencies in the text (Cooper, 1989: 482).

[2] It is perhaps worth noting at this point that one of the most devastating circumstances for the repatriated employee is being placed in a 'repatriation holding pattern' without a clear assignment or set of responsibilities (Black & Gregersen, 1991b; De Cieri, McGaughey & Dowling, 1996).

[3] The critique of mindsets and headquarters orientations above is, of course, also relevant here.