

Case Studies:

- **How could pre, during, post ethnographic methods assignments or activities mitigate the common conflicts described below?**
- **What other assignments or exercises might you think to employ to provide a platform of analysis before, during, or after the following site visits?**

Scenario 1: Site Visit to Goree Island, Senegal

A group of 10 African American students and 2 white students visit Goree Island in Senegal. During the trip the tour guide refers to the group as “white visitors” to Senegal. At first the students think that the comment is being directed only to the two white students in the group. They soon discover that they all are being referred to as “white” visitors as a way of distinguishing their privilege as visitors. The students are taken aback with this comment and some of the African American students are overwhelmed and angry. Goree Island has been a place that they felt a strong emotional connection to before the visit. Now they feel ostracized.

Scenario 2: Site Visit to the Binational Market in Dajabón, Dominican Republic

A group of 13 African American students are studying abroad in the Dominican Republic. The group travels to Dajabón to visit the Massacre River that divides Haiti and the Dominican Republic in order to witness the Binational Market where Haitians and Dominicans come to buy and sell goods that is held every Monday and Friday. The group is stopped by a Dominican immigration and border security and the two darkest skinned students are pulled aside and questioned. They are mistaken as Haitian immigrants and must present their passports.

Scenario 3 Site Visit to St Louis, Senegal

A group of students studying abroad in Senegal are in a class discussion having returned from a city tour of St. Louis with a local guide. They notice on the tour that the only statues in the city that they have seen were of white Frenchmen. The Senegalese teaching assistant with the group says that she does not understand why the US students take offense to this fact. One of the white US students tries to explain why it could be seen as offensive. When she tries to explain, one of the black US students in the group interrupts her and says that the white student has no right to talk about racism as a white person. The class erupts into a heated discussion about race in America.

Scenario 4 Site Visit to Centro Habana, Cuba

A group of 13 US students goes on a walking tour of Centro Havana with a local guide. Centro Havana is one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in all of Cuba. The guide is giving a tour trying to please his audience and leads the students to all the visual images of poverty. The guide takes the students into people’s homes and crumbling buildings. Students snap photographs of children playing in the streets, of housing

structures that have been divided and subdivided to make room for expanding families, and of local markets where meat and vegetables are in full display in the hot sun. Some of the students are laughing and joking, not paying attention to the guide.

Scenario 5: Site Visit Santería Ceremony, Cuba

A group of US students is invited to a santería ceremony in honor of iansã in the house of a colleague. The group arrives with their professor during the offering to the orishás but they are not greeted right away because the hosts are performing the introductory ceremony in the backroom where the students are not allowed to go. The students sit down and wait for what seems like hours. They start to get restless and some want to leave. The house is located in a location where students are not able to leave on their own safely. One of the students stands up to peak behind the curtain and is quickly asked to sit down. Another stands up and starts picking up the shells on the offering. When the ceremony begins, they are underwhelmed by what is happening and continue to ask when they will be leaving.

Scenario 6: Visit to a Social Project in a Rio de Janeiro Favela

A group of students visited a boxing school located inside a favela in Rio, where they participated in a boxing class after which there was an informal presentation by the boxing instructor of the project mission and activities, followed by questions and answers. Few participants asked questions. When debriefing the visit later that week, it became apparent that participants struggled to ascribe any particular meaning or benefit of this boxing school for the local community. Student responses seemed generic and could fit into any context globally. Furthermore, participants could offer few observational details for how the boxing school was inserted into the local community as a cultural space.

Scenario 7: Educational Community Visit to Santa Marta Favela

A group of students were lead on a visit to Santa Marta, a favela in Rio de Janeiro's South Zone, by a local resident who has worked closely with CIEE and received training in experiential teaching methods and is committed to our mission to develop student intercultural skills. However, three women of color decide not to attend the visit. When asked later by site staff why they did not attend, they indicated that they did not feel comfortable visiting this "black space" accompanied by a majority white cohort, which in fact was a majority latino/a cohort.

Commented [SM1]: We could offer an amalgam example, as I have very, very similar example to offer from taking students to a Candomblé ceremony. One key lesson I learned was not to allow last-minute participants who did not participate in the preparations. Those participants were missing key context and did not know what to expect or even the basic do's and don'ts. One student took a photo a woman in trance and another student fell asleep during the ceremony. Despite the "lesson learned" that I just mentioned, I decided that in most circumstances it is simply not appropriate to take students to a Candomblé ceremony

Commented [SM2]: Although this—and many other case studies I could provide—is similar to some that you have proposed, I'm thinking here that one valuable comment could be directed at the WHEN and the HOW for pre-briefing some site visits. Open up the discussion to not only the variety of pre-briefings available (mini-lectures and presentations; conversations; developing questions together; etc.) but also when and where that occurs. Some visits may be delicate enough and raise enough potential barriers to student perception (will this visit be "poverty tourism"?) that an earlier intervention in the form of pre-briefing is necessary—a pre-pre-briefing, in essence. Some visits even need contextual knowledge and information staging. This one, for instance, we actually stage with a lecture several days or more prior. But in this case we did not anticipate this problem and therefore did not address this explicitly in the lecture.