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Study Abroad and Identity Development

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Advances in technology in recent years have rapidly increased the interconnectivity of the world and the interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations. Globalization has promoted interactions between different people and geographic regions worldwide while opening borders to an increasing trade of goods, services, finances, and ideas. Increases in technology have allowed for swift and efficient travel, as well as greater international connections between people around the world through social media and the Internet. The individual context has quickly become global (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Increasing globalization in the past few decades has affected many industries around the world, including higher education. These globalization-based changes have put an emphasis on new sets of skills and competencies. For example, Young et al. (2015) argue that cultural competence

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has shifted from a focus on multicultural competence (interaction with diverse groups) to intercultural competence, defined as "comprehension of cultural differences and similarities evoking a deeper sense of self-awareness and cultural awareness" (p. 176). In other words, a greater emphasis has been placed on students possessing global awareness and intercultural competence than at any other point in history. One of the vehicles that higher education institutions have promoted to develop these skills and competencies in students is study abroad and other intercultural exchange opportunities.

Students who participate in study abroad not only have the opportunity to develop intercultural competence but because of its timing (predominantly 18–22 years of age) students are also still developing their identities. Since study abroad experiences force students to navigate multiple cultures and identities at one time, it can result in transformations in identity (Arnett, 2002). In fact, when challenged to adapt to a new context, individuals often deepen their understanding of the "other" and equally their understanding of the self (Young et al., 2015).

This chapter delves deeper into these transformations in identity in students while studying abroad. Starting with a brief overview of the twenty-first-century globalized world and the related development of study abroad programming and participation, the chapter continues with a discussion of research (albeit limited) on the impact of study abroad on cultural identity while focusing on the importance of varying study abroad programs' duration, destination, and type. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a review of research on how a specific cultural identity, American, is negotiated by U.S. students during and after their academic experience abroad.

Globalization, the Workforce, and Study Abroad

The twenty-first-century globalized world is one of increasing connectivity economically, politically, and socially (Steger, 2020). Globalization, with the increased technological and service-centered advancements, has led to a shift in the job market with employers seeking out recent

graduates with skills applicable to the twenty-first century. Using a three-domain framework proposed by the National Academy of Sciences (2012), Farrugia and Sanger (2017) clustered these skills in three competency domains: cognitive (e.g., cognitive strategies, knowledge, and creativity), intrapersonal (e.g., intellectual openness, work conscientiousness, and positive self-evaluation), and interpersonal (e.g., collaboration and leadership). They also demonstrated that these skills can be acquired through a study abroad experience. In a study conducted by the Institute for International Education, Farrugia and Sanger (2017) surveyed over 4,500 study abroad alumni who participated in study abroad between 1999–2000 and 2016–2017. Results of the survey showed that study abroad had an overall positive impact on the development of job skills for the twenty-first century across the three domains. Of the skills surveyed, the most significant developments were in intercultural skills, curiosity, flexibility and adaptability, confidence, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, communication, problem-solving, language, tolerance for ambiguity, and course or major-related knowledge. In addition to these skills, a general trend emerged in the survey findings that study abroad expands career possibilities as it gives students a broader understanding of what careers are available and the confidence to pursue them. This claim is further supported by another study conducted through the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES Abroad) that found that for American study abroad alumni (2012–2015), 93% of those who entered the workplace were employed within 6 months of graduation, and 89% were admitted into their first or second choice graduate or professional program (IES Abroad, 2015).

Since U.S. higher education institutions put a great deal of emphasis on preparing American students to secure jobs after graduation in order to be economically prosperous and successful, study abroad and its career benefits are becoming an increasingly common and important component of the higher education experience. Universities are increasing staffing and budgets for study abroad offices and programs of all types, duration, and location (e.g., Salisbury et al., 2009). Study abroad provider companies continue to grow and multiply and create new opportunities such as international internships and service-learning programs (Fisher, 2009). This increase is justified by the number

of students who participate in study abroad programs. For example, according to the Institute for International Education, in the 2018–2019 academic year 347,099 U.S. students earned academic credit abroad, up 1.6% from the year prior, and more than any other year in history (Martel et al., 2020). Not only has study abroad participation increased, but it is also becoming more diverse in program type and location. Students from all majors and minors are going abroad and to destinations all around the world. The data for the 2018–2019 academic year showed that while Europe still hosted 55.7% of all study abroad for academic credit, countries like China, Australia, Japan, and Costa Rica cracked the top 10 destinations for U.S. study abroad students (Martel et al., 2020). While the COVID-19 pandemic has stifled study abroad in the past two years due to health and safety concerns, the field remains optimistic that participation rates will continue to climb once borders begin to reopen (DiGiovine & Bodinger de Uriarte, 2020). As an increasing number of university students venture overseas for academic experiences, understanding the impacts above and beyond academic and career development is essential.

Emerging Adulthood[1] and Identity

Students often return home from a study abroad experience claiming that their time abroad was "life-changing." While abroad, students are thrust into a new environment where their identity is destabilized, due to their cultural identities being challenged given exposure to a different way of being (Kinginger, 2013). This destabilization has the potential to push students to reconsider their own values and beliefs, renegotiate identities, and see themselves as national and global actors (Dolby, 2004). Examining identity development and study abroad is especially interesting given the average age and period of life that American university students occupy. Ranging on average between 18 to 22 years old, most

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[1] Although we are using the term emerging adulthood, which was coined by Arnett (2000) to indicate a specific developmental stage, we are aware of Côté's (2014) criticisms of the term, and thus we are using it here descriptively to designate a transitional phase and not a life-stage.

university students have left home, are not married, do not have children, and do not have career jobs until at least their late twenties. They are at a transitional period in life with the freedom to explore different options, but the unsettled feeling of not knowing where this exploration will lead them (Arnett, 2014). These students are not adolescents, as they are often freer from parental control, nor young adults as they are usually unmarried and without children. Thus, they fall into a transitional phase that Arnett (2000) calls emerging adulthood. According to Arnett, emerging adulthood, which spans 18 to 25 years of age, has materialized in the United States due to the increase in length and spread of education, later age of marriage and parenthood, and a longer period before finding a stable career job. Emerging adulthood is not universal in young people's experiences during that period and will vary greatly across national, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts. Although previous work on identity development (Erikson, 1950) has argued that identity exploration and formation happens during adolescence, research shows that many adolescents have not yet solidified their set of particular beliefs and behaviors (Arnett, 2000; Côté, 2000). While not tied to parents and adult responsibilities, emerging adults have the time and space necessary to try out different ways of living. Their identities are still quite fragile and malleable. The experiences during emerging adulthood are key to identity development and the eventual maturity and understanding of individuals' belief systems and behaviors (Arnett, 2014).

Study Abroad and Cultural Identity

During emerging adulthood, study abroad students experience new cultures that can begin to challenge their current cultural identity. Forming a cultural identity involves adopting the beliefs and practices of one or more cultural communities and making choices about the culture with which one identifies (Jensen, 2003). Schwartz et al. (2008) argue that cultural identity focuses on three aspects: "cultural values and practices, the ways in which one regards the ethnic or cultural groups to which one belongs, and relative prioritization of the individual and of the group" (p. 636), and as such answers the question of who one is

as a member of their cultural group. Before the rapid interconnecting of cultures, economies, and politics around the world, cultural identities for many were relatively simple. Children were born into a culture, grew up in that culture, and learned the ways and basis of living according to that culture (Jensen et al., 2011). However, due to globalization, many individuals have a foot in more than one cultural space (Arnett, 2002). These cultural spaces often have separate or even contradictory values regarding life domains (Jensen et al., 2011). This allows emerging adults an opportunity to choose from a variety of potential cultural identities. Different lines of theorizing and research have explored the process through which adolescents and emerging adults form and negotiate their cultural identities. Some theorists have adapted John Berry's (1997) acculturation immigrant strategies and applied them to negotiations of local and global identities (Arnett, 2002; Jensen & Arnett, 2012; Jensen et al., 2011). Others have argued that young adults engage in multicultural acculturation, where they are negotiating or taking cultural elements from more than two cultural spaces (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2017; Ozer & Schwartz, 2016). The rise of intersectional theorizing also supports a multidimensional identity negotiation rather than a bidimensional one.

Encountering new worldviews and experiencing new cultures can lead to intercultural dialogues and learning experiences, but can also be challenging and surprising at times. Depending on their individual situation, some students will reject the new culture while others will navigate or accept it. Berry's (1997) model of adaptation to immigration can be applied to study abroad psychological adjustment. Berry (1997) proposed four possible patterns of acculturation : assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Reconceptualizing these acculturation patterns with regard to cultural identity formation in the context of study abroad can help understand how cultural identities may develop in study abroad students. Students who assimilate will reject their local culture and embrace the new one. Students in this pattern are the most likely to create an entirely new cultural identity. Students falling into the separation pattern will hold to their local culture and reject the adoption of the new culture. Oftentimes these students will socialize only with other study abroad students rather than explore and familiarize themselves with members of the host culture . Integration

will find students who merge together elements of the local and the new culture. Students in this pattern will often find themselves identifying as bicultural. Lastly, marginalization is when students have little interest in maintaining their local culture but also reject or are rejected by the new culture. Depending on where a student falls in line with these acculturation patterns, they may begin to view their cultural identity differently. Some students may find themselves feeling a greater sense of their national identity while others may begin to feel like they belong to the wider world.

Although in theory this reconceptualization makes sense, it brings multiple questions to the forefront. One question is whether the cultural negotiations are occurring between their local and the new host culture, or between their local and a global culture? For example, is an American study abroad student in France going to assimilate to French culture, or to a global culture, which incorporates both American and French elements? A second question is how feasible are some of the acculturation strategies? While separation and integration might be realistic strategies, assimilation appears to be less so. One reason for that is related to the third question: Does the relatively short amount of time that one spends abroad (in comparison to a permanent move) allow for acculturation to occur?

Because of similar questions the term "sojourner adjustment" has been applied in the literature to address populations that interacted with foreign environments in a shorter time span (Pedersen et al., 2011). Pedersen et al. (2011) argue that full acculturation cannot occur due to both limited exposure and lack of perceived importance of integrating into the host culture. Sojourner adjustment is defined as "the psychological adjustment of relatively short-term visitors to new cultures where permanent settlement is not the purpose of the sojourn" (Church, 1982, p. 540). Research on the relationship between sojourner adjustment and cultural identity has demonstrated that one's cultural identity can impact sociocultural adjustment to the host culture. For example, research on New Zealand civil servants serving in other countries (Ward & Kennedy, 1994), Filipina domestic workers in Singapore (Ward et al., 1999), and foreign nationals residing in Nepal (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000), have

shown that stronger cultural identity was associated with psychological well-being, but identification with the host culture was unrelated to sociocultural adjustment. More interestingly, and applicable to the content of the current chapter, is the expressed level of some study abroad participants' cultural identity difficulty upon re-entry into the original culture (for a review see Ward et al., 2020). Confusion about cultural identity upon re-entry does support the idea that being abroad would impact one's perception of who they are.

Study Abroad and Cultural Competencies

While students in today's society seldom grow up without exposure to more than one culture through the globalization of social media and technology, engaging a new culture in person is a different experience. Several studies have demonstrated the effects of study abroad (in comparison with in-home learning) on cultural competencies. For example, Ball et al. (2012) found that engineering students who participated in study abroad versus students who participated in global virtual teams (GV), which relied on internet-based communication, scored higher on multiple global competencies than the GV students. Although globally infused in-home programs and classes increase intercultural competencies (Soria & Torsi, 2014), study abroad allows students to go beyond these competencies and impact their cultural identity. For example, Angulo (2008), in a longitudinal study, examined whether students who study abroad experience changes in their identities, beliefs, and feelings, and what personal, situational factors, and living arrangements would predict change. The researcher compared the University of Texas, Austin students who did a semester-long study abroad with an at-home group. The results indicated that the study abroad participants showed higher worldliness and marginally higher self-liking (which were the operational variables capturing identity). While identification with the host country and the United States did not change, ethnocentrism increased across time. Some of the changes in these variables were predicted by personal and situational factors. What this study reveals is that changes in identity can occur as a function of study abroad and that the interacting

factors contributing to that change provide a rather complex picture. In another study, DiFrancesco et al. (2019) asked students who completed a week-long study abroad with a service-learning component to reflect on their own identity as a result of the experience. Students indicated that they were more aware of multiple identities after their experience abroad. Maharaja (2018) examined changes in personal development, along with perceptions of the native and host cultures, in American study abroad students. All students participated in a semester-long program in both English and non-English speaking countries. In terms of personal development, 65% of students indicated that they became more independent as a function of the program; 58% reported developing higher levels of self-confidence; 72% said that they became more open-minded; and many students also reported exposure and learning of new things, leading to the development of different perspectives.

Study Abroad Programs

As mentioned before, students going abroad are thrust into a transnational consciousness which is "essentially composed of an awareness of multi-locality and an abstract awareness of one's self" (Gu, 2015, p. 65). Even though study abroad is temporary, the immersive experience influences one's cultural identity through exposure to a new worldview (Kinginger, 2013). While certainly affected by the international experience, the experiences and the outcomes associated with study abroad will not be universal for all participants. Because study abroad programs vary by duration, depth, and destination of program, these differences can result in differential outcomes.

Before reviewing the empirical evidence on outcomes related to study abroad programs, the question of how one measures cultural identity and perceived changes to it needs to be addressed. Multiple scales have been utilized to measure cultural identity (see Science.gov topic cultural identity scales), and their dimensions vary as a function of the context and the population studied. In regard to cultural identity negotiations between different cultural streams, one of the most popular measures has been in regard to acculturation. In regard to both of these types

of measures (cultural identity and acculturation), one of the issues that emerges is that the majority of them are directed toward a specific group, predominantly various ethnic groups in the United States (Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011). Research on study abroad predominantly measures the development of various competencies rather than identity changes. Some researchers make a distinction between the two, such as identity is seen as a sense of self, while a competency is seen as an ability that enables people to perform specific roles, complete tasks, or achieve specific objectives (Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2012). However, other research on identity demonstrates that competencies are interrelated with identity, because they can predict one's level of identification. For example, Reysen and Katzarska-Miller's (2013) model of global citizenship identification demonstrates that global awareness, which has been conceptualized as a competency in the study abroad literature, predicts identification with global citizens. Similarly, identity in some study abroad research has been operationalized through competencies (e.g., worldliness; Angulo, 2008). Thus, in the present review of the outcomes of the different types of study abroad programs, we have included both.

Program Duration

One way in which study abroad programs vary is duration. Study abroad programs typically range in length from one week to one academic year. In the past, study abroad was the traditional "junior year abroad" model, but now, short-term education abroad programs, ranging from a week long to less than eight weeks long, have increased in popularity (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). In fact, in the 2018–2019 academic year, 64.9% of all American study abroad students participated in a short-term program (eight weeks or less), 32.9% in a mid-length program (one semester, or one or two quarters), and 2.2% in a long-term program (academic or calendar year) (Martel et al., 2020).

Research on outcomes associated with short-term, mid-length, and long-term programs has shown interesting patterns. Students who study abroad in mid-length and long-term programs are likely to have a more similar experience than those in short-term programs. In fact, DeLoach

et al. (2021) conducted a longitudinal study across 80 study abroad programs from a single institution that measured global awareness pre- and post-abroad experience. Besides program length, the researchers also measured depth of programs, as related to genre, destination (English or non-English speaking country), common or uncommon destination, and type of program (island or non-island) (see the section on program type for more information on program depth). The researchers found that the duration of the program impacted students' global awareness, such that longer duration was associated with significant changes in intercultural awareness, for programs without depth. Interestingly, across some global awareness dimensions shorter programs with depth had a similar impact on students as longer programs. Antanakopoulpu (2013), in a study of two groups of American students studying in Greece (one group for four weeks and one group for a full semester), found that both short-term and mid-length study abroad students scored high in sociocultural adaptation on the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale. Medina–López–Portillo (2004) measured intercultural sensitivity, defined as "the worldview that establishes the way that he or she experiences or processes cultural differences" (p. 180), of American students who studied abroad in Mexico. One group did a seven-week and the other a sixteen-week program. The results showed that the participants in the longer program developed greater intercultural sensitivity in comparison with those in the shorter program. The researcher also conducted interviews and counterintuitively found that students in the shorter program showed more evidence of a change in their perceptions of their cultural identity before and after the program than students in the longer program. The explanation provided was that students who participated in the longer program already had strongly defined cultural identity prior to the program, which was not the case for the shorter term group.

Dwyer (2004) surveyed over 3,000 alumni who studied with the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) for varying term lengths between the academic years of 1950–1951 and 1999–2000. One of the goals of the study was to measure the longitudinal correlation between the length of the study abroad and a variety of student outcomes, including intercultural development and personal growth. The results showed that, regardless of program length, a high percentage

of participants indicated that the study abroad experience "helped them better understand own cultural values and biases" and "contributed to developing a more sophisticated way of looking at the world" (p. 158), though full-year participants indicated this at a higher level (99% and 85%, respectively). Similar findings, with highest percentages for the full year participation, were indicated for personal growth items, such as increased maturity, lasting impact on worldviews, tolerating ambiguity, et cetera. However, some of the data also revealed that in some categories, summer abroad students were as, or even more likely, to benefit from the experience than one-semester students. The author's explanation for this finding is that the key for successful short-term programs is well-developed pedagogical planning and resources.

Overall, although programs of all durations have a positive impact on student growth, when the programs are not carefully planned, longer duration appears to be more beneficial. One reason for that could be that prolonged exposure has a more profound effect, which, however, could be achieved in a shorter amount of time with in-depth planning around concrete learning objectives. Another reason could be due to the fact that many students who chose the longer programs are self-selecting (Dwyer, 2004) and they may already have higher levels of competencies that are associated with study abroad (e.g., global awareness, cultural sensitivity, etc.). While this is the case, program destination and type also play an important role in the level of associated student growth, as program length is not the only indicator of cultural identity growth.

Program Destination

Another way programs vary is in destination. In the 2018–2019 academic year, American students ventured to 194 countries and territories on all seven continents (Martel et al., 2020). Since the inception of study abroad, the most traditional destination for American students has been Europe (Wells, 2006). In recent years, however, there has been an increase in interest in nontraditional destinations. Wells (2006) defines nontraditional destinations as a country that has had

few American students studying there previously, summarizing classifications of such destinations by others as "non-industrial, third-world, or developing-countries" (p. 114). Wells refers to these nontraditional study destinations as those in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Middle East. In order to avoid value-laden descriptions of countries (e.g., third-world, developing, etc.) we use Wells' (2006) label of nontraditional destinations.

Given varying cultural differences in countries around the world, students will have unique experiences. For example, an American student in Ireland is going to have a drastically different experience than an American student in Vietnam. Food, language, traditions, holidays, and religions are just a few of the many ways that countries around the world differ from one another and the United States. As such, cultural identity development will vary from student to student based on the destination of choice. Students going to an English-speaking destination may be able to communicate with locals and feel less culture shock than those going to a destination where they do not know the language. Additionally, students who go to countries that they have studied in the past or have a shared heritage may feel more of a connection with the culture than those who do not. However, some research suggests that study abroad in nontraditional destinations has more profound personal development benefits than in traditional countries. For example, Thompson et al. (2000) examined the experiences of North Ireland nursing study abroad students who traveled to both traditional and nontraditional destinations. The results showed that students who visited nontraditional countries reported more gains in terms of international perspectives (e.g., evaluation of world issues), personal (e.g., awareness of their own culture, tolerance of others), and intellectual development. Similarly, Cook (2004) found that students who traveled to Eastern Europe and Latin America expressed higher program satisfaction and personal growth in comparison to other regions. However, another study examining the development of cultural consciousness of American nursing students who participated in study abroad either in the Netherlands or Bangladesh, revealed that regardless of destination, students did experience an overall increase in cultural consciousness (Maltby et al., 2016).

Wells (2006), after acknowledging that there is no sufficient research on the impact of nontraditional study abroad destinations, discussed some of the purported goals of study abroad and the potential effect of the nontraditional destinations on these goals. One of the objectives is related to the development of personal growth, global citizenship, and transnational competence of students. Nontraditional locations would be more beneficial to this objective than traditional ones because they allow for greater flexibility, problem-solving skills, and a greater challenge to one's beliefs, values, and opinions. Furthermore, because the likelihood of encountering and experiencing global issues and problems is higher in nontraditional destinations, studying in these destinations could lead to better intercultural competence and higher global awareness. Davis and Knight's (2021) findings provide mixed support for Wells' (2006) suppositions. Davis and Knight (2021) examined the influences of seven international destinations of a common global program, on students' experiences and outcomes. The authors investigated this via analyses of students' journals while studying abroad. The researchers grouped the destinations into three tracks based on the cultural distance between the international destination and the United States. The journal coding yielded several dimensions with three—knowledge, identity, and affect—having the most variability between the three tracks. The high cultural distance tracks had the most knowledge codes and the low cultural distance track had the fewest. In contrast to knowledge, the identity dimensions had a negative relationship with cultural distance, such that the high cultural distance track had the lowest numbers of identity codes. Although some journals discussed cultural identity, the majority of identity mentions were in regard to engineering identity, which was the specialty of the students participating in the global program.

Overall, research on study abroad destinations is rather limited and deductive in nature. More research is needed on study abroad outcomes based on destination, especially between those highly visited and those more "off the beaten track" for study abroad students. However, it appears that destinations that are more culturally divergent from the native culture have more profound effects, either positive or negative, in that they can challenge one's cultural identity in deeper ways due to

increased cultural differences in language, food, religion, social norms, et cetera.

Program Type

A third way programs can vary is in type, defined by the learning context. Norris and Dwyer (2005) argue that these programs can be seen as a continuum. On one end of the continuum are programs that are fully immersive, and students are directly enrolled in the international institution. Norris and Dweyer (2005) emphasize that these programs do not provide extensive orientation for the study abroad students and any support services are provided through the host university. On the other end of the spectrum are programs that operate like an "island" and take American students overseas to an American study center with American faculty members. Island programs often limit interaction with local students and citizens. They require additional programming and effort to ensure effective host country interaction. In the middle of the continuum are programs labeled as "hybrid" "for which the home institutions offer support and services and which encourage students to take coursework offered by the program as well as courses taught by host-country faculty at the local university" (Norris & Dweyer, 2005, p. 122).

In addition to traditional study abroad programs, there are service-learning programs, internships abroad, and student teaching opportunities in certain instances. Students participating in programs will also have varying types of accommodations. Some students may live with a host family, some with other international students in dormitories, and others in apartments with other American study abroad students. The amount of cultural adjustment needed for each program type and living situation varies drastically and can have an impact on the amount of cultural identity growth that is possible over time. For example, Norris and Dwyer (2005) conducted a comparison analysis among hybrid programs (combined some features of island programs and direct enrollment programs) and fully immersive programs. In terms of cultural and personal development, the results showed that participants in the hybrid programs expressed greater interest in the host

culture, while the fully immersive had stronger ties with people from the host country and were more likely to maintain contact with them. Participants in the hybrid programs also expressed higher interest for another language and culture in comparison with the fully immersive ones. However, the majority of items related to cultural and personal development (e.g., a better understanding of one's own cultural values and biases, increased maturity, learning something new about the self, etc.) although not statistically different between types of programs were highly rated by participants in both types of programs. Pederson (2009) studied a year-long island study abroad program, with intercultural pedagogy intervention in Birmingham, England, with American students. Students' intercultural development was measured pre-departure and one month after the completion of the program. The researcher added two comparison groups: students who studied in England in the same year but did not receive the intercultural pedagogy intervention, and students who studied at home but were registered for study abroad for the upcoming year. The results indicated that the year-long study abroad program with the implemented intercultural pedagogy resulted in the most overall change in intercultural development in comparison with the other two groups.

What these studies reveal is that specific outcomes come not so much from the type of program, but how these programs are executed. While some direct enrollment programs do not include a comprehensive orientation upon arrival, others do, and some "island" programs allow for cultural immersion while others prevent full cultural interaction through structured daily itineraries. It is also important to note that home university preparation prior to departure plays an integral role in potential intercultural development of students while abroad on any type of program. In sum, intentional and carefully planned pedagogical features are more important than the specific type of program.

American Identity Salience

In recent years a major emphasis in education has been on global citizenship education. Even international organizations such as UNESCO and

The United Nations have highlighted the relevance of global citizenship education in terms of transforming the world by moving beyond knowledge development to the development of competencies and skills that are useful for the globalized world. Study abroad has been seen as a major component to the development of global citizenship and its associated skills and competencies (see Lewin, 2010). Although this is an important area of research, less empirical attention has been paid to how study abroad programs impact local cultural identities. Thus, the remainder of this chapter reviews research on how a specific cultural identity, American, is being negotiated by U.S. students during and after a study abroad experience.

When studying abroad, American students have the opportunity to see America and American culture through a new perspective. Seeing their home nation in a new light allows students to reformulate opinions on their own American identity, or outlook on America and where they see themselves in relation. As Dolby (2004) claims, "American national identity is neither simply discarded nor strengthened, but it is riddled with contradictions, as it is actively encountered and constructed outside of the physical borders of the United States" (p. 151). Dolby (2004) argues that national identity in the global context shifts from passive to active and American identity increases as students are in a cultural context that makes them feel like the "other." Study abroad students are cross-examining their home country for potentially the first time. In a comparative study of university students from the United States studying abroad and students from a university in the Western United States that stayed home, Savicki and Cooley (2011) found that while the homegroup did not explore their American identity and were highly committed to it without much questioning, the study abroad group showed a similar commitment but also an increased exploration of their American identity. Part of study abroad students' identities are rooted in how they define themselves in relation to this exploration and their sense of belonging to, and preference for their home country (Savicki & Cooley, 2011). Many students when they arrive abroad quickly realize that the United States is perceived differently in various parts of the world. How U.S. study abroad students view and see American history,

culture, and politics from the inside can drastically differ from how people see it on the outside.

Some study abroad destinations may be pro-American and place students on a pedestal, while other destinations may not favor Americans and students may for the first time feel like outsiders. One American student studying abroad in Australia commented that their study abroad group was often teased for being American, and it was one of the first times in their lives when they felt cast as the "other" (Dolby, 2004). That student recalled that "the tour bus drivers would make some comments about Americans on the sly. Or we'd pull up to a McDonald's and they'd be, like, oh the American embassy. We're, like, what are you guys talking about" (Dolby, 2004, p. 165). Another student mentioned that it was frustrating that in some cases Australians knew more about the United States than they did. It was through experiences like these that the students in Australia realized that their national identity is not just created in the United States, but people around the world have an impact on what defines an American (Dolby, 2004). While these students realized for the first time how their own identity is constructed by many, they also felt a stronger sense of their American identity as they often felt they had to defend their home nation from stereotypes and constant teasing (Dolby, 2004).

The sociopolitical climate of the study abroad experience has the potential to exacerbate American identity salience while abroad, especially if the experience is during a major political event or national crisis. During the 2016 presidential election, students studying abroad had to not only navigate a new cultural environment, but also how to talk about their home culture and nation in relation to the election. One of the most intense elections in recent history, 2016 pitted the potential first woman president—Hilary Clinton—and a career businessman—Donald Trump—against each other. During this time, students had the increased stress of navigating perceptions of the election as an American abroad. One study abroad student mentioned, "stereotypes of Americans were common, but most prominent was conversation around U.S. politics….The main question I get asked is about what I think about Trump" (Sturm, 2017). Goldstein (2017), using the framework of stereotype threat, investigated U.S. study abroad students' reactions to being targets

of American stereotypes. Stereotype threat "occurs when one expects to be judged negatively based on stereotypes of one's social group and when one feels at risk of confirming these stereotypes" (p. 94). Goldstein (2017) measured predictors and responses to stereotype threat. Of the several hypothesized predictors only gender, exposure to Trump-related stereotypes, and motivational cultural intelligence were significant predictors. Of note, the level of national identification prior to the study abroad was not a significant predictor of stereotype threat. Depending on the level of stereotype threat, students engaged in different responsive strategies. The most common strategy for those experiencing stereotype threat was to show a decrease in national identity and even alter their appearance and behavior to appear less American. Although students who experienced stereotype threat were less likely to engage in conversations about positive or negative aspects of the United States, students who did not feel as much threat found themselves discussing positive aspects of the United States with members of the host culture. One student mentioned, "I think America is an amazing place and I do not understand why people are not proud of being from America… so when America, or where I come from comes up, I will talk very highly of it because I am proud" (p. 104). A similar pattern was observed following the 9/11 attacks. Students, even supporters of the Bush administration, felt discomfort abroad when confronted by the many questions about the U.S. government's actions following the event (Sato, 2009). At the same time, they intensely identified as American given the nation's patriotic response to the tragedy.

Further, American identity salience abroad can be impacted by heritage. Heritage can be defined as "any ancestral connections to [students] based on language, ancestry, race, or any other identities significant to them" (Naddaf et al., 2020, p. 252). In a study of eight heritage seeking study abroad alumni from a large public four-year university in the Midwestern United States, Naddaf et al. (2020) found that while heritage seekers felt a connection to their heritage identity while abroad, many recognized the strength of their American identity as well. Naddaf et al. (2020) observed that the most prominent factors in American identity salience in these eight students abroad were language barriers, feeling foreign, and historical influences. When

discussing language barriers, one student commented, "When I would open my mouth, that's when it was given away. Like, Oh, you are not Italian, and you never will be" (p. 255). Another student commented similarly that "I look very German, appearance wise. Until I spoke, I fit in. Nobody noticed that I was an American until I was like "Oh hi! You could see their perceptions change" (p. 255). While language proficiency, a familiarity with the culture, a sense of belonging, the ability to navigate the culture, and family influence led these eight students to feel a heritage identity salience, negative interactions with locals, peers, or professors led to a stronger American identity salience and less of a connection with their host community (Naddaf et al., 2020). Block (2007) and Moreno (2009) bolster the claim that negative experiences with the host culture may lead to students strengthening their American identities. When study abroad students face challenges abroad they often retreat to the cultural norms of their home country and spend time with their American study abroad friends instead of locals (Block, 2007; Naddaf et al., 2020). While distinct for every study abroad student, understanding and shaping their American identity is an important part of the intercultural experience.

What research on American identity salience during and after study abroad shows is the impact depends on several factors, associated with individual student characteristics, destination's conceptualizations of American, and the sociopolitical climate in the United States during the study abroad experience. Individual characteristics that lead to stereotype threats such as gender, and exposure to Trump-related stereotypes (during the 2016 election process), as well as one's heritage culture and ability to speak the heritage language, impacted levels of American identification. Likewise, whether the study abroad destination has more positive or negative perceptions about the United States has an effect on one's national identification, leading to increase in spaces in which students felt the need to defend it. Lastly, the U.S. sociopolitical events at the time of the study abroad experience impacted the ways in which members of the host culture interacted with the students, (e.g., students being constantly asked what they think about Trump during the 2016 election process) and increased their level of stereotype threat, therefore influencing their levels of American national identification.

Conclusion

Since the inception of study abroad for college students in 1923, when eight young men from the University of Delaware studied in Paris (Angulo, 2008), programs and destinations have proliferated throughout the years, amounting to close to 350,000 U.S. students in the 2018–2019 academic year earning academic credit abroad (Martel et al., 2020). Research on study abroad began in the 1960s with the initial goal of examining changes in study abroad students (Coelho, 1962). Since then research on study abroad has become relatively comprehensive and interdisciplinary, investigating a range of questions, with one of the most common ones related to personal growth (Angulo, 2008).

Personal growth, especially in the age of contemporary globalization, can have a variety of dimensions, ranging from cultural competencies and desirable skills for the workplace, to finding one's passion and understanding of who they are as a person. Although research in study abroad has concentrated on the former, there is some research that points out the ways in which one's cultural identity development can be impacted by study abroad. In the chapter, we have attempted to review the scholarship that demonstrates the impact of study abroad on identity development. In the process of doing so, there are several trends in the literature that stood out. First, much of the literature concentrates on U.S. study abroad students. Although this is not surprising given the high number of U.S. college students participating in study abroad programs (see Martel et al., 2020), according to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2020), in 2019 the total number of Chinese nationals studying overseas was 703,500. While this is twice the amount of Chinese students studying abroad, a quick google scholar search reveals 2.44 times more articles about American study abroad students than Chinese. Second, despite the interdisciplinary nature of study abroad literature, there is a lack of measures directly assessing identity change. One of the difficulties that this presents is that other measures are used as proxies (e.g., development of competencies), and although they are related to identity, in that they can predict identity identification, there is little consensus on whether identity and competencies are distinct aspects of the self. Lastly, because of the heavy emphasis on global citizenship education in

recent years, study abroad has been seen as a major component of the development of global citizenship (e.g., Lewin, 2010). As such, much research has been focused on study abroad programs that can develop and produce global citizenship outcomes. While this is a timely and important area of research, with the recent global shifts in increased nationalism (Bieber, 2018), more research is needed on how national identity is impacted by study abroad.

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