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## Reconceptualizing Global Citizenship: Experiences from Women who have Studied Abroad

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Reconceptualizing Global Citizenship: Experiences from Women who have Studied Abroad

by

Jessica L. Colston

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
College of Education  
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Keywords: Bronfenbrenner, global citizen, self-curated photo elicitation, study abroad,  
transnational feminism

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## **Dedication**

*I dedicate this work to my family. Thank you for showing me your love, support, and passion for travel.*

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Abstract**

This study used self-curated photo elicitation to express students' awareness of power, privilege, and identity. The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore how female undergraduate students interacted with their environment and conceptualized a critical understanding of global citizenship. As such, this inquiry asked: (1) To what extent do female undergraduate students from the United States who have participated in a study abroad program develop a critical understanding of global citizenship? (2) How are students' awareness of power, privilege, and identity reflected in their documentation and narration of their experiences abroad?

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and transnational feminism explained the researcher's unique perspective on study abroad and global citizenship. Most feminists only look at power, privilege, and oppression at the individual level, ignoring environmental influences. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory states everyone sees the world with individual lenses, explaining cultural differences, and why students respond differently (Mapes, 2020). Also, some critical perspectives failed to acknowledge the historical impact on development and how relationships and experiences impact personal development (Enns et al., 2020). The significance of this research contributes to the perceptions and experiences of female students from study abroad. The key findings represent five themes: (1) life abroad, (2) global interactions, (3) global community, (4) time abroad, and (5) American perceptions. Recommendations included may improvement global citizenship education and study abroad programs.



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1: Personal Experience**

Obtaining global knowledge and experiencing the world firsthand has been a part of my life since I was a young girl. At school there were cultural celebrations, my friends travelled often, and every year my family took a vacation. Our family vacations consisted of travel around the United States and as I got older, they became international. Being from the Midwest, some say I was closeminded, sheltered, and even naïve. Growing up I refused to accept those labels. I had travelled quite a bit and I always wanted a local, immersive experience. When I travelled, I tried to avoid all the tourist traps and gimmicks and sought after an authentic encounter. In my senior year of college, I decided to challenge those stereotypes and prove to myself with firsthand international travel I could become more cultured and develop a global mindset. Study abroad provided this opportunity and changed my perceptions of the world and allowed for personal growth. My first choice of a study abroad destination was Athens, Greece. As a young child I grew up watching Disney movies and Hercules was one of my favorites. I longed to see the famous statues of Zeus and Poseidon and buildings of Ancient Greece such as the Parthenon and had always been interested in Greek mythology. Unfortunately, the program was full due to a high number of applicants. The university suggested the next best location of Syracuse, Italy, a small city in Sicily. My family is Italian, thus, an opportunity to explore my cultural background was appealing. I would have the ability to see similar monuments from a Roman rather than a Greek perspective.

Before I committed to the trip, the decision to study abroad in college was an internal dilemma. As a tall White woman, would I stand out in the crowd? I was nervous I would attract unwanted attention and look like a foreigner. I did not want to be a target of any theft or crime. Also, would the academic experience allow for personal growth? It was challenging to decide on the courses available and how they could meet my educational needs. I wanted to take advantage of the field trips included with specific classes, but I also wanted to learn about different content areas and gain the experience of learning from international professors. How would my perceptions of the world change upon my return home? I thought after I travelled abroad no one could ever say I was naïve, because I had studied abroad and had seen places outside of my home country. With better preparation I may have experienced less of a culture shock and could have overcome personal fears.

I experienced immediate disappointment upon arrival in Sicily after learning most students in the program were White and only spoke English. I signed up for the program to learn a new language and to interact with people from another culture. Also, I wanted to gain a different academic perspective and experience personal growth from living in a foreign country. An orientation helped participants adjust to life in a new country. The orientation explained cultural differences and potential social interactions to be aware of. Taunted by locals, whistled at as I walked by, and had my rear end pinched by a man driving by on a Vespa were neither normal nor expected interactions. Also, my lost baggage forced me to wait a week without any personal belongings. In the meantime, I had to go shopping for a completely new wardrobe on a 60-euro allowance allotted by my travel insurance. Sicilian's dress differently than Americans and their clothing is more expensive than I imagined. As a result, I borrowed clothes from my roommate whom I had just met. Then my apartment was broken into a few weeks later.

Consequently, students reside in the same housing from semester to semester and the locals are aware of these arrangements. My final obstacle was self-identifying as Italian. Because my family is from Northern Italy, I thought I would blend in more. However, I was taller than most everyone in Sicily and had lighter hair and lighter features. Being from the North was different than being Sicilian. I should not inform the locals my family is Italian because of the social and cultural differences between Northern and Southern Italians.

Looking back on the experience, I see it as a period of transformation. A glimpse into the environment and culture shaped my personal development and global outlook. Living in a fast-paced society, it was difficult to adjust to the slower pace of Sicilian life. Over time, I learned to walk slowly, take an afternoon break, and go for a stroll after dinner. I learned to adapt to my surroundings, adjust my appearance, and embrace cultural differences. It was amazing to see the whole community gathered in the piazza (city square) late at night. The children ran around and played games while the adults conversed and drank wine. As an introvert, I was able to grow as a member of their community. I learned to speak with the locals, ask for directions, try new foods, and received local travel recommendations. Giving back to the community, I was able to introduce innovative ideas and share my culture with the locals. On Halloween I carved a jack-o-lantern and placed it in my apartment window. I had never seen so many curious people stop and analyze a pumpkin before. For Thanksgiving, our school agreed to host a special dinner. The staff watched and learned as our class shared food and stories from home.

I was nervous to travel alone since I did not know the language or the culture. Through this experience I was able to learn Italian, appreciate the art and architecture, and experience what it meant to be an outsider. An opportunity to experience the lifestyle of Sicily was unforgettable. Even if I did encounter cultural stereotypes, was a victim to a crime, and took a

full load of courses I had an enjoyable and life changing experience abroad. Now as a world history teacher and doctoral student, immersed in research on citizen education, I wonder who or what attributes quantify someone to be a citizen of the world. For future travel I hope to encounter a culture different than my own, but no matter where I go, I know I will further my global and cultural knowledge. Do other women have the same longing? Have they had the same experiences abroad? Anyone can be a citizen of the world, but not everyone will take advantage of the opportunity to experience it firsthand.

## **1.2: Background of the Study**

Global citizenship is a contested term. With no clear definition, people either understand the concept as passive or active. Critical global citizenship refers to someone who is a part of the global community, eager to participate in globally important actions, and deepens their responsibility so humans may all coexist on the same planet (Rapoport, 2017; Stein & Andreotti, 2021). Also, a global citizen emphasizes global community and social justice, cultivates greater understanding across cultural differences, and has a duty and responsibility to others extending beyond nation-state boundaries (Giroux, 2021; Pashby et al., 2020; Stein, 2015). There is a consensus one way to achieve global citizenship is through study abroad because it contributes to the social and human aspect of a global civil society (Rapoport, 2017; Stein, 2015). Some scholars criticize study abroad as a passive experience of sociocultural differences. This attitude perpetuates colonizing orientations to the people and places visited (Doerr, 2016; Harper, 2018; Sharma, 2020). Emphasizing critical global citizenship allows students to be more aware of their surroundings and better prepared to act, not only locally but globally. Human suffering transcends borders, it is a global problem (Giroux, 2021). Critical and feminist researchers, such as Chan-Tiberghien, argued anti-globalization social movements are not making students aware

of the history or culture of people and places. Therefore, current study abroad participants are less aware of their responsibility and not prepared for the global future (Ficarra, 2019).

### **1.3: Statement of the Problem**

Thousands of students interact with a unique environment during study abroad every year, but how does this experience change the student? Every individual has a unique identity, position of power, and privilege influencing how they experience the world. Women have even more diverse experiences due to a wide range of gendered issues and sociocultural relationships (Enns et al., 2020). Few studies have focused on how study abroad influences a student's perception of global citizenship and how their experiences contribute to their sociocultural identity. Currently, there is little research from the perspective of students' and their perceptions of global citizenship and the relevance of experiences from study abroad (Baker & Fang, 2020). Also, with easy access to digital photography and cellphones, photographs have a powerful message and are under-utilized as a data source. Photographs can help explain the experiences and perceptions of global citizenship and sociocultural identity associated with study abroad. Utilizing a critical method for visual culture suggests a serious approach towards social conditions, modes of distribution, and considerations for personal interpretations of images (Rose, 2016). Photographs reveal a rich narrative and identity creating deep understandings of an individual (Berdanier, 2018; Marcella-Hood, 2020). According to Kang et al. (2017) images can provoke memories and reflection on experiences relating to global citizenship. The photographs shared from the self-curated photo elicitation could encourage others to travel abroad, demonstrate their sociocultural identity as a global citizen, and promote social change.

A study abroad trip and international exposure does not have the same effect on everyone. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory states everyone sees the world with individual

lenses, explaining cultural differences, and why students respond differently (Mapes, 2020). Previous studies regarding students' experiences used Bronfenbrenner's theory, yet there was no focus on how their experience influenced their conceptions of global citizenship. Shimmi and Ouchi (2013) discussed how travel can influence future career decisions. Taylor and Ali (2017) did not accurately explain meaningful learning while abroad. Naddaf (2016) discussed changes in identity from study abroad experience. Kang et al. (2017) discussed the adjustment to school in the United States. Not only is it important to evaluate the environment and relationships from study abroad, but also how it impacts sociocultural identity.

As emerging adults, the educational process of study abroad is critical during the stage when individuals form their identity they position themselves socially and culturally (Harper, 2018). Understanding students' experiences while abroad and their conceptions of global citizenship aid in the process of addressing contemporary inequalities. Previous studies have looked at identity formation, but they did not utilize photographs to empower students to share their stories. For example, Chang (2017) discussed Latinas' identity and cultural dissonance and claims underrepresentation; however, Chang did not give the students an opportunity to express themselves visually. Allowing students to curate their own photographs and share their experiences from abroad provided a new narrative and functioned as an expression of their sociocultural identity. Applying a blended theoretical framework allowed a unique perspective into an underrepresented population and provided insight on the benefits of global citizenship.

#### **1.4: Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this visual research qualitative study was to contribute to the literature by exploring how women interacted with their environment during study abroad and conceptualized a critical understanding of global citizenship. Examining everyday lived experiences gave insight

to personal identities and larger systems and structures. Using a feminist methodology, the interactions do not inform the reader of a complete story, but challenge what happened during the experiences (MacDonald, 2020). Bronfenbrenner argued citizenship is a social construct developed from an individual's interactions of various systems (Rapoport, 2013). Each participant must openly analyze her own experiences of gender, ethnicity, and social class before moving to an analysis of others by revealing her self-evident identity-based formation (Fernandes, 2013). A resocialization approach to global citizenship can enhance an individual's ability to improve their global identity and a capacity to face and embrace complexities of global and local problems (Rapoport, 2013; Stein & Andreotti, 2021). Critical global citizenship assigns students agency, allows for student voice, and participation. Also, it promotes the ability to work in solidarity to re-create an alternative future (Pashby & Andreotti, 2015). According to Hartman et al. (2020) critical global citizenship recognizes every individual's basic human dignity and encourages a continuous effort to build a better world. It is more important to recognize individuals as people and share their story.

This study allowed participants to explain their experiences abroad using a semi-structured interview and self-curated photo elicitation. Interviewing seeks to make meaning of experience and understand society and cultural values (Sakkal, 2013). Interviewing with a feminist lens affirmed differences among women as well as promoted justice and the well-being of all women (DeVault & Gross, 2014). Use of critical pedagogy and visual culture can influence the recognition of power and inequality worldwide (Lai & Kan, 2020). Utilizing visual media can unleash a wide range of skills and abilities such as broadening thought, deepen understanding, and release creativity (Kang et al., 2017). Photographs can provide a safe space to contest issues. Participants involved in this study had the opportunity to: (1) conceptualize a

critical understanding of global citizenship and (2) curate photographs demonstrating their power, privilege, and identity from their study abroad experience. Exploring the narratives from undergraduate students illuminated everyday life and exposed a critical perspective of their power, privilege, and identity.

### **1.5: Research Questions**

To align the proposed study with critical qualitative research methods the following questions guided the study and provided relevant feedback regarding the participants' experiences and interactions with their environment while abroad:

(1) To what extent do female undergraduate students from the United States who have participated in a study abroad program develop a critical understanding of global citizenship?

(2) How are students' awareness of power, privilege, and identity reflected in their documentation and narration of their experiences abroad?

### **1.6: Theoretical Frameworks**

This research analyzed women's study abroad experiences using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and transnational feminism. Bronfenbrenner believes citizenship is a social construct and the reconceptualization of global citizenship demands a critical lens. People are influenced by their immediate settings, where they live their lives, and in the broader context of society (Bronfenbrenner, 1995a; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). These principles apply not only across space and time, but through varying personal characteristics manifesting responses to the returning environment because of how people respond differently to their environment (Naddaf et al., 2020). The environment during study abroad showed a substantial shift in a person's environment involving housing, lifestyle, and daily interactions with others and the greater societal culture (Shimmi & Ouchi, 2013). Acting local but thinking global



emphasizes social justice, a global community, multiculturalism, and awareness of unequal global power distribution (Falcón, 2016; Pashby et al., 2020). The impact of economically poor environments leads to problems in emotional control, social disruptiveness, and developmental competence such as lower academic achievement and social skills (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Studying abroad provides the exposure to a fuller environment and therefore the ability to address social change and prepare for the global future.

Understanding the experiences of women provides insight into gendered issues. Recognizing power, privilege, and identity shapes our interactions with our environment. The experiences of women may be shaped by histories, politics, and geography revealing its qualities and outcomes are indeterminate (MacDonald, 2020). Transnational feminists support the learning of cultural knowledge and studying abroad nurtures global citizenship and transnational solidarity (Anantharam, 2020). Students gained a unique perspective of the realities present in the world. Studying abroad created an opportunity to challenge social identities, enhance global citizenship, and reflect on how positionality impacts our interactions with our environment.

### **1.7: Definition of Terms**

- **Global Citizenship:** a contested term. It can be a way of thinking and living with a focus on social responsibility and global competence (Kishino & Takahashi, 2019). Noddings argued global citizenship refers to the welfare of a nation, region, or globe (Rapoport, 2013). Global citizenship cultivates informed and ethical people who demonstrate affection, respect, and good behaviors as members of humanity not just a local community or country (Rapoport, 2013; Schattle, 2015). A critical approach to global citizenship encourages learners to deepen their sense of responsibility and learn to coexist differently on a shared planet (Stein & Andreotti, 2021).

- Global Citizenship Education (GCE): GCE is a framework allowing students to engage in a critical environment contesting opportunities in an ever-changing global society (Van Werven et al., 2021). Global Citizenship has multiple approaches according to the desired outcomes. Global competency citizenship encourages students to compete in a global world with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Goren & Yemini, 2017). Global consciousness citizenship provides students with a global vision, sensitivity to diverse cultures, empathy, challenges assumptions, and encourages humanistic values (Goren & Yemini, 2017).
- Photo elicitation: A complex process where photographs used during an interview stimulate a response and generate an authentic conversation (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Elicitation occurs when a researcher and participant collaborate to form different perceptions of visual data while facilitating a dialogue (McLean et al., 2012).
- Positionality: one's position in the world; their social identity and source of power and privilege (Enns et al., 2021).
- Self-curated photo elicitation (also known as auto-driven photo-elicitation or participant-generated photo elicitation): Pictures selected by the participant. The images purposively chosen by the participant reveal meaningful insight from the participant's identity and experience by describing the story behind the photographs in greater detail (Marcella-Hood, 2020). This method emphasized the participant's role during the research process and broadens the scope of data access. Self-curation exposes the complexities of experience (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). Since this study is reflexive, this visual research method was appropriate. The participant selected photographs they previously took during their study abroad trip and organized them in a new way. They created a new set of photographs for the photo elicitation interview.

- Study Abroad: An academic experience occurring outside of the home country when students participate in study and cultural interactions (Kitsantas, 2004). During the time abroad host families can provide housing or students may live in an apartment with fellow students and the period ranges from a single week to an entire academic year (Kishino & Takahashi, 2019).
- Transnational Feminism: A conceptual framework addressing the asymmetries of the globalization process and liberation from restraints of the international community and feminism worldwide. It is important to differentiate women because each woman lives in a different environment, a different country, and any woman may experience oppression anywhere in the world (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010). Understanding the relationship between the local community and the greater community worldwide is dependent on one another and convoluted at the same time (Anantharam, 2020). The purpose is to (1) address race, class, masculinity, and heteronormative stereotypes and restructure the relations of the dominative narrative, (2) inform and shape both individual and communal agency, and (3) intertwine accounts to resist ideas of projected feminist politics in each location at any time. (Nagar & Swarr, 2010).

### **1.8: Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a personal experience from the researcher as well as the context for the study by describing the contested space of global citizenship. The chapter continued by explaining the overview of the study, along with a statement of the problem driving the research. The purpose of the research study was to evaluate experiences of women and how women have different interactions with their environment. Also, due to their study abroad experience women reconceptualized global citizenship and explored their position of power,

privilege, and identity. Chapter 1 also included definitions of terms and the theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner and transnational feminism supporting the line of inquiry.

Next, in Chapter 2, I examine the literature surrounding global citizenship, global citizenship and the connection to study abroad, women who have studied abroad, and self-curated photo elicitation. Also, in this study I explore the gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 provides a thorough explanation of the underlying theoretical perspectives and the amalgamation of Bronfenbrenner and transnational feminism and why these theories complement each other and support the research. Then, I discuss the research design utilized for the study. Finally, the methods for participant selection, interview procedures, data collection, and data analysis.

In chapter 4, participant overviews and collages represent the power, privilege, and identity of each participant. The emergent themes from the self-curated photo elicitation expose the ideas of global citizenship. I discuss the themes and present the overall findings in Chapter 5. This chapter also offers recommendations on how to improve global citizenship education and study abroad programs as well as ideas for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

In this chapter, I address the literature surrounding global citizenship, critical definitions, global citizenship education, and global perspective of global citizenship. Also, I explore current literature regarding experiences of women during study abroad and perceptions of tourism. Literature surrounding self-curated photo elicitation, a specific visual research method, provides the participant a greater voice and representation. Self-curated photo elicitation empowers women to share their experience and reflect on their power, privilege, and identity. To conclude, this research fills in the gaps of the literature and contributes to the field.

### **2.1: Overview**

Global citizenship is a complex idea and rarely used in the United States before 2012 (Rapoport, 2017; Van Werven et al., 2021). It can be a way of thinking and living with a focus on social responsibility and global competence (Kishino & Takahashi, 2019). Harshman et al. (2015) argued the lack of a definition is a way to fight discrimination and xenophobia by rejecting exclusivity (Rapoport, 2017). Transnational feminism argues for the decentering of national and imperialist power structures and emphasizes the uneven ways power has unfolded globally (Hundle et al., 2019). Those in power traditionally grant citizenship, but no person or nation can grant this type of citizenship as it is everchanging and transcends national boundaries. Global citizenship should examine the influence from the environment. Citizenship is a social construct developed because of interactions with various systems (Rapoport, 2013). Global citizens look beyond their immediate surroundings or microsystem (according to Bronfenbrenner this is a home, school, or workplace) and aim to understand different macrosystems (according to

Bronfenbrenner this is a broader cultural attitude and or belief system). Study abroad can develop and encourage global citizenship. The current literature does not reflect how study abroad experiences impact global citizenship, instead student selection of trip destination and satisfaction of the overall study abroad trip (Sakkal, 2013). Also, there is limited research on the interactions of women studying abroad and how gendered issues influence their experience. Understanding the interactions students have with their environment while studying abroad and understanding students' perceptions of global citizenship informed the field.

## **2.2: Global Citizenship**

**2.2.1: Defined.** Global citizenship does not have one set definition or an agreed upon list of characteristics or attributes. Noddings argued global citizenship refers to the welfare of a nation, region, or globe (Rapoport, 2013; Schattle, 2015). Global citizenship cultivates informed and ethical people who demonstrate affection, respect, and good behaviors as members of humanity not just a local community or country (Rapoport, 2013; Schattle, 2015). A critical approach to global citizenship encourages learners to deepen their sense of responsibility and learn to coexist differently on a shared planet (Stein & Andreotti, 2021). A global citizen is a part of the global community and eager to participant in globally important actions (Rapoport, 2017). Also, a global citizen deepens their responsibility so humans may all coexist on the same planet, emphasizes global community, and social justice (Pashby et al., 2020; Stein & Andreotti, 2021). Global citizens cultivate greater understanding across cultural differences and have a duty and responsibility to others extending beyond nation-state boundaries (Giroux, 2021; Stein, 2015). The definition of global citizenship is not determined by birthplace or a community where you have legal rights (Harshman et al., 2015). According to Byker and Putnam (2019) global citizenship challenges injustices and encourages everyone to act in solidarity for the

advancement of global society. Enns et al. (2021) argued people with greater privilege cannot impose priorities. Having a shared interest is crucial to providing a foundation for solidarity and shared purpose (Enns et al., 2021). According to Nussbaum, citizens of the world think critically about beliefs and traditions, think as if in someone else's shoes, and use reason (Borkovic et al., 2020). A globalized notion of citizenship extends beyond boundaries of the nation-state (Giroux, 2021). Mohanty (2003) argued global citizenship is a historical issue encouraging participation to challenge systematic inequalities between those that do not have power and those that control the dominant narrative (Byker & Putnam, 2019). Unfortunately, not all definitions support a critical approach.

Critics of a critical definition argue for more of a neoliberal approach to global citizenship. Global citizens are aware and sense one's own role in the wider world, respect cultural diversity, and commit to social justice (Doerr, 2016). Also, global citizens participate in both local communities and global communities, collaborate to generate a more just society, and contribute to a sustainable world (Mason & Thier, 2017). Global skills are necessary to compete in an ever-changing and globalized society (Goren & Yemini, 2017). This cosmopolitan approach focuses on the economy, political ideologies, cultural values, and moral characteristics of global citizenship (Van Werven et al., 2021). These attributes validate the power structure of nation-states and support the dominate narrative, which is counterproductive to a critical approach.

To prepare for a global future, a more critical global approach advocates for social change. Global consciousness provides a global outlook, moral development, and cultural awareness originating from a critical humanistic approach (Goren & Yemini, 2017). According to Schattle (2015) global citizenship appeals to informed and ethical people who demonstrate

good behaviors as members of humanity not just a local community or country. An advocacy approach stresses critical global citizenship that appeals to improvements in society, culture, environmental, and religious forms of global citizenship (Giroux, 2021; Van Werven et al., 2021). To encourage global citizenship a community centered approach should be multilingual, multicultural, ecologically balanced, and culturally sensitive (Bosio & Torres, 2019). Global citizenship should be inclusive and possible for anyone (Whatley & Stich, 2021). Critical global citizens should acknowledge and address social injustices (Pashby et al., 2020).

Recognizing global interconnectedness reveals how global issues affect individuals, communities, and the planet (Harshman et al., 2015). There is a consensus to become a global citizen, students should aim to promote social justice, establish cultural connections, and recognize power and inequality worldwide (Davies, 2006; Lai & Kan, 2020; Newton et al., 2020). Social justice not only pertains to equality and fairness, but encourages opportunities regardless of race, beliefs, gender, etc. (Newton et al., 2020). Beyond knowledge of the wider world, a well-rounded global citizen should demonstrate a change in attitude reflecting valuing diversity as well as contributions to local and global communities (Kang et al., 2017). Also, understanding the root causes of the problems and acting towards a more permanent solution demonstrates a critical approach to global citizenship (Tarc, 2015). Actively trying to solve local and global problems is a powerful way to demonstrate global citizenship.

Santulli (2018) argued seeing problems firsthand allowed for a profound investigation of topics and social issues encouraging increased participation. Giroux (2021) suggested intervention and learning as the fundamental parts of social change. Providing community or global opportunities allowed students to ignore their assumptions of power and privilege (Anantharam, 2020; Lai & Kan, 2020). Developing stamina to engage with difficult issues and



being uncomfortable with the unknown allow for the possibility of relating differently through radical tenderness (Stein & Andreotti, 2021). Active participation requires passion and sensitivity towards critical issues and the ability to develop creative critical thinking skills, originality, and imagination (Kang et al., 2017). For example, setting up a fundraiser, donating to charity, or conducting a food drive are beneficial to society, but to make a difference, setting up a food source or providing jobs for a community has a longer impact instead of addressing an immediate need (Leduc, 2013). Also, according to Leduc (2013) taking small steps such as teaching others to compost or writing letters to the government to promote ethical causes demonstrates hope for a global future. Looking deeper into the causes of global problems and recognizing the local and global relationship provide a much more valuable lesson and have a longer lasting effect. The new measures supported by a commitment to empowering marginal communities and how they can work together with local organizations can support democratic values (Anatharam, 2020). Change starts in the community.

Service learning promotes a critical approach to global citizenship. Houston and Lange (2018) advocated for the restructuring of grassroots efforts to encourage future sustainability for communities. Santulli (2018) argued service learning encouraged environmental improvements of the planet by creating a more peaceful and sustainable approach. By reflecting on experiences, service can develop empathy and mutual empowerment (Santulli, 2018). Giroux (2021) stressed connecting theory and practice to reflection and action are necessary for critical thinking. Preparing people for learning how to govern is essential to promote global citizenship and influence others (Giroux, 2021). Change occurs one person at a time.

Each person is in control of their own actions and can promote social change. Selfless labor and discipline are crucial for self-transformation and global consciousness (Anantharam,

2020). Giroux (2021) argued everyone is an intellectual because they can think, generate ideas, and develop socially. The difference is in the responsibility of a global citizen to address the unbalanced distribution of power works through individuals, institutions, and across borders. Global citizens must connect ideas to the world and advocate for social empowerment (Giroux, 2021). Establishing a cultural connection and promoting an ongoing relationship with a community can help end social inequalities. Transnational activism and a commitment to social transformation demonstrate a critical approach towards global citizenship (Pashby et al., 2020). As a citizen of the globe, it is our responsibility to know about other cultures, customs, human rights, and ethics. Avoiding an “us versus them” mentality can alleviate an inferiority complex (Leduc, 2013). Everyone needs to be able to critically analyze oneself and their own traditions as well as utilize a narrative imagination by putting oneself in someone else’s place (Dolby, 2008). Developing familiarity with the uncomfortable and creating collective joy will further society (Bosio, 2021).

Developing relationships with people from other cultures decreases the unfamiliar and makes cross-cultural interactions more joyful. Having a multi-cultural mentor allows for an entry point into an unfamiliar cultural community and exposure to a different culture firsthand (Chwialkowska, 2020; Myers, 2006). Alviar-Martin and Baildon (2021) argued belonging occurs in imagined global communities and is not accommodating civic ideals and rights to social inclusion. Education should incorporate global citizenship to avoid these pitfalls.

**2.2.2: Global Citizenship Education.** The lack of coherence of qualities and lack of differentiation between global citizenship or global citizenship education (GCE) makes this a contested space (Pashby et al., 2020; Stein, 2015). GCE is a framework addressing diversity and prepares students for critical and active engagement in an interdependent world (Van Werven et

al., 2021). According to Pashby et al. (2020) the status quo is problematic, there is a need for social justice, a global community, awareness of unequal power distribution worldwide, and emancipation. Preparing students for a globalized world is becoming increasingly important for educators (Van Werven et al., 2021). Spivak argued GCE supports unlearning, a necessary step to live with each other differently (Stein, 2015). Perceptions taught in school should share a transnational and critical humanist approach to challenge the misconceptions of neoliberalism.

A transnational approach is the opposite of cosmopolitan because it reveals western exploitation and imperialist aspects of citizenship (Pashby et al., 2020). According to Rapoport (2013) teachers can promote awareness of global interdependence and encourage students to understand the part the United States plays in the global community. By taking a less imperialist approach, a thoughtful and caring aspect of citizenship occurs (Stein, 2015). Working against patriarchy, sexism, class division, racism, and hegemony supports a commitment to social transformations and post-colonial ideas about human rights (Pashby et al., 2020).

Transformationalists support new patterns of inclusion and exclusion by blending international, nation, and local ideas (Pashby et al., 2020). Students are people of the world and should be able to negotiate agendas, resolve conflict, and act in solidarity (Pashby et al., 2020; Rapoport, 2017). Global citizenship education is necessary as students become consumers instead of critical thinkers (Giroux, 2021). Different perceptions of global citizenship exist in different countries because there is a lack of understanding and acceptance of changes within a global-national-local hierarchy (Rapoport, 2017). Rapoport (2021) supported universal acceptance because humankind is now approaching universal human rights and recognizes equality is possible.

**2.2.3: Global Citizenship from an International Perspective.** Universities across the globe promote equality and address human rights as stated in their mission statements. This adjustment towards social change appeals to international students.

Australia and New Zealand focus on global citizenship to address immigration and environmental concerns as well as hopes to promote tolerance (Goren & Yemini, 2017). Australian students have a strong cultural support for international travel, contribute to an evolving global knowledge economy, and a considerable number hold British passports (Borkovic et al., 2020; Dolby, 2008). According to Dolby (2008) Australians have a weak national identity, therefore they had a robust global identity. One could argue Australians are more open-minded and greater influenced by global citizenship since their attachment to their own country and identity is weak. Also, Australians highly value employability skills enabling competition in the global market and are encouraging students to travel and develop innovative partnerships with Asia (Borkovic et al., 2020).

Asian Pacific countries are interested in global citizenship to stay current with world political changes and strengthen relationships with the West. This attitude helps students understand how the world changes, encourages participation, and how to be competitive in the global economy (Goren & Yemini, 2017). Chinese students seek international experiences to learn the English language. Eleven Chinese students interviewed during a predeparture program (10 of the participants were women) had never heard of global citizenship (Baker & Fan, 2020; Rapoport, 2017). Chinese students experience Confucian-heritage learning at home and teacher-directed instruction, explaining the lack of a foundation for global citizenship (Wang et al., 2020). Through international experiences and establishing relationships, the Chinese unknowingly were developing the skills to become global citizens. They yearned for an

experience in a different place, with a different culture, to taste different food, and to learn another language (Baker & Fan, 2020). By the end of the trip, they considered a global citizen to be someone who followed international laws, promoted economic cooperation, and understood global interdependence (Rapoport, 2017). People from Taiwan defined global citizenship as recognizing, participating, and influencing transnational institutions and networks (Brysk, 2020). According to Brysk (2020) social globalization is widespread and roughly 11% of the people have studied abroad or worked internationally.

Central and South America encourage global citizenship to stay current with world changes in the political realm as well as changes in the economy and hope to improve student participation in a global society (Goren & Yemini, 2017). A socially just view of global citizenship known as “el buen vivir” promotes a community-centric society, ecologically balanced, and culturally sensitive (Bosio & Torres, 2019).

Europe focuses on global citizenship to address issues of immigration and adjustment to multiculturalism (Goren & Yemini, 2017). According to Goren and Yemini (2017) global citizenship promotes tolerances and creates a common ground for citizenship. In Northern Ireland students address global issues such as the global ecosystem, cultural diversity, immigration, and racism (Niens & Reilly, 2012).

Africa pushes for global citizenship to promote human rights and improve the perception of their countries (Goren & Yemini, 2017). Africa prides themselves on their hospitality, their inclusive community, and the social responsibility that they place on their citizens (Amin, 2020). Cameroon has felt the effects of mis-educated people for generations. Cameroon used to be a very safe nation and tourists flock to indulge in the outdoors, celebrate the evening ambience, and learn from the communal culture (Amin, 2020). Unfortunately, due to recent conflicts, the

image of safe travel is no longer present. Testimonies from people who have visited Cameroon challenge the stereotype. People left Cameroon feeling self-confident, embraced in a wonderful culture, and the immersion experience was refreshing (Amin, 2020). Global citizenship appears differently around the world.

**2.2.4: Global Citizenship from a U.S. Perspective.** In the United States people in a position of privilege impact supporters of global issues and perceptions of global citizenship. A common expected outcome of global citizenship is to maintain U.S. status as a powerful country and for students to comprehend the everchanging patterns of the world (Goren & Yemini, 2017). The material wealth and misconception that only affluent Americans travel abroad allowed the image of ego-centric and ignorance of others around us or other countries to perpetuate a negative identity of American students (Chakravarty et al., 2020; Rotabi et al., 2006; Ungar, 2016). An explanation of cultural superiority and privilege is American culture supersedes the rest of the world (Ficarra, 2019; Xu et al., 2020). Some have the wrong motives and are seeking an exotic adventure and are not interested in growing as a person, developing relationships, or learning a new language (Pengelly, 2018). Once students are aware of the interconnected global community, personal and cultural bias will decrease and students will be able to help one another (Chakravarty et al., 2020). By seeking global citizenship, a negated position of privilege occurs as students attempt to understand their surroundings. There must be a deeper connection and deeper understanding of global citizenship or else current global stereotypes of hegemony, ethnocentricity, and patriarchy will continue (Pashby & Andreotti, 2015). Avoiding an “Ugly American” stereotype (someone who disregarded local customs, avoided using the local language, and claimed superiority of the United States) allows people to concentrate on global

values and demonstrate attributes of global citizenship (Rotabi et al., 2006). Acting as a tourist or an Ugly American inhibits the ability to become a global citizen.

If a person does not have a critical approach before becoming immersed in the identity of another country, the lack of knowledge regarding different cultural practices and language risks remaining classified as a tourist (Pennington, 2020). Assuming English is automatically spoke by everyone, even those in South Africa, is an example of the narrowmindedness of Americans (Byker & Putnam, 2019). The “Ugly American” refused to speak the local language, adapt to their surroundings, and usually comes from a privileged environment. America has overly amplified pleasure-based, economic, and individual benefits of traveling abroad mainly appealing to White students (Lai & Kan, 2020). Whiteness remains the primary marker of identity, bound by a US-centric framework (Sharma, 2020). Outsiders have different ideals than the local population and study abroad can portray students as tourists or adventurers instead of learners (Gathogo & Horton, 2018; Hartman et al., 2020). While globetrotting, students ignore the impact of their presence on the local culture. These actions further impose American imperialism and unequal global capital distribution, therefore disregarding a global citizen’s commitment to global welfare (Lai & Kan, 2020). Some students continue this negative portrayal of Americans and function as tourists, meaning they were more focused on a sight-seeing and a picture-taking experience than an academic one. Once immersed in another culture a tourist perspective reinforced their prejudgments of the local community and continued cultural stereotypes (Newton et al., 2020; Savicki & Cooley, 2011). American tourists taking photographs of people and objects that confirm their previous stereotypes of places perpetuate an unequal perspective of the visited culture (Chakravarty et al., 2020). Discussing perceptions and

acknowledging cultural differences can eliminate negative stereotypes and improve future cultural interactions.

Reflecting upon the study abroad experience can encourage cultural awareness and improve cultural stereotypes. After living abroad students realize Americans are ruder, spoiled, selfish, and feel superior (Maharaja, 2018). To diminish negative experiences, students should utilize a critical approach to citizenship by enrolling in a course aligned to a program challenging them to act culturally appropriate (Gambino & Hashim, 2016). According to Gambino and Hashim (2016) utilizing a civic education program promoted self-awareness through the analysis of student reflective essays where students were able to reveal their identity and morality as a global citizen. Learning or understanding the local language will address social inequalities and promote social change.

**2.2.5: Barriers to Global Citizenship.** Failing to learn the local language and local culture can cause unnecessary misunderstandings. Also, without knowledge of the local language hypervisibility occurred, meaning students are outsiders (Newton et al., 2020). Some students experience anxiety, lack of motivation, and an unsupportive learning environment for a new language (Isabelli-Garcia et al., 2018). Without proper preparation and practice students may not learn a new language. Also, there is no guarantee of frequent contact with natives and few linguistic gains occur because of the limited ability to practice (Isabelli-Garcia et al., 2018; Lee & Kinginger, 2018; Taguchi & Collentine, 2018). Therefore, practicing language with others and not learning in isolation may improve language acquisition. Without daily communication with locals, it is difficult to immerse oneself in an unfamiliar environment and learn a new language (Gong et al., 2020). Struggling with language proficiency contributes to a negative experience and can discourage further global involvement (Kelly et al., 2018). Furthermore, an unsettling



experience of those visiting as foreigners may be a burden and lack necessary language and skills to assimilate and interact with locals (Xu et al., 2020).

Another problem propagating a negative portrayal of Americans students is seeking out programs where English is the dominant language. Some students have no interest in learning another language and chose to avoid a language barrier (Walsh & Walsh, 2018). Exploitative consumption of culture, exoticized tourism, and reproduction of colonial and imperialist attitudes toward minorities continue without a shift towards global citizenship (Lai & Kan, 2020). Being a tourist or foreigner can have a negative connotation, but some scholars argue it is acceptable to acknowledge an outside perspective without being harmful to local traditions or self-identity. Travelers, mainly white colonists, traveled to exotic places and recorded their thoughts and overtime researchers from the field of social science understood that an outsider can incorrectly reinforce and perpetuate negative societal identities (Pennington, 2020).

A person recognizing their outside perspective and limited knowledge of a place in a respectful manner may be a flaneur. A flaneur acknowledges their outside identity and admits they are not an expert; how they experience the people and places they visit were different than locals (Wearing & Foley, 2017). The perspective of a flaneur can shed light on a positive experience in another place through the eyes of a foreigner. Considering a flaneur an outsider in a city through the context of their social, political, and economic environment helped create a personalized experience (Wearing & Foley, 2017). Experiencing a place through a study abroad program may avoid the downfalls of a tourist and or flaneur.

### **2.3: Global Citizenship Through Study Abroad**

One way to achieve global citizenship is through study abroad. Global citizenship contributes to the social and human aspect of a global civil society (Rapoport, 2017; Stein,

2015). Study abroad enables global citizenship as it provides distance from specificity of place or knowledge or origins (birthplace) emerging through travel and global communications (Giroux, 2021). During the 2018-2019 academic year almost 350,000 students from the United States studied abroad. Unfortunately, this only represents 1.8% of students in higher education and only 10% of U.S. graduates (NAFSA, 2020). Analyzing the ethnic and gender breakdown of students who studied abroad during 2018-2019 aides in the establishment of power, privilege, and identity (Institute of International Education, 2018). Nationwide 67.3% of those participants were female and 32.7% male and this trend has remained constant for more than a decade. The participants from this study all attended the University of South Florida (USF). Consistently with the national average 69.5% of USF participants were female and 30.5% male (USF World, 2021). In 2018-2019, USF’s study abroad population was slightly more diverse than the national average (**Table 1**).

Table 1. *Study Abroad Demographics*

Race/Ethnicity	U.S. Students Abroad 2018-19	USF Students Abroad 2018-19
African American or Black	6.4%	8.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	8.9%	7.9%
Caucasian	68.7%	48.4%
Hispanic/Latino American	10.9%	19.7%
Multiracial	4.7%	15.7%
Native American	0.4%	0%

Students predominately visited Europe (United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, and Germany) and over the past five years consistently visited the same regions (NAFSA, 2020). The location of study abroad played a role in identify formation and global citizenship. Compared to

the national average, USF sent more students to North and Latin America (**Table 2**). This could be due to partnership programs and reflective of the diverse student population.

Table 2. *Study Abroad Destinations*

Host Region	U. S. Students Abroad 2018-19	USF Students Abroad 2018-19
Africa	3.9%	1.8%
Asia	11.7%	9.3%
Europe	55.7%	50.7%
Latin America	13.8%	27.8%
Middle East	2.3%	0.3%
North America	0.6%	7.5%
Oceania	4.4%	1%
Multiple Regions	7.5%	1.6%

The perception and identity of being from the United States plays a role in students' study abroad experience. The national context as an American shaped how students understood the country they were visiting, how it fit into a larger scheme in their lives and identities, and how they visually perceive the world (Dolby, 2008). It is challenging to measure the benefits of a study abroad experience, but it is valuable for any student, no matter their history or background (Ungar, 2016). Travel challenges notions and assumptions by offering a unique environment to supplant an individual's home culture instantly upon arrival in another society (Sakkal, 2013). It can be difficult to generalize the American experience as there is inequality in access to education abroad (Whatley & Stich, 2021). Interactions with the environment heavily impact the development of every person.

By utilizing Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory, psychological, sociological, and educational perspectives change through a study abroad experience. Global citizenship is a part of a complicated and conflicting space surrounded by socially negotiated goals, but interactions with diverse cultures beyond their school, home country, and visited country develop the needs to understand and participate in the global future (Sakkal, 2013). Cultural adaptation is necessary during study abroad. Individuals strive to establish or re-establish a functional relationship with the environment at various levels: in a classroom, at a university, and in the host society (Gong et al., 2020). Every student has an individual personality and unique demographic influencing the interactions with new environments and each experience may affected the student in a different way (Mapes, 2020). Different responses to the environment include psychological, academic, lifestyle, socialization, and language-based (Gong et al., 2020).

Studying the history, social, religious, and political life of the country to visit before the trip takes initiative to increase awareness of global issues and diminishes fear of violating cultural norms (Anantharam, 2020; Walsh & Walsh, 2018). Study abroad allows students the opportunity to see how other people live, interact, celebrate, and work. These interactions and experiences shape their own sociocultural identity. Awareness of historical and political global systems increase the interest of marginalized groups and create a more definite sense of global citizenship (Ficarra, 2019). There is a consensus among students who found meaning during their study abroad experience and set goals of cross-cultural competence. Also, those students increased their global understanding and were engaged in subsequent learning opportunities and found the trip had a long-lasting impact (Berg & Schwander, 2019; Chwialkowska, 2020; Kitsansa, 2004). Creating a global outlook allowed for a more accepting and sympathetic approach towards life shaping events, cognition, and behavior as well as expanded worldviews

and deepened cross-cultural and international awareness (Byker & Putnam, 2019; Chwialkowska, 2020; Isabelli-Garcia et al., 2018; Kitsantas, 2004). Participating in study abroad provided a unique and life changing experience. Immersion in a different political and religious system can cause a new perspective or interest in a new culture (Johnstone et al., 2020). Long term benefits may occur with a critical approach to global citizenship.

Re-imagining study abroad through a critical lens promotes a transformative experience from a critical perspective (Obenchain et al., 2020). Study abroad also encourages the reflection of one's own identity. Reflecting on whose knowledge constitutes the norm and a critical evaluation regarding race and privilege help students confront bias and stereotypes (Obenchain et al., 2020; Sharma, 2020). Deconstructing the identity of destinations allows students to understand local everyday life and extend the study abroad experience (Lai & Kan, 2020). According to Sharma (2020) study abroad is transformative because it allows for a firsthand experience outside of a Eurocentric lens and teaches local and historically subjugated truths. The power in study abroad is the change it brings. The impact affects everyone differently, including women.

#### **2.4: Women and Study Abroad**

It is a challenge to understand gender in a globalized world. Exposing women to study abroad gave them the opportunity to challenge exploitation, understand oppression, and stand in solidarity (Moosa-Mitha, 2010). Each group of women and each individual woman must exist in their own historical, political, and geographic context. Several scholars believe the lived experience outside of a white dominated society provided counter stories challenging the narrative and historical misrepresentations as well as provided a deepened understanding of

ethical issues in a global context (Berdanier, 2018; Sharma, 2020). The choice of location had a profound impact on the experiences and interactions while abroad.

To encourage a cultural heritage experience for women, matching study abroad locations to student demographics can help alleviate societal pressures while providing an authentic learning opportunity (Whatley & Raby, 2020). While abroad students realized they are the minority, and this may encourage them to proudly represent their cultural and national identity (Savicki & Cooley, 2011). Chinese women felt more psychological freedom from studying abroad, developed a desire to travel around the globe, and acquired an awareness to fight for equality (Kelly et al., 2018). Taiwanese women felt refined after experiencing a process of self-discovery (Kelly et al., 2018). Each woman has a different demographic, a unique experience, and different motivations to study abroad and address social change.

**2.4.1: Motivation for Studying Abroad.** Some scholars argue women have slightly different motivations for studying abroad than men do. In some cultures, career gains and obtaining a higher degree is more important to impress society and family members (Kelly et al., 2018). Expectations of others may take precedence over expectations of self. A socially just study abroad program empowers women and informs current practices increasing cultural identity formation, language development, and a connection to students' heritage (Hartman et al., 2020). When studying abroad in a students' native country the ability to demonstrate linguistic knowledge and expertise enhances the experience (Johnstone et al., 2020). Understanding one's ethnic and sociocultural identity is crucial to understand when choosing a program (Lee & Negrelli, 2018). The choice of destination, length, and program impacts future decisions for women such as their career path.

As women survive the clash of cultures, they can utilize the interactions from abroad and initiate social change by making different lifestyle choices and ending with future academic pursuits and career goals (Anatharam, 2020). Because of study abroad, most students change their career path due to their increased cheerful outlook about diversity (Geyer et al., 2017). Five women from the University of Dayton had the opportunity to participate in an African Immersion Experience. They shared common threads throughout their careers and their connections to the world as global citizens (Amin, 2015). According to Amin (2015) cultural immersion was the best way to absorb the culture. All the women traveled on subsequent trips, feeling a powerful desire to effect change in their communities. Another cosmopolitan goal of women is to remain competitive in the global market. Women have more empathy, are more mature, and can notice more non-verbal communication from travel abroad (Maharaja, 2018). Women were also interested in learning a new language.

**2.4.2: Language Usage Abroad.** Targeting a country where the language is different from the woman's native language and language learning is a huge draw to travel abroad (Isabelli-Garcia et al., 2018; Walsh & Walsh, 2018). In 2018 almost 500,000 foreign students were attending Chinese universities and almost half attempted to learn Chinese (Gong et al., 2020). According to Gong et al. (2020) one woman from New Zealand understood a developing vocabulary for everyday scenarios helped her adapt to her new surroundings while studying in China. Another woman felt identifying social norms and becoming acquainted with native speakers and national culture helped identify with the host community (Gong et al., 2020). Keeping a conversation with the locals, haggling in the marketplace, and blending in due to language proficiency strengthened a women's connection to the host society and their personal heritage (Naddaf, 2016). According to Naddaf (2016) one woman began her trip to Italy with

low language skills, but by the end her advanced skills provided a stronger connection to her Italian roots. Unfortunately, not everyone is as adaptable and able to learn the language and have a positive experience.

With the presence of linguistic barriers, students may fail to blend in and have a negative interaction with locals (Naddaf, 2016). Looking the part and appearing as you belong helps to adapt to a new cultural surrounding, but once you speak English locals react differently. One woman appeared German and felt welcomed in a crowd, but as soon as she greeted someone in English, she felt a change in perception and experienced treatment as a foreigner (Naddaf, 2016).

**2.4.3: Effects of Study Abroad.** Most female study abroad participants notice a profound change in personal development. Traveling abroad improved global citizenship in 21 participants after a trip to South Africa (Byker & Putnam, 2019). According to Byker and Putnam (2019) all 21 participants were women, and they reported an improvement in global competencies and developed an awareness for the importance of understanding interconnectedness of multiple cultures. Some of the women were more aware of their cultural identity and how they perceived the world upon conclusion of the trip. Other women advocated for action and took notice of issues both locally and globally (Byker & Putnam, 2019). Interviews are helpful to gain insight regarding women's experiences from a trip abroad; however, self-curated photo elicitation allowed for a more meaningful interpretation of the study abroad experience, perceptions of global citizenship, and the sociocultural identity of the individual.

## **2.5: Self- Curated Photo Elicitation**

**2.5.1: Origins.** Photographs started out as tool for ethnographers to craft narratives of peoples designated as non-White. Said (1979) argued otherization as portrayed by Bourdieu



allowed colonizers to separate themselves from the colonized (Boucher, 2018). Bateson and Mead (1942) used photography to discuss human development (Boucher, 2018). Collier (1957) paved the way for photographs as an effective method in interviews, not just an illustration of observations. He used photographs to challenge the inequalities of race and class and facilitated conversations across cultural and racial differences (Boucher, 2018). Harper (2002) challenged researchers in education to see photographs as a valuable tool that provides more reliable data (Boucher, 2019). Rose (2016) explained photographs in the context of social and cultural practices are the act of photography, not a cultural act (Boucher, 2018). Photographs can provide a safe space to balance the power between researcher and participant.

**2.5.2: Empowering Participants.** Photographs demonstrate the reality of our own existence. Allowing self-curated photo elicitation enhanced validity and empowered the experience for the participant (Boucher, 2018). Visual culture represents the way people interact with their environment. Culture is a mechanism to understand empowerment and those oppressed by society (Boucher, 2018). People obtain knowledge from what they experience. Self-curated photo elicitation was appropriate for this reflexive study since the participants selected the photographs after the trip took place. The curation of the photographs allowed the women to view their photographs in a new way. Also, this research attempted to capture the perception of an outsider in a foreign culture, not study the native perception within a culture as do most photo elicitations (Berdanier, 2018). Self-curated photo elicitation can provide a new perspective for travel abroad

**2.5.3: Uses in Study Abroad.** Most of the data and literature surrounding study abroad utilized interviews and surveys; however, visual methods are on the rise. Self-curated photo elicitation describes images purposively chosen by the participant to reveal meaningful insight

into their identity and experience by describing the story behind the photographs in greater detail (Marcella & Hood, 2020). Highlighting projects as a post travel exhibition reflect on the travel experience and increase students' sense of responsibility for learning from their study abroad trip (Lai & Kan, 2020). Providing women the opportunity to share their photographs, even virtually, encouraged the same outcome. According to Lai and Kan (2020) visual culture can influence the way people think about the world and can allow people to learn about and gain respect for others in their community. Berdanier (2018) discovered several women felt a transformation during their program and the images displayed a desire to educate and empower other women to sustain local communities and cultures. Utilizing visual media can unleash a wide range of skills and abilities, deepen understanding, and release creativity (Kang et al., 2017). Photographs are tools used to expose the underlying social and cultural aspects of our identity. Without an identity, who are you?

## **2.6: Gaps in the Literature**

To truly have a transnational approach, acknowledgement of a social and cultural identity must occur for each person. Global citizenship is full of controversy and misconceptions continue to exist. How study abroad influences the conceptualization of global citizenship has limited research. Also, little research has addressed how study abroad affects women and their sociocultural identity. Niens and Reilly (2012) explored student perceptions of global citizenship including recognition of global issues, the global ecosystem, and responsibility towards others. However, the argument of cultural stereotypes perpetuates, and issues of identity and interdependence remained unresolved (Niens & Reilly, 2012). There is limited research on the acknowledgement of local and global issues and any students taking action to encourage change or accept cultural differences. There is only a small amount of research demonstrating global

citizenship and its relevance to students' experiences (Baker & Fang, 2020). By encouraging dialogue of global citizenship, I promoted a reflective experience for women as well as informed the body of research. This research contributed to the understanding of global citizenship. Also, it proved self-curated photo elicitation is a valuable tool to reveal power, privilege, and identity.

Every woman who has travelled abroad reflects a unique position of power, privilege, and identity. Ten students, majority being women, agreed study abroad was the epitome of their undergraduate experience and recommended all students travel abroad at one point during college (Demetriou et al., 2017). Most scholars could agree study abroad is beneficial, but the study failed to mention the power, privilege, and identity of these students. Another group of eight students, six identified as women, shared language proficiency and connection to heritage were factors in their decision to study abroad and upon conclusion experienced a deeper connection to their cultural identity (Naddaf et al., 2020). The study could have benefitted by adding visual methods and could have explored whether the woman now identified as global citizens. There is a substantial amount of research conducted on women who study abroad, however there are few studies exploring the conceptualization of global citizenship and how photographs can empower women to reveal their sociocultural identity from their experiences abroad.

Photo elicitation is a powerful visual research tool providing the participant an opportunity to share their story. Self-curated photographs are even more empowering as it balances the dynamics between researcher and participant. According to Raby et al. (2018) cellphones have made it easier for students to randomly capture moments on their cellphone camera of something they think is important. With the availability of more photographs, researchers can encourage self-directed interviews. Previous studies have utilized this technique,

but few were reflexive and asked participants to curate photographs after the trip took place. Also, little research on study abroad experiences through the theoretical frameworks of Bronfenbrenner and transnational feminism exist to discuss global citizenship and positions of power, privilege, and identity.

## **2.7: Summary**

This review of literature identified conflicting definitions of global citizenship. Also explored was global citizenship education and conceptualizations of global citizenship from an international and U.S. perspective. Further reviewed were the topics of study abroad and the connection to global citizenship and the experiences of women abroad. Finally, the benefits of self-curated photo elicitation encourage more use of this method in the future. The next chapter, Chapter 3, discusses the context of Bronfenbrenner and transnational feminism as theoretical frameworks for this study. Also, I describe how I used self-curated photo elicitation to collect data.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methods**

This chapter includes the theoretical frameworks and a description of the research design. A critical paradigm guided the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. The purpose of this qualitative study was to evaluate how female undergraduate students interacted with their environment during study abroad and conceptualized a critical understanding of global citizenship as well as engage in dialogue to reveal their power, privilege, and identity. Using semi-structured interviews and self-curated photo elicitation women shared how their interactions with their environment impacted their study abroad experience. To conclude this chapter, I discuss the ethics surrounding professional responsibility, consent, and confidentiality.

Visual research methodology originally inspired this project. Throughout the process I decided using self-curated photo elicitation aligned more closely with a critical theory and my theoretical frameworks. Photo elicitation is a participatory method fostering empowerment and supporting feminist theory (Guillemin & Drew, 2020). I placed an emphasis on meaning and supported a commitment for social change. Utilizing self-curated photographs navigated cultural differences and altered the positionality between the researcher and the participants (Guillemin & Drew, 2020). Positionality refers to the place of an individual in the world; their social identity and source of power and privilege (Enns et al., 2021). As the researcher my interpretation of the participants' experience shaped the interview process and data analysis.

#### **3.1: Background of Researcher**

As I reflected on my past experiences, I aspired to reconceptualize study abroad and global citizenship. Growing up I was fortunate my family went on vacation every year and I had

the chance to learn about the world around me. My father is Italian and travelled to Italy as a teenager to reconnect with his cultural heritage and I am glad I followed him. My positionality as a White woman from the United States shaped my role as the researcher. Disclosing my positionality serves to inform the reader of my worldview and guides my thinking during the discussion of social change and attempts to challenge hegemonic discourse (Levine & Breshears, 2019). I addressed race as a social construct grounded in the perceptions of skin color and understand Whiteness as coated in invisibility, privilege, and power (Pennington, 2020). People experience the world differently due to their social identity (class, age, race, sexual orientation, and gender) and it influences how they make meaning of the world (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019). As the researcher I acknowledged social inequalities, understood local and global relationships, and avoided the pitfalls caused by globalization (Mohanty, 2003). It is important to understand how individuals make sense of the social and cultural influences from traveling abroad as students come from different social and or economic backgrounds than I do (Sakkal, 2013). Not only does my identity, but also my past experiences, and my own study abroad trip function as motivation to conduct this research and impact the data I collected and analyzed.

Understanding how women make sense of their contextual settings of differing social and cultural environments among various systems (such as home, school, foreign country) was vital to understanding global citizenship and study abroad. I utilized self-curated photographs to disrupt the predictability of traditional interviewing. This method enabled meaningful engagement and allowed the participants to share their reflections of the process of curation. (Marcella-Hood, 2020). This reflexive process encouraged further understanding and greater comprehension of each experience allowing for a bond to form between researcher and participant. Challenging interview questions at times were difficult for the participants to

generate a response, but the photographs allowed for clarification (Marcella-Hood, 2020). The data reconceptualized global citizenship by establishing the power, privilege, and identity of women and further explored their experiences of study abroad.

**3.1.1: Promoting Global Citizenship.** Study abroad is a means to reframe the possibilities of global citizenship. Women had the opportunity to develop and embrace social and cultural complexities not previously possible. According to Pashby et al. (2020) having a critical focus and changing one's convictions influences one's behavior and convinces others to do the same. There is a consensus among critical scholars who believe global citizens should imagine their responsibility towards others, interrupt patterns of consumption, and work together differently (Pashby et al., 2020; Stein & Andreotti, 2021). I questioned the dominate discourse of global citizenship education and redefined the conceptualization of global citizenship. Currently teaching world history at a time when the dominant narrative challenges curriculum presents an opportunity to promote social change. Exploring positionality, acknowledging local and global issues, and encouraging trips abroad are steps any educator can take towards global citizenship. By engaging with difficult and complex issues I aspire for more students to become critical global citizens and to explore their own power, privilege, and identity.

### **3.2: Research Questions**

This research aligned with the critical paradigm. The following research questions guided the study:

(1) To what extent do female undergraduate students from the United States who have participated in a study abroad program develop a critical understanding of global citizenship?

(2) How are students' awareness of power, privilege, and identity reflected in their documentation and narration of their experiences abroad?

To address these questions, I applied a critical feminist theory during the question formation of the first semi-structured interview (**Appendix A**). Open-ended, semi-structured interviewing allowed for socially constructed questions favoring feminist qualitative research (DeVault & Gross, 2014). A similar approach guided the self-curated photo elicitation. I provided the following directions: As a woman, select up to thirty photographs from your study abroad trip explaining your sociocultural identity (power, privilege, and position) as a foreigner in a new place. The images can explain your individual interactions you had with people, the culture, and or the overall environment of being in another country. The images could be an object, a sign, a symbol, or a place invoking a sense of belonging, acceptance by another culture, or rejection and fear of standing out. Be intentional and purposeful for every photo selected for this study. Try to find one photo for each theme/idea/moment you want to share. Your experience and the way you interact with your environment was different than someone else's experience. Select photos expressing emotions, oppression, poverty, power, and moments of cultural humility or misunderstandings. Also, think about photographs demonstrating growth, perception changes, and awareness of the world around you. Photographs are powerful, but the meaning behind them speaks volumes (**Appendix B**).

### **3.3: Theoretical Frameworks**

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory and transnational feminism framed this research study. By understanding Bronfenbrenner's idea of citizenship as a social construct and the transnational feminist perspective that women have different experiences across the globe, work together to explore the relationship between global citizenship, study abroad, and self-curated photo elicitation (**Figure 1**).



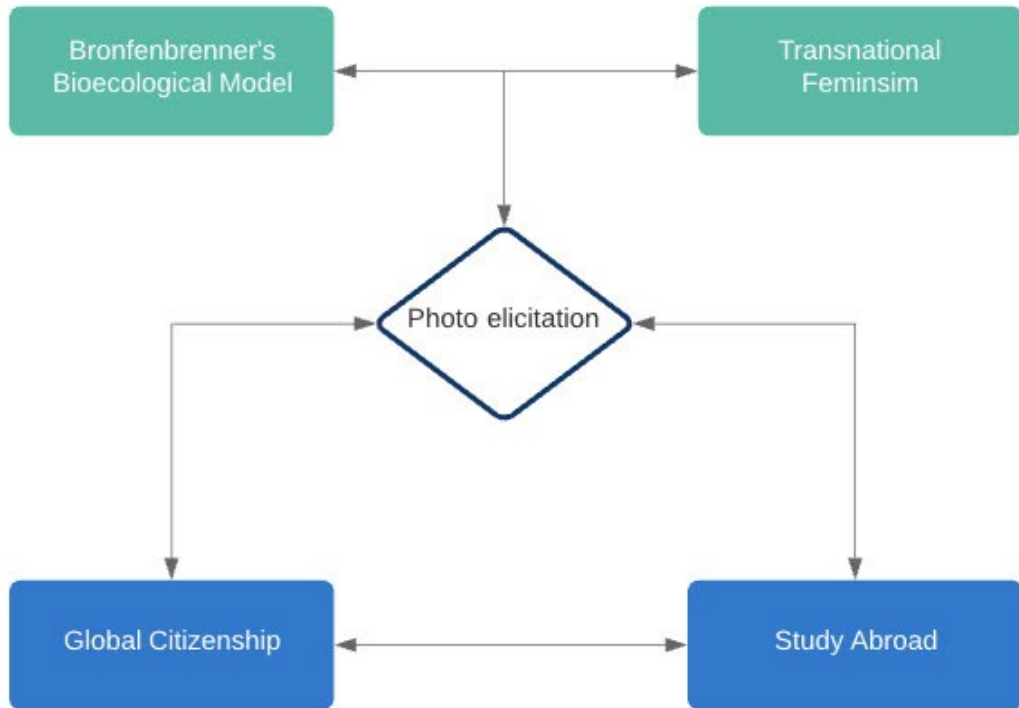


Figure 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

**3.3.1: Bronfenbrenner.** Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory explained the development of an individual occurs among interactions with the environment, forming an entire system for each individual (Xu et al., 2020). Bronfenbrenner's original theory has the person at the core and explained each interaction with the environment was overlapping, each inside one another like a set of Russian dolls (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This layered structure, consisting of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, drives human development. Added later was the chronosystem, reflecting the influence of changes over time. Also, he renamed the theory bioecological systems theory because the person's characteristics interact within the microsystem. For example, men may have different interactions during travel than women. The description for each system is below.

The microsystem includes physical and material characteristics pertaining to the activities and relationships experienced by the individual in each setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The

microsystem focuses on an individual's experience (Levine & Breshears, 2019). The microsystem consists of a person who has direct interactions with their immediate surroundings, such as their home, school, and neighborhood.

The next layer is the mesosystem, the person is developing and engaging in interactions among two or more microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A person's formal and informal interactions with others as well as how one setting can impact another occurs in the mesosystem (Levine & Breshears, 2019). An example of an interaction is between home and school.

A larger social system, the exosystem, refers to settings not directly involving the individual person, but somehow affecting them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Events occurring in the exosystem will potentially impact an individual (Levine & Breshears, 2019). For example, a parent's employment influences the child indirectly (parent works long hours or a location far away).

The outermost layer, the macrosystem, reflects the belief systems or cultural ideology of the entire culture or subculture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The reciprocal interactions among these systems heavily influence human development (Xu et al., 2020). The macrosystem alludes to the interactions among the subsystems, providing endless opportunities for lively interactions between groups (Levine & Breshears, 2019).

According to Rosa and Tudge (2013) the chronosystem, represented by time, recalls the events that occur during the lifespan of an individual. Each individual has a different interpretation of the world due the influence of the historical events that occurred during their life (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This study utilized Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model to evaluate global citizenship as a student experienced a new microsystem abroad and entered a different macrosystem (**Table 3**).

Table 3. *Personal Examples of Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems*

Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems	Examples from personal study abroad
Microsystem: an individual interacting with their immediate surroundings	Living in a foreign country, peers, international school
Mesosystem: an individual actively interacting between two microsystems	Interactions among peers and international school and apartment with roommates
Exosystem: a larger social system not requiring active participation by individual	Increased security measures and Sicilian law
Chronosystem: how time impacts an individual’s life	Attack on local businesses that did not support the mob
Macrosystem: subculture of society	Sicilian beliefs, cultural ideology

The final stage of the theory added proximal processes, the engines driving development. These processes represent different life transitions as either normative (entry into school, puberty, marriage) or nonnormative (death or divorce) and have an impact on personal development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Rosa and Tudge (2013) argued to fully utilize Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model an explanation is necessary for how each system is interdependent and how the possible effects of historical underpinnings affect development (**Figure 2**). The PPCT models

represents the person, the place, the context, and time.

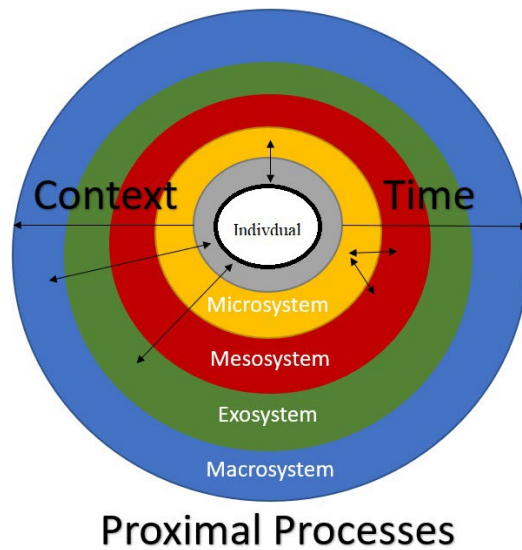


Figure 2. *Bronfenbrenner PPCT Model*

Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model appropriately explained students' study abroad experiences because it evaluated the students' development and the impact of their interactions within their environment. According to Shimmi and Ouchi (2013) female Japanese students studied abroad in the United States to gain language development and the skills necessary to prepare for their careers. The study utilized Bronfenbrenner's theory as a framework by addressing each of the four systems of development: (1) the microsystem was represented by the interactions between the Japanese students and the people in their temporary home in the United States, (2) the mesosystem was represented by the relationship between their homelife and their interactions at school, (3) the exosystem was represented by educational law regarding English Language Learners, and (4) the macrosystem was represented by learning and adapting to the American culture (Shimmi & Ouchi, 2013). Time and historical context are important aspects of the PPCT model. The person was the female Japanese students, the place was their American university, the context was learning career development and the English language, and the time

was the length of study, their stage of life, and historical time people lived. As the women studied abroad, the relationship among their ability to learn English, gain career related skills, and communicate with others increased their sense of belonging and created a beneficial experience (Shimmi & Ouchi, 2013).

Another example of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model represents a connection to global education by analyzing the changes in identity during a study abroad experience. According to Naddaf (2016) three interviews conducted (before, during, and after) analyzed their experiences of identity. The participants, their study abroad destination, the culture/heritage, and the time and age of the participants while in the country met the requirements and demonstrated proper use of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model. Before students travelled abroad, most participants associated strongly with their cultural heritage (i.e., Mexican, German). During the trip, the interactions among their host family and school (mesosystem) as well as their community (exosystem) and even the culture (macrosystem) began to change their association with identity. The interviews conducted during the study abroad experience showed students now associated themselves as a hybrid (i.e., Mexican American or German American). Finally, at the conclusion of the trip, results suggested due to interactions and experiences, most students realized their cultural identity was American (Naddaf, 2016). Bronfenbrenner's theory is appropriate to use when analyzing study abroad experiences because it evaluates the interactions among individuals and their environments as well as their cultural identity and changes over time.

A third example of Bronfenbrenner's theory incorporated a critical approach. Levine and Breshears (2019) created a framework to analyze intersectionality by discussing the intersection of identities in each system and advocating for social justice. The macrosystem contributed to the lasting inequality and oppression and is the most difficult to change (Levine & Breshears, 2019).

The exosystem, such as institutional policies, can be the most damaging as the person is not directly involved. Levine and Breshears (2019) argued discrimination within the exosystem allowed for individuals who have power to maintain power with distributive-focused policies such as the distribution of material goods. Progress for women does not necessarily improve the experience of all women because progress does not benefit all social classes (Levine & Breshears, 2019). Each woman has a unique sociocultural identity. The mesosystem for people with marginalized identities is unique because it may be discriminatory based on past experiences. Systemic oppression and hegemonic paradigms within the microsystem conclude discrimination is a result of societal flaws not yet acknowledged (Levine & Breshears, 2019). A critical lens is necessary to address oppression and encourage social change.

**3.3.2: Transnational Feminism.** Another theoretical framework helping to reconceptualize global citizenship is transnational feminism. Transnational feminism represents classes, sexes, race, gender, and disabilities resulting from globalization (Mohanty, 2003). This framework looks across borders. It does not mean borderless, it challenges the structure of nation-states and looks beyond boundaries (Falcón & Nash, 2015). Global citizenship encourages people to connect to their local communities and to help the wider world. Individuals who saw themselves as global citizens assumed social responsibilities wider than the state and expanded into a transnational domain (Grewal, 2005). Transnational feminism advocates for human rights. Now global citizenship is one of the many human rights considered a part of the global ethic transcending national borders (Grewal, 2005). Women across the world are campaigning for a common goal, recognition, and equal treatment in political and ideological arenas, as well as public and private (Grewal, 2005). Exposure to diverse cultural backgrounds and problems through study abroad supports the fight for human rights.

Studying abroad allowed students to see the struggles firsthand and gained a unique perspective on the realities present. Most people assume only women from the Third World can be oppressed, yet women in Second World countries, most notably Eastern European countries and women everywhere may be feeling oppressed (Tlostanova, 2019). Moreover, according to Bondy (2016) Latina students face harsh realities in the United States. Their peers harass and bully them because they are different. The cultural differences made it challenging for the Latinas to adapt to their school, and the American students were ignorant of cultures different than their own (Bondy, 2016). Introducing students to different perspectives and teaching them about the world through a transnational feminist lens may aid in the reconceptualization of global citizenship. Parisi and Thornton (2012) worked together to form a civic engagement project allowing students the opportunity to collaborate with people from other countries to help solve local problems. Assigned readings challenged students to view the world from a different perspective. The readings opened their eyes to the realities of third world countries. Students gained experience and understood limitations for organizations around the world. Not only was funding an issue, but stability, political rights, and the opportunity to work were issues as well. They considered this project successful because students understood how to solve problems because they understand the root cause (Parisi & Thornton, 2012). Using photographs may have encouraged further success with the project.

### **3.4: Visual Research Methods**

Utilizing photographs reveal students' sociocultural identity. Visual methodology requires a particular research design with clear objectives and organizes data based on interpretations of subjective cultural significance and social practices (Caldarola, 1985; Rose, 2016). Visual research methods provide a deeper understanding and exposes the power of

photographs. To authentically interpret photographs, the meaning and context must be available because photographs are glimpses of time, a split-second, and take on different perspectives depending on interpretation (Sekula, 1975; Tinkler, 2013). Utilizing photographs to understand the experiences of study abroad and global citizenship uncovers cultural and societal influences from a personal perspective. Photographs are taken out of context and analyzed differently depending on the viewer because outside narratives can influence the content of the photograph (Banks, 2011). Interviewing participants while discussing the photographs avoided any misrepresentations.

**3.4.1: Photo elicitation.** The image represents an intersection between culture, personal biography, and positionality appealing to the contemporary visual researcher (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Photographs discussed during the interview obtained a deeper understanding of the experiences abroad. This process is known as photo elicitation. This method coined by Collier allowed photographs to be a stimulus during an interview to gain further insight and to help facilitate the interview (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). There is a consensus using photographs during an interview aid in the ability for the participant to remember experiences with more detail and may unveil moments in time (Felstead et al., 2004; Pachmayer & Andereck, 2017; Tinkler, 2013; Tyson, 2009). Using photographs also increases participants' control of data generation and a more reflexive elaboration on individual experiences (Berdanier, 2018; Mclean et al., 2012). It is important to remember people not cameras take pictures (Tyson, 2009). Discussing photographs revealed the context and identity of each person. This allowed for continued dialogue and established rapport between the researcher and participants. Also, photo elicitation revealed other ideas taken for granted and unveiled the power of framing (Felstead et al., 2004; Glaw et al.,



2017; Knoblauch et al., 2008; Pachmayer & Andereck, 2017; Tyson, 2009; Wagner, 2006).

Photographs used as a data collection tool encouraged discussion and empowered participants.

Harper (2002) argued pictures suggest a deeper element of human awareness than words and the primary advantage of using photo elicitation method includes: (1) increased interest of participants in the research process, (2) tone and feel of the interview process, (3) enhanced participants memories, and (4) rich data (Pachmayer & Andereck, 2017). The photographs encouraged discussion of topics of interest and allowed the participants to feel more comfortable during the interview. Women shared details regarding their past experiences and their childhood and how these encounters formed their sociocultural identity.

Encouraging participants to share and describe photographs they have taken revealed their identity and how they viewed the community (Pachmayer & Andereck, 2017). There are gaps between the different experiences of reality because not everyone has the same experience (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Uncovering the meaning of the photograph can explain issues of identity and perceptions created by social inequalities. It is normal to use photographs taken previously for varied reasons. According to Prosser and Loxley (2008) curated photographs create a greater opportunity for added information. Conscious reflection instead of an instant reaction was more important in this study as participants reflected upon their study abroad experience. Participants chose the photographs specifically for this research.

**3.4.2: Self-Curated Photographs.** Photographs selected by the participant promoted collaboration with the researcher and allowed the respondent to be the expert in their own life (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Curating photographs from the trip not only provided new meaning to the photographs taken but also provided the image agency (Pachmayer & Andereck, 2017; Rose, 2016). Selecting photographs taken previously served a new purpose. The women created a new

set of photographs to utilize during the photo elicitation. This process allowed for a more equitable distribution of power, empowered respondents, and aligned with a feminist perspective (Clark et al., 2010; Glaw et al., 2017). Exploring women's past interactions with their environment abroad increased the understanding of their sociocultural identity and conceptualization of global citizenship.

### **3.5: Amalgamation of Frameworks**

Most feminists only look at power, privilege, and oppression at the individual level ignoring environmental influences. Also, some critical perspectives failed to acknowledge the historical impact on development and how relationships and experiences impact personal development (Enns et al., 2020). Transnational feminism along with Bronfenbrenner explain individuals' agency and capacity for growth in response to life challenges (Reina, 2014). Individuals adapt and develop as they interact with their environment and the timing of study abroad affects identity (Kang et al., 2017; Naddaf, 2016). Identity development such as personality, proficiency in language, and culture change from experiences during study abroad (Naddaf, 2016). Numerous scholars continue to ignore historical, racial, and sociopolitical issues faced by women both domestically and globally (Ballou, 2017; Enns et al., 2020). Bronfenbrenner implemented the PPCT model to explore principles affecting people not only during their immediate interactions during their environment, but also across time and space (Naddaf, 2016). Therefore, to address how study abroad experiences affect individuals differently, as well as over time, I combined transnational feminism and Bronfenbrenner in numerous ways:

- Concern with quality and context of environment
- Address social and cultural differences

- How relationships affect broader social and cultural context
- How individuals transgress race, gender, social, and class boundaries

This framework allowed me to explore power, privilege, and identity from multiple perspectives (Levine & Breshears, 2019). Blending Bronfenbrenner and transnational feminism encourage the intersection of identities and expand at the conceptual levels (**Table 4**). These two frameworks work together to address the attitudes perpetuating the larger systemic power affecting the lives of people and guiding activism (Ballou, 2017; Enns et al., 2020). Women are looking across national borders to solve global problems (Butler et al., 2018). Together civic engagement and community organizations can help support the development of global citizens (Anantharam, 2020).

Table 4. *Bronfenbrenner and Transnational Feminist Model*

Bronfenbrenner	Transnational Feminist
Microsystem	Internalized identities: biological, emotional, cognitive self
Mesosystem	Sociocultural categories
Exosystem	Educational system, legal system
Macrosystem	Environmental, distribution of resources, world views, ideologies

Self-curated photo elicitation complements the theoretical frameworks because photographs empower women and analyze their positions of power, privilege, and identity. According to Biber and Brandenburg (2020) capturing experiences through photography allowed for effective reflection from study abroad and promoted global citizenry and cultural integration. This method of data collection complements Bronfenbrenner because participants provide

physical photographs explaining the interactions with their environment and the changes occurred due to their individual experience. Self-curated photo elicitation complements transnational feminism because photographs and stories were given agency to promote social change.

### **3.6: Research Design**

Qualitative research methods allowed for data collection from semi-structured interviews and self-curated photo elicitations. Data collected utilized inductive reasoning to analyze how the experiences of studying abroad impacted women. Guided questions provided an opportunity for the participants to reconceptualize global citizenship and reveal their position of power, privilege, and identity from their experience abroad. The reasons and trends found from the data explained social phenomenon. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to:

- (1) reflect on their upbringing and how their environment shaped them
- (2) provide a greater understanding of their experience as a woman who traveled abroad
- (3) determine how their photographs explained their power, privilege, and identity

**3.6.1: Interviewing.** The purpose of interviewing is to understand how people interpret their experiences and how they make sense of it all (Sakkal, 2013). The first interview provided the background of each woman, their experience abroad, and how their interactions with their environment shaped their conceptualization of global citizenship. Feminist interviewing contributed to an inclusive and multicultural experience (Devault & Gross, 2014). Active listening required hearing the participant's full experience. Feminist researchers who take active listening for granted risk reinforcing dominant perspectives and ignoring their own privileges (DeVault & Gross, 2014). The second interview utilized self-curated photo elicitation and asked

women to provide photographs reflecting their study abroad experiences as a woman and explained their sociocultural identity.

Self-curated photo elicitation promoted reflexivity. The reason behind the choice and selection of each photograph and the level of difficulty selecting the photographs was an integral part of the interview (Marcella-Hood, 2020). This approach differed from other photo elicitations because participants provided and discussed photographs already taken explaining their own personal narrative (Marcella-Hood, 2020). Specific instructions guided the participants in curation of the photographs (**Appendix B**). Self-curated photo elicitation added value to an accumulation of photos by assigning meaning through creativity and organization (Broekhuijsen, 2018). According to Broekhuijsen (2018) curated photographs allowed participants to construct the story they wanted to tell by utilizing certain photographs. These photographs played a significant role to explain their study abroad experience as a woman. DeVault and Gross (2014) argued gathering participants stories, discovering their perspective, and providing them a voice supports feminist qualitative interviewing. I conducted the interviews virtually and saved all transcripts in a password protected file.

**3.6.2: Context of the Study.** For this study I decided to research within the institution where I was completing my graduate coursework. Also, I chose to collaborate with USF World to determine areas of need and interest for study abroad. During 2018-2019, 70% of the study abroad participants were women (USF World, 2021). Also, the ethnicity of participants from this university were diverse: 49% White, 21% Hispanic, 9% African America, 8% Asian, and the remaining 13% either Multicultural or Other (USF World, 2019). This university compared to the United States ethnically as followed: 70% White, 10% African America, 8% Hispanic, and

4% Asian (Whatley & Raby, 2020). Women were the focus of this study because most of the study abroad participants are women.

**3.6.3: Recruitment.** All contact was virtual due to the global pandemic and as a female researcher I thought women might be more comfortable sharing their honest experiences with me. Recruitment occurred through the USF study abroad office. The recruitment email included almost nine hundred women who were former study abroad participants and had most likely graduated. I say this because the research focused on travel during 2018 and/or 2019 and most participants travel abroad during their senior year. Therefore, it is impossible to know how many women received the email because upon graduation most students either lose access to their university email address or no longer check it.

**3.6.4: Participant Selection.** In total 22 potential participants responded to the recruitment email expressing interest in the study. I selected ten participants through purposeful sampling. The following criteria aided my selection:

- (1) identified as a woman
- (2) completed an international trip abroad through a university program
- (3) studied internationally during 2018-2019

Once a participant expressed interest, then I emailed the participant selection form (**Appendix C**). Several of the potential participants never responded with a participant selection form. Another participant was no longer interested once I explained there was no compensation. If the participant met the criteria, then I emailed the consent form and list of interview questions. Once I received the participant selection form and consent form, I considered the spot filled. I limited the study to 10 participants due to the nature of a qualitative study and the time it takes to

conduct two interviews with each participant and time to collect and analyze the data. Consent forms are in a secured Box account along with the participant selection forms.

**3.6.5: Informed Consent and IRB Approval.** Before the interview process began, I obtained written consent from each participant and informed them of the purpose of my research in accordance with the expectations and regulations of the university-based IRB. Participation occurred solely on a voluntary basis. At any time during the research participants had the option to cease participation. I emailed participants an informed consent form prior to the first interview. I asked their permission to record the interviews and to sign a photo release form before the second interview to use their photographs.

**3.6.6: Research Interview Protocols.** I gathered data through dialogue exchanged during interviews. During the interviews I asked women to explain their experiences from studying abroad, conceptualize global citizenship, and analyze their sociocultural identity (**Appendix A**). During the first interview the participants shared information about their background, motivations to study abroad, and expectations. These cultural perceptions explained how their individual experiences with their environment have shaped their life and in turn their experiences abroad. By utilizing a semi-structured interview, flexibility allowed for the exploration of similar themes (Bearman, 2009). Participants discussed their individual experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and values as it related to global citizenship. To provide a more personal experience and obtain a richer narrative of the study abroad experience a second interview utilizing self-curated photo elicitation occurred. By utilizing photo elicitation, the participant explained the meaning behind the photograph and provided different insight to the research due to their personal experience (Glaw et al., 2017). Participants curated photographs demonstrating how their power, privilege, and identity influenced their experiences in another

country (**Appendix B**). Self-curated photo elicitation encourages the participants to share their story and gather a more accurate representation of the experience abroad (Pachmeyer & Andereck, 2017).

The participants received the interview topics prior to the initial interview to allow time for comprehension, recollection of experiences, and for any clarification to occur. I conducted the interviews through MS Teams and recorded them. The links of the recordings are in a university password protected Box account. The interviews lasted between one to three hours without a set time limit to ensure the women could share their narrative and speak freely. I gained a deeper understanding through the participants' answers and experiences abroad. By utilizing a researcher journal and applying a critical perspective I was able to question the narratives.

**3.6.7: Researcher Journal.** A research journal allowed me to record my thoughts and observations. As the researcher I am an outsider to the research, but my involvement influenced the analysis of the research (Rose, 2016). This process allowed me to organize my thoughts and challenge the narratives provided. A few entries revealed some inconsistencies with the stories and perspectives of the participant. Using a critical and bioecological lens the data explained how the participants' activities, relationships, and roles within the participants' bioecological system impacted global citizenship (Xu et al., 2020). Referencing the journal provided clarification and exposed topics and problems requiring attention for future research. Analyzing the photographs and organizing the data required a reflexive attitude. To accurately represent the participants' experiences the journal helped to limit misconceptions. The journal was online in a password protected Box account through my university.



**3.6.8: Member Checking.** To align with a transnational feminist perspective, I conducted interactive interviews. This structure challenged the dominant research model and acted like a conversation (Falcón, 2016). It is impossible to know in advance (or even after the fact) what impact an interview can have on the participant (Patton, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to allow the participant to review the interview transcription and to edit and verify comments to avoid misinterpretation. Throughout the interviews I commented on the participants stories and shared some of my own. This style of research nurtured collaboration and promoted the willingness of those interviewed (Falcón, 2016). Once I transcribed the interviews, I emailed the transcripts to the participants. Two participants provided further clarification on two questions. Allowing the participants to revise the documents and make any changes or modifications is an example of interactive consent (DeVault & Gross, 2014; Falcón, 2016). The member checking process created an accurate representation of the participants past experiences and ensured valid data analysis.

**3.6.9: Triangulation.** To best explore the findings, I cross referenced the interview transcripts, a reflective journal, and member checking to demonstrate consistency found throughout the data collection. By utilizing multiple methods, I achieved triangulation to ensure validity, increased credibility, and encouraged a greater accuracy of results (Tyson, 2009). Also, this process allowed for a reflexive and analytical approach to data analysis ensuring my personal thoughts and feelings did not influence the data incorrectly.

### **3.7: Data Analysis**

The analysis consisted of techniques often used in qualitative research and allowed me as the researcher to apply a critical lens. According to Saldana (2021) the analysis consisted of (1) initial coding, (2) sub coding to determine emerging categories, and (3) establishing final themes

correlated to the research questions. Throughout the process I ensured the categories, themes, and conclusions corresponded with the purpose of the research study.

I personally transcribed the interviews for all participants. After completing the transcripts, the participants provided clarification and ensured validity of all statements. Once I finalized the transcripts initial coding for each participant began. The first coding cycle for the semi-structured interviews used Saldana's (2021) initial coding. Codes such as: American identity, architecture, community, cultural connection, experience, environment, first time, globalization, history, identity, language, locals, multicultural, must see, national identity, nature, nostalgia, outsider, preservation, privilege, relationships, souvenir, tourist, and youth emerged. I chose to manually organize the data to get a physical feel for what I wanted to accomplish. I re-read the interviews and the coding for each individual participants and compiled the list on an excel spreadsheet. Sub coding included: personal growth, identity, culture, nature, government, living, interactions, nostalgia, adventure, and tourism. A final read-through allowed for a closer look at the data and ensured the final themes represented a critical approach. The final themes included: (1) life abroad, (2) global interactions, (3) global community, (4) time abroad, and (5) American perspectives. As the researcher is the primary research instrument used to design, collect, and interpret qualitative data, it is important to conduct and present high-quality research along with ethical considerations.

### **3.8: Ethical Considerations**

Self-curated photographs are powerful and relatable; however, it is easy to misrepresent a person, place, or object or to take an image out of context. Limited researcher bias occurred because the participants provided their own photographs (Rose, 2016). The participants consented to the use of their photographs for this study as well as in potential future research and

or presentations. There can be fuzzy boundaries when it comes to ethics but putting the participants' best interest first ensured proper decisions (Warr et al., 2016). The following ethical considerations occurred: professional responsibility, confidentiality, and participant consent.

**3.8.1: Professional Responsibility.** The code of ethics aimed to provide a safe space for the participant and had their best interest in mind (Miller, 2018). Professional responsibility and respect occurred throughout the process of this research study (Papademas, 2009). I aimed to safeguard the rights and privacy of the participants (Miller, 2018). The recognition of proper authorship and ownership was important to limit misrepresentation particularly when sharing the photographs (Warr et al., 2016). Each photograph has a photo credit ensuring proper ownership. The potential benefits outweigh the risk for participation in the study and minimal consequences occurred (Miller, 2018). Justice occurred because I explained to the participants possible outcomes and consequences of the project (Riele & Baker, 2016). Research was based on voluntary informed consent (Boucher, 2018).

**3.8.2: Participant Consent.** Fostering a relationship built upon trust and informed consent allow for a rich collection of data. Self-curated photo elicitation interviews contributed to trustworthiness and rigor of the findings (Glaw et al., 2017). Initial consent occurred before conducting the study. Consent and confidentiality occurred throughout the entire study (Clark et al., 2010; Papademas, 2009). The participants had a unique opportunity to share their story. All participants signed a photo release form. According to IRB protocol only the participants themselves were to be identifiable in the photographs, therefore no other identifiable persons were allowed.

**3.8.3: Confidentiality.** Participants understood the extent to which anonymity and confidentiality were possible (Boucher, 2018). Pseudonyms instead of participant names aided in

the process of confidentiality. Assuring confidentiality can be difficult since photographs yields visually identifiable participants and anonymity is not a guarantee (Clark, 2020; Miller, 2018). It is no longer unusual to find recognizable individuals displayed in research and enabled more authentic data and a critical approach to research (Clark, 2020). Participants had the option to share photographs of themselves to demonstrate their experience abroad. Feminist researchers are flexible when it comes to confidentiality because a participant should have the opportunity to reveal their identity (DeVault & Gross, 2014). Prosser and Loxley (2008) argued covering faces renders the data meaningless or distorts the central message (Miller, 2018). Since the focus of this study is on the individual and identity it was meaningful to share photographs of the participants' faces. As demonstrated by the photographs provided by the participants some wanted to be visible in the work. Miller (2018) argued it is unethical to deny a participants' desire for proper identification.

**3.8.4: Personal Ethics.** Personal ethics represents the beneficence of the researcher to place participants interest and needs before their own (Miller, 2018). I am an outsider to the research, but my involvement influenced the research (Rose, 2016). I aspired to positively impact my participants. Utilizing photography can assist in balancing the power and encouraging collaboration with participants, but it must have a careful application moving towards social change (Miller, 2018).

### **3.9: Limitations**

Limitations in this study included access, willingness of participants, and exaggerations or misreading of the intention of the photograph. Also, misrepresentation of only positive or pleasant experiences and ethical concerns made anonymity a challenge (Pachmayer & Andereck, 2017). The researcher had to trust the selection of photographs to be true and accurate

perceptions of the experience. Participants may not have remembered the event or the purpose for the photograph. Also, the participant may not have taken a picture of the biggest impacts or experiences they had, therefore less data may be available. The self-curated photo elicitation focused on global citizenship, study abroad, and interactions women experienced with their environment while studying abroad. The findings from this study are not generalizable because of the context of its participants, however, the study results may have some implications for the reconceptualization of global citizenship and social change.

### **3.10: Summary**

In review, chapter 3 began by highlighting the theoretical perspectives of Bronfenbrenner and transnational feminism used to frame the study. Then I discussed how I used semi-structured interviews and self-curated photo elicitations to collect data and how I interpreted them through a critical lens as well as the ethical considerations of the research. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the themes discovered through the collection and analysis of data.

## **Chapter 4: The Findings**

The purpose of this study was to explore how environmental influences impacted women during study abroad and how they conceptualize a critical understanding of global citizenship. The study aligned with qualitative methods and utilized interviewing to explore the thoughts and experiences of participants regarding global citizenship and their power, privilege, and identity. In this chapter, I present findings from the data collected to address the following research questions: (1) To what extent do female undergraduate students from the United States who have participated in a study abroad program develop a critical understanding of global citizenship? (2) How are students' awareness of power, privilege, and identity reflected in their documentation and narration of their experiences abroad?

Once the final data analysis was complete the following overarching themes emerged: (1) life abroad, (2) global interactions, (3) global community, (4) time abroad, and (5) American perspectives. The first theme, life abroad, represented how the students' background and outside influences have shaped their power, privilege, and identity and perceptions of living abroad. The second emergent theme, global interactions, demonstrated students' ability to balance their identity of self as well as the adjustment and expectations of a new school, new peers, and a new place. The third theme, global community, explained students' understanding of interactions in the emerging global world such as transportation, urban green space, social inequalities, and sustainability. The fourth theme, time abroad, represents the life stage, length of study, and historical context of life before covid. The fifth theme, American perceptions, discussed the perceptions of power, privilege, and identity experienced in foreign countries. Also provided is a

discussion of cultural stereotypes and a tourist mentality of visiting iconic landmarks and eating authentic food.

To help process the data I created a chart (**Table 5**) to look at the codes and find patterns and connections. Considering the unique interpretations and experiences of each participant, narrowing down the themes was challenging. Through re-reading and several different drafts, the table provided demonstrated the initial coding process. Then through sub coding and the clarity of participant response’s emergent themes were determined. Finally, after a guided selection five final themes emerged.

Table 5. *Emergent Themes*

College	Landscapes	Awareness
Family	Travel Alone	Nature
Friends	Outsider	Understanding
Heritage	Language	Get Involved
Immigrants	Food and Beverage	Social Inequality
Tourist	Must See	Iconic

Participants made it clear study abroad was an experience of a lifetime and a big moment of personal growth. Although all participants attended the same diverse university, each participant had a unique cultural upbringing allowing for a distinctive study abroad experience. “Coming from an immigrant family,” and “family instilling travel,” explained their outside influences and shaped their identity and position on foreign travel. For some this was their first time “traveling alone” and others their first time in a foreign country. During the weekends participants “explored nature” and vast natural landscapes. The context of time and generational influence (all participants were a part of Generation Z) demonstrated a cultural trend of food photography as an expression of cultural appreciation. The participants admitted they had visited tourist locations or iconic landmarks, but most made it clear they did not want to be labeled as a

tourist. They wanted to blend in and wanted more of an authentic experience. Most participants identified as global citizens and wanted to “share their experience with others.” It was important to “make connections,” “get involved,” and “address social inequalities,” demonstrating their understanding of a global citizen. The photographs provided a unique perspective of their experience.

Due to IRB protocol participants included pictures of themselves, but no other identifiable people. DeVault and Gross (2014) argued feminist researchers are flexible when it comes to confidentiality because if a participant wants to be identified then their identity can be revealed. Therefore, if a participant wanted to share a picture of themselves it could support their position of power, privilege, and identity and strengthen their narrative. Feminist scholars believe human agency is influential and when used correctly can have a significant impact on society (Falcón, 2016).

#### **4.1: The Individual**

Ten women volunteered to participate in this study and shared their experiences from studying abroad. These women functioned as agents in their own lives and ethically are subjects existing in a period of time influenced by particular cultural and historical events (DeVault & Gross, 2014). During the first interview while listening to the upbringing of each participant I noticed the materialization of information related to the second research question. As the participants explained how their demographics determined their identity, I recognized this was the foundation of their positionality (**Table 6**). This lens explained their perceptions and interactions during their study abroad trip. Encouraging reflective dialogue, especially regarding global citizenship and positionality, provided insight on how globalization has changed study



abroad. An overview of each participant highlighted their positionality and how their interactions influenced their experience abroad.

Table 6. *Demographics of Study Abroad Participants*

Pseudo-nym	Country Visited	Duration	Age	Ethnicity	SES	Religion	Sexual Orientation
Aelin	Romania	2 months	22	Hispanic (Cuban)	Low-Mid	Spiritual	Straight
Kate	Japan	Semester	23	White American	Low	NA	Queer
Emily	Cuba England & France	10 days 10 days	23	White American	Mid	Catholic	Straight
Dawn	Panama	1 week	22	Pakistani	Mid-Upper	Muslim	Straight
Zoey	Canada	1 week	18	Hispanic (Cuban)	Low-Mid	NA	Straight
Lynette	England	One month	22	Indian/Guyanese	Low-Mid	Hindu	Straight
Valentina	England Italy	Summer Fall	22	Hispanic (Colombian)	Mid-Upper	Catholic & Spiritual	Straight
Gianna	Italy Ireland	7weeks 4 weeks	23	Asian American	Upper-Mid	Catholic	Straight
Rose	Germany	Semester	22	White American	Mid	Agnostic	Bisexual woman
Mei	China	2 weeks	22	Black & Asian	Mid	NA	Straight

**4.1.1: Aelin.** She loved to read, wanted to get good grades, and overall had a happy childhood. Growing up low-middle class and with limited travel opportunities she prioritized her needs and wants. Aelin saw the difference between getting a degree and not appreciating an education. Her upbringing prepared her for the trip. She had travelled by herself before, and her mother taught her about self-care. Her spirituality allowed her peace of mind and freedom of choices. Identifying as straight she “loves men and is happy to see beautiful men.” Someday she wishes to travel to South Korea to watch K-pop.

Majoring in Biology and Anthropology provided motivation to dig at an archeological site. Also, her professor played a big role, and the trip fulfilled a requirement for her program of

study. Aelin mentioned at this stage in her life, “Living in the moment and not having any family obligations was the perfect time to travel.” At first people avoided her since she was a foreigner, but over time they warmed up and even smiled. Being a positive person, she made it a point to be polite and greet everyone. She had no prior knowledge of the host country’s language, only a few conversational phrases. Most people in the group were American and spoke English.

Even though she did not speak the local language she felt accepted by her peers, school, community, and host country. Everyone was welcoming and if English was not an option, she used Google translate. Her cultural encounters resembled her upbringing in Cuba and reminded her of her grandmother. Aelin explained, “The employees at the restaurants were sitting on their phones, not paying any attention to you, and it reminded me of home.” Another encounter was with a homeless woman. Aelin shared, “She grabbed my phone with dirty fingernails, tried to navigate the language barrier until finally she asked me for money.” She said this is like what happens with the homeless in Cuba and the level of poverty. Her overall perceptions of people and her environment did not change. Aelin said, “People are not as different as she thought they would be, as rude as people here.” She arrived with American and Cuban ideals but chose to act like locals whenever possible. It was important for her to walk wherever possible. Aelin exclaimed, “My peers would call a taxi to go to the supermarket. It is a mile, why don’t you walk!” She thought it was more culturally appropriate to walk and the people who saw her walking valued it and welcomed her into the community. She enjoyed the walk and was able to pay attention to the architecture and beauty around her. Aelin expressed, “You can see the shift from rural to communism urban planning.”

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Aelin (**Figure 3**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Aelin best

exemplifying her study abroad experience. This view of the Capitol Building provided a connection to her hometown and represented her Cuban culture. Aelin mentioned, “I tried so hard to get this picture right. This view in Hungary is the exact same view in Cuba and it brought me great joy. It transported me to Cuba and made me feel comfortable.” The second photograph represents the bones she found during the dig. Aelin explained, “The bones reveal how the population was distributed, how varied it was in terms of gender and age.” The motivation behind the third photograph was for her mother. Aelin commented, “In Latin America there is a psychosis of people exchanging your bag for a bag of drugs. To prevent the misconception from happening you have to pay and get your bag wrapped at the airport.”



Figure 3. *Capitol Building, Bones, and Secured Luggage*  
Photo Credit: Aelin

**4.1.2: Kate.** Even though she recognized she is young she has had a lot of life experiences. Growing up poor and coming from divorced parents she still recognized her privilege as thin, White, and American. Her background motivated her to accomplish everything

she wanted in life, and she can rely on herself to obtain funds. She does not claim to be spiritual but is more open and interested in others' religion. Kate identified as queer. She stated, "My identity is opposite, it is more about other people, and makes me more relaxed." Her environment challenged her to overcome barriers and encouraged her to find a support system elsewhere.

Peers have had more of an influence than her family as she does not have anything in common with them. Her close friends in college were non-White, shaping her ability to become more culturally aware. During her trip abroad as an English-speaking foreigner she witnessed racism in Japan. Kate shared,

"White Americans never say there is any racism in Japan because they are the most well received alongside White Europeans. I acknowledge the privilege I have as an English-speaking foreigner. I am able to see beyond my individual experiences and address racism in Japan towards those with darker complexions and from non-Western countries."

Prior knowledge of the Japanese language and a previous study abroad trip for a pilot program motivated her to return in 2019 for an entire semester. Choosing to study in the countryside with a reputable school with more opportunities for direct involvement sealed the deal. Kate said, "The only thing to do was to make friends." Since this was her third trip to Japan, she had more realistic expectations, was slightly nervous, and afraid people in the countryside would be less friendly. Kate said, "I was mindful of the way Japanese culture is to Western looking people. A lot of people would stare, and I was seen as this beautiful standard." Understanding her positionality, she planned to network and rely on friends if she got into a bind. Kate explained, "I had enough cultural knowledge I could make myself palatable to other people." Her listening and speaking skills were better than her ability to read and write Japanese.

Once abroad she felt accepted, but with conditions. Kate explained, "Being White, you are visiting, you need to put in the effort." Being a part of the Kanto Club meant drinking parties

were mandatory and a strict social hierarchy existed. Kate continued, “The club wanted to be diverse, but if you broke the rules then it was expected to be like a Japanese person. I knew I would not be seen as a Japanese person and would never officially be accepted.” The biggest cultural difference she experienced was the Japanese language and culture was indirect. Kate elaborated, “I was constantly reading between the lines or taking miniscule gestures to have great meaning.” Her interactions abroad, specifically the power harassment she experienced, taught her valuable lessons about people and relationships. Kate shared:

“Japanese friendship is like a set of stairs and American friendship is like a ladder. You can climb to the top of the ladder quickly, but with the stairs you must take things slowly one step at a time, no matter how much you get along initially. This has had a positive impact on setting boundaries and being more careful with whom [she] spends time with and trusts.”

She related to the Australians and Europeans abroad more so than other Americans. Kate explained, “They expected me to be loud, opinionated, and blunt. I tried to be more of a listener, speak in Japanese only, and take up as little space as possible with my body language.” The students were so impressed with her behavior they said wow, she is so Japanese, and she does not act American at all! Performing in the Kanto Club and in a parade allowed her to make a good impression on the locals because for some of them she was the only American they had ever met.

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Kate (**Figure 4**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Kate best exemplifying her study abroad experience. The view of The Kanto Circle represented the tradition, discipline, and commitment to the club. Women cannot touch the poles and the men practice in a separate location. The team circle was a unique opportunity for everyone to be together. Kate explained, “This became my identity and would be a serious commitment. These Japanese students supported me, and I spent most of my time with them. It reminded me of why

people stay in sororities, all the hard work and strict rules.” This topic was interesting to her as it served as the topic for her undergraduate thesis. The second photograph displays her performance during a night festival. Her role in the Kanto club was playing music, specifically the drum, and this photograph appeared in the school brochure. The third photograph is from the fishing village festival. “Getting my hands dirty and being invited for a great experience with little expectations is what I love about Japan.” She was one of the few foreigners who participated.



Figure 4. *Kanto Team Circle, Drum Performance, and Pulling the Float*  
Photo Credit: Kate

**4.1.3: Emily.** Being a young straight White woman, she felt privileged but acknowledged her privilege and did not allow it to be a hindrance. Emily shared, “My sexuality doesn’t impact my identity because I don’t have to struggle with coming out as a straight person.” She believes you should be kind to others and try to put yourself in someone else’s shoes before you judge them. She grew up in a small town with the same peer group. Her grandparents were serious globe trotters and always sent her postcards from their trips. Her parents instilled travel and

every spring break, fall break, and summer they took a vacation. Travelling throughout her childhood played a significant role in her desire to study abroad in college.

The Health Sciences department and her professors, along with her childhood, were the main motives behind study abroad. In Cuba, the program offered a global perspective on public health and the classes counted towards her degree program. Before she left for Cuba, she was unsure of what to expect since she had no preconceived notions. She anticipated a language barrier, but surprisingly a lot of people spoke English in Cuba. She had completed the Global Citizens Project and earned the scholarship allowing her to travel again and this time to London and Paris for an internship. Since the Cuba trip had been such a success, she had high expectations for the London and Paris trip. Again, she anticipated a language barrier and in Paris people preferred French. She never felt threatened abroad and realized after the fact having blond hair and blue eyes and appearing as a nice girl, it was easy for people to approach her and offer help during the trip.

In Cuba and London and she felt accepted by her peers, community, and professors. She stayed with a host family in Cuba and formed a tighter group of friends she remains in contact with. In London, small groups of friends formed, but she only stays in communication with a few fellow travelers. A few cultural differences she experienced in Cuba was the need to provide her own toilet paper, drinking more amounts of coffee, and a lot of walking. In London she was able to easily transition to the daily lifestyle. In Paris she had to learn to experience life at a slower pace and due to this cultural adjustment was able to appreciate cultural differences. She experienced a few incidents in Paris when fellow Americans had created a negative stereotype of themselves. It was important to her to act and dress like a local. However, in Cuba, while visiting patients in an impoverished section of town a man was so happy to see an American, he gave her

an apple. Her overall perceptions of study abroad changed. Emily realized, “The world is smaller than you think. Everyone is just like me, looks a little different, speaks a little different, and doing the best we can.”

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Emily (**Figure 5**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Emily best exemplifying her study abroad experience. Not only was this the best cup of coffee she had ever had, but it also represented the warmth of her host family and Cuban culture. Emily exclaimed “It was part of the ambiance of Cuba! The teacup and saucer were porcelain, the fanciest teacup I had ever drank from.” The cup of coffee was welcoming and appreciated. The second photograph is of London’s iconic red telephone booth. Emily questioned, “How can you not? You have not been to London until you have taken a picture in the telephone booth. It is iconic.” The third photograph represents an important water source. Emily shared, “This was the water pump John Snow had to take the top off to stop the spread of Cholera. This action started epidemiology.” As a global citizen she recognized the importance of the moment, and that contaminated water is a global issue. Emily stated, “We all need water and once it is not there it is devastating to our health and community.”





Figure 5. *Cuban Coffee, Telephone Booth, and Water Pump*  
Photo Credit: Emily

**4.1.4: Dawn.** She identifies as Pakistani and believes her minority status gives her more of a diverse view. Being from the middle-upper class she is more prone to travel, has more experience around the world, and has an increased knowledge of the world. Her Muslim identity gives her a holistic perspective on everything about the world. Identifying as straight allowed for more privilege. Dawn explained, “In terms of society, being straight gives me an advantage over others who are likely to be discriminated against, it allows for more privilege.” Having studied abroad at a younger age may have altered her experience.

Dawn has lived in Florida her entire life. At the age of 4 she began traveling the world with her family. Countries visited prior to her study abroad trip included: Costa Rica, Russia, and most memorably Spain. Dawn shared, “Being a Muslim and see the Alhambra was so amazing, beyond words.” Having travelled to other countries with a similar atmosphere and Hispanic culture prepared for her trip to Panama.

Five years of Spanish and course credit motivated her to study abroad in a Spanish speaking country. She was familiar with the atmosphere and Hispanic culture. During her weeklong trip she expected to learn a lot and was busy. She explained Panama is like a big city environment in the United States. She anticipated a struggle with food selection as she follows a Muslim diet and praying five times a day was difficult with her schedule. Also, wearing modest clothing was difficult as it was a hot humid climate. Her cultural differences may have impacted her interactions abroad.

Surrounded by graduate students was a little uncomfortable at first, but eventually she was able to warm up. She felt accepted by her peers and the host country. Everyone was helpful and informational. Since this was a business focused experience everyone was professional, and the cultural encounters were comparable to home life. There was one opportunity when she visited an Indigenous tribe where she was able to see traditional Panamanian culture. Dawn explained, “This showed my privilege as not everyone is able to visit a rural village in their lifetime and I was enlightened by this experience. I was able to witness a traditional dance, artwork, and shared a meal together.” Another opportunity to experience cultural differences was during bargaining in the marketplaces for souvenirs. Dawn shared, “It is a little demanding if you aren’t used to it. I just gave in since I was not familiar with the culture.” Her overall impression of Panama changed as she realized the national importance of urban planning, transportation, and trade. She learned more about behind the scenes operations and sympathized for the locals as she discovered the past regarding colonization. As an American abroad she was able to acknowledge her privilege and recognized the difference in treatment. Dawn mentioned, “We cannot have one point of view when looking at the world.”

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Dawn (Figure 6). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Dawn best exemplifying her study abroad experience. The modern city is where she spent most of her time and learned about business. Dawn explained, “Cities and high rises are synonymous to business. Modernization has occurred in countries all of the world.” The second photograph is a quote from the lobby of Dell. Dawn explained, “Enabling human potential speaks to global citizenship as it is about opening your mind to whatever the world hits you with.” She believes Dell is true to what they say they are doing and demonstrates how they are impacting the world. Dawn elaborated, “Panama’s position to deliver goods is vital to the world and it speaks to the interconnectedness of our world.” The third photograph is her coconut juice. Dawn explained, “I felt privileged to be able to experience Panama’s natural produce on a daily basis, I valued it so much.” Experiencing new commodities was one way to understand a new culture.



Figure 6. *Modern City, Quote from Dell, and Coconut Juice*  
Photo Credit: Dawn

**4.1.5: Zoey.** Being Cuban and spending most of her childhood in the Bahamas her entire family speaks Spanish. Zoey was surrounded by strong women and thankful to have role models with an incredible work ethic. Her father is religious which influenced the decision for her to attend a Christian elementary school. She was thankful for the financial aid provided and hopes to attend graduate school and create a comfortable lifestyle for herself. Understanding her identity as a straight woman she is aware of her surroundings and encounters with men and proceeds with caution. She knew not to go out late at night and not to wander alone.

Wanting to stay on course to graduate on time, she decided to take a one-week summer class to Canada. Living in various places growing up prepared her to experience another culture. Zoey shared, “I couldn’t imagine what it would be like if you lived in one place and then travelled abroad.” Prior to the trip she did not have any expectations. She did anticipate a potential language barrier and attempted to learn a little French beforehand. Being open-minded allowed her to overcome any obstacles and embrace the culture. Everyone was welcoming and she felt accepted by her peers. She and her friends had met a homeless guy who was quite funny, and they talked for an hour. She was impressed with the trip, wants to return with her family, and even considered moving there temporarily. Her American identity did not have an impact on the trip.

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Zoey (**Figure 7**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Zoey best exemplifying her study abroad experience. This piece of artwork entitled *Scars* spoke to her on a personal level. She felt this quote demonstrated her ability to become stronger from tough times. The second photograph displayed Café Starbucks. This photo represented an example of globalization and the presence of a French Starbucks in Canada. Zoey said, “I was impressed and

shocked to see Starbucks in another country. It was cool to see the differences in the menu.” The availability of products is dependent on the economy. The third photograph is from her last day in the park. Zoey shared, “This was a bittersweet moment. I wanted to savor my last day and was privileged to take in the beautiful scenery. I love the outdoors and it was humbling to explore the nature side of Quebec.”



Figure 7. *Scars, Café Starbucks, and Park*  
Photo Credit: Zoey

**4.1.6: Lynette.** She challenges the label of her generation by demonstrating attributes of an old soul. Lynette acknowledges the voice of the youth, but her family history has a greater impact on her identity. Her family has experienced the effects of British colonization as they migrated from India to Guyana and eventually the United States. She was born in New York and has retained parts of Hindu and Caribbean culture. To her Hindu is more of a philosophy of life, a lifestyle promoting doing good. She experienced a White upbringing as her peer group was homogenous and her social life influenced by White culture. Most of her peers stayed together

throughout school and the only difference occurred when she decided to attend an IB program for high school.

Due to family members living in England she visited the country during elementary school and had longed to return. Another motivation to studying abroad was the requirement for the honors college global experience. She wanted to go somewhere where she would be comfortable. Prior to the trip she did not have any expectations. Also, she did not have time to think about the trip as she was preparing for finals and packed the night before. Being familiar with English culture she anticipated cultural differences. However, she was confident the trip would be successful due to her global experience and multicultural background.

Travelling to another country where English is the primary language and to a partner program with her home university made her feel accepted. She felt the perceptions of cultures and languages are different at home, but abroad, most people can accommodate and speak English. Being an American caused people to treat her differently. For example, in Paris, she met some resistance with a language barrier. She now realizes how much discrimination minorities face. Overall, her perceptions abroad made her want to travel more and absorb more cultures. She enjoyed using public transportation and felt more independent.

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Lynette (**Figure 8**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Lynette best exemplifying her study abroad experience. Having a cup of tea gave her a sense of community and part of human nature. Lynette shared, “At the end of the day my trip was not about the attractions, but about studying. This is a realistic representation of day-to-day common life. Everyone can relate to sitting down over food to study.” The second photograph is a view of the ground. She likes to take pictures of the ground to remind herself of where she has been and to



consider a unique perspective. Also, she appreciated the preservation of the British roads and the history behind them. The third photograph depicts Westminster Abbey. The history of this building is a living reminder of the power and status of the Church. It also represents the privileges of different social classes as people buried here are only royalty and those with notable achievements.



Figure 8. *Cuppa Tea, Ground, and Westminster Abbey*  
Photo Credit: Lynette

**4.1.7: Valentina.** She came from a village of 1200 people in Colombia. Life was different there and she realizes that now. Valentina is the first to come to the United States in her family. For example, when she arrived in the US, she never had a mailbox or a front and backyard. Acknowledging she is young and has a lot to learn she was ready to explore the unknown. Her peer group has influenced her identity and the same peer group continued throughout high school. She commented, “When I go back home, I reach out to my friends, and I make it a priority to know my neighbors.” Her community has shaped her cultural identity.

Being middle-upper class allowed her the opportunity to explore her identity and embrace the importance of family. Because of their financial situation they have been able to bring more family here and they are close knit. Her family may have influenced her decision to become a religious studies major. She explained, "It gives me a guide in a way, gives me a mythology on how to build trust in yourself, be more patient, be forgiving, and loving." When thinking about her identity she never thought about how her age or sexual orientation contributed to her identity. She is straight but appreciates women and would stand up for them in a feminist way. Travel was something her parents instilled in her and she has always wanted to travel.

Before the trip she thought the less expectations the better. Valentina shared, "Sometimes the best things happens when you least plan them." She wanted to take advantage of this unique opportunity to study abroad. Valentina said, "There is no other time in your life when you can travel with your classmates, have some independence and to get out of my comfort zone." She thought there would have been more immersion in the lives of locals (i.e., hole in the walls, customs, etc.). Since the World Cup was happening during her trip, she anticipated meeting people from all over the world. During her stay in Italy, she wanted to learn more about Roman Catholicism. Keeping in mind her positionality she knew she could rely on her family, friends, and faculty if she needed them. She did not anticipate any language barriers as her trip to Florence was with all English students.

During her study abroad experience and personal travel she felt accepted everywhere except in Florence. Valentina explained, "Over the years it has become a study abroad destination and more American students' study here than anywhere else. The Americans had gotten more stigma, you could feel it when you walked into local places as if we were taking over." Nothing specific said, but she felt it if she did something out of the norm. One day a bike



hit her while walking on the sidewalk and a girl yelled out and insulted her as if she had done something wrong. She elaborated, “In Florence, understand you are the foreigner, you are the outsider.” In England she did not experience culture shock and her cultural interactions had been like life at home. As a result of the trip, she realized there are so many different personalities, perspectives, and ways of living. It also left her wanting more. She appreciated the experiences and gained different perspectives on things. Being an American and in London the same time Trump was visiting the Queen was kind of a big deal. Protests transpired and the university reminded her to be safe, but she was aware of her surroundings.

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Valentina (**Figure 9**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Valentina best exemplifying her study abroad experience. The path represented her journey from London to Florence. Valentina explained, “It may be everchanging and difficult, but there is beauty in the experience.” The second photograph is a sunset in Santorini. Valentina shared, “It was amazing the whole community stopped to watch the sunset. It is important to take the time to appreciate the small things.” The third photograph is from an alpaca ride. Valentina explained, “As an outsider it is important to let go of expectations and seek some type of adventure while abroad.”



Figure 9. *The Path, Santorini Sunset, and Riding an Alpaca*  
Photo Credit: Valentina

**4.1.8: Gianna.** In an age of transition, she felt as though she was not out on her own yet. Helping others less fortunate than her and paying it forward explained how her socio-economic status has contributed to her identity. Raised Roman Catholic and attending church weekly she never realized the lack of diversity until she went to college. Ethnically Asian, but culturally American, she forgets she appears Asian until someone says something. Identifying as straight her life has been easier than others and she has not experienced any bullying. Gianna said, “Women experience inequality and minorities too, but I haven’t felt it.” Until recently she was not aware how much better off she is than most people. She is lucky and because of this blessing she is a caring person.

Adopted at the age of 2 from China she has experienced an interesting dichotomy growing up. Her mother is single and originally planned to only adopt three children but had a religious premonition and took all three daughters with her to China and adopted a fourth baby girl. Her uncles and grandfather lived with them for a time, but she did not have a father figure in

her life. She is not sure what impact it has had on her yet. She attended the same Catholic high school in Pennsylvania as her older sisters, but for college decided she did not want to follow them any longer. The typical American college experience did not happen for her. She did not make many friends, therefore after her first year she transferred out and then her mother decided to move the family to Florida.

The first thing she investigated once she enrolled in college was study abroad. She had always dreamed of travelling and wanted to get out of her comfort zone. Gianna explained, “College was the perfect time to travel since it was part vacation and part classes.” Travelling domestically prepared her for the trip, but she had never flown alone before. Her original study abroad trip to Belgium did not take place due to a lack of interest. Since she had already paid the deposit, she decided to travel with the Florence program. She was nervous about the trip because she did not know anyone, this was her first time away from home for an extended period, and in a different country. She expected a language barrier since she had no prior knowledge of Italian, but her professors spoke English. In Ireland she had no trouble with the language since most people spoke English. She participated in the one-week orientation to assimilate into the culture.

She felt accepted by her peers and professors. Gianna explained, “The director said during the summer thousands of Americans descend upon Florence for study abroad and the locals are familiar to seeing it and it does not faze them anymore.” In Ireland she had all male roommates. This was an interesting and gross experience, but she made friends with them. The area felt warm and welcoming. Overall, her interactions were like being at home since she had few encounters with locals. One moment stuck out to her. She explained, “A woman in Italy saw her and said ‘Cheena’ and gave her a funny look.” Her perceptions changed because of the trip. Gianna described, “The world speaks English. The way I talk, and dress says American, but I am

not sure how people perceive us and nothing negative happened. At the core of it we all want to be happy and loved.” Overall, she felt welcomed, embraced the cultural differences, and used them as moments of personal growth.

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Gianna (**Figure 10**). The first and largest photograph of a bilingual sign represents the photograph chosen by Gianna best exemplifying her study abroad experience. Seeing a different language signified to her she was in another country and experiencing a culture different than her own. The second photograph is a quote from the Guinness Factory. She explained, “I thought I would need a man to protect me before I studied abroad and as a woman the quote resonated with me.” This trip elevated her sense of personal growth and ability to travel on her own. The third photograph is from a wine tasting in Italy where she fell in love with Bolognese. During her first week she participated in a cultural orientation to overcome any barriers. She was able to connect with locals and learn about Italian culture.



Figure 10. *Gaelic Sign, Guinness Factory, and Bolognese*  
Photo Credit: Gianna

**4.1.9: Rose.** Throughout her childhood she moved around and is not from anywhere specific. Her family is not close, and she considers herself independent. The time in between she lived in Maryland. Growing up in the middle class she had to limit her extracurricular activities and looked for the cheaper options. Currently she views herself as agnostic and stated religion is not a major influence right now. Acknowledging her youth and not claiming a culture gives her freedom. Rose stated, “The fact I don’t have specific things I am going to do with my life I have the freedom to see what is out there.” Identifying as bisexual she believes it makes her a more open person and slightly more accepting.

Moving around prepared her to make friends quickly during her study abroad experience. Due to her father’s occupation, she lived in the Netherlands for part of her elementary and high school years and was familiar with the European lifestyle. She admitted it had felt more like being a tourist in a foreign country than living on her own, but she felt prepared. Also, she knew what cultural differences she might experience when in Germany. Identifying as White gave her privilege and traveling to Germany made it easy to blend in. Her parents lived in the Netherlands at the time of the trip and were a short distance away. She took two years of German before the trip and felt comfortable with her language proficiency as they spoke High German, the same as in her textbooks. Studying the German language, she prioritized a language immersive experience rather than another country. The expectations were high for opportunities to practice her German. She anticipated cultural misunderstandings as people might assume she was German due to her appearance. Keeping her positionality in mind she thought she might have had a unique experience if she was a different race.

Her acceptance was a part of her nationality. Rose commented, “Since I look German I have it easier, easier to be more welcoming. People all over the world laughed at Americans. A

lot of people look down on Americans.” Her peers were friendly only if she did not act out and she felt accepted by her community during her trip abroad. A few cultural encounters and expectations exposed her foreignness. For example, she wanted to help a young girl who was harassed on a bus but felt as though Germans did not want to make a scene or get involved in other people’s business. Other experiences that were different included: grocery shopping, leaving tips, payment for recycling glass, and the freedom to leave a restaurant if it was too expensive. The biggest perception change was public transportation. Rose commented, “Europe is pedestrian friendly, and the use of public transportation was highly encouraged.”

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Rose (**Figure 11**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Rose best exemplifying her study abroad experience. Her bike was integral to her lifestyle. Rose said, “The first thing I bought was a bike. Europe was much more bike friendly and safe. It was so different having a bike there instead of back home. Bike theft was insane. I replaced five tires and have had so many pieces of my bike stolen.” The second photograph is from Switzerland. She met up with a family friend who was able to show her around and access local places. She appreciated the insider perspective and once she learned about the wealth of Zurich was jealous of their lifestyle. The third photograph is from her stay at a youth hostel. Rose commented, “There is a level of trust when sleeping in a room with other people. You must be comfortable with yourself and your identity. Staying at a hostel is a great way to experience the culture.”



Figure 11. *Bikes, Switzerland, and Youth Hostel*  
*Photo Credit: Rose*

**4.1.10: Mei.** Age does not have a huge factor on her identity. She feels like every other young person her age. Mei said, “Being 22 is just being 22.” Her ethnic background plays less of a role than her age. Her industrious parents started with little but were able to move to an affluent area of Florida and provided a comfortable upbringing for her and her brother. Her parents have instilled adventure and the importance to see the world. Her socio-economic status as college educated and middle class presented more opportunities. She does not consider herself religious though raised Catholic. It does not connect her to other people, and she does not spend time thinking about religion and how it reveals her identity. Also, she has never been in a situation where she has had to analyze or think about how her sexual orientation has impacted her identity. Mei has prior experience with her identity in an Asian country because she travelled to Japan in high school with a group.

Study abroad was a challenge for her since most programs were cultural, not science based. However, since she was an honors student, there was an opportunity for a two-week trip

to China in between semesters which met the requirements and would not extend graduation. She expected to see the countryside and experience language immersion. She anticipated international encounters and had hoped to see everyday life. Mei said, “I wanted to blend in with the environment and blend in with people on their daily commute.” The language barrier was not a huge obstacle. Mei explained, “There is a lot you can do with body language, gestures, and eye contact.” She knew a few simple phrases and felt no obstacle was too big to overcome. If she had been abroad alone, she acknowledged her encounters might have been different than if travelling in a group of American students.

During her trip abroad she felt accepted by her peers and school. She knew most of the students ahead of time and their guide was friendly. Her cultural encounters abroad were different than at home. Mei shared, “Culture here seems a lot more hush hush. People are enforcing politeness and awareness of what you are saying and how you approach each other.” During her trip to China, it was not rude at all to acknowledge you were an outsider. Mei continued, “It was easier to talk about with the Chinese students as they spoke about where they were from, grew up, cultures, etc.” Her perceptions changed by gaining more knowledge and understanding of a different kind of culture. She explained, “Americans have a funny reputation abroad.” A group of European men had labeled her as an American just from walking by. Mei said, “It does impact your experience, but not sure if people would treat us necessarily any ruder or nicer.” Her impressions were Chinese people assumed everything is bigger in America and Americans are famous because of the stardom associated with television, film, and music. She was out of her comfort zone and only associated the cold with Northeastern United States. Mei said, “While flying over Russia looking out the window of the airplane, I expected to see polar



bears running across the ice and snow.” It was the furthest she had been from home and the most different landscape she had experienced.

The following collage I created from the self-curated photographs represents Mei (**Figure 12**). The first and largest photograph represents the photograph chosen by Mei best exemplifying her study abroad experience. This moment at the buffet represented an evening with new friends and cultural exchange. Mei stated, “I think the best way to relate to people is through food. When sitting down for a meal I felt like I was on the same page as the people sitting next to me. It brought us together, we weren’t divided into Chinese students and American tourists.” Besides street food, buffets, and takeout Mei could not resist trying McDonalds. She explained, “I could be in the ice cream capital of the world but still want a McFlurry. It shows we can all be the same while being in a different place. Cities are starting to look the same and McDonalds represents the growing prevalence of globalization.” Encouraged to try new food provided comfort in her unique environment. The second photograph is a Chinese Market. This market was located down an alleyway where people sold goods. This photograph represents bargaining and negotiating as a unique way of shopping. Being from Jamaica bargaining was normal, but she realized after the fact she may have overpaid for the piece of jewelry she bought. The third photograph is from the Wai-Fong Kite Flying Museum. Mei shared, “Wai-Fong is the kite flying capital of the world. This changed my perception of the city.”



Figure 12. *Buffet, Chinese Market, and Kite Flying Museum*  
Photo Credit: Mei

## 4.2: Life Abroad

A setting where an individual develops interpersonal relations, traits, resources, and activities constitute a microsystem. Traveling abroad encourages personal growth and changes an individual's worldview. Kishino and Takahashi (2019) encouraged encountering diverse people and making friends from other cultures facilitates becoming other-centered and globally minded. Sharing their experiences participants acknowledged cultural differences and characteristics of a global citizen. Santulli (2018) suggested if people travel with an open heart, an open mind, and genuinely reflect on their own experiences the possibility for the future is endless.

**4.2.1: Upbringing.** Bronfenbrenner (1995) highlighted the influence that members within a family have on each other and the reaction to events may impact the development of others amongst the same generation or future generations. The family explains how our experiences in life shape our perceptions and expectations. Families who have knowledge and live in environmental contexts with resources have a higher advantage (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994).

Most participants discussed how their family shaped their desire to travel and study abroad. Adopted at the age of 2 from China, as are her three other sisters, she has experienced an interesting dichotomy growing up because she is ethnically Asian, but culturally American. She grew up in White culture. Gianna admitted, “I kind of forget I am Asian until someone says something to me. I don’t walk around feeling like I am Asian because everything I have learned in school is American.” She attended the same Catholic high school in Pennsylvania her older sisters did and for college decided she did not want to follow them any longer. Gianna shared, “The typical American college experience did not happen for me. This was my first time living with a stranger and I didn’t make too many friends, so I transferred out after my first year and moved to Florida.” Looking back, she realized how fortunate she has been to have such an influential family. Growing up poor, Kate’s peers had more of an influence than her family. She had nothing in common with them and motivated herself to accomplish everything she wanted in life and study abroad was at the top of her list. Kate shared, “I work hard, and I am motivated. I am much more conscious of funds and budgeting.” In college most of her friends were non-White and this allowed for an easy transition to make friends in Japan. For many participants this was either their first time away from their family and or their first time traveling by themselves.

**4.2.2: Traveling Alone.** Klinginger argued traveling abroad destabilizes students’ identity when immersed in a unique environment (Naddaf et al., 2020). Whether travelling alone for the first time or not, the experience of being alone is unique. Lynette commented, “In London everyone seems to be paranoid about pickpocketing. I pretended none of those things would happen to me and I knew not to go out alone at night and to keep my purse hidden.” Similarly, Gianna’s biggest fear was being pickpocketed, but she stayed in a group and made smart decisions about when and where to go. Valentina knew her experience might be different since

she was a female foreign exchange student traveling alone. She added, “You must understand you are the foreigner; you are the outsider. There are so many risks, but I can’t live in fear. There is so much that is unknown. It is important to be comfortable traveling by yourself.” For protection Emily wore a wedding ring. Thankfully, she never felt threatened abroad. Emily realized, “I think having blond hair and blue eyes and appearing as a nice girl it was easy for people to approach me and offer help. Also, I think being White offered me some sense of security and being a woman, I was always aware of my surroundings.” She believes you should be kind to others and try to put yourself in someone else’s shoes before you judge them. Emily recognized, “I acknowledge my privilege, but I didn’t allow it to be a hindrance.” Differences in physical appearance challenge the assumptions of power and privilege.

**4.2.3: Cultural Identity.** The ability to appreciate and assimilate culturally is also another important aspect of being a global citizen. Valentina said, “A global citizen is open to acknowledge other cultures and doesn’t focus on borders. The less we emphasize borders the more globally minded someone can be.” Mei added, “A global citizen is someone who has an understanding and appreciation extending across borders.” Hunter and Austin (2020) argued exposure to a different culture provides a tool to humanize foreigners. Culture represents syncretism of backgrounds, beliefs, and histories. Palmer (2018) supported cultural assimilation because of the historical complexity of human interaction, culture can have multiple identities, boundary-crossing experiences, and match a world of growing migration and diaspora.

Transnational feminism focuses on persons who attempt to integrate multiple cultural identities (Enns et al., 2021). Lynette’s family has experienced the effects of British colonization as they migrated from India to Guyana and eventually the United States. She was born in New York and has retained parts of Hindu and Caribbean culture. This identity differs from Haiti or

the US Virgin Islands, places also sharing a Caribbean identity, but due to the different colonial histories and related intersectionality (language, ethnicity, etc.) each is unique (Enns et al., 2021). Influenced by her White upbringing she is fascinated with British history and history of empires. Seeing Shiva Nataraja in the British Museum Lynette wanted to capture the moment (**Figure 13**). Lynette explained,

“A lot of people say it is a museum of stolen goods. For instance, to this day, there is still debate between Greece and Britain regarding certain Greek pieces located in the museum. I took this picture because I felt a personal connection to the pieces of Indian culture located in the museum that had been taken from India during the height of the British empire.”

The British Museum has artifacts from all over the world resembling its global identity and the blending of cultures of conquered people. Lynette shared, “In regard to my positionality and identity I think it illustrates the Hindu side to my identity. It was how I was raised and so I naturally had a curiosity towards subjects reminding me of home.” To her Hinduism is more of a philosophy of life, a lifestyle promoting doing good. Not everyone coming from a colonized background has the same approach.

Gianna is ethnically Asian but raised by an affluent White mother. Ethnicity and class shape women’s experiences (Mitchem, 2021). She did not know what Italian views were on Asian people and was nervous about the trip. Gianna said, “I look Asian, but my identity doesn’t reflect it culturally. Being Asian and American I was afraid to be wrongly identified.” Also, she did not know anyone, this was her first time away from home for an extended period, and in a different country. To help her assimilate she participated in a one-week cultural introduction to Italian life. One day she visited an art in the park exhibit and was slightly uncomfortable and surprised by what she saw (**Figure 13**). Gianna explained, “Out of all the historical sites the program chose this modern park. Italy is a Catholic country and the nudity surprised me. I

thought it was bizarre.” Americans are modest and public nudity is abnormal. The story behind the art is unknown, but it represents a challenge of the status quo.

Mei identifies as Black and Asian and disagrees with the other participants because she does not think that being an ethnic minority factors into her identity. Mei stated, “Race and identity are just a culmination of cultures.” According to Naddaf (2016) familiarity with the culture, a sense of belonging, and family influence create a stronger heritage identity. Mei said, “I had it easy to become a global citizen because of my background and upbringing. I learned from my immigrant parents, and it influenced my personality.” Her maternal grandparents are 100% Chinese, and her parents were born in Jamaica. Mei shared, “It is such a way of thinking and a mindset with children of immigrants. I have both a Jamaican and American upbringing. A lot of my friends do not have passports, whereas I have already gone through three.” DeVault and Gross (2014) argued marginalized groups, such as immigrant women, push the boundaries of our thinking about gender, race, sexuality, and power. Mei knew she looked different from the general population in China and was the darkest student in her travel group. She explained, “You can see it. Going to a country with one main race. People flock to those with curly hair or have blue eyes. There was a fascination with someone who looked completely different, it was all about curiosity.” I think the same applied to her but instead of people she was interested in her new surroundings (**Figure 13**). Mei explained, “I was amazed by the architecture. I was not sure if people actually worshipped here but allowing people to learn about it and experience it was a great opportunity to learn something new.” The ability to recognize differences and appreciate them demonstrates the ability to adapt to new environments.

Transnational feminism supports decolonized alternatives and seeks to challenge ways how colonization has affected local communities and experiences (Enns et al., 2021). Zoey

identifies as Hispanic, specifically Cuban, but her childhood was in the Bahamas. When she lived in the Bahamas, she attended a Christian elementary school. She relocated to the United States before her sophomore year. Zoey stated, “Living in different places growing up prepared me for learning about new cultures. It fostered an environment for creativity, acceptance, and openness about cultures and their identity.” Everyone has bias, but you must be able to look beyond. Zoey elaborated, “I couldn’t imagine what it would be like if you lived in one place and then travelled abroad.” Her cultural heritage encouraged global citizenship. Aelin too identifies as Hispanic, specifically Cuban. Her heritage plays a significant role in her identity because it explains how she speaks, her hand gestures, and her culture. Aelin said, “We always had enough money for vacations, but our travel was limited, and we were always forced to prioritize our needs over our wants.” Associating with fellow global citizens promoted and encouraged acceptance regardless of borders. Living in multiple countries, especially those with similar cultural environments, established an easier connection.

Being an ethnic minority may create a unique experience (Goldoni, 2017). Dawn identifies as Pakistani. Wearing modest clothing in a hot humid climate, such as Panama, and following a strict Muslim diet in a foreign country created obstacles for her when she was away from home. Also praying five times a day was difficult with the mandated busy schedule of the study abroad trip. Knowing her ethnicity shaped her experience she maintained a positive outlook. She explained, “The more I travel the more experiences add to what I know about the world.” Just because someone is a minority does not mean it is a setback. Traveling alone and embracing cultures different than your own impact your sociocultural identity. Struggling with language can add to the challenges of traveling abroad.



Figure 13. *Shiva Nataraja, Art in the Park, and Temple*  
Photo Credit: Lynette, Gianna, and Mei

**4.2.4: Language Acquisition.** Having knowledge of the local language ensured a smoother transition and greater acceptance in a unique environment. Shimmi and Ouchi (2013) explained how the proximal processes of learning abroad presented an opportunity to learn how to assimilate within another environment and learning a new language. Neff and Apple (2020) argued demonstrating language acquisition increased intercultural competence and exhibited respect for the local culture. Kate had prior knowledge of the Japanese language. She thought studying in the countryside with a reputable school provided more opportunities for direct application of her language ability. Kate said, “The only thing to do was to make friends and talk to people.” To her surprise learning firsthand provided more of a culture shock. Kate said, “The biggest cultural challenge I experienced was Japanese language and culture was indirect and I was constantly reading between the lines or taking miniscule gestures to have great meaning.” Her interactions abroad taught her valuable lessons about people and relationships:



“Japanese friendship is like a set of stairs and American friendship is like a ladder. You can climb to the top of the ladder quickly, but with the stairs you must take things slowly one step at a time, no matter how much you get along initially. This has had a positive impact on setting boundaries and being more careful with whom [she] spends time with and trusts.”

Similarly, Rose studied German for two years prior to her trip. Rose said, “I wanted the language immersion more than going to a far-off country.” Previously living in Europe, she was familiar with the lifestyle and the cultural differences she might experience in Germany. Rose admitted, “It had felt more like being a tourist in a foreign country than actually living on my own, but I felt prepared and had high expectations to practice my German.” Language should not be a deterrent for travel abroad as most people can speak English.

Lynette knew she would not have a language barrier in England but was not prepared for her weekend excursions. When she visited France and Italy, she encountered different responses to English. Lynette explained, “I lived in hostels for two weeks in Paris and needed to buy shampoo and conditioner. The lady at the store spoke to me in a different language the whole time and people were pretty rude about it, but I managed to get through it.” During her stay in Italy someone tapped her on the shoulder thinking she spoke the language, but then she said English and they switched immediately. She was impressed by their bilingual ability. Other cultures and languages are excluded at home, but abroad most people can accommodate and speak English. She now realizes how much minorities face discrimination. Lynette said, “In my experience it’s not that people are more respectful because I was a foreigner. I think it seems people are more accepting of other cultures in most places compared to where I am from in the States. So, it is not only towards tourists. Of course, this depends on where you go and, to the extent, how much nationalism is present. Based on my experience the US does not tend to be as accepting. Personally, I did not realize how often people accommodate us and our culture/mannerisms, such as widely learning English as a second language, until I saw it firsthand abroad.”

Living in another country has its challenges and language is only one piece of the puzzle. Also, living in a unique environment can either strengthen or weaken perceptions of your own culture.

**4.2.5: Amenities.** Living in a different country can expose perceptions of a comfortable life. The participants had certain expectations of what amenities would be available and how changes in resources would affect their daily routine. Rose was surprised she did not have access to a washer and dryer (**Figure 14**). She shared, “Americans are considered prude. At first, I hung my underwear in my room for some privacy, but then at one point I stopped caring and left it out in public.” Having these resources is a privilege and it shapes expectations of privacy, modesty, and comfort level. Emily on the other hand was lucky. She had a television, air conditioning, and a mini refrigerator in her room (**Figure 14**). She explained, “I was not expecting power and electricity. The air conditioning was only in the guest rooms. I think the purpose was to make the house more accommodating for visitors.” One problem she did encounter was the inability to drink the water. Emily shared, “The mom would boil water for me and then put the bottles in the fridge signaling they were safe to drink. Also, I used the water to brush my teeth.” Not everyone had the same amenities and Emily felt privileged. Besides getting accustomed to resources inside the home, there was a change in scenery outdoors. All participants traveled from Florida and are accustomed to sandy beaches and warm weather. Several participants had never seen a pebble or rocky beach (**Figure 14**). Also, they were not prepared for the wintry weather. On the other hand, several participants embraced the change in climate and experienced new outdoor activities.



Figure 14. *Laundry, Guest Room, and Pebble Beach.*  
*Photo Credit: Rose, Emily, and Lynette*

**4.2.6: Activities.** Experiencing nature was one way the participants embraced their unique environment. There is power in the appreciation of nature. With power comes responsibility. It is important to travel with a conservation mentality and preserve nature when possible. Travelling during the weekends and taking a break from studying most participants took a breath of fresh air and went for a hike. Lynette took the opportunity to hike in the Alps (**Figure 15**). Lynette shared, “It was such a humbling experience to see what the earth has created. It puts into perspective human-made versus what is inherent to nature.” Zoey took on the challenge of hiking a mountain in Canada (**Figure 15**). This experience shaped her identity and provided meaning to her trip. Zoey expressed, “This was a hard day, the most physical taxing, but glad I decided to climb the mountain and had the ability to try something new.” It was not her favorite part of the day, but she was thankful for the experience. Rose appreciated the opportunities to be in touch with nature and created fond memories (**Figure 15**). Rose explained, “Hiking in Germany was a new experience because there are vast woods, and the trails are more

accessible. There are bathrooms and paved trails making it easier for anyone to experience.” She mentioned this trail was located near a nursing home. Providing opportunities for people of all ages to experience nature increases accessibility and availability of resources. This can encourage people all over the world to support preservation and conservation efforts. It is one of the responsibilities of a global citizen to protect the environment. How people interact with different environments shapes their sociocultural identity.

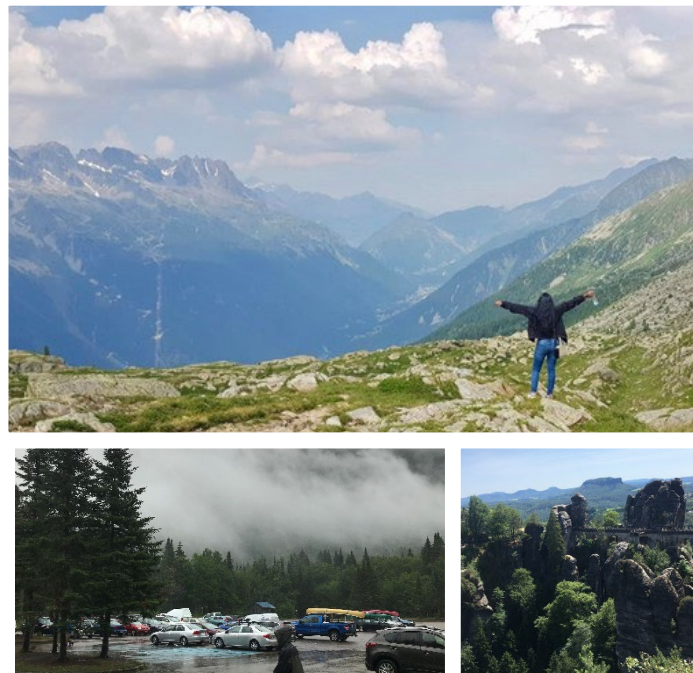


Figure 15. *Alps, Mountain Climbing, and Painter’s Way*  
Photo Credit: Lynette, Zoey, and Rose

### 4.3: Global Interactions

As two microsystems overlap and interact new experiences occur. The mesosystem represents how the individual adapts and transforms within the unique environment. Open-minded people have more opportunities to create a variety of connections and are more calculated when it comes to decisions (Nonis et al., 2020). Kate added, “Someone who is able to take them out of themselves and out of their own perceptions, mindset, and cultural biases is a

global citizen.” One way to promote an open mindset is to provide students with out of the ordinary experiences causing a shift from a local perspective to a more global perspective (Nonis et al., 2020). Shifting perspectives requires being inquisitive and interacting with others. Rose shared, “A global citizen is actively interested in meeting other people and learning.” Aelin commented, “A global citizen is someone who fits in everywhere and can interact with others.” Underhill (2019) supported these ideas by explaining the need for knowledge production and the ability to relate to someone by producing a consensus of understanding. Also, McCloskey stated, having the ability to evaluate both sides of an argument is importance because contradicting thoughts enables critical awareness (Underhill, 2019).

**4.3.1: School.** Educational settings and the influence from professors and colleagues shape our perceptions. After Kate arrived in Japan and joined the Kanto Club she became well known around campus. The largest festival in the Akita Prefecture, Kanto Matsuri, is known for honoring the *kami* for a good harvest. She had the opportunity to perform at the AIU Festival and invited her friends to come and support her. This festival is open to the community and displays the skills of the Kanto Club from school. Describing the performance, Kate explained, “The poles and lanterns sway in the wind looking like a stalk of rice. During this Shinto festival the *kami* not only brings fertility to the crops, but for women as well.” For this reason, to avoid the curse of infertility women cannot touch the poles or even walk under them. Therefore, only the men hold the lanterns (**Figure 16**). Kate explained, “This is a challenging task as the pole weighs about 80 pounds and rests on the hip. In the other hand the men must hold a fan.” The musical performers, some who were women, are not in the photographs. Kate described this moment as visually impressive. She elaborated, “This picture explains the moment before the bamboo could have broken and the crowd was being moved back.” The people in the club were panicking about

disqualification while the crowd enjoyed the views. This picture is a notable example of how images can be misleading and how an alternative truth provides another version of the story.

Naddaf (2016) argued when participants identify with another culture personal growth and changes in perceptions occur. Due to Lynette's historical connection to the British Empire, she clearly understood the social identity and position of London in the global order. Lynette explained, "While visiting Kensington Palace, where Queen Victoria grew up, I was amazed and felt like a commoner. She created an empire across seas and oceans, a mark of globalization, and yet her home is open to everyone." As people migrate and bring their traditions with them this palace stands as a monument that people from all over the world visit. Her perceptions changed as she sought after bona fide opportunities. Lynette said, "Traveling and trying authentic places gives me the opportunity to interact with new people and get out of my little circle." Changes in perception alter our identity of other cultures. Taking a phenomenology class influenced her perspective and expectations of her experience. Lynette's professor told them they were going to Cambridge. She expected to get off the train and see this stunning institution. Instead, she saw a cow pasture (**Figure 16**). Lynette explained,

"We thought we were going to a world-famous university. We arrived at the station and didn't immediately go to the town or see a university building. We took the most off beaten path just talking and walking through pastures with cows. My professor wanted to frame it differently. I wasn't expecting this. I felt like I was in the middle of the countryside, and it gave me an entirely different perspective."

Her impression of Cambridge was different due to the presentation and interaction with the environment. Lynette explained, "This showed how ignorance and expectations can influence a person. I was excited for this part, but I got something better. Universities across the world seem so private, but when you frame it next to the countryside it brings them down to earth."

Challenging our assumptions and changing the status quo can have a profound impact on the future.

Another assumption for a college student was to find a quiet place to study. Unfortunately for Valentina quiet study spots were far and few between. England, well-known for pubs, was not the most conducive study environments. Valentina explained, “It was almost a thing to just study in a pub, especially in London.” Thankfully in Florence this college pub was just for foreign exchange students (**Figure 16**). She said, “I enjoyed studying here because there were school writings all over the walls and it was a place to leave an imprint. The Wi-Fi went down in both countries I visited so it was hard to find places to study after a certain time of day.” This pub was the most convenient adjustment to her unique environment. A quiet place was not the only challenge to life in new country. Learning in a unique environment can also present a challenge.



Figure 16. *AIU Festival, Path to Cambridge, and Study Spot*  
Photo Credit: *Kate, Lynette, and Valentina*

#### **4.3.2: Learning Experience.** Learning from someone else can alter perspectives.

Firsthand learning provides an authentic opportunity for research. These experiences enhance students global view and add to knowledge production. As an archaeological student Aelin had the opportunity to explore a grave site. She shared, “Working at the grave site we were able to measure how deep the bones were buried. This determined when the person was buried and provide more information about the community.” They were interested in the preservation of the bones and replaced the dirt to ensure conservation of the land took place. Getting field experience at a grave site enhanced her understanding of archeology and aided in her knowledge production for her program of study. Participating in firsthand activities can enhance learning. Mei had the opportunity to gain experience how to write calligraphy (**Figure 17**). Learning how to write from a Chinese professor ensured proper placement of the characters and symbols. Mei commented, “I love learning new things, but I had no natural ability. The professor was not easy on us. She came over and asked me to correct my mistakes.” She was envious of the other students who had caught on faster and of those who had previous Chinese language experiences. Valentina too was envious of others who had prior experience with fashion. The final assignment for her fashion class was to design a dress and she was way behind schedule (**Figure 17**). Valentina shared, “It wasn’t something I planned to do. I told myself don’t give up on yourself. Don’t give up on yourself, the culture, and the people. Keep trying and keep learning.” Valentina was the only student in the class who was not a fashion major and was proud of herself for finishing the dress in time. Valentina appreciated every course and professor who emphasized the importance of challenges. Most of her classes encouraged travelling outside the walls of the classroom and to work with peers.





Figure 17. *Grave Site, Calligraphy, and The Dress*  
 Photo Credit: Aelin, Mei, and Valentina

**4.3.3: Peers.** Peer groups play a significant role in influencing our life experiences.

Taylor and Ali (2017) argued meeting new peers (microsystem) allowed for new knowledge and adjustment into a new culture (macrosystem). Bronfenbrenner stated those closest to the person have the most immediate influence and the quality and strength of these interactions has significant developmental influence on the individual (Taylor & Ali, 2017). The people you surround yourself with, whether ethnically similar or not, influence your experience.

The easiest way for Mei to make friends and spend her time with them was through food. Mei explained, “Food is one of the best ways to bring people together. My roommate and I ordered take out all of the time, which I learned is popular in China.” Mei was not afraid to try new foods, even with warnings to avoid street food (**Figure 18**). She said, “I weighed the pros and cons and decided to be adventurous. Only a few people were brave enough to try it.” I shared with Mei that I try to be brave as well, but I only eat what my Asian friends recommend. Having the influence of our peers encourages decisions to be spontaneous and adventurous. Valentina

explained during her trip abroad she felt compelled to try new activities with her new friends. After a long day of hiking, she rewarded herself with a refreshing jump off a cliff into the sea (**Figure 18**). She explained, “As a young adult I wanted to embrace the people I met, the things I experienced, and embrace the adventure. I didn’t anticipate cliff jumping. The trip itself was unplanned. It is okay to step into the unknown and trust yourself and not give into fear.” By letting her friends take the lead she was able to have a once in a lifetime experience. Another life altering experience was meeting someone who you can have a close relationship with. During her trip abroad Rose met a boy who eventually became her boyfriend. Due to his influence and availability to drive her around she was able to get involved in the community. She joined a local band (**Figure 18**). Rose explained, “They allowed me to join because they thought I was a new girl in town because I looked German. I had it easier and the fact I am White gave me a lot of privilege. I had previous experience playing the Saxophone and played in several festivals.” Keeping her positionality in mind she thought it might have been more difficult to get involved in the community if she was a different ethnicity and did not have a local boyfriend. Her connections made for an easier transition to local life. Living in a new place and not having access to transportation can limit the experience. Also, living with new people can influence daily interactions with peers and the community.



Figure 18. *Street Food, Cliff Jumping, and Local Band*  
*Photo Credits: Mei, Valentina, and Rose*

**4.3.5: Living Arrangements.** The setting of study abroad reflects a shift in an individual's environment. This includes housing, routine, daily exchanges with others, and the larger cultural society (Shimmi & Ouchi, 2013). Most participants either stayed in a dorm or an apartment. One participant completed a homestay, and another stayed in various hotels. Gianna lived in an apartment in a second story building when she lived in Florence. She said, "The whole building was designated for study abroad students and apartment living is common here. America seems to be the only place with planned communities." The living arrangements provided magnificent views and a feeling for what it was like to live in a small city. During her stay in Florence, Valentina lived in an apartment (**Figure 19**). She shared, "As a foreigner in a new place I made it my home. At the end of the street was a school. I would see the kids coming out and parents picking them up. I was able to understand the way of life and found the small pleasures in the little routines of the city." She embraced the curiosity of being a traveler but felt secure. During her stay in London, Valentina stayed in a dorm room. She had a bed, chair, and

small dresser. She shared a bathroom and kitchen with other students. Living in a foreign country forced a new routine in a unique environment. Valentina explained, “We are all the same species regardless of where we are living. We have the same motivations, drives, and goals to be happy and healthy.” On the other hand, living in a hotel provided a unique experience. Mei noticed the program spared no expense for where she stayed (**Figure 19**). She explained, “It provided a level of comfort staying in a familiar accommodation on the same floor. But I might have had a different experience if I would have stayed in a dorm or with a host family.”

Participating in a homestay made the trip more comfortable and genuine. Torii et al. (2020) argued homestays provide a quest for cultural authenticity seeking the true experience of the local culture. Emily stayed with a host family in Cuba and formed a tighter relationship with the family and was quickly able to adapt (**Figure 19**). She said, “It became my home and the parents treated us like their own kids. They cooked beautiful and delicious meals, they spoke with us, taught us Spanish, and asked us how our day went.” Emily saw her own parents reflected in them. Emily shared, “People are more friendly than you think, willing to get to know each other, and willing to interact with us.” A homestay provided an experience quite different than staying with peers or complete strangers. She was able to learn more about Cuban politics and economic differences. Emily explained, “Everyone in Cuba is provided a book, like food stamps, and it demonstrated how food was rationed. It explained the number of items a family could obtain each week. Eggs, milk, and flour were hot commodities.” Everyone relied on this book, and everyone tried their best to provide for their family. Emily elaborated, “With how important this book was I was surprised it was made of paper and not laminated or anything. Everyone knows exactly where their book is located, and it was important not to lose it.” One day Emily shared she saw three or four broken eggs on the ground and felt bad for the person

because she had learned those commodities were not easy to come by. Equalizing availability to resources and providing a community resource can improve social change.



Figure 19. *Apartment, Hotel Lobby, and Homestay*  
Photo Credit: *Valentina, Mei, and Emily*

**4.3.5: Community Involvement.** To prepare for a critical global future, cross-cultural interactions should become more commonplace. Helping within the community provides an opportunity to gain an authentic experience and address social inequalities. Socioeconomic backgrounds can lead to a wide range of transnational intersectionalities (Enns et al., 2021). Due to her low-income background Kate connected to the struggles of local rice farmers (**Figure 20**). Kate explained, “Something like farming is so basic for human nature and society and no one does it anymore. The government controls the distribution and price of rice. It is a hard way to live and is also hot and stinky.” This multigenerational farm is at the mercy of the government. The government decides where to allocate funds. A club existed to encourage community involvement and help local farmers. Kate explained, “If I had stayed the whole year, I would have been able to go back and help with the harvest. This was such a rare experience, but the sad

truth is it shouldn't be. Green tourism should be more commonplace." Encouraging others to create similar clubs or obtain similar experiences can benefit the future of sustainable resources.

Houston and Lange (2018) encouraged internships and projects to destabilize normative categories such as us/them, real world/campus, and resourced/impoverished to achieve integrative learning. As an archeology student, Aelin ensured the preservation of a community's past and helped others understand the importance of safeguarding history. For the dig, a quadrant was allocated to Aelin. Her quadrant was in the sun making it easy to dust things out (**Figure 20**). Aelin said, "We excavated from the top down. It is important to follow procedures because it told how the bones were laid out, how big the room was, and about the community. Also, it is important to respect the remains, preserve the history, and tell their story." When the dig is over, they count all the bones and try to determine how many people lived there. The bones were either placed back in the ground or displayed in a local museum. By community involvement, not one-time volunteering, long lasting changes could support critical global citizenship.

A global/local relationship resists the power imbalances and encourages on-going community engagement (Houston & Lange, 2018). Rose participated in several workaways during study abroad. She explained, "A workaway was an opportunity to help people with work and then in return get free room and board." Workaways provided an opportunity to help in the community and encouraged cultural exchange. Rose fed goats at a farm, created bathrooms for a concert venue, and painted outdoor cracks of a house (**Figure 20**). Rose shared, "It was a cool thing to do, and the people were welcoming." Participating in workaways allowed her a cheaper way to travel and demonstrated her trust in others. It took confidence to stay with strangers and demanding work, but she was able to save money and obtained a unique experience by travelling in this manner. Overall, the participants attempted to get involved in the community, but due to



restrictions such as time and an ongoing relationship, a long-term commitment was not possible. In the future, providing students with more meaningful multicultural encounters can improve intercultural communication (Palmer, 2018). Programs could establish partnerships and relationships promoting changes within the community. Evaluating such changes would need to take place on a global level.



Figure 20. *Rice Planting, Dig Site, and Workaway*  
Photo Credit: *Kate, Aelin, and Rose*

#### **4.4: Global Community**

The exosystem indirectly impacts the participant through policy making and societal structures. Promoting change requires developing the capacity to face and embrace complexities necessary for a critical approach to global citizenship (Bosio, 2021). Laws, institutions, local politics, and social services have an impact on their community and shape the experiences of individuals.

**4.4.1: Transportation.** Most participants support ecotourism and the promotion of using ecofriendly transportation. From her study abroad trip Dawn learned of Panama's importance of infrastructure and transportation and its connection to the global world. The boat ride to an Indigenous tribe allowed her a glimpse into the duality of Panama (**Figure 21**). Dawn explained, "I felt privileged to visit a rural village and witness a culture different than my own. Transportation looks different everywhere and everyone does things their own way depending on their environment." The availability of resources determines the ability to navigate one's environment. Learning how to navigate in a new city can be a challenge. Mei explained, "Trying to read the bus schedule in Chinese was quite difficult. I had some trouble traveling and adjusting to life in a busy city." Wishing for more efficient ways to get around she snapped a photograph of a motorcycle, the locals' preferred method of transportation (**Figure 21**). Having the flexibility to use a bicycle or walking is the most ecofriendly, but due to time constraints and the unfamiliarity of a new place those transportation options were not feasible for Mei. Europe on the other hand is more pedestrian friendly. Emily appreciated the added charm of European streets and how clean they were (**Figure 21**). She discussed, "Europe was walkable, bikeable, I didn't need a car to get around. Walking and biking should be possible globally. I wish we were less reliable on cars in the United States." These examples speak to the possibilities of conservation and preservation efforts and the importance of ecofriendly tourism.





Figure 21. *Boat Ride, Motorcycles, and Street*  
 Photo Credit: Dawn, Mei, and Emily

**4.4.2: Urban Greenspace.** Questioning assumptions legitimizes the unequal distribution of power and limits the ability for social change (Giroux, 2021). Educating people on global issues can help address systemic difficulties that oppress people everywhere in the world. Valentina suggested, “When being critical I try to analyze how interconnected problems are and how environmental problems are connected to social inequality.” Having an urban greenspace can provide an essential mental health break or added environmental benefits. Lynette explained, “London is a huge city with iconic monuments, yet the parks and green spaces are amazingly well kept. It provides an escape for people. Nature and flowers represent beauty in all cultures.” London charms people from every place around the world because it can balance history and modernity while preserving nature. Lynette said, “The Tower of London is representative of British Culture. Originally this was a place for prisoners and commoners weren’t allowed.” Now visitors can appreciate the beautiful grounds as well as the jewelry stored inside (**Figure 22**). Another place with a dual identity is Panama. Panama has a busy industrial and trade identity as

well as the identity of the canal and the environment (**Figure 22**). Dawn explained, “The natural beauty of the greenery and the water shows the potential for Panama. This is what the whole country can look like with preservation. Unfortunately, this is what gets destroyed during human settlement.” Witnessing nature and urban green spaces can relieve stress and restore energy.

Falling into the routines of everyday life people forget to go outside. Emily explained, “Living in a fast-paced society and pressure to be the best and make history we forget to enjoy life and the outdoors. Globally we should respect more time off because it is important to take care of our mental health and not just moving up the social ladder.” When touring London Emily stumbled upon this green field (**Figure 22**). Emily shared, “It was serene. Everything got quiet. It was a hidden gem and a moment away from the hustle and bustle to just relax.” Places such as these are not on any tourist destination list, but they are essential. She elaborated, “It is important for every city to have a green space as it is important for our mental health, spiritual health, and physical health.” Lifestyle choices are not the same worldwide, but it should not negate the possibility of access to resources. Both locally and globally taking care of the environment can improve quality of life.



Figure 22. *Tower of London, Nature, and Green Field*  
Photo Credit: Lynette, Dawn, and Emily

**4.4.3: Social Inequalities.** Global citizenship is a worldwide phenomenon, and it crosses borders and aligns with transnational feminism. Social inequalities exist within broader systems of oppression and around the world (Alviar-Martin & Baildon, 2021). Gianna met a girl from Saudi Arabia. Gianna shared, “I wanted to hear her thoughts and was open to what she had to say because I don’t know anything about her culture and didn’t want to make assumptions based upon American ideals.” She informed me her friend from Saudi Arabia just got the right to drive two years ago. Gianna explained, “In first world countries equality between gender is a normal conversation. I learned [elsewhere] there are many restrictions prohibiting women from having any freedoms.” To address social inequalities a more critical approach can improve global citizenship.

Alviar-Martin and Baildon (2021) encouraged dialogue to display empathy for others and understanding their perspective can address social inequalities. Along the train ride the natural beauty of Panama and trash is everywhere (**Figure 23**). Dawn commented, “As an outsider the

poverty and debris made me feel sad.” Dawn felt this is a global problem and yet there are no reforms or movements to keep the countryside clean. Working together to solve local problems in turn addresses global problems. Emily, a Public Health major, was surprised by the lack of necessities she witnessed during her visit to Cuba. While visiting patients in an impoverished section of town a man was so happy to see an American, he gave her an apple. It made her more appreciative of her status from the United States. Emily said, “There were many exposed wires and the need for water storage. Cuba once was a globally fascinating top-notch area and now it has slowly deteriorated over time. It hasn’t progressed the way it should have.” They do not have access to fresh running water and there might be electricity problems (**Figure 23**). Another social inequality witnessed was the state of the medical files (**Figure 23**). The basis for her program was to compare the health care system to the United States. She was surprised by the lack of digitalized files. Emily mentioned, “The family doctor has been in the neighborhood forever and knows everyone’s medical history. The records looked chaotic, but at the same time other countries can look at Cuba for how their doctors work in the community.” Social inequalities can refer to more than the availability of resources, such as long-term food sources.



Figure 23. *Trash, Exposed Wires, and Medical Files*  
Photo Credit: Dawn and Emily

**4.4.4 Sustainability.** The availability of food or food culture reflects political or economic dimensions that seem irrelevant, but during dining experiences it can challenge cultural inaccuracies (Torri et al, 2020). As a vegetarian or vegan, it can be challenging to find dietary accommodations. Rose was excited to see vegan options in Germany such as the Vegan Döner and the Insekten Burger (**Figure 24**). She said, “We don’t have insect burgers in the United States, this is incredibly progressive and is helping to protect the climate. This is more ecofriendly than meat sources and a possible future meat replacement.” There must be a demand since grocery stores are selling them. Everyone lives a different lifestyle, and they do things their own way depending on the environment. Dawn visited an indigenous village during her trip to Panama and was surprised at their environmental sustainability. The food appeared in a bowl made from local plants and consisted of fried plantains and locally caught fish (**Figure 24**). She shared, “They took pride in their food presentation and ensured nothing used would pollute the environment.” Utilizing natural resources and ensuring sustainable food sources provides for the

future needs of the community. The timing of exposure to new environments may influence personal growth. Trends in food culture may reflect the age of the participants.



Figure 24. *Vegan Döner, Insekten Burger, and Village Food*  
*Photo Credit: Rose and Dawn*

#### 4.5: Time Abroad

The chronosystem represents the life stage and the historical representation of time. Also, the age at the time of study abroad and the context of the year influenced their experiences.

Regarding heteronormative identity the youthful participants are in a stage allowing for freedom and adventure since they are not married and do not have any children. Also, as globalization is on the rise and global citizenship education is becoming more prevalent the participants were more aware of attributes of global citizenship. Anyone can become a global citizen including people from all backgrounds. Gianna commented, “A global citizen is someone who does not have preconceived notions about people, doesn’t stereotype, and someone who just understands the world is different and these differences are good.” Kate added, “Anyone from any religion, cultural background, or country has the potential to be a global citizen. You need a mixture of



grit and flexibility.” Dawn continued, “Everyone is the same in some aspect, raised differently, but aware of our differences and expects a sense of unity.” Houston and Lange (2018) argued understanding one’s own positionality and perspective disrupts assumptions about “others” and strives for a more just and peaceful future.

**4.5.1: Life Stage.** Time as a historical context and life stage are crucial factors when studying abroad (Shimmi, 2013). Most participants are currently 22, an age of transition, yet representative of the youth. Lynette felt connected to British youth culture during a street walking tour of London (**Figure 25**). Lynette explained,

“I was able to see the rebel culture of London and the street art was beautiful. This is the voice of the youth. Through generations, always this struggle between older and younger mindset exists. It is interesting to see the power and expression of the youth. Even when they don’t have power, take power, and show what they stand for even if it’s a different mindset. I really respect that.”

Art and other mediums have powerful messages but may go unnoticed. It is important to look around and learn about something new. Rose took advantage of her position of living abroad and was able to complete an internship at a seal center one summer. Rose commented, “It was in the middle of nowhere. It was a cool place to meet new people, help seals, and rehabilitate them. The demand was surprisingly high, and I was privileged to come to Europe for an unpaid internship.” Since her family lived in the Netherlands it was cheaper for her to complete the internship than pay rent in Florida. Most of the people were not Dutch. The friendships Rose made were so strong after her internship she returned to the seal center to visit and check in on the seals. Due to her age and life stage, she was able to benefit from the experience of being abroad. Valentina was excited to explore a new place. She commented, “It is important to be comfortable traveling by yourself and a choice not everyone would enjoy. This allowed me to be more open and interact with locals and traditions. It displayed my personal drive.” College age students are impressionable and at a pivotal point in their development to act and form their own identity.

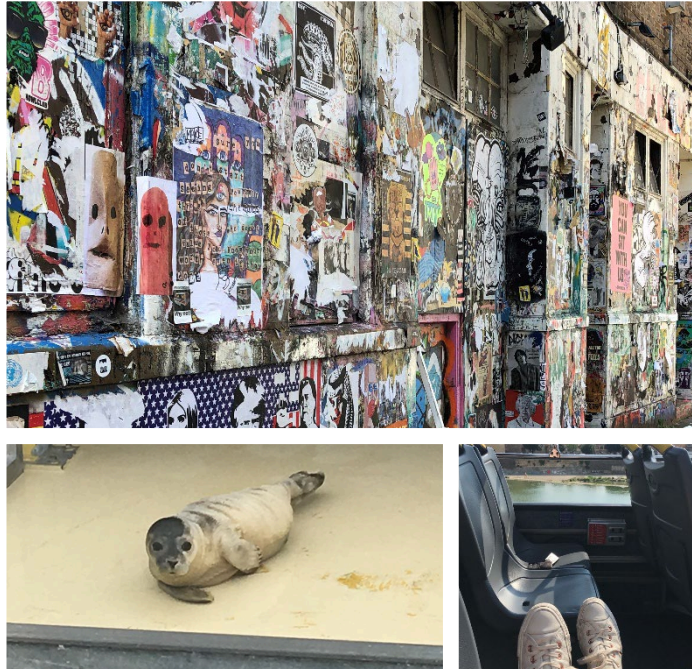


Figure 25. *Graffiti, Seal Center, and Exploration*  
Photo Credit: *Lynette, Rose, and Valentina*

Demetriou et al. (2017) argued at the age when a student goes to college, most likely they will take on new roles and responsibilities associated with the location and culture of college. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined developmental roles as a set responsibilities and actions expected from an individual within a particular culture. Graduating on time was important, but Zoey needed an adventure before college was over. She had the option of taking a one-week summer class in Canada and seized the opportunity all the while having little expectations. Before the trip Valentina thought the less expectations the better. She commented, “Sometimes the best happens when you least plan them.” Also, she was open to new styles of learning. Valentina explained, “Having the classroom outside and exploring the cities showed me how much I could learn. If you are not here to learn, not here to gain more, than you don’t experience it the same.” College was the perfect time for her to travel. Valentina said, “There is no other time in your life when you can travel with your classmates, and I wanted some independence. I wanted to force myself to grow and get out of my comfort zone.” Travelling during college age years allows the



opportunity to study in a different environment. Acknowledging their youth and desire for growth, all participants capitalized on the option to study abroad while attending college.

**4.5.2: Length of Study.** All participants decided to study abroad, but they chose programs with different lengths of time. Encouraging professors (microsystem) and the study abroad office (exosystem) complements the adjustment needed for a unique environment (macrosystem) during study abroad (Shimmi & Ouchi, 2013). Specific college programs and supportive professors influenced the decision of study abroad location and expectations of the trip. Rose travelled to Germany as recommended by the German department at school. It is an affordable location for students and she wanted to travel to a smaller German town with less native English speakers. Since she only took a few classes, she had time to travel on the weekends and visited various parts of Germany. During one of her weekend excursions, she discovered Barefoot Park (**Figure 26**). Rose explained, “The park was relaxed and chill and represented an authentic Dutch experience. It is good for your health to walk barefoot, and the park had different textures to explore, such as mud.” Even though she had a wonderful experience staying for an entire semester she wished she would have done a homestay or made more German friends. Having less time to participate in a program can put restraints on the experience.

Having only a month or two allowed for a little less opportunity to get involved in the community and experience the local life. Lynette was fortunate to have travelled abroad so a shorter program had less of an impact on her. She had longed to return to England since visiting family during elementary school. The Honors College required a global experience. Lynette shared, “I wanted to go somewhere where I would be comfortable.” Prior to the trip she did not have any expectations. Lynette explained, “I didn’t have much time to think about the trip as I

was preparing for finals and packed the night before.” Aelin, a Biology and Anthropology Major, jumped at the chance to dig at an archeological site. Her professors were supportive, and the course counted towards the degree requirements. She thought the trip would be hectic yet structured, but it was freeing and fun. In her spare time, she was able to witness a local car racing event (**Figure 26**). Aelin said, “I wanted to integrate with the locals and connect with others. Also, the event was free, and all the cars had big sponsors. I enjoyed cheering with Hungarian people and surprisingly there was a big crowd.” College is a time to explore and try new things, but some people have less availability for lengthy trips.

For Emily, the Health Science department offered classes in Cuba counting towards her degree program. Before she left for Cuba, she was unsure of what to expect as she had no preconceived notions but had completed the Global Citizens Project. Upon her return she earned a scholarship allowing her to travel to London and Paris for an internship. Due to her brief time abroad, she was able to learn about the culture, take in sights, and had the opportunity to meet up with her mom (**Figure 26**). Emily explained, “This was my favorite day. We didn’t have any set plans. A man was playing an accordion, I enjoyed a typical Parisian meal, and spent time with my mom. Good food, good music, and good company.” What more could she have asked for? The memories created during study abroad provided a sense of nostalgia.

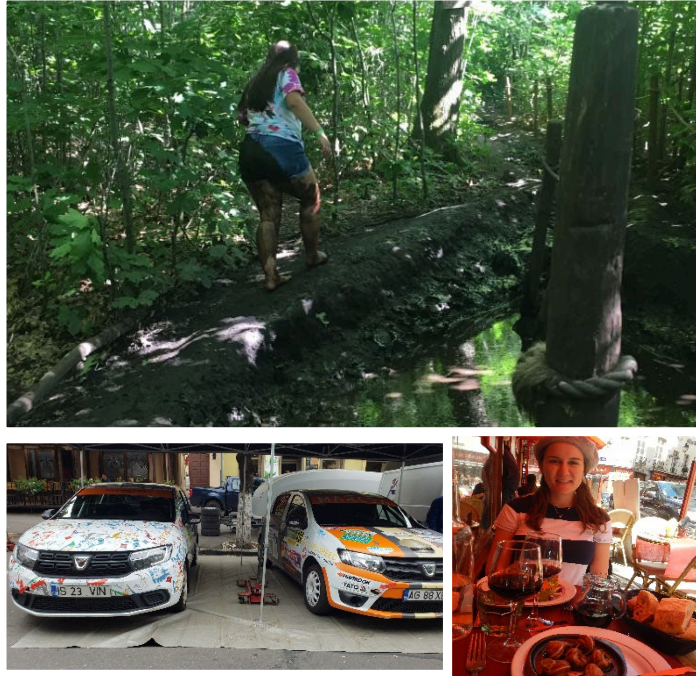


Figure 26. *Barefoot Park, Car Racing Event, and Long Lunch*  
Photo Credit: *Rose, Aelin, and Emily*

**4.5.3: Nostalgia.** Pictures can evoke feelings and remind people of the past. Besides photographs most people collect a souvenir to remind themselves of their travels. At the end of the dig Aelin cut the string from her assigned quadrant (**Figure 27**). Aelin explained, “This was the section of the dig I was responsible for excavating and I still have the string. I do not collect touristy souvenirs, but actual things reminding me of why I was there, and it grounds my memory.” The tally marks on her hand represent the number of teeth she found during the dig. These memories provided a feeling of accomplishment and happiness. Any number of items can be a souvenir.

Souvenirs can serve as a reminder of the moment a person realizes they are in another country. An easy souvenir most people still have at the end of the trip is a nation’s currency. Zoey mentioned, “I keep money from everywhere I’ve been. It reminds me of the place and represents a good time.” I shared with Zoey I also keep money from my travels. I enjoy the visual appearance of foreign currency and sometimes I kept the money because it was too small

of an amount to spend before I left. Also, currency is usually an indicator you are not at home (Figure 27). Zoey explained, “The moment I pulled this out of my wallet, I realized I was not at home anymore and on my own.” Being in a unique environment can cause feelings of uncertainty but also adventure. Having the opportunity to study at a different university and learn from an unfamiliar perspective is an unforgettable experience. This photograph represents the moment Valentina realized she was studying at another university (Figure 27). Valentina exclaimed, “They were selling merch for the university, and it really hit me. Wow I am here! I was open to working with other schools and being an international student. It is important to branch off and realize how interconnected different fields of study can be.” Wearing her Birkbeck shirt reminds her of how important it is to learn from different people.

Some people do not collect souvenirs or travel with any intentions of remembering the moment or experience. Some people only travel for the recognition, to post on social media, and or to become an influencer. This mindset is popular with American youth.



Figure 27. *String from Quadrant, Banknote, and Birkbeck*  
Photo Credit: Aelin, Zoey, and Valentina

## 4.6: American Perceptions

The macrosystem considers culture, history, social conditions, and economic system when forming an identity. Americans in general have a reputation for helping others and are wealthy when compared on a global scale. An explanation could be cultural superiority and the privilege that American culture supersedes the rest of the world (Ficarra, 2019; Xu et al., 2020). In return the participants have their own cultural perceptions of the nations they visited. There were boundaries for White Western feminism and minorities ignored and as a response transnational feminism started and women around the world no longer needed saving (Mohanty, 2003). Kate said, “We need to center the definition around interactions between individuals rather than characteristics of people. Americans have a history of *saving* other people or teaching them how to think and behave.” Ignoring local problems and local perspectives allow this behavior to continue (Mitchem, 2021). Mei added, “It is important not to emphasize an ‘us versus them’ approach.” Critical global citizenship recognizes every individual’s basic human dignity and encourages a continuous effort to build a better world (Hartman et al., 2020). Looking at the influence from colonization and how imperialism contributed to history shaped the American perceptions of other countries.

**4.6.1: British Identity.** For most of Europe the capital city represents their identity as a nation and as a culture. Some Americans experience a cultural obligation to visit certain places while traveling abroad as either part of a cultural introduction or an iconic tour of the city as a preview of local life. Lynette captured Tower Bridge at night (**Figure 28**). Lynette stated, “When you see London it is Tower Bridge. London is a global city and does a great job of highlighting its duality of history and modernity.” Due to globalization, it is easier to spread ideas and concepts throughout the world. Emily added, “Tower Bridge is a blend of old and new. It

represents tourism and transportation. British culture is represented by the red telephone booth and the red double decker bus.” This identity is due to the influence of mass media (**Figure 28**). Lynette added, “The bus is iconic, it is what Britain is known for.” Besides places and objects, food too represents national identities and associations. Food was central to cultural exchanges and ethnic heritage meals solidifying cultural norms (Torri et al., 2020). Eating together reveals information about a culture. Emily associated the red door, fish and chips, and pubs to this iconic British city (**Figure 28**). She explained, “The door was half open and enticing. I didn’t go inside, but this picture summed up London. I didn’t take a lot of the typical tourist pictures because I wanted a different perspective.” Emily was able to see main tourist attractions and learned history but hoped to have had more local interactions like her experience in Cuba. The British identity continues to modernize and capture the attention of Americans, whereas the ornate and extraordinary reputation of France amazes most visitors.



Figure 28. *Tower Bridge, Double Decker Bus, and Pub*  
Photo Credit: Lynette and Emily



**4.6.2: French Identity.** When most Americans think of France they think of Paris. Paris has a reputation for being a romantic city. Emily visited the Palace of Versailles and was amazed at the details found throughout the grounds (**Figure 29**). She explained, “Everything in Paris genuinely had thought behind it. It reminded me to take a moment to enjoy the extravagance.” Since she spent more time in tourist locations her overall perceptions of the city were different (**Figure 29**). Emily explained, “The flag was everywhere. They were so proud of where they came from and where they are going as a country. Old buildings, pigeons, and the flag is Paris to me.” Emily and Lynette had the opportunity to see the Eiffel Tower at night. Emily said, “Paris really comes to life at night.” Lynette explained coming from a small town she had preconceived notions of Paris and the Eiffel Tower, but when she was there in person, she felt a unique experience. Lynette exclaimed, “I was blown away! The architecture of Paris really delivers and provides a sense of national pride, and their pride is on display.” For Ireland, the food and natural scenery created more of a national identity.



Figure 29. Versailles, Paris, and Eiffel Tower  
Photo Credit: Emily and Lynette

**4.6.3: Irish Identity.** Sharing images of local culture, such as food, is an essential element of experiencing other cultures (Hunter & Austin, 2020). The food and beverages consumed express our cultural identity and have certain cultural expectations and labels. The familiarity of cuisine can influence one's experience and impact their identity (Naddaf, 2016). Ordering what the locals eat is another way to solidify cultural authenticity. Places like Ireland and England are known for fish and chips. Gianna tried it once and ordered it every time after, allowing her to feel more like a local (**Figure 30**). She explained, "We went to this restaurant specifically because they are famous for fish and chips. It was welcoming with all of the flags outside, especially the American flag, and it felt homier and more familiar than some of the other restaurants." Ireland has natural beauty and is well known for places such as Dublin. Gianna explained, "The Blarney Stone and the cliffs are just iconic places for Ireland. It was a must see, but I felt like such a tourist arriving on a huge bus." She noticed people from all over the world present. Gianna said,

"People from all over the world were at the cliffs. It was interesting to walk by and hear so many different languages. If someone wants to learn Gaelic they go to a specific island since it is no longer available in the schools anymore. I think all Americans think Irish people speak English, but really, they speak Gaelic. I think they keep it to separate them from UK."

Ireland serves up their proud heritage through traditional dishes as well as beautiful scenic landscapes. Italy too is well known for food, but the architectural accomplishments of the Roman Empire leave a stronger legacy as well as the natural beauty of the coastal towns.





Figure 30. *McDonagh's, Fish and Chips, and Cliffs of Moher*  
 Photo Credits: Gianna

**4.6.4: Italian Identity.** The Roman Empire lives on and is synonymous with Italian identity. Italians are also known for their laidback attitudes and slow pace of life. Also, due to Italy's history of city-states each city represents something new and exciting for travelers. Cinque Terra has become a more popular destination for tourists (**Figure 31**). Valentina and Gianna visited this city for its amazing hike and coastal views. Gianna explained, "It must have been an extremely expensive city to live in. The location along the coast and mountainside was breathtaking. Visiting as a tourist it is hard to remember people live here. I can't image what the transportation must be like." Italy has a unique terrain and unique system of transportation. Venice was a must see for Gianna (**Figure 31**). "Taking a Gondola ride was not cheap, but I just had to do it. I was fortunate to be able to take so many day trips and to experience Italy." Again, the capital city for European countries set the tone for the national identity. Rome not only contributes to the identity of Italy today but carries on the traditions of the Roman Empire. Lynette explained, "Rome is a city clinging to the past and makes all of its money from tourism.

It is a city of ruins with so many conservation efforts. It was unlike London because it has failed to modernize.” Most Americans associate empire with Rome. Lynette said, “It is our first exposure growing up to empire. It is our first sense of global unity. It is an example of how people were able to maintain their own identity, but then also became part of the Roman Empire.” Italy has a deep-rooted history and a diverse collection of individual identities from each city. Eastern European countries represent more of an ethnic dichotomy and a Communist past.



Figure 31. *Cinque Terra, Venice, and Rome*  
*Photo Credit: Gianna and Lynette*

**4.6.5: Romanian Identity.** Growing up in Cuba, Aelin felt connected to Romania due to a shared Communist past. The architecture of a city can demonstrate its colonized past. Aelin explained, “You can see the Soviet influence in the buildings. The streets are small, sometimes only one way, and it reminded me of Cuba.” Most Americans think of crossing the border to be a lengthy and official process. Aelin said, “The border was a light wooden fence. The wind could knock it down.” In Romania, the border was more of a meeting place where Hungarians met up

with other Hungarians. Some Hungarians cling to the past and refuse to identify as Romanians. Aelin explained, “The signs were posted in Romanian and Hungarian, but most people were frustrated if you spoke to them in Romanian because they considered themselves Hungarian.” Having a complicated past can lead to a present identity struggle. Latin American countries represent more of a colonized identity.



Figure 32. *Colonial Architecture, View from Border, and Kaufland*  
Photo Credit: Aelin

**4.6.6: Cuban Identity.** Cubans have a proud heritage, but some say Cuba is stuck in time (**Figure 33**). Emily explained, “To own a car showed higher income, but most of the cars resembled cars from the 1950s. They don’t want to waste the resource. It was something special about Cuba and speaks to its’ character.” Cuba uses the cars as a taxi service. Emily elaborated, “The cars no longer have seat belts, and you can negotiate the price of the ride. I was a little worried about the safety of it but driving along the ocean was worth the experience.” Another aspect of Cuba’s identity is politics. Emily had the opportunity to talk to locals about their political views and learned a unique perspective (**Figure 33**). She shared, “I was taught Cubans

are suppressed, but the locals interpret it as everyone is equal. With the wet foot dry foot policy, I thought everyone wanted to move here, but with all of the signs of Fidel everywhere it appeared they supported him.” Cuban food also plays a significant role in Cuban identity as well as Cuban coffee and the mojito (**Figure 33**). On her last night she wanted to savor the moment and have one last opportunity to experience Cuban culture and had to order a mojito. Experiencing life as a local and participating in local traditions provides for a more authentic experience.



Figure 33. 1950s Car, Fidel, and Mojito  
Photo Credit: Emily

**4.6.7 Panama Identity.** Panama is most well-known for the Panama Canal. A lesser well-known fact is the monument to the builders of the Panama Canal. Dawn shared, “The monument is an unsung dedication to the builders, and it speaks to the testament of an amazing canal built by people who did not receive the recognition they deserved.” Recognizing the commoner speaks volume to the importance of the community and the need for people to collaborate to accomplish a common goal. What someone may not think of or realize is the



modernization and free trade occurring in Panama. Dawn shared, “I was surprised to see this free trade zone. It is a good business decision and speaks to the position Panama plays in the world.” Due to the location and the opportunity for financial growth Panama has a colonized past. The easiest way for someone to recognize the influence of another country is through architecture. Dawn commented, “The inner city had such unique architectural style. You can clearly see outside influences from Spanish colonial rule. It captures the essence of Panama.” Each country has its own identity and a culture it can call its own. Tourist attractions and cultural meals are not meant to be discriminatory or judgmental. These places or items represent the past and allow others an opportunity to get a glimpse of local life.



Figure 34. *Monument to Builders, Zona de Libre, and Old City*  
Photo Credit: Dawn

**4.6.8: Chinese Identity.** Again, architecture and monuments influence the formation of identity of a foreign country. The Great Wall is the most recognizable accomplishment associated with China (**Figure 35**). Mei explained, “This was the first wonder of the world I had actually seen. There were people from all over the world visiting and the walkway seems to go

on and on.” She reacted a little differently than most. She commented, “It wasn’t until after we took the slide and got off the wall, it hit me. Wow. I was just on the Great Wall of China.” Along with the Great Wall, other astounding buildings appear all over the city (**Figure 35**). Mei explained, “I couldn’t get over the beauty of the architecture. It is so unique and so different from what we see back home.” It is imperative people take time to learn about the history behind the artifacts as well as the education system. Mei anticipated international encounters and hoped to gain a deeper insight into the language and culture. One day Mei visited two elementary schools: one was international and the other local. Mei exclaimed, “It was adorable watching them learn! They lined up at the desk and repeated after the teacher practicing rote memory.” This was a unique opportunity for a young American student (**Figure 35**). Mei shared, “It was fascinating to enter a foreign school, especially hearing about how the United States is in competition with the education systems of China, Japan, and other countries around the world.” Witnessing another education system was a privilege and an excellent local experience.



Figure 35. *Great Wall, Chinese Square, and Classroom*  
Photo Credit: Mei

**4.6.8: Japanese Identity.** Japan has a proud history of Kanto. In Akita City this mural represents the Kanto demonstrations and is present all year long (**Figure 36**). Kate explained, “The juxtaposition of the mural and the actual live Kanto demonstration was a unique experience. As an American I felt privileged to participate.” This four-day festival brings teams from all over and provides a chance to highlight their abilities in front of the community and encourages camaraderie amongst the teams. Kate had another unique experience during her trip to Japan. A local fishing village had a bi-annual parade consisting of floats weighing 3.5 tons and pulled by ropes (**Figure 36**). Kate explained, “This village was able to proudly show its history during this festival. This was not a common festival and other Japanese people had never heard of it before. I felt privileged to participate and enjoyed the close access to all the floats.” This was her favorite thing as it was chaotic, but a fun opportunity to obtain firsthand experience in local culture. Along with the practices and demonstrations there was another cultural obligation of attending the Nomikai drinking parties (**Figure 36**). She elaborated, “There is a social hierarchy among the teams and within the Kanto community. It is a serious commitment, but it provided an opportunity to learn proper etiquette and practice her Japanese.” History and religion are central to Japan and their cultural heritage. Participating in festivals and local experiences confirmed aspects of Japanese identity.



Figure 36. Akita City, Hikiyama Matsuri Float, and Nomikai Drinking Party  
 Photo Credit: Kate

#### 4.7: Self Curation Process

After the participants shared their thoughts and feelings regarding the experiences represented by the photographs, a discussion of the self-curation process took place. I asked the following questions:

- (1) How easy or difficult did you find the selection process?
- (2) How are the photographs connected?
- (3) What does this set of photographs reveal about your power, privilege, and identity?
- (4) If you could select one photo best exemplifying your study abroad experience, please explain the photo you like the best and why?
- (5) What photos did you not include and why?

The process of selecting photographs varied from participant to participant. This form of expression allowed the participant to share their experiences from abroad and advocate for global citizenship.



Numerous participants found this process to be effortless. Aelin said, “The process was easy, and the directions gave me an idea for certain content. All the pictures have unique memories, and they are all important to me. They reminded me of my Cuban identity.” Dawn’s photographs demonstrated the most impactful experiences in Panama. She explained, “These photographs are taken from someone who is unfamiliar with the place and shows my identity as a student and speaks to my privilege about how I am able to take a stance about some of the topics discussed.” Valentina found the selection process easy. She said, “Looking back at the pictures it brought me back to how I felt in those moments.” All the pictures represented moments of the unexpected. Lynette explained, “I allowed myself to say yes to last minute things and am grateful.” Curating the photos was easy for Gianna as she had them stored in an album on her phone. She said, “Narrowing it down was more difficult because I did not want to have too many of food or scenery.” All the photos represented moments she was present. Gianna explained, “I took the pictures for a reason. I wanted photos to look back on, I tried to remind myself of why I was there.” Selecting photographs was easy for Rose as all the experiences were unique opportunities or moments she enjoyed. Rose explained, “Most people who go as a tourist wouldn’t go to the same places. Most people didn’t join a band, have a local boyfriend, and have niche experiences.” Curating the photographs was easy for Mei. She knew right away several photos she wanted to include. Mei explained, “All the photographs are moments I was excited about and represented my perspective.” Not all participants felt the same.

The process was slightly difficult for Kate because she did not have staged photos. She said, “I would take pictures of things I was doing trying not to make it about me.” The photos demonstrated her commitment to community involvement and culture. Kate explained, “Almost all of the pictures are about Kanto because it was the biggest time commitment outside of class.”

Emily too struggled with the curation process. She said, “I wanted to show everything, a different perspective not found on social media, and show different ideas of each city.” Each picture represented a personal story or experience. Emily explained, “The photos triggered a memory or a conversation: the weather, smells, music, and being so happy in those moments.” Zoey too struggled to select certain photographs. She wanted to highlight her favorite moments, but it was hard to select. All the photographs were from the end of the trip. Zoey shared, “I was emotional, but I knew it wouldn’t last forever. Some of the best moments were captured in these pictures.” Lynette also found it difficult to curate the collection of photographs. She was not sure if the photographs were within the parameters. Lynette explained, “All the pictures represented something interesting and show a change in me.”

**4.7.1: Content of the self-curated collection.** Each participant explained how all the photos connected to one another. This revealed their power, privilege, and identity. Also, each participant selected one photograph from the self-curated photo elicitation that best represented their study abroad experience. This photograph is the main photo in each of the participant collages included earlier in this chapter. The description of the content of each participants' collection is below.

Aelin said, “The pictures remind me how I am privileged as a person, living in a country allowing me to do these things. I am grateful my parents sacrificed a lot for me.” The capital building was the picture best exemplified her by study abroad experience (**Figure 3**). Aelin explained:

“I was alone when I took the picture. It reminded me of home. The whole experience. in Romania, feels like a dream. I came and went, and something happened, and nothing happened at the same time. When I was in Hungary, I experienced a lot of things since I was alone because I wanted to do them. Felt more real in Hungary. Felt true to who I am. I love photography and am very artistic. I wanted to take it for a long time. I want to take it in Cuba, but it is dangerous

to be on your own and if see me with a big camera someone would try to rob me. When I took it there, I felt happy.”

The stories behind Kate’s photographs gave insight to unimaginable events for a study abroad student. She had the opportunity to participate in the Akita Kanto Matsuri and other festivals and traditional activities during her trip to Japan. The photograph best exemplified by her study abroad experience was the Kanto team circle (**Figure 4**). Kate explained, “My photographs are unique because of my proximity to the event. I did incredible things even Japanese people don’t take the time to do. I learned more by doing those things than by sitting in a class.” The photographs reveal interactions going beyond surface level.

Emily’s set of photographs demonstrated how her identity has developed over the years and how people have had an impact on her. Emily said, “In London I felt like I had to take certain iconic pictures and I would not have gone out of my way to find the water pump if it hadn’t been for my Cuban professor.” Part of the joy of her journey was stumbling upon random places such as a patch of grass in the middle of the city or the baguette competition. Emily explained, “We have this global pressure to be the best and make history, but we should understand it is important for our mental and spiritual health to take a moment from the hustle and bustle and relax.” The one photo best exemplified by her study abroad experience was the cup of coffee (**Figure 5**). Emily shared, “The photo itself isn’t a lot, but it represents my whole trip. It showed me how much compassion the people had and immediate relationship I had with my homestay family.” This moment set the tone for her trip to Cuba.

Dawn’s trip to the village was a once in a lifetime opportunity, but the focus of her trip was visiting businesses. The picture of the modern city was the photo best exemplified by her study abroad experience because it was where she spent most of her time (**Figure 6**). Dawn

commented, “A modern city and high rises are synonymous to business, and I discovered there is a certain amount of modernization everywhere around the world.”

These photographs demonstrated Zoey’s privilege and her desire to share these same moments with her family in the future. Zoey said, “Going to Canada was a humbling experience and I didn’t think it would shape me today, but it has had a huge impact.” The *Scars* photograph was the picture best exemplified by her study abroad experience (**Figure 7**). Zoey explained, “I was going through a tough time. People aren’t always happy, and everyone needs to know it is not a bad thing and I came out stronger in the end.”

Lynette thought her pictures represented a change in her, something different than the life she knew. She explained, “The set revealed how small the world is compared to the possibilities of the truth there is in the world.” The photo best exemplified by her study abroad experience was the cuppa tea (**Figure 8**). Lynette said, “At the end of the day it was studying abroad, including the studying. It wasn’t the attractions. It represented the reality of what I was doing on a normal everyday basis.”

The set of photographs revealed a great deal about Valentina’s positionality. She explained, “As a young adult I didn’t want to attach myself to one background as a Colombian or a college student. I just let go of previous knowledge and expectations and through the classes and traditions I identified with new ones.” The picture best exemplified by her study abroad experience was the path (**Figure 9**). Valentina said, “As tough as the path gets and as hard as the hike was and how many times I wanted to turn around, it was worth it. I didn’t have any prior experience hiking.” She was able to relate the path to life. Valentina shared, “As a global citizen as hard as the journey gets allow yourself to enjoy the worth and beauty of it, regardless of how hard it gets. Follow through what you want to learn and experience life where you go.”

No expense spared. Sightseeing and indulging in the local fare were the highlights of Gianna's study abroad experience. She commented, "I was fortunate enough to leave the area I lived, was able to take time away from my real life and had the means to do this. I was over there with not a care in the world just my classes." She thought it was easier to take pictures of objects instead of having her picture taken. Gianna explained, "I was scared to ask people to take my picture or afraid they would run off with my phone." Also, social media has influenced our picture taking. She said, "I am not like anyone in my generation. I did not try to get the perfect Instagram shot. Sometimes it felt like people were travelling just so they could post about it. They did not want to experience new things." The photo best exemplified by her study abroad experience was the sign with Gaelic (**Figure 10**). She explained, "If you didn't know anything about the outside world but saw this photo with a different language it was a clue you were in a different place."

Since Rose had connections due to her family living abroad it made the trip feel more like home. Rose commented, "The fact I look German, and I am a woman made these experiences easier. As a cute young woman, it is easier to be accepted." The photo best exemplifies by her study abroad experience was the bicycles (**Figure 11**). She explained, "I was always out on my bike. Everything was far away, the bus was too slow or took too long, and I zoomed everywhere."

Eating food, experiencing the cold, and visiting local classrooms were highlights for Mei's trip to China. She explained, "The photographs represent my American identity, born and raised, and also represent my background and food I like." The photo best exemplified by her study abroad experience was dinner with friends (**Figure 12**). Mei said, "This picture sums it all up because we were all together, comfortable with one another sharing a meal."

**4.7.2: Photographs Not Included.** Zoey, Gianna, and Rose did not include any touristy pictures and pictures of themselves standing in front of buildings. Gianna said, “I didn’t include the monotonous and boring stuff. These pictures could be misleading because I was not doing and seeing these fun things 24/7.” This is ironic because there are several pictures Gianna shared of herself with landscapes in the background. They may not have been in “touristy” destinations, but I disagree with her statement. Rose explained, “I did not include pictures of food besides the insekten burger and vegan doner and pictures from my hikes as they were not important aspects of my trip.” Again, I critiqued this comment because she did include pictures of food and pictures from hiking. She discussed the importance and sustainability of Germany’s food choices. Also, she shared pictures from Painter’s Way and Barefoot Park explaining the importance of hiking. Zoey did not include any tourist photos due to the fact she submitted the least number of photographs and only had one week’s experience abroad.

Lynette did not include any photos of nightlife or exhibits because they were not as powerful as she wanted them to be. The photograph of Shiva was from an exhibit, but this was a representation of her cultural background and one aspect of her identity, therefore it was an exception to the rule. Emily refrained from including side trips from Cuba and common everyday items. Although the coffee cup and water pump may seem like everyday items, they had impactful stories making them extraordinary. Dawn did not include photos of other businesses she visited because it was during presentations, and she was unsure of confidentiality. Aelin did not include any pictures of the bones or pictures from the museum as she was not sure of the copyright. Many of the bone pictures will be in a museum or another research project making them unavailable for this study. Zoey did not include any photos from the circus because she wanted to be in the moment.

Emily and Gianna did not include pictures with other people due to the limitations. Mei did not include group photographs because it did not represent her experience. Valentina did not include pictures of herself. She explained,

“I saw a lot of pictures of myself and looked so different. It is not a bad thing, but it made me realize if I could include them I wouldn’t because it is a past me. You love your first car. It took you so many places and learned so much, but you are not going to take it back. Appreciate what we’ve learned but don’t get stuck in it.”

Valentina was in the pictures, but only her feet complicating the fact she stated she was not in the photographs. Kate did not include any photographs taken during break time, silly photos, and photos in her Kanto team t-shirt. People could not wear the shirts off campus and out of respect she did not include them in this research study.

#### **4.8: Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the data collected during a qualitative study with 10 female undergraduate students from their experiences during study abroad. This chapter included the narratives from participants regarding their perceptions of power, privilege, and identity and perceptions of global citizenship. The emerging five overarching themes were: (1) life abroad, (2) global interactions, (3) global community, (4) time abroad, and (5) American perceptions. In the next chapter, I discuss each theme, the implications of these findings, future research, and my concluding thoughts.

## **Chapter 5: Discussions, Implications, and Future Research**

### **5.1: Overview**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent in which female undergraduate students interacted with their environment and reconceptualized global citizenship. Through this process women shared their perceptions of power, privilege, and identity. The following research questions guided the study:

(1) To what extent do female undergraduate students from the United States who have participated in a study abroad program develop a critical understanding of global citizenship?

(2) How are students' awareness of power, privilege, and identity reflected in their documentation and narration of their experiences abroad?

To help me interpret the narratives provided by the semi-structured and self-curated photo elicitation I conducted acts of coding (Saldana, 2021). I created an initial set of codes: college, family, friends, outsider, language, comfort food, awareness, and social inequality. Then re-reading the transcripts and applying my critical lens I looked for broader themes: identity formation, outside influences, experiences abroad, global citizenship, and next steps. When looking through the data codes emerged such as: globalization, positionality, iconic attractions, food and beverage, and landscape emerged. Then I re-read the narratives and continued to sub-code with new themes represented by their interactions with their environment. I organized these codes into five overarching themes: (1) life abroad, (2) global interactions, (3) global community, (4) time abroad, and (5) American perceptions.



In this chapter, I discuss my findings regarding the participants' awareness of power, privilege, and identity from their experience abroad and their understandings of global citizenship. I critique their experience and challenge the narratives provided. Additionally, I discuss the implications of this research for the field of education as well as its limitations and suggest future research. Finally, the results of this research add to the literature regarding women's experiences and perceptions of international travel. Also, this research contributes to how self-curated photo elicitation can empower research participants. Study abroad is an irreplaceable experience altering the perceptions of others and causing personal reflection and growth.

To complete Bronfenbrenner's theory, the exosystem is represented by the same university all participants attended. A. Maurer, Director of Education Abroad, explained, "USF as an institution is amazingly committed to the success of all students and has made remarkable progress ensuring all students regardless of race and ethnicity succeed," (personal communication, October 21, 2021). This university had a diverse population and promoted study abroad to diverse locations in 2018–19. Italy, the United Kingdom, and Canada were the top three destinations all represented in this study as destinations chosen by the participants (USF World, 2021). An explanation for this is they are English-speaking countries or English-speaking programs in Italy. Surprisingly, this university sent 7.5% of students to North American locations, specifically Canada, 7% more than the average university in the United States (USF World, 2021). Also, the university sent 27.8% of its study abroad students to Latin America, 14% more than the average university in the United States (USF World, 2021). This may be because of the fact this university has a larger than average Hispanic population and students are interested in a cultural heritage experience during their trip abroad.

## **5.2: Discussion of Theme 1: Life Abroad**

It is clear the environment impacts our identity and how women perceive the world. Many of the participants sought out study abroad programs due to their upbringing and environment. When people are young family and peer groups influence our passions and perceptions of others. Students need to reflect on their upbringing and cultural background to understand how it has influenced the lens through which they see the world (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Most of the participants shared stories about family members who had been world travelers or family trips abroad as a younger child. One participant's family was still living abroad. The immediate settings where people live their lives and the broader context of society plays a significant role in human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Study abroad may have a profound influence on identity and perceptions as women experience new microsystems.

Establishing a connection and experiencing cultural heritage had a profound impact on the participants. Experiencing diverse cultures encourages conversations regarding sociocultural identity and seeks to diminish oppression (Mathews, 2018). I was surprised by the diversity of the women who agreed to participate. I assumed it would be mostly White middle-class women studying history or education. Thankfully, I was wrong. Most of the participants are nothing like me and I enjoyed hearing about their upbringing and the people who have shaped them into the intellectuals they are today. I was able to challenge their perceptions of identity as well and ask them questions they had never thought about before. Most participants were comfortable sharing their personal information making me feel less like a researcher and more like a colleague. The women were able to relate to me and understood perceptions and stereotypes felt by women

during travel. By using a critical method, I was able to see the whole person and not just conduct research *on* them but learn with them.

Traveling abroad provided a unique environment that was challenging and rewarding. Traveling as a woman added another dynamic. Women encounter a wide variety of interacting forces impacting gendered relationships and experiences (Enns et al., 2020). Study abroad can challenge identity and cause people to second guess themselves. Being alone provides time for reflection and time to discover their true self. Valentina was comfortable traveling by herself and had an open mindset to seek out adventure and she wanted to try and accomplish anything. On the other hand, Dawn admitted she was tired from the overpacked schedule and fell asleep during the business meetings and did not get as much out of the trip as she had hoped. Feelings of discomfort and being an outsider can cause personal growth (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Constantly challenged by her view as a foreigner, Lynette accepted this as a part of her identity and was able to learn from cultures different than her own. Not having known any French before the trip she encountered stressful moments when trying to purchase everyday items. This caused her to develop a negative attitude towards the French but was able to communicate enough to complete the transaction. Perceptions of women vary around the world and women possess different societal roles in each place and culture.

Certain countries are prideful of their heritage and do not make exceptions for Americans. Certain countries refuse to allow English to become the number one language and when travelling abroad if you insist on using English everywhere you could be an Ugly American. Out of respect for the other country trying to speak introductory phrases demonstrate an attempt to culturally assimilate and may meet less resistance. Also, Americans tend to have a more modest mindset. All the women lived in Florida and are accustomed to beach life the

concept of a nude beach is almost foreign to them. The art in the park experience from Gianna supports this idea as it is not natural to see nudity in public. Europeans as well as others may see this attribute as a shortcoming. There are different viewpoints and perspectives regarding female body image. Americans have a reputation for excessive accommodations and material items. To fulfill the stereotype other countries are willing to make sacrifices for the needs of Americans. During her trip to Cuba, Emily was surprised to see luxury items such as televisions and air conditioning in the guest rooms because these are limited commodities. The interactions experienced by each woman depended on the living arrangements and the culture of the country visited. Exposure to new environments and new experiences help negotiate new meanings within their societal context (Mathews, 2018).

### **5.3: Discussion of Theme 2: Global Interactions**

As the women entered college they intended to study abroad. At an important age for personal growth and identity formation, they wanted a firsthand cross-cultural experience. They had the support and the knowledge to expand their horizons and enter a new cultural environment. However, women may interpret events differently based on their positionality (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Kate has an interest in living in Japan and working there in the future. This desire caused full immersion. She took advantage of every opportunity to participate in the local culture and gain authentic experiences. Emily too may pursue a future in public health and took interest in her studies and the experience of health care in other countries. Rose and Gianna had completely different experiences. Rose made connections and developed personal relationships while abroad. Gianna enjoyed the break from life at home and took advantage of the opportunity to travel each weekend. Other women discussed the impact of the classes they took. Valentina mentioned her fashion class and how it had challenged her. Lynette discussed the

knowledge gained during her role of empire class and how her perceptions changed from her phenomenology class. The women had a different motivation for traveling abroad, but it was inconclusive if these motivations affected their study experience in another country.

It may have been interesting to hear more about their experiences in the classroom and how learning from a professor in a new country was different. Also, if any incidents occurred due to gender differences may have been noteworthy. I can imagine someone reacted differently due to the restrictions of women in other countries and as an American woman did not know how to act in certain situations. No one shared information about what it was like to live with their new roommates other than Gianna who had to live with males during her stay in Ireland. Were there different expectations for male students and female students? Did their male professors treat them any differently than their female professors? The treatment of gendered issues varies in diverse cultures. People have different social roles in different countries. Unfortunately, these topics went undiscovered. In the workplace there are also gender differences and no differentiation regarding male and female experiences exist. Also, communities shape interactions.

I wonder if getting involved in the community was just a part of the local experience or if this commitment took place back home. Kate helped a local rice farmer by planting seeds one day, but it only occurred one time. Are there any long-term partnerships with this family farm or was it more of an act of performative activism? Also, the concept of a workaway could have the potential benefit of addressing social inequalities. However, right now it just is a cheaper way to travel. Also, Rose had both positive and negative experiences at workaways. I wish Rose would have discussed differences in assignments for male and female volunteers. Were the men expected to build things while the women fed the animals? Who is ensuring quality treatment of

the volunteers and what happens if the agreement is not honored? I wonder what the gender ratio is for workaways. By promoting this concept as a part of study abroad maybe more males would participate. Workaways could promote social change by influencing our work habits and the treatment of people. Taking care of others and the environment is a critical step towards global citizenship.

#### **5.4: Discussion of Theme 3: Global Community**

Supporting ecofriendly transportation and appreciating nature are first steps towards conservation. The problem is there are no long-term changes and being ecofriendly only while traveling abroad is an example of performative activism. Acknowledging there are social inequalities and bringing these problems to the attention of others again is a great start, but what happens next? The exposed wires in Cuba, the trash all over Panama, and trash at the train station in Rome is saddening. However, posting a picture on social media about the problem is not making a change. These types of performative activism are becoming more popular. Getting to the root of the problem and demonstrating global citizenship, conducting cleanup efforts, and improving the availability of resources can be effective. Students could advocate for partnerships or internships to start solving global issues.

Recently vegetarian and vegan diets have become more popular. I question the intention and rationale. Why does someone choose to follow this diet? Is it because you genuinely believe in the health benefits, animal rights, or because it is trendy? If people continue to follow these diets, can they convince Americans to eat insects? I believe in sustainability efforts, and I hope there will not be a future shortage of meat because I am not sure I could knowingly eat an insect. There would have to be a shift in perspective on a greater societal scale.

## 5.5 Discussion of Theme 4: Time Abroad.

Bronfenbrenner implemented the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model to investigate principles affecting people not only during their immediate interactions in their environment, but also across time and space (Naddaf, 2016). As the immediate surroundings change with age and life experience, the identity of a person changes too. All the participants are by birth borderline Millennial and Generation Z. Some women chose to fight the stereotype and demonstrate qualities of an old soul, or an older generation and others fit the generational cliches. The findings from this study build upon existing research regarding self-curation and identity formation. Using self-curated photographs provided a means for self-expression and empowered the participants.

When I saw most women had included photographs of food and beverages, I first wondered how to incorporate them into research. Then realizing I take pictures of food, I thought *this is a cultural phenomenon*. Recently food photography has been popular for most millennials and Generation Z (I am a Millennial) take pictures of their food. Everyone can relate to food. In one study a teacher studying abroad in Kenya took pictures of food so her students could relate to her experience (Mathews, 2018). Everyone must eat but depending on where they live or are visiting meals might look a little different. Sharing and discussing food is one way to understand cultural and racial differences. Food can also evoke memories.

Since this study took place before the global pandemic of COVID-19 the photographs could have represented memories of a better time. The interviews took place during May 2021 when the pandemic had settled but was not completely over. The participants longed for social interaction and the chance to get out of the house, let alone the country. Sharing their stories could have been nostalgic and they could have been idolizing their own experiences. All the

participants mentioned uncomfortable moments but seemed overly optimistic about their interactions and the qualities of a global citizen. It is easy to remember the good times but does our memory accurately portray the reality of the entire experience. Moving forward to address social change and promote study abroad programs should incorporate more of a critical approach to global citizenship.

Maintaining up-to-date research and trends to address changing social identities will keep study abroad programs current. One participant in this study chose Canada as her destination. Zoey, a psychology, and behavioral health major, looked to Canada for a change in scenery and the program offered. Ethnically Cuban and raised in the Bahamas traveling to a destination with a different climate and culture was appealing. I was surprised to discover Canada has become a highly sought-after location for study abroad. Toprak (2021) suggested due to its welcoming atmosphere, superior academics, and promotion of the English language has made Canada one of the most attractive study locations. According to the Canadian Bureau for International Education (2021) Canada's student population has tripled over the past decade and grew by 13% in 2019 compared to the previous year. Another opportunity to address social inequalities is to appeal to students from all degree programs. I was surprised Education majors were not in the top 20 majors represented and only 3% of Education students travel abroad. No Education majors volunteered to participate in this study. Business and Health Sciences majors participated in this study because of the global nature of trade and medicine. More Education students should consider study abroad because as educators, cross-cultural experiences and being able to relate to our diverse student populations is important. Cultural interactions allowed the participants to shift their worldviews and began to reflect on the sources and ideas influenced by their earlier perceptions (Mathews, 2018).



## 5.6: Discussion of Theme 5: American Perceptions

After the themes emerged, I went back and listened to my personal experience on page 1. I discovered similarities between my experience and those of the research participants. My perceptions of other cultures changed during and after the trip. At first, I was nervous to travel alone and wrongly identified. I lived in similar housing as the participants. I embraced the culture by trying new foods and talked to the locals. I wanted to be a part of the community but lacked a sufficient knowledge of the language. I was able to share my cultural identity with the community by inviting them to celebrate Halloween and Thanksgiving. Even though our experiences were ten years apart some cultural interactions remained the same. With the increasing availability of technology and the preference of visual culture photographs can promote social change. Photographs can help overcome barriers of race and class and facilitate conversations across cultural and racial differences (Boucher, 2018). However, cultural identities are changing, and perceptions are shifting. The women shared surprising experiences challenging my own cultural perceptions.

The biggest surprise for me was listening to Dawn describe Panama. I have never been to a Central American country and was not sure what to expect. I knew the Panama Canal played a significant role in global trade yet had no idea the country was so modern. The photographs she shared of the Zona Libre and the Modern City challenged my perceptions of Panama and gave me a greater insight into what Panama represents. Also, Dawn a business student, visited large corporations and taught me about the principles of management; a topic I was unfamiliar with beforehand. Additionally, two other students mentioned street bargaining. This interaction with another culture was memorable and shaped their impression of the economy and how businesses operated in other countries. Finally, another surprise was the discussion of the encounters with homeless people. Due to a Christian upbringing and a call to help the needy the participants felt

compelled to share these experiences. This study allowed participants to consider in what way others can reinforce labels because of their limited worldview. Kate's experiences in Japan provided an example of the dominant narrative and continued use of a traditional mindset through the specifications of the uniform. Also, she described existing racial discrimination. However, recognizing and addressing the cultural assumptions and being adaptive allowed the participants to survive and assimilate when necessary.

Lived experiences, including race and ethnicity, shape encounters and experiences of others while traveling in another country (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Based on students' positionality they interpreted their expectations and experiences differently. Due to the power, privilege, and identity of an individual privilege and oppression can look different in different social and cultural environments (Marie & Sanders, 2018). It did not bother Mei that she stuck out in a crowd in China. These feelings are similar to her experiences at home because she is a racial minority in the United States (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Mei received more positive attention in China due to her skin color than at home. One way to improve American perspectives of other cultures is to encourage global citizenship.

### **5.7: Discussion on Global Citizenship**

Study abroad increases global citizenship. Field trips and studying abroad encourages a world systems approach and a willingness to accept global responsibility (Myers, 2006). One of the most surprising aspects of this research was how well the women articulated their thoughts and their global mindset. Global citizens can practice reflexivity, identify other perspectives, and stand in solidarity with people all over the world (Mathews, 2018). A. Maurer shared, "The overlap between Honors students and those who have gone through the Global Citizenship Project is a reflection of the priority of global citizenship and course offerings," (personal

communication, October 21, 2021). This change in perception and new knowledge is a testament to the experiences of the participants. The women had diverse backgrounds and an ability to see different perspectives. It can be a challenge to prepare students for transformative global citizenship which requires considering multiple perspectives and critical global perspectives as well as interrogating taken-for-granted assumptions (Mathews, 2018). These women were and are an exception to the rule. As an educator I am impressed with their open minds and open hearts. But these students are preparing for a global future, improving upon their cultural-consciousness, and seeking opportunities to develop cross-cultural awareness (Mathews, 2018). Indeed, the findings from this research provide insights on female perceptions of global citizenship.

Acceptance, inclusion, and helping one another are aspects of global citizenship. The women all shared stories about how they demonstrated global citizenship at home, but no one shared any stories of helping others while abroad. Rose did mention a bystander effect occurring on a train once. As an American she felt obligated to help, but currently as a foreigner she did nothing. Lilley et al. (2017) supported this idea by stating global citizens are socially responsible and foster ethical thinking. Looking deeper into the causes of global problems and the local and global relationship provides a valuable lesson.

The first research question sought to determine the extent participants developed a critical understanding of global citizenship. Looking at the participants' responses, the critical aspect of global citizenship was the most thought provoking. A critical approach should be inclusive, but experiences are emergent in the moment and shaped by discursive histories (DeVault & Gross, 2014). Immersion and participation in the community was beneficial. Some participants thought authentic experiences such as interacting with locals and homestays represented a critical

approach to global citizenship. Others identified critical global citizenship as volunteering or bringing medical supplies. Taking a critical approach may improve social change and challenge systemic paradigms that perpetuate marginalization and discrimination (Levine & Breshears, 2019). By identifying as global citizens students sought after ideas and cultures across global boundaries (Lilley et al., 2017). It offered new insights about characteristics and goals of global citizenship.

### **5.8: Implications of Research**

Insights from this study can help future research on social change. Individuals may better understand how their environment shapes their sociocultural identity. It is clear study abroad will remain a factor in determining citizenship and is a way for students to gain experiences in environments different than their own. A. Maurer commented, “I was pleased students indicated a sustained interest in study abroad or travel. Two participants mentioned taking it to the next step with Fulbright or Peace Corps,” (personal communication, October 21, 2021). Making improvements to study abroad programs will inspire more students to participate in this opportunity. The following recommendations target global citizenship education and study abroad programs.

**5.8.1: Global Citizenship Education.** A critical approach to global citizenship encourages a curriculum disrupting the dominant narrative and helps students acknowledge their power, privilege, and identity (Mathews, 2018). Universities and study abroad programs should encourage these changes. A university that values social justice and embeds social change into each course may cause a change in the macrosystem (Levine & Breshears, 2019). Global education promotes social change by boosting sensitivity to global affairs, develops a sense of global vision, and increases knowledge about the events happening around the world (Altun, 2017). Global education encourages students to explore other cultures and self-discovery. The

participants can enact social change. To create a greater social movement, curriculum should encourage a diverse world view (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010). As the demand for improving the curriculum continues, a desire for global consciousness increases the need for exposure to transnational feminist thinking (Anantharam, 2020). To challenge the dominant narrative current research must acknowledge oppression and social inequalities (Levine & Breshears, 2019). The few women who participated in the Global Citizenship Project (GCP) understood critical content, reported feeling more prepared, and had better reactions to cultural confrontations abroad.

Exposing students to the GCP allows for meaning making and the creation of new knowledge. Global citizenship might be a utopian concept because there are no universal rights and responsibilities in the world community and no universal solutions to problems (Palmer, 2018). To address this issue the GCP provides unity and improves students' global awareness, their sense of global responsibility, and global participation. Required courses enable meaningful and effective interactions with diverse peoples and provide students unique challenges and opportunities (USF GCP, 2020). Developing relationships with people from other cultures is a terrific way to practice global citizenship. Providing community or global opportunities allowed students to address social inequalities and acknowledge their positionality (Anantharam, 2020). Participants were able to recognize their own power and privilege. Lilley et al. (2017) supported this idea by recognizing global citizenship as a form of education enabling learners to address local and global challenges. Introducing global citizenship in the classroom is a start, but study abroad provides a more authentic experience. Educating students to participate and develop global citizenship ought to part of the main goal for socially and culturally responsible universities (Lilley et al., 2017).

**5.8.2: Study Abroad.** Researchers and institutions may find the information offered throughout this study useful. Encouraging researchers to incorporate minority perspectives more frequently will change narratives and lead to social change (Levine & Breshears, 2019). Currently most women oversee the faculty led programs. Female students are more likely to travel abroad when a female faculty member leads the program. If the personal interest of the faculty member matches that of the student, the faculty member will be one of the top reasons a student participates in study abroad (Marie & Sanders, 2018). If a student had a positive experience with the professor in class, they would join them for study abroad (Marie & Sanders, 2018). There is a need for a more diverse pool of faculty willing to travel abroad and those faculty must have a stronger sense of diversity competency (Marie & Sanders, 2018). The study may encourage further dialogue for a critical approach to global citizenship specifically addressing how positionality influences students' experiences. Understanding one's ethnic and racial identity is necessary as they become adults. What better way is there to assist students in understanding their ethnic identity than to study abroad?

Universities should consider ethnic backgrounds of their student population when developing a program (Lee & Negrelli, 2018). Most students are interested in their ancestry or cultural heritage and want to travel to see their roots and establish a cultural connection. Hartman et al. (2020) argued the current goal of global intercultural competence is insufficient as it fails to recognize the perspective of students of color and focuses solely on the dominant narrative. The narrative of undergraduate students is of particular interest since they are in a stage of life of personal discovery and development. Creating an academic orientation for study abroad will address social inequities and provide the tools to process and understand cultural encounters abroad (Chang, 2017; Goldoni, 2017; Hartman et al., 2020; Perkins, 2020; Pulsifer et al., 2020).

Racial and linguistic discrimination as well as recognition of inequity may occur while abroad and some students may not be prepared to react and process these emotions (Goldoni, 2017). Students of color have different constraints than White students due to their lived experiences. Most students of color have experienced racism at some point, but most White Americans have not (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Minority students are assets to study abroad, therefore destinations and programs should appeal to diverse populations. Finally, critical reflection and discussion should be a part of all phases of the trip; most programs only target one phase (Marie & Sanders, 2018). Study abroad alone cannot produce global citizens but including academic content alongside critical pedagogy can be effective (Aktas et al., 2017).

### **5.9: Modifications**

During this research study COVID 19 caused a global pandemic. The research originally was going to be a group of students on the same study abroad trip. I was going to participate in an orientation class beforehand to help the students be more comfortable and aware of the expectations. Also, I would have conducted an interview before they left inquiring about expectations and interactions they might experience while abroad. Then I would have joined the students on the trip and conducted an interview to see how their perceptions of themselves and global citizenship was changing. Upon returning home a final interview would have occurred to see what changes took place and if their experiences met their preconceptions and how study abroad changed their outlook. Missing this opportunity has altered the research. Being on the trip and having similar experiences would have allowed for an analysis of how different people react to the same situation. There would have been a focus on one country and one set of cultural values. In the end, the data included a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and interactions with multiple cultures around the world.

Another limitation was the photographs available. The participants looked through pictures previously taken from their study abroad trip and identified the photos representing their power, privilege, and identity after the fact. They accomplished the task at hand and exceeded my expectations; however, if they had taken pictures while abroad would those photographs have looked different? Knowing someone else would be looking at the pictures and publishing them would have also altered the process and results. I did ask participants what photos they did not include in their self-curation, but I did not ask them what photos they wish they had taken. Finally, I would have liked to have asked participants to include pictures with other people such as family and peers because they play such an integral role in identity formation and experiences. Some photographs showed memorable moments and clear depictions of power, privilege, and identity, but had other identifiable people were also in the same photograph. For ethical reasons only participants were in the photographs.

Taking another look at the interview questions asked there are topics I wish I would have discussed. Digging deeper into gendered issues and learning about any specific examples of how their male counterparts interacted with others. Also learning if their treatment was any different than their male counterparts. Did any incidents transpire where they relied on a male for help or if they used their gender to their advantage? Did the participants impose their identity, share their culture, or otherwise impacted the community in their host country in any way? For people in the host community the participant may have been the only American they have ever met. As a global citizen cross-cultural interaction should occur on both sides



## 5.10: Recommendations for Future Research

Not only was the purpose of my research to address the research questions but also to implement changes for future study abroad and to encourage everyone to seek global citizenship. This research is meant to promote further inquiry on the topic of study abroad programs, global citizenship, and positionality. Also, looking at gendered issues and addressing why interactions in different environments occur because of gender differences may be of interest. Limited research has explored the counternarratives of individuals who expressed negative interactions often related to race and ethnicity may be a topic for exploration (Marie & Sanders, 2018).

To build on this research other sociocultural factors may identify new participants:

1. Age: high school students, graduate students, and/or professors may have different experiences than undergraduate students.
2. Gender: interviewing men might expose different perspectives. Men may be less aware of their own positionality and might be less practiced in self-reflection.
3. Length of stay: programs varied from one week to one semester abroad. Comparing students who studied the same length of time may produce different results. Comparing a short-term stay to a long-term stay could influence the experience and sense of global citizenship.
4. Housing: some participants were in a homestay and others in a dorm. Where a student lives while abroad can influence the experience. Living with a family can provide a more authentic opportunity for cultural encounters and practice the local language. Future research on the experiences of students who only participated in one or the other or explicitly compare the experiences.
5. Country: participants visited a variety of countries around the world. Comparing students from the same trip or students who visited the same country at a different time may

produce different results. The country visited shapes the experience so focusing research on one country may produce deeper but less widely applicable insights. Similarly, exploring countries not included in this study may uncover different experiences.

6. Interview type: Future research may consider group interviews. It might be illuminating to hear participants' different perspectives and interpretations of the same trip in a group setting. Listening to others talk may refresh their memory or provide details left out if interviewed alone.

Critical research should focus on the perspectives of marginalized groups to construct new knowledge to create social change. Women continue to face the challenge of deciding what types of activism to support and what issues deserve attention (Enns et al., 2021). To shift the focus of these issues future research may focus on pre-departure programs. How do the predeparture programs currently prepare students to study abroad? Another topic for future research may include ecotourism and how to limit the effects on nature during the trip abroad and looking at environmental problems. Analyzing the effectiveness of reverse culture shock could foster steps to creating long term partnerships with either companies or universities abroad for a more sustainable future.

### **5.11: Concluding Thoughts**

Women experience life differently than their male counterparts. Each woman can have a unique experience within the same environment. Women from the United States have unearned privileges and affiliations because of citizenship status (Falcón, 2016). According to Falcón (2016) women in the United States have easier movement across national borders, benefits, and employment opportunities than women across the globe. Women around the world do not necessarily have access to the same resources and the

same privileges and identity as women in the United States. These gendered issues influence American experiences abroad. This study exposed the American perceptions of women studying abroad.

Overall, the participants felt they demonstrated global citizenship during their trip abroad and saw the world from a globalized perspective. By utilizing self-curated photo elicitation, the reader gained a deeper insight into female perceptions and experiences abroad. The photographs allowed the reader to explore the participants' perceptions of global citizenship and explained how these women understood how their environment shaped their perceptions of power, privilege, and identity. Due to the experience of study abroad and exposure to global citizenship these women felt compelled to enact social change.

After completing their study abroad program the participants decided to continue to work towards a deeper understanding of global citizenship. The women demonstrated awareness and are ready to take on global responsibilities and global participation. As Emily prepares for a graduate degree in Health Policy, she shared how studying abroad impacts social change. Emily explained, "It created an opportunity for humans to learn from one another and apply it to their lives and their communities." Longing to travel again before starting a Master's in Social Work Valentina shared how study abroad impacted her views on social change. Valentina said, "Studying abroad makes you realize how certain communities are often misunderstood and receive less aid because of it. When a cultural misconception occurs, people act less urgently during a crisis abroad." Rose applied for a Fulbright and believed studying abroad will make social change occur faster and have more of an impact if you see it for yourself. Rose explained, "If you travel to one part of the world and realize people are treated a lot better here than you

will be more likely to advocate for those things when you get back home. Zoey will be seeking a degree in clinical psychology in hopes to obtain a Ph.D. Zoey shared, “Understanding other cultures can help you understand the people around you and make you a better person in your friendships and other relationships.” Kate will be traveling back to Japan for the JET program and has also applied for Fulbright. Kate described how studying abroad impacts social change. She said, “Study abroad makes our interactions with other people and countries tangible. It brings our awareness of cultural perspectives to the forefront of our consciousness and allows us the opportunity to truly engage in the world at an individual level we don’t often think about.” Acceptance, inclusion, and participation are steps towards social change.

One way people can initiate social change is through culture. Boucher (2018) argued culture helps people understand empowerment and oppression by the larger society. Reconnecting with our culture reminds us of our purpose and how people can contribute to society. Transnational feminist theory supports social activism and collaboration (Enns et al., 2020). Social change celebrates diversity and increases engagement with others who are like-minded. Not all women share the same experience and transnational feminism will continue to disrupt the dominate narrative and challenge social inequalities (Enns et al., 2020). Each woman is different and experiences similar situations differently due to their past and environmental influences. The participants understand their background does not make them any better than anyone else, but their global citizenship, meaning their willingness to help others, advocating for the oppressed, and educating people, can enact social change.

A study abroad experience is irreplaceable. No matter your age, gender, or background visiting another country and interacting with other cultures changes you. Your way of thinking changes as you can see beyond your own cultural norms. Topics of conversation and meal

preparation are different than back home. The pace of life and appreciation for nature is more surreal. Having the opportunity to visit another country will speak to your heart. As an American you may be more appreciative of your lifestyle back home or you may feel guilty about all the material possessions you own. There is an opportunity for change. You can get involved and have influence. You can share your resources and learn from others while they can return the favor. Anyone can learn to coexist on the planet and in turn make life more enjoyable for others. It is not about the amount of money you have or your status, but about your mind and your heart. If you are willing to take a chance and look beyond your own boundaries and comfortable lifestyle and step into someone else's life, then you are ready for a study abroad experience.

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## Appendices

## **Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

### **Section 1: Identity Formation**

1. How old are you?
2. How does your age contribute to your identity?
3. What is your race/ethnicity?
4. How does your ethnic background contribute to your identity?
5. What is your socio-economic status (SES)?
6. How does your SES contribute to your identity?
7. Are you religious or spiritual?
8. How does your spirituality contribute to your identity?
9. What is your sexual orientation?
10. How does your sexual orientation contribute to your identity?

### **Section 2: Outside Influences & Expectations**

11. Can you tell me about your family and where you grew up?
12. What is your educational background?
13. What were your motives to study abroad?
14. How did your upbringing and prior experiences prepare you for your trip abroad?
15. What were your expectations of the trip abroad?
16. What type of cultural encounters did you anticipate?
17. Keeping in mind your positionality and identity, how did you expect to overcome any obstacles?

### **Section 3: Trip Abroad**

18. What country did you travel to for study abroad? Why did you choose this country?
19. What year did you study abroad?
20. How long did you study abroad? Why this length of time?
21. Did you have any prior knowledge of the host area's language? If so what language and how proficient were you beforehand?
22. Did you feel accepted by your peers, school/community, and host country while abroad?
23. How did your cultural interactions abroad reflect or differ from your interactions at home?
24. How did your perceptions (of people, of foreign countries, etc.) change as a result from travel?
25. Did you feel like your nationality as an American impacted your experiences during your trip?

### **Section 4: Global Citizen**

26. What is a global citizen?
27. How would you identify a global citizen?
28. Can you give me an example of a time when you demonstrated global citizenship?

29. What are the goals of global citizenship?
30. Is it inclusive, meaning can anyone be a global citizen?
31. Does positionality influence the ability to become a global citizen?
32. How can you influence others to become global citizens?
33. How can people take a more critical approach to global citizenship?

### **Section 5: Conclusion**

34. Did the trip meet your expectations?
35. How do you view the world differently?
36. How likely are you to continue traveling abroad? Why?
37. What will you do differently on your next trip? How did you come to this realization?

## **Appendix B: Self-Curated Photo Elicitation Interview Protocol**

As a woman, I would like for you to select up to 30 photographs from your study abroad trip explaining your sociocultural identity (power, privilege, and identity) as a foreigner in a new place. The images can explain your individual interactions you had with people, the culture, and or the overall environment of being in another country. The images could be an object, a sign, a symbol, or a place invoking feelings of belonging, acceptance by another culture, or rejection and fear of standing out. Be intentional and purposeful for every photo you select for this study. Try to find one photo for each theme/idea/moment you want to share. Your experience and the way you interact with your environment was different than someone else's experience. Feel free to select photos expressing emotions, oppression, poverty, power, and moments of cultural humility or misunderstandings. Photographs are powerful, but the meaning behind them speaks volumes.

For each individual photograph.

1. What does this picture represent to you?
2. Why did you select this photo for the study?
3. How does this photo demonstrate your power, privilege, and identity?
4. How is this photograph related to global citizenship?

At the end, the following closing questions:

1. How easy or difficult did you find the selection process?
2. How are all these photographs connected? What elements do they have in common?
3. What does this set of photographs reveal about your power, privilege, and identity?
4. If you could only select one photo best exemplifying your study abroad experiences and your interactions with your environment, please explain the photo you like the best and why?
5. What photos did you not include and why?

## **Appendix C: Participant Selection Criteria Form**

- 1 What gender do you identify as?
- 2 What ethnicity or cultural background do you associate with?
- 3 Why did you decide to study abroad?
- 4 What year(s) did you complete your study abroad trip?
- 5 How long was the study abroad program?
- 6 What country did your study abroad take place?
- 7 Why did you select this location?
- 8 Where did you live while abroad? (Homestay, dorm, apartment, etc.)
- 9 Briefly describe your study abroad experience.
- 10 What would you have done differently either before, during, and or after your trip abroad?

## **Appendix D: Recruitment Email**

### **Seeking Female Undergraduate Students who have Studied Abroad For Research Study**

**I am seeking female undergraduate students who have studied abroad during 2018-2019.**

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this study is to determine what students know and think about global citizenship. Also, this study seeks to understand the interactions between students and their study abroad environments and how that impacts personal development and identity formation.

#### **LENGTH OF STUDY:**

The study will consist of two interviews lasting one-two hours each and will be conducted virtually through MS TEAM. Preferably the interviews will take place one to two weeks apart.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES:**

Participants will participate in two separate interviews. Interview questions will be sent through email one week prior to the interview for review. The interviews will be conducted virtually and recorded through MS Teams. The first interview will establish background information and discuss the study abroad trip. After the first interview is over, the participant will be asked to select and curate a set of photographs that explain and demonstrate their perceptions of global citizenship. Once the participants have gathered the photographs, a second interview will be scheduled. These photographs will be the focus of the second interview. The participant will have the opportunity to explain how the photographs represent positionality and experiences from the study abroad trip. Each interview is estimated to last one-two hours.

#### **CONTACT:**

*Please email Jessica Colston at [colston@usf.edu](mailto:colston@usf.edu) if you are interested in participating.*

*IRB Study # 2395*

## Appendix E: Protecting Human Research Participants Certificate



Completion Date 23-Mar-2021  
Expiration Date 22-Mar-2024  
Record ID 41762231

This is to certify that:

**Jesi Colston**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

**Human Research**  
(Curriculum Group)  
**Social / Behavioral Investigators and Key Personnel**  
(Course Learner Group)  
**2 - Refresher Course**  
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**University of South Florida**



Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w2b74b68d-9c46-4f07-9099-e15640e50265-41762231](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w2b74b68d-9c46-4f07-9099-e15640e50265-41762231)

## Appendix F: USF IRB Approval Letter



### EXEMPT DETERMINATION

April 12, 2021

Jessica Colston  
8918 Eastman Dr.  
Tampa, FL 33626

Dear Jessica Colston:

On 4/11/2021, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

Application Type:	Initial Study
IRB ID:	STUDY002395
Review Type:	Exempt 2
Title:	Reconceptualizing Global Citizenship: Experiences from Women who have Studied Abroad
Funding:	None
Protocol:	• 2395 Protocol.v1.4.8.21.docx;

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Please note, as per USF policy, once the exempt determination is made, the application is closed in BullsIRB. This does not limit your ability to conduct the research. Any proposed or anticipated change to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB oversight must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant a modification or new application.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Sincerely,

Gina Larsen

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**Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance**

FWA No. 00001669

University of South Florida / 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165 / Tampa, FL 33612 / 813-974-5638

Page 1 of 2



## Appendix G: Adult Consent Form

### Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

**Title:** Reconceptualizing Global Citizenship: Experiences from Women who have Studied Abroad

**Study #** 002395

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**Overview:** You are being asked to take part in a research study. The information in this document should help you to decide if you would like to participate. The sections in this Overview provide the basic information about the study. More detailed information is provided in the remainder of the document.

Study Staff: This study is being led by Jessica Colston who is a doctoral student at the University of South Florida. This person is called the Principal Investigator.

Study Details: This study is being conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams and is supported by Dr. Michael Berson. The purpose of the study is to understand the perceptions of global citizenship from female undergraduate students from the United States who have studied abroad and how photographs can explain their experiences abroad. This study will consist of two interviews lasting one-two hours each. The first interview will consist of questions about your background and your study abroad program. The second interview will be a discussion surrounding photographs that were taken during your study abroad trip.

Subjects: You are being asked to take part because in this study because you have studied abroad recently. I want to better understand your experience abroad and your perceptions of global citizenship.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate and may stop your participation at any time. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits or opportunities if you do not participate or decide to stop once you start. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status, course grade, recommendations, or access to future courses or training opportunities.

Benefits, Compensation, and Risk: We do not know if you will receive any benefit from your participation. There is no cost to participate.] You will not be compensated for your participation. This research is considered minimal risk. Minimal risk means that study risks are the same as the risks you face in daily life.

Confidentiality: Even if we publish the findings from this study, we will keep your study information private and confidential. Anyone with the authority to look at your records must keep them confidential.

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## Why are you being asked to take part?

The purpose of this study is to determine what students know and think about global citizenship. Also, this study seeks to understand the interactions between students and their study abroad environments and how that impacts personal development and identity formation.

### Study Procedures:

Participants will participate in two separate interviews. Interview questions will be sent through email one week prior to the interview for review. The interviews will be conducted virtually and recorded through MS Teams. The first interview will establish background information and discuss the study abroad trip. After the first interview is over, the participant will be asked to select and curate a set of photographs that explain and demonstrate their perceptions of global citizenship. Once the participants have gathered the photographs, a second interview will be scheduled. These photographs will be the focus of the second interview. The participant will have the opportunity to explain how the photographs represent positionality and experiences from the study abroad trip. *Photographs may contain the participant, but no other identifiable persons.* Each interview is estimated to last one-two hours.

- With regards to audio recordings and transcripts, only members of the research team will have access to the recordings. These recordings will be password protected on a personal computer and through a secure USF Box account. Pseudonyms, or fake names, will be used during the final report of findings.
- The audio recordings and transcriptions will be maintained for 5 years. At that time (2026) and after the Final Report is submitted to the IRB, all recordings will be deleted, and copies of the transcripts and journals will be shredded.

### Total Number of Subjects

About 5 individuals will take part in this study at USF.

### Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal

You do not have to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status or course grade.

### Benefits

You will receive no benefit(s) by participating in this research study.

## Risks or Discomfort

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

## Compensation

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

## Costs

It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do our best to keep your records private and confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Certain people may need to see your study records. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator and advising professors.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, and staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Jessica Colston at 702-882-4531. If you have questions about your rights, complaints, or issues as a person taking part in this study, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at [RSCH-IRB@usf.edu](mailto:RSCH-IRB@usf.edu).

## Consent to Take Part in Research

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

---

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study

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Date

---

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

## Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent and Research Authorization

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

---

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Date

---

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

## Appendix H: USF Photo Release Form



### STANDARD USF PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO RELEASE

CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX:      For an adult      For a minor under age of 18

I, the undersigned, hereby grant to University of South Florida (USF), to those acting on its behalf with USF's permission and authority, and to USF's licensees, successors and assigns, the absolute, irrevocable, royalty-free, perpetual right and permission to use any and all photographs, videotape, likeness, biographical information, home town, voice, or other recordings of me ("Materials") in connection with my participation in or attendance at the

\_\_\_\_\_, scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ ("Event").

I understand that all such Materials, including film, photographic prints, digital files, or video, are USF's exclusive property and to the fullest extent permitted by law, I grant to USF the unrestricted right to use – including, without limitation, copyright, publish, re-publish, broadcast, transfer, alter, distribute, display, perform, reproduce, and incorporate into other works – the Materials in any medium now known or in the future invented, including without limitation, print, digital, radio and/or television and Internet, for any purpose, including without limitation, trade, solicitation, promotional, advertising, and marketing, without compensation or further permission from me.

I am fully aware that my likeness may appear in materials available to students, parents, faculty, or staff of USF, and individuals outside of the USF community. I further understand that USF is under no obligation to use the Materials and has made no representations to me in this regard. I hereby waive the right to inspect or approve the finished images, videotape, digital recording, sound track, advertising copy, printed matter or other content including advertising copy or printed matter, incorporating any Materials or otherwise in which they may be used or to any eventual use. I further hereby waive any and all rights to any compensation associated with USF's use of the Materials.

I hereby release any and all claims, demands, damages, and causes of action of any nature that I have or may hereafter have against USF, its affiliates, officers, directors, employees, and agents arising out of or in connection with my participation or attendance at the Event or USF's use of the Materials, including, but not limited to, any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, invasion of right of publicity, misappropriation of likeness, infliction of emotional distress, negligence, any right, title or interest in the Materials, or any other physical or monetary injury.

Without limiting the foregoing, I understand that any distribution of the images will be fully compliant with USF policies, statements and values. I release USF and those acting under their authority from any liability related to the alteration, intentional or otherwise, that may occur in

connection with the processing, editing, transmission, display or publication of the images, and understand that images may be cropped or altered for purposes of illustration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME (PHOTO SUBJECT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER

\_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL

DESCRIPTION OF SHOOT (LOCATION AND PURPOSE)

Reviewed for Legal Form and Sufficiency by USF Office of the General Counsel-- November 2021