Global Citizenship and Study Abroad: A Comparative Study of American and Australian Undergraduates

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Among a wide array of the perceived benefits of studying abroad is the promise of returning with an enhanced understanding of the world and its intricate web of political, economic, social, and cultural relationships. Universities as diverse as Kentucky State University, University of California-Davis, Michigan State University, and Elon University include "global citizenship" in their overall mission statements and/or in their study abroad publicity materials. Certainly, the imperative of increased "global awareness" or "global citizenship" is not confined to study abroad programs, but instead has become a hallmark of American universities' attempts to shift their curricula in response to an increasingly globalized environment (American Council on Education, 2003; Appadurai, 1996; Falk and Kanach, 2000). Thus, it can almost be assumed that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, fostering "global citizenship" among its students is part of the mission (stated or otherwise) of U.S. universities generally.

Despite the emphasis on encouraging global citizenship, it remains a poorly defined term and an amorphous objective. As Lynn Davies (2006) argues in her discussion of global citizenship in the British context, the term has become increasingly abstract; however she asserts that there is general consensus on its importance, and that there is the potential for it to become a site for the reinsertion of politics into the curriculum. Leslie Roman's (2003) analysis of the discourse of "global citizenship" at the University of British Columbia suggests that it functions in a contradictory manner, simultaneously dislodging and disrupting Canadian national identity, while at the same time reinforcing it. Roman's analysis highlights the potential for an inherent tension in the discourse and attendant practices of "global citizenship" as it rubs against entrenched narratives of national identity. While Roman addresses the Canadian context, such concerns are also relevant in other national contexts, including the United States, where in the years following September 11, nationalist and patriotic sentiments were used to solidify "American" identity against enemies real and perceived (Apple, 2002).

In this essay, I examine how two groups of undergraduates, from Australia and the United States, negotiate their national and global identities in the context of studying abroad, in doing so I demonstrate the nuances of "global citizenship" as it is actually experienced. Drawing on Craig Calhoun's (2002) scholarship on national identity and Martha Nussbaum's (2002) philosophical framework of global citizenship, I argue for a more complex understanding of the dynamics of nation and globe and for a paradigm of "global citizenship" grounded in critical self-awareness, mutual respect, and reciprocity (Nussbaum, 2002; Gillespie, 2003). This is not to suggest, however, that I am advocating one simple model or paradigm of "global citizenship" which can be universally applied. Instead, I propose that global citizenship is inflected differently in diverse national contexts, as the contrasting experiences of the Americans and Australians abroad demonstrate.

Nation and Globe: Changing Contexts

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, scholars in the social sciences and humanities have focused on analysing the emergent political, economic, social, and cultural terrain of a new global world order. While the "death of the nation" is a vast overstatement, there is validity to the claim that patterns of affiliation (political, economic, familial, and cultural) are shifting, and that there are critical questions to be asked about how the nation shapes, constrains, and enables particular identities, the limits of national identity, and the possible configurations of identities that move above, below, and alongside its shadow (Levitt 2001, Ong 1999, Cheah and Robbins 1998, Hedetoft and Hjort 2002; see also Appadurai, 1996; Burbules and Torres, 2000; Castells, 2000; Torres, 2002). Particularly for individuals who are part of the elite in world economic terms, borders are becoming more fluid, and it is increasingly possible to purchase a national citizenship through economic investment in dozens of nations. At the same time, a growing body of literature argues for an understanding of "citizenship" beyond its narrow legal definition of a relationship between an individual and a state (Appadurai, 1993; Hedetoft and Hjort 2002; Ong, 1999; Sassen, 2003). While earlier literature on citizenship (e.g., the well known work of T.H. Marshall, see Bulmer and Reese, 1996) situates citizenship within its social dimensions, it is largely bound by its national context (e.g., see Marshall in the British context, and Fraser and Gordon, 1992 in the U.S. context).

Craig Calhoun (2002), among other scholars, opens the possibility for a discussion of citizenship which exceeds the narrow confines of law and legal relationships by noting that "Citizens need to be motivated by solidarity, not

merely included by law" (p. 153). In other words, nation-states have not existed merely because of laws which bring them into a legal relationship with citizens, but because of a political imaginary which creates a sense of shared identity (Anderson, 1983). Thus, the possibility exists for the development of a "global citizenship" which is not about political allegiance to a particular world polity (e.g., the United Nations, the World Court, etc.), but about a set of social solidarities which extend globally. Furthermore, Calhoun argues that national identity cannot be easily bifurcated into "thick" and "thin" identities: identities which are either nationalistic and exclusionary, or detached and ungrounded. As Calhoun asserts, "neither of these ideal types fits well with how identities are actually produced and reproduced in society" (p. 155). Democracy, Calhoun observes, cannot be based on national identity (whether thick or thin), but on the sustaining of a vibrant public sphere, which allows for the proliferation of multiple affiliations not necessarily grounded in a particular nation: e.g., environmentalism, Islam, etc. (see Appaduri, 1996)

Martha Nussbaum's (2002) work is also useful for understanding the current context of global awareness and citizenship. Advocating a "rich network of human connections" as the basis for global citizenship, Nussbaum is concerned about an overemphasis on the economic dimensions of global forces, which posit "human lives as instruments for gain" (pp. 291–292). In contrast, Nussbaum argues that universities (particularly liberal arts institutions) play a central role in the fostering of global human connections. She proposes three central principles which form the framework for this paradigm: critical examination of oneself and one's traditions (drawing on the notion of the Socratic "examined life"); the ability to see oneself as "human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern" (p. 295); and the development of the "narrative imagination" which allows one to imagine oneself in the shoes of someone whose life experience is considerably different from one's own.

Taken together, Calhoun and Nussbaum's perspectives provide useful insights into grounding an analysis of global citizenship which allows for the proliferation of multiple affiliations without discarding the significance of the national.

Such questions resonate differently in the two contexts under discussion in this essay, Australia and the United States. National identities in both countries are marked by long (and continuing) internal struggles for gender and racial equality, and by histories of colonialism and oppression. In the recent past, both countries have modified draconian immigration policies, and are destinations of choice for individuals, families, and communities fleeing economic hardship and political persecution. Despite these similarities, Australia

and the United States occupy different positions in the world economy and the world stage. The United States, at the center of world politics and the economy, historically oscillates between interventionist and isolationist positions, but rarely sees itself as working in concert with other nations (Chomsky, 2003). American Reflecting this tendency, the American undergraduate students who participated in this study are generally focused inward on the meaning of their national identity in the context of studying abroad, and have a weak understanding of themselves as individual global citizens.

Australian students are aware that their nation is not as embroiled in world affairs and controversy as the United States. Australian national identity has been marked by controversies both internal-indigenous rights, immigration — and external—political, cultural, and economic ties to Britain, the United States, and nations in the Asia-Pacific region (Bennett, 1998; Hage,1998; Stratton, 1998). In the midst of these ongoing conversations about and struggles over, "what it means to be an Australian" Australia is equally enmeshed in the politics of globalization and the increasing concern that Australia has diminishing sovereignty over its economy, environment, and culture (Castles, 2000). Because of this decidedly outward focus, the Australian undergraduates who participated in this study are less likely than the American undergraduates to be focused on the meaning of their national identity in the context of studying abroad.

For the Australian and American students who participated in this research project, their national context is a significant factor in their expectations of the study abroad experience, how they understand and make sense of their time abroad, how it fits into the larger scheme of their lives and identities, and how they visually and experientially map the world and understand its possibilities.

The Context of Study Abroad

Study abroad is only a small part of the larger picture of global movement at the beginning of the 21st century, and plays a significantly different role in the institutional and national cultures of the United States and Australia. Although some (generally elite) students participate in the ritual tour of Europe after graduating from college, there is no expectation that American undergraduates will "see the world" before settling down into a career path. In the American context, study abroad is one of the few available and acceptable options for students to experience the world. Though the number of American students studying abroad is still limited, it has more than doubled from 71,154 in 1991/1992 to 223,534 in 2005//2006 (Institute of International Education, 2006). Australian students have strong cultural support for international

travel. In addition, large numbers of Australians hold British passports and all Australian youth are eligible for short term working visas in the United Kingdom. Given these societal variations, it is not surprising that studying abroad has divergent meanings within the two countries.

In both national contexts, much of the growth in the number of students studying abroad can be attributed to increased institutional support of such initiatives under the larger rubric of international education (American Council on Education, 2003; Hyam, 2002; NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, 2003. See also Daly and Barker, 2005 and Davis, Milne, and Olsen, 1999). In the United States, federal government initiatives have been significant factors in the growth of study abroad: the availability of federal financial aid for study abroad in 1992, President Bill Clinton's executive memorandum encouraging international experience and awareness in 2000, and more recently, the formation of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Program, 2004). Proposed by the late Senator Paul Simon in 2003 and passed in January 2004, the commission is charged with recommending "a program to greatly expand the opportunity for students at institutions of higher education in the United States to study abroad, with special emphasis on studying in developing nations" and which "meets the growing need of the United States to become more sensitive to the cultures of other countries" (House of Representatives Bill 2673, Section 104, see Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Program, 2004). In November 2005, the Commission released a report calling on the United States to send one million students abroad annually by 2016–2017 (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005). The United States Congress declared 2006 as the "Year of Study Abroad."

Historically, international education in Australia has had a different focus. Driven by economic factors in an era of drastically shrinking federal support, Australian universities have generally been concerned with the economic, not pedagogical, aspects of international education. Until very recently, Australian universities have primarily focused on recruiting international students as a source of revenue, and on opening off-shore campuses as profit centers (Harman, 2005). However, the Australian business community has become increasingly vocal about the need for undergraduates to have global competence to be able to function in the corporate environment (Daly and Barker, 2005).

While research on study abroad has increased in recent years, there is still limited published research on study abroad within the parameters of this study's approach, which is concerned with the cultural and social meanings

of study abroad in global and national context. There is, however, a growing literature on international students, particularly (though not exclusively) in the Australian context, which is concerned with the circulation and production of new global identities. (See, e.g., Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Mattus, 2003; Rizvi, 2000; Takayama 2000.)

Data Collection and Methodology

This study followed 46 Australian and American students before, during, and after their study abroad experiences in 2001. In the United States, students were enrolled at a major research institution in the Midwest; Australian participants were drawn from multiple universities in the Melbourne metropolitan area. All of the students were interviewed in their home country before and after studying abroad (from the end of 2000 to mid 2002), and were contacted via e-mail during their time abroad. Both groups of students studied abroad at universities throughout Australia and the United States, resulting in considerable geographic diversity in the students' experiences. American students were more consistent in their patterns of movement, and more American students than Australians completed the entire set of three interviews. In general, the American students studied abroad the second semester of their junior year, and returned to campus for their final year. Of the original 26 American students interviewed, 22 completed the study. In contrast, Australian students studied abroad at various times in their undergraduate education, for less uniform amounts of time, and often combined studying abroad with extensive international travel or semesters in London. In addition, a strong United States dollar and weak Australian dollar in 2000/2001 meant that while American students carried on with their plans to go to Australia, Australia students cited financial concerns and were more likely to drop out (some before the first interview), switch destinations, or delay travel. As a result of these various complications, there was a smaller pool of Australian students who met the study criteria and only 15 of the original group of 20 Australians completed all three interviews.

In the interviews, students were specifically asked to reflect on their experiences from national and global perspectives. My analysis of the interviews is qualitative and interpretive (Denzin, 2000). Following paradigms developed from grounded theory, data was analyzed inductively and coded for patterns and themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). My approach is to analyze students' own interpretations of their experiences within a critical framework that is sociologically driven and contextual (See Cornbleth, 2003.) I do not claim to

measure or evaluate students' national and global identities before and after study abroad; such an approach is more appropriate to large-scale, quantitative analysis. Additionally, I do not attempt to generalize from this data to other students' (American or Australian) study abroad experiences. Because the context of global movement is continually changing, Americans and Australians studying abroad now may have significantly different experiences than the students I studied.

The Americans who participated in this study have a strong national identity. They are consumed with attempting to understand their own national identity and the United States' place in the world. As a result, this limits their sense of global identity. In contrast, Australians who participated in this research have a relatively weak sense of a national identity, but a robust and vibrant global identity, which allows them to move with relative ease through multiple contexts. This identity is not one that is detached from affiliation, but instead, allows for the possibility of multiple points of attachment, while still embracing Australia as a home and base. Despite this expansive sense of a global place, it is still constrained by a limited tolerance for racial and ethnic diversity.

Americans Abroad

As I have discussed at length elsewhere (Dolby, 2004), the American students who participated in this study were primarily concerned with "encountering" and negotiating their national identity while they studied abroad in Australia. In the pre-September 11 context, these students were largely unaware of the geopolitical realities of the United States' relationship with the rest of the world. Thus, for most American students who participated in this study, understanding their own nation and its place in the world was a significant part of the study abroad experience. Karen's comment (all students are identified by pseudonyms, using first names only) was representative

> …it really helped me to realize the place the United States holds in the world. It really helped me realize what other people think of the United States. It made me feel like up until that point I'd been really secluded, and you know, stuff over my eyes.

Students also became aware that their knowledge of the United States as a political entity was somewhat limited, and that in many cases, individuals from other nations have more information (and in some ways, more interest) than they do. As Mike commented

> They knew so much, a lot of people knew a lot more about our politics than the American. It's kind of sad, but..I just didn't think that they would care as much as they do. I mean, I'd always heard that the American economy really dictates the rest of the world. And it becomes very evident to me seeing that. I mean, you'd see the exchange rate every night and here we'd never see the exchange rate and no one really would have any idea what that stuff is, they wouldn't care.

Angela reflected in a similar manner

> They're interested in knowing who you are and what you're about and what the country's about and I was put on the spot a lot of times in class as being the only American. Asking well, what do they do in America. And I don't know what to say.

Such comments exemplify the "critical self-awareness of one's life and one's traditions," which for Nussbaum is the first component of the development of global citizenship. In this case, and for most of the American students, the "critical self-awareness" involved a re-evaluation of their national identity. This is not to suggest that every student developed such self-awareness. For example, Keith told the following story about crossing a street in Melbourne

> Figure 50 people standing on the street corner, not a car within ten miles, nobody's crossing the street. Me, you know, I grew up in Chicago, I run in and out of traffic. I'm like, I've got somewhere to be, so I start walking across the street, and then everyone's like, oh, this kid's walking, you know why don't we all do that, and they all start following me. But nobody would have thought about it. Like just something as simple as that, because they're not in a hurry.

While this student attributed the reluctance to cross the street to a perceived cultural difference ("they're not in a hurry"), it is also possible that Australian society is simply more cognizant of following rules and being courteous than American society. At this intersection, in the heart of RMIT University, it is equally possible that there were more international and non-Australians crossing the street than locals. What is fascinating about Keith's quote is the way in which the American student centers his interpretation and his experience, in a way that mimics a U.S. centric approach to the world ("they all start following me").

However, other moments of insight on global identity were demonstrated by the American students abroad. For example, Nick explained

> They (my family) think they can take the U.S. with them wherever they do. Just realize that you know we're not number one. We don't, the planet doesn't end at the Atlantic coast or the Pacific coast line. And some Americans think that way.

Finally, one student, Susan, was able to reflect upon how her own behaviors had changed over the course of her study abroad experience

> There were a couple of German students that I became good friends with, but because I couldn't understand their English, it frustrated the heck out of me when I first got there. I was like, I can't be friends with these people. I can't even understand what they're saying. And by the end of the trip I ran into them when I was up north scuba diving…I realized just because these people don't speak my language. I mean, like even going to Thailand, why should I expect these people to speak my language when I don't even know how to say thank you in Thai.

This student demonstrates the ability to take on the perspective of someone different from herself, and to see the world through that lens, another aspect of Nussbaum's criteria for global citizenship.

The American students who participated in this research largely reject the simplistic dichotomy of Cahoun's "thick" or "thin" national identity. Instead, they are apt to maintain their American identity as a fulcrum while cautiously exploring less nation-centric ways of seeing and engaging the world.

Australians Abroad

Unlike the American students' strong sense of national identity, Australian students have a weaker affiliation to "nation" and a more developed identity as a "global" citizen. Certainly, such a finding is consistent with the historical and contemporary contexts of the United States and Australia, and the generally stronger sense of national identity and patriotism which is nurtured and supported in the American context (Giroux, 1998). Thus, the Australian students who participated in this study do not have that strong sense of "encounter" with a national identity which was so prevalent among the Americans.

The Australian students tend to view the world as a series of networked sites (Castells, 2000) which they move through with relative ease, selecting from each what is most useful or helpful. So, for example, Australian students tend to see the United States as a place to use and exploit for what it can offer their careers, London as a locale to absorb "culture" and "exotic" locales in Southeast Asia as sites for relaxation and tourist activities. Such perspectives are reflected continually in my interviews, as I discussed with students their current and future travel plans, and where they anticipate their careers will take them. For example, Chris reflected on the inevitability of a global career

> A lot of chemical engineers end up working overseas…And it's just basically like a global workforce nowadays. If you work for a big company, it's usually going to be a global company, and you're bound to end up overseas.

Australian students were also more flexible in their plans and less likely to interpret studying abroad in the United States as the "center" of their educational experience. For example, Steve was studying at a university in the southern part of the United States, when he was offered a job in the Mediterranean. He abruptly cancelled his plans to return to the U.S. for a second semester so as to accept the six-month reporting position. Another student, Ian, related his travel plans for the next year

> The plan is to get to Rio de Janeiro for Carnival, so I'll probably work from late November, early December to early February. If I get to Jackson Hole, I'll probably try to get to New York for a few days at least, then Rio, and then maybe work my way up to Columbia or something and have a look around there and then, to the Caribbean again, and then go to England and work there, and then travel Europe, and go home.

Raj, an Australian of Indian descent, captured the essence of how Australian students visualize, negotiate, and experience the networked globe, as he reflects on the traveling he did before spending the semester at a university on the East Coast

> I think the world is a very big place now. I still dream about some places, and it's amazing how you can just still picture yourself on some particular corner in Venice or something, and then you just flick over to, um, Montreal, or something like that, and it's so, so different. You remember the

> weather there, you remember the people, the food, the smells, everything. I think that's one of the best things I got, that there are very few limits, as far as this world goes.

Students consistently commented that the most impressive and useful aspects of their study abroad experience in the United States were the academic resources, the depth of knowledge and experience they acquired in their classes, and the professional connections that they made to enhance their career opportunities. One student, Alan, spent a semester in a part of the industrial rustbelt of the United States, so that he could benefit from the expertise of perhaps the best faculty in the world for his narrow specialization. Like other Australians, Alan was clear that he was not experiencing "America" in its entirety (nor was that the purpose of his trip), but that he was exploiting the opportunity to benefit professionally.

Thus, unlike the American students, Australians do not typically take the opportunity to engage in one of the linchpins of Nussbaum's "global citizenship"—the critical self-examination of one's own traditions and perspectives. As Australia is a relatively minor player in world politics, Australian students abroad are not continually forced to encounter their own nation's troubling history, and ongoing struggle with race and ethnicity. Yet studying abroad does not necessarily lead to increased global citizenship and awareness (Falk and Kanach, 2000). Instead, such perspectives must be developed and encouraged within a broader pedagogical framework.

Conclusion: Towards a Pedagogy of Global Citizenship

"Global citizenship" is not easily defined and its significance differs within contrasting national contexts. For the American students, Nussbaum's "critical self-examination" was paramount. While courses in political science may teach students the theories of empire, the experience of constant questioning and probing about American foreign policy while abroad had a more lasting impact on students: they returned with insights that were largely unavailable to them from their vantage point inside the United States (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Thus, they began to ask critical questions about their relationship to nation, the value and place of patriotism, and the geopolitical realities of the world.

While this may be seen as a necessary starting point for the development of a worldview based in the concepts of global citizenship, there is also the danger that students can become consumed with the importance of the United States in the world and obsessed with the centrality of their role as Americans. In her

critique of the *World Citizens Guide*—a manual of suggestions for Americans traveling abroad, Ann Hulbert (2006) expresses the perspective that perhaps such strident self-criticism only tends to refocus individuals on the centrality of the United States

> Busily monitoring our well-known tendency to strident self-importance, earnest American practitioners of personal diplomacy can risk missing the genuinely humbling lesson of being abroad: an awareness of how bewildering another country's own blend of boorishness and fervent belief, of openness and defiance, of backwardness and progress and of internal dissensions can be. It in the end, it's as narcissistic to assume we're the overbearing cause of everybody else's national identity crises in a dizzying world as it is to imagine that we can orchestrate the solutions to them. (p. 12)

National identity became the frame for every conversation, and there was little recognition that others' lives go on without the United States as a constant backdrop. Thus, it is important that "critical self-awareness" be understood as a pedagogical starting place, not an ending point. Nussbaum's second and third criteria are also central components of global citizenship, and were demonstrated—if in nascent form—by some of the American students.

The experiences of the Australian students, however, point to limitations of the Americans' self-reflection, and perhaps indicate what is necessary to establish the conditions for a fuller understanding of global citizenship. Most centrally, Australian students did not engage in the "critical self-reflection" which dominated the experiences of the American students. As individuals from a nation which is less central to global politics, they were not confronted on a daily basis with the need to think about who and what they are in the world. Despite this, they had more global awareness and political knowledge than the American students who participated in this study. Their "networked" view of the world allowed them more easily to take part in the "narrative imagination" or Nussbaum's third component of global citizenship, and they did not have an "Australian-centric" view of the world.

From a pedagogical standpoint, what seems to be suggested by the experiences of the Australian students is the necessity of multiple sojourns abroad in different nations and cultures as a fundamental prerequisite of global citizenship. The "networked" perspective—in which the home nation is decentered (though not displaced) as a site of personal identity—is arguably only possible to achieve through spending time abroad in multiple contexts.

Conversely, one limited (study abroad) experience in one nation can easily lead to a reinforcement of the "them" and "us" paradigm as a student has only one "different" reality to compare to his/her daily life in the United States.[1] Such a trend was discernable among the American students who studied in Australia. Conversely, students left Australia with very little actual experience of the everyday lives of Australians (of any racial or ethnic background). For example, the exploration of Nussbaum's "critical self-reflection" will be much richer if a student can compare an experience in England and an experience in South Africa. A student's experience could also be enhanced if s/he could participate in a structured educational experience which traces the lines of connection (historic and contemporary) between England and South Africa, understanding the power and force of a political, cultural, economic, and social "network" which is located outside of the sphere of the United States. It is this "de-centered" perspective which is an important though largely missing component of study abroad in the U.S. context.

As study abroad and global awareness become even more integrated components of the undergraduate educational experience, it is critical that concepts such as "global citizenship" be interrogated and studied both conceptually and as lived experiences, so that such paradigms do not simply reify existing global dynamics but challenge them.

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Notes

[1]Though, as Falk and Kanach (2000) point out, a student studying in London, for example, is likely to meet individuals from throughout the world, and in some locales this may expose students to multiple perspectives. Such a trend was discernable among the American students who studied in Australia. Conversely, students left Australia with very little actual experience of the everyday lives of Australians (of any racial or ethnic background).

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