

## Introduction

Cities have been magnets for a wide diversity of talent and have captured the human imagination as centers of intellectual and cultural achievement since humans began to live together. To learn from the city means to engage with its assets and riches, but also with its pressing problems, contradictions, and paradoxes. It also means to reflect upon urban settings as places where civilizations often meet and define themselves, and where populations and infrastructure change over time, sometimes slowly, but in other cases, rapidly.

Precisely because they are multi-layered, multi-dimensional, complex and challenging, cities offer rich opportunities for study abroad students to learn, no matter their disciplinary interests. The environmental issues and public health concerns manifested in cities, for example, offer many opportunities for disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry in the sciences, social sciences, as well as in the humanities, if to a lesser degree. The social fabric of cities as well as their social inequities and other problems can appeal to students in the social sciences, while the many varieties of cultural expression, both “high” and “low”, found in cities invite both exploration and creation. Cities’ many layers of history, their locations in particular geographical locales, their changing infrastructure and transitions in population, all can teach students to ask about how places (urban and non-urban) came to be what they are today, and how they might be in the future. Investigations of the city also allow students to think about who they are in relationship to others, what their relationship is to places, and which roles they will play in determining the future of the cities and other places they will call home in future. In short, the cities where students study abroad can serve as laboratories for learning, rather than simply temporary residences or arenas for taking pleasure. The contributors to this volume are doing just this kind of work: asking how and why cities are appropriate venues for study abroad, and experimenting with ways to allow cities to become arenas for learning.

The role of cities as sites for learning is not, of course, new. It was in Classical Athens (480–336 BCC), for example, that Western conceptions of philosophy, history, drama and education emerged. Without the city, it would be hard to imagine the intellectual development and the enduring educational legacy of Socrates (e.g. dialectical reasoning, learning through persistent questioning and analysis, intellectual self-discipline, autonomous thinking, self-examination, self-criticism, high standards of moral conduct,

intellectual honesty, and life-long learning). Cities in the Middle Ages (400–1400) hosted universities, where learning was considered sacred, not merely practical. Thus, Timbuktu became a vibrant center of learning, with libraries that rivaled anything in Christian Europe and the highest literacy rate in Africa. A quantum leap in cultural evolution, commercial vitality, technical innovation and new consciousness of humans at the center of the action took place over a two hundred year period beginning around 1450. This would have been unthinkable without great Renaissance cities such as Florence and Venice. Indeed, for the nature of learning, arguably the farthest reaching long-term consequence of the Renaissance was the development of the scientific method, a truly intellectual and conceptual revolution that made human beings think differently about the world and themselves. Similarly, many of the great intellectual and practical breakthroughs of the Scientific Revolution (1500–1700) are nearly unthinkable without the city. Emerging from the intellectual cauldron of the city were, among others, the great minds of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Newton, Descartes, Galileo, and Bacon. The goal of education, if we follow Bacon, is knowledge in the service of improving the human condition. This continues to this day to be a goal of many study abroad students. Finally, the intellectual achievements that characterize the Enlightenment (1700–1800): secularism, cosmopolitanism, skepticism, security for the individual through the rule of law, personal freedom and autonomy, deep respect for human dignity, and intellectual and scientific inquiry are based in the interactions with others that are essential components of urban life.

The articles in this volume offer their own contemporary examples of study abroad and the city, considered through an impressive range of approaches. The articles provide a balance between different theoretical and pedagogical approaches to the topic.

Theoretical perspectives on the cities are central to a number of discussions in the volume. Lance Kenny, in “First City, Anti-City: Cain, Heterotopia, and Study Abroad,” argues that the time has come to underpin the practice of study abroad with theoretical perspectives. As an example, he suggests that the work of theorists such as Foucault (heterotopias) and Virilio (the anti-city) can provide study abroad students with the analytical tools to “know” the city. Rodriguez and Rink use Walter Benjamin’s notion of the flâneur to incorporate technology as way for students to engage with the

city. Benjamin's writing on the flâneur is also introduced to students studying abroad in Athens by Augeri et al., who also draw on Dubord's derive and psychogeography to provide students with frameworks for understanding urban realities and their reactions to them. Augeri et al. turn to de Certeau's work on walking as rhetorical practice, while Patrick McGuire and James Spates demonstrate how the urban sociologist Jane Jacobs' work helps students understand cities as shaped by culture and the residents who live in them.

To discuss the impacts of globalization on cities, Gristwood and Woolf draw on theoretical writings about the city (Raban), fiction and poetry (Kurieshi, Brecht, Eliot, Ackroyd, Zephaniah), writers writing about writing (Sandhu and Upstone, for example), perspectives from geography (Halbert and Rutherford, Massey, Wills et al.) and sociology (Castells, Jacobs, Sassen), and government statistics. Milla Cozart Riggio, Lisa Sapolis, and Xianming Chen also look at how globalization is transforming cities and discuss how their home city, Hartford, is used as the starting point for students' engagement with cities and globalization.

Other articles focus on pedagogical approaches to assisting American students abroad engage with their study abroad cities. Scott Blair points out that American students frequently have never learned to read a map, and delineates how mapping can be employed as a tool for analysis, as well as for fostering intercultural learning and tolerance for diversity and engaged experiential learning. Mieka Ritsema, Barbara Knecht, and Kenneth Kruckemeyer also point to mapping as a useful tool for engaging students with cities encountered during study abroad. Thomas Ricks offers strategies for understanding Jerusalem's multi-layered history through its contemporary reality. Evidence for the power of experiential learning in study abroad cities is offered by Thomas Wagenknecht. Wagenknecht's interviews with educators in Germany, however, find that experiential learning has not yet earned the status of "academic" learning, and calls for more evidence about its outcomes.

Finally, two articles discuss the impact of engaging home-campus faculty themselves as learners in cities abroad. Anne Ellen Geller, discussing a faculty writing institute, shows how engagement with daily life in contemporary Rome helps faculty understand and value the study abroad experience. Elizabeth Brewer discusses Beloit College's faculty members' experimentation with mapping, walking, and ethnographic research methods, including participant-observation.

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It has been humbling and enriching to read the rich work being undertaken on the city and study abroad and to work with the authors who contributed to this volume. It is hoped that the examples and discussions offered in this volume not only will be productive in themselves for readers, but also will generate new discussion, ideas, and practices.

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