

Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad

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Consuming the Image of Study Abroad: Exploring U.S. Study Abroad Rationale in the Twentieth Century

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Abstract

This article places the historical events that have influenced the rationale of study abroad programming in U.S. higher education, throughout the twentieth century, within the framework of Baudrillard's theory of hyper-reality. The intent of this paper is not to repeat Hoffa's (2007) and Hoffa and DePaul's (2010) comprehensive two-volume history of study abroad published by the Forum on Education Abroad. Instead, it sheds light on the underlying rationale that led to both the growth and misconceptions of the benefits of study abroad programming throughout the twentieth century. Drawing on Baudrillard's concept of simulacra, which posits that representations can become more significant than reality itself, this paper argues that the U.S. approach to study abroad has increasingly operated as a symbolic construct divorced from its original utility. Ultimately, the article challenges higher education leaders and policymakers to critically examine whether contemporary practices are fulfilling their stated goals or perpetuating a hyperreal image untethered from educational reality.

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1. Introduction

When the real no longer is what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality: of secondhand truth, objectivity, and authenticity.

– Jean Baudrillard

In a speech to inaugurate the 2022 International Education Week, a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education to promote the benefits of worldwide international education and exchange programs, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken addressed the U.S. people on the benefits of study abroad. He started his address by stating that:

When international students and scholars come to the United States – and when Americans study abroad – they bring their talents, perspectives, and cultures to their new communities. And when they work with peers to advance research and knowledge, they spark innovation and forge bonds across borders that can last a lifetime. Ties like these are vital to working together to tackle global challenges, from combatting climate change and pandemics to broadening economic opportunity, to standing up for human rights and democracy. (U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2022)

Continuing, the U.S. Secretary of State said, “Simply put, international education is a crucial part of our diplomacy and our national security” (U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2022).

U.S. Secretary Blinken’s assertion of study abroad as a tool of diplomacy and national security is a long-held government belief of this practice that dates back to the Cold War years from 1947 - 1991 (Nye, 2005). Yet, a simple web search of current study abroad offerings within U.S. universities reveals programming that is at variance with the U.S. foreign policy agenda. This begs the question if Secretary Blinken’s view of studying abroad is rooted, and if not, what were the influences that led to this illusion?

In this article, I place the historical events that have influenced the rationale of study abroad programming in U.S. higher education, throughout the twentieth century, within the framework of Baudrillard's (1983,1994a,1994b, 2001) theory of hyper-reality. Baudrillard's theory suggests that in a consumer society, representations of reality become more important than reality itself, eventually leading to a stage where signs refer only to other signs rather than to any real-world reference. This lens allows us to examine how study abroad evolved as a symbolic construct rather than merely a functional practice. The intent of this paper is not to provide a synopsis of Hoffa (2007) and Hoffa and DePaul's (2010) comprehensive two-volume history of study abroad published by the Forum on Education Abroad but to shed light on the underlying rationale that led to both the growth and misconceptions of the benefits of study abroad programming throughout the twentieth century.

Blinken's views toward studying abroad shed light on a much larger narrative of the commodification of U.S. higher education and the mass production of identity through the purchasing of prepackaged experiences that developed over time (Bolen, 2001). Throughout this article, I contend that the slogans, such as global citizenship and citizen ambassadors, that are currently dominating the field are reiterations of a history that redefines the purpose of study abroad to fit with the needs of a country trying to reconcile with the ever-expanding impact of globalization. Currently, key themes in the literature focus on study abroad as a tool for inter-cultural competency development (e.g., Cushner & Chang, 2015; Deardorff, 2008), transformative learning (e.g., erg et al., 2012), job attainment (e.g., wyer & Peters, 2004; Liwiński, 2018), and academic advancement (e.g., O'Rear et al., 2012; Raby et al., 2014). Another growing theme in the literature is the return on investment (ROI) of study abroad, particularly as the U.S. public increasingly scrutinizes the value of higher education in terms of economic mobility and employment outcomes. Are these benefits a reflection of the practice of study abroad or are they a part of a consumer ethos that is concerned with presenting an image that separates itself from the crowd? It is imperative that both higher education administrators and policymakers examine the historical origins and the development of study abroad rationale within U.S. higher education to ensure they are not forcing expectations on something that was never meant or designed to accomplish.

This article investigates, by way of study abroad, the rationales behind the push for internationalization within U.S. higher education. Throughout, I contend that the lack of a conceptual and theoretical framework for internationalization within U.S. higher education have led institutions, policymakers, and students to concern themselves with how the practice enhances their reputation rather than its actual utility (Mestenhauser & Ellingboe, 1998; Qiang, 2003). Overall, this article challenges the ways in which we approach global mobility in higher education and calls for a new approach to this practice in the twenty-first century.

In this article, I delve deep into rationales behind the growth of study abroad throughout the twentieth century. The article is divided into seven sections. In the first section, I provide a brief overview of the current literature that explores the history of U.S. study abroad throughout the twentieth century. Throughout the second section, I investigate the literature that has linked study abroad with U.S. consumerism. The third section explores the key thoughts of Baudrillard's view of U.S. consumerism as well as his theory of hyper-reality. His theory of hyper-reality, which he defines as the "meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another, reproductive medium" (Wolfreys et al., 2013, p. 52), challenges the current narratives that have been associated with study abroad within U.S. higher education. In section four, I investigate the early origins and rationale of U.S. student mobility by looking at the concept of the Grand Tour. Section five highlights the rationale that led to the massive increase in U.S. global mobility, as well as the government overhaul of university internationalization efforts throughout the Cold War. Section six highlights the effect of the end of the Cold War on U.S. study abroad efforts. Along with some closing thoughts, the final section analyzes the rationale for study abroad in the twenty-first century. Throughout, I challenge the long-held origins of study abroad in U.S. higher education by placing the practice within the wider framework of U.S. capitalism and the struggle for hegemony and calls for a different kind of intentionality to this practice in the twenty-first century.

2. Literature Review

While the historical evolution of study abroad within the U.S. higher education system has been explored by researchers (de Wit, 2002; Dulles, 1964; Gore, 2005; Hoffa, 2007; Hoffa & Depaul, 2010), rarely have scholars placed the

study abroad phenomenon within the greater context of the significant shifts in the hegemonic order in the global economy throughout the twentieth century. In their two-volume work, *A History of U.S. Study Abroad*, Hoffa's (2007) and Hoffa and DePaul's (2010) presented the most comprehensive historical overview of study abroad within U.S. higher education. Throughout their research, they pieced together an intriguing narrative that shed light on the events that influenced the discourse on study abroad within higher education over the years. While their work is the most complete historical study of U.S. abroad, it was not the first.

Utilizing Foucault's discourse theory as a method for understanding the role of study abroad in U.S. higher education, Gore (2005) investigated how clichés about study abroad have influenced the perception of the practice in U.S. higher education over time. She explored how dominant beliefs have marginalized study abroad and how alternative voices have expressed its value. By adapting Foucault's methodology, Gore was able to highlight how dominant perspectives of the practice in higher education coalesced into a coherent and powerful discourse that devalued the practice amongst those in the education community (p. 161). Throughout, she argues for a new discourse on study abroad that challenges old beliefs of the practice in higher education.

De Wit (2002) provided an in-depth analysis on the growth of internationalization within institutions of higher education throughout Europe and the U.S. throughout the twentieth century. He explored the rationale behind this growth, its meaning and approaches, and the variety of strategies and organizational models that were utilized to inform efforts. Both of their narratives provided a general overview to the themes that dominate recent internationalization and study abroad research, but due to the width of their scope, they failed to thoroughly address the significance of the Cold War on the U.S. approach to higher education.

While many historical narratives have drawn attention to the exponential growth of study abroad in U.S. higher education throughout the Cold War, researchers fall short in their analysis on the rationale behind this push for increased global mobility. Furthermore, their research fails to question the shifts in rationale of study abroad over time. I seek to expand on their work by exploring the growth of study abroad within the context of the war of ideologies.

3. Consumerism and Study Abroad

Many researchers have investigated how consumer culture has permeated U.S. study abroad. Over the years, authors have explored the influence of U.S. consumer culture on student learning experiences (Feinberg, 2002), the rise of consumer terminology and imagery in study abroad (Reilly & Senders, 2009; Zemach-Bersin, 2009), and the links between consumerism and colonial attitudes within U.S. study abroad (Ogden, 2008). The most notable research article on this topic, Bolen's (2001) "Consumerism and U.S. Study Abroad", explored the development of study abroad marketing and advertising tactics within the larger historical frameworks of U.S. higher education and consumerism.

Bolen's (2001) research investigated the "intertwining elements of higher education history, study abroad practices, and consumer culture theories in an attempt to outline the policy and practical implications of consumerism in study abroad" (p. 182). Throughout the article, she presented a compelling history of the commercialization of U.S. study abroad throughout the twentieth century. She argued that in the latter part of the twentieth century, similar to U.S. higher education, study abroad entered into "consumer ethos" in which identity formation and the meaning of life were to be found in the buying of prepackaged experiences (Bolen, 2001, p. 187). Bolen's research was the first to situate study abroad within the wider growth trends in U.S. higher education. Furthermore, her use of different consumer theories as a lens to explore the commodification of study abroad does well in revealing the links between consumerism and identity.

While Bolen's historical narrative sheds light on the influences that drove the growth of this practice in higher education in the twentieth century, her analysis failed to thoroughly identify the causes of shifts in attitudes toward U.S. study abroad overtime. This article expands on Bolen's research by placing a magnifier lens on the historical events that have influenced the rationale of study abroad programming in U.S. higher education throughout the twentieth century. Unlike the author's mentioned in this section, I contend that the growth of this practice within U.S. higher education, over the years, is the result of study abroad signifying something more than a commodity. By placing the history of study abroad within the framework of Baudrillard's hyper-reality, I highlight

how the representation of study abroad in U.S. higher education became more indispensable than its actual utilization.

4. Baudrillard and Hyper-Reality

Baudrillard, a French sociologist and cultural theorist, has been well cited for his post-modern views and critique of U.S. society and culture. Instead of analyzing society through economic structures, Baudrillard chose to study society through the way they consume. His books explore the symbolic aspects of objects and analyze how they are interpreted and valued in contemporary society. Throughout his works, he contends that postmodern society is a consumer society, and declares the U.S. to be the greatest consumer of the contemporary world (Baudrillard & Turner, 1992).

Through this lens of consumerism, Baudrillard contends that objects are not only valued by their utility but by what they represent (Baudrillard, 1998). Therefore, when a consumer purchases an object it signifies something more than a commodity. While the object has use-value, an economic term used to describe how a thing meets a human need; it also stands for a sign of the consumer's rank, social understanding, and prestige (Habib, 2018).

Similar to Bolen's research (2001), Baudrillard (1968) points out that individuals have a deep desire to distinguish themselves from others through the system of social differentiation, a sociological concept that concerns itself with the process by which the different roles of the members of a society become institutionalized. In a consumer society, the consumer displays what they buy in order to differentiate themselves culturally. Within this consumer system of social differentiation, the utilization of the object is not as important as what it does to differentiate the consumer from the masses. An example of this is when a student chooses a university because of its ranking before considering how the curriculum meets their educational goals. For Baudrillard, the moment an object is purchased for its sign rather than its utility, the consumer is "owned" by the object (1968). In that moment, the object represents something that moves far beyond its mere utility into pure sign; the signifier preceded the signified (Baudrillard, 1994). Therefore, the consumption is not natural but rather cultural, and the consumer is constantly under pressure of sign to preserve their differentiation (Habib, 2018). Throughout his works, Baudrillard explores how the consumption of sign instead of use has led to objects being entrenched with

meaning that is not there. He contends that this process, of adding meaning or signs to objects that go beyond their utility, moves the consumer from reality to illusion.

In Baudrillard's (1994a) most notable work, *Simulacra and Simulation*, he captures how societies search for meaning that consistently remains out of reach (Baudrillard, 1994). Baudrillard believes that consumer society has drifted so far from objects being valued for their use that exchange-value is only between signs. In this world, signs have no resemblance to reality. Furthermore, he argues that the human need for social differentiation has pushed society to a point in which the representation of an object is viewed as more "real" than the actual object. The process in which an image is no longer a reflection of itself is defined by Baudrillard as simulacra. Baudrillard defines simulacra as a copy of a copy which has been so repeatedly acknowledged that it has come to be accepted as more real than the original. He contends that these events do not occur all of a sudden, but change through history gradually (Hegarty, 2004).

Throughout *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard outlines the four successive phases of the image, which leads to the final stage of hyper-reality or simulacrum; "(a) it is the reflection of a profound reality; (b) it masks and denatures a profound reality; (c) it masks the absence of a profound reality; and (d) it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (p. 6).

For Baudrillard, stage one of the transition into hyper-reality takes place when the reflection of the original image is a basic reality. In this stage, the image is a clear sign of the real and is widely accepted as an illusion that reflects a profound reality (ex. purchasing a hand-painted copy of a Van Gogh from amazon). Stage two of hyper-reality is the masking and perversion of the original image. In this stage, the distinction between the image and its representation start to become blurred (ex. purchasing a digitally rendered Van Gogh). The image does not clearly reveal reality, but hints at the existence of an ambiguous reality that the image itself cannot encapsulate. Stage three, which he views as the pivotal transition into hyper-reality, takes place when the original version is masked to the point that the image is only determined by its representation (ex. the digitally rendered Van Gogh is more popular and accepted than the original). In this phase, the original version of an object has no real significance because it no longer exist; what remains is an image that

claims to represent a faithful copy, but it is a copy with no original. Finally, stage four of hyper-reality, which Baudrillard terms 'pure simulacrum', is when the image bears no relation to any reality (ex. a digitally rendered copy of the digitally rendered Van Gogh is being purchased on amazon). At this stage, signs merely reflect other signs and any claim to reality on the part of images or signs is only of the order of other such claims. He contends that, at this stage, reality dies out and hyper-reality sets in (Baudrillard, 1994). In hyper-reality, entities and phenomena are imbued with characteristics they do not and cannot have, yet are treated as though they do (Hehir, 2011).

Hehir (2011) points out that Baudrillard believed Western society, due to rise of consumer capitalism, was engaged in a constant process of self-delusion, "where illusions had come to replace reality and the capacity of liberal democracy to attain perfection had become an article of faith" (p. 1077). This process of self-delusion is clearly seen throughout the twentieth century, in which the U.S. was so obsessed with identity and self-differentiation –or lack thereof- that it made one up to counter Soviet propaganda (Baudrillard, 1998; Hehir, 2011). In the context of U.S. higher education and study abroad, this has been manifest in the desire to promote study abroad as a tool of Western cooperation and goodwill (ex. global citizenship, intercultural competency, mutual understanding), which does not equate with the original practice of study abroad but rather with an idealized composite rendering of study abroad.

Evidence of Baudrillard's theory can be identified in the general discourse on study abroad throughout the twentieth century. The historical overview that follows examines the early conceptions of study abroad within U.S. higher education and the shifts in rationale of this practice at the start and end of the Cold War. Throughout, I highlight how the U.S. desire to counter Soviet ideology led to the characterization of higher education global mobility as a tool to improve international relations and strengthen U.S. competitiveness in the age of globalization. I contend that the consumption of U.S. study abroad as sign dates back to its earliest foundations in higher education, and the mass consumption of this practice (by students, higher education institutions, and government) was not natural, but rather forced under pressure of sign to preserve differentiation; leading to an illusion of its capabilities.

5. The Grand Tour: Symbolic Order

Most of the study abroad literature that investigates its' origins within U.S. higher education begin with the "European Grand Tour" (de Wit, 2002; Dulles, 1964; Gore, 2005; Gürüz, 2011; Hoffa, 2007). While the idiom can be traced back to the seventeenth century, in which young European men of position traveled to major cities throughout Western Europe to complete their informal education, the U.S. adaption to this concept did not begin until the early nineteenth century (Gore, 2005; Hoffa, 2007; Sweet, 2012). The popularity of the Grand Tour amongst U.S. elites was a result of the rise in consumerism and the mass production of printed information throughout the early nineteenth century (Black, 2011). Throughout this period, "young Americans with no such social pretenses or aspirations, but with the nerve of wherewithal to travel on their own, took off for a year or more of unplanned experiences" (Hoffa, 2007, p. 31).

Within the U.S., Grand Tours were representative of rites of passage to adulthood for young wealthy white men. Women's participation was far more restricted due to societal norms and educational access, though some upper-class women did undertake limited study or travel experiences abroad. For many Americans "the pursuit of study in Europe was considered the final touch to their cultural integration into American society" (de Wit, 2002, p. 9). Black (2011) contends that the motive behind foreign travel, at that time, was influenced by the belief that certain social skills and knowledge could not be attained without travel outside of one's own country. Furthermore, Hoffa (2007) points out that, due to a lack of academic qualifications of U.S. students, the Grand Tour provided a substitute for young U.S. elite to engage with European high society without being admitted into their degree granting institutions. Throughout this period, young adults from wealthy backgrounds traveled to Italy, Germany, France, Austria, and Great Britain for the purpose of leisure and personal development (Contreas, 2015).

When placed in Baudrillard's theory, the Grand Tour was not only consumed as a leisurely break away from the mundane U.S. society, but also as a sign of the consumer's rank, social understanding, and prestige. Baudrillard (1994) would classify this image of travel as the first of his four phases of sign; in which the "image is a reflection of a profound reality" (p. 6). Throughout this

period, U.S. travel to Europe meant more than going from one place to another; it represented one's cultural edification (Gore, 2005). Through the lens of the U.S. consumer, travel to Europe was the reflection of one's societal rank; which faithfully represented a basic reality of the economic gaps in U.S. society (Baudrillard, 1994).

The Grand Tour as a sign of societal rank is a time in history that Baudrillard (1983) defines as the symbolic order. The symbolic order is described as a time in which "signs are limited in number, and are not widely diffused, each one functions with its full value as interdiction, each is a reciprocal obligation between castes, clans, or person" (p. 84). For Baudrillard, the limited access to travel abroad represented a feudal or archaic society in which only those of higher cast and rank were able to partake. The end of the symbolic order takes place when the limited access becomes boundless.

Phase two of Baudrillard's successive phases of hyper-reality would come in the early twentieth century, in which institutes of higher education incorporated travel abroad into their curriculum to address the improved U.S. positioning in the global economy. The incorporation and mass production of travel abroad in U.S. higher education curriculum perverted the image of travel abroad by masking this socio economic indicator as an educational practice with multiple signs.

6. Creation of U.S. Study Abroad: Counterfeit

Baudrillard (1983) contends that "competitive democracy succeeds the endogamy of signs proper to statutory order" (p. 85). From a few thousand travelers in the early 1800's, the U.S. participation in Grand Tours increased to nearly thirty thousand at the start of the twentieth century (Dulles, 1966). The growth of participation over this period is a direct result of the rise of the Gilded Age in the U.S., in which the economy experienced rapid growth through the expansion of industrialization. The development of transcontinental railroads and the increased production of ocean liners made travel to the Europe much more accessible (Schriber, 1997; Stowe, 1994). The rise of a middle class and increase in global mobility distorted the of the Grand Tour as a signifier one's value and position in society in the early twentieth century (Contreras, 2015; Sweet, 2012). This distortion would turn to counterfeit as U.S. higher education implemented travel abroad into their programs of study.

By the time U.S. higher education adopted the practice of travel abroad into their curriculum, a World War took place, the creation land grant institutions expanded access to education (Lucas, 1994), and the U.S. found them self in a favorable economic position on the world stage (Schulzinger, 2008). From 1919 to 1945, masked with the rationale of career advancement, national security, and foreign employment, U.S. institutes of higher education added new signs to travel abroad due to the demand of the growing economy and desire to supplant the image of the Grand Tour.

By the end of World War I, the U.S had found themselves in a position of great influence on the world stage. This newfound authority brought the U.S. out of isolationism and into diplomacy (Schulzinger, 2008). Within higher education, this new positioning prompted a rise of what Spring (2001) defines as the Americanization of the curriculum. He states that, "Americanization meant cultural imperialism and the building of a national spirit that was suspicious of foreign countries and ways of living" (Spring, 2001, p. 225). In a country inhabited by many different immigrant populations, U.S. policymakers believed that the deculturalization was essential to developing a national identity that could not be penetrated by radical political ideas such as socialism and communism (Spring, 2001). The departure from isolationism also meant that the U.S. needed to learn more about the world they were seeking to foster.

In their description of the effects World War I on U.S. higher education curriculum, Goodwin and Nacht (1988) state:

The demonstrated unpreparedness of the United State to comprehend the process of which it was part, both during World War I and at the Peace Conference afterward, suggested to many young Americans the need to both understand other countries better and to reflect on different ways to arrange relations among states. The study of international relations increased in the United States between the war, with practitioners lodged both in universities and in nongovernmental research institutions like the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Brookings Institution. (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988, p. 3)

De Wit (2002) points out that the rationale for internationalization in U.S. higher education after World War I was rooted in economic positioning and the promotion of peace and mutual understanding. He contends that the dark cloud of destruction that resulted from World War I provided "a new impetus to travel

abroad” (p. 23). The belief that economic stability, peace, and understanding could be gained through people educating themselves about the other culture, while noble, was also deeply rooted in a fear of another world war (de Wit, 2002).

From 1919 to 1925, there were three major events that took place to usher in the era of study abroad programming within higher education. They were (a) the 1919 creation of the Institute of International Education; (b) the development of the first credit approved year abroad program within University of Delaware; and (c) the development of the Smith College Junior Year in France program in 1925.

The 1919 development of the Institute of International Education (IIE), an independent nonprofit, nongovernmental national organization that promoted peace through educational exchange, was crucial to the growth of study abroad programming across all U.S. universities. IIE was created to respond to the need for a national entity that could mediate between government policies and college and university programming (Hoffa, 2007). By taking the lead in recommending standardization of study abroad programming amongst U.S. universities, the IIE opened the doors to U.S. universities viewing travel abroad as a critical practice to formal undergraduate curriculum rather than an extracurricular activity for personal leisure (Hoffa, 2007).

From 1919 to 1939, the Institute of International Education (IIE) thrived within the field of international education. Throughout this era, IIE played a significant role in the creation of non-immigrant visas for international students coming to study in the U.S., and the first Russia (1934), China (1936), and Argentina (1939) study abroad programs designed for American students (Lee, 2012). It is important to note that, once the initial IIE funding from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ran out, the U.S. State Department provided funding to ensure that the organization would continue to thrive. Federal funding would play a crucial role in shifting the purpose of the IIE throughout the Cold War. By establishing themselves as the link between government aims and university curriculum, the IIE was the first organization to create a pattern in which the U.S. government looked to higher education to play a critical role in U.S. foreign policy.

While the Institute of International Education was hard at work in expanding U.S. influence through international education, Kirkbride, assistant

professor of French at University of Delaware, was busy advocating for a foreign study plan that was distinct from the Grand Tour. Contreras (2015) explains that Kirkbride's foreign study plan was fourfold. He states, "it sought to improve international understanding in the students, increase U.S. effectiveness and efficiency in foreign trade, broaden U.S. vision of world affairs, and to stimulate and liberalize U.S. college education" (p. 243). Interestingly enough, what was missing from the language of his proposal were any references to the Grand Tour. Kirkbride's emphasis on understanding the world economy and possibilities for future employment represented a distinct shift in the way travel abroad was promoted within higher education. Kirkbride's emphasis on import/export employment opportunities, after engaging in his program, with companies like Macy's, Gillette Razor, and Eastman Kodak, represented an acquisition that went beyond the "rite of passage" narrative that dominated the early days of the Grand Tour (Contreras, 2015). In 1923, with the full support of his university president, Kirkbride led eight men to France on a University of Delaware credit approved yearlong study abroad program.

Throughout the twentieth century, Kirkbride's foreign study plan would be duplicated across U.S. universities. Although the University of Delaware's first approved study abroad program was all male, the women were not far behind. Unlike University of Delaware, the Smith College credit approved study abroad program focused more on a curriculum in language and culture.

Cattanes, professor of French at Smith College, was the driving force behind the first credit approved study abroad program within her institution. In 1924, Cattanes approached her president with a program proposal that was designed "for students with advanced knowledge of French language to spend their junior year living in France studying special languages and culture courses at Sorbonne in Paris living with local host families" (Contreras, 2015, p.245). The program's specific emphasis on structure, academics, and cultural acquisition represented a break from the Grand Tour narrative of leisure, escape, and social articulacy that dominated the rationale for global mobility with women in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1925, Smith College, a private women's liberal arts college, was responsible for the creation and coining of the term "Junior Year Abroad" (JYA). In her first year, Cattanes selected 32 women of high academic standing and proficient French language ability to lead to France for a year (Hoffa, 2007).

Baudrillard (1983) believes that the development of a counterfeit takes place when the object of consumption passes from a limited order of signs, which prohibit free production, to a proliferation of signs according to demand (p. 85). Bolen (2001) points out that the consumers of these signs remained the same. Limited programming and high program cost ensured that only those of certain economic classes could have access to the experience. Throughout the early twentieth century, the demand of travel abroad was based on multiple signs. No longer solely representing a sign of societal rank, travel abroad in this period represented national security for future U.S. policymakers, academic elitism for the high academic standing student, and job placement advantage for the student looking to engage with the world economy. Bolen (2001) argues that, similar to higher education, the marketing of study abroad as a means to improve societal rank (through education or earnings) fit into consumer ethos. Baudrillard contends that when “the sign multiplied no longer resembles, in the slightest, the obliged sign of limited diffusion; it is counterfeit, not by corruption of an ‘original’, but by extension of a material whose very clarity depended on the restriction by which it was bound” (p. 85).

The proliferation of rationales to travel abroad went beyond socioeconomic standing to represent an image that does not clearly reveal reality. In an attempt to differentiate study abroad from the rhetoric of the Grand Tour, institutes of U.S. higher education inundated travel abroad with signs itself cannot encapsulate. While travel abroad cannot singularly guarantee national security, employment, or cultural acquisition, research suggests that it has contributed to the development of globally competent policymakers, provided students with career clarity and competitive advantages in job markets, and deepened linguistic and cultural understanding. Yet, institutes of higher education branded study abroad with these identities, which would later play a crucial role during the Cold War; a time when study abroad was consumed as sign to combat Soviet ideology.

From 1938- 1946, there was a brief suspension of promoting efforts to study abroad due to the chaos that ensued all throughout the world. De Witt (2002) argues that World War II (WWII) underlined the need for more curriculum focused on international area studies and languages that fell outside of the European scope. He contends that national security and foreign policy became the driving force behind the consumption of these programs in higher

education. The Cold War drastically amplified these education initiatives after WWII and U.S. government funding ensured these programs would thrive in a post-WWII world. Once the war was over and international borders were re-opened, the overhauling of U.S. study abroad programming by the government was not far behind. During this period, the U.S. government financially supported and embraced study abroad in U.S. higher education because of its sign as national security; a sign that had no bearings on reality.

7. Study Abroad and the Cold War: Order of Sorcery

In Baudrillard's (1983) theory of hyper-reality, the third successive phase of the image masks the absence of a basic reality. He defines it as an "order of sorcery" due to the fact that the image has no original but pretends to be a faithful copy (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 12). In this phase, what drives consumption is not necessarily need, but rather marketing and advertising. In relation to study abroad, the exponential growth that resulted from the Cold War was directly connected with the U.S. desire to promote an identity that combated Soviet ideology.

Baudrillard (1998, p. 61) states:

You never consume the object in itself; you are always manipulating objects as signs which distinguish you either by affiliating you to your own group as an ideal reference or by marking you off from your group by reference to a group of higher status.

Throughout this period, the U.S. federal government called for the mass consumption of study abroad to fulfill an image of the U.S. that was just as manufactured as the product itself. As Bolen (2001, p. 186) contends,

consumerism's message of instant gratification leads participants to expect that a culture that took thousands of years to form will be quickly and easily available to them. She continues, "they purchased this knowledge by buying the program, and so the program gets blamed if cultural understanding remains elusive.

During this period, the U.S. policymakers looked to study abroad to convey democracy among nations on the cusp of communism and accused the practice of being ineffective when the results did not match their needs.

As the dust settled from World War II, where some 40 million soldiers and civilians lost their lives, the United States and the Soviet Union stood far above all other countries as influencers on how the world should move forward. Prominent Cold War historian, Melvyn P. Leffler (2008), describes the Cold War as “the struggle for the soul of mankind” (p. 8). Ideological differences would set the stage for a war that would be fought on the lands of emerging nations. In his examination on the impact of the Cold War within U.S. curriculum, Pinar (2011) argues that Cold War anxieties caused the Eisenhower and Kennedy presidential administrations to mobilize and make public education more arduous. The 1957 launch of Soviet artificial satellite, Sputnik I, sparked an educational curriculum movement that shifted from the development of “life skills” to focus on producing the “best and brightest” to compete on a global scale (Osgood, 2008; Schulzinger, 2008). After the launch of Sputnik I, the American public educational system was scrutinized by policymakers and educators for being “slack” and many called for a stronger and more rigorous approach to education within the school system (Bruner, 2002; Pinar, 2011).

The growth of physical fitness, mathematics, science, and engineering programs within public education institutions were a direct response to the ever-growing fear of losing global military and economic influence to the Soviet Union (Gregg, 2016). Along with the shift in classroom curriculum, educational exchange and study abroad programming within institutions of higher education, throughout the U.S, underwent a dramatic modification in order to meet the needs of federal government initiatives (Bu, 1999). Once study abroad efforts began again, a new voice emerged as the advocates of study abroad...the U.S. government.

From 1948 to 1969, educational exchange and study abroad programming within higher education were consumed as sign by the U.S. government to promote U.S. ideology and advance foreign policy goals (Mikhailova, 2002). During this period, study abroad was financially supported, not because of what it does, but because of what it represented to U.S. policymakers; an ethical counter to Soviet propaganda. In 1946, there were two major creations that set the stage for a U.S. government overhaul of study abroad programming in higher education. The first was the creation of the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC) within the State Department and the second was the creation of the Fulbright Act.

On January 1, 1946, guided by Secretary of State William Benton, the U.S. established its first post-World War II cultural/informational agency, called the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (OIC). This agency was sponsored by President Truman; who declared that “the nature of present-day foreign relations makes it essential for the United States to maintain informational activities abroad as an integral part of the conduct of our foreign affairs” (Iriye, 2006, p. 46). The “informational activities” of the Truman administration were “to provide a full and fair picture of American life and of the aims and policies of the U.S. government” (p. 46). Managed by the Department of State, this agency ran both cultural and information programs abroad. The Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs’ (OIC) fundamental aim was to “advance the cause of peace through fostering clearer reciprocal understanding between the people of the US and those of other nations.” The creation of the Fulbright Act soon followed.

Senator William Fulbright introduced a bill in U.S. Congress that called for the use of proceeds from the sale of surplus war property to fund the promotion of international goodwill through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture, and science. Instead of a mass U.S. information or propaganda endeavor, Senator Fulbright proposed a scholarship bill that would soon lay the groundwork for the first large-scale effort by the U.S. government in the field of international educational exchange. Senator Fulbright believed that this program would remove cultural blinders, foster tolerance, and create a sense of public service to those who, like him, were dedicated to the promotion of peace and cultural understanding (Woods, 1987).

The 1946 Fulbright Act was designed to discontinue once the funding from the sale of surplus war property ran out. Fulbright designed the program this way in order to avoid influence from State Department programming operated by the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs, but his efforts fell short as the U.S. government appointed a Board of Foreign Scholarships. This board, which had substantial control of the direction of the program, consisted of members that represented cultural, educational, student and war veteran groups. There were also representatives from the United States Office of Education, the United States Veteran’s Administration, State educational institutions, and privately endowed educational institutions. Soon after the board was appointed, a vote was cast to allow for the U.S. Department

of State to manage all Fulbright scholarship recipients overseas. This decision established a link between the Fulbright program and Department of State that allowed for educational exchanges and informational activities to be ran as one operation (Sussman, 1992).

In 1948, President Truman signed into law the Smith-Mundt Act, also known as the U.S. Informational and Educational Cultural Exchange Act. The Smith-Mundt Act provided federal funding to U.S. non-profit organizations that promoted and facilitated international educational exchange programs with U.S. universities. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA), two very influential organizations to this day, were both funded through the Smith-Mundt Act in the early 1950s and became, as Bu (1999) contends, contractors for U.S. Cold War policy objectives. The Institute of International Education (IIE) also followed suit and received federal funding from the State Department to track the flow of students in and out of the United States for college-level study. As part of the funding requirements, these organizations had to ensure that their programming coincided with U.S. foreign policy initiatives (Hoffa, 2007; Mikhailova, 2002). It is important to note that this same act funded U.S. propaganda machines such as Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, the National Committee for a Free Europe, and the American Committee for Liberation were information programs used as weapons to combat communist propaganda with U.S. government money (Bu, 2003; Kellerman, 1978).

From 1960 to 1965, U.S. higher education government sponsored study abroad programming reached its height of financial support in the Cold War era. This period also witnessed an unparalleled growth of participation of U.S. students going abroad and international students studying in the U.S. The Institute of International Education reported that in 1955, about 9,500 U.S. students and 300 U.S. faculty members participated in international education programs overseas. By 1965, the IIE reported more 20,000 U.S. students and nearly 4,000 U.S. faculty members abroad (Open Doors, 1970). Throughout this period, the U.S. government viewed informational and educational programming as a tool for the promotion of peace and understanding, while also utilizing military force to contain perceived threats of communism. Interestingly enough, the tremendous amount of funding allotted to U.S. government sponsored educational and cultural exchange activities, was what

brought government support for these types of programs to a screeching halt under the Nixon Administration.

The Nixon administration was not as supportive of educational and cultural exchanges as their predecessors were. At a meeting with congressional leaders, held on February 1970, President Richard Nixon said he “eschewed gushy optimism of any kind,” adding, “some Americans think that we can rely on peace by sending a few Fulbright scholars abroad...but that doesn’t bring peace. We can avoid war if we are realistic and not softheaded” (Iriye, 2006 p. 160). During the 1970 appropriations hearing on mutual educational and cultural exchange activities, Senator Rooney justified some very severe budget cuts for exchange activities the previous year, stating that, “It seems we have too many of these leeches who have attached themselves to the Federal payroll under this program who are living on it.” He explained, “It does not mean a darn thing because our relations with countries are worse than they ever were” (Scholarship Plan is Hard Hit Again, 1970).

For Baudrillard (1994), the pivotal transition into hyper-reality takes place when the original version is masked to the point that the image is only determined by its representation. He states that, at this stage, the image “plays at being an appearance” (p. 6). During the Cold War, the U.S. government support of study abroad programming resulted in an unparalleled growth of both American and foreign student exchange. Shifting from mostly western European study tours, U.S. government sponsored programming widened their global scope and conducted exchanges in over 110 countries throughout this period. Attempting to differentiate themselves from Soviet propaganda tactics, U.S. policymakers presumed that the allocation and mass distribution of U.S. culture, through educational and cultural exchange, would win the ideological war against communists, but their attitudes soon dulled as the war heated up. Throughout this period, study abroad was both funded and defunded based on its sign as national security.

For U.S. policymakers, study abroad represented a counter-narrative to Soviet propaganda, a tool to better improve U.S. image abroad, a means to maintain economic hegemony, and an instrument of peace; delusional features that were so far removed from the original image of the practice, that it represented something entirely different. When the idealized representation did not live up to the reality, federal funding was drastically decreased.

However, this decrease in funding did not prompt an exploration into the underlying assumptions around the actual utilization of study abroad and the rationale behind its growth. Moreover, the end of the Cold War only increased the impetus to provide an identity to study abroad in a post-Cold War society.

8. Study Abroad and Post-Cold War: Divine Irreverence

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of the Cold War. Once again, global geopolitical conflict reconfigured the domestic politics of U.S. higher education, and with that, the approach to study abroad. The federal government had enlisted institutions of higher education throughout World War II (WWII) and the Cold War to serve a central role in building a distinctively American version of modernity. Stevens (2018) points out that, throughout WWII and the Cold War, government support of higher education was a central element of the American state. He argues that the massive federal investment for basic research and college credentials was “disbursed through a diffuse network of schools” and “were presumed to be agents of service, simultaneously, to their own local constituencies and to U.S. national interests worldwide” (p. 15). Once the Cold War ended, the close partnership between the federal government and higher education rapidly deteriorated.

No longer bound by the common foe of foreign influence, the two parted ways. Unfortunately, this parting left U.S. higher education underfunded and looking for ways to redefine itself. During the 30 years between 1949 and 1979, higher education enrollments increased by more than nine million students, a growth of almost 400 %. From 2.4 million in 1949, U.S. higher education enrollment hit a high of around 14 million in the 1990s (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Federal funding during the Cold War for research grew from \$13 billion in 1953 to \$104 in 1990, an increase of 700 % (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2014). Fear of losing the battle of ideologies was a driving force in the drastic expansion of U.S. higher education enrollment and program development throughout the Cold War. Federal funding for research in higher education institutions, as well as a major push to increase both national and international student enrollment, expanded access to higher education beyond the economic elite. However, significant barriers

remained, and it would not be accurate to claim that the majority of U.S. young adults benefited from these changes immediately.

The decrease in federal funding after the collapse of the Soviet Union triggered a new wave of competitiveness in U.S. higher education, one in which U.S. institutions were jockeying for higher enrollments and international influence to maintain and expand their budgets in a post-Cold War society. One driven by capitalism. This competitiveness came in the form of admissions standards, privatization of research, expanded curricular program offerings, extracurricular activities, and internationalization (Altbach et al., 2011).

Bolen (2001) points out that, in 1992, federal financial aid became explicitly available for study abroad students. This federal aid created a mass market for study abroad in U.S. higher education, thus leading institutions to personalize the practice in order to differentiate it from others to attract consumers. This, in turn, led to massive advertising campaigns that further severed the tenuous relationship between reality and signification. Baudrillard (1998) contends that advertising has no meaning. He states that advertising “merely conveys significations” and that these significations are never personal and are all differential; “they are all marginal and combinatorial” (p. 88).

For many higher education administrators and U.S. policymakers, study abroad remains an imperative practice for improving U.S. foreign relations and maintaining U.S. economic positioning on the world stage. Furthermore, educators have found ways to include new meanings to this practice in higher education by including metrics which evaluate characteristics such as global competence and citizenship; further disconnecting the practice from a basic reality (Engle, 2013; Wong, 2015).

In speaking on the divine irreverence of images, Baudrillard (1994, p. 3) stated that:

To dissimulate is to feign not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one has not. One implies a presence, the other an absence. But the matter is more complicated, since to simulate is not simply to feign: Someone who feigns an illness can simply go to bed and pretend he is ill. Someone who simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms. Thus, feigning or dissimulating leaves the reality principle intact: the difference is always clear, it is only masked; whereas

simulation threatens the difference between true and false, between real and imaginary.

8. Closing Thoughts: Verge of Simulation

So, where are we now in the twenty-first century? Baudrillard's (1994) final stage of simulation takes place when the image "has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (p. 6). Our ability to identify the rationales behind the growth of study abroad throughout the twentieth century is an indicator that we have not yet crossed into simulacrum. However, we are at a critical point in our history in which we must critically assess whether the benefits of study abroad are being overstated or selectively framed to align with constructed narratives, rather than fully embracing a more nuanced and evidence-based understanding of its impact. Over the last twenty years, there have been renewed efforts and interests to increase the participation rates in study abroad programs across U.S. institutions of higher education. Interestingly enough, these efforts have been situated on the belief that U.S. student mobility can (still) improve international relations and strengthen national security.

On April 19, 2000, President Clinton, in a memorandum to the head executives of departments and agencies of the U.S. government, stated that:

To continue to compete successfully in a global economy and to maintain our role as world leader, the United States needs to ensure that its citizens develop a broad understanding of the world, proficiency in other languages, and knowledge of other cultures. (Clinton, 2000)

In the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the American Council on Education (2002) published *Beyond September 11: A Comprehensive National Policy on International Education*, in which they urgently called on the federal government to move toward a "new" national policy that would prioritize international education. It stated:

Like the challenge of Sputnik in 1957, the attacks of September 11 have brought America's international preparedness to a crossroads. The global transformation of the last decade have created an unparalleled need in the United States for expanded international knowledge and skills. But the nation is unready. And our future success or failure in international endeavors will rely almost entirely on the global competence of our people. (p.7)

Johnson (2002), who was associate executive director of public policy at the National Association of International Educators (NAFSA) at the time, asserted that “international education is a national security issue”, since “the globalization of terror has propelled those of us who promote globalization of education ineluctably into the policy arena” (p. 3).

In 2019, the Institute of International Education (IIE) published its annual report, *Open Doors (2019)*, which highlighted that 341,751 U.S. students studied abroad for credit for the 2017-2018 academic year. Redden (2019) points out that the number of students studying abroad has grown steadily over the last 25 years, and that the “IIE estimates that about 10.9% of all undergraduates (including community college students), and 16% of all students enrolled in baccalaureate programs, study abroad at some point during their degree program.” The American Academic Council on Education reported more than 90% of colleges and universities across the U.S. are offering study abroad programming options to their students (Green et al., 2008; Helms et al., 2017; Twombly et al., 2012). I argue that the numbers, while impressive, are motivated by a proliferation of study abroad myths that are not rooted in reality.

In reflecting on the concept of internationalization in higher education, Brandenburg and de Witt (2015, p. 16) stated that:

Today, internationalization has become the white knight of higher education, the moral ground that needs to be defended, and the epitome of justice and equity... Internationalization has become a synonym of “doing good”, and people are less into questioning its effectiveness and essential nature.

When the foundation is weak, the entire structure is in jeopardy. Throughout, I have highlighted how the very foundation of study abroad in U.S. higher education was built on a consumer ethos that was more concerned about presenting an image that separates itself from the masses, than its actual utilization.

Baudrillard (1994, pp. 6-7) states that:

When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. There is an escalation of the true, of the lived experience; a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. And there is a panic-stricken

production of the real and the referential... This is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us: a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal, whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence.

As higher education professionals, policymakers, and advocates for international education, we have agency on where this field moves in the twenty-first century; therefore the responsibility is on us to determine the utilization of study abroad in U.S. higher education moving forward. We are in a moment of time in which we can gaze outside of the simulation. In order to break from this cycle of consumption of signs, we must question the foundation in which the structure was built upon. For study abroad in U.S. higher education, we must interrogate the “why” for this practice within our places of learning. We must bring into question the advertising and marketing tactics used to influence students to study abroad, and challenge the rationale behind the metrics used to evaluate competency and learning.

Finally, in examining the justification of this practice throughout history, we must decide if the path taken for study abroad in U.S higher education is one that best prepares students for the global era or one that further moves them toward simulacrum.

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