Research Article

Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad

Volume 36, Issue 3, pp. 331-349
DOI: 10.36366/frontiers.v36i3.869
www.frontiersjournal.org

Re-conceptualizing Study Abroad: Shifting the Focus to Connection, Flow, and Movement

Lori Hartmann[1]

Abstract

This article begins with the question: "Why is study abroad focused on discrete locations and stasis when human history is characterized by movement, flows, and connectivity?" The answer to that question can be found in the original purposes of study abroad in addition to the historical and epistemological context in which these programs emerged. The article then explores the limitations of discrete-location study abroad programs and provides alternatives that focus on the flow of people and ideas across borders and the connections between cultures. By focusing study abroad courses on the fact that human communities are mutually constitutive, I argue that students may better understand many of the current challenges facing the international community. Furthermore, the approaches outlined in the sample courses featured here can help to foster empathy and meet other cultural competency goals by the nature of the subject matter that puts connection and flow at the center.

Abstract in French

Cet article commence par la question: <<Pourquoi les programmes d'études à l'étranger se concentrent-elles sur des lieux discrets and sur la stase alors que l'histoire humaine est caractérisée par le mouvement, les flux, et la connectivité?>> La réponse à cette question se trouve dans les objectifs initiaux des études à l'étranger ainsi que dans le contexte historique et épistémologique dans lequel ces programmes sont apparus. L'article explore ensuite les limites des

1 Centre College, Danville, KY, United States of America

Corresponding author: Lori Hartmann, lori.hartmann@centre.edu

Date of Acceptance: June 25th, 2024

programmes d'études à l'étranger dans des lieux distincts (souvent un seul pays), et propose des alternatives axées sur la circulation des personnes et des idées à travers les frontières et sur les liens entre des cultures. En visant ces programmes et ces cours sur le fait que les communautés humaines sont mutuellement constitutives, je soutiens que les étudiants pourraient mieux comprendre bon nombre des défis actuels auxquels est confrontée la communauté internationale. De plus, les approches décrites dans les exemples de cours présentés ici peuvent aider à favoriser l'empathie et à atteindre d'autres objectifs de compétence culturelle grâce à la nature du sujet qui met la connexion et le flux au centre.

Keywords

Cultural connection; flow; movement; multiple destinations; study abroad

1. Introduction

Approximately 90% of the history of homo sapiens' existence on the earth is characterized by movement and flow. As hunter-gatherers, humans were on the move, unencumbered by hard borders or territorially distinct areas, long before the existence of the nation-state. That nation-state structure emerged slowly in the last millennia, culminating with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that established territorial sovereignty as the defining principle of international relations. Europe then imposed this system on the rest of the world through imperialism in the modern era. However, even with this principle of territorial sovereignty, nation-states are not discrete atomistic entities. Each state is a product of centuries of interaction and movement of people, culture, and ideas across borders.

In general, borders are an attempt to impose order on the human community allowing authorities to exercise control; however, they cannot stem the flow of ideas and people (Scott, 1998; Torpey, 2018).[1] Why? First of all, the system is relatively new. Humans have inhabited the earth for 80,000 years and the nation-state system has been in place for 500 years, merely a blip in time.

[1] According to Scott (1998), the creation of nation-states was a process of simplification and homogenization that imposed a centralized system with clearly defined state boundaries upon a mosaic of overlapping systems with loose boundaries. The goal was to "map" the territory, to make it legible to state authorities, in order to control citizens and processes such as taxation, agricultural production, conscription, etc. For the purposes of this article, this history illustrates that nation-state formation was neither automatic nor natural. It was an imposition.

Secondly, identities are forged in relation to one another; communities are established as a result of encounters amongst diverse groups of people. Nation-states do not emerge in a vacuum; they are created through political and cultural conflict, cooperation, and connection.

So, what does this discussion have to do with study abroad? Most study abroad programs are focused on a discrete destination, e.g., Paris, France; Merida, Mexico; Shanghai, China. The idea is for the student to learn the language, culture, and history of *that place*. It does not mean that outside influences are ignored but the focus of the abroad experience is on a fixed location. Given the fact that the organization of those spaces is an imposed and relatively new system, a natural question arises: Why is study abroad focused on discrete-locations and stasis when human history is characterized by movement, flows, and connectivity?

This article will suggest answers to that question, identify problems with the discrete-location approach to study abroad, and explore alternatives that focus on connection and flow. For this study, I am defining "connection" to mean contact between diverse groups of people over time. I define "flow" to refer to the movement of people (migration) and ideas across time and space. In the spirit of Theodore Long's piece (2013) where he argues that study abroad should have a global focus rather than a nation-state focus, I contend that programs that focus on flow and connection take us closer to that goal. Not only can they get us closer to Long's ideal, but they serve to remind students of the long history of connection, flow, and mutually constitutive communities before, during, and after Westphalia, thus potentially fostering a sense of empathy across time and space.

2. Short History of Study Abroad: Why the Discrete-Location Approach?

Initially, studying or venturing into a country other than one's own was a luxury reserved for the elite. Young princes went abroad as a symbolic means to cement positive relations with royalty in neighboring locations. Sons of the elite class studied abroad in order to become cultured and to learn a foreign language, with the goals being political and class-based rather than academic. Examples extend across time and space. According to Gerald Fry (1984, p. 203),

> Study abroad and the related migration of scholars and professionals is a pervasive phenomenon dating back as early as 500-300 BC [sic] when intellectuals migrated to Athens. In subsequent centuries, there were similar migrations to major intellectual centers such as Alexandra, Rome, and Gundi Sapur in East Persia. In the Thai language, there is a concept and term, *chup dua*, which connotes acquiring significant prestige by study and/or travel abroad.

The idea of exchanges and experiences abroad having academic benefits as well as political benefits emerged as an outcome of the Enlightenment. In 1754, a Swiss diplomat Emmerich de Vattel urged the "exchange of professors among various nations," arguing that "the peace and security of each nation was dependent upon the peace and security of all" (Soares, 2014). In 1792, French educator Marc-Antoine Jullien wrote to Louis XVI, "demanding the creation of a worldwide commission on education composed of educational associations from the various European states" (Lee, 2012).

In 1919, Stephen Duggan Sr. and Nobel Peace Prize winners Elihu Root and Nicholas Murray Butler founded the Institute of International Education (IIE) in the United States. They "envisioned IIE as a central coordinating hub to establish political, economic, and cultural collaboration between students, scholars, and institutions worldwide" (IIE, n.d.). Then in 1923, the University of Delaware launched the first officially credited study abroad program in the US, which consisted of a six-week program in France, developing into a program that came to be known as Junior Year Abroad (JYA); soon after, other universities began to develop similar abroad programs (Lee, 2012). This model focused largely on linguistic and cultural immersion in Western Europe (Hoffa & DePaul, 2007).

Throughout the 1920s, many universities began to offer academic credit for international group travel mostly through short-term exchanges in the summer. These programs were established with the hope, in the wake of WWI, that increased understanding could bring peace. Similarly, in the post-WWII era, Senator J. William Fulbright proposed the establishment of the Fulbright program, and it passed by unanimous consent in the United States Senate in 1946. The program was designed to support US and foreign participants in exchanges in all academic areas with the goal of increasing mutual understanding. Since 1946, more than 250,000 students, scholars, and teachers

from all over the world have participated in the program (Fulbright Scholar Program, n.d.).

The establishment of the United Nations in 1948 was based on the imagining of an "international community" for which membership required nation-state status. This shift strengthened the Westphalian structure that underpins our international system, so it is not surprising that study abroad and academic exchanges (and travel in general) were focused on discrete destinations. In the 1960s, the field saw a transition from the JYA model to a more pluralistic model in terms of locations and curricular models, reflecting geopolitical phenomena such as the Cold War, independence movements in much of Africa and the Middle East, and questioning of American power at home and abroad (Keller & Frain, 2010).

During the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, study abroad and scholarly exchange programs continued to grow, with the number of American students studying abroad doubling between the 1980s and 2000s, with 91% of college campuses having study abroad programs by 2006 (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010, pp. 1-2). Not only did globalization spur students' curiosity about the world, but as the landscape of international politics shifted, there was a sense that students and professionals with language and cross-cultural skills would be well-positioned to understand the changing face of international relations, engage in meaningful problem-solving across cultures, and help to mitigate tensions.

The current model of study abroad and scholar-exchange programs emerged out of the context of world wars (hot and cold) where those programs were seen as an antidote to conflict. In the post-Cold War era, institutions of higher education have sought to globalize their campuses to adapt to the political, economic, cultural, and technological changes taking place in the world. Study abroad programs have responded to and reflected these changes where international and cross-cultural competencies gain attention (Keller & Frain, 2010). In doing so, destinations have expanded dramatically from the original European locations, yet even in the telling of that story of expansion, the unit of analysis remains the nation-state (Ogden et al., 2010). Over the years, while the goals of study abroad have ranged from mitigating conflict to enhancing international competencies they still center on the foundational goal of mutual understanding between nation-states.

Ironically, the contemporary structure of international politics rests on a Westphalian hope that the merging of state (territory) and nation (people) *would* mitigate conflict. On the heels of two World Wars that illustrated the shortcomings of that structure (Strange, 1999), the international community began to imagine creative solutions to conflict that focused on diplomacy and soft power (e.g., educational initiatives). In answer to the question posed in this article's Introduction, one reason that study abroad programs are focused on discrete locations is that their creation was part of a strategy to mitigate conflict, and then later to enhance understanding, between nation-states within an international system that recognizes nation-states as the only legitimate entity.

A second reason is more philosophical. As Dr. W. David Hall, points out, "humans have difficulty studying flows" (Hall, 2019). We tend to want the object of study to be fixed and delineated, bringing clarity to the project. If the Westphalia shift to a nation-state system was one of the most significant changes in the last 500 years, the other is arguably the scientific revolution that shaped our thinking in terms of fixed objects of study.[2] The result of this epistemological change was that human inquiry now required the identification of a subject and an object. The subject seeks to fix the object of study in space and time in order to conduct credible experiments and ascertain cause and effect.[3]

However, just as the nation-state system is an imposition (a "construct"), the scientific method imposes order on systems that are not inherently orderly. Thus, I argue that another major reason for discrete-location study abroad is that the modern education and scientific systems have structured learning in a way that captures and subdues the object of study. Studying flows and connections and mutually-constitutive communities requires a different approach, not always fitting into the demands and structure of a traditional scientific (and thus educational) endeavor.

[2] In fact, I am not sure if Dr. Hall's idea that "*humans* have difficulty studying flows" is totally accurate. I think that, more likely, it is "*humans who are the product of the scientific revolution*," that is, most of us.

[3] While there are many critiques of the scientific method, I find that the feminist critique provides a compelling argument about the rigidity of the categories of "subject" and "object", as well as the problem of the subject-object gap in social science research. See, for example Abu-Lughod (1993), Harding (1991), Patai (1994), and Scheper-Hughes (1992). For a more general critique, see Culler (1982) and Clifford and Marcus (1986).

3. Why is the Discrete-Location Approach to Study Abroad Problematic and How Might We Address That?

At this point, the reader can probably guess some answers to that question. Let us begin with the first explanation in the previous section, that study abroad emerged in the context of a rigid nation-state system made more pronounced by conflict during the 20th century. While that context is significant for the last 500 years, it is an irrelevant construct for understanding most of human history and is being challenged today by the ebbs and flows of globalization. The system is a social construction born out of a particular context.

Furthermore, even if one retains a focus on the nation-state system, it is impossible to fully understand its formation and subsequent dynamic without considering flows, connection, and mutually constitutive communities. As Wanis Kabbaj (2018) discusses in his Ted Talk *How Nationalism and Globalism can Coexist* from language to food to technology, what is thought to be a purely national tradition is actually the result of centuries of cross-border interactions. For example, "Italian food" is actually heavily influenced by the New World (what would pizza be without the tomato?!), pasta came from Sicily under Arabian rule; coffee/espresso from Abyssinia via Yemen. Languages are constantly being formed and re-formed through interaction with others. A simple example is letters in the Roman alphabet from hieroglyph in Egypt to Arabic, Greek, Roman, and then English. Even relatively insular China adopted (and adapted) its primary Ideology (communism) from German Karl Marx, and its largest religion (Buddhism) from India (Kabbaj, 2018). These examples are just the tip of the iceberg but in fashioning a study abroad experience with these connections *at the center* of the curriculum, students begin to understand the constructed nature of the nation-state system and to gain a more global perspective.

With regard to the second explanation from the previous section, that our knowledge and ways of knowing are shaped by the scientific method making it more natural and more comfortable to study fixed objects (for study abroad, that means a location, a culture, a language, a history), I suggest that we consider loosening that construct. Instead of a study abroad model fixed on a static object of study, my suggestion is to focus on a dynamic object of study.

Since we know that human communities are forged through conflict, cooperation, and connection with other human communities, why not shift the object of study from destination to connection and flow? If the goal of study abroad is for students to better understand the world and to become global citizens, then a deeper understanding requires paying attention to those flows.

An example might be helpful here. A three-week course offered at Centre College[4] is titled "Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Morocco and Spain," in which students are introduced to the history of the interactions between Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in Morocco and Spain that began in the Medieval period and extend into the present, and to the rich culture these interactions have produced. The course does not merely *incorporate* connection and flows of people and ideas; they *are* the primary topics of study: Arabic influences in Spanish language, dynastic influences from Morocco in southern Spain during the 12th and 13th centuries, cuisine, technology, and intellectual innovation. Shifting attention away from destination study-abroad to connection study abroad allows students to see how cultures develop and evolve.[5]

Another example that highlights flows and connections was a Collaboration Program involving three small colleges, Centre College, Rhodes College, and Sewanee. Initial iterations of this semester program focused on historical and contemporary linkages between Ghana and the African diaspora in the United States, beginning with two weeks in Memphis, Tennessee, highlighting this important site of vibrant African American culture and a rich history of civil rights advocacy. A central goal of the semester program was to help students understand the multiple and varied ways in which Africa is connected to the Diaspora (in areas that include history, politics, music, economics, food, and fashion), and how those influences move back and forth between these sites. After two weeks in Memphis, students spent the remaining 13 weeks in Accra taking courses that explicitly emphasize the *connections* between Africa and the US and/or link Ghana to a *global* context.[6]

[4] https://www.centre.edu/centreterm-study-abroad

[5] One of the activities for that course is for students to do a scavenger hunt in Vejer (Spain, across the Straits of Gilbrater from Morocco). The assignment is for them to take and post pictures of art, architecture and other public pieces that are similar to what they had seen in Morocco. This activity is the basis for discussion about historical connections (information based on discussions with course leaders).

[6] This program has recently moved to South Africa for reasons outside the scope of this article.

Both the religion course described above and the Memphis-Ghana semester program provide examples of flow, connectivity, movement of people and ideas, and curriculum centered on a compelling theme. I argue that this model of study abroad allows for students to deepen their understanding of history and approach learning with an important creative epistemological angle, one that challenges the discrete-location model of study abroad by transcending some of its limitations.[7]

In addition to helping students understand the pre-Westphalian system and the history of the nation-state system formation, study abroad programs that emphasize flow and connectivity help students see the porous nature of those borders. Yes, the borders exist and are significant for many reasons in international politics. However, they are constantly being challenged. The most obvious challenges to nation-state borders are three of the most salient issues facing the global community today: migration, environmental crises (climate change, biodiversity loss), and disease/pandemics (most recently, COVID).

Thus, the discrete-location study abroad model is problematic because it does not take account of pre-Westphalian forms of human organization nor the process by which nation-states were created nor the trajectory of globalization (see Long, 2013).

A less obvious but no less important value that is enhanced with a flow and connectivity model of study abroad is the potential to foster empathy, a central component of cultural competency. Increasingly, institutions of higher learning are seeking ways to meet these goals through study abroad and other experiential programs (Coker et al., 2018). One of the tools to measure cultural competency (and a leader in promoting these values) is IDI (Intercultural development inventory) whose mission is to: "facilitate personal growth and insight and collective change in ways that improve people's intercultural competence and their efforts at bridging cultural differences so that relationships are strengthened and the human condition is enhanced" (IDI). While it is likely that many study abroad programs focus on these goals, when

[7] To emphasize how difficult it is to imagine a system *not* defined by nation-states as the main unit of analysis, I want to clarify that even these alternative models focused on flow and connectivity still operate within that framework. Students studying cultural and historical connections between Spain and Morocco are still studying two nation-states! The goal is not to escape the nation-state system but rather to problematize it.

the model is based on human connections and flows, it can be more natural to integrate discussions of empathy into the program. From an ethical perspective, connection-based study abroad conveys the message that we are all products of connections and flows, thus weakening the dangerous and pervasive "us vs. them" mentality. Alternatively, seeing the world through the lens of clear and permanent boundaries and discrete nation-states might encourage an "us vs. them" conceptualization of the world, blocking efforts to foster empathy.

4. Selected Models for Moving Beyond "Discrete Location" Study Abroad

My suggestion is that study abroad programs that embody two or more of the following variables that illustrate connection and flow will offer alternatives to the discrete-location model of study abroad. Thus, it might help students to better understand age-old human phenomena of movement, connectivity, mutual constitutive communities, and empathy. In the context of contemporary globalization, these models allow learning to transcend the nation-state context.

1. **Multiple** Destinations: Are students visiting one country/location or multiple? Long (2013) suggests multiple locations as an important goal for moving study abroad from the nation-state focus to a global focus. Multiple destinations also encourage comparative analysis.

2. **Movement**: Study movement across borders or movement of people and ideas as a central part of the course. As mentioned in this article, fluid borders are not only a pre-Westphalian model; it is the context for many of the global challenges we are currently facing.

3. **Connection**: Study connections across countries or regions, or in some cases from global to local. These connections might be cultural, historical, or political, and they reflect the idea of mutually constitutive communities.

4. **Theme**: Study one theme (e.g., urbanization, climate change, race, and identity) across different locations, usually in a compare/contrast format. This variable is similar to #1 by requiring multiple locations but it goes deeper by allowing a sharp thematic focus.

All of the programs explored below exemplify at least two of these variables. These courses/programs reflect creative ways of conceptualizing study abroad and provide inspiration for the future of study abroad that emphasizes globalization and focuses on movement, connection, and the flow of people and ideas. By no means exhaustive, these courses/programs are included to provide examples that colleges, universities, and institutions have run in the past, are currently running, or have planned for the future. They are presented as illustrations of the theoretical discussion presented above.

4.1. Multiple Destinations, Focus on Movement

A popular and interesting study abroad program is the Semester-at-Sea model which began in the 1960s. Students spend a semester on a ship traveling around the world, docking in multiple locations, and taking courses on the ship in disciplines such as Language, Politics, History, Science, Psychology, Sociology and Communications. In the fall of 2019, Semester-at-Sea lasted 106 days, 11 countries, 12 cities, four continents – a wide array of exposure to different cultures and destinations (Semester at Sea, n.d.).

While the experience is rich and varied, and surely students think about connection as they move from location to location, the focus of the model is not flow or connections. In addition, the program fosters breadth over depth.[8]

In this model, the variables are MULTIPLE and MOVEMENT.

4.2. Multiple Destinations, Clear Theme

Another model that explores multiple destinations involves a focus on one common theme that is manifested in those locations and is often presented in a comparative format. The School of International Training[9] (SIT) provides such opportunities. For example, in the course "Cities in the 21st Century: People, Planning, and Politics" students spend time in New York, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, and Cape Town, learning through an innovative urban studies

[8] This Semester-at-Sea (SAS) program is the oldest program highlighted in this section so there has been time for assessments. In general, they have shown that students value learning from each other especially given diverse participants (Manning, 2023), and a 2006 study revealed that those who participated in the program 22 years prior maintained a global perspective and saw the SAS experience as a springboard for growth (Dukes, 2006). While these are laudable results, assessments do not reveal a better understanding of flows and connections between people and places nor do they note academic rigor as a key element of the program.

[9] https://studyabroad.sit.edu/

curriculum with fieldwork involving key actors and stakeholders (e.g., urban citizens, academic leaders, public agencies, planners, elected officials, NGOs, and grassroots organizations). They learn how to critically "read a city" and gain a better understanding of the interconnected systems that affect urban environments (School for International Training).

Another course offered at SIT is "Climate Change: Politics of Land, Water, and Energy" in which students spend a semester divided into four locations: Casablanca, Morocco; Quito (and the Galapagos), Ecuador; Kathmandu, Nepal; and San Francisco, CA. The focus is on exploring some of the world's most productive and vulnerable landscapes to witness how climate change affects regions differently and how communities are responding to the climate crisis. In these four cultural and socio-ecological contexts, students analyze the challenges of working toward more equitable food, water, and energy systems, and examine the problems and possible solutions with researchers, farmers, activists, social entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, and policymakers (School for International Training).

A course planned for a Maymester at the University of Richmond[10] is titled, "Future Cities and the Environment" and would take place in Richmond, VA, and South Africa (Cape Town and Durban). This local-global course would focus on environmental challenges (and progressive solutions) faced in both locations. It is comparative in nature across two countries/continents and the goal is to help students link the local issues to the global (University of Richmond).

Finally, a course taught several years ago at Augsburg University titled, "Sustainable Cities in North America" (Vancouver, British Colombia and Portland, Oregon) fits this model. The course focused on the multiple dimensions of urban sustainability and their complex interrelations to develop students' powers of 'urban literacy' (the ability to 'read' a city by understanding its planning and design elements) (Augsburg University, 2008).

This model reflects what I am advocating in this article. A common theme is explored across locations to understand how urban environments develop (or in the second example, how climate change affects politics). While

[10] https://international.richmond.edu/study-abroad/programs/encompass/future-cities/index.html

the focus is not necessarily flow and connection, because the courses/programs engage environmental studies, the rigidity of borders is naturally thrown into question.

In this model, the variables are MULTIPLE and THEME.

4.3. One Destination, Focus on Connections, Clear Theme

A course that has been offered at Dickinson College is, "Experience the African Diaspora in Cuba, through music, Dance, Film, and literature," a short course that builds historical understanding of the African influence on Cuban culture and life over several centuries. Students engage with academics and historians, specializing in the multiple branches of Afro-Cuban ancestry: Yoruba, Congo, Arara, and Abakua, as well as strong Haitian and Jamaican traditions (Dickinson College).

In this model, the variables are ONE DESTINATION, CONNECTION, and THEME.

4.4. One Destination, Focus on Movement, Clear Theme

Pilgrimage courses allow students to walk in the footsteps of previous pilgrims and understand it as a centuries-old religious human phenomenon, with movement at the core of the experience.

At Centre College, "The Art of Pilgrimage" is frequently offered during the three-week January term ("CentreTerm"), taking place on the El Camino de Santiago in Spain. The course is intended to immerse students in the tradition, theology, culture, and environment of pilgrimage, allowing them to explore the significance of pilgrimage by performing the actions of a pilgrim. The routes to reach Santiago flourished in the medieval era, paths that were walked by princes, kings, and ordinary peasants. As a result, each town along the way to Santiago bears vivid material evidence, in the ecclesial art and architecture, of the popularity of this practice. Students enrolled in this course walk in the footsteps of previous pilgrims, gaining a deeper knowledge of the role of ritual practice in religion and the significance of physical ritual in the contemporary world.

Also offered frequently at Centre College is "Pilgrimage in the East: Actual and Environmental Footprints (Shikoku, Japan)." In this course, students

explore the interconnection between spiritual and physical worlds focusing on concepts such as enlightenment, human and environmental deification, respect, awareness, and sustainability through a three-week walking pilgrimage experience in Japan. Students learn basic tenets of Japanese Buddhism as well as Shinto, a spiritual belief system unique to Japan. At the same time, they focus on environmental issues directly related to the pilgrimage sites. The general goal of the course is for students to understand the complex issues that arise when religion, tradition, and tourism meet.

In this model, the variables are ONE DESTINATION, MOVEMENT, and THEME.

4.5. Multiple Destinations, Focus on Connection and Movement of People, Clear Theme

"West Africa and the African Diaspora" with locations in Memphis, TN and Accra, Ghana (Collaboration Program) – summarized above. "Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Morocco and Spain" (Centre College) – summarized above.

In this model, the variables are MULTIPLE, MOVEMENT, CONNECTION, and THEME.

TABLE (1)

MAPPING STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS ACCORDING TO KEY VARIABLES

Program Title	Multiple Locations	Movement	Connection	Theme
Semester-at-Sea	X	X		
Cities in the 21st Century	X			X
Climate Change: Politics of land, water, and energy	X			X
Future Cities and the Environment	X			X
Sustainable Cities in North America	X			X
Experience the African Diaspora in Cuba			X	X
Art of Pilgrimage – El Camino de Santiago, Spain		X		X
Pilgrimage in the East – Shinto and Buddhist shrines, Japan		X		X
Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Morocco and Spain	X	X	X	X
West Africa and the African Diaspora in the US	X	X	X	X

5. Conclusion

This article began with a question, why is study abroad focused on discrete locations and stasis when human history is characterized by movement, flows, and connectivity? By exploring the history of study abroad (and scholar exchange programs), it is clear that these programs emerged out of a Westphalian context, particularly with the goals of mitigating conflict by achieving higher levels of understanding across nation-states. The discrete-location model also fits logically into the epistemological approach that arose out of the scientific revolution. The main problems with this approach are that it ignores most of human history and does not reflect the fact that nation-states are the product of cross-border movement and flows of people, ideas, and culture. I contend that a better understanding of that history will provide more clarity about the current challenges facing the international community. Furthermore, the approaches outlined in the sample courses featured here have the potential to foster empathy and meet other goals included in the concept of cultural competency by the nature of the subject matter that puts connection and flow at the center.

Of course, there are drawbacks to this model of study abroad. Multiple locations often result in a heavier carbon footprint. Already, study abroad is under fire for the carbon footprint associated with international travel (Dvorak et al., 2015; Redden, 2019). This problem can be mitigated by traveling to destinations that are closer to each other (or to the home country) which allows for movement via trains, buses, boats, camels, or other green modes of transportation. The course highlighted above, “Sustainable Cities in North America” which took place in Vancouver, British Colombia and Portland, Oregon is a good example. Additionally, institutions can engage in carbon mitigation strategies (e.g., purchase carbon offsets, reduce energy consumption during and after travel) and employ green travel strategies (e.g., low consumption, focus on recycling, eating local foods, staying in local lodging that embraces sustainability goals). Often faculty directors build in course content that provides skills and inspires change for students, either by experiencing the effects of climate change first-hand and/or learning about public transit (or other green transportation strategies). An assignment to calculate and track carbon footprint can be built into the curriculum (Dvorak et al., 2015; The Forum on Education Abroad, 2020).

Another problem with traveling to multiple destinations is that it can be more expensive and more time-consuming than travel to one destination. These are real challenges; however, with examples such as the Morocco-Spain course highlighted above, the proximity of the two countries along with the ease of boat transportation between them resulted in no extra costs. In terms of the time question, the goal is not for students to visit both countries in their entirety but rather to highlight connections and flows. With a shift in the goal of the course(s), the time factor can be addressed. Finally, most study abroad professionals argue that semester (long-term) programs are more effective than short-term programs in achieving cultural competency and other study abroad goals, no matter how many destinations are visited; therefore, scholars suggest promoting those programs to students for reasons beyond the time factor (Coker et al., 2018).

A third drawback actually reflects the primary strength of discrete, single location study abroad programs and that is language acquisition. A program that takes place in multiple locations does not allow for intensive language study, particularly when the locations are in different regions of the world. Second language acquisition is a weakness for US students, and as such, study abroad is one educational sector where that goal is more readily achieved. Of course, if the multiple destinations are in the same region or are cross-regional but language-based, this drawback could be mitigated. Imagine a program that moves from Tahiti to Puducherry, India (French-colonized region of southeastern India) to France. Students can remain focused on French language learning while traveling across three different locations. The theme could be language and/or history of colonization. Returning to Wannis Kabbaj's (2018) work, study abroad that emphasizes mutually constitutive communities helps students to understand the cross-influences of language.

Despite these potential drawbacks, I argue that the benefits are worth exploring, especially if one is intentional about reducing those drawbacks. I am heartened by the creative ideas that are highlighted in the programs mentioned above. For the reasons outlined in this article, I argue that study abroad would be strengthened by offering students more opportunities that fit a movement, connection, and flow model. As Long (2013) points out, if study abroad is going to have more of a positive impact on students' lives and on our world more generally, we have to "transcend its limitations." He argues for a less "homeland"

focus and a more cosmopolitan approach. I submit that some of the ideas outlined in this article might move the field in this positive direction.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my research assistants, Samuel McIntyre and John Anderson. Their insightful questions and collaborative spirit helped to shape this article. I am also grateful to the anonymous external reviewers whose comments helped me clarify the writing and improve the final product.

References

Abu-Lughod, L. (1993). *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. University of CA Press.

Augsburg University. (2008). News and Media: Auggies traverse the concrete jungle. https://www.augsburg.edu/news/tag/sustainable-cities-in- north-america/

Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. (1986). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Clarendon Press.

Coker, J. S., Heiser, E., & Taylor, L. (2018). Student Outcomes Associated with Short-term and Semester Study Abroad Programs. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *30*(2), 92–105. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v30i2.414

Culler, J. (1982). *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism.* Cornell University Press.

Dickinson College. https://www.dickinson.edu/info/20089/africana_studies/3724/experiential_learning

Dukes, R. (2006). Reflections on the Meaning of a Semester at Sea voyage after twenty-two years. *Psychological Reports*, *98*(1), 209-216.

Dvorak, A. M., Christiansen, L. D., Fischer, N. L., & Underhill, J. B. (2011). A necessary partnership: Study abroad and sustainability in higher education. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *21*(1), 143-166. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v21i1.307

Fry, G. (1984). The Economic and Political Impact of Study Abroad. *Comparative Education Review 28*(2), 203-20.

Fulbright Scholar Program. (n.d.). *About Senator J. William Fulbright*. https://www.cies.org/about-us- about-senator-j-william-fulbright

Hall, W. D., Interview with author, October 25, 2019.

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Cornell University Press.

Hoffa, W. W., & DePaul, S. (Eds). (2010). *A History of U.S. Study Abroad: 1965 to the Present.* The Forum on Education Abroad, Special Publication of *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*.

Institute for International Education (IIE). (n.d.). *Commemorating a Century*. https://www.iie.org/about/history.

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). (n.d.). *About Us*. https://idiinventory.com/about-us/our-mission/

Kabbaj, W. (2018). *How Nationalism and Globalism can Coexist*. TED Talk. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDClQv1SeeE

Keller, J. M., & Frain, M. (2010). The Impact of Geo-Political Events, Globalization, and National Policies on Study Abroad Programming and Participation. In W. W. Hoffa, & S. DePaul (Eds.), *A History of U.S. Study Abroad: 1965 to the Present* (pp. 15-53). Special Publication of The Forum on Education Abroad with *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*.

Lee, M. (2012). *The Complete History of Study Abroad*. Go Overseas. https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/history-study-abroad

Long, T. E. (2013). From Study Abroad to Global Studies: Reconstructing International Education for a Globalized World. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *22*(1), 25-36. https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v22i1.317

Manning, M. (2023). Curiosity, belonging, call to action: Reflections from Semester at Sea. *The Pie News*. https://thepienews.com/curiosity-belonging-call-to-action-reflections-from-semester-at-sea/

Ogden, A., Soneson, H., & Weting, P. (2010). The Diversification of Geographic Locations. In W. W. Hoffa, & S. DePaul (Eds.), *A History of U.S. Study Abroad: 1965 to the Present* (pp. 161-198). Special Publication of The Forum on Education Abroad with *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*.

Patai, D. (1994). U.S. Academics and Third-World Women: is Ethical Research Possible? *Feminist Nightmares, Women at Odds: Feminism and the Problem of Sisterhood*, eds. S. O. Weisser and J. Fleischner. New York University Press.

Redden, E. (2019). International educators begin to confront the climate crisis. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/12/19/international-educators-begin-confront-climate-crisis

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992). *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. University of CA Press.

Scott, J. (1998). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press.

Semester at Sea. (n.d.). The World is YOUR CAMPUS. https://www.semesteratsea.org/

Soares, G. (2014, October 29). *A-broadening Your Horizons: A Little History of Study Abroad*. Scribe: University of Southern California. https://scribe.usc.edu/a-broadening-your-horizons-a-little-history-of-study-abroad/

Strange, S. (1999). The Westfailure System. *Review of International Studies 25*(3), 345-354.

The Forum on Education Abroad. (2020). *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (6th ed.).

Torpey, J. C. (2018). *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Author Biography

Lori Hartmann is the Hower Professor of International Studies at Centre College, and chair of the International Studies and Politics departments. She holds a B.A. from Denison University, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Denver. From 2019 to 2023, she was the director of the Center for Global Citizenship at Centre. She has led study abroad programs in Cameroon and Strasbourg, France. In addition, Lori has spent extended periods of time living and working in Niger, Senegal, and Ethiopia.