ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	EMBARGOED EXCHANGE: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY OF STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMMING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA
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Internationalization continues to remain a central focus within the U.S. university environment. Internationalization motives are under question as neoliberal policies continue to limit sustained, long-term state funding for public universities and undermine the academic mission of these universities. Universities are leveraging internationalization practices, like study abroad programming, in response to the pressures of neoliberalism. Using both an academic capitalist and post-colonial lens, this dissertation seeks to understand how study abroad programming, specifically in non-traditional locations (viz., Cuba), operates within and is shaped by political and economic contexts.

In this study, qualitative case study methods were used to critically examine study abroad programming between the United States and Cuba before, during and after the Obama Administration's announcement changing diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba on December 17, 2014. The perspectives of 12 of the main actors in the field, including educational administrators and faculty from U.S

universities, Cuban universities, and study abroad program providers, were captured to provide a more comprehensive view of U.S. study abroad implementation in Cuba.

The findings illustrate four key aspects of the political and economic context that significantly impact study abroad programming. First, the U.S. blockade (embargo) on Cuba is shown to hinder academic operation and impede international relationship building. Additionally, the neoliberal and neo-colonial university environment in which study abroad programming is situated leads to the reproduction of colonial dynamics and amplifies inequities and power dynamics within North-South study abroad programs. Yet, in the face of neoliberal and neo-colonial pressures, solidarity building emerged as a key area for resistance within these programs. Thus, two opposing approaches, market-based and solidarity building, are dictating how study abroad programming is developed and implemented. The tensions between these approaches provide insight into the liminal space within which educational administrators and faculty develop and facilitate study abroad programming. Therefore, this dissertation critically analyzes the political and economic environment in which study abroad operates to determine implications for internationalization practice and policy in an effort to guide the future international dimensions of the university.

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THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
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DEDICATION

To the Appalachian Mountains and the community within its embrace.

You provided me with a cultural foundation and taught me the art of storytelling.

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My dissertation is not mine alone. I had a community of people surrounding me who were always there to discuss the latest international higher education article, travel alongside me during my fieldwork in Cuba and pick me up when I did not think I could complete this journey.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is one of the most emphasized initiatives in the strategic plans and institutional endeavors of colleges and universities in the United States (Coryell et al., 2012). The process of internationalization, which Knight (2003) defines as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education at the national, sector, and institutional levels," has gained increasing popularity and necessity as the world continues to be more globalized and interconnected (Gacel-Avila, 2005). Many leaders in higher education connect internationalization with student success in a global economy, stating that, in order for the next generation to be effective leaders in their professions, they must have greater appreciation of and connection with global happenings and movements (Altbach and Knight, 2007; De Witt, 2014; Knight, 2015; Childress, 2009). As a result, higher education institutions have been subject to external and internal pressures forcing them to reinvent their mission and goals to incorporate international programming.

A widespread vehicle for universities looking to internationalize is the expansion of their study abroad programming. Study abroad has become an all-encompassing term to describe overseas, off-campus, foreign or even international study. The FORUM on Education Abroad provides the definition for study abroad that is used throughout the study: "Study taking place outside the country where the student's home institution is located for the purpose of making progress toward an academic degree at a student's home institution but excluding a full degree program abroad" (FORUM, 2014).

U.S. study abroad programming, which dates back to the 1920's, traditionally grew from international exchange agreements facilitated by the research connections of faculty members. These connections allowed students from one university to study at another country's institution for academic credit over the course of the academic year or semester (Pickert, 1992). Today, study abroad programming has diversified beyond traditional exchange programming. Many programs are led for short term (ranging from one week to eight weeks) or long term (eight weeks to an academic year) academic periods by faculty in various disciplines from engineering to the humanities. Additionally, a number of private organizations, called program providers, have emerged to design and facilitate study abroad programs for university students (Bowman, 1987).

Diversification of study abroad program design, combined with an increase in international education actors, led to investment and growth in international opportunities over the last two decades. This investment can be seen through U.S. study abroad participation. Participation by U.S. college students has increased 300% in the last two decades. In the academic year 1989-1990, 71,000 students studied abroad, whereas 325,339 studied abroad in 2015-2016 (Institute of International Education, 2017). In 2005, 27% of higher education institutions in the U.S. did not send any students abroad; however, within the last decade, all institutions offered some form of study abroad programming (Stearns, 2009).

Given the significant increase in the number of students studying abroad, the purpose of this qualitative case study research is to understand how universities' current study abroad programming is shaped by their political and economic context

and to what extent the resulting international networks influence the respective universities' higher education internationalization policies and practices.

This chapter provides an overview of the problem that underlines my study before explaining the purpose of this particular study. Following the purpose of this study, I state the research questions and provide a brief overview of my methodological approach and theoretical framing, which will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters. I will then establish the context for selecting my research site and explain the relevance of its selection. Once my research site is established, I then describe the significance of this study to the field of international education. Lastly, I will include an overview of the chapters following this introductory chapter.

Problem Statement

Neoliberal reforms continue to undermine U.S. public funding for higher education, leading to the corporatization and privatization of universities (Giroux, 1983). The neoliberal reforms pressure universities to create a minimally regulated market that advances the maximization of entrepreneurial initiatives (Harvey, 2007). Within the university, labor (i.e. the faculty) becomes more regulated and managed in an effort to limit resistance to corporatization and privatization and expedite conformity to neoliberal thought and practice (Shahjahan, 2012). U.S. universities are thus forced to turn their efforts to entrepreneurship by selling research goods and services and leveraging resources from students (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). This phenomenon is described by scholars, such as Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), as academic capitalism. While academic capitalism penetrates U.S. university campuses,

university officials promote these market-driven reforms through a multitude of initiatives across the university.

Meanwhile, the university environment is becoming more globally focused, providing a new arena in which neoliberal reforms can be enacted. As a result, the motivations of international strategies have shifted over the last decade from focusing on the development of intercultural skills for the global good to being economically driven (Altbach and Knight, 2007). The shifting motivations have implications for all elements of a university's internationalization plan, specifically study abroad programming.

As study abroad programming has increased, critics are questioning the intention behind study abroad programs (Knight, 2014). For example, Stromquist (2007) criticizes the shift in study abroad programming toward prioritizing a market-driven, profit-making approach over educating students in support of intercultural collaboration for the global good.

As universities have become increasingly motivated by generating revenue, various new trends in study abroad programming are emerging. A common financial trend in the university environment is for study abroad offices to be self-supporting units, thus receiving little to no university funds and being funded mainly by income generated from student participation (Sutton, 2008). This lack of dedicated university resources is one reason why there is a rise in private organizations facilitating study abroad programming and fulfilling the academic and administrative needs to carry out the international mission. These private organizations are frequently called *program providers.* In the case of this dissertation, a program provider is either a non-profit or

for-profit organization that provides study abroad programming services to multiple U.S. higher education institutions and their students (FORUM, 2014).

With the involvement of private for/non- profit organizations, the university's guiding academic mission is no longer the sole focus of programming, creating an environment in which a market-driven approach can thrive. A market-driven approach prioritizes the needs of the student as a consumer and develops programming through an entrepreneurial lens, instead of viewing the student as a learner through an academic lens (Bolen, 2001 and Ogden, 2008). As a result, consumer desire is driving changes in the university environment, particularly within study abroad programming. An example within study abroad is the expansion of programming to what international educators consider *non-traditional* locations (regions outside of Western Europe and Australia) as students see these locations as exotic. In 2016, over 40% of U.S. study abroad programming took place in non-traditional locations (Institute of International Education, 2017).

The expanded study abroad programming in non-traditional locations has not been developed with appropriate oversight or connection to university academic curriculum to ensure intentional and sustained learning (Woolf, 2006). U.S. universities have not created an academic space to support or integrate studies of these non-traditional locations. For example, U.S. university student enrollment in foreign language programs is decreasing (MLA, 2013). While more students now study abroad in African and Latin American countries, African and indigenous language courses are rarely offered on U.S. campuses (MLA, 2013). Furthermore, U.S. universities offer few area studies programs that focus on the political and

historical environments of these non-traditional locations. Students do not receive the academic support needed to understand the historical, cultural and political context of their host communities (Woolf, 2006). The development of programming in non-traditional locations is driven not by academic structures but by market forces for short-term financial gain, which can lead to the reproduction of colonial dynamics between the U.S. and the partnering country.

Prioritizing market gain in study abroad programming is a shortsighted approach which has the potential to reproduce previous colonial and dependent dynamics between U.S. universities and partnering institutions or organizations (Ogden, 2008). Sustainable study abroad programming requires reciprocity and collaboration with clear positive outcomes for both participating universities. Educational administrators and university faculty alike should more deeply examine the study abroad programming they create to ensure alignment with both home and host institutional and societal goals.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to examine how the U.S.'s dominant neoliberal approach to internationalization impacts study abroad programming in non-traditional locations, specifically in Cuba. To understand the influence of neoliberal policies on the university internationalization strategy, I use Slaughter and Rhoades' academic capitalism theory. They define academic capitalism as a phenomenon where U.S. higher education institutions are forced to turn their efforts to entrepreneurship by selling research and other goods and leveraging resources from students (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). This dissertation research is thus grounded upon academic

capitalism theory, establishing that this environment exists and is pervasive across U.S. institutions. I continue to build upon the relationship between academic capitalism and study abroad programming in my literature review. Additionally, I analyze study abroad programming between the U.S. and non-traditional locations with a post-colonial lens. Gandhi's (1998) writing on post-colonial theory allows me to examine the neo-colonial dynamics between the U.S. and non-traditional locations, while also giving attention to possible resistance to such neo-colonial dynamics within the previously colonized community. Resistance to these dynamics is viewed through a global solidarity lens in an effort to provide a conceptual framework for resistance strategies. This study examines the following overarching research question with three subquestions:

> How does the economic and political context shape study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba?
>
>> a. How do market dynamics present themselves in study abroad programming?
> >
> > b. How do the ideologies of faculty and educational administrators manifest in study abroad programming?
> >
> > c. In what ways does the U.S. blockade impact study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba?

These research questions address study abroad programming as they relate to the relationship between U.S. and international institutions in non-traditional locations. More specifically, the research compares voices of both U.S. and international educational administrators and faculty to understand overlapping and conflicting

reasons for engaging in international exchange activity. The voice of academic community partners is included in the research to elevate the perspective of the host communities and those at the center of academic exchange, educational administrators, which historically is lacking from study abroad research.

To carry out this particular study, I utilized a qualitative methodological approach involving a case study to provide an in-depth descriptive account of study abroad programming between U.S. and Cuban international educational administrators and faculty. A case study research design provides concrete and contextual knowledge (Merriam, 2009) to be interpreted and referenced (Stake, 1981) by the reader to transfer the study's findings to additional cases in non-traditional study abroad locations. Utilizing case study design offers a rich environment to explore these programs in order to understand how information is exchanged.

To examine the tensions between internationalization for financial gain and other internationalization motivations, I study the recent shift within the U.S. academic community around study abroad programming in Cuba. Cuba was specifically selected as a research site since it is a non-traditional location that has historically approached political and economic policies governing society and the educational sector in a way that is in opposition to the neoliberal reforms occurring in the U.S.

Cuban Context

The U.S. engagement with Cuba in study abroad is peculiar due to the political, historical and economic context of diplomatic, economic, political, and military as well as cultural relations between the two countries. In 1962, the U.S.

government instituted a trade and travel embargo, which is referred to as the blockade in Cuba and within this dissertation. The blockade has continually impeded all types of collaboration and highly regulates U.S. travel to Cuba. The prevention of collaboration impacts not only economic but also academic relations, resulting in an intellectual embargo (Kozol, 1978). The intellectual embargo has led to a dearth of academic research focusing on Cuban educational practice in U.S. academic journals.

In conjunction with the historical and political context of U.S. and Cuban relations, recent events have made researching U.S. - Cuban academic relationships rather timely. In December 2014, former President Obama announced a new way forward in an effort to bring about "democratization" in Cuba. His announcement ushered in an era of increased diplomatic relations between the two countries, including reestablishing embassies. While a number of U.S. universities have long-standing relations with Cuban universities and research institutes, many U.S. universities immediately capitalized on this opening. Since 2014, U.S. university presidents, officials and international organizations encouraged new ties with Cuban academic institutions. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, a leading U.S.-based international education organization that advocates for the advancement of policies and practices in international exchange, formed an advocacy campaign, symposium and community discussion board to address study abroad programming in Cuba (NAFSA: Cuba Engagement, 2017).

The shifting diplomatic environment combined with the promotion and advocacy of study abroad programming led to an increase in student participation in Cuba. The number of students traveling through study abroad programming to Cuba

rose by 58% from 2,384 to 3,781 between the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic

years (Institute of International Education, 2017). However, in September 2017 the

current U.S. President issued a travel warning and in November 2017 reversed select

changes made during the Obama era, making collaboration between the U.S. and

Cuba more difficult. At this time, it is unclear how the current U.S. administration's

policies will impact future study abroad programming in Cuba.

The rise in study abroad programming in Cuba occurred while the challenging

economic effects of the blockade continue to limit student exchange between the

countries. At the center of U.S. academic exchange practice is academic mobility.

Although there is an increase in U.S. students traveling to Cuba, Cubans experience

significant barriers, mainly in terms of financial resources, to travel to the U.S. Given

this apparent lack of mobility, Cuba approaches globalization in their higher

education institutions by welcoming international students and infusing a global

mindset within their home campuses more so than by sending their undergraduate

students abroad.

Cuban universities' approach to globalization may stand in contrast to the

market-driven approach of U.S. higher education internationalization strategy. Many

Cuban universities engage in global solidarity efforts through their educational

institutions aligning with "internationalism," focusing primarily on international

cooperation and the global good (Jones, 1998; Stromquist, 2007). Internationalism

provides an alternative approach for higher education institutions as they respond to

the pressures of globalization. Historically, long-standing university relations existing

between U.S. and Cuban institutions have been committed to international

cooperation, solidarity and the pursuit of the global good. Yet, as collaborations continue to expand, market-driven approaches may alter these agreements in the face of new diplomatic relations. For example, recent developments at the Latin American Medical School in Cuba have instituted fees for international students. While Cuba's dominant approach to globalization provides an alternative to pervasive market-driven practices at U.S. higher education institutions, there are also signs of changing practices. Thus, Cuba offers a unique and fertile research setting to understand the impact of a neoliberal approach to internationalization on a non-traditional location.

Significance

Study abroad programming is a hallmark of U.S. internationalization strategy. Programming in study abroad is expanding to non-traditional locations (outside of Western Europe as well as Australia) with complex historical, cultural and political environments. Programming in these locations increases the potential for U.S. institutions to reproduce dependent and neo-colonial-like relationships with their international partners.

Utilizing a post-colonial lens to examine U.S. and Cuban study abroad programming can reinvigorate the fight against academic capitalist models of innovation in domestic and international activity on U.S. campuses, as the post-colonial lens articulates forms of critique and resistance. This is especially important given that U.S. partners have the potential to introduce or deepen market-driven practices within Cuba through academic exchanges. Research utilizing a post-colonial lens can further inform how university administrators and faculty members can approach internationalization by focusing on internationalism's global solidarity

building instead of focusing mainly on market gain. The study's critical examination of study abroad programming will illuminate the links between internationalization and the academic capitalist mindset that at least in part is shaping the current practice of U.S. institutions. With deeper understanding of this phenomenon, a renewed effort on U.S. campuses can occur to support a conversation for increased public funding of higher education to ultimately support the global good.

Furthermore, examining how study abroad programs are formed and maintained within the expanding scope of internationalization of higher education will help the international education field understand how partners navigate potentially differing, and even conflicting, motivations. Exploration of these research questions can lead to new insights for developing study abroad programs.

Research on the study abroad programming efforts of U.S. institutions specifically within Cuba is of importance as Cuba is a non-traditional location experiencing rapid growth in study abroad programming. Given the unique history of Cuba and U.S. - Cuban relations, it is likely that Cuban university administrators' and faculty members' motivations to engage in study abroad programming differ from those of their counterparts in U.S. institutions. This study offers insight into resulting potential threats to international cooperation that can disempower the host country institutions involved in exchange and threaten the reciprocity between partners. The findings in this study provide educational administrators and faculty with a greater understanding of how to navigate tensions resulting from differing dominant internationalization ideologies within a complex historical and political environment.

Furthermore, this study is of significance as it captures the voices of both U.S. and Cuban educational administrators and faculty from university and program provider organizations to inform study abroad programming and assessment practices in an inclusive way that includes the perspective of international partners, particularly those in non-traditional locations. Understanding and appreciating university voices in different societal contexts ultimately leads to more sustainable study abroad programming, which is essential to the implementation of U.S. higher education institutions' internationalization plans. To elevate the academic communities of non-traditional locations this study reorients scholarship by placing the international academic community as an equal partner in the development of study abroad programming. My research incorporates the voices of non-U.S. educational administrators and faculty and compares these with those of their U.S. counterparts to better understand how potentially differing internationalization ideologies impact academic collaboration and study abroad programming.

Conclusion

In chapter one, I outlined the background context informing the development of research questions and the purpose of this research. The context provided highlights the shifting landscape of study abroad programming as it is carried out in the name of internationalization of higher education. The chapter provided the significance for studying this shift and the changing motivations for study abroad programming in non-traditional locations. In the next chapter, I will contextualize the literature grounding this particular study before discussing my methodological approach to studying this phenomenon in chapter three. Chapter four will discuss my

findings from my interviews with my informants. Chapter five will provide an

overview of conclusions from the study and implications for future international

education research, policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES AND RELATED RESEARCH

Introduction

In this chapter, I address the literature that grounds and guides the work of this dissertation research study by providing an overview of the major bodies of literature related to my research topic. Chapter two, also, includes an overview of my theoretical perspectives, post-colonialism and academic capitalism, as they relate to neoliberalism. Then the chapter addresses four core areas of literature that provide a foundation for understanding my dissertation study. First, I discuss the impact of neoliberalism on the current U.S. higher education landscape. After establishing the current higher education landscape, I analyze the internationalization of the university before addressing specific research regarding study abroad programming. I conclude my literature review with an examination of U.S. and Cuban higher education exchange.

Academic Capitalism

| Neoliberalism in U.S. higher education | Internationalization of U.S. higher education |

Literature Review
Focus Area

| U.S. Study Abroad | U.S.-Cuba Study Abroad Programming |

Post-colonialism
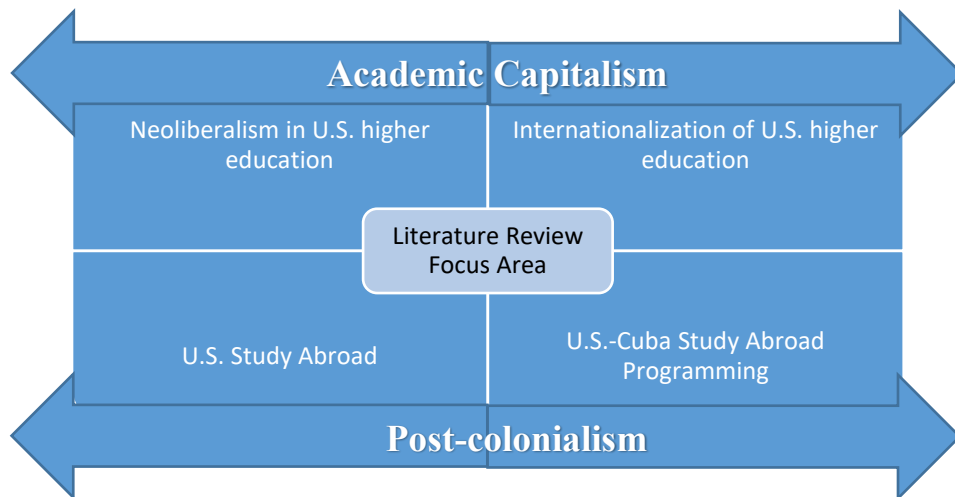
Figure 1: Literature Review Map

Overview of Theoretical Perspectives

To guide this study, I draw upon two theoretical perspectives. These perspectives provide lenses to examine the current context of higher education and a means to interpret the policy and practices of study abroad programming as well as university administrators' and faculty's perspectives on study abroad. The first theoretical perspective I address is post-colonialism.

Post-Colonial Theoretical Perspective

Post-colonialism aims to elevate the many voices of the oppressed in an effort to create new ways of being, knowing and doing (Gandhi, 1998; Jeffress, 2008). Post-colonialism addresses the impacts of the colonial era and reproductions of those power dynamics in the current context (Gandhi, 1998; Gopal, 2016). As Gandhi (1998) explained, it aims to incorporate the discourse of marginalized groups to adequately describe and represent the world we inhabit and to move marginalized voices out of the realm of the "other." This theory also examines the forces of educational colonialization and current efforts to decolonize educational ideology and practice (Hickling-Hudson, Gonzalez, & Preston, 2012).

Three scholars, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, are often referenced as the "holy trinity" within post-colonial theory. Said's *Orientalism* is viewed as a foundational text in post-colonial theory. In Said's text, he exposed the Eurocentric nature of western thinking about the Orient and more broadly the other (Said, 1978). Said's work clarified the object of post-colonial theory while highlighting Western society's limited and incomplete way of viewing the East or the other (1978). In addition, Spivak's work, *Can the Subaltern Speak,* introduced a

critical feminist perspective that illuminated the diverse voices of the *subaltern* into post-colonial theory discourse. Her work brought the conversation of gender to the forefront of the post-colonial discussion by illustrating the way the voices of the working class, specifically working class women, were being silenced by western forms of thought (Spivak, 1998). Lastly, Bhabha's (1994) work refined post-colonial theory by introducing additional concepts like his terms mimicry and hybridity. The term mimicry references a marginalized person who imitates western thought and practice but never achieves the status of the colonizer (Bhabha, 1994). He also discussed hybridity, a performed space in which people take on the multiple identities of the colonizer and the colonized. Bhabha's concept of hybridity creates a space of resistance as a way of renegotiating the past to produce oppositional meanings (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha elevated the discussion of resistance within post-colonial theory; however, the concept remains understudied (Jeffress, 2008; Shahjahan, 2012; 2014). Post-colonialism will allow me to explore the resistance strategies that emerge among U.S. and Cuban academics and university administrators. Through this lens, I will also examine possible U.S. participants' resistance to neoliberal policy and Cuban participants' resistance through solidarity ideology embedded within internationalism.

While these scholars shaped the discussion around post-colonial theory, a new discourse is emerging in an era of globalization. Within the framework of post-colonial theory is the concept of neo-colonialism, which seeks to explain the exploitation and power structures that emerge through economic means. No longer is the discussion centered on the explicit colonial structures of the historical past, but a

neo-colonial era in which these power structures continue to operate in more subtle but just as damaging ways (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006). In the era of globalization, the flow of information, capital and people continues to circulate toward the West (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006). Neoliberal ideologies are transmitted through these flows, creating an economic rationality put forth by corporations and financial elite (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006). My research aims to study how ideologies are specifically transmitted through the flow of academic exchanges, by examining the power dynamics between the U.S. and Cuba. By analyzing these ideologies, resistance and dominance strategies can be documented to better understand the influence of these exchanges on higher education policies and practices.

Global solidarity. To provide a framework for understanding these resistance strategies, I utilize the concept of global solidarity frequently referenced in Cuban rhetoric and policy. Solidarity, meaning the "unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group" (Oxford, 2018), is a concept that emerged in the mid-19th century and was popularized by Marx and Engels. Marx and Engels (1848) alluded to the concept within the context of political revolution as a means for the proletariat to unite by rising up against the ruling classes in order to overthrow the current social conditions. This revolutionary or political solidarity was used to mobilize workers across geographic boundaries.

Political solidarity reached its height in the 1970's with the rise of internationalist movements, which attempted to connect liberation movements across the Third World (Olesen, 2004). Many of these movements connected leftist movements within

newly liberated countries to build political alignment in order to reduce the dependency of these countries on their former colonizers. In short, these countries were aiming to reimagine global power structures.

Within the Cuban context, Fidel Castro's thinking on solidarity movements was greatly influenced by the teachings of Marx. Aiming to create a new nation, Castro introduced a framework that reimagined national power structures and systems and led Cuba through a process of decolonization and empowerment of the citizens of Cuba. Through the reorientation of the Cuban economy and education systems, the Cuban Revolution aimed to promote equality, human dignity and national sovereignty. For instance, in a speech given in Berlin, Castro (1977) discussed the solidarity teachings of Marx; "[Marx] saw humankind, and the science and technology of the most developed nations working for the benefit of the poorest, well-being and justice for all." Castro operationalized Marx's teachings on solidarity through government policies aimed at furthering Cuba's contribution to the world. In 1977, Castro stated, "There are Cubans working in Asia and Africa and making their modest contribution. We aren't doing it for national prestige or out of vanity to play a role in the international scene. We're doing it out of sense of internationalism." Furthermore, Castro created government institutions like Cuban Friendship Institute (ICAP) to guide the solidarity work of the Cuban government.

Global solidarity moves the concept of solidarity, formerly defined within the internationalist movement as being mainly a political force, to one that now addresses the reality of global interconnectivity resulting from globalization (Olesen, 2004). Global solidarity is thus a process and product of connections between people of

different backgrounds in an era of globalization and global communication. For this study, I use global solidarity as a grounding concept that illustrates the resistance strategies historically embedded in Cuban practices, which guides Cuba's current involvement in the international community.

In conclusion, post-colonialism is selected as a theoretical perspective as it strives to address the historical and political nature of the power dynamics in exchanges between the global north (western, urbanized and industrialized countries) and the global south (non-western, industrializing and developing countries). Additionally, post-colonial theory provides a lens to elevate the visibility of marginalized narratives. Infusing the global solidarity lens within post-colonial theory provides a way to incorporate the voices and alternative perspectives of Cubans, who in modern American history have been marginalized and seen as the "other," into the greater discourse about study abroad.

Academic Capitalism Theoretical Perspective

In addition to utilizing the post-colonial lens, I subscribe to a belief that the current university context is neoliberal in nature. An exploration of the neoliberal university environment is described in more detail in the following section. Prior to providing the university context, I wish to explore the rise of neoliberal ideology as it influences policy and creates an academic capitalism mindset, which is my second theoretical perspective.

Within the university context, I position neoliberalism as a neo-colonial force. Shahjahan's research illustrated the interplay between the neoliberal environment of the university with post-colonial theory by analyzing resistance strategies. As

Shahjahan (2012) stated, "Transformational resistance entails first recognizing one's complicity and agency within the oppressive logics of neoliberalism, and then experimenting with different ways of knowing and being in line with a future vision." These resistance narratives may be central to U.S. - Cuba relations, and this study hopes to add to the body of scholarship working to decolonialize and transform current university study abroad programming.

Neoliberal economic policy subscribes to the existence of a system in which the state maintains institutions that support citizens through the core tenets of free markets, free trade and private property rights (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberalism emerged in the 1970's from discourse about the role of government intervention. In the 1970's, economists debated public choice theory, which subscribes to the belief that, while free-market failure may create inequities and inefficiencies, they pale in comparison to government intervention, which is incapable of successfully addressing inefficiencies and inequities (Klees, 2008). The 1980's Ronald Reagan era in the U.S. saw the rise and institutionalization of these neoliberalist policies on the national scale. Neoliberal economic policies seek a number of reforms including the creation of markets in non-market state activities (e.g. within education), the reduction of government funding, the privatization of government functions, the deregulation of labor and the commercialization of public services (Klees, 2008; Harvey, 2007). The implementation of these reforms has impacted all aspects of state and institutional frameworks leading to new conceptualizations of labor, social relations and even state sovereignty (Harvey, 2007). In particular, the neoliberal environment has restructured the university environment in drastic ways. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) studied the

emerging market behaviors within the higher education landscape that resulted from the influence of neoliberal policy and led to the creation of their theory of academic capitalism.

Academic capitalism is described as a phenomenon in which U.S. higher education institutions are pressured to direct their efforts toward entrepreneurship by selling research and other goods and leveraging resources from students (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). The creation of this phenomenon is described as an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. It is said to have replaced the public good knowledge/learning regime, which viewed knowledge as a public good that provided benefits to the citizenry (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004).

Academic capitalism has its roots in resource dependency, which in this context suggests that the recipient of funding (e.g. the university) will imitate its funders (e.g. the neoliberal state or capitalist firms) (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Thus, universities, which have received decreasing levels of direct government funding, enter the new economy in a global marketplace through the selling of advanced knowledge and lose the possibility of autonomy by engaging within a neoliberal context that aims to deregulate, privatize and commercialize their educational activities (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004).

In addition to these assumptions, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) proposed that academic capitalism manifests through four aspects within a new institutional environment- circuits of knowledge, interstitial organizational emergence, intermediating networks and extended managerial capacity. Circuits of knowledge refer to new scholarly environments that are outside of traditional teaching platforms.

These new environments (e.g. web-based course platforms) create new modes of accountability and move the judgment of knowledge outside the physical university environment. Interstitial organizations emerge throughout the university environment connecting university operation to the neoliberal state and capitalist firms. For example, self-funding study abroad offices are created to generate revenue outside of the official curriculum and in addition to that received from the state, student tuition, etc. Intermediating networks link universities, non-profits and organizations to solve problems emerging in the new economy. In the realm of study abroad, program providers, private organizations operating study abroad programs, serve as the intermediary between the U.S. university and the host community and alter traditional educational boundaries. Extended managerial capacity is needed within the context of the other three elements outlined above. For instance, the rise of the senior internationalization officer emerges as a centralized manager to oversee the international strategy of the university. McClure (2016) noted that these managers are often the agents promoting, if not requiring, market-driven approaches to internationalization. As noted above, these four elements of the new institutional environment within the neoliberal state emerge with a focus on an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime which values market and the private good over the public good (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004).

In *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy,* Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) acknowledged the global scope of academic capitalism but it remains largely unexplored. In 2014, Brendan Cantwell and Ilkka Kauppinen published *Academic Capitalism in the Age of Globalization,* which began to explore the global dimensions

and reach of academic capitalism. Cantwell and Kauppinen (2014) discussed the interrelation of globalization and academic capitalism and examined how globalization is a driving motivation for university reform. Additionally, Slaughter (2014) advocated for considering the actors' motivations in the global university environment as a way to understand shifting knowledge/learning regimes. My dissertation aims to further the research of academic capitalist scholars by documenting the potentially mixed motivations of global university actors to understand how neoliberal and perhaps other narratives are incorporated, resisted and possibly transformed though university study abroad programming,

Post-colonialism is a lens for interpreting the power dynamics and resistance strategies present in study abroad, while academic capitalism grounds my examination of university practice within the neoliberal university environment.

Neoliberalism in U.S. Higher Education

As discussed above, neoliberalism is a dominant and pervasive force within higher education. In this section, I review current literature to contextualize the extent and impact of neoliberalism on university operations and functions in the U.S.

Neoliberal policymakers see the university as an environment in which they can implement their reforms, as educational environments are conduits for value formation. This phenomenon is not new and was studied by Bowles and Gintis in 1976. Bowles and Gintis (1976) illustrated the power of schooling in the transmission of ideas through the creation of the theory of correspondence or the correspondence principle. In short, the correspondence principle states that the norms and values students learn through their schooling correspond to values and norms in the capitalist

economy (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Bowles and Gintis' correspondence principle highlights the school's direct influence on cultural models and structures that shape individual students by generating norms, rewards and sanctions that govern their daily life experiences. However, Bowles and Gintis took a critical stance on the ways in which schools were creating these norms. Specifically, Bowles and Gintis (1976) noted the capitalist approach to education that valued the capitalist firms' needs more so than the needs of the students and the community. Understanding the influence of schooling, neoliberal policymakers continue to focus their efforts on transforming the university environment.

In the current neoliberal environment, higher education policy advances the right of the self-interested individual, the creation of a self-regulating free-market and commitment to free trade (Harvey, 2007; Klees, 2008; Olssen and Peters, 2005). In this policy environment, attempts have been made to deregulate higher education and reduce funding in an effort to create a system that is intelligible, practicable and governable by a particular (e.g. neoliberal capitalist) economic rationality (Harvey, 2007; Shahjahan, 2014). This economic rationality prioritizes a system governed by consumer interests that produces alumni focused solely on individual interests (Harvey, 2007; Olssen and Peters, 2005; Shahjahan, 2014). For instance, Hensley, Galilee-Belfer and Lee (2013) examined a situation in Arizona where state funding for higher education had been drastically cut. Legislators changed the narrative of the goal of higher education being a societal benefit to one of individual benefit in order to justify the increasing cost of attendance (Hensley, Galilee-Belfer and Lee, 2013).

Reduction of state funding of university education creates a dynamic in which universities must search for funds from new revenue sources. New revenue sources are found by increasing financial costs to students such as raising tuition rates and fees (Klees, 2008; Shahjahan, 2014) and by selling research goods and university-branded merchandise (Shahjahan, 2014; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Introducing a market within the university is one way to induce the state to privatize the higher education sector. With this market-like environment, traditional university governance models are transformed into corporate models that ultimately reduce the power of faculty (Giroux, 2002). By operating within a corporate model, universities become susceptible to both internal and external forces that may not be directly connected to the traditional academic mission of the institution.

University Governance

Historically, the contributions of faculty, which were seen as deepening knowledge and uncovering truths, were assessed by scholarly peers; however, within the neoliberal university faculty are now monitored and held accountable to outcomes that generate income for the university. For example, faculty instruction has been redefined in skill based language that focuses more on workforce development (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2000). Judgment of faculty scholarship lies outside of the university, and the priority of scholarly activities becomes revenue generation instead of knowledge production for the public good (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000). In this environment, faculty members are constrained by the demands for revenue generation, which generates competitive, profit-driven motives among faculty (Davies, 2005). Surveillance methods are established internally through a managerial

administrative structure to reinforce the individualistic environment that deemphasizes knowledge for the public good (or knowledge for knowledge's sake) (Davies, 2005).

The managerial administrative structure attracts and encourages higher education leaders who internalize the neoliberal narrative and view students as customers (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2000). By framing students in customer-based language, the managerial administrative structure encourages faculty to design curriculum with student outputs aligned to global economic values that prioritize individual gain, instead of creating student outcomes that promote the public good (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2000). Olssen (2002) mapped the desired internal university governance system within the neoliberal environment as detailed in the figure below. The figure captures the shift in the university environment under a neoliberal environment.

	Neoliberal
Mode of operation	Private
Mode of control	'Hard' managerialism; contractual specification between principal–agent; autocratic control
Management function	Managers; line-management; cost centres
Goals	Maximize outputs; financial profit; efficiency; massification; privatization
Work relations	Competitive; hierarchical; workload indexed to market; corporate loyalty; no adverse criticism of university
Accountability	Audit; monitoring; consumer–managerial; performance indicators; output-based (ex post)
Marketing	Centres of excellence; competition; corporate image; branding; public relations
Pedagogy/teaching	Semesterization; slenderization of courses; modularization; distance learning; summer schools; vocational; Mode 2 knowledge
Research	Externally funded; contestable; separated from teaching; controlled by government or external agency

Figure 2: Neoliberal Governance Structures (Olssen, 2002)

In addition to the reduction of faculty guidance within the internal governance

of the university system, external forces also shape the university environment. While

external forces (i.e. legislature, industry, etc.) were apparent in previous faculty

governance structures, their impact within the neoliberal structure becomes more

explicit and pervasive. As a result of these influences, university rankings have

emerged within a commercialized system as another force shaping university

governance. Ranking systems inherently encourage students, faculty members and

administrators to make decisions that advance their institution's standing in the rankings. This type of behavior is called striving. "Striving" is defined broadly as the institutional pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara and Bloomgarden, 2011). In an effort to raise one's ranking, striving behavior responds to consumeristic desires (e.g. luxury housing and athletics) to attract students instead of furthering the university's academic mission.

Intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the World Bank) further push the university to consider neoliberal policies. Ginsburg et al.'s (2003) study documented the privatization of universities in Romania and Chile, thus positioning these societies so that they were not exempted from the rules for trade in higher education services instituted in 1995 by the World Trade Organization and the General Agreement in Trade in Services. This study revealed that aspects of Chile and Romania's higher education systems were privatized to encourage market behaviors and the trade of students and research goods (Ginsburg et al., 2003). Internal and external actors encouraged the neoliberalization of university policy in both these cases. Both societies were able to compete in the global higher education arena but also opened themselves to new vulnerabilities in funding, governance and autonomy (Ginsburg et al., 2003). The cases of Chile and Romania offer insight into neoliberalism's ability to take root in distinct local and cultural contexts (Cannella and Koro-Ljungberg, 2017). Additionally, the example of Chile's and Romania's transformation amplifies the need to understand neoliberalism within other country contexts. In this study, I bring study abroad programming into the wider discussion of the forms and avenues of transmission of neoliberal policies. To understand the international realm of the

university, I now turn my focus to the internationalization of the university environment.

Internationalization of the University

Drawing on the existing body of literature, I provide an overview of common components of internationalization followed by a discussion of motivations of various stakeholders guiding internationalization strategy on university campuses primarily in the U.S. context. I conclude this section with an overview of critiques and alternatives to current internationalization strategy.

The interdependency of the globalized world and efforts to infuse global understanding into the university curriculum have been studied widely. One of the most prolific scholars on the topic is Philip Altbach. Altbach and Teichler (2001) stated that internationalization is inevitable in current times with the development "of a global economy, a growing worldwide labor market for highly skilled personnel, and a knowledge communications system based on the Internet." In the U.S., for example, various types of higher education institutions, from small community colleges to large public and private institutions, are adding internationalization initiatives to their university mission statements and are developing strategic plans at increased rates (Stearns, 2009).

Internationalization of the university can be defined as the incorporation of an intercultural or international dimension into all teaching, research, and service functions of a university (Childress, 2009; Knight, 2003). It is important to note that the notion of internationalization is not a new one. Universities in Europe beginning in the thirteenth century developed mechanisms to help higher education institutions

recruit international scholars and establish a common language, Latin, for instruction

(Altbach and Teichler, 2001). What is new is the extent and intensity at which

American institutions are using internationalization rhetoric in their policies and

practices. These policies and practices at the university level influence the campus

climate surrounding internationalization efforts and the direction in which these

directives develop (Altbach and Knight, 2007; De Witt, 2014; Knight, 2015).

Furthermore, internationalization efforts influence the curriculum and the student's

college experience. The process by which internationalization occurs varies across a

diverse set of university systems throughout the world.

Phases of Internationalization

Knight described three phases of internationalization. In the first phase, the

central focus is a commitment to develop international partnerships in order to

facilitate mobility and conduct cross-border research (Knight, 2015). In phase two,

international branch campuses or brick and mortar institutions, typically from the

global north, are established to facilitate capacity building, thus asserting dominance

of "western" institutions in the developing world (Knight, 2015). During the third,

emerging phase, new institutions are co-founded and co-developed by the existing

institutions from different countries (Knight, 2015).

De Wit examined various dimensions within these phases of internationalization.

He expanded upon Knight's study showing that much of phase one and phase two of

internationalization was focused on south-north or north-north exchange centered on

student mobility (De Wit, 2014). De Wit (2014) noted shifts in this environment

where south-south exchanges were occurring and new countries were emerging as leading recipients of student mobility efforts.

Motivations of Internationalization

Research continues to highlight the motivations and future direction of internationalization strategies within the university environment. Knight studied and documented the shifting motivations of U.S. universities' internationalization strategies. In 2004, Knight's research grouped the motivations of U.S. internationalization strategies into four broad categories: social/cultural, political, economic and academic. While economic motivations existed in 2004, they were tempered with goals of intercultural understanding, peace building and enhancement of the quality of teaching. Just four years later, Knight (2008) conducted an updated study on U.S. internationalization strategies that merged the motivations into two categories: institutional and national. The motivations identified within these two categories were inherently connected to the neoliberal mindset. For example, Knight (2008) documented the central motivations of a variety of actors (i.e. professional and academic associations, nongovernmental organizations, and governmental actors) that influenced U.S. internationalization strategy. These motivations included branding, income generation and strategic alliance creation (Knight, 2008). Knight (2014) recently stated internationalization was going through an "identity crisis" as the traditional motivations around partnership, exchange and mutual benefits were now being replaced by competition and commercialization. These shifting motivations clearly show the presence of neoliberalism within the international realm of the university.

Stakeholders in University Internationalization

Motivations surrounding internationalization are also shaped by key stakeholders within the university. Certain faculty members have historically guided the purpose, activities and direction of internationalization. As shown above, Knight's 2004 research emphasized the role of faculty and the academic work, yet in her later studies, the faculty presence notably shifted. Omitting the faculty perspective in the development of these initiatives is quite troublesome, as faculty members are specialists who can provide unique insight into internationalization from the perspective of an educator and disciplinary expert. For example, Agnew (2013), in her interviews with 37 faculty members across disciplines at three institutions in a single state university system, noted that departments had different needs and concerns for internationalizing, and that the type of study abroad programming offered typically helps some students more than others depending on their major. As research shows, interviews and discussions with faculty not only further their engagement with international initiatives but also help to better integrate the curriculum with international programming and create more academic access for students (Childress, 2009). The recent absence of faculty perspective highlights a shift in the priorities of internationalization from one focused on academic cooperation and exchange to one focused mainly on revenue generation.

Additionally, government entities and advocacy organizations can aid in the development of internationalization strategies of U.S. universities. In 2012, The U.S. Department of Education released its first international education strategy, *Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement*. This strategy

aimed to strengthen U.S. education in the global market while advancing international priorities (Engel and Sizeck, 2014). The strategy included three main objectives: increase global competencies, learn from other countries and engage in education diplomacy (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). In addition to these explicit objectives, the strategy supplemented educational standards and programs falling under the Higher Education Act's Title VI international programming initiatives.

The Department of Education's international strategy is a top down approach which aims to infuse an international message within the mission of the governmental department. The strategy is not policy but serves to complement current policies like the Higher Education Act's Title VI programming. Yet, departmental level strategies are often taken as directives. Thus, while this particular strategy has received little attention, some state governments have tried to build policy based on this strategy.

Furthermore, this strategy aims to move the conversation beyond core competencies (reading, math and science) to include global competency. Global competency within the strategy is broadly defined as "knowledge and skills individuals need to be successful in today's flat, interconnected world and to be fully engaged in and act on issues of global significance" (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Yet, global competency is often framed as another way to stay competitive in the market place, which limits the scope of global competency to only having economic value. Much of the language of this strategy is coded with neoliberalism terminology that views international activity as a function of the marketplace and being solely in service to the individual student.

Advocacy organizations are aiding universities to strategize under increasing pressure to internationalize. One such organization, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU), has published several reports emphasizing internationalization reform over the past decade. In a document entitled *A Call to Leadership*, the association urged members to help foster "students-of-the-world," arguing institutions that can do so will be part of the universities and colleges of the next century (APLU, 2004). The report viewed internationalization as a necessary next step, and pushed for universities to begin integrating study abroad into the curriculum for students so that they may continue to gain credits toward their degrees while abroad (2004). In some ways, the push for the portability of credits responds to the notion of choice and responds to the consumer desires of the student. Rather than focusing solely on the process of transferring credit, the APLU's advocacy should also support the integration of the international experience into the academic fabric of the university.

Scope of Internationalization

Various stakeholders present a range of motivations that can alter/shape internationalization strategy, impacting both the breadth and scope of internationalization activities. Key activities within the scope of internationalization strategy are the development of study abroad programs to facilitate student mobility, the recruitment of international students and faculty, the addition of international dimensions to the curriculum, and the creation of international campuses (De Wit, 2014).

Scholars and practitioners within international education have studied the scope of internationalization. A notable scholar, Hudzik, defined the scope of internationalization in two parts: campus and comprehensive internationalization. Hudzik (2011) defined comprehensive internationalization as the commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspective throughout the teaching, research and service missions of higher education. Meanwhile, campus internationalization is a component of internationalization that focuses on aligning the parts 'at home' to the practices of internationalization of Higher Education (Hudzik, 2011). Defining internationalization in these terms illuminates how internationalization strategies are a priority within the international and domestic realm. However, universities often execute internationalization activities in an ad hoc manner.

Edwards (2007), in her review of challenges to internationalization at Harvard University, found that historically the institution had a great deal of sporadic study abroad programs occurring in various regions around the world. Edwards stressed the importance of central administration in the internationalization process. Harvard did not see consistent growth across campus until the establishment of more uniform systems of support for international study, such as through the appointment of a Vice President of International Affairs and the development of standards for study abroad (Edwards, 2007). One consistent finding in this study was that, before and after the centralization of study abroad, faculty were one of the most active groups spearheading the international process (Edwards, 2007). Harvard University provides

an example of an institution striving to balance centralized administration with honoring faculty autonomy and expertise surrounding internationalization activities.

Similarly, in a separate study, Coryell et al. (2012) found the scope and operationalization of internationalization to be disjointed. Coryell et al. (2012) evaluated three research universities and found that each had a different model for implementing international initiatives. At one institution, there was little centralized staff and governance on internationalization. Instead, each college operated separately, creating an environment that was described as "fractionalized." This often led to conflict and competition between departments as opposed to collaboration (Coryell et al., 2012). The university stated to have had the greatest success utilized a "centralized internationalization" approach; this institution had a well-equipped and well-staffed central office led by a vice president, whose sole duty was internationalizing the campus. Having this level of institutional investment led to the creation of a culture of international activities throughout the campus, instead of, having a more segmented environment (Coryell et al., 2012). While a coordinated effort for internationalization can support effective implementation of an internationalization strategy, establishing managerial structures can also be a surveillance-like mechanism that aligns with market-driven priorities.

Deschamps and Lee (2015) studied the role of these centralized university departments through interviews with senior internationalization officers (SIOs). SIOs, a common addition to the managerial structures of universities, manage a university's internationalization strategy. Deschampes and Lee (2015) noted an increase in entrepreneurial activities in their interviews with 30 SIOs. In the neoliberal

environment, the SIO plays an important role in setting the internationalization agenda and allocating funding to support these institutional priorities. Further, Fligstein and McAdam (2011) examined the power of these administrators as they set agendas, convince others that goals are achievable, broker agreements and link university actors. Understanding the roles played by these university administrators is central to my study.

Critiques of Dominant/Neoliberal Internationalization Strategies

The shifting nature of internationalization strategy on U.S. higher education campuses combined with competing and disjointed implementation has led to a number of scholars and practitioners providing alternative approaches to internationalization. Stein (2011) categorized internationalization ideologies in three categories: idealism, educationalism and instrumentalism. Utilizing these three ideologies, Stein aimed to highlight the contradictions in internationalization ideologies while advocating for university faculty and educational administrators to explicitly express their vision, goals and strategies surrounding internationalization. Knight (2014) furthered a critical approach in her recent study as she described a clear change in what once was a university cooperative approach to creating exchange and partnership across borders to one now focused on competition amongst one another for students and prestige.

Some scholars, like Lee (2013), believe it is irresponsible to think of internationalization as an inherent force for social and educational good. Stromquist (2007) reinforced skepticism of the real intentions of internationalization policies as she argued; "Internationalization refers to greater international presence by the

dominant economic and political powers, usually guided by principles of marketing and competition." The financial state policies guiding university budgets also shed light on Stromquist's concerns. For example, economic motives behind internationalization initiatives are clearly seen through admissions fairs and drives that take place abroad to recruit full fee paying students. This can be seen on large, public university campuses as there are specific enhanced initiatives to recruit international students while trying to overcome budget cuts to a university's operating budget (Abutaleb, 2012). The practice of establishing U.S. university branch campuses also highlights the economic motives behind internationalization initiatives. These initiatives are thinly veiled in a language of exchange but are exploited for economic gain through one of the four modes of trade identified in the General Agreement on Trade of Services by the World Trade Organization, "commercial presence", and thus devalue the benefits of international students to the university campus (World Trade Organization, 1998).

To differentiate and refocus on internationalization for cooperation and mutual benefit, scholars are now using Jones's (1998) term internationalism, which emphasizes a focus primarily on international cooperation and the global good within the international activity of universities. Internationalism is seen as an alternative to the economic focus of current internationalization strategy by refocusing on global solidarity efforts.

Stein conducted an analysis of internationalization strategies in an effort to create three categories of critique surrounding the practice of university internationalization. Stein (2017) first identified a soft approach to

internationalization that continues to see the countries in the global north as central to internationalization strategy. Next, she described the radical approach that aims to shift power dynamics by centering oppressed voices and problematizing higher education's role in reproduction of inequities in society but does not address the fundamental context within which internationalization operates, thus failing to mobilize internationalization for global good (Stein, 2017). In her third element of critique, she addressed the liminal approach which understands the relational models that exist within internationalization and connects these relationships back to inherited dynamics within the world system in an effort to understand empire narratives (Stein, 2017). A liminal approach aligns with a post-colonial perspective as they both provide a lens that understands the historical and political environment within which universities operate.

Others like Zemach-Bersin further critiqued international educators for blindly accepting the U.S. government's directives (2007). Zemach-Bersin (2007) linked internationalization policies to a process that "reproduces the logic of colonialism, legitimizes American imperialist desires and allows for the interests of U.S. foreign policy to be articulated through the specious rhetoric of global universality." Thus, developing internationalization strategy that is sensitive to university partners in the developing world requires acknowledgement of previous colonial dynamics. Even though the formal process of colonialism has ended, colonial dynamics present in new, subtler forms.

Continued imperialistic desires are highlighted by Stearns (2009) who sees U.S. academic exchange as a force for enhancing America's standing abroad and

forging new strategic relationships with foreign institutions. Typically these relationships are one sided, as noted by Queen. Queen (2012) claimed that U.S. academic exchange promotes a false rhetoric of diverse forms of intercultural learning. One sided approaches to internationalization for U.S. higher education gain leads critics to fear resulting indoctrination of dominant American ideals and values (Stearns, 2009).

As Wright (2009) noted, universities at the forefront of internationalization are highly influential and have the potential to set a precedent that other institutions may follow. Lee (2013) advocated for moving internationalization beyond a checklist of activities to one that should advance social and educational responsibility. If international educators establish a culture of sustainable and thoughtful development of engagement with the university's internationalization strategy, this will lead to higher education institutions incorporating practices that acknowledge and challenge power dynamics in an effort to create mutuality among international partners. In pursuing this line of inquiry, it is my hope that this research highlights the transmission of ideology through the internationalization strategy in an effort to unearth the reproduction of colonial structures emphasized through neoliberal language and strengthens the case for using solidarity and other resistance strategies to promote the global common good.

Study Abroad Programming

As noted, internationalization initiatives include a wide array of formal education policies, activities and practices. It would be far too complex to look at each of these initiatives within the diverse U.S. higher education system. Therefore,

the sole focus of this dissertation study is the study abroad efforts of U.S. higher education institutions to carry out their internationalizing efforts. The following section examines the purpose and practice of study abroad, specifically looking at study abroad enrollments and program development and operations.

The FORUM on Education Abroad, a nationally recognized organization which develops standards of good practice for Education Abroad in the U.S., defines study abroad as a subtype of Education Abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student's home institution outside of the country (for this study the U.S.) in which the student is studying but does not result in receiving a degree from a foreign institution (FORUM, 2014). Student mobility is an increasingly common vehicle in the higher education internationalization process. In 2005, 27% of U.S. higher education institutions did not send any students abroad but over the first decade of the 21st century study abroad programming expanded to almost all institutions (Stearns, 2009). Yet, study abroad only continues to grow. For example, the Institute for International Education (2017) reported 325,339 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit in 2016-2017, an increase of 3.8% over the previous year and an increase of over 100,000 student participants since 2005-2006 (Institute for International Education, 2007). As study abroad becomes more common in universities, research studies provide evidence of its importance to and relevance within the American college environment.

Study abroad began as language and culture centered programs in women's colleges before shifting to a model of supporting and educating veterans after World War II (Hoffa, 2007; DePaul and Hoffa, 2010). Now study abroad programming

supports various fields beyond just the humanities (Hoffa, 2007; DePaul and Hoffa, 2010). Study abroad programming has not only diversified in regards to academic subjects but also in location. Today, over 40% of U.S. study abroad programming takes place in non-traditional locations outside of Western Europe and Australia (Institute of International Education, 2017). In addition, English has become the common language of instruction for U.S. study abroad programming, similarly to how Latin became the common language of education in the thirteenth century (Altbach and Teichler, 2001). Practitioners see this development as an effort to encourage students without language skills to study abroad, but I believe this is one of many ways study abroad is becoming consumer driven and neo-colonializing.

Study Abroad Student Learning

Much of the research on study abroad programming is focused on the U.S. university student learning experience. Understanding the student learning experience provides context for my study but also illuminates the need for my specific research that captures the perspectives of faculty and university administrators. Below is a review of seminal studies within the field of study abroad.

The expansion of study abroad programming calls international educators to action, to determine the purpose of these experiences for the student, host community and home university. Studies of study abroad programs (or experiences) have provided evidence that students gain many benefits from studying abroad, at least some of which universities want to promote. Many of these studies examine the outputs of study abroad in areas such as intercultural learning (Bennett, 1993; Crabtree, 2008). Yet, there is a dearth of studies that engage international hosting

academic communities to incorporate their perspective in the research. More research on study abroad programming is needed as programming continues to expand and incorporate destinations across the globe.

Many scholars have focused their research on the learning outcomes of study abroad students. Research on study abroad programming provides evidence of the benefits to a student's learning and development, such as intercultural competency and career development, which university leaders want to promote (Bennett, 1993; Crabtree, 2008; Deardoroff, 2006; Dwyer and Peters, 2004). These scholars have examined student learning outcomes ranging from language learning to career preparedness, but all these gains are typically placed under the umbrella of becoming a "global citizen." In contrast, international educators rarely define what it means to be a global citizen and institutions are vague in their rhetoric (Zemach-Bersin, 2007). However, the ambiguity in the definition of global citizenship can offer flexibility in the assessment of study abroad programming's learning outcomes but the ambiguity can also lead to a prioritization of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can construct and reproduce neo-colonial relations at individual, group and societal levels.

Notably, Vande Berg and Paige's research on student learning outcomes addressed the topic of academic engagement while abroad. Their research showed increases in intercultural development and a movement along the ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism continuum occurring when early interventions in cultural learning occurred on study abroad programs (Vande Berg and Paige, 2012). Their research noted these early interventions, like pre-departure orientations, are shown to provide cultural frames for future learning (Vande Berg and Paige, 2012). Their research

furthers the need for a trained professional (e.g. faculty or educational administrators) to facilitate such programs to advance student learning goals.

Additionally, the Institute for International Education of Students, a program provider, found in a survey of their study abroad program alumni from 1950-1999 that participants expressed increased self-confidence, developed greater interest in their academic studies, found greater diversity in friendships, and acquired skills influencing their career path as a result of studying abroad (Dwyer and Peters, 2004). This research shows the long-term impact of study abroad on a student's personal, professional and academic life (Dwyer and Peters, 2004).

Another study conducted by Baernholdt, Drake, Maron, and Neymark (2013) analyzed the development and outcomes of a nursing exchange program between an American and a Danish university. During this experience, students of both countries spent time studying nursing in the other country, participating in coursework as well as having opportunities to practice in the field. The researchers found that, by the end, participants could recognize and understand cultural differences in the way nursing operates in the other country and felt that they had become stronger practitioners in the process. The research team attributed these positive outcomes to the strength of having an exchange program that engaged students and required great investment from the students and their respective institutions. These studies provided insight into the student learning that occurs on study abroad programs and supported the rationale for universities seeking to expand programming and partnerships to create these programs.

Administrative Structures for Study Abroad

Many universities demonstrate a desire to establish an extensive network of exchange program partners in order to increase the number of students going abroad. This requires a university to make a comprehensive investment in internationalizing by creating support systems to manage student concerns and needs (Childress, 2009). Other scholars have noted the need for systems in the operationalization of study abroad programming. For example, Doyle et al. (2010) surveyed 1,368 university students across several institutions in New Zealand to see what factors were associated with choosing to study abroad. After examining the data they found that the institutions with lower numbers of students going abroad were those with students who felt uninformed and under supported by their university. On the contrary, students at institutions with higher numbers participating in study abroad programs felt knowledgeable about their options for international study and encouraged by the university to pursue them. They concluded from these findings that the success of study abroad programs "can be reinforced by…the efforts of liaison officers, lecturers and international program staff" (Doyle et al., 2010).

Further, Agnew (2013) remarked that the actions of the university administrators foster an organizational culture that indicates to stakeholders (e.g. students, faculty and staff) what behaviors will be rewarded and those that will not be. It therefore becomes important that strategic missions and plans are clear and precise in the expectations they set for higher education institutions (Rudzki, 1995). If institutions would like to see the number of students involved in study abroad increase, then they must make that goal explicit to the university community and provide the appropriate resources needed to support these international experiences.

In addition to the creation of university systems to facilitate study abroad programming, the increased interconnectivity of the world creates direct implications for the U.S. government to aid U.S. higher education institutions in doing so. Governments are taking notice of the increased interconnectivity of the world and pressuring higher education institutions to produce citizens capable of working in a globalized world system. A clear example of the linkage between political institutions and higher education institutions was highlighted in 2005 when Senator Paul Simon lobbied for congress to form a group of educators and politicians to strengthen the U.S.' international mindset. In response, congress established in 2005 the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Commission with the sole purpose "to develop the framework for an international study abroad program for college students" (Durbin, 2006).

The Lincoln Commission established three main goals, which included "increasing student abroad participation to 1 million participants by 2017," as well as increasing the number of minorities going abroad and diversifying the locations in which these students study (Durbin, 2006). To accomplish the goals of the Lincoln Commission, the Simon Act was drafted. In addition to the Simon Act, in 2005, Senator Durbin himself successfully lobbied for the passage of Senate resolution 308, which deemed 2006 to be the "Year of Study Abroad." Resolution 308 further highlighted the deficiencies of the current U.S. curriculum and "encourages institutions of higher learning to promote and expand study abroad opportunities." Through resolutions like 308 and other policies, the United States government places higher education institutions at the forefront of strengthening America's dedication to enhancing the global competency of its future leaders and other citizen/workers.

However, the U.S. government has yet to pass the Simon Act and the resolution and recommendations of the Lincoln Commission have never fully been realized.

Assessment in Study Abroad

Even though legislation in support of study abroad programming is still pending, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs does fund the Open Doors Report, which is produced by the Institute of International Education. The Open Doors Report is the only current ranking system for study abroad programming at a national level in the U.S., but it is quite limited in scope. The Open Doors Report is the only comparable assessment of universities in study abroad which looks at the total number of students going abroad during an academic year. This sole quantitative measure across U.S. higher education institutions, promotes an overemphasis on the quantity of students studying abroad instead of a focus on the quality of educational and institutional objectives as well as outcomes (Woolf, 2007). The Open Doors Report does not help universities analyze what they and other institutions are practicing in any critical manner. Numbers, while reflecting the efforts of an institution, do not help stakeholders understand what is most conducive to creating well-supported and prepared study abroad programs. Focusing solely on the number of students participating can lead to a competitive market-driven approach as universities try to increase participation to climb the ranks without focusing on the quality and purpose of these exchanges.

In addition to using the Open Doors Report, many higher education institutions and program providers operating study abroad programming assess their programs through formative student satisfaction surveys. Vande Berg, Paige and Lou

(2012) synthesized data from developmental psychologists to show the flaws in student satisfaction surveys. Their research offered critiques of this measurement of study abroad programming. They first questioned the validity and use of self-reporting of learning outcomes because educators in higher education institutions generally do not use this type of evaluation at the end of their regular academic coursework (Vande Berg, Paige and Lou, 2012). Additionally, student self-reporting on the quality of a program assumes the student possesses sufficient knowledge on study abroad learning outcomes and assumes they tell the truth about what they learned (Vande Berg, Paige and Lou, 2012). While student input is helpful in the decision making process, educators must proceed with caution when using these measures to inform their programming decisions.

Overemphasis on student stakeholders providing input into the study abroad programming through student evaluations can further contribute to a consumer-driven dynamic. Faculty and university administrators can counter this consumer-driven dynamic by aligning their evaluation tools to the academic learning outcomes of their courses (Engle and Engle, 2012). Assessment alignment produces valuable information to education abroad professionals. Engle and Engle (2012) state that educators must detail the actions which lead to successful intercultural learning while putting the onus on the student to make the necessary choices that lead to quality education abroad experiences. Aligning these choices with student outcomes and addressing them in student evaluations leads to a greater depth of information gained through student evaluations and moves the conversation beyond pure satisfaction

metrics. In the end, learning in a new cultural environment will not always be a satisfactory experience.

Study abroad, however, is a relatively young field that has much room for new research and analysis of its practices (Coryell et al., 2012). While many studies exist that look at the outputs of study abroad in areas such as intercultural learning, there are few, if any, that look holistically at the inputs of the institution in promoting intercultural learning (Deardorff, 2006). As Childress (2009) notes, an institution must work to develop consensus amongst the organizational apparatuses that compose it if it wishes to implement large scale study abroad programming effectively. A consensus is needed for a university's success in internationalization which means success cannot solely be determined by the number of students who go abroad but how well it collectively supports and executes the programming of students' experience. Paige et al. (2010) conducted a large scale research project that surveyed over 6,000 students who studied abroad on various programs over five decades and compared their responses to those of an additional 5,000 student comparison group (who had not studied abroad). The longitudinal data reframed the discussion about the value of study abroad from an individual to public good. Additionally, Paige et al. (2010) created the concept of the four D's (demography, duration, destination and depth) from their research analysis. Their research advanced the argument that study abroad serves the public through the development of human and social capital (of the U.S. student participating, their foreign country peers, and perhaps others).

In addition, Vande Berg conducted the Georgetown Consortium study that provided insight into common programming myths. In the Georgetown Consortium study, Allport's Challenge and Support Theory, which states that for optimal student growth there needs to be a balance between challenge and support, was introduced to study abroad programming decisions (Vande Berg, et al., 2009). Myths regarding programming decisions focusing on duration, location and language learning components were critically examined through the use of Allport's challenge and support theoretical framing. The study led to the justification of diversifying of study abroad programming.

Changing Nature of Study Abroad

Some scholars attribute the changing direction in study abroad programming to consumerism (Bolen, 2001; Ogden, 2008). Consumerist values are driven by a market that caters to its consumers' (i.e., students') desires (interests or at least choices). Recent trends in study abroad suggest that programming is increasingly catering to students. This is further exacerbated within the university environment with the use of satisfaction surveys, veiled as assessment practices, which reinforces that the university prioritizes student desires or satisfaction over academic learning.

Consumerist pressures have diversified the practice and scope of study abroad to expand beyond traditional exchanges to include programs led by faculty in various disciplines, federal government initiatives helping students gain international experience and even study abroad programs designed by independent organizations for university student participation (Bowman, 1987).

Of particular interest for this study is the rise of independent organizations, or program providers, in the field of study abroad. Program providers existed before the 1980's and 1990's, but the number of providers expanded during those decades (DePaul and Hoffa, 2010). While no studies currently exist that examine the rise of these organizations in relation to neoliberal university reform, the timing of their rise and continued existence today is cause for concern.

Concern arises for two main reasons. First, these providers are non-university organizations that take a variety of forms and operate outside the university purview. While FORUM on Education Abroad serves as a standards regulating body of study abroad programming, there is no evidence of a study abroad program ever being shutdown based on low quality or unethical practice. Second, these organizations continue to replace the roles that faculty and university administrators previously held, even as internationalization becomes central to many universities' mission (Stearns, 2009). The act of contracting with these providers highlights another space in which universities are privatizing their functions.

For many institutions, privatization of their functions is blamed on the costs of hiring professional staff or training faculty in international work. Childress (2009) noted that financing study abroad can be prohibitive, making it difficult to hire sufficient professional staff and fund different initiatives. Some universities turn to peer advising programs to supplement professional advising services (Lo, 2006). However, placing students in roles that faculty and educational administrators previously occupied is another way of reducing resources to adequately implement the university's commitment to international programming. Childress (2009) found

that faculty play an integral role in encouraging study abroad among undergraduate students, and it is important to many that they be a part of the evolving internationalization of their respective campuses. Therefore, reducing the role of faculty and staff counters Childress' recommendations on the role of faculty.

Many universities pass the costs of these experiences onto the student in the form of an administrative fee in addition to tuition. The assessment of fees adds a new level of financial burden on students that is often seen as a deterrent for student participation (Salisbury, Paulsen, and Pascarella, 2011). Additionally, fees are shown as further prohibiting poor students, including many minority students, from accessing study abroad opportunities (Naffziger, Bott and Mueller, 2008).

In addition to seeing the reduction in funding and staffing, we see that the length of time students are embedded within international host communities on study abroad programs has decreased. Over the last decade, program length declined as short term study abroad, eight weeks or less (versus an entire semester or academic year), became the preferred length of time abroad (Institute of International Education, 2007; 2017). Short term study abroad programs do offer at least some learning benefits for students (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige 2009) but a reduction in length is a cause for concern. Further examination is needed to determine how resource allocation impacts the scope and purpose of study abroad programming as well as how the length of the study abroad experience affects learning and other outcomes.

Another noteworthy change in study abroad is the expansion of study abroad programming to the developing world. This expansion is incorrectly seen by many in

the field as a purposeful decision by many in the field to move students away from traditional locations (e.g. Western Europe, Australia) to build infrastructure and program exchanges with study abroad in less traditional locations (e.g. sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, etc.). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence identifying the motivations for these exchanges. Woolf (2006) critiqued the expansion of study abroad programs because this was occurring in parallel to a decrease in area and regional studies courses and the reduction of language courses on the university campus. Increasing the sites of study abroad but reducing students' curricular connections further supports the neo-colonial critiques of scholars. Ogden (2008) added another critique, providing insight into programming practices in these nontraditional areas that he likens to a colonial settler's veranda. Students in this colonial-like setting are provided resources (e.g. luxury housing, 24/7 internet access, etc.) beyond the standard of living of the local population. Students enjoy the comforts of their study abroad programming only to passively engage with the local population or view the community from afar (Ogden, 2008) and to be perceived by the local population as privileged or elitist. Failure to create programming in solidarity with the local community creates tensions between study abroad programs and their host academic institutions and broader communities.

Study Abroad Host Communities

Host communities are often a population overlooked in the literature on study abroad programming. Yet, U.S. universities make connections with these host academic communities, demonstrating investment not only in internationalization as a whole but also as a means to create institutional bonds. By establishing a reciprocal

agreement, two universities create an exchange in which students (and perhaps faculty and administrators) from each university are encouraged to study at and learn from the other higher education institute. In an era where private organizations are carrying out these exchanges, the concept of reciprocity between academic communities is even more difficult to establish and sustain.

Reciprocity is a broad concept that many scholars and practitioners claim adherence to without fully defining and understanding its application to their work and research (Dostilio et al. (2012). Dostilio et al. (2012) identified three different approaches to establishing reciprocity in study abroad programming: exchange-based, influence-based and generativity-oriented. Both exchange and influence-based reciprocity mindsets are transactional in nature and furthers a consumerist mindset. However, generativity-oriented reciprocity acknowledges power, privilege and oppression within its orientation and aims to transform systems and paradigms through building synergies from interconnected relationships between partners. Focusing on a generativity approach within study abroad programming can bring attention to the power dynamics that exist within the pervasive market-based approach.

To understand how institutions can better engage with host academic communities, Wood et al. (2011) examined the role of faculty and staff in program development in one institution. Wood et al.'s (2011) study collected focus group data from 26 faculty and staff who led short-term study abroad programs over a five year period. The study showed faculty and staff lacked knowledge about potential negative aspects of community engagement and threats to building reciprocity. Wood et al.

(2011) called on institutions to correct this through an institution-wide commitment to sustainable and reciprocal exchanges. Additionally, they recommended proper training of faculty in local community cultural norms and practices so they would be able to identify negative community engagement practices and intervene in an effort to support students in engaging appropriately with the community (Wood et al, 2011). Finally, the authors expressed the need for faculty and staff to discuss with students before their departure topics such as power and privilege, community building and the potential negative impact of their presence. If these techniques work, faculty and staff can influence their students' behavior and encourage stronger engagement between students and the host academic and broader community. Incorporating efforts to promote reciprocal relations as part of assessment practices will serve as an additional feedback loop between faculty, host communities and educational administrators, increasing the achievement of desired outcomes as well as the sustainability of the programming (Schroeder et al., 2009). In recognition of the importance of the perspective of the host community, I included host community representatives as research participants in this dissertation study in an effort to elevate their voices within the body of U.S. scholarship.

Cuban Higher Education

Following the 1959 revolution led by Fidel Castro, the relations between the U.S. and Cuba quickly deteriorated due to a multitude of factors. The Cubans eventually aligned themselves with the Soviets in response to U.S. aggression and manipulation. In conjunction with the Soviets, Cuba developed a socialist educational system (Hickling-Hudson and Arnove, 2016).

The educational campaign of Castro's government to establish the socialist educational system can be viewed in three phases. The first phase, implemented soon after the revolution, involved a literacy campaign to eradicate illiteracy in the country. Beginning in 1962, the country reformed the university system. During this phase, universities provided a direct link between academic studies and the country's needs, with an emphasis on scientific research (Martin Sabina et al., 2012; Ones & Jover, 2009). In phase two, which took place during the 1970's, a new set of reforms restructured higher education to focus on goals of equity and quality (Martin Sabina et al., 2012), including the substantial increase in the number of universities in each province (when the revolution triumphed in 1959, Cuba had only three universities). These goals were carried out through a centralized governance system, but with a degree of institutional autonomy to plan and implement central government policies. Cuba's commitment to socialist ideals led to prioritized educational commitments. Lifelong learning, literacy and the decolonization of the curriculum were, and remain today, central foci of the Cuban educational system (Martin Sabina et al., 2012). Following phase two, access became a central focus, leading to phase three. The system continued to expand in an effort to provide university access to all Cubans, in large part by offering courses and degree programs in sites off the main campuses of the universities (Martin Sabina et al., 2012). With these reforms, Cuba created a successful educational system that is well documented by scholars and intergovernmental organizations (Carnoy et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2005).

Despite the success of Cuban educational reforms, the educational system was deeply impacted by the fall of the Soviet Union and the loss of Cuba's trade relations

with that country as well as with the Eastern European countries that in 1989 had shifted away from socialism. These changes led to over a 70% reduction in Cuba's international economic activity. This time period, beginning in the late 1980's and lasting through the early 2000's, is known as "The Special Period in Time of Peace" in Cuba. During the special period, resources were scarce and a reorientation of the university environment was enacted. Faced with severe economic hardships, universities reoriented to align more closely to the immediate practical needs of society, serving now as sites for economic and social innovations (Ones and Jover, 2009). The resulting effects neoliberal effects of the special period, influenced by an encroaching neoliberal environment, led to the restructuring of many economic, political and educational systems that continue to impact the Cuban system today (Sobe and Timberlake, 2011).

Scholars have been critical of these global neoliberal influences that continue to challenge the Cuban education system. During the special period, Cuba was forced to engage in more trade with capitalist countries. This rendered the Cuban society and universities vulnerable to neoliberal ideology (Malott, 2007). Even with the end of the "special period," the influence of neoliberalism and resource scarcity is still seen within the education system today. For instance, in 2015, a new university reform was announced that reduced the time to degree (from five to four years) for 23 subjects, introduced an English language requirement and increased the prevalence of distance education programs (Ferreira, 2017). This new reform aligns with mobility initiatives and is seen as a way to align Cuba with the global university marketplace. Today, with the special period having ended and with the newly established diplomatic

relations with the U.S., Cuban universities are revitalizing their international strategies and expanding the international scope of their campuses.

Internationalism in the Cuban University

During the 1960's-1970's, Cuba's expanding university reform included building ties with the international academic community through global solidarity efforts. As Cuba began to look outward, they did so through the internationalism approach. Cuba's internationalism aimed to provide foreign universities with assistance in all aspects of the university, including administration, research and teaching (Hickling-Hudson et al., 2012; Hickling-Hudson and Arnove, 2016). Hickling-Hudson and Arnove (2012) noted that these south-south exchanges grew from an internationalism mindset that strived "to build solidarity and cooperation based on need rather than market-principles."

Cuba's internationalism has a long and rich history of engaging in south-south exchange by accepting international students from the African continent and other mainly leftist countries (Perez, 2012; Hickling-Hudson and Arnove, 2016). From 1961-2009, over 55,000 international students from 120 countries graduated from Cuban universities with Cuban government scholarships (Perez, 2012). During the height of Cuba's internationalism movement, the Isle of Youth (a special municipality of Cuba) was transformed into an international school destination (Perez, 2012; Hickling-Hudson and Arnove, 2016). Students from across the world, at times escaping war or natural disaster in their home country, came to study there in an effort to gain a secondary or higher education. Cuban students were also supported by the Eastern European socialist bloc to study in their countries during this period.

However, international mobility was thwarted with the fall of the Soviet Bloc in 1991. The number of international students during this period (1990's) fell to a low of 3,000 (Perez, 2012). The Cuban commitment to the principles of internationalism was tested.

Yet, even in the face of declining resources, Cubans created various organizations to facilitate both in-bound and out-bound mobility. Notably, the Association of Cuban Educators (APC), a non-governmental Cuban organization with over 39,000 members, has been a central organization establishing academic exchange amongst educators, both school-level and university-level, since 1989 (Marti, 2012). The efforts of these organizations, along with policies friendly to international students, have continued the legacy of Cuba as a site for exchange. Today, Cuba is among the top three countries in the world that receives the most international students from Latin America (Hickling-Hudson and Arnove, 2016). The development of the Latin American Medical School (Escuela Latinamericana de Medicina or ELAM), a medical school for international students from low-resourced communities, including U.S. students, has revitalized academic exchange. Nevertheless, mobility continues to be an on-going challenge for Cuban students as resources are still scarce.

U.S. – Cuba Academic Exchange

As mentioned above, following the 1959 revolution, the relations between the U.S. and Cuba quickly deteriorated and the U.S. administration decided to implement a trade and travel embargo against Cuba. During the resulting era of "frozen flows," it became increasingly difficult for Americans to travel to Cuba and for Cubans to

travel to the U.S., such that only few academics were able to do so (Stephenson, 2006; Lutjens, 2012).

During the Carter Administration, certain aspects of the travel ban were lifted while the economic sanctions and the embargo stayed in place. Lifting aspects of the travel ban led an increased number of Americans to travel to Cuba for educational, cultural and religious activities. A flurry of cross-border activities began, similarly to what occurred in 2014, with diplomatic visits and hopes of future collaborations (Lutjens, 2012). These hopes were dashed with the election of Reagan in 1980.

During the Reagan era (1981-1988) the restrictions provided mixed messages to academics. On one hand, research provisions were granted through general licensing, but, on the other hand, anti-Cuban presidential directives created a contentious collaborative environment (Lutjens, 2012).

This ongoing flow of academic and non-academic travelers continued throughout the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations. However, both the 1992 Torricelli Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act fortified the sanctions against Cuba, putting into law many of the features of the trade and travel embargo that had been included previously only in executive orders (Lutjens, 2012; 2018). During this period, exchanges were characterized – by the U.S. government, but not necessarily by most academics involved – as "instruments of the state" to subvert the Cuban government (Lutjens, 2012; 2018).

In 2003, exchanges came to a halt as travel restrictions and licensing regulations were tightened by the George W. Bush administration (Lutjens, 2006; 2012; 2018). Semester study abroad programming and exchange agreements between

institutions collapsed with new strictly enforced regulations, including increased

financial penalties (Lutjens, 2018).

Yet, with the election of President Obama in 2008, a cautious optimism began

to emerge for U.S.-Cuban relations. In January 2011, the Obama administration

amended U.S. regulations towards Cuba. The announcement paved the way for

renewed people-to-people engagement between Cuban and American citizens (Office

of the Press Secretary, 2011). Then on December 17, 2014 (D17), Obama announced

a new round of changes that led to a flurry of activity that led to the reestablishment

of diplomatic relations. Obama himself even visited Cuba, becoming the first U.S.

president to visit the island nation in a century.

The context of academic exchange in Cuba began rapidly changing after

December 17, 2014. In academic year 2015/16, U.S. students studying abroad in

Cuba reached over 3,700, as shown in figure 3 (Institute for International Education,
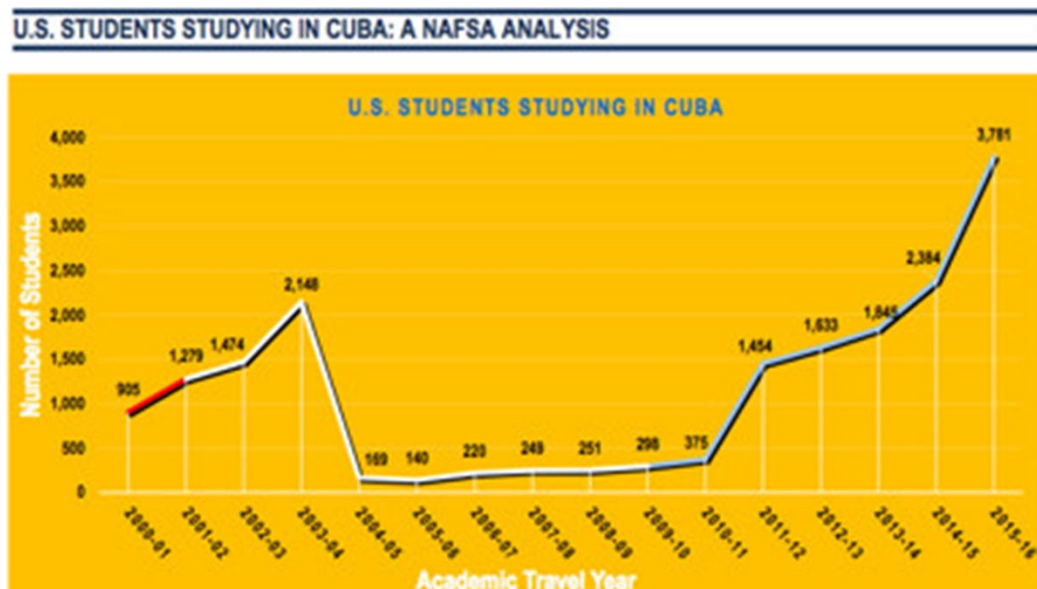
2017; NAFSA, 2017).

Figure 3: U.S. Students Studying in Cuba 2000-2016 (NAFSA, 2017)

However, even with this increasing activity, there is still suspicion of and contention around studying in Cuba. Some American study abroad programming leaders believe that U.S. spies loom within their programs and that Cuban informants or counterparts are only providing top-down party lines (Kolivras and Scarpaci, 2009). Others deem the U.S. and Cuban academic environment too sensitive of a political landscape to traverse, making many scholars hesitant to engage in U.S. – Cuban exchange (Clarke, 2007; Bell 2013).

With the recent increase in U.S. academic travel to Cuba after nearly a decade of decline, much of the institutional memory for setting up reciprocal exchange has been lost (Reinosa, 2011). An increasingly market-driven approach seems to have emerged, at least for many, if not all, U.S. institutions. For instance, a U.S. educational advocacy organization is now charging Americans for exclusive access to meet with Cuban government officials (Institute for International Education, 2017b) and to advocate for all forms of travel to Cuba (NAFSA, 2017). Others see this as a market opportunity and are scrambling to sign inter-institutional memorandums of exchange, as study abroad providers hurry to establish their program sites (Solloway, 2016). The motivations behind the increase in academic exchanges and the extent to which neoliberal ideology, or solidarity/resistance strategies, are impacting these activities is still unknown. My research is therefore occurring at an important time for U.S. - Cuban academic exchange. I designed this dissertation study to address the current gaps in the literature, that is, to provide an empirical understanding of U.S. - Cuban academic exchange in the current era.

Conclusion

Chapter two provided an overview of the theoretical perspectives (academic capitalism and post-colonialism) guiding this study before reviewing four core areas of literature to contextualize this study. In the first section, I discussed current neoliberal reforms in the university environment. I linked the impact of these neoliberal reforms to the internationalization strategy in section two before examining literature on a key internationalization activity, study abroad programming. In the third section, I provided an overview of the stakeholders in study abroad programming, the shifting purposes for and landscapes in study abroad, and the consumerist approach to program development. Lastly, I discussed the historical and contemporary context of higher education in Cuba as well as study abroad programming between the U.S and Cuba in an effort to situate this study within existing scholarly discourses.

Internationalization and study abroad programming will remain a central focus for the future of many institutions, particularly in light of the increasing neoliberal influences on the university environment. This research provides a reflection of current study abroad practices in an effort to better understand the motives and purposes of these exchanges. Additionally, it furthers previous empirical studies by conducting an examination of the role of political and economic context within which study abroad programming operates. Lastly, this research explores study abroad programming's role in transmitting, or diffusing, ideas that impact university policy and practice. In the following chapter, I discuss my intended research design to examine study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I share an overview of the research design guiding this dissertation study. This chapter provides a roadmap for my research and outlines the steps used to conduct this research study. The chapter will first remind the reader of the research purpose and questions. Following this, I establish the use of qualitative research methodology and outline my epistemology. I then address the specific rationale for selecting a case study design before establishing the specific procedures that I implemented to carry out my study. Next, I discuss participant recruitment and the instruments used to collect data and various artifacts needed to address my research questions. Once the data for my study are described, I discuss my strategy for data analysis and dissemination. Following this, I address my positionality and how I establish trustworthiness and conduct my research within the bounds of standard ethical research practice. I conclude the chapter with a review of the limitations that bound my study, followed by a summary of this chapter.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine how the U.S.'s dominant neoliberal approach to internationalization impacts study abroad programming in non-traditional locations, specifically in Cuba. To understand the influence of neoliberal ideologies and policies on universities' internationalization strategy, I examine the political and economic context these study abroad programs operate within. This context aids in establishing connections between academic capitalism theory and post-colonialism as it applies to U.S. higher education study abroad programming. The study uses a post-colonial lens to examine how neoliberal ideology-informed policies and practices

may reproduce the neo-colonial dynamic between the U.S. and non-traditional locations, while presenting resistance or solidarity building alternatives to these existing colonial dynamics in order to empower previously colonized communities.

Restatement of Research Questions

This study examines the following overarching research question with three subquestions:

How does the economic and political context shape study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba?

    a. How do market dynamics present themselves in study abroad programming?

    b. How do the ideologies of faculty and educational administrators manifest in study abroad programming?

    c. In what ways does the U.S. blockade impact study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba?

The Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research is formulated to investigate a phenomenon in all its complexity within the phenomenon's natural context. Qualitative research is frequently characterized as descriptive, inductive, and naturalistic, as it makes meaning of research participants' lives (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). The complex nature of U.S. - Cuba relations aligns with the purpose and goals of qualitative research. This type of research offers rich descriptions and in-depth understandings of why Americans and Cubans decide to traverse sensitive and contentious political boundaries to engage in academic exchange. The reflective and meaning making

process inherent in qualitative research offers new understanding of these study abroad programs in an effort to provide insights into the transmission, and perhaps transformation, of ideas that impact both U.S. and Cuban higher education communities. As a researcher who is concerned with creating dialogue between these communities to enhance practice, the role of the researcher as an instrument within qualitative research allows me to explore these research questions in an in-depth and naturalistic manner.

Since qualitative methodology utilizes the researcher as a research instrument, the underlying epistemological assumptions that shape the researcher must be examined to understand the interpretive paradigm that guides the action within the study (Guba, 1990). Creswell (2009) describes these paradigms as the framework that proposes assumptions about the reality of nature that guide how the researcher conducts inquiry.

I utilized a critical epistemological viewpoint to guide the research. My critical epistemology is grounded in a constructivist approach that asserts that the reality is subjective and created by individuals through interactions with historical and social norms and material reality (Creswell, 2007). However, I further the constructivist approach through the use of the critical perspective of post-colonialism to establish the context of economic and power structures at play in the world (Mertens, 2005). A critical epistemology orients me to examine how race, gender, class, economics and former colonial (and neo-colonial) power dynamics facilitate the transmission of neoliberal (and other) ideas and create the conditions for the socially constructed world.

As a critical constructivist, I understand and value the lived experience of individuals but believe that certain historical, political and economic forces play a role in (i.e., constrain and enable) the decisions individuals make and the meaning that individuals derive from their social interactions. I am committed to examining these historical, political and economic forces to enact change in study abroad programming and build solidarity amongst our international counterparts. Furthermore, critical epistemology encourages a participatory approach to research that enables me to involve my participants in discussing my research findings and their implications. One example of implementing this critical constructivist epistemology within my dissertation is the usage of the term *blockade.* For many of my Cuban counterparts and those in solidarity with Cuba, the term embargo does not adequately capture the nature of the U.S. policy towards Cuba. I not only incorporated and elevated this terminology within my written findings of this dissertation, but I also shifted my language and used the term blockade in order to honor the perspective of my research participants. I expand on participation below, but I plan to continuously present to and involve the U.S. and Cuban academic communities in my research in an effort to effectively elevate their voices and influence international education practice and policy. Adopting a critical epistemology allows me to understand the historical, economic and political forces guiding university practice with the goal of transforming study abroad programming such that it serves as a means for establishing solidarity between universities and hopefully between societies.

Research Design

The critical constructivist paradigm I used for this study is commonly used in case study design. Case study design is used to answer how and why questions concerning contemporary, complex social problems, like the research questions posed in this particular study (Yin, 1994). Additionally, case study design is utilized when the researcher has little control over the phenomena but is interested in the process by which the phenomena emerges (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). In this case, the processes through which a university engages in study abroad programming is outside my locus of control. However, understanding the ways in which these educational administrators and faculty navigate the political and economic context they operate within is a central phenomenon addressed in this study. In addition, the process of transmitting policy and programmatic ideas through study abroad programming is not clearly evident in the extant literature but is addressed in this research.

Case study research is distinct in that it focuses the study within the bounds of an event, time or topic (Stake, 1978). The boundaries of my case are not limited to a single study abroad program but instead take a broad approach in defining my case as the topic of study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba. In examining this phenomenon, I bound the study to university and program provider faculty and educational administrators who have primary oversight of facilitating these exchanges. Of particular interest are the faculty and educational administrators that engage in semester length study abroad programming both prior to, during, and following December 17, 2014, when the Obama administration introduced a change to the diplomatic approach to international relations with Cuba. Ideal participants in

my study engaged in U.S. – Cuba exchange at least one year prior to and after December 17, 2014.

As discussed in earlier chapters, Cuba was selected as a research site as it is a non-traditional study abroad location with increasing study abroad numbers. Cuba, as a socialist society, has historically approached political and educational decisions in contrasting ways to the U.S. Cuba will likely provide narratives of cooperation and solidarity but also of resistance to dominant neoliberal policies implemented in the U.S. This study was designed to examine whether the influx of academic travelers to Cuba likely created a tension between U.S. and Cuban faculty and educational administrators and reshaped internationalization strategies of both parties.

Research Procedures

I implemented case study research to collect and analyze various forms of data (e.g. interviews, observations, websites and other documents) in an effort to provide transferrable findings (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2013). The recruitment of my participants, the description of the data sources and the data collection techniques are discussed below in more detail.

Participant Selection

The 12 participants, as noted in table 1 below, for this study were selected for interviews through a common qualitative practice of snowball sampling (Maxwell, 2013). Snowball sampling identifies "gatekeepers," or primary research participants, who then refer the researcher to other potential research participants (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling allows me to gain access to the limited number of

(Cuban and U.S.) informants that meet my research criteria by using the social networks of my primary research participants (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981).

Gatekeepers were identified for this study through a review of current U.S. study abroad programming in Cuba. To identify current U.S. study abroad programming, I reviewed common data sources, including IIE's Open Doors Report, NAFSA's Cuba Initiative and the International Education National E-Mail Listserv (SECUSS-L), as well as utilized my professional networks. Even though my professional networks were used to gain access to gatekeepers, no participants for this study are affiliated with the seminar in Cuba I currently facilitate. Following the interview with these gatekeepers, research participants were asked to provide additional names of faculty and educational administrations to interview.

It must be noted that study abroad students are purposefully omitted within this study as this research hopes to generate information at a university policy and programming level. Student voices and student learning outcomes are often the focus of study abroad research. Yet, my study is limited to the voices of faculty and educational administrators to fill a gap in the existing body of study abroad literature.

Participant Profiles

Due to the sensitive political nature of U.S. and Cuban relations, combined with the limited number of actors and institutions with a historical presence in U.S and Cuba study abroad programming, I opted to assign a pseudonym to all participants, alter identifying information and provide a collective participant profile. A collective participant profile offers insight into my research participants' experiences and

applicability to the study as a whole in an effort to maintain the anonymity of individuals (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Participants in this study represent all three areas of administration of U.S. and Cuban study abroad programming:

- Cuban university faculty and educational administrators

- U.S. university faculty and educational administrators

- Program provider affiliated faculty and educational administrators

. To give equal weight to all three of these categories of participants, four interviewees were selected from each category. It should be noted that the categories are not exclusive of one another, as many faculty and educational administrators working in program provider organizations formerly worked in the university context and vice versa. While interview questions were focused on interviewees' current practice, interviewees occasionally spoke about previous academic exchange work in Cuba with former employers. These perspectives were valuable, as some participants were able to compare and contrast pressures from their previous university and current program provider experiences.

In the Cuban context, participants were limited to Havana. As the country's capital, Havana has become the hub of study abroad programming with the U.S. Additionally, U.S. study abroad programming in Cuba is centralized with just a few educational institutions in Havana accounting for hosting over 90% of U.S. study abroad programming. These four research participants were able to provide detailed accounts of program creation, partnership maintenance and future direction as they are decision makers at three central organizations for carrying out exchanges. One

research participant provided numbers of participants from the last year that indicate the organization she represents hosted over one third of the U.S. study abroad programs in Cuba last year indicating that these four research informants can speak to and represent the majority of study abroad programming in the country.

All participants were decision makers who manage, lead or direct study abroad programming related to U.S. and Cuba. Furthermore, all participants engaged with U.S. and Cuba study abroad programming both before and after the December 14, 2017 Obama administration announcement that changed U.S. and Cuban diplomatic relations. All participants have been engaged in U.S. and Cuba study abroad programming for more than 10 years, with some spending their entire career working on study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba. Many research participants also frequently produce presentations and papers on various topics related to U.S. and Cuban exchange, and these documents were reviewed.

Pseudonym	Gender	Role (Faculty/Educational Administrator)	Affiliation
Shelvia	Female	Educational Administrator	Provider
Kyle	Male	Faculty & Educational Administrator	Provider
Gilberto	Male	Faculty & Educational Administrator	Provider
Changha	Female	Educational Administrator	Provider
Viviana	Female	Educational Administrator	Cuban Institution
Nana	Female	Educational Administrator	Cuban Institution
Jazmin	Female	Faculty & Educational Administrator	Cuban Institution
Lidia	Female	Faculty & Educational Administrator	Cuban Institution
Sheryl	Female	Educational Administrator	U.S. University
Maggie	Female	Educational Administrator	U.S. University
Vanessa	Female	Educational Administrator	U.S. University
Laura	Female	Educational Administrator	U.S. University

Table 1: Research Participants

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews occurred in-person in Havana, in Washington, D.C., or virtually
through WebEx and over the phone based on the availability of participants. For the
interviews, participants who are not native speakers of English were given the option
to use a local translator of their choice to capture the full linguistic and cultural
essence of the data. Of the five participants who are not native English speakers, only
one used a translator of her choosing. Three one-on-one interviews were conducted in
Cuba with a fourth interview having been conducted in Cuba with two participants at
once. Two interviews were conducted in-person in the Washington, D.C. area, while
another occurred over the phone and the rest took place virtually over WebEx.

An interview protocol that guided the semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2007)
of the participants was utilized. Semi-structured interview protocols provide some

structure to the interview process while allowing for flexibility to follow unique threads of individual participant's stories (Jones et al., 2014). In the beginning of each interview, participants were asked about their experiences with U.S. and Cuban exchange. These questions were asked to determine if the participant fit the desired research profile and were used to populate the collective profile of participants. Additional interview questions focused on participants' current and possibly changing reasoning for being involved in U.S. and Cuban exchange, perceived changes and continuities in programming, policy and stakeholders, sustainability and cooperation efforts and tensions that arise from these exchanges. The interview protocol used for this study is located in the appendices section following the body of this dissertation.

Interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes with the majority of interviews lasting more than 60 minutes. Interviews were recorded with permission of the participant and transcribed within 7-10 days of the interview by a transcription service. Ten of the 12 participants opted to have their interviews audio recorded. Following transcription of these ten interviews, I reviewed the transcripts for consistency and accuracy. For all interviews (both those with an audio recording and those without) I completed a memo that detailed emerging themes. After writing my memos, I sent the interview transcripts or summary notes of our conversation and highlighted quotes to my participants to review for member checking purposes. No participant offered any major edits to the documents that I provided to them. The transcripts or summary notes of any participant, who reviewed transcript documents and noted minor errors, were corrected before analysis.

Participant Observer

As a study abroad professional who leads courses to Cuba, I leveraged my own experiences with study abroad programming in Cuba to internalize the research goal while collecting data in the field (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As a participant observer, I was able to take a reflective and descriptive approach to document the complex context of my research site (Creswell, 2007). I viewed behaviors, organization, nonverbal communication and actions that are carried out in a naturalistic state (Mertens, 2005). These observations provided insights and additional reference points to confirm, refute or refine the data collected through interviews and documents. These observations aided in conducting semi-structured interviews as I was able to utilize my previous experiences to craft more poignant follow-up questions. These observations also aided in the development of memo-writing and the coding process.

Document Collection

The collection of various web-based and other documents added to the depth of the study and provided additional historical and institutional context (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2013). All participants were asked to share documents related to their study abroad programming for U.S. students traveling to Cuba. Shared documents included international office memos regarding study abroad programming activities; articles and presentations on U.S. and Cuban academic exchange; internationally related sections of university missions and goal statements; course syllabi; study abroad handbooks; digital and print marketing materials and photographs and video documentation of international activity at the student level. These documents provided context about and confirmed or clarified motivations for study abroad

programming. Additionally these documents offered insight into future trends and additional university administrative processes that will likely impact future study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba.

Entering the Field

My field research occurred over a sixth month period. To begin my research, I focused my efforts on building rapport with Cuban colleagues during a visit to Cuba in February. At that time, I identified Cuban participants within my current networks that could serve as research participants and gatekeepers. In Cuba, it is important to have a Cuban colleague who can serve as a reference should Cubans question one's research motives. I utilized a five-year relationship with a colleague who serves as an official for an educational organization in Cuba as a reference. My colleague called identified Cuban colleagues to encourage them to meet with me and offer additional leads. Given the suspicions around Americans' motives in Cuba, this reference was an invaluable resource in gaining access to the Cuban interviewees. Through this reference, I was able to make contact with my identified Cuban participants in February. Following our contact in February, I maintained contact with my informants via e-mail and provided them with additional information regarding my dissertation study. I returned to Cuba in June to conduct in-person interviews. These interviews took place in a location of the participant's choosing, with most taking place in their offices.

Given the international location of my research, I returned to the U.S. following my interviews in Cuba. Back in the U.S., I transcribed the interviews that

were audio recorded before sending them to the Cuban participants for member checking purposes.

The U.S. portion of my research occurred in between and after my international fieldwork in Cuba. To identify U.S. gatekeepers, I examined recent study abroad programming to Cuba and professional and academic conference programming to determine who the current organizational and individual leaders are in U.S. and Cuba study abroad programming. In addition to these techniques, I also sent a recruitment e-mail to NAFSA's Cuba Initiative discussion space and the national listserv for international educators, SECUSS-L.

Many of these connections and recruitment tactics led to the identification of a gatekeeper or a contact who could connect me with a colleague that fit the desired research participant profile. Following the interviews with the U.S. gatekeepers, I asked for recommendations of additional colleagues who met my research criteria. Both participants from university campuses and study abroad program providers were identified in this way. Interviews for U.S. participants took the form of WebEX video calls, telephone interviews and in-person interviews.

Data Analysis

Data were organized into a qualitative electronic database, MaxQDA, which included documents, memos and interview transcripts. Seeing the qualitative data analysis process as an iterative process, I found myself utilizing data analysis techniques throughout the data collection phase as there were gaps between recruitment of new participants and interviewing due to the international nature of the research.

Following the organization of the data in the electronic database, I completed an analysis of each individual interview transcript. During the within-case analysis, I implemented an inductive coding process that utilized an *in vivo* coding approach (Saldana, 2013). Utilizing an *in vivo* coding approach allowed me to begin the process of reducing my data while also maintaining the voice of my participants in the codes. To code my data, I segmented data by the responses to questions. This allowed me to maintain the essence and complexity of my interviewees' words without breaking up their quotes through a line-by-line process (Saldana, 2013). Following my first round of coding, there were 534 individual codes. After this stage, I followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) guidance of creating a post-coding memo to organize my thoughts, identify connections between codes and begin connecting my data back to my research questions and the theoretical underpinnings of my dissertation research.

Moving from the first round of *in vivo* coding, I identified related codes using axial coding which allowed me to collapse my codes into larger broad categories (e.g. logistical issues; relationship building; financial gain/self-interest; roles and responsibility; and university pressures) using both inductive and deductive methods (Saldana, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These broad categories aided in the continued reduction of my data while providing me with refined understanding of my researched phenomenon. At this stage, I continued to review my data in an effort to further understand its broader meaning. I also began to consider other alternatives to my connections and the meaning I was making from this data. I documented this process through another round of memos.

After creating these categories, I conducted a cross-case analysis looking at the history; mission and purpose; motivation; broad curriculum; governance mechanisms; and international collaborative activity within each participant's interview. Creating these profiles assisted me in establishing the relevance of the categories to specific themes across all interviews and the interconnectivity of these participants' narratives (Saldana, 2013).

In addition to the interview transcripts, observation field notes, researcher's memos and documents shared by interviewees were reviewed, selectively coded and used to verify or challenge the codes, categories and themes which emerged from the interview data. This process of utilizing additional data to check findings in an effort to support one's conclusions is commonly called triangulation (Fielding and Fielding, 1986).

Following these stages, I collapsed the categories into four emergent themes (e.g. market pressures; reciprocity and solidarity; neo-colonial tendencies; and implications of the blockade). These themes serve as salient macro level data that speak directly to my research questions. The four themes are elaborated on in the findings chapter, chapter four, of this dissertation. Figure four below illustrates the main stages of the coding process.

In Vivo Coding (Data Sensemaking/Reduction)				

Axial Coding (Category Formation)				
Financal Gain/ Self Interest	Logistical Issues	Relationaship Building	Role & Responsibility	University Pressures

Emergent Themes			
Market Pressures	Reciprocity & Solidarity	Neo-Colonial Tendancies	Implications of the Blockade
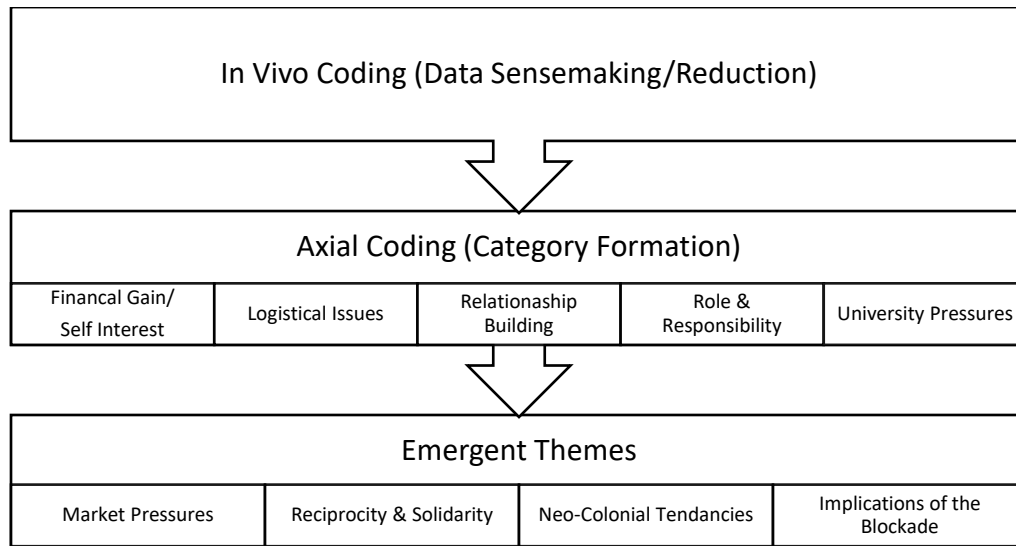
Figure 4: Overview of Coding Scheme

Positionality

As a human research instrument, my interpretation is central to this study. Recognizing this, I must address my desire to study this particular topic and how my lived experience creates certain tendencies that could lead to bias in my research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Two of my salient identities, my professional identity as an international educator and my cultural identity as an Appalachian, drew me to this study.

My professional identity as an international educator grounds my understanding of study abroad practices and my desire to pursue study abroad programming as my dissertation research topic. I first started questioning the dynamics of study abroad programming while studying abroad as an undergraduate student in Stellenbosch, South Africa. While attending this program, I completed a community development certificate that was created solely for international students. I questioned the motivations for developing classes and programming solely for international students. If programs were being developed solely for international

students, I believed that integration between locals and international students was less likely. Additionally, I thought that creating programs based on the desires of international students leaned towards a consumer dynamic that may negatively impact the host university community and may misalign with curriculum foci. This experience allowed me to see the disconnects between and the contradictions within the study abroad component of internationalization strategy and practice.

Following that seminal undergraduate experience, I developed a career in the field of international education. Throughout the following decade of my career, I continued to advocate for research or programming that included the voice of the hosting academic community. However, I found the host community perspective often missing in U.S. study abroad programming conversations. Noticing the absence of the host community perspective and the ongoing encroachment of market-driven policies in higher education, I enrolled in a graduate program in international education that allowed me to travel to nontraditional locations to further explore these dynamics firsthand.

In 2013, I won an institutional grant supporting the internationalization of the college of education at my university that provided me an opportunity to join an academic exchange to Cuba. Traveling to Cuba before December 17, 2014 offered me insight into the advocacy, community and solidarity that educational scholars created in the face of political and economic tensions. Following this first experience in Cuba, I decided to return and assist, eventually co-directing, the academic exchange in Cuba, originally called a *seminario* and later renamed *Búsquedas Investigativas*. My responsibilities include meeting with Cuban educators, developing the itinerary

for the exchange, shaping the curriculum and site visits with my Cuban colleagues, recruiting U.S. students and other participants and leading pre- and post- exchange educational activities.

Cuba's rich political and historical context continued to connect with my professional and academic interests leading me to pursue this work further. Over the last few years, I built a network of Cuban educational scholars and practitioners both in and outside of Havana, utilizing key colleagues from the Association of Cuban Educators. My academic connections in Cuba led me to co-create a short term study abroad program for graduate students. The development of this exchange embedded me in the U.S and Cuban academic exchange community and has allowed me to build rapport with Cuban university faculty and educational administrators. Through co-created academic projects, I demonstrated my commitment to the Cuban academic community and built reciprocity that I believe has led to trusting relationships with my Cuban colleagues. As a result of these connections, I have been able to engage with Cuban educational institutions over the past five years and conduct small-scale research projects prior to this dissertation research study. This was particularly useful as I entered the Cuban fieldwork stage of this research study.

During this time, I was also afforded the opportunity to establish reciprocity and shared goals with members of my Cuban host community. This reciprocal partnership with Cubans provided me more nuanced insight into Cuban educational practice and culture. Following the December 14, 2017 announcement of changing diplomatic relations, I was soon flooded with inquiries from students, faculty and administrators who knew of my work in Cuba and were curious to learn more about

it. I quickly realized that many desired to go to Cuba "before it changed" without realizing that the human environment continuously changes. Many of them saw Cuba as a new, exotic place to explore, instead of recognizing it as a country made up of individuals actively fighting neoliberal policies that emphasize individual gain over the national collective as well as the the global community. Seeing the differing motivations of those newly interested in Cuba and those of the scholarly networks of U.S. and Cuban individuals that had been operating there before the 2014 announcement made me want to better understand how this new era of diplomatic relations would impact study abroad and university programming Thus, these experiences solidified my desire to conduct this dissertation study.

My second salient identity as an Appalachian has shaped my beliefs about the purpose of study abroad programming. With my cultural identity as an Appalachian, I adhere to the cultural notions of valuing collective action and social welfare, which are both traits of my cultural community as confirmed by anthropologists (e.g., Ford, 1962) and my lived experience. This has led me to support the realignment of university internationalization strategy to focus on the global good through solidarity building over market-based approaches. My value of collective action is mirrored in many Cubans who promote this value in their university internationalization strategy.

Additionally, I see the impact of neoliberal policies in my community (i.e., Appalachia), and how they continue to undermine our cultural notions and disempower our efforts of collective action, similarly to how they affect the Cuban community. The negative impacts of these policies led me to explore critical ideologies that offer alternatives to solving the issues within the Appalachian

community. My desire to seek out communities, like those in Cuba, is grounded in my search to find alternatives to the market-driven techniques that produce capitalist and neo-colonial power dynamics. The intersection of my cultural and professional identity call me to action to critically examine my academic and professional field to ensure that we seek socially just alternatives that equitably benefit the U.S. and its international partners.

Ensuring Quality

Discussing my positionality allows me to reflect on my own assumptions that I bring to the research so I can establish the trustworthiness of the findings from my qualitative study. Validity threats present themselves in two forms in qualitative research: researcher bias and reactivity of the participants to the researcher (Maxwell, 2013). I implemented Mertens' checklist for credibility and transferability strategies to further address the cultural and linguistic challenges of this study and to mitigate potential researcher bias (2005).

Critical Reflexivity and Triangulation

To mitigate threats of bias, I kept a researcher's journal to document my assumptions. I consulted the journal as I made conclusions about my research findings. Anytime my findings aligned or contradicted with my assumptions, I triangulated (Fielding and Fielding, 1986) the data with multiple sources. I kept a researcher's journal to record my assumptions that arose as a result of my work in international education over the last 10 years. This journal documented my thoughts, reflections and previous experiences that I brought to each interview (Merriam,

2009). I used this journal to reflect on my assumptions as I made conclusions about my findings.

I supplemented this journal with a file of internal memos. I developed these memos after each interview to capture the essence of the interview, as well as to record salient quotes and note my beginning interpretations of the interview data in question. These internal memos served as a reflective space for me to document how I reacted and responded to the interviews and to capture any potential trustworthiness concerns that I needed to address in my findings.

Transferability

To address transferability, I created "thick descriptions" or descriptions capturing context, culture, time, location and setting (Mertens, 2005). These descriptions were used to describe the roles and responsibilities of the interviewees. Additionally, I utilized rich quotes in my findings to provide as much context as possible to aid in future research and meaning-making. Yin (1994) recommends the use of multiple cases to strengthen transferability. The participant selection criteria and number of participants across university and cultural contexts was selected to allow for transferability.

Member Checks

Member checks (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) were utilized after each interview to ensure I accurately captured the participant's words and meanings. Participants were given a copy of their transcripts to review to ensure the essence of their stories was accurately reflected. Multiple interviewees responded to these member checks by providing minor edits for clarity or providing additional documentation to aid in this

research project. Member checks were especially important for the members of my study who participated in the interviews in their second language. Allowing these participants to review their transcripts helped to reduce translation and terminology inaccuracies.

Additionally, the selection of these participants was documented in a transparent, open and honest manner to contribute to the reliability of my study (Bell, 2013). While many of the connections to my research participants came through my own professional networks, I did not interview any participants who are involved directly with the program in which I have been involved in Cuba. While I have built considerable rapport with these individuals, I thought it best for the study to only interview participants who have no vested interest in the success of my study abroad program to Cuba. I believe this mitigated potential power dynamics that could have ensued if I had interviewed participants who have been involved in on my particular program.

Linguistic and Cultural Differences

Working across cultures and institutions, it was important to check for conceptual equivalence across my participants (Mertens, 2005). To do this, I took extra effort to explain any higher education and political economic concepts and asked my participants to describe their definition of a term before asking a question about the term or concept. An example of these differences came about during my line of questioning around the U.S. embargo on Cuba. The term "embargo" was easily identifiable for my U.S. participants, but my Cuban counterparts opted to use the word "blockade". Using the term "embargo" in my first interview with a Cuban

participant led to a discussion about the embargo and the reasons why Cubans use the term "blockade" instead of the participant addressing the line of inquiry. After making this mistake in the first interview with a Cuban participant, I used the term "blockade" with future Cuban counterparts. This was a small gesture showing I had a deeper understanding of Cuba that built greater rapport with my Cuban participants. Conversely, when I used "blockade" with some U.S. participants, I could sense a questioning of my research motives and a slight hesitation to provide in depth examples of their work in Cuba. Knowing this, I paid particular interest to language and terminology in my study and continually used language commonly used in each community of faculty and educational administrators to show my contextual knowledge and establish rapport with my interviewees.

Additionally, by collecting and disseminating translated materials I took into consideration local academic and professional culture as well as linguistic nuances (Mertens, 2005; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). During the beginning of my fieldwork in Cuba, I spoke with Cuban colleagues and translators who were not a part of my study to pilot my consent documents and my semi-structured interview protocol in order to receive feedback from them before using these documents in interviews for this dissertation research. As mentioned previously, I confirmed that I understood the meaning of the documents through member checking and continued informal conversations with the participants. Translation also speaks to the need to account for language dominance. My plan to mitigate language issues included allowing all participants who are not native English speakers to participate in interviews in their dominant language with a translator of their choosing present. In all, five interviewees

are non-native English speakers and only one opted for a translator (of their own choosing), making the member checking and continued informal conversations important for clarity purposes.

Community Building

My intensive, long term involvement with a subset of the U.S. and Cuban academic and broader educational communities allows me to understand the institutional and societal cultural norms of both the U.S. and Cuba (Becker and Geer, 1957). This lens into the community served me well as the Cuban community can be hesitant and guarded in sharing with U.S. researchers due to the political and economic history between our countries. It was also important for me to establish trust and transparency with Cuban community members in an effort to establish open communication that could lead to future reciprocity efforts within the scope of this research (Mertens, 2005). My research findings will be shared with not only my interviewees but with various educational groups in Cuba and the U.S. This provides me an opportunity to receive important feedback from the Cuban academic community, so I can ensure their voices are accurately represented in my research. By utilizing these various techniques, I will intentionally minimize potential validity threats to my research.

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Limitations

</div>

Limitations of this study present themselves around issues of cultural and linguistic differences. It is not possible to fully remove the limitations that cultural and linguistic differences present even with my sustained contact with the Cuban academic community over the last five years. Translation services were made

available and member checking techniques were used to minimize these limitations, but these limitations can never fully be removed. This, however, is the joy and challenge of international research.

The self-reported information given during the interviews is subject to the limitations of one's memory as well as the possibility of enhancing the presentation of the self and her/his activities. I used follow-up interviews, documents and observations to address inconsistencies. My hope for this research is to spark dialogue within the international education community that empowers local host communities to ensure that their motivations and goals are equally met through study abroad programming. I encourage future research by international higher education officials who understand their own institutional and societal cultures as well as practitioners who understand the historical traditions of their own programs.

Furthermore, my critical orientation provides a potential for bias in examining current dominant ideologies in higher education, and more specifically, leads me to investigate study abroad in a critical manner. Above, I noted the various ways I attempted to mitigate this bias, but there is no paradigmatic solution for elimination of bias (Norris, 1997). Through my positionality statement I explicitly stated the lens I possess as a research instrument in order to establish openness and transparency for future researchers, policy makers, and practitioners utilizing my research findings. Additionally, I strive to create reflexive and introspective practices to reduce my bias.

The limits of the boundaries of this case study also present limitations in terms of findings as this study is solely focused on a subset of study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba. The 12 interviewees represent three distinct areas of

administering U.S. and Cuba programming; however, study abroad programming in Cuba continues to shift as diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba evolve. These new developments in study abroad programming have led to many new short-term programs. While the Cuban and provider organization representatives speak to short-term programming, the interviewees for this study were historically embedded in semester length study abroad programming.

As a qualitative researcher, I provided thick descriptive accounts of my case and documented my research procedures to allow future researchers to determine the transferability of this study to their context (Yin, 1994). I encourage other researchers to continue to examine study abroad programming in non-traditional regions of the world and to use this research as is relevant to their research.

Ethical considerations

The socio-political nature of U.S. - Cuban relations adds to the complexity of this particular study. In many ways my study seeks to elevate the voices of faculty and educational administrators in both societies. However, elevating these voices may have political ramifications if these voices are seen as critical or at odds with current U.S. or Cuban political regulations, values, or norms. It continues to be my duty as the researcher to protect the identity of my participants. To do this, I strictly adhered to University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board (IRB)'s standards for confidentiality and research conduct.

In an effort to ensure anonymity of my participants, I created pseudonyms for all participants upon beginning the interviewing phase. Furthermore, I transcribed my recordings in a swift manner and password protected the original recordings within an

IRB approved timeline. All identifying information was handled carefully and generalizations in participant profiles were utilized to protect the identities of each participant. Identifying information within highlighted quotes in my findings section has also been anonymized (i.e university of a given state simply becomes International University). The sensitive political context of research in Cuba calls for close adherence to the standards of practice in qualitative research.

Dissemination of Findings

The results of this study will help inform the scholar and practitioner communities involved in study abroad programming. To ensure that the findings of the dissertation report inform these communities, I plan to present the findings in the dissertation to my University of Maryland scholarly community. In addition to this formal presentation at University of Maryland, I plan to present my findings to the Cuban community at the annual U.S. and Cuban seminar, Búsquedas Investigativas, which I lead each spring semester. I will propose presenting my findings at U.S. and Cuban conferences held by professional and academic communities like NAFSA, CIES, ATINER, and Congreso Universidad (Cuban International Education Conference). These findings will also be utilized for scholarly publications that specifically speak to the international higher education and study abroad communities. By disseminating these results widely, I hope to broaden the conversation around study abroad programming in non-traditional locations. It is my hope that this conversation will bring to light the ideologies that are transmitted across these exchanges and the impact they have on practice and policy in higher education.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed both the qualitative nature and epistemological assumptions that underpin this dissertation study before justifying the case study design. Following the rationale for case study design, I established the research procedures that guided the data collection phase of this research and identified the various data sources. After establishing these procedures, I described my positionality and ways in which I established trustworthiness in the quality of this study. Finally, I discussed the limits of my study and the ethical dilemmas that must be addressed.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

In this study, I set out to examine the narratives of those involved in U.S. and Cuban academic exchange in an effort to better understand how academic exchange programs are created and maintained across political and ideological barriers. In this chapter, I present four emerging themes in an effort to better understand this particular case. The themes include market pressures, solidarity through academic exchange, neo-colonial tendencies, and implications of the blockade (or embargo). Each of these four themes is addressed in a specific section within this chapter.

Market Pressures

In this section, the emerging market pressure theme encapsulates the market-driven shifts in academic exchange programming that occurred following December 17, 2014 (D17), when the Obama administration formally announced some changes to U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba. These changes ushered in a new era of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba and enabled new forms of academic travel to Cuba. This diplomatic shift, while widely seen as a positive step in international relations (though the legislated framework for the trade embargo was not eliminated), came as a surprise to many. With the surprising announcement, many sectors did not have the mechanisms in place to predict or regulate new partnerships and activity in their respective sectors. In the Cuban academic sector, this led to new pressures from U.S. universities that were increasingly interested in engaging in academic exchange with Cuba. An example of this increase in interest is shown through U.S. university participation rates in Cuba. In the short time from December

17, 2014 to today, the number of U.S. university students participating in study

abroad in Cuba doubled from 1,845 to 3,781 (Institute for International Education,

2017; NAFSA, 2017).

In this research, I labeled this emergent theme as market pressures. This theme

is expressed by participants in terms of changes in U.S. university students'

backgrounds and their desires, shifts in the language used to justify these exchanges,

updates to marketing strategies for these programs, the infusion of flexibility into the

existing programming models, the elevation of program providers, and the increase in

U.S. study abroad partnerships traveling to Cuba.

Changing U.S. University Student Backgrounds and Desires

Research participants noted that the type of student interested in Cuba

changed after diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba shifted. Simply put,

Kyle stated "the students are changing." Kyle described these changes as new forces

that pressure the U.S. and Cuban counterparts to adapt their programing in response.

Kyle defined specifically in terms of responding to shifts in the students' prior

engagement and knowledge of Cuba. Shelvia also spoke in depth about the changing

nature of the students participating in U.S. - Cuban exchanges by describing students

before and after D-17.

> It [the diplomatic shifts] certainly affects the kind of students drawn to the
>
> program and the kind of inquiries they would like to do academically. I know
>
> that in the early days, in the early 2000s, [our program] was really strict about
>
> how we interviewed people and who we let into the program, because… you
>
> weren't allowed to come into the program if you were coming to be a

capitalist crusader, or the opposite, that you were going to raise the communist

flag and be very vocal about it. Anybody that was going to be really vocal or

make waves was encouraged to go to a different program.

Shelvia went on to contrast this with the student population of today, "Whereas,

now... students aren't quite as politically-charged, or the situation is diffused enough

that that's just not a concern we have in the way it was in the early 2000s." Overall,

the sentiment is that the students arriving in Cuba are pursuing academic study in

Cuba with less historical knowledge of the political nature of these exchanges.

With the current students having less academic, political and cultural

knowledge of the host site, there may be a shift in students' expectations, goals and

desires for the exchange, which has the potential to impact the programming onsite.

Nana spoke from the Cuban perspective noting, "They come with one idea of Cuba."

While Sheryl explained, "We kept hearing stories from students like, 'I really wanna

go to Cuba.' For kind of lame reasons, like, 'I wanna go to Cuba, because there's no

McDonald's there.'" To Sheryl these reasons showed a superficial understanding of

the host country. Maggie attributed student desires to popular culture and media,

saying, "The students want to study what's in the news." Kyle wondered, "How do

they [students] form these expectations [about Cuba]?" The research participants

noted that student desires affect many aspects of programming, even housing. Sheryl

and the Cuban organization with whom she was partnering eventually parted ways

due to disagreements of standards in housing. Sheryl describes,

The other issue in housing our [U.S.] students at the [Cuban] residence

[instead of with host families] was that, for whatever reason, they [Cuban

educational administrators] had a calculus, or formula, based on the number of

students, and the number of students per room, and number of bathrooms that

they would allow our students access to in their residence. And, it was really

like not aligned with our [U.S.] expectations. There were oftentimes six, or

seven, or eight students who were sharing one bathroom. Which like, Cuba in

the summer, kids get sick. And, it was like it was becoming a public health

problem.

Educational administrators and faculty struggled to find the balance between catering

to student desires and addressing student concerns, while providing students with an

immersive experience.

While many interviewees focused on managing student desires, multiple research

participants tempered this focus on catering to students by re-emphasizing the

academic nature of their programs. Sheryl's institution would "cross reference that

[current programming] with our areas of academic coverage and student enrollments"

to better align the academic curriculum with program development and admissions

procedures. Meanwhile, Vanessa's institution touted her program as different from

other U.S. and Cuban programs because of its focus on research.

I think what is very different from our Cuba program is that students really

choose a question, a research question that they want to develop and research.

It's completely based on their own interests. We work with the student to help

create a proposal, and then match them up with a professional in the field that

will be able to help work with them one on one on their research question.

Vanessa's institution tried to counter these student consumerist desires by redirecting their students' focus to the academic purpose embedded within study abroad programming. Yet, in Vanessa's case, even though her programming was academics-focused, it still prioritized the desires of the U.S. students' research interests over U.S. faculty priorities and host community needs. Kyle also noted aspects of customer satisfaction, like the "survey says [the students] are happy" attitude is of utmost importance to her U.S. partners, which speaks to the pressures to meet the consumers' needs. Gilberto noticed the impact of market pressures particularly within changing student interest in program length, when he discussed the declining enrollment in semester-based programming in Cuba. "I think there's an interest to develop short-term programs because that seems to be the trend and tendency for students not to spend a semester program but a summer program."

Cuban research participants were aware of and used different tactics to mitigate the changing U.S. higher education environment and the pressures of student desires. Instead of buckling to the pressure, Lidia decided to address the consumerist notions in her welcome week orientation programming. Lidia recounted the speech she would give to students.

> When you come to… [my Cuban institution] in the orientation I said to you, 'You become a student. For us you're not a client. You're not a client that is paying for a service. You are a student like the Cuban students because you are involved in the same classroom with the same professor in Spanish.'

Lidia's attempt at addressing these concerns show Cuban educational administrators and faculty's understanding of the differences between U.S. and Cuban educational models and an attempt to shift U.S. student expectations.

Students' lack of knowledge of Cuba, combined with the increasingly consumer-driven mentality of many U.S. students and the more general U.S. higher education environment, produces a new challenge with which all the research participants grappled. While many tried to refocus on the academic nature of study abroad, interviewees from both the U.S. and Cuba found the pressures to satisfy the customer as central to their continued operation.

Shifting Language Rationalizing Academic Exchanges

In response to these shifting student factors, the language being used to communicate about study abroad and discuss program administration now includes more market-based terminology (e.g. innovation, visibility, competition, etc.).

Vanessa noticed the shifting language in study abroad occurring simultaneously with the tourism boom in Cuba. "When I first went to Cuba in, I think it was 2012, it was so different. I felt the difference by this last time of going by the number of sheer American tourists there and the number of private restaurants." The increase in tourism explains an element of competition that she did not see before. She noted an example of study abroad programs competing with tourists for homestay families.

Kyle spoke of the rising "visibility" of Cuba within U.S. popular culture. With Cuba's increase in visibility, there has been a noted rise in demand for study abroad programming in Cuba. Kyle identified that the marketing language used for their programs shifted to reflect the increase in demand. Cuba's increased visibility in

mainstream American media also caused new influences on the research participants. Changha explained that, in light of the new visibility of Cuba and the resulting increase in U.S. study abroad programming there, she was directed by the CEO of her affiliated organization to "innovate" in order to attract and retain students for her program. Given such top-down mandates and pressure from her superior, Changha has spent two years working on innovations to her program model to increase enrollment. In contrast, Sheryl solely attributed low enrollment numbers for her program to "just poor marketing on our part, or for whatever reason, the model that we had [in the past] was more interesting to students." Sheryl automatically assumed low enrollment was caused by the market and did not even consider non-market reasons for low enrollments.

The research participants described the competition and entrepreneurial pressures that have emerged within Cuban exchange. Laura, who recently experienced shifts in enrollments, spoke frankly about the competitive nature of the programs at her institution. "And that's something faculty find very difficult to understand. They always think there [are] plenty of students to go around for these programs and they all compete with each other and it's hard to get that message across." To Laura, the environment of faculty collaboration and alignment around facilitating semester programming had shifted in response to the rise in short-term programs. With the increasing number of short-term programs to Cuba, the institution's semester-based programming eventually ended. Yet, Viviana's Cuban institution is likely the best example of a Cuban institution taking on an entrepreneurial spirit. Viviana spoke to

the "personalized" and "tailored" nature of the programming that her institution offers and their "attention to detail" when arranging these exchanges.

The language used to describe the financing of exchanges was discussed by each participant as a fundamental difference in how U.S. and Cuban colleagues approach the economics of study abroad. In arguing against a recent change in the Cuban regulations for U.S. academic programs, which had the potential to cancel multiple programs, Changha used the economic ramifications of the decision to justify her organizations' opposition. Instead of simply accepting the new regulations, Changha and her organization wrote a letter that made its way to the current president of Cuba justifying their opposition to the regulations in terms of the financial losses it would cause. Changha's example highlights the power of economics in exchanges. It is clear that the shifting language around study abroad programming and international activity between the U.S. and Cuba has notably impacted the practices of study abroad programming administration.

Updating Marketing Strategy for Study Abroad Programming

As more U.S. and Cuban institutions enter the academic exchange arena, there seems to be different approaches to marketing. Some Cuban institutions are prioritizing market strategies in a way that induces a competitive approach. Viviana, a Cuban research participant, emphasized the competitive nature of exchanges in describing her institution's new strategic marketing initiatives. Viviana's institution shared their entrepreneurial strategy to programming. "We kind of analyzed the market… in a way to see the possibilities of having an exchange with the colleges in the United States. We went to the United States and we visited a lot of different

universities." Viviana provided brochures that are used for marketing these programs. These brochures notably boasted about Viviana's organization's "corporate efficiency" in program facilitation. In terms of enrollment data, Viviana's marketing is attracting U.S. students as she stated, "According to surveys, our center is [number] one, considering a survey that was made by our government, the institution that received the highest amount of students from the United States." Thus, it appears as though the marketing efforts of Viviana's institution have proven successful in increasing student enrollment.

Yet other Cuban research participants, such as Jazmin, Lidia and Nana, deemphasized efforts to attract new partners through targeted outreach and, instead, spoke mainly about program development in terms of academic linkages. Nana indicated that there was no budget for marketing her program. She only recruits based on word of mouth. Jazmin and Lidia also referred to their reliance on word of mouth recruitment via professional and academic conferences as another form of direct marketing. This formal creation of marketing materials combined with word of mouth tactics also shift the presence and methods that U.S. universities and provider organizations use to market Cuba based programming. Therefore, in response to the increase in demand for exchanges from U.S. universities, Cuban institutions are taking varied approaches to capturing the interest of their U.S. university counterparts.

Infusing Flexibility into the Existing Programming Models

Study abroad programming is overwhelmingly one sided between the U.S. and Cuba with the majority of students flowing from the U.S. to Cuba. With the increase

in U.S. student enrollment, U.S. institutions no longer need to focus on marketing their programs to Cuban students and have turned their focus to satisfying U.S. university interests and U.S. students. Rather than refining their marketing tactics, U.S. universities and provider organizations are more concerned with adapting existing programming models to attract students to their programs. The U.S. is responding to perceived inflexibilities in the system through ongoing "innovation" (Changha) in study abroad programming. In my conversation with Changha, she spoke about her desire to create an "a la carte" system that no longer adheres to the typical Cuban program management model, in which one partner guides all aspects of programming. In Changha's model, she would contract with a variety of service providers to counter the inefficiencies of working with one organization. Shelvia spoke about "work arounds" due to all the unknowns in Cuba. Additionally, Changha, Shelvia, Kyle, and Gilberto (notably all from provider organizations) spoke about their approach of contracting faculty members from Cuban institutions to piece together their programs in order to meet the specific needs of individual U.S. students (or institutions), instead of working with just one Cuba institution. Using a contracting model, reduces the structures Cuba has built to examine U.S. activity that ensures the stated goals of the exchange agreement are met.

Sheryl and Maggie, U.S. university representatives, spoke about moving away from partnering directly with Cuban institutions and utilizing a provider organization to carry out their onsite logistics. Meanwhile, Laura spoke about creating connections with other U.S. universities to develop unique program models that reduce the administrative burden on U.S. institutions. The demands of implementing such

programming innovation has led to the rise of program providers in Cuban

exchanges.

Elevating Program Providers

As programing in the late 1990's grew sharply, infrastructure and networks

supporting exchanges were developed. However, with the George W. Bush era

regulations of the early 2000s, many of these networks were curtailed and

infrastructure was limited to only certain institutions. Some knowledge of the former

academic exchange structures remained, and when the regulations shifted once again

under Obama, new actors emerged with no prior experience in Cuban exchange.

Shelvia noted this shift,

> By the year 2011, the field of study abroad no longer needed a particular
>
> person's expertise, because experience in the history had grown enough that
>
> Cuba kind of knew how to do study abroad and people in the U.S. kind of
>
> knew how to do study abroad in Cuba.

Program providers, new stakeholders in U.S. and Cuban exchange, arose in this

work due to various circumstances. Program provider organizations like Shelvia's,

which had previously been engaged in study abroad in Cuba but were forced to end

its agreements in the early 2000's due to new requirements of the Office of Foreign

Assets Control (OFAC), reentered the arena. Meanwhile, U.S. institutions like

Changha's decided to create new programs in Cuba, filling the previous void of U.S.

operations in Cuba. Cuban institutions began to initiate new partnerships as well.

Viviana's Cuban organization, which has strong ties to program providers, went from

hosting "10 groups a year and last year we had 104 groups." Her institution began to

distinguish its programming from the formerly centralized programming. "They [other Cuban institutions] do have organized programs, but it's more like they have free time. They don't care about transportation or they don't coordinate a visit to the museums. So in our case, as we have this whole package that includes all of that, that optimizes time that the students have here in Cuba." Viviana's organization continues to engage in a transactional approach which leverages its "corporate efficiency" through addressing the noted superficial logistical concerns to attract and cater to U.S. institutional counterparts who found navigating the Cuban system challenging.

Similarly to Viviana, Sheryl described her institution's responsiveness to consumer desires. Sheryl's U.S. university began looking for new Cuban partnerships when they faced disagreements with their partners at the time over student housing that would meet the preferences of the U.S. students. "I don't know, this [student housing] was just like one point that we couldn't come to terms with. So, we started looking at other [Cuban] partners, and other relationships." Sheryl's institution found a Cuban university with fewer U.S. academic ties that was interested in partnering to make connections with U.S. universities in this new academic exchange era. Eventually, due to leadership changes and the weak ties to U.S. academics, these two institutions also decided to part ways, and Sheryl's university re-focused its programming where strong academic linkages between existed in Cuba.

Alternatively, some U.S. university representatives relied less on program providers on the U.S. side of programming, instead continuing to leverage existing faculty relationships. Maggie spoke about utilizing existing connections in Cuba to facilitate new partnerships with faculty interested in creating programs in Cuba.

Sheryl used existing faculty partnerships to continue her university's engagement in Cuba even in the face of low student enrollment. Vanessa and Laura continued their institutions' relationships in Cuba through the research agendas of faculty who helped establish their semester study abroad programs. Overall, the research participants illustrated the tensions around engaging with program providers as they embraced utilizing the services of program providers while continuing to question and at times resist their emergence into the field.

Increasing Study Abroad Partnerships between the U.S. and Cuba

The growing opportunities or "market" for Cuban exchanges had differing effects on both existing and emerging partnerships between the U.S. and Cuba, leading to some superficial and transactional partnerships but strengthening others. Kyle noted the transactional nature of partnerships that arose during the programming "explosion" (Changha), as U.S. institutions just "want to get into the market [of Cuban exchanges]." Meanwhile, in response to the growing market for Cuban exchanges, Sheryl and Maggie, secured grants to build institutional capacity for exchanges and other aspects of their U.S. universities' practice. Sheryl stated,

> Throughout that time, we received a grant to further develop institutional collaborations… [There was] a vested interest on the part of the university to forge more of these connections, both institutionally and faculty to faculty. So, we were taking groups of faculty down to Cuba to meet their counterparts at various institutions.

Such partnerships, like those established by Sheryl and Maggie, continued to focus on building long-term sustained partnerships with strong academic linkages.

From the Cuban perspective, Viviana discussed how her institution is responding to the market growth by maintaining their current university partnerships and also seeking out opportunities to establish relationships with program providers.

> We don't only meet up with the faculty members of the different universities, we also meet with the original directors from the different agencies [program providers] that we work with and that we have outstandingly good relationships with. Actually, we also go to conventions.

Viviana illustrates that connecting with faculty is a central way to build the relationships needed to establish successful study abroad programming. Meanwhile, she highlights the increasing power of program providers as she describes her institution's explicit efforts to connect with program providers at their conferences and travel industry events. Her comments allude to the growing connection between Cuban institutions and program providers, which shows a reorganization of these types of partnerships.

Today, it is uncertain how the market will ultimately impact the study abroad environment. The effects of the current U.S. administration's new round of regulations, curbing connections between the U.S. and Cuba and tightening the regulations for sustaining partnerships, on the market for academic exchanges in Cuba is unknown. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the competitive market for Cuban exchanges will give way to collaborative approaches or if market-pressures and new business-like attitudes to academic endeavors will prevail.

Solidarity through Academic Exchange

U.S. – Cuban academic relations operate within a contentious political and economic context, as U.S. government practices, including the enforcement of a trade embargo, and dominant ideology is directly at odds with the Cubans' government ideologies and structures that emerged from the Cuban Revolution. Establishing an academic relationship between the two nations requires stakeholders from both countries to navigate the resulting tensions. For many U.S. and Cuban educational administrators and faculty facilitating these programs, the act of exchange is seen as an act of solidarity in resistance to dominant ideology and building reciprocity between both nations. The emergent theme of solidarity through academic exchange is explored in three parts: the navigation of liminal spaces, community building efforts and student transformation.

Navigation of Liminal Spaces

Research participants in my study operate in a liminal space, a space at the "border" of two contexts, working to cultivate solidarity while still being influenced by the market-driven pressures on international programming. In developing and facilitating exchanges, educational administrators and faculty are beholden to institutional structures and policies, yet simultaneously operate outside the traditional bounds of the university. This allows for a greater level of autonomy and creates opportunities for administrators and faculty to push an alternative agenda. Kyle noted the autonomy within his role by saying that he had "a lot of power to design his own programming." However, he had to meet his U.S. institution's standards for its Cuban program, while having to prove to his Cuban colleagues that he was "on the good guy

side." Kyle felt that he, and other people of goodwill, had to engage in conversations about motives and consistently had to prove on which side they stand. Stories like Kyle's continued to emerge throughout my interviews in three distinct ways. The first was capitalizing on the work of the "pioneers," or the relationships first established in U.S. and Cuban academic exchange in the post-1959 era. Second was the notion of navigating competing ideologies, as Kyle's example highlights, and the third was navigating differing economic motives.

Capitalization of pioneers. For many of the research participants in the study, their engagement in U.S. and Cuban academic exchange began decades ago. Nana recalled the initial period of exchange started by the "pioneers." These were U.S. educational administrators and faculty who came to Cuba in the 1990's and felt they had experienced "la verdadera Cuba," or the "real Cuba." These pioneers had a "powerful voice" that convinced others through word of mouth to begin exploring partnerships in Cuba. Jazmin similarly noted the impact of the pioneers spreading word about academic exchanges to Cuba.

> [In the past, in] Cuba you never can find money. It is a constant in every year, but it's impossible to make a promotion about our academic program, our country, impossible. But in just two years our country [Cuba] was in a list with the number 14 country that American students wanted to visit in order to participate in the semester program without any kind of promotions.

Jazmin noted that these pioneers "opened the door [to exchanges in Cuba] and many other institutions decided to have relations with Cuba," creating a "boom" in study abroad programming.

Despite the pioneers paving the way for sustained long-term academic exchanges in Cuba, over the last two decades there has been an overall increase in short-term programming and an increase in program providers leading exchanges in Cuba. While short-term program developers capitalize on the initiatives and efforts of the pioneers and continue growing their programs, many pioneers who had developed programs early on are facing low enrollment in their more traditional semester-long programs. Laura shared that her university had to make the hard decision to close its Cuba semester program as student enrollments have diverted to short term programs since D17. Vanessa shared, in contrast, that her institution's semester program, which operated "even when party providers [program providers] weren't," continues to thrive. Yet, she attributed this to the early developers of her institution's program through intentionally integrating the Cuba program into the greater academic and cultural fabric of her U.S. institution.

Competing ideologies. My interviewees described how they navigated between solidarity building and market-based ideologies in an increasingly competitive environment. Sheryl described the situation as one that requires a nuanced view where "you can't see the world as black and white; you have to understand the different actors and the different stories." Kyle reinforced this notion by simply stating that he "cannot make everyone happy" and that he must be "clear about his motivations."

These competing ideologies impact U.S., Cuban and provider organizations. Shelvia discussed how her organization began 20 years ago to establish a relationship-building model focused on reciprocity with Cuba. She speculated,

though, that this approach "went slowly enough it didn't get off the ground." She then

compared this to a Cuban organization that alternatively took a "transactional"

approach that focused on valuing the business aspects of exchanges over relationship

building, which ultimately helped them "survive the slower times and come into these

bigger times well-prepared." The landscape of academic exchange in Cuba continues

to shift in response to the regulatory and political environment. Navigating these

pressures create an overemphasis on transactional approaches that emphasize short-

term partnerships as long-term involvement requires continuous collaboration and

syncing of priorities and goals.

Establishing trust continually emerged as a critical element for solidarity

building, especially in light of the divergent ideologies at play (at least with respect to

government officials in the two countries). Maggie discussed how utilizing a provider

organization to facilitate her university's programming has hindered the current

programming process. "There's always somebody in the middle," which creates "a

sense of distrust," and it becomes unclear "whose rules are supposed to be followed."

Meanwhile, Kyle noted that he proactively establishes trust with his Cuban

counterparts by making sure his colleagues know that "he is against the U.S. embargo

and he does not want to overthrow the Cuban state." Gilberto highlighted how

challenging it can be for U.S. and Cuban stakeholders to gain trust from one another.

> There are other parts [of this work] that are more mental and cultural... For a
>
> long time the United States and Cuba have been in a way enemy states for
>
> almost 50 years. They had no diplomatic relations. Cuba was put on the [U.S.
>
> government] list of states that sponsor terrorism. There was a great level of

mistrust from the U.S. side. On the Cuban side... everything that was related

to the United States was seen with very careful eyes. To launch a new

initiative, a new program, to open something up, to make it accessible for

Americans, there were a lot of special [Cuban] regulations for American

visitors in general or students particularly.

Given Cubans' suspicions of Americans and their "enemy state" mentality, Cuba did

not prioritize the U.S. as a partner in international academic exchange. This continues

today as U.S. government sponsored programming continues to explicitly define

goals that are at odds with the Cuban government policies and practices.

Yet, as Maggie identified, Cuban institutions established "a strong footprint in

terms of international relationships" with other partnering countries around the world.

These relationships were "primarily during, you know, the revolutionary period with

Sub Saharan Africa, and other countries, Soviet Union, where Cuba politically had

some similar ideologies." While Cuba has historically engaged in international

exchanges, it is only recently that [Cubans] have focused on their partnerships with

the U.S.

After D17 changed the diplomatic context between the U.S. and Cuba,

educators have been re-examining their partnerships between the two countries.

Maggie reflects on the value of U.S. - Cuban exchanges in the current context.

For Cuba to ignore the U.S., or not be entrusted in U.S. engagement, would be

contrary to what their higher education is, and also detrimental in the same

way that the U.S. ignoring the economic opportunities in Cuba is also

detrimental to the U.S.

In her quote, Maggie contrasts the Cuban ideology of establishing international partnerships for solidarity-building with the U.S. ideology of establishing international partnerships for economic gain. These competing ideologies lead to conflicting priorities for Cuban institutions as they expand their international programming options. Sheryl shared that a Cuban institution with whom she wanted to partner said, "'Sorry, we can't work with you.' Then, there were moments where they were a little more open, and then they were like, 'Wait, no, no, everyone wants to work with us, and that's not possible.'" Sheryl noted this to be reflective "of changes in priorities among various educational institutions in Cuba." For Laura these shifting priorities emerged during meetings with Cuban institutions when "hardliners" expressed that they did not want a "special program for Americans." Due to competing ideologies and increased competition, some educational administrators and faculty found it too challenging to operate in the liminal space between the market-driven pressures and advocacy for solidarity. One such educator was Sheryl who suspended her program due to low enrollment in the face of market pressures. However, continuing to value the relationships she has built in Cuba, she organized a visit to Cuba for U.S. faculty "to remind them [Cuban colleagues] that we still value our connections, and the history that we have with each other… I think there's still a lot of goodwill, and I think [there is] a recognition on both sides that what we did together was great." Research participants continue to find themselves navigating conflicting ideologies within a complex political environment that, in turn, shapes and shifts these ideologies.

Pay as symbolic. The financing of exchanges served both as a market tool, leveraging goods from one another, and a way to build solidarity. Kyle blamed the tension around financing exchange programs on "U.S. capitalism in education as U.S. students come with expectations of being served" and have the "expectation of comfort and ease." Lidia also noted this consumer-driven approach to education. "American universities try to solve all the smallest problems to the students." She views experience in Cuba as an antithesis to the U.S. education experience, saying it gives U.S. students "perceptions about the real life."

Beyond the student experience, perceptions of wealth also played into partnerships. Laura noted that "the expectation [for Cubans] is you're an American, you're richer, you're going to give me this stuff." She continued by discussing the challenges of interinstitutional bidding wars. "We kept contracting with places and then hearing, somebody else had offered them more money." Maggie also noted Cuban institutions were "looking for new ways to bring in revenue and resources" through these exchanges. Maggie found herself switching Cuban counterparts to better align with her motivations. She found a new partner that "entrusted in faculty connections in understanding and creating faculty research, collaborations, and relationships."

Yet, the economics of programming is not always a contested topic in these exchanges. Nana express that both the "economic and intellectual" elements of these exchanges are important to her institution. Gilberto shared that his organization used money gained through exchanges to renovate academic spaces for his organization and the Cuban institution. Viviana noted that money raised from her program goes to

restore her institution's academic space while also paying for the expenses of the program. Viviana summed up many sentiments of U.S. and Cuban participants about the role of economics and money in exchange programming, saying for the Cubans "pay is symbolic" and more of a way to show appreciation than the focus of the exchange itself.

Community Building Efforts

Solidarity was also reflected in the participants' discussion of community building efforts, some of which were resistance strategies to challenge U.S. and Cuban policies, while others aimed at building reciprocal relationships between the two countries.

Cuban perspectives. As a Cuban, Jazmin saw the importance of Americans community building within Cuban institutions in order to be able to engage with and learn from Cubans. Yet, she recognized that there would continually be barriers to partnerships with U.S. students, as exchanges between the U.S. and Cuba are essentially "political decisions, not just academic decisions." Jazmin described the inherent political nature of these exchanges, as giving U.S. students access to Cuban classrooms means U.S. students would know and hear faculty discussing Cuban issues. Jazmin shared,

> [Enrolling an American student in a Cuban institution] is a political decision
> because if you know a little bit about Cuban history, you know that all the
> revolutions more or less [were] in the field of ideas… you need to know that
> [the Cuban Institution] is a dangerous place.

Jazmin emphasized that, through exchange travel to Cuba, U.S. students would not only learn at the site of social transformation in Cuba, but they would also learn alongside the relatives of revolutionary figures. Nevertheless, Jazmin, as well as Lidia, highlighted the extent to which they advocated to establish a culture of exchange with Americans at their Cuban institution.

Community building through programming. U.S. educational administrators and faculty approached community building on a programmatic level. These community building efforts typically took the form of community engagement projects between U.S. students and Cuban community members. Gilberto and Shelvia both discussed projects their institutions created to address a stated Cuban need. Maggie identified the importance of U.S. students engaging in community building during their time in Cuba.

> [U.S.] international education administrators and faculty have an obligation to go above and beyond in delivering these kinds of programs and preparing [U.S.] students to be able to break down the falsehoods, or the hashtag fake news that is out there about Cuba. And to be good, like citizen diplomats in going to Cuba, and relating to people, and also trying to break down some of those barriers that exist through media and politics.

Viviana expressed this sentiment as well and saw these exchanges as creating bridges between both countries. Lidia expanded on the notion of building bridges and leveraging exchanges as a way to underscore the value of seeing multiple perspectives and learning from differing approaches. She shared that from exchanges in Cuba, U.S. students would see that "Cuba showed us how to give solutions to

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many problems that are the same problems that we have in the States, but they find different solutions in different ways." Changha further noted the power of exchanges to build bridges, as she specifically brought a group of U.S. faculty to Cuba after the U.S. State Department increased the Travel Advisory level in her effort to intentionally continue academic exchanges in spite of perceived heightened safety and security issues.

While the research participants developed programming that supported students in building community, they also shared their own personal efforts to build community. Their community building efforts allowed them to move forward a critical academic agenda that elevates Cuban alternatives in their disciplines (Kyle and Gilberto). Shelvia's institution added a line item for reciprocity efforts to cover the cost of publishing a book written by her Cuban colleagues. Additionally, Shelvia's institution funded professional development for her Cuban colleagues through a conference fund. Maggie saw her programming as a way to help Cubans gain access to libraries and electronic resources outside of Cuba. In addition to this, Maggie's participants all signed a pledge to develop a resource about Cuba to share with other U.S. administrators and faculty in an effort to facilitate new understandings of U.S. and Cuban academic exchange. Sheryl's institution committed to bringing Cubans to the U.S. "We certainly invited all of our partners to come here, but we never really got to a stage where we were inviting students to come here." Even with this commitment to support Cubans in coming to the U.S., she acknowledged "there wasn't sort of the [full] reciprocity as much." She felt that while Obama's policy "opened Cuba for Americans," full reciprocity between partners was not realized.

Vanessa's institution, however, was successful in bringing Cubans to the U.S. within their exchange model.

> It's [Vanessa's institutional model is] also about bringing the Cuban scholars here and learning about [our institution], and giving them [Cubans] opportunities, and sharing. I think that our program has really grown because of Cuba and we have really given back to Cuba, and they have given a lot to us and our community. I think that's what an exchange visitor program should be. It's very much reciprocal in a variety of different ways. I think that's something that we really feel strongly about. We don't just want to be sending students there.

The community building efforts that Vanessa describes were possible because of her institution's historical presence in Cuba. Kyle elaborated on this, saying:

> Universities have more to offer, longer scale commitment. Long view. Strong programs have been going on for over a decade. Those programs started because of faculty members with strong relationships and research interests and these faculty protect their research. They have tenure. They want to keep program going. They can protect friends and colleagues in Cuba. And not be exploitative. Cubans get as much out of it as U.S. counterparts.

Vanessa, Kyle and Sheryl's sentiments highlight the impact of community building efforts to offer a critical and sustained long-term commitment to Cuba.

Student Transformation

All of my research participants spoke about fostering solidarity through student transformation. Student transformation was typically an ideal outcome of the

program that the research participants hoped would result from students spending time in Cuba on an academic exchange.

On an individual level, student transformation meant that students would learn "new social skills" (Kyle). Nana also noted many students telling her how their "trip to Cuba helped them know themselves better." Kyle also felt like it was his responsibility to "re-socialize" the student from the notion that the "world is out there for U.S. students to explore." He wanted to make sure that students developed "listening skills before engaging" and realized the world they hoped to explore was also "people's lives." Lidia too thought that these programs had individual transformative power and found satisfaction in this, as she felt like she was "doing something for the future."

Gilberto expressed his interest in facilitating these programs as they help "to overcome ignorance that is still existing, especially in the United States about Cuban realities." Gilberto described the need for this practice.

> [There is] a level of thoughts or inaccurate information that most people are exposed to here [in the U.S.]. To change perceptions and knowledge about Cuba, to learn from Cuba's social policies and experiences, and also because I think it is a still a challenge to improve overall relations between the two countries. When I talk to students we are preparing students for a new semester in Havana, and we make them read Cuban news outlets, both state media and more recent and more independent other alternative media in Cuba, and we also make them watch Cuban movies.

Vanessa also emphasized the importance of building relationships "when there's so much misinformation, misunderstandings." In Vanessa's words,

> [The opportunity to build relationships is]... the humanistic piece of the program where it's allowing people, students and professionals to share in scholarly objectives, to find that we're all just at the core similar regardless of our country's politics and regardless of what's going on. I think that's really the important piece of any study abroad, but specifically to Cuba and the US relations, I think it's essential more now than ever.

Nana and Viviana both connected the programs they facilitate with the mission of their institutions by connecting their U.S. students to scholarly knowledge from the Caribbean and Latin America. They believe that it is important for students to experience the "Cuban reality." Nana said it is "imperative that the students understood that [Cuban reality], and to open their minds, open their hearts, open their sense to the Cuban reality. This is our big, big bridge and our big task." Jazmin also expressed this ideal of continued connections with Cuba. Her approach was more causal and emphasized, "Enjoy the life, enjoy Cuba, and get to know Cuba in another methodology." Kyle also thought that students experiencing Cuba would "see past [U.S.] propaganda" and would likely develop "deep connections," changing [their] view of Cuba.

> Laura believed she and other facilitators had an "enormous shared imperative and desire and belief in the goodness of what we were doing, which is rare." She attributed this shared experience to the difficulties they all had to overcome to operate their programs. Laura also associated this with the "Cubans being the kind of people

they are, who are very... kind of emotional out there." She attributed the connectedness she experienced to "developing intense relationships very quickly with these people." Through her exchanges, she felt like she could really see the change in student perceptions.

Laura also noted outsider perceptions of her work transforming students in negative ways. "People who would say... they're being taught by these hardline Marxists and they're going to take a course on the revolution and they're all going to be indoctrinated." Laura said she was always quick to retort, "I only wish. I wish we had that kind of influence over students." Nevertheless, negative outsiders' perspectives do persist.

Neo-Colonial Tendencies

Cuba is a particularly interesting research site for studying colonial legacies, the former Spanish colony fought for independence only to find itself bound by the Platt Amendment, which allowed the U.S. extensive intervention in Cuban affairs. This political dynamic led to the Cuban Revolution challenging colonial and imperialist desires throughout the world. And yet, the colonial legacy of U.S. policy still exists as the U.S. continues to occupy a portion of the island for its military base and prison for "international terrorists" in Guantanamo Bay. As stated earlier in this dissertation, I am using a post-colonial lens that seeks to examine the power dynamics and relationships that emerge through academic exchange. Post-colonialism is the larger theoretical framework that encompasses neo-colonialist behaviors. The prevailing neo-colonialism creates clear power dynamics between the U.S. and Cuba. In her interview, Sheryl explicitly addressed the power dynamics resulting from neo-

colonialism, as she said, "I do think understanding power dynamics is an important part of operating in any country, and that is moderately unique in Cuba. That was something that we were constantly staying on the pulse of." In researching U.S. and Cuban academic exchanges, the theme of neo-colonial tendencies emerged as salient. Research participants spoke of three distinct forms of neo-colonial tendencies: exoticism of Cuba, academic standardization, and the academic embargo/blockade.

Exoticism of Cuba

Due to the U.S. trade and travel embargo or blockade against Cuba, travel to Cuba has been limited for U.S. citizens. The embargo not only restricted Americans' travel to Cuba but also restricted their knowledge of Cuba, particularly after the end of the Cold War. This lack of knowledge creates a certain type of imagery for Americans who see Cuba as "off limits" and "exotic" (Sheryl). Speaking patronizingly about Cuba as she described it as an isolated country that has not advanced since the implementation of the blockade, Laura described meetings she had in Cuba in "stuck in time 1950's houses and cars." Gilberto also noted the perception of Americans before the Obama administration saying, "Cuba was really seen by many still as kind of the prohibited, problematic place where only very committed and convinced people would go to because you could run into trouble and problems [with the U.S. government] and you might be marked." However, Viviana noted the prohibited nature of Cuba also gives it a sense of being a "forbidden fruit." Portraying Cuba as forbidden makes it a desired destination for Americans. "I think people always have wanted to see why Cuba was closed for the United States for so long. And I think that's the main interest in why they come here (Viviana)." Shelvia

described similar sentiments and referred to Cuba as the "flavor of the month." She attributed this to the forbidden nature of Cuba as well, stating, "The gate finally opened. You finally feel like you can get a glimpse in." The blockade's prohibition of U.S. tourist travel to Cuba created an artificial sense of mystery and an allure of Cuba among Americans that has become exploited through study abroad programming to increase enrollments.

Meanwhile, Maggie expressed frustrations with the new mindset of many Americans rushing to Cuba "to go before it changes." These sentiments irritated Maggie as she thought they were in opposition to and could undermine the relationship building inherent in exchanges. As she noted,

> It's the idea of creating relationships requires you to not have a spectator mentality, as you're not going to gawk at other people's, fill in the blank. And the idea of it's a community changes… whatever it is that you think is going to make Cuba progress, or leaving politics aside.

Gilberto also noted this "drastic" shift in mindset after Obama visited Cuba. "Since then, Cuba has become *en vogue* and fashionable and now it's more this drive where people want to go to Cuba now before it is changing even more." However, Laura noted that with Cuba "opening up and changing… the interest in Cuba diminishes." She went on to describe that the allure drives student desire and, once travel restrictions are removed, only those actually interested in Cuba will go. Then Cuba will become just another "impoverished Caribbean island."

The embargo's travel restrictions continue to limit mobility efforts between the U.S. and Cuba, which creates the sentiment that Cuba is forbidden, inducing

superficial and exotic notions about life on the island. This exoticism continues to complicate U.S. and Cuban academic relations as universities exploit these skewed perceptions "just to say they have a program in Cuba" (Kyle). Creating programming that plays into these superficial notions of Cuba prioritizes the interests and wants of the U.S. community over creating lasting international relationships that uphold reciprocity, combat ignorance and promote collaborative exchanges.

Academic Structure Standardization

Engaging in academic exchange draws universities into conversations about compatibility. Sheryl described the process of identifying an institution for an exchange by searching for institutions that are similar to hers within the desired location. However, even partnering with a similar institution still requires institutions to discuss creating common language and structures that allow for the transferability of academic credit between the two universities. This standardization process includes many aspect of programming, from determining language of instruction to identifying course offerings to crafting the overall design of programming. This process is not neutral and usually involves one institution driving the standardization process and the partner institution catering to the needs of the other university. The academic structures of the partner institution are inherently altered when that university prioritizes the needs of the other institution. In the case of U.S. and Cuban exchanges, the imbalance of mobility in both directions means the "U.S. side tries [and has the power] to standardize (Kyle)."

Program design choices, such as the length of exchanges, are increasingly dictated by U.S. university or at least U.S. student desires. These desires are not

always grounded in academic rationale. A trend that is occurring across study abroad programming is the rise of short-term programs, programs operating less than eight weeks. Short-term programs were noted by many participants, and by the statistics on programming in Cuba, as consuming a larger and larger share of their work (Nana, Viviana, Laura, Shelvia, and Changha). Changha reported that she was facilitating 18 short-term courses in summer 2018 while there were only three students on the spring 2018 semester program she facilitated. Laura observed that short term programs are on the rise due to faculty research linkages and "vague interest," but she confided that many of these programs are not developed for academic integration, but rather,

> They [faculty] want to have the travel to that place because then they can do some other things. If it's a summer thing, they tack on with their family vacation… They get paid extra to do it. It doesn't disrupt anything. It doesn't take away enrollment from their classes. It doesn't disrupt their lives.

Short-term courses programs typically happen in the summer and winter terms which operate outside of the traditional academic calendar in Cuba. Sheryl spoke of the desire to offer a summer program as causing an abrupt end to her program. She recalled what her Cuban counterpart stated:

> This [study abroad program] doesn't really work for us anymore, because you're coming in the summer, and we don't offer classes in the summer. It's unclear [to] what extent this is a reciprocal partnership. We really just seem to be hosting your students. You know, our students aren't really getting much benefit [and] there isn't a lot of faculty collaboration.

An additional rationale provided for short-term courses includes the fact that short-term courses allow the U.S. university faculty to serve as the academic lead, which facilitates ease in transfer credit process. However, this removes Cuban faculty from the center of Cuban courses and continues to privilege American academic structures over the Cuban ones.

The process for standardizing language structures within U.S. - Cuban exchanges has also had a complicated history. Cuban universities in Havana at one point eliminated English language medium content courses (Maggie). However, since D17, the notion of English medium content courses in response to U.S. universities' interest in Cuba has arisen again (Viviana).

> And actually with them [U.S. partnering institution], we're working to implement a semester in English. And the difference with the [other Cuban institution] is that if the students want to spend a semester there, they have to speak Spanish. But we are now in conversations to get to teach a whole semester for American students in English.

Furthermore, standardization processes, like those around language, are also often grounded in ethnocentric notions of academic rigor. Laura, not trained as a Spanish language expert, shared that the requirements for U.S. students to take courses in the local language were an on-going challenge, as the Spanish-language courses did not meet the U.S. academic standards.

> [Since] they [U.S. students] had to take Spanish… [this was] always a problem because the university has a Spanish language kind of unit, which frankly isn't really all that good. And so then we were contracting separately

with Spanish language professors, and the university wasn't happy about that, but...we had to do it.

Contracting of faculty has thus become a common practice among both Cuban institutions (Viviana, Nana) and U.S. institutions to meet the U.S. pedagogical style of academics. Gilberto noted that "often the professors that we hire [to teach U.S. students] are very prestigious, experienced professors that often do not teach anymore at the normal Cuban university level." Gilberto went on to note that Cuban students will come to their center in an effort to take courses with these Cuban faculty members. While Gilberto sees this as a way to support reciprocity efforts between Cubans and his institution, it also highlights the imbalance between students as U.S. students have greater access to premiere Cuban professors than Cuban students.

Standardization, while commonly seen as a natural process that institutions enter into to facilitate mobility, is not a neutral act. Power dynamics, shaped by the market-driven orientation of U.S. students and institutions, continue to play a role in these negotiations and impact practices within U.S. and Cuban study abroad programming.

Academic Embargo

While the Cuban embargo consists of political and economic restrictions on Cuban and U.S. companies and citizens enforced by the U.S. government, its impact extends beyond politics and economics. Jonathan Kozol coined the term "academic embargo," capturing the extent to which the blockade also impacts the academic environment and restricts the U.S.'s fundamental understanding of Cuban culture and

university practices. The lack of knowledge around academic culture between partners creates large knowledge gaps.

In many cases, trust, savvy and humility are lacking in the U.S. approach to exchanges, as the majority of Americans are ill- or even mis-informed about Cuba. For instance, when negotiating with Cubans, U.S. educational administrators and faculty often do not understand the high context, or implicit cultural nuances, embedded within Cuban ideas and practices. Kyle spoke about U.S. universities sending their "top dog," usually a provost, to negotiations because in the U.S. "people usually do what they [provosts] tell them to do." Sending a high level university official is seen in the U.S. as a way to "make a deal." However, this practice does not transfer to the Cuban culture of negotiation. Kyle stated that in Cuba successful negotiations are typically determined by "asking yourself what the Cubans are interested in and accepting what they offer you." Sheryl also expressed this sentiment and spoke to the importance of having the skills of "interpretation and savvy that is necessary in knowing what you can and can't do" in Cuba. Shelvia even discussed how in the U.S. you would "never operate on partial knowledge; however, this was common place in operations in Cuba." Vanessa explained the importance of developing and retaining "trust" with her Cuban counterparts, as they were critical in helping her navigate the Cuban landscape.

The U.S. institutions' notion of superiority is amplified by Americans' lack of understanding of Cuba's place in the world and the prestige of their institutions. Laura noted that many in her institution's higher administration did not understand that her Cuban counterpart institution was a "top class university in the world, which

frankly [her institution] is not. They [the Cuban partner university] rank far above us academically, and we were getting top people teaching our [U.S.] students, doing amazing things with them." A sense of superiority also manifested in U.S. student perceptions. Lidia noted this when she spoke of how U.S. students engaged in the Cuban classroom with little context or acknowledgment of the educational benefit of studying alongside Cubans.

> And most of the time you see the American student among them are very competitive and they reproduce here in those closed programs the same problems or issues that they do there in that small campus of their own universities. When you are mixed with Cuban students you have no time [i.e. no need] to compete.

To Lidia, Cuban students could support U.S. students' academic growth if U.S. students demonstrated a more collaborative mindset during their exchanges. Jazmin articulated what many participants expressed, as she said "the best place to know about Cuba is in the Cuban classrooms." However this requires the U.S. students to give up their privileged notion of America's place in the world.

Beyond the in-classroom experience catering to U.S. students, the curriculum of exchanges has also shifted based on the type of students attracted to Cuba. Shelvia shared that the core course she originally developed with two Cubans for her exchange was no longer attractive to students. Since "students applying to programs are not interested in Cultural Anthropology" anymore, her program has been redesigned, prioritizing students' needs or interests over the expertise of Cuban faculty. This continues to limit the scholarly knowledge and information to which

U.S. students have access, thus prioritizing marketing and consumerism over local academic expertise.

Implications of the Blockade

The blockade, referred to by some U.S. research participants as the embargo, was an ever present topic of conversation during my interviews. To all participants the blockade was a barrier to carrying out academic exchanges, an impediment that fundamentally affected the nature of their academic exchange facilitation. However, the blockade did not deter anyone's desire to continue this work. In the following section, the theme of the implications of the blockade is examined through four key areas: political tensions, uncertainty, program administration and sustainability.

Political Tensions

The impacts of the blockade seem "subtle" at first (Nana) but affect all aspects of academic exchange operations. The blockade reflects and has led to continual political tensions between the two governments. Kyle shared the "fear" of Cubans to engage with U.S. counterparts in light of the blockade. He felt that it was "hard [for Cubans] to get over" working with U.S. educational administrators and faculty who are operating in Cuba. He believes this made sense given that U.S. policy even after the changes made by the Obama administration is meant to overthrow – or, at least, promote change in -- the Cuban government and social system. In the field of study abroad, Cubans have to work with people from a country that is trying to "destabilize" their own. In their joint interview, Lidia and Jazmin captured how the blockade creates a highly politicized environment in which these exchanges operate.

Jazmin spoke about the political nature of the blockade, as she specifically described the rationale for tightening the regulations of the blockade in 2004.

> It's important that it is very clear. I think what were the reasons for American government because for me [they] were political reasons. Only political reasons. They were not reasons to cut the possibility and to change the rules. In that moment they changed the rules and many of these programs, they do it on purpose.

Lidia interjected to offer clarity about why these exchanges are politicized.

> Yes, and also the problem is that in general the image of Cuba is so manipulated in the United States that when American students, American persons comes to Cuba, at the end of the visit at least 98% say, "Well, that is not so bad that they told me." At least 98% of all Americans that come to Cuba at the end have a better impression about Cuba than he had before.

Jazmin returned to her initial point, connecting her argument to Lidia's point.

> So it's a boomerang. [The U.S. government tries] to use academic exchange to subvert Cuban society. But, one, academics are not in agreement with that. They are working for another idea. Students [are] also not [in agreement]. [The U.S. government is] trying to involve them in that kind of [subverting] activities, but they are not interested in that.

This highly politicized environment did not only increase Cuban suspicions around these programs but they also impacted U.S. interest in these programs as Cuba is seen as a forbidden location and connects to both a market and colonial notion of power in being the first to explore/know a location.

An additional note that was not discussed by all participants but was discussed in detail by Laura was the fact that representatives from U.S. government agencies, said to be enforcing the blockade, continued to engage her and her students in ways that made her uncomfortable. It is unclear if other participants experienced this same type of interaction with U.S. government officials but did not see it as applicable to my interview, or if Laura's experience is unique. Since Laura shared various instances of interacting with government officials during her experience administering study abroad programs, I determined it was useful to share. Laura noted both her own interactions with government officials and her students' interactions with government officials.

Laura expressed frustration with her interactions with government officials, as she felt officials were trying to use her and her students for information gathering purposes. "I would get these visits about warning me that the Cubans are going to take advantage of my naiveté and use me as a spy." She described her meeting with representatives from the FBI in this way:

> They presented me with this document that Condoleezza Rice had put together. She never had been to Cuba, and it was clear from reading it, had no idea what things were like now. It was based on a lot of old information. And then I said to the two of them... "Well, I get it, but things are really different. And I'm fully aware of how both sides would like to use us as spies. And frankly, I'm just doing this thing and it's a Study Abroad program… We're talking about classes and visits to artists' studios." And then I said, "But it is

different." I said, "It's clear that no one who wrote this report has ever been to

Cuba."

As an administrator for these programs, she found it "bizarre that American policy

would be based on that [the shared FBI reports]," which did not reflect first-hand

accounts or knowledge of Cuba.

As these interactions with U.S. government officials continued, she felt like

they would threaten the relationships she had built with Cubans and jeopardize her

programming in Cuba. She shared that she could hear "clicks" on her phone and

thought her phones were tapped. At one point she noted that a "CIA plant in the

[Havana-based U.S.] Interest Section [which served diplomatic purposes in the

absence of an embassy] tried to convince our students to get involved with some

dissidents." She found this action to put students in harm's way and thought it was

"unconscionable; it made me realize that the American side didn't care about the

safety of our students. They had their political thing, and they didn't care. They were

perfectly happy to try and use our students. They didn't care if the students got in

trouble."

Laura understood the challenging political environment that she was operating within

and continued to find herself protecting her students and programming, while also

navigating the impact of the blockade on the administration of her programming.

Uncertainty

One aspect of the blockade's influence is the presence of on-going uncertainty,

resulting from the ever-evolving U.S. regulations and changing implementation that

make it difficult to forecast student enrollment in U.S. - Cuban exchanges. During the

Bush era, regulations effectively eliminated program providers from operating in Cuba and created legal fears for universities. However, the Obama administration changes created a "new reality" (Nana) that made the "morning of December 17 of 2014 a surprise" (Jazmin). Laura described the complexities of the new changes.

> They [Cubans] really believed that Obama would change everything and open it up entirely, and I could see why. I also used to say to people, be careful what you wish for because what you're going to get are spring break programs on the beach with kids getting drunk and all that. And sure enough, that is what's happening.

Nana remained hopeful about the impact of the Obama era changes in some of the regulations. During the Obama era, increased scholarly connection "was permitted, the visits of the individuals, professors, and research increases and was better, for a short period of time." Nana then continued by discussing the shifts taking place now as a result of the current U.S. administration moving away from the opening up of relations that occurred under Obama. "Right now, it's changed again, back. But during Obama time was great and we received a lot of universities into our programs, yeah. It was better." Nana and many of the other research participants still remain hopeful for future negotiations that improve relations and allow for more sustainable programs. Yet, as Maggie shared, "Cuba has been thriving, or reacting, or surviving under these circumstances." Cuba remains resilient and able to adapt to the ever-changing regulations.

Laura emphasized the on-going uncertainties associated with academic exchange in Cuba. The changing regulatory environment directly impacts student

enrollment, making it hard to predict and plan exchanges. Laura stated that "things in Cuba have opened up and changed, and that creates its own stresses because I think [now] the interest in Cuba is diminishing." Changha spoke to diminishing enrollments for her semester programs but attributed them to the rhetoric of the current U.S. administration. However, she also spoke about the need for "stabilization" during the current "explosion" of interest in her programs.

Gilberto spoke of other factors, like the U.S. State Department travel warnings, which was reinstated after unfounded "sonic attacks" on U.S. and Canadian diplomats, contribute to the uncertainties in U.S. – Cuban exchange. He noted that the "travel warning doesn't affect us directly, but it might affect some of the parents' or students' decisions." Viviana reiterated Gilberto's concerns and found that even though "the embargo, as we call it blockade, hasn't been affecting us that much, the warnings that the Department of State have been publishing months ago have been drastically reducing the amount of groups that we have been receiving this year." Shelvia noted the addition of a new Cuban regulation requiring the names of participants to be summited to the government 90 days in advance of their arrival in Cuba, further adding to the complicated set of regulations impacting exchanges. Shelvia and Changha both believed that this new requirement would essentially eliminate or greatly reduce short-term programs. Navigating the uncertainty caused by the changing regulations is challenging and cumbersome for educational administrators and faculty members.

Program Administration

The political environment that many study abroad programs traverse is generally seen as outside the locus of control of educational administrators and faculty. In most instances, educational administrators and faculty are able to focus on their program administration without the political arena significantly affecting the programming. However, in the Cuban context, program administration is deeply tied to the inter-societal political environment, which often leads to general time-consuming logistical challenges, as well as complications in more specific aspects of program administration such as communication, finances and legal issues.

Time-consuming logistical challenges. When speaking with Sheryl about program administration, she conveyed the logistical challenges of operating a U.S. - Cuban exchange.

> I would say that there were a lot of logistical challenges that we encountered through this program... I would say in the whole scheme of things, when we're talking to this program relative to our other programs, this one was way more work for fewer students… In the early years, we did not have great success in recruiting students, which was challenging because we were putting all of this energy and effort into building this infrastructure.

The increased administrative effort was felt by Laura and Shelvia as well. Shelvia jokingly said, "I work with Cuba and a bunch of other countries" referencing "the disproportionate time it [Cuba] takes and attention" in comparison with the 10 other sites she manages. She relished the challenge and expressed her love for Cuba, as well, before concluding, "it's absolutely different from working with other sites."

Vanessa shared her thoughts on how the blockade impacts the administration of her programming:

> I also think just the embargo itself and the relations between Cuba and the U.S., and the policies that are in place [make operating study abroad programs challenging]. I know that our partners see us in a very positive light, and we relish our partnerships even more, but it's difficult when they see the policies being in place that make running a program like this very difficult. It's a challenge for sure because they start to lose trust. Luckily, they haven't lost trust in us, but I think they get scared and lose trust and are not sure what to think of everything that's happening.

Gilberto also spoke of the challenging logistical environment, but he lives year round in Cuba and has thus developed strong Cuban ties. He sympathized with other U.S. institutions, stating that, "Sometimes if you are a U.S. entity/institution in Cuba, you just run into challenges and problems and you don't always know the answer or a good approach to it." However, he noted that "it's helpful to be able to talk to experienced Cuban scholars on the ground or administrators" and was thankful for the community of Cuban colleagues he has amassed over the course of his 20 year engagement in Cuba.

Laura attempted to address these resulting challenges directly with regulatory bodies. She voiced her concerns, saying, "You're making it impossible for us to do this with these demands that you have." Meanwhile, Vanessa saw the administrative challenges in Cuba as an evolving reality of operating in Cuba:

Some things over the years have gotten easier, but it's always a challenge I

think to just keep up with those changes and having to work with the changes.

Things have gotten much more open, but it's not certainly absolutely open. I

think that it definitely makes it a challenge.

Shelvia expressed similar sentiments when navigating the administrative challenges.

"You never quite know, if somebody tells you it's a rule, if that's because it's more

convenient for them or it's an actual law of the country. It's hard to drill down there."

Jazmin discussed the "step by step" approach that Cubans take to carry out

exchanges with U.S. partners.

You know one year passed and everybody sees that it's a very good

opportunity. It's something that is good, and then people want to approach the

Cuban institution, and it's different because now they got the experience how

to negotiate and to put in place this kind of program. But you know the first

one, the first persons are the ones that [are] more difficult but you don't know

how it is. But now the Cuban institution, and American institution have a

license, and have the knowledge, and the key things that they need to

negotiate to start a program.

In the early 2000's, study abroad programming was carried out between key

participants or "pioneers" as discussed previously. These key participants knew that

building relationships and navigating the regulatory environment would take time.

Nana spoke about the first U.S. program in Cuba that she helped facilitate.

The first program with 10 weeks here… was very hard. It was our first

experience doing that kind of program. Then, all the universities have to think

in a long period because they needed to pay in that kind of thing, especially

for Cuba, because Cuba is different from other countries, with a different

space, with different regulations, with a different way of life. It's very hard for

the students [coming] from the climate [of their institution]… to

communicate, to live here.

Educational administrators and faculty developing and leading exchanges in Cuba

encounter generally time-consuming logistical challenges as well as more specific

challenges with an even greater impact.

Communication. Maintaining open lines of communication is essential to

facilitating successful exchanges. Within the Cuban context, participants spoke about

the technical challenges of communication. The blockade limits telecommunications

and internet infrastructure in Cuba which cause delays in communication. Nana

expressed the limited nature of "direct connection from Cuba to specific websites"

and the need for "special accounts of e-mail to the students, because it's [other sites

are] blocked." Additionally, Shelvia explained from the U.S. perspective that "access

in Cuba… has improved somewhat. But, [the] inability of our staff to e-mail us any

time, day or night, we're still running into problems." Yet, Shelvia does acknowledge

that there have been improvements. "All of the communications has improved

greatly, but I am still eager for the day when they can have [at least] their own dial-up

connection." The lack of communications infrastructure in Cuba continues to impede

U.S. and Cuban educational administrators' and faculty's ability to communicate effectively with one another.

Beyond the challenges of limited technical communication infrastructure in Cuba, educational administrators and faculty also struggle to meet with one another over the course of the year to evaluate and enhance programming. Participants discussed how the restrictions in travel between the U.S. and Cuba prevent stakeholders from meeting in person and sharing best practices among facilitators. Laura also described about the challenge of meeting face to face in Cuba. She spoke about a Cuban colleague who was prevented from getting a visa to travel to the U.S. She went on to say, "Yes, Cubans can't travel, but a lot of the ones who can, it's the U.S. who stops them [from] coming. Not the Cuban government." Vanessa also reflected on her Cuban counterparts' lack of access to the U.S.

> There were times when I first got here [to her U.S. institution], [when] we weren't able to bring [to the U.S.] anybody [Cubans] because of the U.S. regulations. For the first two years maybe, two or three, we weren't able to bring anyone. Then, we've been bringing one ever since. We actually tried to bring someone this year, and we couldn't, so I don't know, the intention is always there to bring someone. Whether or not we can actually do it is another question.

Shelvia noted that instead of hosting her Cuban colleagues she has "visited Havana more often than I visit other sites." She said in addition to the complexity of operating in Cuba, "the temporality of [U.S.] staff in Cuba" continues to negatively impact communication and relationship building. She said, "The fact that [due to U.S.

regulations] we can't hire a Cuban to be our director limits the ability of that person either to stay on long-term or to know enough of the ins and outs to be able to manage that alone." She contrasted the temporality of staff with other sites where the "onsite staff have served the organization for 25 years." High turnover in U.S. on-site staff, another result of the blockade, makes maintaining consistent lines of communication challenging. However, partnership models that sustain their leadership and staffing can mitigate the effects of the blockade.

Financial challenges. Beyond causing communication issues, the blockade is designed to limit financial transactions in Cuba. For example, U.S. credit card systems, while approved to operate in Cuba, still do not operate there (with the exception of one small bank based in Florida). In addition, Americans also cannot open a bank account in Cuba, nor can they use ATM cards to withdraw money from their accounts while they are in Cuba. Shelvia noted that "The banking has gotten a lot better, although I'm eager for more opportunities to use ATM cards." Since Americans are unable to withdraw money from their ATMs, they must bring cash for the entirety of their time in Cuba with them and adhere to strict budgets. Shelvia shared that "the need to carry cash around is a burden. Wiring money to Cuba in the first place is more onerous than it is in other places." Maggie noted that, beyond the general administrative challenges of operating exchanges in Cuba, the financial regulations further complicate with whom her U.S. university is willing to partner simply because of financial logistics. Kyle described these financial challenges as "cash flow problems." He said getting money to Cuba was a problem and described an event in which he had to tell his homestay families that he could not pay them on

time. "I owe you this much money, but I can't pay you even though this student is staying with you and eating." Furthermore, in November on 2018, the U.S. released a list of restricted entities affiliated with the military that Americans cannot patronize. Nana mentioned a hotel by name as a hotel that students could not visit that was previously used by her programs. Kyle reiterated, as Vanessa expressed that, in the face of the economic constraints caused by the blockade, building trust is the key to successfully facilitating these programs.

Legal issues. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) in the U.S. Treasury Department is responsible for administering and enforcing sanctions against Cuba and sanctions against U.S. citizen who "illegally" travel to Cuba as well as U.S. corporations and their subsidiaries based in other countries that are seen to violate the embargo. The research participants described the various challenges associated with navigating these regulations. Shelvia found the legal questions "innumerable" for operating these programs. Such legal challenges often incited fear and required extra resources and time to navigate. Shelvia also expressed constant anxiety as she took extra precaution navigating the legal licensing requirements.

> As an [representative for my] organization, I'm significantly more careful about what kind of activities we do and promote because... if we step wrong, we jeopardize our future ability to take students to Cuba, as well as [risk paying] fines and other things. I'm much more aware of that heightened level of responsibility as an institution.

Gilberto and Nana expressed confusion over a vague addition in the recent changes in OFAC regulations that require 10-week minimum exchanges in Cuba. Laura noted

that her "dealings with OFAC were complicated" as her organization "had to report back to OFAC and they would give you a hard time on stuff." In addition to the need to secure licensing and procure the required U.S. documents to travel to Cuba, there are also time consuming components within the Cuban visa process. Laura expressed frustration with navigating the Cuban visa process. "Then there's the whole issue of getting the visas, working with the Intersection here, the Cuban Intersection. Sometimes we didn't have the visas until the day before everybody left the country. It was always a nail-biting finish." The lack of clarity in the visa process continued to create anxiety for Laura, as she did not know if her students would be able to travel and if it would be her fault for missing a new requirement.

Strict adherence to changing, vague sanction guidelines continued to raise anxieties in the research participants. Laura and Sheryl even noted that navigating these requirements caused so much additional stress that, when their programs were unsuccessful, they felt a sense of relief.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the main findings of the dissertation. Four key areas within the political and economic context of study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba emerged from the shared experiences of the 12 participants in this study. The first key finding highlights how neoliberalism exerts market pressures on the development and administration of study abroad programming. The second key finding highlights solidarity building in the face of neoliberalism. In this finding, key ideologies and resistance strategies emerge. Neo-colonial tendencies were identified as a third key finding. This finding links study

abroad programming to the reproduction of colonial dynamics and the amplification

of inequities and power dynamics within north-south study abroad programs. Lastly,

the implications of the blockade emerged as salient. In this study, the uncertainty

caused by ever-changing political dynamics was shown to influence all aspects of

study abroad program administration.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine how political and economic context impacts study abroad programming. In order to answer my research questions, my dissertation explored three main focus areas. First, this dissertation aimed to examine if and how neoliberal policies create a market-based mentality in study abroad programming. Second, this dissertation aimed to utilize a critical lens to more deeply examine study abroad, which is often seen as a positive or neutral endeavor. Third, this dissertation aimed to analyze post-colonial dynamics perpetuated through study abroad by adding new perspectives to the existing body of literature, particularly from the voices of the Cuban academic and broader community, a community typically left out of U.S. based scholarship.

U.S. and Cuban academic exchanges constitute a data rich site that can offer new insights into study abroad programming, a critical component of U.S. internationalization strategy. Cuba as a non-traditional study abroad location is of additional interest as the political environment guiding higher education policy there and in the U.S. is approached from differing ideologies. Additionally, U.S. and Cuban educational administrators and faculty facilitate these academic exchanges despite the economic and political sanctions that exist to restrict American and Cuban citizens' movement and engagement with one another. And yet, there has been an explosive growth in the number of Americans wishing to travel to Cuba since the easement of travel restrictions on December 17, 2014 (D17). These particular factors of the U.S.-

Cuban context make study abroad at this non-traditional location a unique site worthy of study.

This study used qualitative methods to deepen the understanding of nontraditional study abroad programming through the examination of a single non-traditional location, Cuba. Case study methods were used to highlight the voices of those involved in these exchanges before, during and after the change in diplomatic relations on D17. Using a case study design created a detailed and rich account of study abroad programming under the pressures of neoliberalism.

The findings from this study highlighted the tensions between market-driven approaches to study abroad and solidarity or long-term relationship-oriented approaches to study abroad. These findings illustrate U.S. university contexts that prioritize transactional practices, which replicate colonial dynamics of dependency and inequities in power. Lastly, participants shared their experiences navigating the blockade, which extends beyond the political and economic context and also undermines academic exchange and information sharing.

Research Question Review

The findings from this study relate to existing literature about neoliberalism, academic capitalism, internationalization and post-colonial theory. Research questions that guided this study were:

How does the economic and political context shape study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba?

    a. How do market dynamics present themselves in study abroad programming?

b. How do the ideologies of faculty and educational

administrators manifest in study abroad programming?

c. In what ways does the U.S. blockade impact study abroad

programming between the U.S. and Cuba?

To address the main findings of this dissertation, I will first synthesize the findings in

an effort to answer the overarching research question that addresses the larger

political and economic context in which study abroad programming operates. After

addressing the overarching research question, I directly answer the three subquestions

in detail.

Overarching Research Question: Political and Economic Context

The political and economic context influences the academic and institutional

environment in which study abroad programming operates. This context dictates how

political and economic ideologies influence the internationalization of higher

education and the scope for which they do so. As such, the political and economic

landscape directly shapes program content and administration, as well as universities'

approaches to study abroad programming.

Program content directly responds to the environment in which it operates.

Within study abroad programming, content usually includes the academic curriculum

and excursions, as well as learning objectives. In the case of the U.S. and Cuba, all

three areas of study abroad content were shaped by political and economic conditions.

Curriculum focused on Cuban alternatives to U.S. approaches with additional courses

on understanding the historical, political, economic and social context of Cuba.

Excursions added an experiential learning component to the curriculum and typically

served as ways to create additional bridges to the Cuban community. The research participants noted recent changes to program content in response to new U. S. student participant profiles with the increasing number of U.S. students enrolling in study abroad programming to Cuba. In some cases, program content development shifted from taking an academic alignment focus to a focus of fulfilling student desires for comfort or adventure in an effort to entice more students to join these programs.

Program administration was also impacted by the political and economic context. The Cuban Revolution prioritized an educated citizenry and placed universities and schools at the center of Cuban society. Involving students from other countries has also been a long-standing practice by Cubans in line with a political/ideological commitment to international solidarity. Thus, placing U.S. students in a Cuban university is seen by many as a political act and, as such, programming in Cuba has received push back from Cuban university officials. In light of the political context, the educational administrators and faculty who work in Cuban exchanges operate within an environment of suspicions where the purpose and goals of their program are constantly questioned. Both U.S. and Cuban educational administrators and faculty fought to establish these programs and encourage their respective university communities to see the long-term benefits of these exchanges. Program developers reported that they are also impacted directly by the economic context in which study abroad in Cuba operates. The current economic context has led simultaneously to the resistance and an embrace of market-orientated approaches to study abroad programming. The emergence of this approach thus further complicates the continued administration and maintenance of these programs, which

have been difficult to build from the onset given the number of barriers both governments place on program operation.

Lastly, the political and economic context shapes universities' approaches to study abroad, as seen in figure five below. Study abroad educational administrators and faculty are developing programming between two countries on opposing sides of the political and economic spectrum and offering divergent approaches to education. The solidarity approach, commonly seen in historical partnerships in Cuba and prioritized in Cuban ideology, is one that emphasizes reciprocity efforts and aims to create long term, sustainable programs that foster learning for the global good. However, a market-based approach, prioritized in U.S. ideology, also exists, which aims to reduce regulations in order to create efficiencies and prioritizes marketing techniques to increase enrollment for financial gain. These methods are short-term, profit-oriented approaches that are highly transactional.
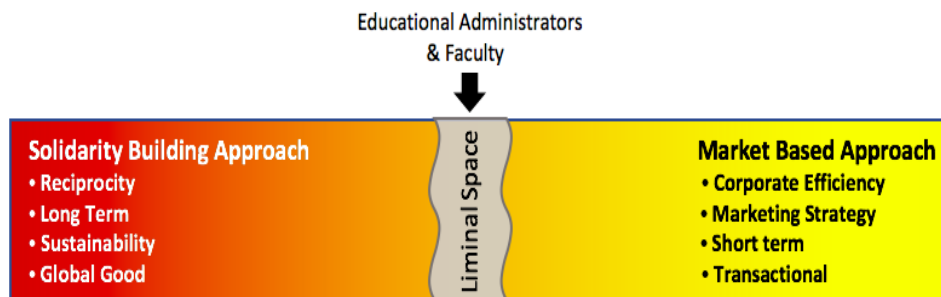
Figure 5: Liminal Space within U.S. and Cuban Study Abroad Programming

In order to develop and operate study abroad exchanges between the U.S. and Cuba, educational administrators and faculty facilitating these exchanges must navigate between these approaches and typically find themselves in a contested area, or a liminal space, between the two approaches. One of the main findings of this

dissertation is the acknowledgement of the liminal space that exists within the approaches to study abroad programming and the power of educational administrators and faculty to traverse that liminal space. In the following sections that address the three subquestions, I further discuss how market dynamics, the ideologies of educational administrators and faculty and the blockade impact study abroad programming in Cuba.

Subquestion A

How do market dynamics present themselves in study abroad programming?

In the case of study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba, market pressures have emerged in new and interesting ways since December 17, 2014. Programming in Cuba has exponentially grown since the Obama administration changed regulations for academic travel. With this growth, there has been a notable shift in the profiles and motivations of the students enrolling in these exchange courses. As noted by the research participants, students today are participating in exchanges with limited knowledge of the inter-societal historical and political context involving the U.S. and Cuba and instead see Cuba in superficial terms as a forbidden, exotic location to explore before it changes. Institutions are pressured to capitalize on these voyeuristic and consumeristic student desires. Academic capitalism theory speaks to this phenomenon as it explains how institutions are pressured to leverage resources from the student in seemingly different ways for U.S. and Cuban institutions. This is evident in this particular case. Educational administrators and faculty find themselves in a precarious situation where they must push back on – and

try to educate or reorient – the student consumer while also appeasing the market-like environment that has emerged in study abroad.

The influences of the market-like environment are seen through the explicit use of marketing strategies and practices. This is most notable in the Cuban context, where Viviana's organization has been able to secure the majority of the market share of U.S. participants through direct marketing initiatives, such as attending conferences, which diverges from previous relationship-driven approaches to establishing exchanges. Historically, Cuban organizations have not had active recruitment strategies; rather they organically networked with like-minded individuals at conferences and slowly built relationships that could sustain long-term programming. Now a newly transactional model exists that prioritizes market demands, which undermines efforts to build sustainable partnerships. This neoliberal influenced market-based approach, which the Cubans vehemently fought in the Cuban Revolution, undercuts the long-term relationships between Americans and Cubans that are needed to end the blockade and develop academically worthwhile and sustainable study abroad programs.

U.S. universities and program providers see Cuba as a new site for innovation. Research participants described how, in response to the increased demand for programming, institutions have changed how they manage and administer international education exchanges, at least those involving Cuba. While the former political and economic context made study abroad programming in Cuba inherently selective, since the changes in diplomatic relations, Cuban institutions have been openly accepting many offer for exchanges. In response to the increase in demand for

study abroad programming in Cuba, Cuban academic institutions are for the first time operating in a competitive environment with their Cuban academic colleagues, who historically have been seen as collaborators and not competitors. With Cubans offering personalized and tailored programming, they begin to operate within a customer-service model that treats the U.S. students as clients – and the U.S. institutions as "business" partners, as opposed to engaging in a reciprocal exchange model where U.S. participants are seen as equal partners, and not privileged consumers.

With their new market approach, U.S. program operators are trying to circumvent and ultimately reduce the current regulatory environment of U.S. study abroad programming in Cuba. In a highly-regulated system, exchanges of any type require patience and persistence. Historically a centralized model existed where U.S. educational administrators and faculty worked with one centralized Cuban counterpart. However, with the recent explosion of programming, efforts to reduce regulations and cater to U.S. interests have grown. An a la carte model has recently emerged as a way to more efficiently operate within the regulated environment. Instead of working with one centralized counterpart, U.S. program operators can now pick and choose between Cuban partners in order to better serve their consumer interests. This was shown through programming that now caters to U.S. preferences for housing, language of instruction and access to noteworthy scholars/professors. These adaptations to programming appear to be fundamentally changing Cuba's administrative structures for organizing, regulating and maintaining these exchanges.

Furthermore, programming in Cuba has shifted from primarily semester-length programming to short-term programs that are eight weeks or less. While short-term programming in and of itself does not necessarily have a negative impact on the learning outcomes for students participating in study abroad, the significant number of short-term programs is usurping the limited academic resources and creating an environment where universities are outbidding one another for access to scholars, housing and services. This increase in short-term programming has subsequently led to the elimination of multiple long-standing, long-term programs.

Subquestion B

How do the ideologies of faculty and educational administrators manifest in study abroad programming?

The ideological differences between the Cuban and U.S. governments, in conjunction with the effects of the U.S. blockade, make Cuba an unconventional site for study abroad programming. In essence, the act of operating a U.S. university program in Cuba is a political act, one that triumphs beyond the U.S. blockade. The research participants, and other educational administrators and faculty, have the unique opportunity to influence the greater political landscape through academic exchanges. For many of the research participants, the U.S. blockade and the Cuban socialist system of government were simply realities they had to navigate but did not deter their efforts to facilitate exchanges. Thus, rather than upending study abroad programming, the political and governmental context in which U.S. - Cuban exchanges operate offers rare and valuable spaces for students and faculty to examine and discuss the nuances of U.S. and Cuban relations. In navigating the complex

political arena and overcoming the barriers it presented, U.S. and Cuban educational administrators and faculty ultimately developed successful programs by establishing relationships and building deep connections with their counterparts.

The educational administrators and faculty who participated in this study have a long history of working on exchanges involving academics and students from the two countries. Some were seen as pioneers who led the way in developing the current infrastructure for U.S. and Cuba study abroad programming today. In many ways, these research participants were drawn to work on exchanges between the two countries to help transform notions of each other's countries and move beyond divisive political rhetoric. They fought to end the academic embargo and ultimately surpassed it through facilitating experiential study abroad programming.

According to the research participants, the initial development and facilitation of study abroad programs was focused on direct connections with one another and exposure to communities. Study abroad was also driven by transformational programming objectives. While the goal for participants from both countries was not to transform students into more radical capitalists or socialists, programming was designed to provide a window into a different context that political barriers made extremely difficult to access. However, since D17, this historically transformational approach to study abroad has given way to a more transactional approach.

Many of the research participants described a new context in which study abroad no longer exists solely to build solidarity, develop mutual understanding, and promote education as a global good but rather to increase university revenue/financial resources. Many feel they are stuck in a liminal space, one where they do not fully

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align with one approach to study abroad or the other. Research participants felt like they were not truly agents of solidarity building as their programs began to take a more market-based approach, prioritizing financial gain over reciprocity. Yet, many are simultaneously fighting these pressures to align with a market orientation. U.S. educational administrators and faculty noted their explicit and intentional reciprocity-building efforts that included supporting Cubans to participate in professional development opportunities, access academic resources, produce publishable academic material and travel to the U.S. to engage in scholarly activity on U.S. campuses. In continuing to advocate for reciprocity while taking on a more market-based approach to study abroad, the U.S. and Cuban research participants are operating within the liminal space, or on the border, between these two divergent approaches to study abroad, study abroad for solidarity and global good and study abroad for market gain. The unique ability of educational administrators and faculty to operate within the liminal space of these two divergent approaches affords them decision making power, allowing them to define study abroad programming between the U.S. and Cuba.

Subquestion C

In what ways does the U.S. blockade impact study abroad programming between the

U.S. and Cuba?

The blockade's impact reaches beyond economics and politics into the academic space. Every research participant spoke at length about the difficulties caused by the U.S. blockade against Cuba and its effects on the operation and maintenance of study abroad programming in Cuba. One participant even spoke of the need for U.S. activities to go through an additional layer of review to determine

the funding and purpose of these exchanges. Having to navigate the regulatory

processes that result from the blockade requires additional time and resources

allocated to administer programs in Cuba and makes it increasingly difficult to

maintain programming there. Interestingly, many research participants saw the travel

warning from the current U.S. administration and perceived safety threats to

Americans as a larger deterrent to U.S. programming in Cuba than the blockade,

given that the current administration has only eliminated the "individual" people-to-

people category of the several categories that the Obama administration specified as

bases for legal travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens. Ultimately the blockade was seen as an

impediment that prevented participants from reaching their programming potential.

It should be noted that the administrative challenges to operating a program in

this context applied to all aspects of program administration and management.

Participants spoke about the "poco a poco" mentality of building these exchanges,

noting that developing programming in Cuba is a slow moving process. Additionally,

participants spoke to challenges in maintaining communication and building trust.

Participants continuously commented on the difficulty of communicating within this

environment. Such challenges affected educational administrators' and faculty's

ability to maintain contact with colleagues when not in country. Additionally, lack of

communications infrastructure within Cuba expanded the timeline for administering

programs and, at times, required U.S. participants to travel to Cuba for meetings as

communicating remotely was not sufficient. These challenges undermine the

relational nature of exchanges and one's ability to effectively and efficiently operate a

program.

These administrative challenges also pose a threat to the longevity of exchanges. The blockade's regulatory structures continue to change from administration to administration, making many U.S. institutions hesitant to create programming in Cuba that may be considered illegal under future U.S. administrations. The academic sector is not the only sector hesitant to create new systems and structures to connect with Cuba. U.S. financial institutions are also reluctant to do business with Cuba, which adds an additional layer of difficulty to exchanging payment for goods and basic services in Cuba. The research participants underscored the financial implications for programming in Cuba as they account for additional legal expenses to interpret regulations and the potential for financial fines that could be placed on an organization should they break a regulation of the U.S. blockade. Furthermore, the Cuban government has responded to the U.S. blockade by creating their own set of regulations that U.S. educational administrators and faculty also need to navigate.

Without proper funding and resources to dedicate to building and maintaining relationships in Cuba, U.S. institutions are increasingly turning to provider organizations to navigate this terrain. However, in previous iterations of the U.S. regulations, program providers were forced to cease operations in Cuba as they did not meet the conditions needed to operate under strict enforcement of the regulations. The current overreliance on program providers may prove detrimental to U.S. and Cuban academic exchange relations moving forward as these partnerships are typically short-term oriented and fall under differing regulatory environments than university partnerships. The impact they will have on study abroad programming

within the current state of regulations is unknown since provider organizations were not able to operate under previous regulations. While Cuba has proven to be a rich academic site that provides U.S. students with alternative understandings of dominant global policy, programming in Cuba is at risk of termination due to the high level of resources required to operate here relative to the number of student participants. The hyper focus of U.S. stakeholders on enrollment and resource generation has the potential to undermine efforts to build and maintain connections between U.S. and Cuban scholars and students.

Contributions to Theory

In this section, I offer insights into how this study illustrates neoliberalism's influence on study abroad programming through the lens of academic capitalism theory. Academic capitalism theory explains current neoliberal forces as they relate to the global scope of the university and illustrates the power these forces possess in influencing the international dimensions of university planning, process and policy. However, previous academic capitalism research has not specifically addressed study abroad programming or examined programming within the Cuban context.

This study establishes that a neoliberal environment does in fact exist in the realm of study abroad in two main ways. The first is through pressures exerted by the market in the context of declining government funding, for different reasons, in both societal context. This was seen in the language used by both U.S. and Cuban counterparts in describing their exchanges using market terminology. Strategic marketing initiatives were implemented and a competitive environment has emerged in a place where collaboration and solidarity primarily existed. This extends academic

capitalism into the international programming space and establishes that an academic capitalist learning regime is taking hold.

Another aspect of study abroad programming that illuminates the presence of neoliberal policy is the rise of program providers. Since the state is investing in the university's strategic priority of internationalization, the university must look outwardly for financial and administrative support to conduct study abroad and other internationalization activities. Program providers have thus emerged as interstitial organizations that conduct study abroad functions which previously were exclusively university functions. Program providers have essentially privatized this component of higher education and have created corporate models in place of educational structures not that different from the models that are increasingly dominant in both public and private universities in the U.S.. Within study abroad, these private organizations ultimately connect the university environment and operation to the neoliberal state and industry (Slaughter and Rhodes, 2004). Furthermore, the use of program providers in this space expands managerial control of study abroad programming to non-university organizations which now direct university programming.

As the presence of neoliberalism within the U.S. university environment is more broadly accepted and rationalized, transactional exchanges prioritizing market gains over reciprocity and solidarity building with host communities are becoming more prolific (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006). The pervasiveness of neoliberalism within study abroad programming threatens to further perpetuate power inequities between U.S. and Cuban stakeholders. Thus, this study intentionally captured Cuban voices in order to incorporate discourse from this academic community who is

marginalized within the U.S. environment. Incorporating these narratives elevates the

Cuban voice so that it is no longer the "other" and re-centers the conversation outside

of solely Western ideology (Gandhi, 1998; Said, 1978). The Cubans' narratives offer

insight into resistance efforts within their communities and insight into the fragile

spaces in which educational administrators and faculty work to foster global

solidarity building within study abroad programming (Olesen, 2004).

This study shows that academic capitalism and neoliberalism do indeed exist

in study abroad. This is an area that has not been explored previously; thus, this study

expands the dialogue about the extent to which market-based ideologies are

embedded within internationalization practices in the university.

Implications of the Findings

In this section, I offer implications of this study to both policy and practice. In

the realm of policy, I will examine both implications of the blockade and university

funding practices as they intersect with internationalization policy on the university

campus. In terms of practice, I specifically examine the role of study abroad

programming within the internationalization context of the university environment.

Implications for Policy

At a minimum, this study shows how the blockade impacts academic freedom

and academic operations. The research furthers the cause to end the blockade and

continue along the path toward normalized relations. The blockade was shown to

cause harm to both U.S. interests and the people of Cuba through the stories shared

by the research participants. The blockade's consequences go beyond the economic

environment. The academic community should continue to advocate for changes in

policy so that they may build understanding across institutions and share best practices more effectively. Cuban academics desire access to U.S. scholarship and libraries and currently this is limited to just those individuals who have relationships with certain groups of Americans. As short-term programs grow, Cubans' networks expand but with looser ties. With looser ties, long-term commitment to information sharing becomes more difficult to establish and maintain. Additionally, U.S. academics have much to learn from Cuban scholarship. The impediments that the blockade puts in place for U.S. academics make it such that only few extremely persistent Americans are able to access Cuban scholarship and advance their study through the alternative ideologies of Cuban counterparts. Nevertheless, despite U.S. government inaction to end the blockade, the international community continues to condemn the blockade as shown by the United Nations General Assembly 189-2 vote in favor of the resolution to end the U.S. blockade (United Nations, 2018). Continued advocacy is needed to end the U.S. blockade against Cuba in order for scholars to have true academic freedom and benefit fully from their academic communities.

This study also addressed the financial environment of internationalization practices at the U.S. university. My research shows the need for adequate public funding for universities to restore their operations with a public good-oriented approach. Without dedicated public funding structures, long-term strategies to international partnerships dissipate, reciprocity building is threatened and the academic outcomes embedded with internationalization initiatives are weakened. In the U.S. context, internationalization continues to be a central pillar of higher

education. Thus, public funds need to be allocated so that the resources provided for

internationalization initiatives reflect their level of prioritization within the university.

Without public funding for study abroad, a market-oriented approach emerges

as universities trying to fund their programs must focus on capitalizing on

enrollments and dollars over fulfilling the intended academic mission of the

university. As a result, universities are not able to simply focus on educating; rather

they focus on developing programs that cater to what are at times students' superficial

desires or preferences in order to increase student enrollment and financial gain.

Thus, these findings illuminate how internationalization efforts are not inherently

neutral. They may have ulterior motives beyond the promotion of education as a

global good. Therefore, international education scholars and practitioners must

question the intentions of stakeholders and examine the environments in which they

carry out study abroad programming and internationalization initiatives. Institutions

should not be misled by the interest of corporations, some of which have lobbied to

end the embargo in an effort to expand their own business there, but rise above them

in order to truly bridge connections between students and scholars across borders. In

an ever connected world, public funding for the internationalization efforts of

universities is needed if universities are going to focus on fulfilling their mission to

prepare students for a globalized world instead of focusing on maximizing the

financial gains of study abroad programming.

Implications for Practice

This study highlighted the critical role that educational administrators and

faculty play in study abroad programming. Their role is at the intersection of

supporting both their home university and their host university. Much attention in the research has been given to how educational administrators and faculty support their students, but little research explores the important decision making power of these actors. Given the importance of educational administrators and faculty, senior university administrators should directly engage these stakeholders in the development of new partnerships and the creation of new academic exchange sites as they have the most comprehensive understanding of host communities.

Educational administrators and faculty members' voices and not just those of university presidents and boards of trustees need to be elevated in strategic conversations around internationalization as a whole. These educators have a unique and valuable understanding of both local and university contexts. Greater attention should be given to the selection of these team members because they represent the university in the international community and have the ability to strengthen or weaken long term ties with other universities. Meanwhile, educational administrators and faculty leading these programs need to be aware of their positional power and how their decisions directly impact the host community, university relations and student learning.

While the majority of study abroad programming continues to operate in Western Europe, programming is growing in non-traditional locations. Even though Cuba is not representative of all non-traditional spaces, this dissertation study shows the need to consider historical, political and economic context when creating programming to avoid replicating colonial dependencies. Extra care should be given

to understanding the historical and modern power dynamics between the U.S. and any non-traditional location for study abroad.

Study abroad programming is currently operating within a market-like environment shaped by neoliberal policies. With the prevalent market-based approach, enrollment and consumeristic practices take priority over educational outcomes. Yet, study abroad educational administrators and faculty should focus their efforts on building programs that prioritize academic learning and community building. Study abroad offices should work to develop long term strategic program management systems that include strategies for enrollment while also strategically building long term relationships with partners that can be maintained even during times of low enrollment.

Research participants highlighted the transformational power of study abroad to create mutual understanding in societies where the inter-societal political context perpetuates misunderstandings and conveys inaccurate information and perceptions of others. U.S. study abroad programming methods should embed solidarity building and reciprocity efforts, like those emphasized in Cuba, into their systems of program development and program maintenance. These methods can include educational administrators and faculty convening shared goal setting meetings, allocating budget line items for reciprocity initiatives and involving the host community in program development.

An under-explored area of research and practice in study abroad is the role of third party providers. Traditional models of academic exchange were developed through the collaboration of two universities. With the diversification of study abroad

programming, program providers have emerged as a new player. They are taking an ever increasing role in facilitating exchanges in place of universities. Universities should critically examine their partnerships with program providers to ensure that their program providers align with the university's academic missions and standards. While these private organizations may be more nimble and able to more quickly adapt to the local context of the host country, they have at times overemphasized market aspects of these exchanges instead of the academic components. In conclusion, study abroad programming, and international initiatives more generally, should include professional development for all stakeholders to understand how power dynamics are perpetuated through study abroad, reflect on their individual role in either reinforcing or combating power inequities and learn how to develop programming that prioritizes community building initiatives over financial gain.

Future Research

This case study research presents new findings about study abroad programming, internationalization and university practices. The implications of these findings lead to further questions and avenues for future research. Future researchers can replicate the methods of this research in other politically and economically complex spaces beyond Cuba and the U.S. to determine the transferability of this study's findings to other contexts.

While this research argues that there is a correlation between study abroad programming and the emergence of market-based tendencies within university practices, additional research will need to be conducted to determine if and how study abroad programming in a particular location may encourage/influence changes to

university policy and practice. Additional studies should be conducted in other locations beside the Cuban and U.S. context to determine how widespread market-oriented approaches are within study abroad administration. Special attention should be given to non-traditional locations, as these are formerly colonized locations where there is potential to replicate colonial dynamics. Lastly, further internationalization practices need to be examined in an effort to understand how market oriented approaches are being implemented or resisted within other aspects of internationalization beyond study abroad programming.

Within the context of Cuba, future research also needs to be conducted on the cyclical patterns of growing interest in expanding study abroad programming by U.S. institutions focusing on Cuba. During both Carter's and Clinton's administrations the shifting diplomatic relations created an influx of American academics and students traveling to Cuba that demonstrates a similar pattern to the events following the Obama administration era changes highlighted in this research. Future studies to compare the interest in academic exchanges during these times would be useful for better understanding future pressures on U.S. and Cuban academic structures that support exchanges.

In terms of study abroad program administration, future studies can expand upon this study by incorporating the perspectives of those developing and facilitating short-term programming. With the focus of this dissertation being before, during, and shortly after D17, most research participants shared their experience with semester-length study abroad programming. However, much of the growth in U.S. study abroad programming in Cuba since D17 has been through short-term programs.

Further research will need to be conducted on the motivations of U.S. faculty to engage in short-term programming with Cuba, as well as the challenges and opportunities that these short-term experiences present in this context.

Additionally, research participants in this study spoke only about U.S. and Cuban study abroad programming located in Havana. In an effort to capture the majority of U.S. and Cuban programming, my research site was limited to Havana. However, there are study abroad programs that operate outside of Havana. Given that they do not make up the majority of study abroad programming and are outside of the research networks of the author of the study, they were not included. Future research efforts could expand upon this study to include both Cuban and U.S. voices from programs that operate outside of the capital city.

Lastly, this study introduced the rise of program providers as central figures in study abroad programming. The program provider presents an interesting possibility for research as, in many cases, providers operate in a corporate-like environment outside the confines of universities that mimics aspects of an academic capitalist learning regime. Future research on the functions of these international education actors will provide additional insights into the future of study abroad programming. Forthcoming research studies should explore the power of these actors to dismantle or reproduce neo-colonial dynamics and the role they play in larger internationalization and university practices.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I connected the findings from this study of U.S. and Cuban study abroad programming to the existing bodies of literature and addressed the

research questions that guided it. I then presented my thoughts on the contributions

this research will make to expand upon theory, policy and practice, thus guiding the

international dimensions of the university. Lastly, I discussed the questions and

implications that this study created and identified possibilities for future research.

This qualitative case study research examined the experiences of twelve

educational administrators and faculty that have been deeply embedded in U.S. and

Cuba study abroad programming before, during and after the Obama administration's

regulatory changes to the U.S. blockade against Cuba. The theoretical frameworks

guiding this study show how neoliberal ideologies emerge through the creation of

academic capitalist learning regimes that have the potential to reproduce colonial

dynamics but are also being countered through resistance and solidarity ideologies

and practices. This case study provides a cautionary narrative for study abroad

programming in Cuba and nontraditional locations at large. Internationalization

efforts are not neutral and study abroad programming must understand the historical

context and the current pressures that impact the scope and future direction of

policies.

My research provides insight to scholars and practitioners who wish to use a

critical lens to examine the international dimensions of the university environment.

The questioning of my own role as an educational administrator and faculty member

in both my home university and host university communities led to the realization of

this study. It is my hope that this study offers valuable reflections on current practices

while also providing new, critical insights into internationalization. May this project

continue to unearth inequitable and neo-colonial systems embedded in market based

approaches and elevate alternatives as the university environment continues to foster

internationalization efforts.

Appendix A: Informed Consent

Institutional Review Board

1204 Marie Mount Hall ● 7814 Regents Drive ● College Park, MD 20742 ● 301-405-4212 ●

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Project Title	Embargoed Exchanges
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Taylor C. Woodman at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are involved with U.S. and Cuba exchange. The purpose of this research project is better understand U.S. and Cuba study abroad programming from the perspective of faculty and educational administrators engaging in this U.S and Cuba study abroad programming. The study hopes to elicit information regarding perceptions and reasons for engaging in academic exchange.
Procedures	The procedures involve providing demographic information in the form of a survey or interview questions that will take approximately 10 minutes. All participants are asked to participate in ONE interview that will last about one hour with a potential follow up interview if needed for clarity. All interviews will take place in a professional space at the choosing of the participant. While feasible, interviews may take place using video conferencing software. Interviews will be audio recorded. Participants will have the ability to share additional documents to support the study. And, participants will have the ability to review the transcripts of their interview. An example of a question potentially asked during this interview is- What are your perceptions of U.S. and Cuban study abroad programming?
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There may be some risks from participating in this research study other than the potential for the loss/breach of confidentiality. All efforts to maintain anonymity will be taken into consideration. While all questions are regarding the professional environment of the participant, you are free to skip any question that may make you feel uncomfortable.

Potential Benefits	There are no direct benefits from participating in this research. However, possible benefits include understanding best practices in study abroad programming. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of study abroad programming.
Confidentiality	Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a secure location such as a password protected computer, de-identifying information by creating pseudonyms and destroying any identifiable information following member checking and analysis. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: **Taylor C. Woodman** **2110 A HJ Patterson Hall** **University of Maryland** **tcwood@umd.edu**
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678 This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you

	have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.
Signature and Date	**NAME OF PARTICIPANT** **[Please Print]**

Signature and Date	**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**	
	DATE	

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Sample of Semi-Structured Interview Questions
Introduce self, overview of procedures and remind about participant about consent.
Ask if they have any questions.
- Name:
- Faculty or Educational Administrator or Program Provider:
  - o Rank or position in the university
- Institution or Organization:
- Why did you choose to work in study abroad**?** [Warming introduction question]
- What do you see as your vision for internationalization?
- How would you define [Organization/University's] internationalization vision?
- Who is driving the internationalization efforts within your O/U?
- What kinds of partnerships is your O/U promoting?
  - o What sorts of activities are they encouraging?
  - o [If study abroad is mentioned as an activity] How are they encouraging study abroad programming?
  - o What is seen by your organization as the main institutional benefits from study abroad programming?
- Do programs between the U.S. and Cuba differ from programs you facilitate with other countries?
  - o [Follow up] In what ways?
  - o What accounts for these programs being different?
  - o Does the fact that Cuba is a socialist country make a different in your programming?

Transition:
- When did you start working with U.S. or Cuban universities or Program Provider:
  - o What year?
- Are you currently working with a program provider, U.S. or Cuban universities on study abroad programming?
  - o If yes, what university or organization:
- Can you provide an example of a U.S.-Cuba study abroad program that you worked on?
  - o Duration
  - o Location,
  - o Purpose of program,
  - o Number of students,
  - o Monitoring
  - o Evaluation of impact for institution and student.

- When did the study abroad program started?
- Does this study abroad program still exist?
- What was your role with this study abroad program?
- What were the main components of this program? (Note all that apply)
  - Research
  - Cultural Events
  - Lectures from local faculty
  - Language classes
  - Others
- How does your study abroad program fit into your O/U's vision?
- To what extent are you able to influence program design or content?
  - Give me examples
- Tell me why it is important to facilitate study abroad programming with the U.S./Cuba?
  - Have these reasons changed in the past year?
    - Since the political and economic opening (December 17, 2014)
    - How so?
- What do you think are your [U.S. or Cuban] colleagues' reasons for developing these programs?
  - Are there any other reasons someone might get involved in this work? [Reframing if needed]
- Why does your O/U engage in study abroad programs with the U.S.?
  - How are these U.S. – Cuba study abroad programs being encouraged?
  - [Ask Inverse] or discouraged?

Ask for Documents
- Are there marketing materials or websites that showcase study abroad programming at your institution? Can you share these or tell me where to find this information?

Transition
Let's talk about your collaboration with your partner.
- Tell me how your partnership was established.
- Why do you think your counterpart is engaging in study abroad with your O/U?
  - What do you think your counterpart's goals are?
  - Are these goals aligned with your goals?
  - What is challenging about working with your counterpart?
    - Ask for an example
  - How do you navigate these challenges?
  - Have these challenges changed since 2014?
    - How so?
- How does the embargo impact your collaboration?

- How do you maintain these programs/relationships with counterparts?

Requesting Additional Information/Participants
- Can you share any documents with me regarding your program?
  - MOU, brochures, photos, syllabi, agendas, etc.
- Are there others involved in U.S. and Cuba study abroad programming that you think I should speak with?

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