This document contains

**Chapter 2: Theory and Method**

from

*El Otro Lado:*

Considering the Impact of Education Abroad

on Host Families in Cuenca, Ecuador

a master's thesis by Søren M Peterson

## CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND METHOD

## *Review of the Literature*

### Introduction

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the education abroad and anthropology of tourism literatures as they relate to this thesis. Following this overview, I then discuss each body of literature in more detail, providing examples of the various concepts that, linked together, created the framework for designing my research and analyzing the data that I collected. As we will see, the education abroad literature provides the student (i.e., guest) perspective. From the large and growing tourism literature, I have chosen work pertaining to the host perspective. By including both perspectives, I have attempted to heed Stronza's call "to learn more about the dynamics of host-guest interactions by observing and talking with people on both sides of the encounter" (2001:272).

As mentioned before, with only a few recent exceptions, previous scholarly research on education abroad impacts has considered *only one side* of the cross-cultural encounter, that is, the outcomes or consequences that *students* experience.  From the broad literature on education abroad, I have chosen work that examines how such intercultural exchange impacts participants.  Some researchers (Bochner et al. 1979; Carlson and Widaman 1988) have studied students' development of an international perspective or understanding (i.e., knowledge of—and concern for—issues of international significance, interest in—and understanding of—other cultures, etc.).  Other scholars (Martin 1987; Stier 2003) have focused on students' intercultural competence (i.e., acquisition of functional skills such as language proficiency), while Adler (1975) and others have looked at students' personal growth or heightened self-awareness.

George Gmelch, a cultural anthropologist, noted that educational psychologists have conducted most of the scholarly research on education abroad impacts (2004:419).  As well, Dennison Nash—an anthropologist well-known for his work on tourism—made a similar observation, writing that psychology has produced a significant body of research on "sojourner adjustment" (1996:40).  Indeed, several of the authors discussed in the education abroad section below are scholars of either education or psychology (e.g., Adler 1975; Bochner et al. 1979; Carlson and Widaman 1988; Stier 2003).  However, anthropology has not ignored education

abroad entirely, although as with the education abroad literature, in general, the focus has similarly been primarily on students (see G. Gmelch 2004; Nash 1976 and 1996; also, S. Gmelch [2004] briefly mentions study abroad and tourism).  A notable exception is Shoshanna Sumka (2000 and 2001), an applied anthropologist who examined the impact of an education abroad program on host families in Quito, Ecuador.

Studies of tourism demonstrate that both hosts and guests are valid and useful subjects, providing a more holistic sense of the impact of the encounter.  Anthropological studies (e.g., McLaren 2003; Smith and Brent 2001) have shown that tourism can have sociocultural, economic, and environmental effects on receiving communities.  These impacts may be positive or negative (or mixed), depending on who controls tourism activities and what type of tourism is involved.  In general, mass tourism tends to have negative impacts such as environmental degradation, leakage of economic benefits, and commodification of culture (Brown 1998; Chambers 2000; Lea 1988; Mathieson and Wall 1982; McLaren 2003).  However, scholars also suggest that, in some cases, tourism may actually have positive impacts, as the presence of tourists may encourage communities to preserve unique natural areas or structures of historical significance (Chambers 2000; Lea 1988).  In addition, tourism may lead to locals "rediscovering" their heritage as they become "tourists" of their own culture (Esman 1984).

Such research demonstrates that tourism is not always bad for receiving communities; nevertheless, mass tourism remains largely associated with negative sociocultural impacts (Brown 1998; McLaren 2003; Stronza 2001). Smaller-scale responsible tourism addresses these issues and tries to minimize negative sociocultural, economic, and environmental impacts by offering a more equal, beneficial exchange and by giving locals greater control over their own tourism destinies.

One of the primary frameworks for anthropological studies of tourism has been the host-guest encounter itself. Specifically, anthropologists have studied the nature and degree of host-guest interactions (Chambers 2000; Mathieson and Wall 1982; Smith and Brent 2001), the types (and motivations) of tourists (Cohen 1979; Smith 1977), and locals' perceptions of tourists (Kohn 1997; Waldren 1997). In short, anthropological studies have furthered our understanding of the sociocultural, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism on receiving communities, and anthropology can make a similar contribution to education abroad, especially in terms of sociocultural impacts and host motivations. Notably, Sumka (2000 and 2001) used the host-guest framework in her study of the impact of education abroad on host families. In addition, she also proposed education abroad as a form of responsible tourism, because it strives for an equal exchange between hosts and guests (Sumka 1999 and 2000).

## Education Abroad

Much of the education abroad literature has been published from an assessment perspective (e.g., Bochner et al. 1979; Carlson and Widaman 1988; Dwyer 2004; Gray et al. 2002). As such, it asks questions that help researchers measure the extent to which programs achieve the stated goals of professionals and other administrators. In particular, those measurements have focused on student learning outcomes. Since education abroad professionals generally view programs through a lens that focuses on the development of students in both academic and personal terms (Carlson and Widaman 1988:1; Gray et al. 2000:47), the literature logically has focused on the impacts on students, which include the development of an international perspective or understanding, intercultural competence, and personal growth.[14]

In the late 1970s and 1980s, scholars noted an assumption in the literature that education abroad leads to the development of international mindedness and international understanding (Bochner et al. 1979; Carlson and Widaman 1988). Carlson and Widaman defined this concept as

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14 Gray et al. note that while anecdotal success stories once were sufficient for justifying the existence—and support—of education abroad programs, now "institutions with these programs are being asked to produce evidence that they contribute to student learning and development" (2002:45). To that end, in 2000 Missouri Southern State College implemented an assessment program to determine whether students were meeting the institution's international learning and personal development objectives (see Gray et al. 2002).

"knowledge of and awareness about issues of national and international significance [and] sensibility to international issues, people, and culture" (1988:2).  More important, these scholars pointed out that there was a lack of empirical research to support  anecdotal claims of such an impact, and both groups set out to remedy the situation.   Bochner et al. (1979) suggested several possible reasons for the lack of empirical data, including uncritical    presumptions    about    outcomes    by    education    abroad professionals and the complexity of defining—and, therefore, evaluating— criteria such as mutual understanding.

Both  Bochner  et  al.  and  Carlson  and  Widaman  used  quasi-experimental  designs  to  test  the  hypothesis  that  cross-cultural  contact leads  to  the  development  of  an  international  perspective.[15]   In  these studies,  the  researchers  concluded  that  students  showed  greater development  of  an  international  perspective  following  a  cross-cultural experience,  but  they  also  questioned  whether  programs  could  actually claim  the  credit.   Carlson  and  Widaman  suggested  that  participants  might have  exhibited  this  outcome  had  they  stayed  home,  and  Bochner  et  al. wondered  whether  programs  were  simply  "preaching  to  the  converted" (1979:40).   By  this,  Bochner  et  al.  meant  that  perhaps  programs  were

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15  Bochner et al. (1979) compared a study group of alumni of the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii with a control group of alumni who had not participated in the center's programs.  Similarly, Carlson and Widaman (1988) compared a study group of University of California students who spent their junior year abroad to a control group that remained on campus during that time.

merely attracting students who already had a positive orientation toward other cultures and that, to truly claim credit for creating an international perspective, international educators needed to reach out to students who did not have such an orientation already.

Martin (1987) and Stier (2003) both studied intercultural competence as an outcome of cross-cultural contact; however, they varied in the approach used. Whereas Martin categorized intercultural competencies into three areas—cognitive skills, affective or personal qualities, and behavioral competencies—Stier distinguishes between content knowledge and processual skills. Content competencies refer to factual knowledge (e.g., history, language, customs, etc.) about the host culture, as well as the student's own culture. Processual competencies refer to cognitive skills such as perspective alteration, self-reflection, and problem solving. Although they used different categories, both scholars are referring to the same kinds of outcomes: greater self-confidence, a more open mind or greater tolerance for other ways of thinking, mutual understanding, and respect for people from other cultures.

Both Martin and Stier concluded that previous intercultural experience does, indeed, have a positive relationship to intercultural competence, but Martin questioned whether certain affective or interpersonal competencies might actually be outcomes of the normal maturation process and not directly attributable to an intercultural

sojourn. Stier's distinction between content and processual competencies is significant. He suggests that becoming competent, or functional, in another culture requires going beyond the foundation of content knowledge and getting inside the heads of people from the other culture (i.e., developing processual skills), not unlike what the anthropologist does in the field.

In addition to outcomes such as an international perspective and intercultural competence, research also has focused on personal growth or development. Adler (1975) developed a model of transitional experience to explain the psychological processes involved in culture shock[16] and their implication for personal growth. He defined culture shock as anxiety resulting from "loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture" (Adler 1975:13). Although culture shock generally has a negative connotation (e.g., some refer to it as an illness or disease), in some individuals it provides an opportunity for cultural learning and personal growth (Adler 1975:13-14). This is because individuals generally are not aware of their own cultural values and beliefs until a cross-cultural experience brings these values and beliefs into perception, and perhaps even into conflict with those of the host culture (Adler 1975:14). With this

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16 Notably, it was an anthropologist, Kalervo Oberg, who popularized the concept of culture shock (Nash 1996:40).

heightened self-awareness, what began as learning about another culture evolves into learning about one's own culture and oneself (Adler 1975:19).

Nash (1976) also examined personal development in his study of education abroad participants in France. Using an experimental design, he tested five hypotheses related to self-realization, which he noted was commonly cited by professionals as a goal of education abroad programs (Nash 1976). Notably, Nash remarked that although numerous anecdotal claims had been made about the outcomes of education abroad, "attempts to assess these claims have produced ambiguous results" (1976:193). Indeed, Nash's (1976) own research produced mixed results. His study confirmed that education abroad participants become more autonomous, develop a more expanded or differentiated sense of self, and become less alienated from their bodies and feelings (Nash 1976:196-197). However, Nash (1976:198) also refuted claims by others that contact with locals leads to more favorable attitudes towards the host country and that learning new ways leads to greater tolerance or flexibility. As well, he also rejected the hypothesis that education abroad participants become more self-confident; in fact, his data suggested that self-confidence may actually *decline* in some cases (Nash 1976:199).

Nash's initial assessment, which he administered at the end of the program, demonstrated that certain aspects of self-realization are outcomes of an education abroad experience; however, a follow-up

assessment suggested that those outcomes may not persist for even a few months after returning home. Finally, Nash noted that "expansion or differentiation of self [on the part of students] ... takes place within the process of acculturation or transculturation with French culture" (1976:197), thus suggesting an interconnection between hosts and guests.

In reviewing the literature, it seems that there is an apparent disconnect between the unquestioned belief by professionals that education abroad leads to certain beneficial outcomes (e.g., an international perspective or a greater tolerance of others) and the empirical evidence produced by scholars, particularly that which has used experimental designs (e.g., Nash 1976; Bochner et al. 1979; Carlson and Widaman 1988). Remarks such as the following are representative of the beliefs held by many in the field of education abroad:

> "It is widely recognized that a study abroad experience has professional and personal benefits for any student." —Mel MacCarthy, Manager of International Programs, London Metropolitan University [Loveland and Murphy 2006:31]

> "Study and work abroad can be important in making American graduates more competitive by increasing their understanding of other cultures, and their ability to interact positively and productively with them." —William Nolting, Director of International Opportunities, University of Michigan International Center [Loveland and Murphy 2006:33]

Often, remarks such as these are based on anecdotal evidence such as the professional's own experience as a student abroad. As Bochner et al. (1979) and Carlson and Widaman (1988) suggest, the empirical evidence does not always support these claims as forcefully as professionals would hope.

The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) recently conducted a non-experimental longitudinal study of its alumni that confirmed beliefs that education abroad offers beneficial academic, personal, and professional outcomes (Dwyer 2004). Based on quantitative data from IES alumni, the results suggested "a significant impact … in the areas of continued language use, academic attainment measures, intercultural and personal development, and career choices" (Dwyer 2004:161). However, as Dwyer herself cautions, since the IES study was non-experimental, it can suggest only *correlations* and not causes.

In contrast, quasi-experimental research—such as that conducted by Bochner et al. (1979) and Carlson and Widaman (1988)—has suggested that while such outcomes do occur, education abroad programs may not be able to claim credit for this development. Such concerns are based on the problem of self-selection, which means that students who choose to go abroad are ones who may already be predisposed to certain outcomes (Bochner et al. 1979; Carlson and Widaman 1988), and on obtaining

similar results from both study and control groups, which researchers suggest might be due to the normal maturation process (Martin 1987).

Although these older, quasi-experimental studies suggest that we may have been simply "preaching to the converted" as Bochner et al. (1979:40) wrote, education abroad has undergone a significant democratization in the last decade (Dwyer 2004). Campuses across the country have established education abroad offices, expanded their offerings of short-term programs, and begun to require that all students of certain majors study abroad.[17] These efforts mean that education abroad programs are reaching out to new groups of students, and it is plausible that these students may not be as predisposed to an international perspective as previous participants were. Education abroad is also undergoing democratization because of a shift, especially with short-term programs, to non-traditional destinations, where receiving communities have less experience with foreign students. Moreover, as I noted earlier, the Lincoln Commission has called for even further democratization of education abroad by sending even more students, especially minorities, to places other than Europe (see Durbin 2006).

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17 Goucher College, located in Baltimore, Maryland, recently decided to require *all* students (starting with those who enter in Fall 2006) to go abroad at least once in order to graduate. It is the first college in the United States to do so (Goucher College 2006), but others are certain to follow, especially if Goucher's policy proves successful.

Although scholars have studied education abroad for decades, in the last decade there has been what Hulstrand (2006a) calls an "explosion" of research by professionals, faculty, and students. William Brustein, Director of the University Center for International Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, suggests that some of the more recent research may be an outgrowth of the post-9/11 emphasis on international education (Hulstrand 2006a:52).[18]  As well, I believe that some of the growth no doubt is related to the establishment of *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* in 1995 (Frontiers 2006), and the creation of a new professional organization, the Forum on Education Abroad ("The Forum"), in 2002 (Forum 2004).  *Frontiers* is an annual that publishes peer-reviewed articles describing results of empirical research on education abroad (e.g., Stephenson 1999).  The Forum lists research among its goals, although its specific emphasis has been on collecting enrollment data and assessing student learning outcomes (Forum 2004).[19]

In addition, the *Journal of Studies in International Education*, a scholarly journal of the Association for Studies in International Education (ASIE), regularly publishes reports of research on education abroad (e.g., Bolen 2001).  As well, *Transitions Abroad*, a bi-monthly magazine about

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18 Indeed, "internationalization" has been one of the major buzzwords on campuses in the last decade, a period that has seen tremendous growth of education abroad, both in terms of programs offered and students participating in such opportunities.

19 Karen Becker, Associate Director of Study Abroad at the University of Denver, first pointed out to me the Forum's emphasis on research activities.

educational travel and work opportunities abroad, has also published shorter articles on education abroad research (e.g., Dwyer and Peters 2004; Sumka 1999 and 2001).

Some of the recent research includes longitudinal studies of impacts on students' personal and career development, as well as studies of underrepresented student populations (e.g., African-Americans) and disciplines (e.g., engineering), and short-term programs (Hulstrand 2006a). Hulstrand also cited several questions in need of research, including why the profile of education abroad participants remains largely unchanged (and unrepresentative of home campus demographics), and what models might be implemented to improve students' experiences.

The fact that *International Educator*—a NAFSA[20] publication—reviewed current education abroad research is significant, because as consultant Carl Herrin noted, "we're so busy day to day doing the basic student services and recruitment activities that not enough of us are paying attention to what our colleagues are learning and publishing" (Hulstrand 2006a:55).[21] However, there is no mention in Hulstrand's article of any research concerning impacts on receiving communities,

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20 NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the preeminent membership organization for professionals in education abroad, international student admissions, and other aspects of international education.

21 The recently established Teaching, Learning and Scholarship Knowledge Community within NAFSA is addressing this issue by organizing conference sessions and disseminating information about current research.

which might suggest that such questions still remain largely off the radar of researchers and professionals in the field.[22]  As well, such research has not been on the agenda of the Forum, nor has *Frontiers* published articles on host impacts, with the notable exception of Stephenson (1999).  In addition, a few years ago *Transitions Abroad* published an article about impacts on host families in Quito, Ecuador (see Sumka 2001).

As should be evident from the preceding discussion, the education abroad literature has, for the most part, not considered the impact of programs on receiving communities.  Even Nash (1976), an anthropologist, made no mention of any impact that students in France might have had on their hosts.  His study focused on a variety of sociocultural impacts on students, including the outcome of their interactions with hosts.  Some scholars (Bochner et al. 1979; Stier 2003) have mentioned hosts, but only briefly, and not in the context of the effects that cross-cultural experiences have on them.  Further, Bochner et al. noted an implicit assumption in the literature that hosts are involved in education abroad primarily to teach guests and that host growth or development is neither assumed nor expected.  Similarly, Stier mentioned hosts, not in terms of cross-cultural effects on them, but rather in terms of

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22 Nevertheless, professionals are interested in this topic.  At the 2006 NAFSA Conference, I did a poster session on my research and received numerous encouraging comments that research on host impacts was needed.  Additionally, several people remarked that they had examined host impacts (e.g., on host national students) at least briefly in their own research.

the unique competencies and expertise they contribute to the education of students.

Education abroad professionals have only recently begun to ask whether—and how—programs impact receiving communities (Julie Levy, School for International Training, personal communication, September 2004; Shoshanna Sumka, personal communication, October 2005), and even fewer have focused specifically on host families. Stephenson (1999) appears to be the first to have addressed the impacts on host families. She explored the impacts on all parties involved in an education abroad program, including students, host families, and professors in Santiago, Chile. Stephenson noted that the strongest impact on host families was "reaffirming their own sense of being Chilean and in gaining a deeper appreciation of their own culture" (1999:35). Sumka (2001) reached a similar finding in her research with host families in Quito, Ecuador. Other perceived changes included the family spending more time together, siblings fighting less, children being jealous of students, children becoming less timid, the family worrying about female students, and the family feeling a sense of extra responsibility (Sumka 2001).

Sumka's (2001) findings are consistent with anthropological studies of tourism, which have shown that hosts—and not only guests—experience sociocultural impacts. As we will see in the next section, that research suggests that when two cultures come into contact, borrowing of cultural

traits occurs in *both* directions, resulting in each one becoming somewhat like the other (Nash 1996:92; Nuñez 1989:266; Spindler 1977:8). Such research challenges the validity of the aforementioned implicit assumption that Bochner et al. (1979) noted in the education abroad literature—that is, that researchers neither assume nor expect host growth or development.

## Anthropology of Tourism and Acculturation

Previously, I noted that, in contrast to the education abroad literature, anthropological studies of tourism have placed greater emphasis on hosts, framed especially in terms of host-guest relationships (Chambers 2000; Smith and Brent 2001). Anthropologists have studied tourism around two main themes—origins and impacts (Stronza 2001:262)—as well as the host-guest encounter (Aramberri 2005; Mathieson and Wall 1982:133). Research on the origins of tourism has focused on tourists, with scholars asking who is a tourist, what motivates someone to become a tourist, and why tourists seek particular types of places and experiences (Stronza 2001:262 and 265). On the other hand, studies of impacts have focused on host communities (Stronza 2001:262), with anthropologists examining tourism primarily as an agent of social or cultural change (Nash and Smith 1991:13). Nash (1996:59) sees this bias toward host impacts as the result of anthropologists' tendency to look at

tourism from the perspective of acculturation or development, while Wallace suggests that anthropologists connected the growth of tourism with globalization and "almost without thinking ... began to study the 'impact of tourists and tourism' on local communities" (2005:7).

In addition to culture change, tourism provides an ideal context for studying several major issues of concern to cultural anthropologists, including political economy, cultural identity and expression, and cross-cultural encounters (Stronza 2001:261 and 264). Nevertheless, anthropology was slow to take up the study of tourism, perhaps because scholars viewed it as frivolous and, therefore, unworthy of serious research (Nash 1981:461; S. Gmelch 2004:7), or because anthropologists did not want to be associated with pleasure-seeking tourists (Wallace 2005:5).

Publications in the 1960s and 1970s by Theron Nuñez, Erik Cohen, Nelson Graburn, Dean MacCannell, and Dennison Nash, as well as compendia edited by Valene Smith and Emanuel de Kadt, helped to make tourism a more serious and respectable subject of inquiry (Chambers 2000:2; S. Gmelch 2004:7; Nash 1981:461, and 1996:1 and 4; Smith and Brent 2001:7; Wallace 2005:7). Nuñez's (1963) analysis of rural-urban acculturation through *weekendismo* in Mexico generally is considered the first anthropological study of tourism (Nash 1996:1; Smith 1977:1); however, tourism as a subject of anthropological inquiry did not gain momentum until more than a decade later (S. Gmelch 2004:7; Graburn

and Jafari 1991:4; Nash 1996:4). The acceptance of tourism as a legitimate subject for scholarly research coincided with anthropology's shift from the treatment of societies as timeless and isolated groups to an interest in the processes and encounters that link cultures (S. Gmelch 2004:4; see Wolf [1982] for an enlightening discussion on this topic).

Scholars have categorized tourists by focusing on three distinct areas: tourists' motivations for travel (Smith 1977), meaning of the visit for tourists (Cohen 1979), and locals' perceptions of tourists (Kohn 1997; Waldren 1997). These areas are interrelated: tourists' motivations for travel (and the meanings that they expect the experience to offer) influence their behavior and their degree of interaction with locals. In turn, this affects locals' perceptions of tourists. Most tourists have a limited, short-term presence in a tourism site (Lea 1988), which they generally view as a place for relaxation, meditation, or self-discovery (Waldren 1997). Tourists may also view a tourism site in terms of the opportunities it offers for cultural learning or souvenir shopping (Waldren 1997). If tourists' expectations are met—for example, if they have enough hot water and clean towels—they usually perceive tourism in a positive light (Lea 1988).

MacCannell (1976) theorized that tourists are in search of authenticity, which is lacking in their lives at home. However, scholars generally consider mass tourism as less than a genuine experience, citing

examples such as the tourist who drives through a Native American village without stopping, only to buy a Chinese-made rubber tomahawk in a gift shop farther down the road (Chambers 2000:19). As well, a tourist visiting the indigenous handicraft market in Otavalo, Ecuador, might see a vendor wearing a baseball cap, a pair of Levi's, and a belt with a Marlboro buckle and label him a non-native, even though he maintains other cultural practices, such as speaking Quichua (in addition to Spanish and English), and self-identifies as an authentic *otavaleño*. Examples such as these would suggest that tourists are actually in search of what they perceive—or *mis*perceive—to be authentic and when confronted with a reality that is incongruous, they are likely to judge it as *inauthentic* (Chambers 2000).

MacCannell (1976:169) also noted that tours are circular structures —that is, the tourist's final destination is the same as his point of origin (i.e., home). Similar to the observation that a cross-cultural experience can bring an individual's values and beliefs "into perception" (Adler 1975:14), MacCannell suggests that this circular structure can result in tourists beginning to notice "tourist" things at home. As he declared, "the edge of the tourist world is in every tourist's town" (MacCannell 1976:169). Likewise, as Esman (1984) concluded, interaction with tourists can result in locals noticing "tourist" things in their communities. As we will see in

Chapter 4, host families in Cuenca sometimes learn new things about their own culture from the students they host.

Locals also participate in tourism, as direct or indirect "hosts," for different motives and to unequal degrees (Chambers 2000; Stronza 2001). To illustrate this point, one might think of a hotel housekeeper who interacts very little with guests and whose motivation is simply to earn a living. For her, the economic benefit of employment likely outweighs any concerns about potential sociocultural or environmental impacts of tourism. In contrast, someone with extensive knowledge of an area's culture, history, or natural resources might work as a tour guide and interact directly with tourists. For her, concerns about potential environmental and sociocultural impacts may weigh equally with (or outweigh) economic benefits.

Locals are motivated to participate in, or to support, tourism for various reasons, of which the most common may be economic development (Chambers 2000; Lea 1988). Those who participate in tourism directly may see the economic development it offers as job creation, while those who do not participate directly (but who support tourism) may see it as a source of revenue for the community. Another motivation is the prestige a local can gain by associating with foreigners,

which may be especially true in cases involving locals in less developed countries and tourists from more developed countries.[23]

The ways in which tourists and locals interact with each other is referred to as the host-guest encounter. The host-guest framework has been the main approach that anthropologists have employed to examine tourism, especially in terms of the sociocultural impacts that these interactions have on locals (Nash and Smith 1991:14). Although the term "host-guest encounter" suggests a binary opposition, there are actually three sets of actors involved in tourism: tourists, locals, and mediators such as culture brokers (Chambers 2000:30). Mediators or culture brokers are foreigners or locals who are knowledgeable about both the host and guest cultures (e.g., a tourist guide or travel agent). The nature and quality of their cross-cultural interactions depend on the type of tourist involved, the context in which the contact takes place (i.e., spatial, temporal, and communicative factors), and the role of culture brokers (Mathieson and Wall 1982:163).

Tourists (i.e., "guests") and locals (i.e., "hosts") view tourism from their own, distinct perspectives, which do not always correlate with each other and which, in fact, sometimes are in conflict (Lea 1998; Waldren 1997). Hosts view their community from the *inside* as a complex of

23 Krippendorf (1987:18) notes that sometimes prestige is also a factor for tourists, who gain or maintain social status as a result of traveling to distant and exotic places.

kinship relationships, rituals, work, and values; guests, on the other hand, view the same place from the *outside*, often seeing it as a paradise or idealized setting (Waldren 1997:61-62). Waldren suggests that for hosts, a community is a place where people live and work, but for (some) guests, it is a place for relaxation, meditation, or self-discovery. This dichotomy may lead to tourist behaviors or expectations that seem inappropriate or unacceptable to locals. As Chambers observes, "what makes sense to us on the basis of our own preferences for different tourism styles might not always make the same sense" to locals (2000:21-22). However, in some situations, locals may actually be forgiving of certain tourists:

> Foreigners from outside Turkey are *expected* to have different religious and cultural beliefs and practices. Their behavior is not deviant as much as it is different. Therefore, the behavior of foreigners is more easily accepted and leaves less impact on the host community than the behavior of domestic Turkish tourists. [Van Broeck 2001:173]

Just as scholars have categorized tourists, we can also think about a basic typology of tourism itself that separates the phenomenon into two broad categories: mass tourism and alternative tourism. As suggested above, the type of tourism is an important factor in determining the nature and extent of host-guest relationships. In mass tourism, cross-cultural contact between hosts and guests often consists of superficial, pre-programmed encounters, especially in the case of first-class facilities in less developed countries, where enclaves isolate tourists from the locals

(Chambers 2000; Lea 1988). A classic example of the tourist enclave is Cancún, Mexico, which consists of a residential city for locals and a separate, isolated hotel zone that caters to "sun, sea, and sand" tourists. There, tour operators whisk tourists from the airport directly to the hotel zone, where they can find everything they need, without the need to ever set foot in Cancún itself.[24] In such situations, the superficial encounters that occur impede hosts and guests from getting past their preconceived notions and achieving genuine intercultural understanding. Especially when economic and cultural differences between hosts and guests are great, this superficial cross-cultural contact may actually strengthen stereotypes and increase misunderstanding (Chambers 2000).

In contrast, smaller-scale alternative tourism generally offers tourists greater opportunities to interact with locals. In the case of cultural tourism (a specific type of alternative tourism), the primary motivation for the tourist is the opportunity to interact with locals in meaningful ways (Wickens 2005:117) as she learns about their cultural heritage and their contemporary lives (Smith 2003:29). An example of cultural tourism is CultureXplorers, a Philadelphia-based company that offers small groups of travelers the opportunity to meet locals in Latin America and to learn from

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24 In fact, when I first studied abroad (on Augustana College's Latin American Fall Quarter in 1991), the program's initial port of call was Cancún. During my brief stay there, I never left the hotel zone and interacted only superficially with locals, all of whom were tourism industry workers.

them about the local culture. These meaningful interactions require a significant effort:

> It is only when a person makes an effort to penetrate into the real life of the areas he visits that he ends up in places especially designed to generate feelings of intimacy and experiences that can be talked about as "participation." No one can "participate" in his own life; he can only participate in the lives of others. [MacCannell 1999:106]

As we have just seen, tourists and locals each have their own motivations for participating in tourism, as well as expectations of the benefits they will receive. These motivations and expectations determine how—and, indeed, whether—tourists and locals interact with each other in the host-guest encounter. The type of tourism (i.e., mass vs. alternative) also affects these interactions. The host-guest encounter results in impacts on all three parties (let us not forget that mediators are also involved in this process), although anthropologists generally have focused solely on host impacts (Stronza 2001).

Tourism's impacts fall into three general categories: sociocultural, economic, and environmental. As we will see, tourism's impacts are diverse and contradictory: "tourist activities have both positive and negative impacts upon a destination but these may differ considerably from the effects which are occurring elsewhere" (Mathieson and Wall 1982:185). Sociocultural impacts are the kind most relevant to my analysis of host families, although economic and environmental impacts

also factor in (albeit to a lesser degree). As such, I begin with a brief overview of economic and environmental impacts before delving into the complexities of sociocultural impacts.

Hosts often perceive *economic* impacts of tourism to be positive, if they obtain employment in the tourism sector or if new infrastructure is built that benefits them. For example, in Mallorca, tourist industry complaints about the airport led to improvements that benefited all users, including locals (Brown 1998:29). However, tourism can also have a negative economic impact, as locals become economically dependent on revenues brought in by tourists who could, at any moment, decide to go elsewhere (or be diverted to another, comparable destination by the tourism industry itself). Mathieson and Wall (1982:36) note that there was an early emphasis on studies of economic impacts, which are more easily quantified than other types of impacts (i.e., sociocultural and environmental). Industry members and national governments who promoted tourism as an avenue to development often undertook economic studies that disregarded sociocultural and environmental variables (Chambers 2000:32).

*Environmental* impacts, which affect both the natural and the built environment, have been mixed (Mathieson and Wall 1982). A negative environmental impact occurs when the number of tourists exceeds the carrying capacity of a delicate ecosystem, thus leading to environmental

degradation (e.g., destruction of flora in the Galápagos or soil erosion at Machu Picchu). Negative impacts can also occur when a natural area or part of the built environment is converted to another use, such as a tourist resort; however, in some cases, tourism has led to the conservation or preservation of unique buildings, historic sites, and natural areas (Chambers 2000:71; Lea 1988:53-54).

*Sociocultural* impacts of tourism are the most complex type and the most difficult to measure (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Smith 2003). This is because sociocultural impacts often are intangible and because tourism is merely one of many agents of change, including urbanization, migration, and modernization (Mathieson and Wall 1982; Smith 2003). Indeed, "culture is dynamic and changes over time irrespective of tourism development" (Smith 2003:55). Nevertheless, some indicators can facilitate the complex, time-consuming process of measuring the sociocultural impacts of tourism. These indicators include the tourist-local ratio, the nature of host-guest interaction, locals' perceptions of tourism (and of tourists), changes in family relationships and the role of women, demonstration effects, and increased social problems (Smith 2003:55).

Scholars usually have assessed sociocultural impacts as negative, due to factors such as economic inequalities and cultural differences between hosts and guests (Lea 1988; Tosun 2001). Negative sociocultural

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impacts include commodification of culture, alteration of the host culture to serve tourist interests, drop in morals, reduced access of locals to services, rising economic expectations, and adoption of westernized consumerism (Brown 1998; Chambers 2000; Lea 1988). Given this list, the assessment of tourism as negative is not surprising. As well, some groups (e.g., Native Americans of the southwestern United States) may object to the way that they are represented—or *mis*represented—by outsiders in tourism brochures and other advertising (Chambers 2000). Occasionally, locals' perceptions of host-guest inequalities and differences may result in animosity or resentment toward tourists (Chambers 2000; Kohn 1997; Lea 1988). Tourism can also affect the position of women and provide them with greater independence, which may lead to conflicts in the existing social structure (Brown 1998:72).

Many of the sociocultural impacts that anthropologists study are described by acculturation theory (Brunt and Courtney 1999; Mathieson and Wall 1982; Nash 1996; Nuñez 1963 and 1989). A committee established in 1935 by the Social Science Research Council to analyze what was then the emerging concept of acculturation proposed the following definition:

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. [Redfield et al. 1936:149]

According to acculturation theory, two cultures that come into direct contact borrow traits or artifacts from each other, and each one becomes somewhat like the other (Nuñez 1989:266). Borrowing occurs both ways, although these relationships almost never are balanced (Nash 1996:92; Nuñez 1989:266; Spindler 1977:8). As an example of this asymmetrical borrowing, Nuñez suggests that the "host population produces ... bilingual individuals, while the tourist population generally refrains from learning the host population's language" (1989:266).[25] Visible changes in behavior, values, and standards are called *phenotypic changes* (Mathieson and Wall 1982:162). Acculturation occurs when these phenotypic changes are passed on to subsequent generations (Mathieson and Wall 1982:162).

Mathieson and Wall (1982:161) expressed concern about acculturation theory, which assumes continuous firsthand contact, and suggested the notion of *cultural drift* as an alternative to describe the culture change that results from tourism. Collins explained that

> cultural drift in this sense states that the role of the guests differs from that of the host and that the temporary contact situation results in change of phenotypic behavior in both the host and the guest. The phenotypic change may be

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25 However, education abroad programs whose focus is language immersion may produce similar asymmetrical borrowing in the *opposite* direction, i.e., guests learn the host language. Moreover, these programs often have policies that prohibit the use of the student's native language in the homestay setting. When adhered to, these policies preclude the host family from the opportunity to learn, or practice, the student's native language, thus preventing (or at least minimizing) one acculturative effect.

permanent in the host society/culture but temporary in the guest society/culture. [1978:278]

Whereas Collins proposes here that the change in hosts' behavior tends to be permanent, other scholars suggest that hosts may adjust to tourists' needs *temporarily* but then revert back to their normal behavior after tourists have left (Mathieson and Wall 1982:162; Smith 2003:53). Cultural drift occurs when hosts and guests exploit the cultural distance between them, as well as each other, in an effort to achieve personal satisfaction from their interaction (Mathieson and Wall 1982:162). As a result, cultural drift "still produce[s] the normative behavior of both groups, but with additional actions which were originally either unacceptable or constrained under previous circumstances" (Mathieson and Wall 1982:162). Similarly, McFee (1968), in his study of Blackfeet culture change in Montana, proposed that acculturation does not always result in cultural loss or replacement; rather, traits borrowed from another culture may be *added* to one's existing set of cultural traits.

In contrast to other research that suggests significant contact is required for acculturation to occur, Brunt and Courtney (1999:509) found that hosts may experience some degree of acculturation even without meaningful conversation with guests. Likewise, Smith suggests that, although host-guest encounters are temporary and short-lived, "local people are subjected to a steady stream of changing faces [, and] constant

levels of visitation over time can have a considerable impact on the social and cultural fabric of the host society" (2003:53). In other words, the constant flow of tourists can have a cumulative effect over time.

In rare cases, stronger ideas from the outside may actually result in assimilation of hosts, as opposed to a more symbiotic acculturative effect (Lea 1988), or in "cultural homogenization" (Chambers 2000). Cultural homogenization in tourism implies that destinations become more like tourist-generating areas, as a result of hosts' perceived need to meet tourists' expectations, as well as the capitalist tendency towards standardization (Chambers 2000:119).

Chambers (2000) notes that not all places fall victim to homogenization and that, in fact, some places respond to tourism by emphasizing *differentiation* between host and guest cultures. This differentiation is seen especially in tourism marketing campaigns that focus on local heritage and culture (S. Gmelch 2004:16). In a globalizing world that seems to be getting more and more homogenized, Brown declares that "tourism has the potential to show people that the world is not as undifferentiated as they thought" (1998:19). Indeed, Sofield (2001) proposes that tourism is simultaneously an agent of *both globalization and localization.* That is, although tourism has a homogenizing effect in terms of creating uniform facilities and services (which usually reflect western standards), it also highlights differences in order to distinguish

one locale from another (S. Gmelch 2004:18-19). In this respect, tourism does not necessarily destroy cultural differences but instead can be a force in maintaining and retaining cultural diversity (Sofield 2001:104).

In some cases, hosts may actually develop greater self-identity and appreciation of their own culture as a result of tourism (Besculides et al. 2002; Chambers 2000; Esman 1984; Kohn 1997; Smith 2003; Waldren 1997). Locals may observe tourist behavior that they consider unacceptable and, as a result, they judge their own culture to be superior. For example, Chambers (2000:26) reports that in Taos, New Mexico, natives' interactions with tourists reinforce their own cultural identity, and they have begun to view their own culture as superior. As well, tourism may also strengthen cultural identity within a heterogeneous group as a way for locals to distinguish themselves from tourists. For example, in Kohn's (1997) study of a small island in the Inner Hebrides, she observed the merger of separate native and non-native resident identities into a single identity that defined residents in opposition to their short-term visitors. Finally, tourism can also instill greater pride in, or deeper appreciation for, locals' own culture as they begin to understand that they have something (i.e., cultural heritage) that is of interest to others (i.e., tourists). As Esman (1984) discovered in Louisiana, this situation led Cajuns to rediscover their cultural heritage and to become "tourists" of their own culture.

In summary, tourism results in a variety of sociocultural impacts—both positive and negative—on receiving communities. Sociocultural impacts include acculturation or cultural drift, cultural homogenization, differentiation or localization, and greater self-identity or appreciation of one's own culture. The types and the extent of these impacts depend on the nature and quality of the host-guest encounter, which itself depends on the actors and the context involved. In addressing these issues, scholars have asked key questions that can be applied to a study of host family outcomes in education abroad, including the following:

- How has cross-cultural contact with guests affected hosts? (Brunt and Courtney 1999; Chambers 2000; de Kadt 1979; Waldren 1997)

- Does cross-cultural contact reinforce stereotypes and increase misunderstanding between hosts and guests? (Chambers 2000)

- Does cross-cultural contact foster a greater appreciation of the host culture on the part of the hosts themselves? (Besculides et al. 2002)

- In what ways do hosts share their culture with guests? (Besculides et al. 2002; Waldren 1997)

- What motivates someone from the host culture to participate in tourism? (Chambers 2000)

- How are host identities strengthened or created as a result of contact with tourists? (Kohn 1997; Waldren 1997)

- In what circumstances do hosts become "tourists" of their own culture? (Besculides et al. 2002; Esman 1984)

## The Link between Tourism and Education Abroad

As we have seen in the sections above, whereas the education abroad literature has focused on student impacts, the anthropology of tourism literature has examined host impacts, especially sociocultural ones that result from the host-guest encounter. But how are these two bodies of literature connected? How does the tourism literature provide a relevant framework for studying the impact of education abroad on receiving communities?

First, tourism and education abroad are both intercultural phenomena (Nash 1996). In the case of education abroad, Chambers (2000) suggests that students actually play the role of tourists, in general terms of being guests in another culture. Although international educators might cringe at such a comparison (as did I), I would argue that education abroad participants are at least *academic* tourists. Like many education abroad professionals—and similar to anthropologists in the not-so-distant past—I did not want to be associated with "frivolous" tourists. Instead, I saw myself as a traveler with a serious purpose, that is, learning about another culture. The adjective "academic" came to mind as a way to justify such a comparison, and especially to distinguish education abroad from mass tourism. This no doubt reflects the influence of the late John Perry, Dean of International Education at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Brockport, whose insistence at meetings of the SUNY Directors

of International Education (and other venues) that education abroad is an "academic enterprise" has been forever etched in my mind.[26]  In other words, education abroad is not tourism.

The comparison of education abroad and tourism also seems apt in the context of the anthropological definition of *tourist* first proposed by Valene Smith: "a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change" (1977:2).  The latter part of this definition certainly applies to education abroad participants, whose academic motivation propels them to travel to distant places in hopes of learning about another culture and, ultimately, about their own culture and themselves (Adler 1975:19).

The reference to *leisure*, which Smith (2001:17) defines as time away from work and essential daily tasks, is relevant as well, especially if one considers it in its historical context.  Modern tourism has its roots in the "Grand Tour," which was an opportunity for Northern Europeans, beginning in about the sixteenth century, to expand their education as they explored the world, accompanied by a tutor, and learned about other cultures (Boorstin 1961:82; Chambers 2000:4; S. Gmelch 2004:5-6; Graburn and Jafari 1991:2; Nash 1996:39).  Notably, Nash refers to education abroad as "a more egalitarian form" of the Grand Tour

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26 I certainly cannot claim to have coined the term "academic tourism," which Johnston (1990:2) used earlier.

(1996:39).  Further, Graburn and Jafari noted that "the term *tourist* was coined to describe participants in such pleasurable, educational journeys" as the Grand Tour (1991:2).

In the last century, the development and expansion of capitalism led to the growth of a middle class that has enjoyed increasing opportunities to travel to other places, made even easier by vast improvements in transportation (Chambers 2000:4-5).  In both the Grand Tour and modern tourism, leisure is one of three elements (the other two being discretionary income and positive social sanctions) that make participating in tourism a possibility (Smith 2001:17).

Nevertheless, the reference to leisure is problematic when one considers Smith's explanation that a leisured individual "has a choice to do virtually nothing" (2001:17).  Mel MacCarthy, an education abroad professional in London, insists that "study abroad is not about leisure; it's primarily about education" (Loveland and Murphy 2006:33).  Education abroad participants, of course, do not have the luxury of doing nothing (with the exception of weekends and breaks during, or between, academic terms), but instead have many of their daily activities essentially imposed by host institutions and program directors.  Education abroad programs often require attendance in classes, guest lectures, seminars, and other activities to a greater extent than at students' home campuses, especially in the case of the intensive language programs involved in my research.

Tourists, on the other hand, are free to plan their activities and may choose to spend entire days relaxing at the hotel pool or on the beach; in fact, sun and relaxation may be their sole motivations for participating in tourism.

Given this potential for confusion about the meaning of leisure, a more appropriate, less problematic definition of *academic tourist* is needed. Such a definition could be based on Smith's (1977) definition of *tourist*, sans the reference to leisure, and on Adler's (1975) notion of learning about one's own culture and oneself. As well, it should emphasize the inherent international and cross-cultural dimensions of education abroad, and it should take into account that education abroad participants are not always college (or even high school) students. Indeed, participants may include a variety of adults ranging from recent college graduates to retirees.[27] Based on these criteria, I propose the following definition of *academic tourist*: a student or other individual who travels to another country for the purpose of learning about another culture (which may or may not include learning the host language), as well as about their own culture and themselves.

Given this focus on culture, one could argue that education abroad is an academic form of cultural tourism, a comparison that is especially

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[27] I have worked with educational travel programs whose participants have included adults of all ages (even a 76-year-old retiree), as well as college and high school students. Many of these programs have offered classes for college credit.

appropriate in the case of intensive language programs that offer homestays. Indeed, Smith (2003:31) suggests that language learning or practice is one type of cultural tourism.

Dann's (1996) notion that tourists are "children" and that the tourism industry acts as their "parents" provides an additional link between education abroad and tourism. Anthropologists refer to this as *fictive kinship*, which can be defined as "a relationship, based not on blood or marriage but rather on religious rituals or close friendship ties, that replicates many of the rights and obligations usually associated with family ties" (Ebaugh and Curry 2000:189). Tourists have a tendency to revert to children when they travel, due to the freedom from daily obligations (i.e., leisure) and the rules of home, and because of the unfamiliarity of their new, temporary milieu. Dann also notes that for some tourists, tourism is a form of rebirth, "an opportunity for personal growth" (1996:109). He also observes that the tourism industry treats the tourist like a child, thus suggesting the industry as "parent."

Education abroad also involves fictive kinship, in terms of both the legal concept of *in loco parentis* ("in place of a parent")[28] and the homestays that some programs offer. Fictive kinship plays an important role in homestays, which use terms such as "host parents" and "host

28 For a discussion of the legal implications of *in loco parentis*, see Aalberts and Rhodes (1997).

siblings," which I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 4. *In loco parentis* refers to the surrogate parent role that education abroad professionals play. "Study abroad programs, almost by definition, bring students with limited understanding of other countries and cultures to unfamiliar places" (Aalberts and Rhodes 1997:362), thus placing professionals in the position of "parents" who enculturate their "children" (i.e., students) into a new cultural milieu.

## Summary

In the sections above, I discussed the education abroad literature and anthropological studies of tourism and acculturation. As we saw, research on education abroad has been conducted from an assessment perspective to measure students' learning and personal outcomes such as international mindedness or understanding, intercultural competence, and personal growth or development. I then noted that there is an apparent disconnect between anecdotal claims about the benefits of education abroad and the empirical evidence produced by scholars. Recent trends in education abroad include democratization, in terms of both reaching out to underrepresented groups of students and opening programs in non-traditional destinations, and a surge in scholarly

research.  I pointed out that with only a few recent exceptions, research continues to focus on students.

We then toured the literature of the anthropology of tourism and acculturation.  Initially, anthropologists were reluctant to study tourism but have since accepted it as a legitimate subject for research.  Research has focused on the origins of tourism (i.e., tourist motivations) and the impacts on receiving communities, as well as the interactions between these two groups.  I noted that host-guest encounters generally are superficial in mass tourism but more meaningful in alternative forms such as cultural tourism.  Tourism impacts fall into three categories: sociocultural, economic, and environmental.  Of these, sociocultural impacts are the most complex and difficult to measure, but are also the type that most interest anthropologists, due to the implications for culture change.

Finally, we looked at the connections between tourism and education abroad, noting that both are intercultural phenomena.  I suggested that students are academic tourists and that education abroad can be seen as a form of cultural tourism.  These analogies are appropriate in part because of tourism's historical roots in the Grand Tour, an educational cross-cultural experience that started in the sixteenth century.  Lastly, we saw that both tourism and education abroad involve fictive kin relationships.

## *Theoretical Perspectives in Tourism Studies*

This section takes a more detailed look at the theory embedded in the anthropology of tourism literature that I reviewed above. Several scholars (Aramberri 2005; Chambers 2005; Graburn and Jafari 1991; Nash 1996) have declared that there is no general theory of tourism, while others (Dann 2005; Stronza 2001) suggest that there are, in fact, theories about *some aspects* of the phenomenon (e.g., MacCannell's [1976] theory of the tourist and Urry's [1990] concept of the tourist gaze). Dann (2005) observes that what little theory there is in tourism has not been developed from within but has been contributed by researchers from their respective disciplines (e.g., acculturation theory from anthropology). In this regard, anthropology and sociology have made disproportionate contributions (Dann 2005:4), even though they are relative latecomers to the study of tourism. Further, he notes that much of this theory is grounded in analogies (e.g., tourism as sacred journey) that "may provide some sort of understanding of what tourism *is like*, yet fail to reveal exactly what tourism really *is*" (Dann 2005:9). Dann states, however, that such "metaphorical understanding persists ... because tourists and tourism are

themselves metaphors of the social world" (2005:9; see Picard [2002] for a discussion of the tourist as a metaphor of the social world).

These metaphors are what Nash (1996) calls "perspectives." He proposes that there are three general anthropological perspectives on tourism (Nash 1996:165), which incorporate more specific metaphors (e.g., tourism as play). The metaphor t*ourism as personal transition* is concerned with tourists and focuses on their motivations and on what the experience means to them. *Tourism as superstructure* treats tourism as a system and tries to understand its causes. Finally, *tourism as acculturation or development* is the predominant anthropological paradigm for examining the sociocultural, economic, and environmental impacts (Nash 1996:25) that lead to culture change in hosts. Anthropologists who have conducted research from the perspective of acculturation or development have done so with the agenda of helping hosts who have been impacted by tourism (Nash 1996:81).

Anthropologists began to study tourism in the 1960s and 1970s because it offered an additional context in which to examine culture change (Nash 1996:8; Nash and Smith 1991:13). At the time, acculturation was already a well-developed theory for analyzing culture change. In 1935, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) appointed Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville J. Herskovits to study the emerging concept of acculturation (Redfield et al. 1936:149). They were the first scholars to

systematically outline the concepts involved in studying the phenomenon (Clemmer 1972:216). Nearly two decades later, in 1953, the SSRC devoted one of its summer seminars to the study of acculturation (1954:973). The result of that seminar was an "exploratory formulation" of acculturation theory (see SSRC 1954).

Acculturation is a specific type of culture change that involves direct contact between two or more cultures that borrow cultural traits or artifacts from each other (Nuñez 1989:266; Redfield et al. 1936:149; Spindler 1977:7-8; SSRC 1954:974). The SSRC summer seminar on acculturation defined the concept as "culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems" (1954:974). This cross-cultural aspect distinguishes acculturation from other types of culture change that result from interactions between subgroups of a single society (Spindler 1977:8; SSRC 1954:974). Acculturation is a condition of *assimilation*, which "implies an essentially unilateral approximation of one culture in the direction of the other" (SSRC 1954:988). *Diffusion* describes cultural transmission that may or may not occur through direct contact (Redfield et al. 1936:149-150; Spindler 1977:7).[29] Acculturation, which occurs as each group borrows traits from the other, is always

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29 While drawing this distinction, Redfield et al. also pointed out that the concepts are *connected*: "diffusion [occurs] in all instances of acculturation ... but [it] constitutes only one aspect of the process of acculturation" (1936:149-150).

reciprocal; however, since it usually occurs asymmetrically, sometimes it may appear to be one-way (Nash 1996:92; Spindler 1977:8).

Since "cultures do not meet, but people who are their carriers do" (SSRC 1954:980), acculturation results from the interaction between *individuals* of different cultures. That is, culture change generally begins with individuals and then spreads through the group (Spindler 1977:7). However, it is the cultural systems—and not the individuals involved (i.e., the culture bearers)—that are acculturated (SSRC 1954:975). Moreover, culture bearers "never know their entire cultures and never convey all they know to one another" (SSRC 1954:980); therefore, intercultural transfer is only *partial*. These individuals mediate the cultural process (SSRC 1954:975). This mediation is conditioned by the reasons for the contact and by the roles the individuals assume (SSRC 1954:980-981). In tourism parlance, these culture bearers are the hosts and guests.

Jafari (2001) provides an alternative set of categories, which he calls "platforms," that suggest an evolution of tourism research since World War II. The advocacy, cautionary, adaptancy, and knowledge-based platforms developed chronologically over several decades but co-exist today (Jafari 2001:29).

Proponents of the *advocacy platform* have viewed tourism as a positive phenomenon, especially in economic terms, as it provides

employment for locals, preserves the natural and built environments, revives cultural traditions, and promotes global peace (Jafari 2001:29). Lea observes that during this period "studies tended to assume that the extension of [tourism] in the Third World was a good thing" (1988:1). The Advocacy Platform includes primarily economists and industry members who have promoted tourism as a route to economic development (Jafari 2001:29), as well as national governments that have bought into the idea that tourism is a miracle cure. As such, this platform has tended to ignore negative impacts (especially sociocultural and environmental ones) or to suggest that they would be outweighed by the economic benefits received (e.g., creation of jobs, construction of infrastructure, etc.).

The *cautionary platform* developed in the 1960s and 1970s as anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists concerned with protecting cultures (especially indigenous ones in less developed countries) and the natural environment began to document the negative impacts of tourism on host communities (Jafari 2001:29). For example, researchers pointed out that although tourism may provide employment for locals, many of those jobs are seasonal and unskilled (higher-paying jobs often go to foreigners). As well, scholars expressed concern about the potential for governments to divert scarce resources from crucial social programs needed by locals to development projects that benefited only (foreign) tourists. Moreover, as Lea (1988:5) noted, sometimes the

economic benefits may actually be outweighed by less obvious disbenefits in other areas (e.g., negative sociocultural and environmental impacts).

Scholars in the cautionary platform also have warned of cultural loss through commodification and acculturation.  As Jafari notes, "for any claim of the Advocacy Platform, there has been a counterclaim by the Cautionary Platform, a situation potentially not conducive to fruitful dialogues or discourses" (2001:30).   Given that cultures are always undergoing change, one might wonder why change usually is perceived as bad when it is related to tourism (Brown 1998:73).  Indeed, scholars often took a largely one-sided, negative view of tourism's impacts on locals that later proved to be unwarranted (e.g., Greenwood 1977), but "seen from a host country's point of view, tourism seemed to have both good and bad sides" (Nash and Smith 1991:15).  Tourism served as an easy scapegoat in early studies, but more recently, scholars have begun to understand that tourism is just one of many agents of culture change and that global means of communication, transnational migration, urbanization, industrialization, and other factors need to be considered as well (Brown 1998:112; S. Gmelch 2004:15; Van Broeck 2001:172).

The *adaptancy platform* developed in the 1980s in response to the polarization between the advocacy and cautionary platforms (Jafari 2001:31).   Proponents of the adaptancy platform suggested that alternative, or adapted, forms of tourism would have fewer negative

consequences on host communities (Jafari 2001:31; see also McLaren 2003). Such forms are "responsive to the host communities and their sociocultural, built, and natural environments and ... provide tourists with new choices and rewarding experiences" (Jafari 2001:31). To that end, alternative tourism should be community-centered, employ local resources, benefit both hosts and guests, and not be destructive (Jafari 2001:31). Depending on the specific focus, other terms have also been used, including community-based tourism, cultural/ethnic tourism, ecotourism, responsible tourism, and sustainable tourism (Jafari 2001:31). Jafari (2001:31) notes that even "no tourism" has been mentioned as an alternative. He further notes that alternative tourism is merely a *partial* solution, since it cannot handle the ever-growing volume of tourists (Jafari 2001:31).

Finally, the *knowledge-based platform* emerged in the 1990s as scholars moved toward a more systematic, or scientific, analysis of tourism (Jafari 2001:31) that has tried to avoid the value judgments that predominated earlier studies (Nash 1996:22). Unlike the other platforms, which focus on impacts or forms, the knowledge-based platform represents a shift to a *holistic* study of tourism (Jafari 2001:32). This important development recognizes that elements in any sociocultural system are related; therefore, change in one area is likely to lead to change in other areas (Nash 1996:23). Along these lines, Brown argues that

environmental, economic, and sociocultural impacts cannot be separated and should be analyzed as a totality of "tourism effects," but she cautions that "'holism' should not imply studying only the whole to the exclusion of any consideration of the parts;" *both* should be examined (1998:112).

In summary, the few theoretical perspectives in tourism have been contributed by the individual disciplines of the scholars who have examined the phenomenon and not from within tourism itself (Dann 2005). Scholars have approached tourism from various perspectives (e.g., acculturation), which Jafari (2001) observes have evolved over time. While earlier studies tended to be simplistic and viewed tourism as either good or bad (i.e., the advocacy and cautionary platforms, respectively), more recent research has been more holistic and sophisticated (i.e., the knowledge-based platform). Jafari (2001:31) suggests that by considering tourism as a *system*, scholars will understand better its underlying structures and functions, which will lead to the further development of theory. Likewise, a more complete understanding of education abroad, including the perspective of both students and hosts, could be achieved by studying it as a system as well.

# *Research Goals and Methods*

## Research Goals

As I noted earlier, several scholars have suggested that there is a relevant connection between education abroad and the anthropology of tourism (Chambers 2000; Graburn and Jafari 1991; Nash 1976 and 1996; Sumka 1999 and 2000). This connection stems from the commonality of cross-cultural contact between guests and their hosts. A noted scholar of tourism, describing the anthropological approach to tourism, wrote that

> culture is expressed by the ways in which members of a group determine and symbolize the meaningfulness of their lives. While anthropologists have in the past used this concept largely to describe the unique meaning systems of particular groups of people, there has been a growing interest in thinking of the cultural as a process that originates in occasions in which different groups are led to confront and then attempt to reconcile each others' standards of meaning and significance. Tourism, with its multiple realms of human interaction, provides ample opportunity for the play of cultural processes and for the invention of new forms of cultural expression. [Chambers 1997:3]

Chambers was writing about tourism, but he just as easily could have been describing education abroad.

As I pointed out in the literature review, much attention has been given to how cross-cultural contact affects students, but little has been done to learn about the encounter from the hosts' perspective. Since hosting students appears to involve some of the same host-guest dynamics

found in tourism, it seems logical to apply this model to education abroad as well. Given this assumption, we can look to the tourism literature for guidance on the kinds of inquiries that would further illuminate our understanding of host-guest encounters and host impacts in education abroad.

Noting that the anthropology of tourism has focused on the motivations of tourists and the impacts on hosts, Stronza called for further research to learn "the full story of what happens to both hosts and guests throughout all stages of their journeys and cross-cultural encounters" (2001:277). In the education abroad literature, the missing parts of the full story are the motivations of hosts, the host-guest encounter from the perspective of hosts, and the impacts (especially sociocultural and economic) on hosts as a result of that contact. Further, Stronza called for future researchers "to learn more about the dynamics of host-guest interactions by observing and talking with people on both sides of the encounter" (2001:272). I have heeded that call by including the perspectives of a variety of hosts and guests.

Nash (1996:171) also called for better-balanced coverage of touristic processes through the holistic approach of ethnography, especially in places other than the traditional anthropological areas of the less developed world. Nash's suggestion is to study tourism in places other than the rural villages and indigenous communities where anthropologists

traditionally have conducted such inquiries. My research honors the spirit of that suggestion by examining a particular context of cross-cultural encounter (i.e., education abroad) that has received minimal attention in the tourism literature. In doing so, I have suggested that education abroad is not merely *like* tourism but that it *actually is* an academic form of cultural tourism.

Smith notes that while alternative forms of tourism such as cultural tourism have served niche markets, "the growth of cultural tourism has meant that the impacts have increased in parallel" (2003:43). She also writes that

> the growth of international tourism and the diversification of the tourism product have led to an increase in demand for cultural activities, which are becoming an integral part of the visitor experience. The phenomenon of *mass cultural tourism is increasingly becoming a cause for concern*, whether it is the proliferation of long weekend breaks in the historic cities of Europe, or hill tribe trekking in Southeast Asia. [Smith 2003:45; emphasis added]

Smith's caution is especially poignant in the context of education abroad, given the Lincoln Commission's challenge in the next decade to quintuple the number of students that go abroad.

With these issues in mind, I went into the field with the following questions, which emanated from the tourism literature:

- Which locals become host families? What are their motivations for hosting?

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- What happens in the host-guest encounter? How do host families share their culture with students?

- How do host families perceive that cross-cultural contact with students has affected them? Does hosting students seem to foster a greater appreciation of their own culture? Does it increase understanding between the two cultures?

These questions have guided me throughout the research process, both while I was in the field and in my analysis of the data I collected.

I went into the field with a basic, yet incomplete, understanding of host families. Based on my experience as an education abroad professional in Cuenca, I had a general idea that only a specific segment of the population (i.e., the middle class) was involved in hosting, but I had only suspicions about their motivations. As well, over the years students had told me stories about their interactions with host families, and of course I could recall my own experience as a student, but I did not know what the families themselves thought about hosting nor how they thought it affected them. In summary, the research questions listed above, as well as those from the tourism literature (see the "Anthropology of Tourism and Acculturation" section of the literature review earlier in this chapter), guided me toward reaching a more nuanced understanding of the hosting experience, specifically, from the perspective of host families.

## Methods

The following section describes the ethnographic methods used to support this thesis. I began my research by reviewing background materials, including the bodies of literature discussed above, after which I conducted fieldwork in Cuenca, Ecuador, from June to August and November to December 2005.

I chose Cuenca as the site for my ethnographic research because of my professional and personal connections with the city and its people. As an education abroad professional, I have worked with Cuenca-based programs for much of the last decade. In that time, the number of programs co-sponsored by US institutions has grown rapidly from just two or three to more than a dozen, and enrollment has increased several times over.[30] I have been directly involved in facilitating some of that growth, both by recruiting students and by helping to develop new programs. Moreover, as a former resident staff member, I accompanied several groups of students to Cuenca, helped them to adjust to their new cultural milieu, and worked to resolve any problems that arose. In short, I was one of the culture brokers that mediate the interaction between hosts and guests.

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30 In addition, there has been an explosion of Spanish language schools. In 1992, there were perhaps just two such schools, but today that number has grown to 20 or more. I discuss this in further detail in Chapter 3.

Additionally, as an undergraduate in the early 1990s, I studied abroad in Cuenca. During the year I was a student in Cuenca, I took intensive Spanish language classes, completed an internship at the regional development agency, and lived with a host family. More recently, I married a *Cuencana* and now have affinal, as well as fictive, kinship ties to Cuenca.

These professional and personal connections provided me with important contacts that facilitated my fieldwork. Whenever I had questions or needed assistance, I had a preexisting social network on which I could rely. Moreover, as an adopted member of the culture, I already knew how many things worked before I arrived in the field, which greatly eased the process of gaining entrée and reduced the time required in the field. In short, I went into the field with a partial understanding of the host-guest encounter in education abroad, specifically, from the viewpoints of guest and mediator; what I needed to learn was the viewpoint of the host families themselves.

While I will demonstrate in Chapter 4 that host families *perceive* that they have experienced some sociocultural and economic impacts, a longer period of fieldwork would have been required to adequately measure the *actual* effects of hosting. For example, a longer time in the field may have provided me with the opportunity to track new host families from the time that they applied, through hosting their first

student, to follow-up after the student's departure.  Moreover, I could have compared my empirical observations with the families' perceptions of the sociocultural impacts on them.  This would have allowed me to address not only the question of what hosts perceive they get from hosting but also what they actually receive.  As well, additional time in the field would have permitted me to conduct focus groups with host families and to facilitate the implementation of some of the improvements that host families and key school personnel suggested.

### *Participant-Observation*

I spent a total of three months living with a family (comprised of my parents- and brother-in-law, and a live-in maid), taking part in the daily life of Cuenca and participating in weekly reunions with the extended family.  This served as a refresher to living with a host family, as several years had elapsed since my own firsthand experience in a homestay.[31]  This experience also provided me with an informal, ongoing setting to learn about important current issues.[32]

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31 I lived with my host family for over a year (June 1992 to July 1993) and later stayed with them on several subsequent visits through the mid- to late-1990s.  I was the first student they hosted, and we have kept in touch (in fact, I visited them a few times during my fieldwork).

32 In addition, I had hoped to observe students and host families interacting with each other, but this did not work out.  I found that, during the week, they did not spend much time together (an observation confirmed by several host families).  Indeed, by visiting one of the schools at various times of the day (including the siesta, late afternoon and evening—all times when classes were not being held), I observed that many of the students spent much of their time there instead of at home.  Students

### *Key Consultants*

Homestay coordinators at three language schools served as key consultants for my research. Their familiarity with host families, as well as with the culture in general, was invaluable in identifying host parents who would be willing to participate in semi-structured interviews and in helping me to understand some of the intricacies of Cuencan culture. Two of these key consultants served the crucial role of introducing me to the host families and arranging interviews with them. All three consultants, as well as an administrator who previously worked with families, provided valuable insights about the processes of evaluating applicants interested in hosting students and of matching students and host families. All of my key consultants were women, and their experience with host families ranged from a few years or less to two decades.

### *Interviews*

Interviews represent the bulk of my data collection. In heeding Stronza's (2001) call to include people on both sides of the encounter, I interviewed members of several groups: 36 current host families, three

were at school to attend extracurricular activities (e.g., guest lectures and salsa classes) and to use the computer lab (for completing papers and accessing the Internet). In addition, some of the families were not hosting students at the time I interviewed them.

families that no longer host, five students, several key personnel (both Ecuadorians and foreigners) of language schools and education abroad programs, and a few other locals. The current families ranged from those who had started hosting just a few months prior to my fieldwork to those who had hosted for a decade or more. There is the potential for some bias, as the host families were self-selected or selected for me by homestay coordinators. If I could do this again, I would try to avoid such an "opportunity sample" by first using demographic data to group host families into appropriate categories and then using a representative sample.

For most of the interviews (especially those with current and former host families), I used a general protocol, so that I could collect responses for specific topics from all of the consultants. Questions for host families included the following:

- How long have you been hosting students?

- How many students have you hosted?

- How did you get into hosting?

- What were your expectations or hopes of hosting before you started?

- Describe a normal weekday.

- What are some of the good experiences you have had with students?

- What problems or bad experiences have you had with students?

I chose a semi-structured format for interviews, which offered the flexibility to spend more time on certain topics, or to explore new topics that consultants suggested, while still providing guidance on overall content. The protocol did not specify a rigid time limit for each interview, although I tried plan about an hour for each session. However, in some cases, the consultants got so wrapped up in talking (and I in listening) about their experiences that the interviews lasted for several hours (one as long as five hours). With the other local consultants, I used a more open-ended format, which allowed them to tell me what they thought were the most important points within the general topics of tourism and culture change in Cuenca.

At the beginning of some of the interviews with host families, they seemed to be concerned, or perhaps confused, about my role. Prior to each interview, the homestay coordinators from the schools called the *señora* to inform her that I was conducting research about host families and to inquire if she would be willing to participate in my project. While this certainly facilitated my access to the host families, it may have also given them the impression that I was an official envoy from the school. Fortunately, I was able to allay such concerns and to build rapport fairly

quickly by explaining at the beginning of each interview that the research was for my master's thesis and that each interviewee's confidentiality was protected. A written informed consent form on University of Denver letterhead reinforced this message and also facilitated my ethical responsibility to explain the purpose of my research and to ensure that participants fully understood the reason for their involvement and how I would use the information they provided (see Fluehr-Lobban 2003 for a discussion of informed consent).

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

To analyze the qualitative data from my interviews, I used TAMS Analyzer, an open-source program for the Mac OS X and Linux operating systems.[33] Since I did not have audio equipment in the field to record interviews, I instead took copious notes that I later transcribed. I then used TAMS Analyzer to code the text, identifying themes such as impacts on host families, motivations for hosting, appreciation of one's own culture, cultural identity, etc. By using qualitative analysis software, I was then able to search through the data for themes more easily than I would have by relying solely on my handwritten field notes.

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[33] TAMS Analyzer was written by Dr. Matthew Weinstein at Kent State University and can be downloaded from http://tamsys.sourceforge.net/.

The analysis process was one of trial and error, as I was simultaneously learning how to analyze qualitative data (not to mention learning a new piece of software) and trying to code my actual research data. This meant that on several occasions, I had to re-code interview transcriptions as I learned how to better carry out the task.