Encountering Place, Pedagogy, and Culture: Study Abroad and Experiential Learning in Morocco and Indonesia

Jennifer M. Pipitone
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ENCOUNTERING PLACE, PEDAGOGY, AND CULTURE:
STUDY ABROAD AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
IN MOROCCO AND INDONESIA

by

JENNIFER M. PIPITONE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2017
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in Morocco and Indonesia

by
Jennifer M. Pipitone

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in
satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Caitlin Cahill
Richard Mitten
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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Encountering Place, Pedagogy, and Culture: Study Abroad and Experiential Learning in Morocco and Indonesia

By

Jennifer M. Pipitone

Advisor: Professor Chitra Raghavan

Efforts to globalize higher education have resulted in study abroad climbing to an all-time high in the United States. Amidst this growth, emergent bodies of literature have uncovered problematic trends in study abroad that reproduce hierarchies of power and colonialism, perpetuate views of an exotic cultural “other,” and privilege tourism over education. In my dissertation, I respond to these problems by exploring ways of teaching and learning in study abroad that embrace the pedagogical power of place to foster awareness of the self in relation to other, cultivate relationality, and deconstruct the exotic. Rather than focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis, I was concerned with wider phenomena of experiential learning, including understanding how knowledge was produced in study abroad programs to Rabat, Morocco and Bali, Indonesia, with a focus on place. In 2014, I spent seven weeks abroad with these programs as a participant-researcher, collected over 200 written narratives in the form of reflective journals with 26 students, and conducted one-year post-program interviews.

I looked to Henri Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space to formulate the overarching research question that guided this dissertation: What is the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad? I introduce the concept of experiential learning space as situated within sociocultural (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1962) and socio-spatial perspectives, which allows for exploration into the ways in which experiences in/of place are both socially produced and socially producing through engagement with surrounding
environments. Three sub-questions arose in order to explore my research question fully: How can a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning advance place-based research? How does student engagement with place contribute to the production of experiential learning space? How might the inclusion of a place-responsive pedagogical intervention shape student experiences in/of an exotified cultural environment? Analyses of each sub-question are presented in three interrelated chapters that act as standalone units and make up the main body of this dissertation.

Findings indicate engagement with place was fundamental to the production of experiential learning space in the Morocco and Bali programs, mediated through pedagogies that engaged students with local rhythms, meanings, and histories; social interaction with locals, each other, and participation in cultural communities; and cultural tools that engaged students in alternative ways of knowing and being the world before and during the trip, including narrative activities and a pre-trip pedagogical intervention. Comparative case analysis suggests pairing experiential place-based pedagogies with narratives activities encouraged students’ acknowledgment and renegotiation of representations of Moroccan-ness and Bali-ness, deconstruction of the exotic, and enhanced relationality between self and other that remained a year later, while simultaneously guiding students in the unpacking of their own cultural baggage.

Transcending categorical hierarchies of cultural difference and reversing the colonial gaze in study abroad requires providing students with tools that help them embrace difference, while at the same time, find some common ground or relationality within their experiences in/of place. To this end, I advise that study abroad educators adapt the intentions and practices of their programs to embrace the pedagogical potential of place, and provide a theoretical framework, five epistemological commitments, and several pedagogical strategies to guide future program development with an eye toward social change.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The support I have received while working on this dissertation, and throughout my doctoral studies, has come from all corners of my lifeworld, and for this, I am forever grateful.

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to my advisor and mentor, Professor Chitra Raghavan, who took me under her wing and provided me with endless encouragement over the past four years. The hours upon hours we have spent together discussing pedagogy, doing research, and sojourning with students have been vital to my professional and personal growth, and are memories I will cherish forever. What I appreciate most about Chitra, is her transparency. I always found myself in awe of how knowledge and experience seemed to flow out of her effortlessly, but she made it a point to impart upon me the key to achieving such flow: practice, patience, and perseverance. From Chitra, I have learned what it means to be a careful listener, a robust researcher, an empathetic traveler, and a supportive but challenging mentor. I am honored to have had the opportunity to learn so much about the ways of the world with someone I admire so much.

A special thanks goes to Professor Joe Glick, who advised me during the first three years of my studies, and graciously continued to offer his support after retiring. His way of challenging me intellectually furthered this work extensively. Joe has a way of asking unassuming questions that dig deep—I have often sat with them for months before uncovering the answer in a glorious a-ha moment. From Joe, I have learned that the best teachers are not those that provide answers, but those that ask evocative questions. I am grateful to have had the chance to work alongside such a brilliant cultural psychologist.

Professor David Chapin’s unwavering support and enthusiasm has been a constant source of inspiration throughout the course of my studies. David is the type of person who always has
his door open; in fact, my fondest memories of the sixth floor took place gathered around
David’s patch-work clothed table surrounded by warmth and seemingly never-ending trails of
books, plants, and energizing conversation. I first met David when visiting the program before
applying; since then, he has sat on all of my doctoral exams and continuously encouraged me to
more readily embrace the radical and revolutionary fringes of my work. From David, I have
learned not only the importance of pushing intellectual boundaries, but also what it means to
build a meaningful learning community, and for this I am thankful.

I am also fortunate to have welcomed Professor Caitlin Cahill as a committee member,
and Drs. Richard Mitten and Kimberly Holland as external readers for this dissertation. Caitlin
had a hand in planting the seeds for this work to grow, as it was in her class I was introduced to
Lefebvre in my second year. Though Caitlin worked with me on this dissertation for just a short
time, her generous and insightful feedback strengthened this manuscript in such a profound way
that it is hard for me to believe she was not a part of it from the start. Richard and Kim, despite
us having just met, pushed this work into deeper waters by offering the invaluable perspective of
study abroad administrators, urging me to consider its far-reaching implications for practice.

A warm shout out to my cohort, Sruthi Atmakur-Javdekar, Bryce DuBois, Scott Fisher,
Hannah Jaicks, and colleagues at The Graduate Center, Christin Bowman, Tia Fletcher, Svetlana
Jović, Bijan Kimiagar, and Jen Tang, for providing me with intellectual stimulation, emotional
support, and a sense of community in NYC. And to Judith Kubran, thank you for being our rock.
I am especially grateful for Svetlana’s companionship during the often lonely dissertation writing
phase. Svetlana has a lust for life that is irresistible, and a way of inspiring those around her to be
better humans. She can always bring me back to down to earth with her witiness, irrefutable
logic, and engaging storytelling. Not only does she (re)tell the greatest stories, I can think of no one better to have made dissertation history with.

I want to thank from the bottom of my heart, the incredible students who participated in this study, for sharing their time and study abroad experiences with me; my research assistants, Janelle Robinson and Hazell Imbert, for their loyalty to this project over the past year and a half; Chelsea Gross, for her cartography skills and helping me construct the maps included in this work; Olivia Pipitone and Genever McBain, for their supportive and thoughtful proofing of this manuscript; and the Baruch-Rubin Museum Partnership, for funding a considerable portion of this project.

Completing this dissertation would have been impossible without the love and support provided by my family and my dear friend, Julie Sisson, who after a decade of friendship has never stopped advocating for personal revolution, and is like a sister to me. It was Julie who invited me to participate in my first study abroad program during college, ultimately shaping my life path. Thank you to my parents, Mom, Dad, Mike, and Tracy, for instilling in me a love of learning, and always encouraging me to follow my dreams even when they lead me far away from home. To my New Orleans family, thank you for always letting the good times roll. To the matriarchs of my family, Maw Maw Gloria and Maw Maw Brenda, I aspire to be as loving and caring as you have been throughout my life. Finally, to my sister and best friend Olivia, who has been there for every step of this journey, thank you for being my loudest cheerleader.

Thanks to all of you, and the kindness of countless others, now is the time I can finally say that this has all been wonderful, but now I’m on my way.
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Introduction

The power of place will be remarkable.

Aristotle, Physics Book IV

Efforts to globalize higher education and churn out “global citizens” (Barbour, 2012; Doerr, 2012; Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015) have resulted in study abroad climbing to an all-time high in the United States (IIE, 2016). Amidst this growth, an emergent body of research has uncovered dominant discourses and problematic trends in study abroad that (re)produce hierarchies of power and colonialism, perpetuate views of an exotified cultural “other,” privilege tourism over education, and turn “global citizenship” into a commodity (e.g. Barbour, 2012; Doerr, 2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Zemach-Bersin, 2009). In this dissertation I challenge these dominant discourses by exploring ways of teaching and learning in study abroad that embrace the remarkable pedagogical power of place to foster awareness of the self-in-relation to other and narrow ideas of difference by dismantling the economic in favor of the relational (Somerville, Davies, Power, Gannon, de Cartet, 2011). As experiential education is the philosophy behind many study abroad programs, this body of work studies experiential learning at the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture within study abroad.

Place is a productive framework through which to respond to Jakubiak & Mellom’s (2015) call for “a paradigm shift in higher education’s myopic focus on the global—particularly
in study abroad programs,” for it is through “intense engagement with the specificities and
dynamics of local places that students can come to realize the specificity and interconnectedness
of all places” (p. 101, original emphasis). Importantly, my conceptualization of place, which
may be described as a relational materialist approach, departs from the camp that considers place
as space that has been imbued with individual meaning (Tuan, 1977). Instead, I conceptualize
place as landscapes full of sociocultural and historical meanings to be engaged with, not as
empty spaces to be colonized. Encounters with place are participatory and experiential
phenomena influenced by geophysical and corporeal realities and cultural ideas (Wattchow &
Brown, 2011). Places are in/of our minds, in/of our bodies, and in/of the world; place “occupies
the space between grounded materiality and the discursive space of representation” (Somerville
et al., 2011, p. 3). Throughout this dissertation I intentionally use “in/of” to trouble the implied
separation between humans and place associated with the preposition in—and encourage the
thinking that we are of place, that we are shaped by place, and we in turn, also shape place.
Places, like pedagogy and culture, are in a constant process of becoming (Simonsen, 2008).

Pedagogy is the key to unearthing the power of place in study abroad and experiential
learning. Understood as a concept that “draws attention to the process through which knowledge
is produced” (Lusted, 1986, p. 2), pedagogy involves “the transformation of consciousness that
takes place in the interaction of three agencies—the teacher, the learner and the knowledge they
together produce” (Lusted, 1986, p. 3). Within this dissertation, pedagogy is conceptualized as a
“fundamentally relational process” that “takes shape as it unfolds” (Somerville et al., 2011, p. 2).
This dissertation calls for experiential pedagogies that are responsive to place (Gruenewald,
2003; Gruenewald & Smith, 2007; Somerville et al., 2011; Wattchow & Brown, 2011) in order
to counter the reproduction of hierarchies of power and colonialism in study abroad, and
deconstruct exotified notions of people and cultures. Although place, pedagogy, and culture are all relational processes, I situate pedagogy between “place” and “culture” in the title of my dissertation to reflect its centrality to the production of knowledge in study abroad; to help students come to know a culture through place, or learn about place through culture, pedagogy is the connective tissue.

_Culture_, from a sociocultural perspective, is not something we have—it is something we _do_. The roots of culture are shared activity (Rogoff, 2003) and shared meaning, or “a way of knowing, of construing the world and others” (Bruner, 1993, p. 513). It is through interaction and participation _within_ cultural communities that people shape, and are shaped by, these shared ways of knowing about and being in the world (Greenfield, 2000; Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Rogoff, 2003; Scribner & Cole, 1981), which in turn, shape place. In other words, people are not passive recipients of culture, but instead play an active role in the process of mutual constitution (Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). Thus, culture is not static, but a fluid process whereby cultural communities and individuals are ever-changing (Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003; Rogoff, 2003). And because culture is enacted in place via living bodies, it plays a dynamic role in the process of becoming experienced by people and place—culture is both emplaced and embodied. Situating study abroad and experiential learning within a sociocultural perspective can help to de-exotify notions of a static, homogenous cultural other. Instead of conceptualizing study abroad as “an encounter of two bounded cultures” (Doerr, 2016b, p. 95) that is ripe for the (re)production of hierarchies of power and colonialism, situating study abroad within a sociocultural perspective can help to position students as joining in the “ongoing production of life and meanings in the host society’s space” (Doerr, 2016b, p. 95).
Primarily concerned with students’ individual learning outcomes such as intellectual development or global citizenship (e.g. McKeown, 2009; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014), most research in study abroad has taken for granted the role of place and human-environment interaction in shaping learning experiences situated within novel cultural environments. In the current historical moment, with study abroad programs gaining popularity (IIE, 2016), it is both timely and critical for institutions of higher education and faculty program leaders to consider how teaching and experiential learning at the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture may deconstruct the exotic and (re)connect humans with themselves, each other, and the world.

This project contributes to the development of theory, research, and pedagogy in the context of study abroad by investigating the role of place in shaping learning experiences within novel cultural environments. Drawing from Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space, I explored the role of place and place-based pedagogies in what I have termed the production of experiential learning space in two study abroad programs to Rabat, Morocco and Bali, Indonesia. Importantly, my use of the term “learning space” vastly differs from the idea of learning space developed by Kolb and Kolb (2005), which conceptualizes space as residing within individual experience. Instead, my conceptualization of learning space is situated within sociocultural (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1962) and socio-spatial perspectives, which allows for exploration of the ways in which experiences in/of place are both socially produced and socially producing through engagement with surrounding environments (Beyes & Michels, 2011; Lefebvre, 1991/1974). I use the term socio-spatial to indicate the entanglement of “social” and “spatial” that Lefebvre theorized. In the spirit of a merged sociocultural and socio-spatial perspective, this study embraces narrative activities as a unit of analysis, as student narratives encompass the interaction between learners, each other, and their environment (Leontiev, 1977).
Using this merged perspective to interpret student experiences in/of place allows for exploration into the ways in which students relate to, and engage with their surrounding environment, and how their engagement shapes, and is shaped by the production of experiential learning space.

In Chapter 1: A Case for Place in Study Abroad and Experiential Learning (A Case for Place) I make a case for studying interconnections between student engagement with place and experiential learning in study abroad. I also provide a brief introduction to American study abroad programs and their benefits. Short-term study abroad programs, which are often faculty-led and less than eight weeks in duration, have become the most common form of study abroad encounter for students in the United States. Study abroad conceptualize is often conceptualized as an abstract global venture, thus I argue for a reframing of study abroad as “learning about someone else’s local” (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117) in order to resist hierarchical colonial discourses. Indeed, study abroad is caught in the midst of a recent wave of research that has uncovered dominant discourses in guidebooks, promotional materials, and pedagogy that perpetuate difference between self and other, (re)establish hierarchies of power and colonialism, and deny the pedagogical power of place (e.g. Doerr, 2016a, 2016b; Michelson & Valencia, 2016). I briefly review this trouble within study abroad and make a case for why place-based pedagogy should be embraced as an act of resistance. This project was energized by the work of John Dewey and Henri Lefebvre, both of whom were revolutionary advocates for social change in their own right. To this end, I look to work of these scholars in making a case for place and the body in experiential learning and study abroad. Calling upon Dewey, I investigate literature that is critical of conceptualizations of experiential learning as an individualized, cognitive phenomenon. Many authors have critiqued Kolb’s theory and argued for perspectives of experiential learning that bring place, culture, and environment to the fore. In this section I
present my own argument on this matter, and offer Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space, which serves as the theoretical foothold of this dissertation, as a way to emplace and embody experiential learning. In each of the three main chapters of this work, I present additional literature reviews that are relevant to each chapter’s focus.

In Chapter 2: *Methodology (Method)* I describe the overarching qualitative multi-case study methodology used to explore the role of place in shaping student experiences in study abroad programs to Rabat, Morocco and Bali, Indonesia. In 2014, I spent three weeks in January (Morocco) and four weeks in June (Bali) as a participant-researcher with these programs. Data were collected from multiple sources, including participant-observation, student narratives in the form of journals completed in the field, and one-year follow-up interviews, which allowed for triangulation of findings (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). In my analysis, I treated each study abroad program as an individual case, with groups of narrative activities as the embedded units of analysis. Importantly, the programs that served as the case studies for this project were designed and led by the same faculty program director, who served as my dissertation advisor. This not only allowed me to collaborate with her in developing narrative activities as student coursework and institute experiential place-based pedagogical interventions, but also ensured that the approach taken to student learning, program structure, and coursework were as similar as possible across both programs, despite differing foci of study. To alleviate potential coercion, the program director was unaware of which students participated in the research portion of the study abroad, and consent to include student coursework in the study was obtained after the program was complete and grades were submitted.

Because the results of this dissertation are divided into three chapters that act as standalone units (I looked to Mullins, 2011 as a guide), in this chapter I also present an overview
of the methods undertaken in each of the chapters that make up the main body of this work.

Aimed at answering one of the sub-questions of this dissertation (described below), each chapter conducts place-based analysis on one or more purposive sets of data drawn from the large pool collected with participants. In the final results chapter, I also employ a set of data collected during my pilot study with the Bali 2013 program to conduct a comparative analysis.

**Research Questions**

While a great deal has been theorized about place within experiential education, research that explores its role in shaping learning experiences is lacking aside from a few notable exceptions (e.g. Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015; Mullins, 2011; Mullins & Maher, 2007; Nakagawa & Payne, 2011). This is particularly true within the context of study abroad. Considering that many experiential educators engage learners with place in practice, and that travel to a novel cultural environment is at the heart of study abroad, this lack of empirical research speaks to the challenge of studying experiential learning at the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture. Drawing from and building upon existing theory and research, I have taken on this task in my dissertation. Seriously pursuing and understanding the relationship between place and experiential learning in study abroad involves joining the ongoing conversation between scholars who challenge longstanding conceptions of experiential learning as an individualized cognitive phenomenon (e.g. Kolb, 1984) and conceptions of place as space that becomes meaningful for an individual (e.g. Tuan, 1977). To reinfuse the individual with the social, and the social with the spatial, I looked strongly to Henri Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space to formulate the overarching research question that guided this dissertation: *What is the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad?* The three sub-questions
that arose in order to explore this question fully are at the heart of the three chapters that make up the main body of this dissertation.

In my first sub-question, I ask: “how can a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning advance place-based research in study abroad?” This question is addressed in Chapter 3: A Socio-spatial Analysis of Study Abroad Student Experiences in/of Place in Morocco (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco). Due to the scant empirical research on the role of place in experiential education and study abroad, an exploratory socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco program was deemed the most appropriate starting point to lay the groundwork for this dissertation’s approach to comparative case analysis between Morocco and Bali (taken up in following the next chapter). In this chapter I engage with current literature in experiential education surrounding the role of place and the body in experiential learning. In anticipation of critiques of Morocco, or study abroad in general, as an exotic or unique site to study the importance of place in experiential learning, I put forth the idea of “abroad-ness” as a social construction in order to make a case for why a focus on local place in study abroad is both relevant and critical in light of current discourse in study abroad that denies place. Drawing from Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space and his spatial triad of the perceived-conceived-lived, I conduct a socio-spatial analysis to explore how student engagement with surrounding environments may have shaped, and been shaped by, the production of experiential learning space. From this analysis, three “spatial stories” emerged, including Morocco as a diverse country of paradox, encountered histories, and positioned bodies in space. These spatial stories led to the development of the coding system used in Chapter 4 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali), which systematically assesses the role of place—and student experiences in/of it—within novel cultural environments. This chapter contributes to place-based theory and
research in study abroad by demonstrating the ways in which a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning can enhance the understanding of place in study abroad.

The second sub-question, building upon findings from the first, asks: “how does student engagement with place contribute to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs?” and is taken up in Chapter 4: Representations, Relationality, and Engagement: Study Abroad Student Experience in/of Place in Morocco and Bali (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali). In this chapter, I offer a comparative analysis of the Morocco and Bali programs using a coding system developed from the spatial stories that emerged in Chapter 3 and review literature relevant to the families of codes I developed. This includes representations of place, relationality within and between places, and types of engagement with place, such as experiential, social, historical, and physical/geographical ways of knowing place. I present a comparative case analysis of reflective journals and one-year follow-up interviews in order to explore the ways in which engagement with place impacted their experiences in/of place, and the ways in which these experiences shaped, and were shaped, by the production of experiential learning space. My findings suggest that place plays a powerful role in shaping the production of spaces of experiential learning that dismantle discourses of difference in favor of relationality that were sustained a year later. For example, analysis revealed that places existed in the minds of students prior to arrival to their host countries, and these representations, or pre-conceived notions of Moroccan-ness and Bali-ness, shaped their experiences in/of place. Students in Morocco expected the country to be highly conservative, while students in Bali had exotified views of Bali as an island of paradise. Through engagement with place, these representations were renegotiated and gave way to understandings of Morocco as highly diverse, and of Bali as a complex culture beyond exotified notions of paradise. In other words,
representations of Morocco and Bali were found to be entangled with student experiences of relationality within and between places, mediated by engagement with place. I interpret these findings using Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space. This chapter offers important contributions to place-based research and place-based pedagogy through the development of a systematic way of studying student engagement with place in study abroad, which also is applicable to local programs. Further, I offer reflections on the ways in which the structure of the narrating activities contributed to the production of experiential learning space that guided students to appreciate, rather than exotify, difference. To further my exploration of the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad, in my final results chapter, I conducted another comparative analysis geared toward understanding the ways in which a place-based intervention can impact student experiences of an exotified culture.

The third sub-question was: “how might the inclusion of a place-responsive pedagogical intervention shape student experiences in/of an exotified cultural environment?” and was taken up in Chapter 5: Deconstructing the Exotic through Place-based Pedagogy: Mediating Student Experiences in/of Balinese Society (Place-based Intervention—Bali). The Indonesian island of Bali has long been associated with iconic exoticism—the distinctiveness of Balinese Hinduism, “paradise” beaches, and renowned “traditional” art, music, and dance have lured travelers in for decades (Dunbar-Hall, 2003; Morgan, 2007; Williams, 2011). However, the meaning and value of art and aesthetics as a centerpiece to the Bali Hindu religion is too often shaded by romantic stares (Morgan, 2007). For these reasons, the Bali study abroad program was an ideal setting for an applied exploration of my third sub-question. In this chapter, I describe the development and assessment of a place-responsive museum-based pedagogical intervention that aimed to help Bali 2014 students engage with alternative ways of knowing and doing art present within Balinese
society. Through purposive sampling, I conducted a longitudinal comparative case analysis of Bali 2014 student narratives with parallel data collected with the Bali 2013 study abroad program during my pilot study to explore how the inclusion of an experiential museum-based pedagogical intervention shaped the Bali 2014 cohort’s experiences of Balinese society and engagement with the arts a year later. Findings suggest that the museum-based pedagogical intervention functioned as a cultural tool that mediated the Bali 2014 cohort’s experiences of the Balinese cultural environment, in addition to their sustained engagement with the arts a year later. While causal links cannot be claimed, data imply that exposing students to, and engaging them with, the Hindu arts before departure helped to expand the meaning students shared with a previously “othered” and “exotic” culture. I found that arts engagement enacted, or co-constructed, in Bali 2014 student narrating was more prevalent, more sophisticated, and more critical in analysis of the intersections of Balinese art, religion, and culture across written narratives and one-year follow-up interviews. Further, in addition to heightened appreciation of the arts described by both cohorts, the Bali 2014 cohort was more likely to describe changes to their participation with the arts a year later. This chapter makes two important contributions. First, in its empirical assessment of a place-based pedagogical intervention’s impact on student experiences within a novel cultural environment, it provides empirical evidence of how intentional experiential pedagogies that are responsive to place can help to deconstruct notions of exotified societies and static cultural “others” in study abroad. Secondly, it calls attention to the potentiality of using the arts to teach multiculturalism and engage students with alternative ways of knowing place.

In the conclusion, Chapter 6: The Power of Place (Power of Place), I revisit the overall research question by braiding major findings from the preceding three chapters and highlighting theoretical and pedagogical contributions of this work. Building upon Lefebvre’s spatial triad, I
present a theoretical framework of the elements of engagement with place relevant to the
production of experiential learning space, including how place is engaged with materially,
abstractly, and experientially. Reflecting further on how the findings of this study can inform
program development and practice, I envision a pedagogy of place for study abroad that is
informed by Lefebvrian and Deweyan perspectives. I offer five epistemological commitments
and several pedagogical strategies for the development of future programs. Finally, I conclude by
asking the reader to imagine what embracing the revolutionary ideas of John Dewey and Henri
Lefebvre could mean for the future of study abroad and experiential education for social change.
Wisdom sits in places. It’s like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don’t you? Well, you also need to drink from places. You must remember everything about them. You must learn their names. You must remember what happened at them long ago. You must think about it and keep on thinking about it. Then your mind will become smoother and smoother. Then you will see danger before it happens. You will walk a long way and live a long time.

You will be wise. People will respect you.

Keith Basso, 1996

At the end of his book *Wisdom Sits in Places*, in which he explores the significance of place and place names in Western Apache culture, anthropologist Keith Basso asks an Apache elder, “What is wisdom?” I begin the opening chapter of this dissertation with the elder’s response to this question, as it speaks to the profound pedagogical power of place that was, and still is, recognized in indigenous cultures. Over time, perhaps due to modernity and the perceived separation between humans and nature, place has become something taken for granted in so many ways—we knowingly shape places, but seem to forget that they also shape us. The somewhat intuitive idea that place is space imbued with meaning privileges individual
experience and meaning-making, while largely banishing the collective and sociocultural histories and wisoms that sit in places. Places have so much to teach us, if we only listen.

In this chapter I make a case for a rebirth of place and an embracing of its pedagogical power in study abroad and experiential learning. Experiential learning is the method of the philosophy of experiential education, which was formalized in the nineteenth and early twentieth century by John Dewey. Dewey’s philosophy of experiential education was revolutionary in its contribution to the development of progressive education—a socio-political movement that considered it the responsibility of education to cultivate a more just and equitable society. Though John Dewey is often credited as the father of experiential education, I again return to the opening quote of this chapter in order to acknowledge subaltern narratives and alternative histories of experiential education. Learning through experience, and with place, has been embraced by indigenous cultures across the globe (Roberts, 2012) long before it began to be woven into the tapestry of western higher education.

Study abroad and experiential learning are considered high-impact educational practices in higher education, as they are touted to increase rates of student engagement and retention for students across all backgrounds, especially those typically underrepresented in higher education (Brownwell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008). It is also worth mentioning that while experiential learning is gaining ground in higher education, it is still fighting for its place at the table amidst standardized testing and narrow ideas of learning that privilege math and English over physical education and the arts, especially in American primary schooling. Despite forms of experiential learning being recognized as high-impact practices in higher education (e.g. study abroad, community service, capstone projects, undergraduate research, writing-intensive courses), Kuh (2008) recognizes that all too often these are “unsystematic, to the detriment of student learning”
Further, I argue that while many institutions of higher education have begun to adopt the methods and pedagogy of experiential learning, they have embraced its progressive mission to a much less degree—particularly in study abroad.

To explore these issues, and set up the rationale and background for this dissertation, in this chapter, I make a case for place in study abroad and experiential learning. I begin by providing a brief overview of how study abroad has been framed in America, then I expand upon some trouble with study abroad and higher education’s myopic focus on the global that was presented in the introduction to this work. Next, I make a case for place and the body in experiential learning and introduce Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space, which is the theoretical foothold of this project. Of note, because each chapter in the main body of this dissertation acts as a standalone unit and contains its own targeted literature review, this chapter serves the purpose of providing introductory background information for why this place-based research is critical and relevant in the current historical moment. Of further note, some portions of this chapter are revivified within the main body of the dissertation according to relevance.

**In Study Abroad**

In today’s globalizing society, the cultivation of multicultural, competent citizens with awareness of the self in relation to the other—through experiences that narrow ideas of difference—is perhaps more important than ever. In this section, I provide a brief overview of study abroad in America, the recent emergence of short-term study abroad programs, and report on some current trouble with study abroad. The purpose of this section is to provide a general context of current state of study abroad rather than focus on its historical roots.
Study Abroad in America

Many institutions of higher education have embraced globalization as an opportunity to prepare students to succeed within a global environment by expanding study abroad programs that are meant to provide students with international and cultural experiences (Antonakopoulou, 2013; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; IIE, 2013). Study abroad is generally accepted to provide students who study abroad during their academic careers with gains across cognitive, affective, and interpersonal dimensions (Carlson, 1990; Dwyer, 2004; Langley & Breese, 2005; McKeown, 2009; Milstein, 2005); as well as enhanced international awareness and multicultural competency (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Lewin, 2009). While it is not the intention of this dissertation to unpack each of these outcomes-oriented studies, the point I would like to make is that taken together, studies like these have contributed to study abroad being named a high-impact educational practice (Brownwell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008) and its marked growth in America over the past fifteen years.

Study abroad by American students is currently at an all-time high, and has tripled over the last decade (IIE, 2016). At first glance, current study abroad data is encouraging, however only 1 in 10 undergraduate study abroad before graduation (IIE, 2016). Further, out of American undergraduates who study abroad, only 27% identify as non-white—a number that has increased modestly from 17% over the past decade (IIE, 2016), which is much lower than ethnic minority participation in higher education overall. Thus, despite this growth, there is a still a need for study abroad programs that simultaneously cater to a wider student community and attract higher minority participation.
Significance of Short-term Study Abroad

Over the past fifteen years, short-term study abroad programs, those lasting eight-weeks or less, have replaced longer-term programs as the most common form of study abroad encounters for American students (IIE, 2016). Short-term programs have played a major role in bolstering student enrollment, and can have a positive impact on diversifying the range of students who study abroad (IIE, 2007) on account of affordability and less time commitment (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Long, Akande, Purdy, & Nakano, 2010; Mills, Deviney, & Ball, 2010).

Various studies have contributed to the misleading idea that “more is better,” the title of Dwyer’s (2004) landmark study using 50 years of longitudinal data from the Institute for International Education of Students (e.g. Kehl & Morris, 2008; Medina-Lopez-Portillo, 2004). In Dwyer’s often cited study, she followed up with over 3700 IES students from a 50-year period who had studied abroad for various lengths of time (e.g. full year, semester, summer). Respondents were administered a 28-question survey where responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale. Results of the survey were reported across areas including general findings, academic attainment, intercultural development, career impact, and personal growth. For example, in relation to intercultural development, respondents were asked to rate things like “continues influencing my interactions with people from different cultures,” and “contributed to developing a more sophisticated way of looking at the world.” While Dwyer found that students who studied abroad for a full-year had more significant and enduring impact—this is where the “more is better” comes in—she also found that students who studied abroad for 6-weeks during the summer were as likely or more likely to enjoy sustainable benefits from studying abroad compared with semester students. While informative in its own right, this study tells us very little about how students changed, or the elements of the programming that contributed to such
change, which is my common dissatisfaction with quantitative-focused study abroad research.

However, with the outpouring of short-term study abroad programs in the past decade, a growing body of research has supported the efficacy of such programs (e.g. Antonakopaulou, 2013; McKeown, 2009; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012). Tarrant (2014) has even suggested a “just do it” approach to study abroad (Tarrant et al., 2014, p. 155) to counter Dwyer’s “more is better”.

Indeed, research has indicated compared to students who do not study abroad at all, students who participate in short-term programs experience higher graduation rates (Sutton & Rubin, 2004) and higher intellectual development (McKeown, 2009). Further, not only did Antonakopoulou (2013) find high achievement of sociocultural adaptation regardless of program duration in her study with American students studying abroad in Greece, she also found that intentional, experiential pedagogies increased sociocultural adaptation. Three groups of students participated in her study and completed the Sociocultural Adaptation Scale at the end of their program. One group participated in a four-week short-term program, and two groups participated in a semester long-term program, one of which received a pedagogical intervention. The long-term intervention group were engaged in service learning activities and weekly reflective blogs on local issues related to their cultural experience and received additional information about living and learning abroad. Otherwise, all three groups of students participated in the same curricular activities. The results of her study suggested that both short-term and long-term study abroad programs can have comparable results surrounding sociocultural adaptation. Importantly, she also found that intentional, supportive interventions are essential in supporting strengthening, as the long-term group who received the intervention scored the highest on the SCAS. Thus, a particular advantage of short-term study abroad programs may be the potential for faculty control over the learning environment and the inclusion of intentional pedagogical interventions.
Chapter I: Case for Place

(Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Long et al., 2010). Effective short-term programs create culturally immersive and focused learning environments through intentional program structure and pedagogy (Montrose, 2009; Pedersen, 2010).

Considering increased faculty control over the learning environment on these short-term programs may offer the potential for a more intense and focused study abroad experience (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Long et al., 2010), this key differences calls not only for more empirical research focused on short-term study abroad programs, but it also calls for studies that explore the ways in which learning spaces are produced within such programs—rather than a focus on outcomes. This dissertation intends to fill this gap by exploring the role of place in producing experiential learning spaces within study abroad programs. Despite the call for a “just do it” approach to study abroad (Tarrant, 2014, p. 155), as I will demonstrate in the following subsection, it is important to keep in mind that not all programs are created equally or with the same intention—some programs may commodify “global citizenship” and reproduce exotified notions of a cultural “other.”

**The Trouble with Study Abroad; or, a Myopic Focus on the Global**

Efforts to globalize higher education and churn out “global citizens” in America (Barbour, 2012; Doerr, 2012; Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015) has played a major role in study abroad climbing to an all-time high in the United States (IIE, 2016). However, to paraphrase American legend Christopher Wallace: more programs, more problems.

An emergent body of research in study abroad has shifted its focus from understanding student learning outcomes to analyzing dominant discourses and problematic trends in study abroad that (re)produce hierarchies of power and colonialism, perpetuate views of an exotic cultural “other,” and turn “global citizenship” into a commodity (e.g. Barbour, 2012; Doerr,
2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Zemach-Bersin, 2009). My dissertation fits within this body of work as it doubles both as a response to these problematic trends and presents place-based pedagogies as a potential act of resistance in order to promote social change. Some of the dominant discourses in study abroad that have been deemed problematic include: a myopic focus on the global (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015); the glorification of immersion (Doerr, 2012, 2013, 2016a); valorizing adventure (Doerr, 2012); and favoring personal growth over cultural interaction (Barbour, 2012; Feinberg, 2002). Some problematic trends include universities outsourcing study abroad to third-party vendors and private businesses (Barbour, 2012); privileging tourism over education (Michelson & Valencia, 2016) and the use of colonialist language (Barbour, 2012; Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015; Zemach-Bersin, 2009) in study abroad marketing; and “‘global citizenship’ used as a mantra that effaces the very issues of inequality, race, class, and other categories of difference it pretends to address” (Barbour, 2012, p. 73). It is outside the scope of this chapter to unpack each of these troubles in detail, so I focus on two troubles that are particularly relevant to the present inquiry: the dominant discourse of immersion and a myopic focus on the global.

The glorification of immersion in study abroad has been deemed problematic by Doerr (2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b) who has critically studied immersion as a discourse via text and discourse analysis of study abroad guidebooks paired with extensive ethnographic work with study away and study abroad programs nationally and internationally. Immersion discourse operates under the guise that learning is guaranteed in study abroad simply because the phenomena cannot be experienced in the country of origin (Doerr, 2012, 2016b). Unstructured learning is heralded in place of classroom or structured experiential learning, creating a hierarchy of experience—students are encouraged to immerse themselves in the daily life of their host
country and to avoid spending time with American peers or online connecting with friends and family back home (Doerr, 2012, 2013). Recent research has indicated that immersion discourse, particularly those that mask tourism as education, can impact study abroad student’s discursive practices upon returning home (Michelson & Valencia, 2016). Further research has suggested these discourses may impact students’ perception of “quality” learning time abroad, where time in a classroom or organized learning is deemed less meaningful than free time exploring on their own (Hangen & Sen, 2016). Hangen and Sen (2016) conducted pre-departure interviews paired with post-program interviews with students who participated in a study abroad program to India, within a week of their return to the United States. Hangen and Sen also served as program directors for this program. They found that students’ pre-conceived notions of space and time in India impacted what kinds of activities they deemed valuable, and what they believed the workload, pace, and activities of the program should be. For example, students’ perceptions of Indian time as slower and more relaxed resulted some students feeling frustrated with rigorous “American” coursework. Overall, they found students privileged learning outsides of the classroom over classroom learning, and argue that field-based learning experiences are limited unless they are contextualized with sociocultural and historical research linked to the host country.

This socially constructed idea of “abroadness” is problematic in that it facilitates discourses of homogeneity within the host country and the study abroad peer group, and heterogeneity between the host-home countries (Doerr, 2016a, 2016b). It assumes that novel cultural experiences are reserved for overseas; that rich, diverse cultural experiences are not available in the country, state, city, and even neighborhood; and that students cannot learn with or from their peers. Further, by exemplifying cultural difference, the hoisting of immersion on a
pedestal also perpetuates views of encountering an exotified cultural “other” who is frozen in
time, “immobile” and “parochial” (Doerr 2016b, p. 83). To resist the dominant discourse of
immersion, Doerr (2016b) recommends framing study abroad as not an encounter of two
bounded cultures, but as a diverse group of students joining in the “ongoing production of life
and meanings in the host society’s space” (p. 95). All things considered, I am not arguing that
immersion is not a good way to learn—in fact, it is commonly regarded as the most ideal, and
fastest way to learn a language and provides opportunue way to get to know cultures intimately.
However, as recent research suggests, a discourse of immersion within the context of short-term
study abroad is problematic as it may impact student’s perceptions of what “studying” while
being “abroad” means. I am of the school of thought that regards a healthy dose of structured,
intentional pedagogy with some free time thrown in makes for a well-balanced short-term
program.

To this end, branching off the work of critical study abroad scholars, in this dissertation I
put forth the idea that pedagogies that are responsive to place may be a strong form of resistance
to the dominant discourse of immersion. I suggest actively engaging study abroad students with
local meaning and significances of place, and the multiple ways of knowing, doing, and being in
the world present in novel cultural environments, may be and strong form of resistance to the
dominant discourse of immersion. Philosophically, place-based education embraces pedagogies
that emerge in response to particular attributes of a place (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). Place-
based pedagogies may not only help to de-exotify and reframe difference as something to be
embraced, but it may also help minimize the somewhat deleterious impacts of another dominant
discourse: higher education’s limited focus on the global and the creation of “global citizens.”

Global citizenship is a highly contested term, with varying definitions. Further, it has the
potential to perpetuate a colonial gaze, especially when paired with discourses of immersion, which can foster a false sense of “knowing” a country or culture just for having visited there, and becoming a “global citizen” for doing so. Jakubiak and Mellom (2015) urge educators to reframe study abroad not as learning about an abstract global, which is ultimately what a discourse of global citizenship does, but as “learning about someone else’s local” (p. 117). A focus on study abroad as a global venture ignores the local, unique, specificities of places, which is problematic as coming to appreciate the dynamism and uniqueness of local places is a pathway through which students can come to recognize the interconnectedness of all places—local and global (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015).

Since place-based education is a sub-type of experiential learning, and experiential learning is at the heart of many study abroad programs, in the following section, I make a case for place in experiential learning, and offer Lefebvre’s ideas about the social production of space as a way in which to bring both place and the body (back) into experiential learning.

**In Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning is at the foundation of many education programs that transport individuals into environments that differ from their everyday, such as wilderness therapy programs and faculty-led study abroad programs. Like John Dewey (1938), the founder of the philosophy of experiential education, I understand that engagement with the surrounding environment is central to learning. Dewey’s philosophy of experiential education was revolutionary in its contribution to the development of educational progressivism. Doubling as a pragmatist and a progressive, Dewey believed experience to the ultimate teacher—as linking personal and social experience to social practice is the best way to educate for change. Dewey was tuned in to the political role of education, as he called for education through experience in
order to produce citizens that can contribute to a democratic society. Progressivism as a socio-political movement embraced values and practices aimed at making society more just and equitable amidst the changing urban landscape thanks to industrialism and immigration during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Roberts, 2012).

Yet, since the metamorphosis of Dewey’s philosophy into experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), not only is the environment is viewed as a mere backdrop to learning experiences, but education for social change has been lost in the mire. Kolb’s (1984) four-stage cycle of experiential learning became ubiquitous, yet not only does it separate learners from their surrounding environment, it also splits the body from itself and its enmeshment within social, cultural, and historical contexts.

In the recent decade, many experiential educators and scholars have critiqued Kolb (e.g. Schenck & Cruickshenk, 2015; Seaman, 2008) and offer renewed conceptions and practices of experiential learning that appreciate social, cultural, and environmental context and rethink the human-environment relationship (e.g. Beringer, 2004; Fox, 2008; Mullins, 2011, 2014a, 2014b; Mullins & Maher, 2007; Seaman, 2007, 2008; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Many cases have been made for why place is important in experiential education (e.g. Wattchow & Brown, 2011) and why the focus on the individual should be focused on the social and cultural (e.g. Seaman, 2007; Miettinen, 2001), which are reviewed in more detail in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco). This section joins these scholars in an effort to emplace and embody experiential learning and is representative of several years’ worth of my own unpacking of and dissatisfaction with Kolb’s (1984) take on experiential learning. Through a review of literature, I make my own case for place, space, and the body in experiential learning that is situated within a sociocultural and socio-spatial perspective. To begin, I demonstrate disconnections between Dewey’s
philosophy of experiential education and the way his philosophy has been metamorphosed by presenting human-environment tensions in experiential learning literature, including dialectical tensions between the experiential and conceptual and the continuity of mind, body, and environment. Next, I move into emplacing experiential learning by (re)focusing on space and place as co-dependents and then, I present Lefebvre’s theory on the production of space as the theoretical foothold of this work. While Lefebvre was not theorizing to challenge existing modes of education, as his work is situated within re-conceptualizing social space as a challenge to capitalist society, I call upon a joining of his work together with Dewey, in order to revive education, particularly in study abroad, as an avenue to promote social change. Then, I review the elements of an embodied approach to experiential learning by reviewing enactivism and rhythmanalysis to demonstrate the ways in which student narratives are situated within a sociocultural environment and co-emerge with the production of experiential learning space.

**Human-Environment Tensions in Experiential Learning Literature**

Differing perspectives surrounding the meaning of the body and the role of the environment have been sources of major tension within experiential learning literature (Fenwick, 2000; Wilson & Hayes, 2002; Fox, 2008; Seaman, 2008). Much of these tensions stem from the ambiguous and messy use of the term experience as noun or as a verb (Yorks & Kasl, 2002). Used as a verb, experience is “a particular instance or a particular process of observing, undergoing, or encountering”; as a noun it is “all that is known, the knowledge or practical wisdom gained from the observing, undergoing, or encountering” (Boud, Cohen & Walker, p. 6). Pragmatist and constructivist perspectives of experiential learning (e.g. Kolb, 1984) have come under attack by phenomenological perspectives in the last decade for their use of experience as a
noun, as it stresses learning from experience, which separates learners and their experiential environment.

Constructivism within the context of education portrays learners as independent constructors of their own knowledge through reflection (Fenwick, 2000). This is problematic as it perpetuates a “cut universe” where learners are separate from their environment and from their experiences, framing reflection as “the great integrator” (Fenwick, 2000, p. 249). This predominant conception of experiential learning was spearheaded by Kolb (1984), and is argued to have suppressed the pre-Cartesian view of experience as embodied, communal, and embedded within affective states (Fenwick, 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2002; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

Though Kolb (1984) insists that experience is a process and recognizes the influence of the environment on learning, this is not reflected in his model of the Experiential Learning Cycle. Kolb (1984) describes the phases of his model as connected to separate individual abilities of learners:

Learners, if they are to be effective, need four different kinds of abilities—concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualization abilities (AC), and active experimentation abilities (AE). That is they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (CE). They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives (RO). They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC) and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE). (p. 30)

The first two abilities described, which coincide with the first two phases of the model, contribute to the displacement and disembodiment of learners. According to Kolb, the principle
aim of reflective observation is to achieve “analytic detachment” (Kolb, 1984, p. 9) in order for learners to observe and reflect on experiences from diverse perspectives. To assert that effective learners must approach involvement in new, concrete experiences as unbiased, and then reflect on them through analytic detachment is impractical. Such an assertion means that learners must separate themselves from their peers as well as their subjective affect, histories, desires, and cultures in order to learn effectively with an unbiased lens—splitting learners not only from their environment but also from themselves.

The conceptualization of reflection as a way to accomplish analytic detachment (Kolb, 1984) is starkly different from the way Dewey conceptualized reflective thought—as a means to connect to one’s thoughts through interaction with the environment. Dewey recognized that “experience is already overlaid and saturated with the products of the reflections of past generations and by-gone ages” (Dewey, 1925, p. 40). Thus, the purpose of reflection is to become aware of the layers of perspective, interpretation, and cultures embedded within individual and collective histories that may influence subjective lenses of the world. With such awareness, learners can make meaning of their experiences collectively, which may then enrich their thought and action. Further, for Dewey, “reflection and reconstruction of the environment are inseparable” because “thought is a part and expression of the individual-environment system” (Miettinen, 2000, p. 69). The environment shapes the individual’s learning experience, and the environment is shaped by the learner’s experience—they are related to and determined by one another, in the form of a dialectical relationship. Thus, rather than conceptualizing reflection as means to analytically detach from self and environment as Kolb suggests, practitioners can use reflective practices as a means to provide a space for learners to explore the physical, cognitive, and affective dimensions of their learning experiences, as well as the roles of social and cultural
relations. Through such an exploration, learners can connect with themselves and the sociocultural environment within which their experiences are embedded.

**Dialectical Tensions between the Experiential and Conceptual.** The experiential learning process cannot be separated from the physical, psychological, and social conditions of an experience because they mediate, and are mediated by, these conditions—in Lefebvrian terms these dialectical conditions shape the spatial environment. Kolb (1984) and Kolb & Kolb (2005) recognize the role of dialectical tensions in the experiential learning process, including the dialectical tension between the experiential (material) and conceptual (abstract). However, dialectical logic denounces binary comparisons and embraces a triadic approach that observes the relations and interactions between three terms instead of two, thus enriching an understanding of complex realities (Lefebvre, 1992). From a Lefebvrian perspective, dialectical logic would present a third mediator variable to illustrate the origin of, and interrelatedness between, variables (Lefebvre, 1992; Miettinen, 2000), yet Kolb provides no such variable. Instead these tensions are resolved by placing each variable in separate bipolar phases of the model, with no explanation of how these processes are related to and determined by one another. Concrete experience, associated with feeling is placed at one pole, and abstract conceptualization, associated with thought, is at the other. Neglecting a third variable leaves us blind to how relationships between the experiential and conceptual may shift according to circumstance or context. Also underdeveloped in the realm of Kolb’s concrete experience is the role of the surrounding contextual environment in which learners are embedded, for example, a classroom or a hiking trail, and how human-environment interaction, including the social and relational, may impact the learning experience. This is particularly problematic considering that
according to Kolb, concrete experience is the starting point from which the rest of the learning cycle unfolds.

Concrete experiences embody feelings, but if Kolb were correct, feelings get in the way of learning. Returning to Kolb’s assertion that to learn effectively, individuals must approach new experiences in an unbiased manner, it is not surprising that he neglects to develop the notion of feeling. It is within the concrete experience, the starting point of Kolb’s model, that an individual’s subjective histories, desires, and cultures would interact with the environment and spread their roots throughout the cycle, thus preventing subsequent analytic detachment and conceptual interpretation deemed necessary for effective learning. Kolb’s depreciation of the human-environment relationship restricts our understanding of the deep, relational structure of experiential learning. Such a conception of experiential learning not only leaves us with a dualistic conception of experience that privileges the individual over the environment, but by privileging thought over feeling, it also neglects to recognize the whole person as an embodied being. A dialectical relationship with a third mediating variable between the experiential and the conceptual is necessary to fully understanding the process of experiential learning.

**Continuity of Mind, Body, and Environment.** By now, I have demonstrated disconnections between Dewey’s philosophy of experiential education and the way his philosophy has been metamorphosed by Kolb (for a full review see Miettinen, 2000). Much like the constructivists, Dewey would absolutely reject the idea that human experience is separate from the environment in which the experience occurs. In fact, his principle of continuity unravels this divisive idea at the seams. While Kolb (1984) cites this principle in his theory, it is problematic that it is not reflected in his highly lauded experiential learning model, as it can, and
arguably has, lead to misuse and misunderstanding of the experiential learning process in practice.

Dewey’s (1938) principle of continuity argues that there are no ontological gaps between levels of functioning within an organism. There is no rupture between how humans experience and make meaning of their environment—perception, thought, and feeling “grow out of organic activities” (Dewey, 1938, p. 26). In other words, learning and cognition are rooted in material bodily experience (Johnson, 2008) and thought, reflection, and meaning-making are nested within the human-environment system (Miettinen, 2000). Johnson (2008) calls on Dewey’s principle of continuity to challenge Cartesian dualisms and the “intellectualization” of human experience to form theories on embodied cognition and embodied meaning in his book The Meaning of the Body. Johnson (2008) argues that the cognitive-emotive dichotomy hinders our understanding of learning and meaning-making. The flow of experience and emotion is rooted in the body’s engagement and movement through environments (Corazon, Schilhab, & Stigsdotter, 2011; Johnson, 2008), and it is through this process that meaning is made. In embodied cognition, emotions are central to rational thought and learning about the self (Corazon et al., 2011). Further evidence supports the link between positive emotions and more complex cognitive processes, and argues that the building of psychological resources in one context can be drawn on in other contexts and emotional states (Aspinwall, 1998; Frederickson, 1998). This supports Dewey’s idea that meaning is made through generalizations of human-environment interactions; it is the regularity and similarity of such interactions that allows individuals to apply concepts and meaning across contexts (Miettinen, 2000). Feminist scholars have long denigrated the split between mind and body that privileges reflection as analytic detachment from a disembodied and abstract reality (Fenwick, 2003), or what Donna Haraway has called “the god
trick of seeing everything from nowhere” (Haraway, 1991, p. 188). Thinking, doing, and knowing are not split states—they are embedded “in the material and social conditions that produced the knowledge” (Fenwick, 2003, p. 3)—in other words experiential learning is emplaced and embodied. In the following two subsections, I present ways in which we may resurrect Dewey’s educational progressivism and apply it to study abroad by emplacing and embodying experiential learning, with Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space at the center.

**Emplacing Experiential Learning**

Though recognized as playing a role in experiential learning, the environment itself has been largely taken for granted as an “inert container in which people perform their actions” and through which “the learning subject excavates useful experiences” (Fenwick, 2003, p. 3). Dewey (1938) asserted that experiences and reflective thought are dependent on human-environment interaction; his principle of continuity demonstrates the fluidity of experience, but the role of the environment was not fully developed in an observable sense, until relatively recent movements in experiential education (e.g. outdoor, adventure, and place-based pedagogies). Kolb (1984) cites transactions between learners and their environment as a principle of experiential learning theory, yet his theoretical model separates learners from their environment and themselves, leaving the role of the environment as a backdrop. It is not enough to simply *say* the environment is important; we need to *understand* its influential power to shape our experiences and the meaning we make of the world. To establish a truly emplaced understanding of experiential learning that considers the interconnections between learners and their environment, I suggest we infuse experiential learning with concepts of space and place.
Difficulty arises in understanding how environments are transformed into places of meaningful learning, or what I introduced as the \textit{production of experiential learning space}, without consideration of the roles of space and place. After reviewing the fundamental aspects of place and space, I introduce Lefebvre’s (1991) theory on the production of space to provide theoretical grounding for an emplaced view of experiential learning that appreciates the social, relational, and cultural.

\textbf{Co-dependents: Place and Space.} Place is fundamental to human experience (Heidegger, 1958; Tuan, 1977). To be human is to shape and be shaped by our experience of place. Place matters; our understanding of who we are is intertwined with our understanding of where we are (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). In other words, sense of self and sense of place are co-produced. Experiences of places and the value attributed to them over time contribute to what Proshansky (1978) dubbed “place identity,” a subset of our self-identity which grows out of our environmental past. Places from our past carry valences that attract or repel us in varying degrees (Proshansky, 1978), thus shaping the meaning we make of ourselves-in-world. Our experiences in/of places contribute to the development of unique and distinctive environmental autobiographies, which are “the narratives we hold from the memories of those spaces and places that shaped us” (Giesking & Mangold, 2014, p. 73). Further, Prince (2014) argues that place is not only embedded in how individuals think about themselves in the present, but also how young people imagine their future selves. By emplacing self-concept and linking place identity with imagining of possible selves, Prince (2014) proposes that place is bound up not only in who we are and where we are, but also who and where we will be. Thus, place is a thread woven through our past, present, and future. Its power to influence our lives in such meaningful ways lends itself to the rise in educational practices that transport individuals to, and connect them with, unique
environmental experiences as in the case of study abroad programs. The thread of place, which weaves itself through our lives, is intimately connected with space. The meaning we make of the world is embedded within the experience of our living bodies—meaning-making it is a process of looking inward and outward to make sense of movement through the world, thus unifying the material and the conceptual (Daiute, 2014).

Understanding the role of place in study abroad and experiential learning, necessitates operationalizing place, space, and their relationship, which historically has been a complicated one (Casey, 1996; Lewicka, 2011). In her review of 40 years of place-based research, theory, and methodology, Lewicka (2011) reports an increased number of publications devoted to place in the last few decades, with the highest being from 2000-2011; yet differences of opinion abound from various approaches and schools of thought about the definition of place, and the relationship between place, space, and other place-related concepts.

With his book *Space and Place*, Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) changed the way place was conceptualized and studied—rather than thinking of place as a specific point on the map, Tuan shed light on the experiential qualities of place. He put forth the idea that place is space made meaningful; and that meaning develops over through time and experience in spaces. He stressed sensory engagement with place as key to developing meaning. However, in this view, place is seen as emerging from empty space, the materiality of which was somewhat overcast in favor of the experiential. Over the next few decades, scholars would build upon and deviate from Tuan’s conceptualization of space and place (e.g. Agnew, 1987; Massey, 1991; Thrift, 1999). Casey (1996) provides a phenomenological overview of the ways in which we view surrounding space and place have shifted over time from the ancient scholars like Aristotle who believed place was the root of all things to spatial revolution of modern times. It is not my intention to review how
interpretations of space and place have shifted over time, but rather, assert the view of space and place taken up in this work. My conceptualization of space is that it is neither empty nor abstract but (socially) produced through social relations (Lefebvre, 1991/1974). Thus, while I appreciate and engage with Tuan’s experiential sense of place, I deviate from his conceptualization in that I consider place as full of sociocultural and historical meanings for individuals to engage with—not as empty spaces to be colonized. I view neither place nor space as empty. In the context of this dissertation, the main difference between space and place is that space is abstract and conceptual, while place is rooted in materiality. Place, according to Merrifield (1993), a Lefebvrian scholar, is not a “tabula rasa” upon which space unfolds; “place-specific ingredients” or the qualities and affordances of physical environments, also shape space and the meaning made through engagement in everyday life activity (p. 522). Thus, both space and place are grounded in embodied, material life activity, or lived experience—their relationship is dialectical—they shape and are shaped by one another. I conceptualize engagement with place as the point of departure in the production of experiential learning space.

Grappling with the interconnections between space and place is necessary to move towards an emplaced understanding of experiential learning. Such an understanding is necessary to understand how spaces can be intentionally shaped to allow learners to flow and engage with environments in meaningful ways that promote learning about the self and world, and even promote a more inclusive, just society. The difficulty lies in teasing apart the relationship between space and place, as I have just shown. To begin to understand how place-based pedagogies can be used to promote spaces of experiential learning, we need to recognize that space and place are wedded in dialectical unity. And for this, I look to Lefebvre.
Theoretical Foothold: The Production of Space

“Change life!” “Change society!” These precepts mean nothing without the production of an appropriated space.

Henri Lefebvre, 1974

Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space provides strong theoretical foothold for understanding the dialectical relationship between space and place. Lefebvre’s theory marks the first step in filling the theoretical lacuna left behind by Dewey and Kolb in understanding the role of the place and space in experiential learning. Dewey’s (1938) principle of continuity argues that because experience is rooted in material life activity, there are no ontological gaps between levels of functioning within an organism. Starting at the same point, Lefebvre argues that both space and place have ontological status because they, too, are both rooted in material life activity. Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space moves beyond Dewey to argue that embodied experience, or material life activity, is the connective tissue of the human-environment relationship. Thus Lefebvre, with these dialectical overtones, provides a framework to begin to understand the interconnections between space, place, and embodied experience in relation to experiential learning.

Vehemently opposing Cartesian dualisms that view space and place as separate objects of inquiry, Lefebvre (1991) aimed to “reconnect elements that have been separated...[and] to rejoin the severed and reanalyze the commingled” (p. 413). Lefebvre (1991) conceptualized space as a “living organism” consisting of three parts: physical space, rooted in nature; mental space, rooted in knowledge and formal abstractions about space; and social space, rooted in the sensory phenomena of lived experience. According to Lefebvre (1991), “(social) space is a (social) product” (p.28) and the first implication of this proposition is that “natural space is the common
point of departure: the origin, and the original model of social process” (p. 30). Lefebvre asserts that physical space, rooted in nature is the “background” of the picture and it persists “everywhere.” I interpret Lefebvre’s idea of nature, or natural space to be the physical environment, which supports my contention that understanding the role of place in learning experiences within the context of study abroad programs is important, as place is rooted in physical materiality. Knowledge, stemming from perception, symbolism, and imagination in the realm of mental space cannot be separated from physical and social space (Merrifield, 1993).

Social space is produced through a tripartite dialectical interaction surrounding how the space is perceived, conceived, and lived. Though Lefebvre uses “production” to “get to the root of things”—in his case the roots of capitalist society—by tracing out the inner dynamics and generative moments that actively produce space, his work is relevant to this study in at least two ways. First, I assert that an adaptation of his theory may help us understand the production of experiential learning space in study abroad. Second, considering Lefebvre’s intention was to get at the inner workings of capitalist society in order to dismantle the establishment and the ruling class, an adaptation and application of his theory to study abroad can help to dismantle the commodification of study abroad in favor of the relational. Together with Dewey’s revolutionary educational progressivism, I believe unifying these two theorists’ ideas, and applying them to study abroad and experiential learning, can help to reframe education as having the responsibility to provide students with the tools to advocate for a more just and inclusive society. As such, next I explore each of the elements of the production of social space and situate them within the context of experiential learning.

Conceived space, or representations of space, is “tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence knowledge to
signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). Conceived space refers to the discursively constructed space of professionals (Merrifield, 1993), such as experiential educators, who impose rules and structure for the appropriate behavior while fostering discourses of knowledge in an effort to make the learning experience meaningful. Present here are hierarchical power relations that undoubtedly shape the potential knowledge to be gained and the subsequent meaning learners make of their experience. Conceived space lays in the realm of the abstract and mental, thus I also connect representations of places, peoples, and cultures fostered by those in power as residing within this space.

*Lived space*, or representational space is described as, “embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). Lived space embodies the rhythms of daily life, experienced in the form of codes, symbols, and images. Lived space “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39); it is alive, and embraces place through an affective and passionate center. In a sense, lived space is terrain through which individuals strive to realize themselves as whole, total persons (Simonsen, 2005), and through which learners can renegotiate pre-conceived notions of the world through embodied experience. Lived space is alive as learner’s make sense of themselves and their movement and engagement with surrounding environments.

*Perceived space*, or spatial practice, “embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). Perceived space includes the built environment and the creation of spaces for specific purposes, for example a classroom. An individual’s perception of such space
conditions their reality and their usage of the space, and their perception is influenced by any pre-conceived notions residing in the conceived space. Thus, perceived space is connected with both conceived and lived space as an individual’s rhythms of daily life within lived space is interrelated to their perception of how the material space may be used. Perceived space is linked to both production and reproduction of space—an individual’s perception of space influences their routines, and their routines influence their perception of space. Thus perceived space is rooted in an individual’s perception of the material world, which shapes their movement and engagement with spaces that serve the purpose to foster learning.

Embracing dialectical logic, Lefebvre situates lived space between the poles of perception and conception—with the body involved in the opposition, acting as mediator. Spatial practices or perceived space, which are contingent on the use of bodily senses, are lived before they are conceived (Merrifield, 1993; Simonsen, 2005), therefore demonstrating the intimate interconnection between moments of the perceived-lived-conceived and the central role of the body in mediating experience. Thus, Lefebvre’s (1991) theory on the production of space provides a fruitful framework for both emplacing and embodying experiential learning by adding a spatial dimension to Dewey’s philosophy of experiential education.

**Spatiality & Dewey’s Theory of Experience.** Despite Dewey’s principle of continuity, which recognizes the interrelations between mind, body, and environment with respect to experience, his theory does not adequately account for spatiality. Without an understanding of space and place, which are at the heart of the human experience, the process of experiential learning cannot be fully grasped. All human experience is bound up in place, thus any changes in life, for instance learning, dispatches itself from place.
Returning to Lefebvre’s claim that physical space (nature) is the point of departure in the production of social space, allows for the spatialization of Dewey’s claim that material life activity is the point of departure in the learning process. In other words, engagement with place, which includes people, leads to the production of space. Material life activity is emplaced—it is rooted in physical space, which shapes the type of activity afforded to the learner. Further, Dewey’s conceptualization of experience begins with the learner’s adaptation to the environment; in Lefebvrian terms the environment includes both physical and social space, and it is when routine ways of doing things do not match preconceived notions (or existing mental space/knowledge) that reflective thought is stimulated. The purpose of including experiential learning in study abroad programs should be to stimulate reflective thought through contextualized meaning-making that leads to fresh, enlivening discoveries of the self and world that, as Lefebvre might argue, will contribute to the development of citizens ready to advocate for social change. Lefebvre is concerned with understanding “everydayness” and identifying moments of the “extra-everyday”, or generative and creative moments (e.g. dance, festivals) that are sites of resistance of the oppressive power of capitalist society. Within the context of experiential learning in study abroad, these “moments” can be sites of resistance to dominant discourses and hierarchies of power, colonialism, and difference. Thus, experiential educators must concern themselves with “everydayness” to best facilitate learning experiences and provide students with the tools necessary to engage with their surrounding environments in a meaningful way. For example, study abroad programs require an understanding of the interaction between the everyday of students and the everyday of locals, to facilitate the production of experiential learning space, as within these spaces two cultural and experiential everydays collide. The perceived, lived, and conceived spaces, mediated by material life activity, must come together in
a sensible, and meaningful way for learning to occur. For example, moments of the everyday provide the perfect opportunity to engage students in their pre-conceived notions of place, where those representations came from, and how they can be renegotiated.

Lefebvre’s recognition of the dialectic relationship between perceived (material) and conceived (abstract) space provides some respite to the tensions encountered within using “experience” as a noun or a verb in experiential education literature—experience as a noun or object of reflection sits within the realm of the material and concrete perceptions; while experience as a verb or the process of encounter sits within the abstract and mental conceptions of surrounding environments. Further, in considering the ways in which experiential learning in one context may carry over to another, perhaps the perceived refers to the here-and-now and the conceived refers to what parts of the experience endures—with the embodied lived experience as the mediator between the two—carrying what is endured to different locations. It is necessary to understand both the material experience (e.g. a field trip to a museum) and abstract experience (e.g. how the learner makes-meaning of the field trip), with the body as central to the process. Conceived space, or representations of space, are also lurking in this process, and I demonstrate this empirically in both Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco) and Chapter 4 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali). Can experience not have a dual role, much like the body has the dual role of perceiver and perceived within the process of production? The meaning of the body will be briefly addressed in the following section; as while Lefebvre’s theory on the production of space provides a supportive structure for understanding the spatiality of experiential learning, we also need to consider the interaction between the rhythms of daily life of the person-in-environment.
Embodying Experiential Learning

Experiential learning as an embodied phenomenon is not a radical new idea, but an ancient concept rooted in indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world (Basso, 1996; Castellano, 2000; Cruickshank, 1998; Fenwick, 2003; McIssac, 2000). Drawing from Castellano (2000) and McIsaac (2000), Fenwick (2003) articulately states: “indigenous ways of knowing...have maintained that spirit, mind, and body are not separated in experience, that learning is more focused on being than doing, and that experiential knowledge is produced within the collective, not the individual mind” (p. 6). Indigenous people’s life stories and knowledge are entangled in place and rooted in collective historic experiences that emerge in the moments and rhythms of everyday action (Basso, 1996; Cruikshank, 1998; Fenwick, 2003).

Enactivism and Rhythmanalysis. Related to embodied experience within the context of experiential learning, the relatively recent emergence of an enactivist perspective on experiential learning frames cognition as dependent on the kinds of experience that come from “having a body with various sensorimotor capacities embedded in a biological, psychological, cultural context” (Fenwick, 2000, p.261). In enactivism, cognition and environment become simultaneously enacted through experiential learning—in other words, the environment and the learner emerge together in the process of cognition. With a focus on the relationship between the components of experience in enacting a space (e.g. tools, community, symbols) enactivism is aligned with Lefebvre’s (1991) production of space as enactivism views the learning environment as a system, with body and material life activity at the center.

Though overshadowed by his theories on the production of (social) space, Lefebvre’s consideration of embodied lived experience is present throughout his writing (Simonsen, 2005). Indeed, the corporeal body is central within his tripartite dimensions of spatiality; described as
the “mediator” between different dimensions through everyday lived experience (Simonsen, 2005). In other words, from a Lefebvrian perspective, an individual is inextricably nested within surrounding environments such that through rhythms, bodies not only take up space, but also produce space. Lefebvre’s conception of “rhythmanalysis” (Lefebvre, 1992) can allow for a more re-embodying of experiential learning. According to Lefebvre (1992), “Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time, and an expenditure of energy, there is a rhythm” (p.15). Rhythmanalysis stresses the centrality of the body to understanding social contexts of the environment and transcends divisions between space and time (Simonsen, 2005). Rhythms, defined by movements and differences in repetition, have to do with needs and desires, some of which are easily identifiable (e.g. hunger, thirst, breathing) while others (e.g. thought, social life, sexuality) are more hidden (Lefebvre, 1992). Lefebvre speaks of harmony and disharmony of rhythms; disharmony of rhythms can be the source of pathologies, or catalysts for change. Relating this to the context of experiential learning, perhaps then disruptions of the rhythms or routines of everyday life also disrupt inner rhythms within the individual, eliciting a response to re-harmonize not only within the self, but also within the larger sociocultural environment—this could be a catalyst for learning about the self and surrounding environment.

Throughout this dissertation, when reporting results of my analysis of narrative activities, I use the phrase “enacted in student narrating” to demonstrate that student narratives were part of the production of experiential learning space and cannot be separated from it—they are part of the process. The stories students decide to share, or not share, in their narrative activities is inextricably embedded in the program environment, and co-emerge with the production of experiential learning space.
Now that I have made my case for place in study abroad and experiential learning, in the following section, I present the methodology embraced by the present inquiry to explore the role of place in the production of experiential learning space, or as Lefebvre might call it an appropriated space aimed at changing life and changing society by fostering relationality and rethinking ideas of difference.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the research design and methodology of this study in order to explore the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali. To fully explore this dissertation’s research question and sub-questions, I used a multi-case study design that gathered multiple sources of data, and was longitudinal and comparative in nature. I provide a review of the overarching methodology, including multi-case design and narrative, describe case selection, and provide descriptions of both programs and the demographics of participants, including data collection and data sources, including participant-observation, narrative activities, and one-year follow-up interviews. I present my overall approach to analysis, as well as an overview of the methods undertaken in the three stand-alone chapters that aim at answering of the sub-questions of this work.
Research Design

**Multi-case study.** A qualitative case study methodology “facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources […] which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). The use of multiple data sources, within two study abroad cases (described later), provided opportunities to obtain data that reflected the goals of this study. Further, because I was interested in the role of place in shaping student learning experiences while studying abroad by exploring patterns, similarities, and differences between the contextual environments and student experiences in/of place within two study abroad programs, a multiple-, or collective-case study approach is necessary (Yin, 2014; Stake, 1995). Multiple case studies with embedded units of analysis are appropriate to enrich the understanding of processes, contexts, and phenomena in question. Further, multiple case studies allow for comparative analysis and synthesis (described in data analysis section) to identify relationships between cases, which is central to this study. Evidence from multiple case study research designs are considered robust and reliable (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014). Further, the use of multiple data sources, the first supporting principle of case study design (Yin, 2014), allows for triangulation, which strengthens validity (Patton, 2002).

For these reasons, I carried out a qualitative multi-case study design with embedded units of analysis. Unlike outcomes-based research that focuses on the individual as the unit of analysis, in the spirit of a merged sociocultural (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) and socio-spatial perspective (Beyes & Michels, 2011; Lefebvre, 1991/1974), this study embraced narrative activities as a unit of analysis, as these activities encompassed the interaction between learners and their environment (Leontiev, 1977). Using this merged perspective to explore study abroad students’ experiences in/of place allowed for the exploration of experiential learning space from
a relational point of view appreciative of the dynamic relationship between humans and place, and supportive of the social production of experiential learning space (Lefebvre, 1991/1974). To this end, each study abroad program acted as an individual case, with each narrative activity as an embedded units of analysis (see Figure 2.1 below). The dotted lines indicate that each layer including context, cases, and embedded units are interconnected (Yin, 2014). Also note that there were more than three narrative activities; I provide only three for simplicity of the figure.

Figure 2.1. Visual representation of the multi-case design of the current inquiry

Yin (2014) outlines four supporting principles of high-quality case study design: 1) using multiple sources of evidence; 2) creating a case study database; 3) maintaining a chain of evidence; and 4) exercising care when using data from electronic sources. The first three principles applied to this project. In line with the first principle, and in effort to strengthen my
multiple case study design, I gathered multiple sources of evidence in the form of participant-observation, student narratives, and one-year follow-up interviews. The use of multiple data sources allowed me not only to explore a broader range of experiences and contexts within my two cases, but also to analyze converging lines of inquiry through data triangulation. This principle was particularly important considering my research question and sub-questions converged across an overarching line of inquiry—the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad. Aligning with this principle allowed me to support my findings with multiple sources of evidence that explored the same phenomena across two study abroad programs. Further, because I was interested in students’ experiences and meaning-making within two programs, triangulation of multiple sources of evidence within and across case studies was important in order to appreciate multiple ways of knowing and the ways in which they can shift across contexts.

In line with the second principle, I created a case study database to organize and document data collected for my case studies (Yin, 2014). My case study database was in electronic form and consisted of two separate collections: 1) raw data and 2) reports and interpretations of data. I used MAXQDA, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, to house, code and analyze data, all the while keeping a copy of data in its raw form separated and preserved. My case study database included case study documents collected, audio and transcribed interviews, and coding systems—all of which aimed toward increasing the reliability of this project (Yin, 2014). To further increase the reliability of my case study design, in line with the third principle, I maintained a chain of evidence during case analysis and reporting by constantly referring back to my research question and sub-questions, and clearly reporting the source of evidence in my annotations.
An embedded multi-case study combined with comparative case analysis enhanced my ability to understand the production of knowledge and meaningful relationships between place, pedagogy, and culture within two study abroad programs. Multi-case studies are tied together through common research questions and guiding inquiries (Stake, 2014), which facilitate an enriched understanding of the overarching line of inquiry. Thus, this approach richly contributed to this dissertation’s exploration of the ways in which student engagement with place shaped, and was shaped by, the production of experiential learning space in two study abroad programs.

**Narrative.** Throughout the Morocco and Bali programs, students completed a series of narrative activities that doubled as coursework for the program (e.g. reflective journals; reaction papers). Thus, the design of this study was enriched through the use of narrative as tool of inquiry—to understand the role of place and the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs, I also had to consider how study abroad students experience, or make meaning of, place. The use of narratives was essential as student lived experience and contextualized meaning-making are key to understanding the production of experiential learning space. Further, as described below, the use of narrative as a tool of inquiry aligns well within my conceptual frameworks including, the production of experiential learning space.

Contextualized within “a complex network of social structural, interpersonal, and environmental relations” (Daiute, 2014, p. 33), narrative carries with it a meaning-making function, acting as a tool for individuals to make sense of themselves, others, their environment and how they fit (Daiute, 2014). Narrative can also act as a space for imagining possible worlds and future selves (Daiute, 2014). In other words, through narrative, individuals make sense of who they are and where they are, and even who and where they will be in the future. By collecting narratives elicited and embedded within the context of everyday life in two study
abroad programs, I was able to explore the ways in which students use narrative to construct their personal experiences and interact with place, others, and situations.

Narratives are contextualized, social, and relational devices used to both make sense of the world and represent oneself to the self and others. Narrative relies on language, thus it is inherently social, and produced by individuals within the context of specific physical, social, and cultural environments of daily life (Daiute, 2014). According to Daiute (2014) narrative is rooted in material life and integrated with the symbolic and abstract:

Narrating is a physical process, rooted in the settings, scenarios, expressive features, and social relations of daily life, enacted verbally (also visually and in movement) and with inflections for effect beyond literal meaning (e.g. dialogue, intensifiers, metaphors, repetitions). The symbolic qualities of narrating link so closely with perception, action, and language use common in daily life that they create meaning that integrates symbolic and material expression. (p. 29)

Narratives unify the material and conceptual. The conceptual, or the meanings that individuals construct about the world around them, is also material because they are rooted and produced within material daily life. Meaning is material “because narratives are symbolic systems inextricably linked to persons, contexts, culture, and circumstances of their histories and expressive moments” (Daiute, 2014, p. 23). Thus, narratives can be conceptualized as social products, produced within dialectical interactions between physical, mental, and social spaces, mediated by the body (Lefebvre, 1991), and dialectical interactions between the experiential and conceptual through material life activity (Dewey, 1938). For these reasons, student narratives as a source of data were the heart of this study; they provided a window to peek into the ways in which the material and conceptual interact within experiential learning space. To this end, I used
narrating activities to massage what I cited previously as a major tension within the experiential learning literature—the relationship between the experiential and conceptual.

**Case Selection**

In order to draw comparisons between case studies, it is important that the cases are chosen carefully (Yin, 2014). The study abroad programs for this study needed to be structurally similar enough to draw place-based comparisons, yet differ in location and setting in order to provide a multilayered analysis of the role of the place. Overarching inclusionary case criteria included: a) program must be a psychology, short-term program no more than 4-weeks in length, b) program must be rooted in experiential education.

Conveniently, my dissertation advisor developed two psychology-based study abroad programs, both of which ran in the 2014 academic year. While this may have limited my ability to design an entire research study from the ground-up, such an endeavor is a large undertaking and I was enticed by the opportunity to conduct research with an existing program. This not only allowed me to collaborate with her to construct narrative activities that formed part of program coursework and worked in tandem with place-based experiential learning activities, but it also ensured that the approach taken to student learning, program structure, and coursework were as similar as possible on both programs, despite the differing foci of study. Further, the differing geography, landscape, and cultures of Morocco and Bali (see Table 2.1) allowed for a glimpse into how place may impact student meaning-making and the production of experiential learning space. This arrangement also came with limitations, which I discuss at the end of this chapter.
Table 2.1

Overview of Study Abroad Program Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Case I: Rabat, Morocco</th>
<th>Case II: Bali, Indonesia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Duration</strong></td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Season</strong></td>
<td>Winter Term</td>
<td>Summer Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Housing</strong></td>
<td>Host Family</td>
<td>Hotel Bungalows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate/Landscape</strong></td>
<td>Coastal Plains, Mountains/Dry</td>
<td>Rice fields, Volcanoes/Tropical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Exposure</strong></td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>Balinese Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Focus</strong></td>
<td>Multicultural Psychology; Psychology of Gender, Culture &amp; Community</td>
<td>Multicultural Psychology; Culture, Psychopathology &amp; Healing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Case Study Contexts**

Both the Morocco and Bali study abroad programs were academically intensive, rigorous and required the reading of interdisciplinary journal articles and the completion of written assignments, qualitative research projects, and oral presentations. Each program also required attendance to three pre-trip classes, in addition to basic language classes in each country—Arabic in Morocco and Bahasa Indonesian in Bali. I provide program context for each case study below, in addition to customized maps that visually display each host country with the diverse cities, regions, and landscapes relevant to each program (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3).
Morocco. The Morocco 2014 study abroad program ran from December 29th 2013-January 19th 2014. This three-week winter short-term study abroad program was established in 2008 and was designed to analyze psychological theories on the development of gender and the relevancy of gender in everyday life within the context of contemporary Moroccan culture. The program introduced students to how gender rights in Morocco have historically been a source of internal contest and how the law on the books, customary law, and community organizations have banded together to improve lives of women in Morocco. Students were exposed to how the examination of gender rights in the West has tended to marginalize non-Western cultures, stereotype such cultures as patriarchal or violent, and force Western interpretations of human rights without sensitivity to history or cultural context. In addition to socio-psychological theories of gender, students were exposed to different approaches of combating discrimination against women. Further, how social class, rural-urban geography, and ethnic differences within Morocco influence women and men’s positions were also discussed. Finally, community-based responses to improving women’s lives were considered.

My dissertation advisor acted as program director, having designed the program in 2013 from the ground up together with the support of an American non-profit organization with a country headquarters based in Rabat, Morocco (see Figure 2.2) whose mission is to increase cross-cultural understanding and expand educational opportunities in the Maghreb region. Students were enrolled in two interrelated courses (Multicultural Psychology; Psychology of Gender, Culture, and Community). Ten formal classes were held at the headquarters, which acted as the program home base, alongside eight guest lectures by local experts on family relationships, gender, violence, and Moroccan law. On-campus curriculum was supplemented by field excursions to NGOs and historical sites, such as the ancient Roman ruins of Chellah in
Rabat and Volibulus in Meknès, as well as visits with local activists and Muslim and secular feminists in order to foster firsthand learning about how Moroccan society engages with issues surrounding gender and culture. Further, traveling through Morocco, including major cities (Marrakech, Fès, Casablanca) and villages in the Middle Atlas Mountains (Ifran) allowed students to interact with men and women, which afforded opportunities to dispel many myths about Islam, and women’s position within Islam (see Figure 2.2). To facilitate student experiences of rhythms of daily life, student pairs lived in homestays with Moroccan families in the Rabat Medina, the non-European quarter of Rabat, geographically located on the shore where the Bouregag River and Atlantic Ocean come together.

Figure 2.2 Geographical map of Morocco indicating the diverse regions visited. Custom Map Credit: Chelsea Gross – Chelsea the Cartographer, LLC
Bali. The Bali 2014 program ran from May 28th 2014-June 28th 2014. This four-week short-term study abroad program was established in 2011 and was designed to stimulate students’ understanding of the construction of the Balinese self and society by introducing students to theoretical debates on whether psychology of the self is universal or culturally specific, and extending these debates to understand what constitutes mental illness and how the Balinese enforce prevention and healing within their culture. An additional embedded program goal was to stimulate student awareness of their own cultural lens and exotified representations.

My dissertation advisor acted as program director and designed the program from the ground up with the support of an experienced Balinese guide and liaison. Student pairs lived in family-owned and operated bungalows overlooking the rice fields at the end of Jalan Kajeng, a quiet street with local shops and eateries in the Balinese village of Ubud, geographically located near the center of the island. Formal classes and guest lectures took place at the bungalow site in an outdoor, open air cafeteria overlooking rice fields that doubled as the program’s classroom. Students were enrolled in two interrelated courses (Multicultural Psychology; Culture, Psychopathology, and Healing) aimed at helping students understand the local Balinese environment. Each class required intensive readings supplemented by 12 formal classroom lectures, six guest lectures by local Balinese dance, weaving, and physical and mental health specialists, five field lectures, and 12 field trips. Further, both classes required written coursework and presentations for a grade. All guest lectures and field trips were designed to illustrate or complement formal classroom lectures. The program visited numerous temples, villages, and historical sites, including visiting Tampakasiring for a full moon purification ceremony, hiking Mt. Batur’s volcanic slopes, and weekending in Lovina on the black sand beaches of Bali’s northern coast (see Figure 2.3)
Participants¹

Students enrolled in each program were recruited to participate in this study in-person, upon arrival to respective program destinations. Importantly, the first consent form, which was distributed in the field, invited students to consent to being part of participant-observation, and to participating in one-year post-program interviews. Because narrating activities were part of

¹ This study was approved by the John Jay College Institutional Review Board, a branch of the CUNY Human Subjects Research Protection Program, (protocols #607171-1 and #530043-1).
student coursework, only after grades were submitted did I email a second consent form asking students for permission to download their coursework from Blackboard for review, which lessened the potential of coercion. The faculty program leader was not aware of who agreed to participate, and who did not. That being said, only one student in the Morocco program declined to participate.

All 19 participants (18 females, 1 male) in this study were undergraduates enrolled at a large public urban university with the exception of three graduate students in the Morocco program.

Morocco 2014. In Case One (Morocco), nine students consented to be a part of this study, but one was lost to attrition. The eight members of the program were all women ages 19 to 26, averaging about 22 years of age. Five of these participants or their parents were born outside of the United States (Dominican Republic, Guyana, Poland). I provide individualized participant demographic information in Table 2.2.

Bali 2014. In Case Two (Bali 2014), all fourteen students consented to be part of this study, however, three were lost to attrition (i.e. contact was lost post-program either for coursework consent or to schedule follow-up interview). The total number of students who participated in this study from the Bali 2014 program was eleven. Eight out of eleven students, or one or both parents, were born outside the United States (Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Japan, Soviet Union) and at the time of the study, participants ages ranged from 19 to 27 years of age, with an average age of 20. Individualized participant demographic information is provided in Table 2.3.
Table 2.2

Research Participants: Members of the Morocco 2014 Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major/Minor</th>
<th>(bi)Cultural Identity</th>
<th>Previous Travel Abroad + Study Abroad (SA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wren</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Forensic Psychology (graduate student)</td>
<td>Born in Poland → U.S. 7yo</td>
<td>Yes + Mexico semester abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marigold</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Forensic Mental Health Counseling (graduate student)</td>
<td>Born in Guyana → U.S. 4yo</td>
<td>Yes + Bali short-term SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaye</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Criminal Justice/Psychology</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paloma</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Born in Ecuador → U.S. 6yo</td>
<td>Yes (home country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Criminal Justice/Criminology</td>
<td>Born in Dominican Republic → U.S. 10yo</td>
<td>Yes (home country) + Bali short-term SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Public Administration (graduate student)</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
<td>Yes +Argentina short-term SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paloma</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Born in Ecuador → U.S. 6yo</td>
<td>Yes (home country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Gender Studies/Sociology</td>
<td>Born in Dominican Republic → U.S. 4yo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savanna</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Forensic Psychology/Arabic</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Pseudonyms are used for all participants; reported age indicates age during the program; → U.S. indicates age when moved to the United States; previous travel reported indicates travel prior to program; previous travel noted with (home country) indicates previous travel was limited to visiting country of birth.
Table 2.3

Research Participants: Members of the Bali 2014 Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major/Minor</th>
<th>(bi)Cultural Identity</th>
<th>Previous Travel Abroad + Study Abroad (SA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nellie</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Forensic Psychology</td>
<td>Born in Dominic Republic → U.S. 9yo</td>
<td>Yes (home country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josie</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Forensic Psychology/Gender Studies</td>
<td>U.S. born; Mother born in Canada; Irish background</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinna</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Forensic Psychology/Criminal Justice</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
<td>No (except Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Post-baccalaureate</td>
<td>U.S born; Parents born in Japan</td>
<td>Yes + England for 2 semesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Criminology/Psychology</td>
<td>U.S. born; Father born in Jamaica</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>U.S. born; Parents born in Bangladesh</td>
<td>Yes (parent birth country) + Jordan short-term SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophelia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Psychology/Philosophy</td>
<td>U.S. born; Parents born in Colombia</td>
<td>Yes (parent birth country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassidy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Psychology/Neuroscience</td>
<td>U.S. born; Parents born in Soviet Union</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layla</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>U.S. born; Mother born in Philippines</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izabella</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Forensic Psychology/Theatre</td>
<td>Born in Jamaica → U.S. 12 yo</td>
<td>Yes (home country; UK to visit family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Biology, Religion/LGBTQ Studies</td>
<td>U.S. born</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Pseudonyms are used for all participants; reported age indicates age during the program; → U.S. indicates age when moved to the United States; previous travel reported indicates travel prior to program; previous travel noted with (home country) or (parent birth country) indicates previous travel was limited to visiting country of their or one or more parent’s birth.
A few things are worth noting regarding this group of participants. One potential limitation lays in the main difference between the two program cohorts: three participants in the Morocco 2014 cohort were graduate students. A potential strength lays in the diversity of both samples regarding bi-cultural identifications that are well above the national average. This bi-cultural and ethnic diversity is in congruence with the overall profile of students who participate in study abroad at the college that hosted these two programs, which maintains an exemplary record of diversity compared to national trends (Yanes, 2016).

**Data Collection**

This study employed the use of gathering data from multiple sources as a strategy to provide thick description and enhance data credibility (Yin, 2014). Methods of data collection were parallel for both Morocco and Bali programs in order to strengthen transferability between the cases, including: participant-observation, student narratives, and follow-up interviews (see Table 2.4).

**Participant-observation.** Following the pilot study (described later), it was decided that participant-observation was critical to provide context for each study abroad program and student narratives. Thus, I attended both study abroad programs in Rabat, Morocco (December 29, 2013-January 18, 2014) and Bali, Indonesia (May 28, 2014-June 28, 2014). I was with students daily on average from 9:00am-8:00pm, including class lectures, field excursions, program activities, group dinners, and evening outings. I took photographs and recorded observations in a field notebook. Special attention was paid to class lectures and discussions, field trips, and rhythms of daily life, which provided context for the analysis of student narratives. Participant-observation allowed me to observe, and participate in, the physical and social spaces of the program. Importantly, I was not observing participants’ individual behaviors so much as garnering context
for pedagogical activities. Also of note, I attended pre-trip sessions for both the Morocco and Bali programs, however, data collection did not begin until consent was obtained upon arrival to program destinations.

**Narrative Activities.** Coursework on both programs included rigorous assigned readings, the completion of narrative activities including reflective journals and reaction papers, fieldwork, and visual presentations of research. Of particular interest were student narratives collected in the form of eight journals, which were submitted to the City University of New York’s web-based course management program. During analysis, I kept in mind that because these narratives were a part of program coursework, the audience students wrote for included the faculty program leader, who was grading the assignments.

Narrative activities included pre-departure, arrival, and final reflection journals. The remaining journals were used in tandem with experiential learning activities. These narrative activities were crafted to guide students in reflection and critical analysis of the readings, class lectures, and their experiences on field trips. Since experiential learning activities differed across both programs, prompts were carefully constructed to be matched as closely as possible. For example, students were prompted to describe an excursion to an important cultural area without exotifying it—in Morocco, a visit to a large outdoor market, and in Bali, a full moon purification ceremony. Together, the journal prompts blended formal and informal writing together to help students personalize and contextualize their experiences within the novel cultural environment. These narrative activities gave students space to explore not only what they had experienced, but also, *how* knowledge is produced, including the ways in which their learning experiences were impacted by the lens through which they view the world and the group that they are traveling with. These prompts aimed at engaging students with place and culture both emotionally and
intellectually, in hopes of cultivating cultural and environmental awareness, and intellectual prowess throughout the study abroad experience. A comprehensive list of journal prompts is provided in Appendix A. Of note, the Bali 2014 program included additional coursework in the form of four reaction papers, which were used as part of the place-based intervention described and assessed in Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali), where more details are provided.

**Follow-up interviews.** Follow-up interviews aimed at providing insight into what experiences and places remain salient a year later. Interviews also gave students the space to provide feedback on the overall program. Interviews lasted between 60-120 minutes, with a total of nearly 30 hours of interviews. Fifteen interviews were completed in person, and the other four were completed over the phone. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for qualitative coding. A complete follow-up interview protocol is provided in Appendix B.

**Pilot study: Bali 2013.** In order to test the feasibility of the study, a pilot was conducted with students who participated in the Bali 2013 study abroad program. The pilot study was funded and culminated in the first of what would be two editions of a programmatic teaching guide and evaluation codebook (Pipitone & Raghavan, 2014) with an eye toward the intersection of art-based and place-based experiential learning. Seven out of 14 students in the Bali 2013 program consented\(^2\) to one-year follow-up interviews and agreed to have their coursework analyzed, which included eight journals and two reactions papers. Two main findings from the pilot informed the present inquiry. First, analysis suggested that while journals were rich data sources, they also suggested the prompts could be strengthened to encourage richer, comparative, and analytical responses. Second, analysis sparked the idea for the inclusion of pre-departure,

\(^2\) This pilot study was approved by the John Jay College (CUNY) Institutional Review Board (protocol #591280-1).
arrival, and departure reflection journals to encourage student self-awareness and analyses of their own perceptions throughout the program. Further, accurately reconstructing how spaces of experiential learning were produced was limited because I had not been present as a participant-observer with the program, which is why I obtained funding to attend the 2014 programs.

Table 2.4
Data Collection Methods and Data, By Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant-Observation</td>
<td>Field notes during the Morocco 2014 and Bali 2014 programs, including lectures, field trips, and notes on the general culture, practices, and rhythms of daily life. Field notes focused more so on activities than participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Narratives</td>
<td>Students completed eight narrative activities in the form of journals as part of program coursework. Bali 2014 students completed four additional narratives in the form of reaction papers. Narrative activity prompts are provided in Appendix A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up Interviews</td>
<td>Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted one-year post-program and followed the protocol provided in Appendix B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Pilot-study conducted with Bali 2013 program did not include participant-observation and only included two reaction papers.

Aside from informing the present inquiry, the Bali 2013 pilot study was relevant to this dissertation in that three narrative activities completed by participants in the form of one journal and two reaction papers, in addition to parallel portions of their one-year follow-up interviews, were used as a comparison group for the place-based intervention conducted with Bali 2014 students described in Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali). The three aforementioned narrative activities were chosen as they remained the same across Bali 2013 and Bali 2014.
programs, which allowed me to conduct a longitudinal comparative case analysis of student experiences in/of Balinese society across two program cohorts. A list of Bali 2013 and Bali 2014 reaction paper prompts is provided in Appendix C. Next, I describe the ways in which data sources were analyzed in each of the following three chapters.

**Approach to Analysis**

Analysis and results are presented in the following three chapters, which act as standalone units and make up the main body of this work. Each chapter addresses one of the sub-questions of my larger research question (see Table 2.5 below), which asked, “What is the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs?” Each chapter reviews specific literature and methodology aimed at answering one of the sub-questions of this dissertation before conducting place-based analysis on one or more purposive sets of data drawn from the large pool collected with participants in the Morocco 2014 and Bali 2014 study abroad programs. Additionally, in the final results chapter (Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali), I used a set of data collected during my pilot study with the Bali 2013 program to conduct a comparative case analysis. The arm of analysis stretching across all three papers is content-based, with the exception of Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), in which I also conduct an exploratory socio-spatial analysis of student experiences in/of place. In Chapter 4 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali)) and Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali) I provide details on the coding systems I developed for each line of analysis. Table 2.5 provides an overview of the methodology and sub-questions taken up in each results chapter, and Figure 2.4 provides a screenshot of a sample student narrative and my coding system housed within MAXQDA, the qualitative data management system used for this project.
Table 2.5

Overview of Methodology of Each Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>How can a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning advance place-based research in study abroad?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Case</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Data</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>How does student engagement with place contribute to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cases</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>How might the inclusion of a place-responsive pedagogical intervention shape student experiences in/of an exotified cultural environment?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cases</strong></td>
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**Note.** Sub-research question addressed in each of the three papers is presented in italics.
Figure 2.4 provides a screenshot of my coding system with a sample student narrative. The blue folders in the upper left quadrant indicate sets of student narratives, organized by journal prompt (e.g. Morocco Journal 5 Tigemmy; Morocco Journal 6 NGOs). The quadrant below houses my coding system, which are grouped into families of codes (e.g. Engagement with Place; Comparison to Familiar Places), which are color coded. The main area of the screen houses the student narrative being analyzed. As a sample, I have used Wren’s Journal 5 to illustrate how a coded sample student narrative appears in MAXQDA. To the left of the narrative are color coded codes. For example, engagement with the physical environment is coded in green, and sensory engagement is coded in purple, and comparisons to familiar places are coded in blue. For the purposes of this screenshot, to demonstrate the variety of codes present in this sample, I turned on color coding within the text to visually present codes, however when coding I did not keep this feature on as it makes it difficult to read.
Limitations

As is the case with all research, this study is not without limitations that warrant acknowledgement. In this section I discuss such limitations and the steps taken as an effort to keep the study free of biases that are commonly mentioned as threats to internal credibility in connection with qualitative research, including participant-observer bias, researcher bias, and confirmation bias.

The first potential source of bias that warrants acknowledgement stems from my role as a participant-researcher with two study abroad programs run by my dissertation advisor, which may raise questions regarding my authority and potential manipulability of programming to fit my research questions. It is important to note that both the Morocco and Bali study abroad programs were already developed prior to my joining as a researcher; I exerted no explicit or intentional action over the program structure, field trips, classes, or group discussions. Two exceptions to this involved the pre-trip class in Bali 2014, which I developed together with my dissertation advisor as a place-responsive intervention (*Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali*), and the narrative prompts that doubled as student coursework, both of which were part of my research methodology. While it is not problematic when programs, interventions, or methods are founded in theory—in fact this is encouraged—it is worth noting that aside from the instances stated above, neither program, nor its pedagogy, was developed specifically with place-based pedagogy or a Lefebvrian perspective of experiential learning in mind. I called upon these theories as a conceptual framework and lens for analysis to evaluate programs pedagogically, and to inform future program development. Overall, this could be translated as a potential strength of this study from a research perspective, as it speaks to the utility of calling upon such a
framework to assess or evaluate existing experiential education programs that were not developed with place-based theory in mind.

During recruitment at the start of both programs, students were made aware of my role as participant-researcher and I disclosed that my research was on study abroad programs broadly. It also worth mentioning here the presence of self-selection bias, as students voluntarily applied for acceptance into the Morocco and Bali programs through the John Jay College study abroad office, and thus it can be assumed that the group of students recruited for participation in this study had a previous interest in the culture and subject matter. However, this is the case across research on study abroad programs as most, if not all, students enroll voluntarily.

Coercion to participate in this study was minimized by ensuring my dissertation advisor, who doubled as the faculty program leader, was unaware of who participated. Further, consent to include coursework in this study was collected after programs were complete and grades submitted. This served the dual purpose of not only minimizing coercion, but also to ensure that student narratives were written without knowledge they would be analyzed as part of a larger research study.

As an effort to alleviate student anxiety regarding my role as participant-researcher, I also made it clear to students that I would not be taking notes on their individual behaviors or remarks during the program, but rather on wider program phenomena including class structure, field trips, and activities. Further, with the exception of field notes recorded during classes and guest lectures when the entire group had notebooks out, I recorded field notes at the end of each day while I was alone, rather than in front of students. I was also careful to listen more than contribute to group discussions. However, I do acknowledge that my mere presence as a participant-observer, in addition to being the faculty program leader’s doctoral student, may have
influenced how I was perceived by students, and thus, may have impacted their behavior. Like all researchers, it was impossible to separate myself from my positionality and subjectivities, which may have impacted students during my interactions with them without my knowing.

A second source of biases in the study stems from researcher bias and confirmation bias, which are common challenges in qualitative studies. In an effort to manage these biases in participant-observation, prior to departure I carefully defined the types of phenomena I would be observing and recording (Schweigert, 2006), including class content and structure, activities on field trips, rhythms of daily life, cultural practices encountered, and the overall group’s engagement with place, pedagogy, and culture. To further minimize bias, in my field notes I separated my observations and interpretations. I also kept a separate journal to record my personal experiences abroad. The main purpose of participant-observation was to have a context through which to understand and analyze participant narratives. Understanding student experiences and encounters within a novel cultural environment that I was unfamiliar with would have undoubtedly been more difficult; however, I do acknowledge that my experiences and subjectivities influenced, and may have biased my approach to analysis. My ability to be critical of Morocco and Bali program pedagogy may have been further complicated by my relationship with my dissertation advisor, as she developed these programs. That being said, throughout this process my advisor was supportive of critique, and open to uncovering ways in which the programs could be improved.

In order to further minimize researcher bias and confirmation bias, and strengthen reliability of data analysis and results, I assembled a research team that included two students who were completing their Master’s degree in psychology to serve as research assistants and inter-rater reliability coders. They were provided with an exhaustive list of codes and code
descriptions relevant to this study, but were unaware of the study’s research questions or anticipated results. On average, we met bi-weekly over the course of a year to address questions, compare and refine codes, and discuss interpretations of student narratives. Inter-rater reliability coding was conducted with a subset of data that represented roughly 25% of the total data collected using the percent agreement method (number of agreements / number of opportunities for agreement *100). Since our research team worked closely over an extended period of time, we were able to refine codes and conduct multiple rounds of coding as necessary, which ultimately resulted in an overall inter-rater agreement of 94%. Disagreements occurred in cases that participant narratives, or portions of them, required knowledge of Moroccan or Balinese places or cultural practices that research assistants were unfamiliar with. For example, if students referred to Pura Tirta Empul in their narratives, research assistants were unaware that this is referring to a purification temple in Bali. Other instances of inter-coder disagreement were due to one of the coders missing an instance that should have been coded.

This chapter has reviewed the methodology undertaken to explore the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in two study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali, Indonesia. The following three chapters take up each of the three research sub-questions aimed at fully answering this question.
CHAPTER III

SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF STUDY ABROAD STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN/OF PLACE IN MOROCCO³

Abstract

This chapter builds upon existing place-based research through the application of a socio-spatial perspective—one that views space as both socially produced and socially producing—to make sense of how students’ experiences in/of place shape and are shaped by the production of experiential learning space. Rather than focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis, this chapter is concerned with how knowledge was produced within a three-week study abroad program to Morocco. Data were collected with eight participants through participant-observation and narratives in the form of eight journals. I conduct a socio-spatial analysis of this data guided by Lefebvre’s spatial theory, and offer three “spatial readings” of my findings including: a diverse country of paradox; encountered histories; and positioned bodies through narrative.

Findings suggest the production of experiential learning space was mediated through social interactions, engagement with local rhythms and histories, and intentional narrative activities. Engaging students with place was found to be fundamental to the production of experiential learning space. As a tool for pedagogical practice, the relational structure of Lefebvre’s spatial triad affords educators an opportunity to consider how learning spaces are socially produced, and provides multiple entry points to engage students meaningfully with place.

Keywords: experiential learning space, study abroad, Lefebvre, place, pedagogy

³ A version of this chapter was accepted for publication in the Journal of Experiential Education on April 15, 2017.
In this exploratory case study, I used a socio-spatial perspective to consider how engagement with surrounding environments may lead to the production of experiential learning space and influence participants’ experiences in/of place during a short-term study abroad program to Rabat, Morocco, in order to understand *how a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning can advance place-based research in study abroad*. I conceptualize place, not as space that has been imbued with individual meaning (Tuan, 1977), but as landscapes full of sociocultural and historical meanings to be engaged with. Encounters with place are participatory and experiential phenomena influenced by geophysical and corporeal realities and cultural ideas (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Shifting away from constructivist conceptions of experiential learning that deny place and privilege individual meaning-making in the form of cognitive learning cycles (e.g. Kolb, 1984), I recognize that learning is a collaborative process mediated through embodied experience and situated within contextualized space (Seaman, 2007) and time (Doerr, 2016). Rather than focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis, this project is concerned with wider phenomena of experiential learning, including understanding *how* knowledge was produced within the Morocco study abroad program, with a focus on place.

Using Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) spatial theory as a conceptual framework, I present a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning then offer three “spatial readings” (Beyes & Michels, 2011) of our findings to make sense of how participants’ experiences in/of place in Morocco shaped and were shaped by the production of experiential learning space. Importantly, our conception of learning space differs from learning space developed by Kolb and Kolb (2005), which considers space as residing within individual experience. Instead, our conceptualization of learning space is situated within a socio-spatial perspective, which allows for exploration into the ways in which experiences in/of place are both socially produced and
socially producing through engagement with surrounding environments (Lefebvre, 1991/1974). We see this article as contributing to the field experiential education by joining ongoing conversations surrounding the role of place and considering the ways in which a socio-spatial perspective may enrich, and even act as a connective tissue between research, practice, and knowledge production.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, recognizing the use of study abroad as case study for research may be critiqued as being exotic or contradict some experiential educator’s push to appreciate the local, I make a case for why this research is relevant by reviewing denials of place in experiential education and study abroad. Next, I introduce a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning and uncover spatial stories present in experiential education literature, followed by an outline of Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) spatial theory, including his spatial triad. This is followed by a methodological section, including a brief introduction to the Morocco program context and details on my approach to analysis. Then, I conduct a socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco program using Lefebvre’s spatial triad—conceived, perceived, and lived space—and offer three spatial readings of my findings. Finally, implications for the field of experiential education are discussed.

**Denials of Place in Experiential Education and Study Abroad**

In their comprehensive text, *A Pedagogy of Place: Outdoor Education for a Changing World*, Wattchow and Brown (2011) question assumptions ordinarily taken for granted about outdoor education and provide an arguably comprehensive review of place-based research to present an alternative pedagogy of outdoor education that is responsive to local geographies, affordances, and cultural traditions. While their focus is on outdoor education, parallels can be drawn between the dangers of denying place within experiential education and applied to the
importance of the role of place across disciplines and fields—for example, study abroad. These denials of place include romantic views of nature, an adventure and risk pedagogy, and a focus on individual experiential learning cycles.

Akin to the ways that romantic views of nature deny place in outdoor education by promoting the idea of nature as “wilderness” that is static, simplified, and devoid of local meanings (Wattchow & Brown, 2011), views of encountering the exotic in study abroad can similarly perpetuate the idea of a cultural “other” who is frozen in time and devoid of place. Both of these romanticized views contribute to denials of place by situating the “other” outside of time and space (Doerr, 2016a, 2016b; Gill, 1999 in Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Whether it is “othering” nature as wilderness or “othering” people or cultures as exotic, both run the risk of erasing the local meanings of place, as well as their alternative geographies and histories (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Indeed, just as wilderness exists as a social construction (Cronon, 1996) that promotes othering and homeostasis of nature, the exotification of “abroad-ness” also facilitates a discourse of homogeneity within countries, and heterogeneity between countries (Doerr, 2016a). In order to move away from romanticized, static views that may stifle learners’ experiences in/of place and promote separateness, nature and wilderness, and domesticity and abroad-ness should be viewed on a continuum, where learners are viewed as joining the ongoing production of these spaces in time (Doerr, 2016a, 2016b) through engagement with surrounding environments.

On a related note, another potential denial of place identified within outdoor education is the “promotion of adventure as a radical alternative to normality” (p. 33), which is saturated with imperialistic ideologies as it assumes that individuals must push boundaries to learn and grow, and that these “edges” exist only to be colonized or imbued within meaning for the individual
Chapter III: Experiences in/of Place

(Wattchow & Brown, 2011). This notion both decontextualizes (i.e., place is simply a backdrop for metaphorical challenges) and hyper-individualizes (i.e., personal development is what matters) the learners’ lived experience, ignoring the social, cultural, and historical discourses of place that shape and are shaped by the individual’s experience (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Out of this potential denial of place has emerged a discourse in experiential education to focus on the local, everyday experiences in/of place.

Similarly, study abroad, though certainly not embedded within one’s local community, need not and should not be conceptualized as a faraway place where learning and growth can occur through simple immersion within the exotic. A discourse that appreciates local histories, cultures, and rhythms of daily life beyond immersion in place—which alone does not guarantee learning simply because these phenomena cannot be experienced in the country of origin (Doerr, 2016a)—is also beneficial for study abroad. Study abroad locations should not be treated as boundaries to be pushed or empty spaces to be filled or colonized by the achievements of the student—these landscapes, like those in outdoor education, are full of existing socio-cultural values and histories in and of themselves—and are there for students to engage with, not colonize or consume. Considering that many institutions of higher education have expanded study abroad programs—particularly short-term programs—as an opportunity provide students with international and cultural experiences that aim to prepare them to succeed in today’s globalized world (Antonakopoulou, 2013; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; IIE, 2013), it is perhaps now more important than ever to consider intentional pedagogies that are not “othering,” “exotifying,” or “imperialistic.”

A common thread woven through the two previously discussed denials of place is a focus on the individual, which is at least in part supported by the third potential denial of place:
experiential learning cycles (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). It is outside the scope of this chapter to review these cycles (e.g. Kolb, 1984; see Chapter 1: Case for Place for review) or differing conceptions of experiential learning and their critics (for further review see Fenwick, 2000; Miettinen 2000, 2001; Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015; Seaman, 2008; Roberts, 2012; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). However, the main point here is that experiential learning cycles tend to privilege individual experience and meaning-making, which is largely situated within the realm of cognitive reflection, decontextualized and devoid of social and spatial relationships. Such conceptions leave the role of the sensing body and physical, social, historical, and cultural influences on learning and reflection largely unacknowledged. Wattchow and Brown (2011) suggest cyclical models of experiential learning not only “render the body invisible, but they actively deny embodied ways of knowing thereby presenting a hindrance to both the role of the learner’s body in experience and the ability to be responsive to place” (p. 48). Overall, these cycles fail to recognize that meaning-making is a collaborative process mediated through embodied experience and situated within contextualized sociocultural space (Seaman, 2007) and time (Doerr, 2016a).

**Socio-spatial Perspective of Experiential Learning**

A socio-spatial perspective embraces meaning-making as a participatory and collaborative process mediated through the body and embedded within social, spatial, and temporal realities. Learners are not seen as decontextualized, individual, passive consumers of knowledge, but instead active participants in the ongoing and collaborative process of making sense of themselves, the world and places within it. In this section, I present a review of relevant literature from a socio-spatial perspective, demonstrating the utility of such a perspective in identifying “spatial stories,” or space and stories emergent through bodily movement within
surrounding environments that contribute to understandings of place and self (Humberstone, 2011). This is followed by an introduction to Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space within the context of experiential learning.

**Uncovering Spatial Stories in Experiential Education Literature**

Experiences of place are rooted in bodily movement through environments (Corazon, Schilhab, & Stigsdotter, 2011; Humberstone, 2011; Johnson, 2008)—it is through our sensing bodies that we are able to experience place. The reverse is also true, as through place and movement across landscapes, including seascapes (Humberstone, 2011) and riverscapes (Mullins & Maher, 2007), we can come to know our sensing bodies. From research on the body-nature nexus with a community of windsurfers, Humberstone (2011) asserts that to “know” something, for example what it is to windsurf, one must experience it with all the senses. The (auto)ethnographies presented are layered with sensual language and embeddedness with not only fluid and fluxing seascapes, but also the larger windsurfing community. Movement within and through surrounding environments, such as the practice of windsurfing within seascapes, was found to create spaces and stories, or “spatial stories” (Beyes & Michels, 2011; Cresswell & Merrimen, 2011 in Humberstone, 2011) through physical practice (Humberstone, 2011). While causal links were not drawn, one spatial story that emerged from her research is the interconnectedness of the senses, embodiment, and social and environmental action/justice through practice, mediated by the body and expressed at personal, social, and political scales (Humberstone, 2011).

Mullins and Maher (2007) also explored the role of landscapes, or in their case riverscapes, in human change. Spatial stories emergent from their place-based Paddling the Big Sky expedition also recognized the role of the sensing body, movement and practice in coming to
know oneself in place, and place through oneself (Mullins & Maher, 2007). They stated, “wayfinding required our students and us to learn how to see, hear, and feel our way through our environment from our particular place” (Mullins & Maher, 2007, p. 404). A focus on corporeality and embodied knowledge does not divorce the body from material and social realities; it situates bodily experience within the sociocultural (Seaman & Rheingold, 2013) and socio-environmental (Mullins, 2014a, 2014b) contexts.

The emergence of spatial stories through intentional place-based pedagogies can also be seen in the pedagogical interventions of Preston and Griffiths (2004) and Nakagawa and Payne (2011). In their collaborative action research project with postgraduate students in an outdoor and environmental education program, Preston and Griffiths (2004) explored different ways of knowing a place by having participants encounter place through experiential, historical, scientific, and aesthetic “frames” over time. Overall, they found that an experiential frame was foundational to deepening connections with and getting to know a place. Analysis of journals also revealed that engagement with local place histories facilitated connections and understandings of place. This aligns with the idea that awareness of a place’s history can facilitate place attachment, or emotional connections with place (Lewicka, 2009; Low, 1992). Further preference for historical places over modern architecture has been documented (Nasar, 1998 in Lewicka, 2009), as engagement with histories of place afford symbolic connections to place that surpass temporal and spatial boundaries. With this in mind, place-based pedagogies that intentionally engage students in local historical discourse may facilitate learning and connections with place.

Nakagawa and Payne (2011) explored the ways in which study abroad students experienced beach as place during a semester-long program, entitled “Experiencing the
Australian Landscape” that was designed to foster place-responsive pedagogy through beach, and feelings of belonging or connectedness with it. Emergent spatial stories drawn from students’ experiences of beach and belonging were complex and influenced by various social discourses, such as neo-colonialism, individualism, and mobility, in addition to compression of time and space. Data suggested that students’ experiences of “Australian-ness” was impacted by what they termed “tropical projections”, or pre-conceived notions of Australian beach coded with symbols (e.g. warm weather, tropical fish, pristine beaches). The second spatial theme described in students’ experiences of beach was “filling in the map,” where knowledge of Australian-ness was mitigated by the desire to visit as many places as possible, which is a function of the compression of time. The idea that our bodies are situated within certain temporal and spatial realities which ultimately influence our perception of place, has also been documented Hangen & Sen (2016) who explored how study abroad students’ conceptions of Indian space and time impacted their experience (see also Doerr, 2016a, 2016b). Thus, our bodies are situated within certain temporal and spatial realities which influence our experiences in/of place, and it is possible study abroad student experiences in/of place may benefit from the unpacking of these realities during the program.

**Lefebvre’s (Social) Production of Space**

According to Lefebvre (1991/1974), “(social) space is a (social) product” (p. 28), meaning it is impossible to talk about space outside of human perception and engagement with it; all space is produced. Though Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher, uses “production” to “get to the root of things”—in his case the roots of capitalist society—by tracing out the inner dynamics and generative moments that actively produce space, I consider his work relevant to experiential education in at least two ways. First, his theory may help us understand the
production of experiential learning space in study abroad, as in his *Production of Space*,
Lefebvre himself was attempting to bridge the gap between the individual and the social, and
theory and practice. Second, considering Lefebvre’s intention was to get at the inner workings of
capitalist society in order to dismantle the establishment, an adaptation and application of his
theory to study abroad can help to dismantle a focus on the individual in favor of the relational.

Social space is produced through a tripartite dialectical interaction surrounding how the
space is perceived, conceived, and lived. The origin of departure in the production of space is
natural space, or the physical environment, as it persists everywhere (Lefebvre, 1991/1974). As a
result of Lefebvre’s vague writing style it can be difficult to offer precise definitions or
applications of his spatial triad across contexts, thus I provide simplified interpretations of these
interrelated concepts within the context of experiential learning (see Figure 3.1).

![Figure 3.1. Interpretation of Lefebvre’s spatial triad in the context of experiential learning (adapted from Lefebvre 1991/1974)]
To begin, conceived space lays in the realm of the abstract and refers to the dominant space of society (Beyes & Michels, 2011) constructed discursively by professionals (Merrifield, 1993). In other words, we can position conceived space as “what is thought,” recognizing that it is a result of hierarchical power relations, such as those that foster representations of places, peoples, and cultures. Perceived space, or spatial practice, lays in the realm of the material, including the built environment and everyday perceptions of the world. Therefore, I present perceived space as “what is seen,” as it is within this space that society’s space is materialized. Finally, lived space, or what I present as embodied experience, refers to the (re)production of spaces through bodily enactment in the forms of embodiment and appropriation (Beyes & Michels, 2011). Lived space, with the sensing body as mediator, is positioned at the top of the triangle in Figure 1 to demonstrate its situatedness within and between perceived and conceived space. Drawing from van Maanen’s (1990) lifeworld existentials, lived space may also be thought of as “what is felt,” as it is not ordinarily reflected upon in daily life. The aliveness of the lived space, powered by active engagement with surrounding environments, has the potential for multiple spatial stories to emerge in the (re)production of space, such as the renegotiation of what is thought about or seen.

One way to think about Lefebvre’s assertion that social space is a social product, is that we are taught to see the world a certain way, and we often think this is the “natural” state of things. However, space is in fact produced, with those in power (e.g. media, institutions of higher education, experiential educators) having the upper hand. Lefebvre lived for generative moments, or moments that can challenge the “natural” order of things and get to the root of why things are the way they seem to be. The central principle of Lefebvre’s ideas surrounding the production of space is that space is (re)produced “simultaneously” (Beyes & Michels, 2011).
through the interrelatedness of the spatial triad—the conceived, perceived, and lived—which implies the interconnection between time and space “since one takes on meaning only through the other” (Merrifield, 1993, p. 521). This line of thinking is particularly useful as an act of getting to the roots of how knowledge is produced in study abroad and other experiential education programs. In the following sections, we present the current inquiry, which explored how Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) spatial theory can be used to make sense of the ways in which experiences in/of place are socially produced.

**Method**

**Program Context**

In January 2014 a group of eight students from the City University of New York embarked on a faculty-led study abroad program to Rabat, Morocco. My dissertation advisor acted as program director, having designed the program in 2008 from the ground up together with the support of an American non-profit organization with a country headquarters based in Rabat, Morocco whose mission is to increase cross-cultural understanding and expand educational opportunities in the Maghreb region. Overall, the program was designed to analyze psychological theories on the development of gender and the relevancy of gender in everyday life in the context of contemporary Moroccan culture. While the focus of this paper is not to analyze students’ learning about gender in Moroccan culture, the program’s foci are relevant to contextualize learners’ encounters and engagement with place.

The program director held 10 classes at the headquarters, which acted as the program home base, alongside eight guest lectures by local experts on family relationships, gender, violence, and Moroccan law. On-campus curriculum was supplemented by field excursions to
historical sites and NGOs, visits with local activists and Muslim and secular feminists in order to foster firsthand learning about how Moroccan society engages with issues surrounding gender and culture. Further, traveling through Morocco, including major cities (Marrakech, Fès) and rural villages, allowed students to interact with men and women, which afforded opportunities to dispel many myths about Islam, and women’s positions within Islam. To facilitate student experiences of rhythms of Moroccan daily life, student pairs lived in homestays with Moroccan families in the Agdal medina, the non-European quarter of Rabat. Students also completed a visual essay project that required them to informally interview locals. (see Chapter 2: Methods for detailed program context)

**Participants**

Students enrolled in the Morocco program were recruited to participate in this study in-person, upon arrival. The program director was unaware of who gave consent. Five female undergraduates and three graduate students between 19 and 26 years of age consented to participation. Five of eight participants or their parents were born outside of the United States (Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Poland) and could be described as possessing bicultural orientations, or having close ties to multiple cultural contexts (Schwartz & Unger, 2010). Two students had never traveled abroad previously. (see Chapter 2: Methods for detailed demographics)

**Data Collection**

This study employed data gathering from multiple sources as a strategy to provide thick description and enhance data credibility (Yin, 2014). Sources included participant-observation and student narratives in the form of coursework journals.
Participant-observation. Participant-observation was deemed critical to provide context for student experiences, thus I attended the Morocco program to observe and participate in the physical and social spaces of the program. I was with students daily and attended all classes and excursions to collect field notes. Special attention was paid to student engagement with place, including physical, cultural, and social environments, and rhythms of daily life.

Student narratives. Narratives are contextualized, social, and relational devices used to both make sense of the world and represent oneself to the self and others. Narrative relies on language, thus it is inherently socially produced within the context of specific physical, social, and cultural environments of daily life (Daiute, 2014). Contextualized within “a complex network of social, structural, interpersonal, and environmental relations” (Daiute, 2014, p. 33), narrative carries with it a meaning-making function, acting as a tool for individuals to make sense of themselves, others, and their environment and how they fit (Daiute, 2014).

To this end, as part of program coursework, students completed eight narrating activities in the form of reflective journals. In effort to engage students in thinking about their expectations of Moroccan-ness, and the ways in which their conceptions had or had not changed over the course of the program, a trio of narrating activities were developed. At the beginning of the program, students were prompted to narrate about their expectations of each place before departure (Journal 1 Pre-departure) and to describe first impressions upon arrival (Journal 2 Arrival). Finally, the last narrative activity (Journal 8 Return) asked students to revisit their first two journals and consider if and how stereotypes, expectations, or impressions of Morocco had shifted. The remaining five prompts were used in tandem with experiential learning activities, for example reflecting upon visits to an ancient Roman necropolis (Journal 3 Chellah), a women’s cooperative and rural villages (Journal 4 Tigemmy), and an outdoor market in Marrakech.
(Journal 5 Jemaa el Fna). These narrative activities were crafted to guide students in reflection and critical analysis of readings, class lectures, and their experiences on field trips. Together, the narrative activities blended formal and informal writing together to help students personalize and contextualize their experiences within a novel cultural environment. A comprehensive list of narrative activities is provided in Appendix A.

Approach to Analysis

The analytical strategy we used to conduct a socio-spatial analysis of student experiences in/of place in the Morocco program began by using Lefebvre’s spatial triad and his theory on the production of space as guide. Using narrative activities as the unit of analysis, narratives were coded for physical space (engagement with physical environment) and social space (engagement with people), including the spatial triad of conceived (abstractions; what was thought), perceived (materiality; what was seen), and lived space (embodied experience; what was felt) enacted in student narrating. This exploratory coding led to the refinement of families of codes, which we used as a guide for a second round of coding. For example, using Lefebvre’s conception of conceived space, we coded for representations of space, or moments in student narrating when they present or deconstruct (pre)conceived notions of the host and/or home country, people, or culture. Initial coding for Lefebvre’s perceived space led to the development of codes surrounding different ways students engaged with materiality of places, for example, aesthetic, social, or historical moments (i.e. engagement with historicity). Using Lefebvre’s lived space, we coded for sensory engagement, or moments in student narrating when they engaged with visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, or kinesthetic experiences in/of place. Patterns within the exploratory socio-spatial analysis of student narratives combined with reflections on participant-observation led to realizations surrounding the production of experiential learning space and the
emergence of three spatial stories.

In addition to calling upon Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space, I looked in part to Beyes and Michels’ (2011) analysis of the production of educational spaces to frame my socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco program. In the following section, I present this socio-spatial analysis first in order to frame our presentation of spatial readings of my findings, presented below.

**Socio-spatial Analysis of the Morocco Program**

Reflecting on the Morocco program through the lens of Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) spatial theory and spatial triad, the overarching setting of Morocco itself, including our home base in Rabat, the country headquarters where classes were held, homestays in the Rabat medina, and other cities and sites visited acted as launch pads for student engagement in/of place and the emergence of the spatial stories shared later. In terms of conceived space, the planning and organization of the program, including detailed itineraries and syllabi, lectures, and communication of program expectations and deadlines relate to the hierarchical power relations that helped to produce experiential learning space within the Morocco program (Beyes & Michels, 2011). Yet another layer of power relations was present in that the resultant program organization and syllabi had to be approved by the program director’s home institution. Thus, in terms of perceived space, the Morocco program can be read as an effort to reproduce the home institution’s educative and pedagogical practices within a Moroccan context. Furthermore, this planned structure of the Morocco program was also reflected in the spatial practices of the students, program director, host families, and guest lecturers in the field. Together, these practices produced the rhythms of the Morocco program. For example, students produced these rhythms by showing up to class and meeting places for field visits, participating in discussions,
and completing assignments. Finally, situated between perceived and conceived space, is the lived—the space that is alive, unbounded by rules and consistency, and produced through the body’s movement through and engagement with surrounding environments. It is in within this space that bounds between conceived and perceived space are negotiated; through their sensing bodies, students appropriate, or invest space with meaning, which facilitate the emergence of spatial stories.

Though described separately in the following spatial readings, it is important to keep in mind that conceived, perceived, and lived space are interconnected, and together, they produce (social) space (Lefebvre, 1991/1974), or what I have termed experiential learning space. I now build upon the above socio-spatial analysis of the program by providing three interconnected spatial readings of my findings to make sense of how spatial stories surrounding engagement with, and experiences in/of place shaped and were shaped by the production of experiential learning space.

**First Spatial Reading: A Diverse Country of “Paradox”**

The past three weeks were not what I expected. I am amazed at the level of insight that I have gained now that I reflect on my experience in Morocco. I definitely don’t think that I would have gained this understanding by reading a book. Being immersed and living in Morocco has been very fulfilling and eye opening. We kept hearing the word paradox throughout our guest lectures, which is very fitting in describing Morocco […].

*Wren, Journal 8 Return*

Tensions between conceived and perceived space were prevalent in students’ lived experiences of Morocco, largely operating as a function of time. Students’ pre-departure and
arrival journals revealed dominant discourses surrounding Africa and Islam contributed to projections of Morocco that influenced their experiences in/of place. These projections of Moroccan-ness (Nakagawa & Payne, 2011), or representations of what life would be like living in Morocco for three weeks included Morocco as having warm weather, dry landscapes, and a conservative, oppressive religion and culture that resulted in many students being worried about their safety entering the country as women (details forthcoming in Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali). These pre-conceived notions not only positioned Morocco as homogenously fixed in time and space, but also positioned it as heterogeneous to America and other countries bicultural students identified with (Doerr, 2016). Over time, students came to see Morocco as diverse and heterogeneous, and even sometimes paradoxical, as described by Wren above. While such changes are expected after spending three weeks studying abroad, we were concerned with generative moments, and how and what mediated such changes.

Analysis revealed abstract representations of Morocco were on a collision course with the observed materiality of Morocco that students would encounter upon arrival. The collision of representations (conceived) with the materiality and rhythms of Morocco life (perceived) can be understood as generative moments that allowed for renegotiation of space through embodied engagement with surrounding physical, cultural, and social environments (lived), arguably socially producing what we have been referring to as experiential learning space. As suggested by student narratives, the conceived space of a homogenous Morocco gave way to spatial stories that represented Morocco’s landscape, people, and weather as varied, diverse, and heterogeneous:

…I thought I would see a third world country, like on television commercials that ask for donations for the vulnerable children. This manipulated preconceived image of Africa
painted Morocco as a poor wilderness in my mind, but this is not what I found at all. Many of my expectations and stereotypes about Morocco have changed in the past three weeks. I have learned so much about a country I barely knew anything of in such a small amount of time by living with a host family, visiting different cities, and interacting with Moroccan people and even its environment.

Violet, Journal 8 Return

Moroccans themselves seemed to be very heterogeneous, not only in their appearance but also in their approach to Islam…Interviewing young boys and girls on their perception of dating really opened my eyes to the fact that although most Moroccans identified themselves as Muslim, their religious views were very different.

Wren, Journal 8 Return

Like Violet and Wren, many students identified one or more generative moments when conceived space of representations were (re)negotiated, such as interacting with Moroccans (e.g. “living with a host family”; “interviewing young boys and girls”), visiting different cities, NGOs, and women’s cooperatives, and visiting historical sites. Further, like Violet who identified the source of her (mis)representation of Morocco from television commercials that ask for donations, over time students also came to consider how they came to think the way they did about Morocco, identifying the media or conversations with friends and family as usual suspects. These changes were mediated by direct social interaction with Moroccans and the environment, engagement with local rhythms and histories, as well as the intentional narrative prompts, further evidenced by the spatial stories shared below.
Second Spatial Reading: Encountered Histories

Representations influenced students experience in/of place, but were also renegotiated through students’ experiences within place. In our analysis we found that historical encounters with place, when paired with pedagogical practices that facilitated engagement with local histories, had the power to serve as generative moments that produced spatial stories that influenced meaning-making about place. To illustrate the importance of intentional pedagogy in producing experiential learning space, we provide one example. One of the first program excursions was to Chellah, an ancient necropolis dating back to third century BCE. An art historian led us through the site, engaging us with its rich history—over time it was inhabited by multiple groups, reflected through varied architectural ruins scattered over the grounds. Following the tour, students had time to explore Chellah freely.

Figure 3.2. Study abroad students exploring Chellah in Rabat, Morocco. Photo: Pipitone
Prevalent across Journal 3 Chellah narratives were connections between the historical and architectural environment, arguably a function of the art historian’s tour and subsequent discussion, which set the stage for some students’ understanding of modern day Morocco, including its diversity:

One of my favorite aspects of Chellah was its intricate history. I thought that it was amazing that so many groups influenced one place and this was especially evident in the architecture…I don’t think that I have ever been to another site in which I was able to directly see the combination of different forces that impacted one place…Walking around Chellah made me really understand the diversity of Morocco…Moroccans are a heterogeneous group and this one area is the perfect illustration of this.

Wren, Journal 3 Chellah

I definitely was able to appreciate Morocco more after our visit to Chellah. I wanted to soak in the history of which seemed like a mysterious city at first and felt as though I gained a better understanding for how Romans and Moroccans lived their daily lives. Even in our differences, I was able to find so many things that I could relate to in Moroccan life.

Jaye, Journal 3 Chellah

Students were largely enchanted by and felt connections with Chellah—some students, like Robin, even described active imagining of its history in the present:

Once we started to hear about all the different histories of what has happened where we were standing, I felt myself feeling so grateful for this experience. I had to step back and regroup. I closed my eyes and allowed myself to really see where I was…I started to
picture all the men and women who worked to make this so beautiful. All the people who lived here in peace, all the fighting that happened here, all the death, all the birth. In such a small space there is endless history.

Robin, *Journal 3 Chellah*

The emergence of these spatial stories align with research that has documented preference for historical places over modern architecture (Nasar, 1998 in Lewicka, 2008), as engagement with histories of place afford symbolic connections to place that surpass temporal and spatial boundaries (Low, 1992). It is important to note, however, that this type of connection with Chellah may not have been possible without the art historian’s lecture and discussion, or the students’ freedom to move through and within the grounds, both of which contributed to the production of experiential learning space. With this in mind, place-based pedagogies that intentionally and meaningfully engage students in local rhythms, meanings, and histories may facilitate learning and connections with place.

**Third Spatial Reading: Positioned Bodies in Space through Narrative**

The structure of narrating activities also mediated student learning and engagement with place. Analysis revealed that sensory engagement enacted in student narrating was highest in the narrative prompt that played with audience (*Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna*), followed by one that asked students to shift perspective (*Journal 5 Tigemmy*). To illustrate, we use Journal 4 as an example. During our weekend trip to Marrakech students visited Jemaa el Fna, a large open-air square and market in the medina quarter, both as a group and on their own. Upon return to Rabat, students responded to this prompt: “If you were telling a friend about Jemaa el Fna in Marrakech, how would you do so without exotifying it and yet making it attractive?” Interestingly, this was the
only journal prompt that played with audience (e.g. telling a friend), and it yielded spatial stories saturated with thick description and the highest amount of interpersonal and intrapersonal sensory phenomena (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and even some descriptions of touching objects) and the positioning of bodies as moving in and through space out of all eight prompts (expanded upon in Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali). For example:

As you make your way out of the square, the music begins to fade, the aromas dissipate and the crowd disperses, before you realize it you are on the main road and the liveliness of the Jemma el Fna is behind you. It is definitely a world completely unto itself.

Marigold, Morocco 2014 Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna

Figure 3.2. Jemaa el Fna before sunset in Marrakech. Photo: Pipitone
In the narrative excerpt above, there is a high concentration and variety of senses engaged with. Marigold’s 50-word excerpt contains visual (“the crowd disperses”), auditory (“the music begins to fade”), olfactory (“aromas dissipate”), and kinesthetic (“make your way out”; “you are on the main road”) sensory engagement. Similarly, in *Journal 5 Tigemmy*, analysis suggests that prompting students to imagine life as a Moroccan woman encouraged them to draw upon their experiences speaking to women at Tigemmy, a women’s cooperative, as well as what they saw and experienced visiting more rural villages in the mountains and desert in order to narrate imaginatively about a day in the life of a Moroccan woman living under those circumstances. Even though students did not actively participate in the rhythms of daily life they imagined, it appears that asking students to narrate from the position of a Moroccan woman, akin to the ways in which having students imagine they are narrating to a friend, may have had an impact on the sensory engagement enacted in these narratives. Considering that reflective journals are commonly used as both a pedagogical and research tool, it is worth exploring how playing with audience and even the genre of journaling may generate narratives that engage with more complex psychosocial dynamics (Jović, 2014) or yield more personal (Daiute, Buteau, & Rawlins, 2001) spatial stories with enriched descriptions of embodied experiences in/of place.

**The Production of Experiential Learning Space**

Using Lefebvre’s spatial triad of conceived, perceived, and lived space, I have conducted a socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco program, and offered three spatial readings (Beyes & Michels, 2011) of my findings surrounding participant experiences in/of place in Morocco. In the presentation of experiential learning space as both socially produced and socially producing, I see three implications for place-based pedagogy and research in the field of experiential education.
First, I have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which the application of a socio-spatial perspective of experiential learning builds upon current place-based research and practice. Socio-spatial theory was largely supported in this study, as findings indicate that conceived, perceived, and lived space acted as multiple entry points to set the production of experiential learning space into motion. Findings suggest that the Morocco program enhanced student engagement with place through the integration of pedagogical approaches that introduced some “trouble” (Bruner, 1990), or conflict, into student experiences of place by way of conceived, perceived, or lived space. For example, I had students write about their expectations of Morocco pre-departure, and these representations (conceived) did not always match what students encountered during the trip (lived), which influenced how they saw place (perceived). This trouble necessitated renegotiation of representations (conceived), and can be thought of as a generative moment that produced experiential learning space. Considering the salience of Moroccan-ness, or representations of Morocco in student narrating, coupled with the fact that students and program leaders are more often not viewed as tourists, I suggest programs engage study abroad students in reflecting upon their own culture, for example American-ness, and how they may be perceived before departure and throughout the program (expanded upon in Chapter 6: Power of Place).

Utilizing Lefebvre’s spatial triad as potential pedagogical entry points, educators may engage students in experiences (lived) that trouble their representations (conceived), ultimately shaping how they see place (perceived) and (re)think about place (conceived); or, educators can challenge representations (conceived) that could shape how they see place (perceived) and their experience of place in the future (lived); and finally, using the perceived as an entry point, educators may have students approach or encounter place from different “frames” (e.g. historical) as Preston and Griffths (2004) did, in order to trouble the ways in which they typically
view place. Lefebvre’s spatial triad is a useful tool for pedagogical practice because it affords the ability to focus on how learning spaces are socially produced via engagement with surrounding environments, rather than individualized phenomena such as learning cycles, which allows for assessment of wider pedagogical practices, such as what mediates knowledge production in study abroad.

Relatedly, analyses of student narratives suggest that engagement with place was fundamental to the production of experiential learning space in Morocco, mediated through: direct social interaction with locals and participation in cultural communities, engagement with local rhythms and histories, and intentional narrative activities that engaged students in reflecting upon alternative ways of being and knowing in the world. Thus, I suggest that discourses appreciative of local histories, cultures, and rhythms of daily life beyond immersion in place is not only beneficial for outdoor education, but also beneficial for study abroad. Pairing with local universities or community organizations in order to engage students in projects where they conduct research with, not on or about, the communities they are living with is one way to increase meaningful social interaction with locals. As this may come with its own challenges to arrange, research projects that encourage students to spend time with, and interview locals, perhaps even their host families, or complete photo essays may be alternative ways to increase social interaction. Pedagogies that are responsive to place and their local cultures and histories may hold the key to avoiding the production of touristic consumers, or a touristic gaze (Urry, 1990), and instead foster visitors who are empathetic (Relph, 1976) to local rhythms, meanings, and significances of place.

Lastly, I have suggested narrative serves as a tool to mediate the production of experiential learning space, as prompts can be used to engage students with alternative ways of
being and knowing in the world, as well as to support them in relating meaningfully to novel cultural environments. In this study, narrative activities in the form of journals served not only as a pedagogical tool, but also a research tool. We have proposed that using reflective journals differently, namely a shifting of audience, may not only facilitate learners’ understandings of themselves as embodied in place, but that narratives may also provide a window into understanding the role of place in experiential education, and learners’ experience in/of it. I encourage study abroad and experiential educators to consider ways to engage students in narrating beyond the traditional autobiographical perspective for the limited audience of the program leader. Reflecting on our own pedagogy, considering only two of the Morocco 2014 prompts played with audience or perspective-shifting, we have revamped narrative activities for future Morocco programs to better engage students with their senses, other people, and historical context while studying abroad. For example, new prompts include a three-part series that asks students to imagine they are writing a blog for their school’s study abroad office website from multiple perspectives (e.g. living in the Rabat Medina as an American study abroad student and as a Moroccan). Further, Journal 5 Jemaa el Fna, has been restructured to prompt students to imagine they are writing a transcript for a podcast. I see future place-based research benefiting from narrative analysis (Daiute, 2014); the studying of narrative properties, such as prepositions, has recently been used as a tool to understand narrators’ relationship to their environment (Lucić, 2016). Overall, Lefebvre’s spatial triad appears useful not only for pedagogical practice, but also for place-based research, as it provides a framework to guide the production of experiential learning space, and to explore how knowledge is produced in study abroad and experiential education programs.
Summary

Due to scant empirical research on the role of place in experiential learning—particularly in study abroad—an exploratory case study was deemed necessary to lay the foundation for this dissertation’s approach to place-based research. This chapter joins ongoing conversations surrounding the role of place and the body in experiential education by exploring the ways in which a socio-spatial perspective can enrich our understanding of place in study abroad. Recognizing Morocco as a site for experiential learning research may be critiqued as being exotic or unique, I put forth the idea of “abroad-ness” as a social construction and make a case for why a focus on local places within study abroad is not only relevant, but critical at the current historical moment. Informed by Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory on the production of space and his spatial triad of the perceived-conceived-lived, I have conducted a socio-spatial analysis to explore how student engagement with surrounding environments may have shaped, and been shaped, by the production of experiential learning space, and ultimately influenced participants’ experiences in/of place Morocco. Three spatial stories, or space and stories, emerged from this exploratory case study, including Morocco as a diverse country of paradox; encountered histories; and positioned bodies through narrative. Overall findings suggested the production of experiential learning space was mediated through social interactions, engagement with local rhythms and histories, and intentional narrative activities. Further, engaging students with place was found to be fundamental to the production of experiential learning space.

These spatial stories, uncovered through my exploratory socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco program led to the development of a coding system aimed at assessing the role of place, and student experiences in/of it, within novel cultural environments. Morocco as a diverse country of “paradox” tells us the spatial story of study abroad students’ shift in their experiences
in/of place over time—through engagement with local histories and meanings, students eventually came to see the country not as a homogenous place, but one full of diverse people, landscapes, and approaches to religion. This led to the creation of a family of codes to explore in the ways in which student comparisons to places within and outside of the host country shifted over time. Encountered histories shows us that engaging students with the past of place and encouraging them to view place through a historical frame, may foster meaningful understandings of place by connecting students with the past. Adapting Preston & Griffiths’ (2004) “frames” of encounters with place, this spatial story led the creation of place engagement codes to consider the different ways of knowing place that students engage with, including historical, aesthetic, physical/geographical, and cultural. Finally, as a spatial story, positioned bodies through narrative reveals the potential of narrative to explore sensory engagement with place. This led to a family of codes to track sensory engagement with place enacted in narrative activities. To build upon the groundwork laid in this chapter, I present my developed coding system in the methods section of the following chapter (Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali), and apply it in the comparative case analysis of student experiences in/of place within the Morocco and Bali study abroad programs, to further our understanding of how knowledge is produced in study abroad.
CHAPTER IV

REPRESENTATIONS, RELATIONALITY, AND ENGAGEMENT: STUDY ABROAD STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN/OF PLACE IN MOROCCO AND BALI

Abstract

Building upon the previous chapter, this chapter explores more fully the ways in which student experiences in/of place shape, and are shaped by, the production of experiential learning space in study abroad. This longitudinal comparative case study explored how student engagement with place contributed to the production of experiential learning space on two study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali. Data were collected in the form of participant-observation and student narrative activities including eight journals completed in the field and one-year post-program interviews with Morocco 2014 and Bali 2014 program cohorts. Comparative case analysis revealed three major findings. First, representations or pre-conceived notions of Morocco and Bali had an impact on both cohorts’ experiences in/of place upon arrival and appear to have been renegotiated through their engagement with place during the program. Second, throughout each program student comparisons between and within host country and familiar places shifted in accordance with their place-based experiences. Third, relationality within and between places gave way to students appreciating, instead of exotifying difference. Over the course of the programs, students came to appreciate Morocco as culturally diverse, and Bali as culturally complex. Findings, which were sustained a year later, suggest that engagement with place was fundamental to the production of experiential learning space.

Keywords: study abroad, pedagogy, representations, production of space, relationality, sensory engagement, experiential education
Travel may well involve an insight into other people’s lives in their ‘backyards,’ but it may just as easily curb understanding if, for instance, those who travel take with them their own assorted cultural baggage as a means of insulating themselves from the realities of life elsewhere.

John Allen & Chris Hamnett, 1995

Contact with places, peoples, and cultures from other parts of the world is always a mediated encounter (Hamnett & Allen, 1995), which is also political (Barbour, 2012). As demonstrated in the previous chapter (Chapter 3: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), places exist in our minds and bodies before we visit them (Massey, 1995) in the form of representations, often gathered from the media or conversations with peers and family. Further, places continue to exist in our minds and bodies after we visit them, which influence perceived differences and similarities within and between places encountered in the future. In travel, through our living bodies, we ultimately carry with us representations and perceptions that intersect with our own “sense of selfhood and cultural baggage” and must be acknowledged “so that we can begin to understand that which is different from ourselves” (Turner, 2011, p. 65). Thus, we cannot simply associate study abroad with greater social or cultural awareness (Hamnett & Allen, 1995). Nor can we assume study abroad is inherently educational; instead spaces of experiential learning must be produced that encourage learners to acknowledge and unpack their cultural baggage, rather than use it as insulation, so that they might better connect and understand rhythms of daily life of backyards other than their own.
Furthermore, it is not just what is carried within us when we travel, but also what we are met with upon arrival that impacts our learning about new places. For example, if I travel to the Dominican Republic and stay at an all-inclusive, “gated” resort, I am vacationing in a comfortable bubble of the familiar that just so happens to be on beach in a different country. It is unlikely I will gain any insight into Dominican culture unless I venture outside of the resort for extended periods of time. In the context of study abroad, this matters greatly, as producing spaces of experiential learning that assist students in coming to terms with their own cultural baggage should not just happen anywhere, but in places that cultivate “learning about someone else’s local” (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117). Engagement with local places is a pathway through which students can come to learn about and appreciate the interconnectedness of all places (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015).

In this longitudinal comparative case study, I explored how student engagement with place contributed to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs to Rabat, Morocco and Bali, Indonesia. In January (Morocco) and June (Bali) 2014, I spent a total of seven-weeks with both of these programs as a participant-researcher. Data were collected in the form of eight narrative activities completed in the field, and one-year follow-up interviews with nine students enrolled in the Morocco program and 11 students in the Bali program. To systematically assess 19 study abroad students’ experiences in/of place in Morocco and Bali, I developed a coding system informed by previous socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco program (Chapter 3: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco). Findings from comparative analysis suggest that in both of these programs, place played a powerful role in shaping the production of spaces of experiential learning that dismantled discourses of difference in favor of relationality that were sustained a year-later. This chapter makes important contributions to place-based research
and experiential pedagogy by presenting a systematic way of studying knowledge production through student engagement with and experiences in/of place in study abroad, which are also applicable to local programs. Further, this chapter speaks to the ways in which experiential pedagogies of place and narrative activities can serve as educative tools in multicultural contexts.

The chapter proceeds as follows. To contextualize the families of codes presented in the Methods section, I begin by reviewing literature relevant to my coding system. This is followed by a methods section, where I briefly introduce the Morocco and Bali program contexts (for full review see Chapter 2: Methods), review data collection methods, approach to analysis, and provide my coding system with sample narrative excerpts. Next, I present results from the comparative case analysis, including representations of Morocco and Bali, relationality within and between places, and engagement with place enacted in student narrating. Within each results subsection, I present Morocco and Bali as individual cases and offer some interpretative comparison when appropriate. In the discussion section, I discuss parallel and juxtaposed patterns across both cases and offer an interpretation of the findings within Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) theory of the production of space. In conclusion, I reflect on the importance of engagement with place for “learning about someone else’s local” in study abroad (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117).

**Exploring Place**

While a great deal has been theorized about place within experiential education, research that explores its role in shaping student learning experiences is scant—particularly within the context of study abroad—aside from a few notable exceptions (e.g. Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015; Nakagawa & Payne, 2011). Considering that many experiential educators engage learners with place in practice, and travel to an often novel cultural environment is at the heart of study abroad,
this lack of empirical research speaks to the challenge of systematically studying student experiences in/of place and the connection with experiential learning. In my endeavor to explore the role of place in producing experiential learning space study abroad, I have developed a coding system, which I contextualize through a review of relevant literature that in this section. This section reviews the three main families of codes, including: representations of place, relationality, and types of engagement with place.

**Representations Of**

Places are often represented in our minds before we encounter them, and these impressions may be tough to unhinge or renegotiate (Massey, 1995). We encounter representations of people and places through advertisements, images, movies, television shows, books, music, and even conversations with friends. Whether encountered intentionally or unintentionally, representations are bound to impact future encounters with place, and are part of the stories we know and share about them. Lefebvre’s (1991/1974) spatial triad is helpful in unpacking the ways in which representations influence, and are influenced by, encounters with place.

For Lefebvre, representations of space lay in the realm of the conceived. He understood representations of space as imagined or mental images that are developed cognitively and, more often than not, socially constructed by those in power (Lefebvre, 1974/1991; Zhang, 2006). Importantly, representations of space are not simply mental images projected onto a static physical world—their very existence requires the body, for to know about something, to have an image of it, “is to exist in a particular embodied relationship to one’s context or social space” (Waitt & Maquarie, 2012, p. 54). In other words, representations are more than just an image of the mind; the ways in which we move through and engage with environments may be a reflection...
of our image of it. Thus, representations are more than just imagined, they are embodied, which has important implications for the ways in which representations not only shape the human experience in/of place, but also places themselves. Saïd (1978) also reminds us that representations are not simply myths or ideas situated solely in the realm of the imagination with no correspondence to reality; the relations of power that produce such representations are rooted in materiality and often manifested in maps, textbooks, rules, symbols (Lefebvre, 1991/1974; Saïd, 1978; Zhang, 2006), as well as popular culture and media (Nguyen & Coryell, 2015).

Intersections between the media, study abroad students, and their motivations was recently explored by Nguyen & Coryell (2015). Drawing upon Giroux’s (1991) assertion of popular culture as pedagogy, they explored perceptions and motivations to participate in a study abroad program to Italy undertaken by students who are typically underrepresented in study abroad (e.g. non-white; adult and higher education learners). Through semi-structured interviews that explored student motivations, they found that popular culture and entertainment media influenced students in two important ways. First, students’ initial perceptions of study abroad as reserved for white, wealthy elite were formed by representations of travel found in popular culture TV shows (e.g. MTV Road Rules, The Travel Channel). This perception was renegotiated through stories and conversations with peers, family, and friends. Second, the media played a role in students’ perception formation about the host country, ultimately mediating students’ motivation to participate in the Italy study abroad program; they found that popular culture showcasing Italian life encouraged participation in the study abroad to Italy. While informative regarding student motivations to study abroad, as well as the ways in which representations can be negotiated, this study did not report on the ways in which representations of Italian life impacted student experiences of Italy.
As illustrated by the aforementioned study’s findings, representations are not inherently problematic; they are as much a fact of life as the air we breathe. Under the right circumstances, they lay the foundation for critiques of dominant discourses and have the possibility to open up space for consideration and appreciation of alternative histories, stories, and ways of knowing and being in the world. In Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali), I describe the ways in which exotified notions of Balinese arts and aesthetics were used as a launch pad to deconstruct the exotic by engaging students in alternative ways of knowing and doing art present in Balinese society through place-based pedagogy.

However, under the wrong circumstances, representations can be dangerous as they have the potential to marginalize entire groups of people through the (re)production of power relations. For example, in the aftermath of “9/11,” Western media and politicians have primarily depicted Islam as a “dangerous and backward religion” that is an “enemy of women’s rights” (Raghavan & Levine, 2012, p. xv). Such representations of Islam erase complexities and diversities within and across Muslim nations, and have the power to fuel fear and hate between groups by perpetuating ideas of irresolvable difference. Raghavan and Levine (2012) encourage us to be wary of misleading representations of Muslim societies as homogeneous, as even within nations there is notable diversity in religious interpretation and practice. As introduced in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), representations of Islam contributed to students’ pre-conceived notions of Morocco as place, or “Moroccan-ness,” which were renegotiated over time through the production of experiential learning space within the program (I detail this finding in the following Results section).

Lefebvre deemed representations of space (conceived space) as the dominant space of society—our subjective bodily experiences within space are dominated by the representations
shaped by those in power. If unchallenged, representations can result in the projection of these dominant discourses back onto lived space, therefore (re)producing power relations. However, the beauty lays in the lived space, a space of embodied possibility, where through engagement, spaces can be created to challenge these dominant discourses by uncovering the clandestine rhythms of the everyday. Problems arise when representations go unrecognized, unquestioned, and are taken as whole truth without asking where the representation came from and of whom it is actually representative. Over-generalized representations that focus on difference and are taken to represent the reality of entire peoples or religions without question, often connected with discourses of immersion, are inherently problematic as they come to represent entire regions as homogenous (Doerr, 2016a). In this work I was particularly interested in identifying representations enacted in student narrating and the ways in which they were renegotiated over time, if they were.

What is necessary to create spaces that allow for moments of renegotiation of representations? How can new, alternative stories be generated that have the power to counter dominant discourses of place (Somerville et al., 2011)? As demonstrated in the next subsection, relationality may play a key role in shifting relationships within and between places.

**Relationality**

Places continue to be represented in our minds after we visit them, which impacts future encounters with and experiences in/of place. Place, our experiences in/of them, and our relationship with them, are in a constant state of becoming (Simonsen, 2008). How we relate to people, places, and cultures initially unfamiliar is shaped by what we have experienced in our past. Humans categorize by nature; it makes it easier for our brains to process information on a day-to-day basis, which is particularly useful in novel situations. Unfortunately, categorization of
self and other along the lines of difference between “us and them” can distance us from nature and the worlds of other cultures. Somerville et al. (2011) call for troubling, or unsettling, habitual categorical thought:

Difference has, for a long time, been understood as categorical difference; the other is discrete and distinct from the self, with difference laying in the other, whose identity is constructed through a string of binaries in which their sameness as, or difference from, oneself is made real…there is important work to be done toward generating a new understanding of relationality [...] (p. 7)

Work aimed at cultivating a new generation of relationality entails no longer fixating on representations of self and other along the lines of difference. We have to train ourselves to embrace an openness to the unknown, the impossibility of knowing, and to the relish in the moments of insight into alternative ways of knowing, being, and doing that exist in the world (Somerville et al., 2011). This work is relevant not only for study abroad, but our everyday lives.

Just as representations are a fact of life, so is difference—what matters is how these concepts are understood and interpreted in daily life. Humans move within and between places, and this bodily motion is critical in understanding experiences in/of place, because we exist in a relational universe (Casey, 1996). Movement within place entails “moving one’s body about a given place while still remaining in it,” while movement between places “denotes the circumstance in which bodies travel between different places” (Casey, 1996, p. 23). This movement is not just transportation but also transition (Casey, 1996), and can be analyzed at different scales, such as moving within or between a room or an entire region. Aspects of relationality relevant to the current work were the ways in which study abroad students drew
comparisons within and between places as they moved within and between places, and if and how these comparisons changed over time.

**Engagement With**

Places are landscapes full of sociocultural meaning and history, which are in a constant process of becoming (Casey, 1996; Simonsen, 2008). Our experiences in/of place are rooted in materiality through our sensing bodies (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), and encountering place is an experiential and participatory phenomena influenced by geophysical reality, embodied experience, and cultural ideas (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Thus, in order to explore experiences in/of place, it seems necessary to launch an expedition from multiple, interrelated fronts that align with the ways through which place may be encountered. In this section, I introduce these different but interrelated ways of engaging with place. Since the body is central to the experience of place, I begin with experiential or sensory engagement, then move on to other forms of engagement including social, physical/geographical, historical, and aesthetic “frames” (Preston & Griffiths, 2004), or ways of knowing.

**Experiential.** Our bodies are at the center of our experience of the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962); bodies mediate experiences of the material and conceptual (Lefebvre, 1991/1974; Dewey, 1938). Indeed, it is through our sensing bodies that we engage with, and come to know place. Further, place and bodies are mutually constituted, “as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place” (Feld, 1996, p. 91). While I strongly believe we sense with our whole bodies, whether we are conscious of it or not (Hiss, 1990; Johnson, 2008), and that our sense-making about place is relational and influenced by culture (Olsen, 2002), considering what different senses do for us in encounters with place, or what places enact
particular senses in student narrating, may be helpful in understanding how we can better engage ourselves, and our students in embodied ways of knowing place.

Although I deviate somewhat from Tuan’s (1977) conceptualization of place as space become meaningful, the mark that his work has left on fields such as environmental psychology, geography, and anthropology is undeniable. Prior to Yi-Fu Tuan’s (1977) *Space and Place*, the experiential qualities of place were largely ignored. Tuan gave us a fresh, experiential perspective of space and place. “Spatializing” senses of sight, touch, and movement were identified as key to enabling humans to understand place spatially, while sound helps to enlarge our spatial awareness and enables us to know where we are physically. For Tuan, sound, smell, taste, and touch serve to enrich what we encounter visually. While it may seem intuitive to privilege sight in the organization of space, it is important to remember that perception is the human ability to organize and interpret the world through all the senses (Olsen, 2002): indeed, places are never sensed and made sense of by sight alone (Waitt & Macquarie, 2014, p. 53). We come to know the world through our sensing bodies. Further, it is important to acknowledge that there are different ways of, and capacities for, sensing among humans, which can impact engagement with environments in various ways. Encounter place through an experiential frame has been identified as foundational (Preston & Griffiths, 2004); in other words, the experiential is but one element of place that sets the stage for other ways of engagement.

**Social, Physical, and Historical.** Place also takes on meaning through social relations (Lefebvre, 1991/1974) as our experience of place is in part participatory (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). People shape places, and places shape people. Thus, even if we encounter a place solo, the experience is still social in that we are engaging in some way with the ways in which that place has been shaped by people who have been there before us. Further, representations of place
are also socially produced. Place is more than the geophysical reality or our experience in/of it; “place does not emerge out of ‘nowhere’ but it is a personal experience of the networks of social relations that interweave through and across spaces, changing over time” (Rickly-Boyd, Knudsen, & Braverman, 2014).

People are as much a part of place as the physical environment. As an educator, I have found that when asked to complete environmental autobiographies, the places students discuss as having shaped them often have to do with social experiences in/of that place, and in many cases this is more prominent than their discussion of physical elements of the environment. When they describe feelings of connection with places, memories of social interaction or memories of those who have passed are deeply embedded into the physical realm. We come to know places through social interactions of those who are with us presently, as well as the memories of those who have gone before us. By coming to know “how others have spent time in places we visit, we can place ourselves in a continuum of ideas and values that bring a new depth of understanding to our own presence and theirs” (Slattery, 2001, p. 29). Thus, the social and physical are intimately entangled in the experience of place.

To review what was mentioned previously in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), in their exploration of different ways of knowing place, Preston and Griffiths (2004) had students choose a place to visit repeatedly over the course of a semester, and each time they were instructed to encounter the place with an intentional experiential, historical, scientific, or artistic “frame.” They found that an experiential frame was foundational to deepening connections with and getting to know a place. However, they also found that students who engaged with local place histories facilitated connections with and understandings of place. The importance of engaging with historical context of places to better understand them aligns with
the idea that awareness of a place’s history can facilitate place attachment, or emotional
connections with place (Lewicka, 2009; Low, 1992). All things considered, place-based
pedagogies that intentionally engage students in local historical discourse, social relations, and
embodied ways of knowing may facilitate learning and relationality with place locally and
abroad.

Method

This longitudinal comparative case study explored how student engagement with place
contributed to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs to Rabat,
Morocco and Bali, Indonesia. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the Morocco and Bali
study abroad programs and my approach to data collection and analysis. I present the coding
system developed to systematically study student experiences in/of place in Morocco and Bali.
The methods described below were aimed at understanding how student experiences in/of place
contributed to the production of experiential learning space with both programs, as well as the
ways in which these experiences were deemed meaningful a year later. For a full review of
program contexts and methodological limitations, as well as participant demographics, please
refer to Chapter 2 (Methods).

Program Contexts

Both the Morocco and Bali study abroad programs were hosted by the same large public
university, and developed and directed by the same faculty member, who was also my
dissertation advisor. This ensured the programs were run as parallel as possible. Across both
programs, students attended three pre-trip classes, and were enrolled in basic language classes—
Arabic in Morocco and Bahasa Indonesia in Bali. I attended both programs as a participant-researcher.

**Morocco.** In January 2014 eight students embarked on a three-week faculty-led study abroad program to Rabat, Morocco. My dissertation advisor acted as program director, having designed the program in 2013 from the ground up together with the support of an American non-profit organization with a country headquarters based in Rabat, Morocco whose mission is to increase cross-cultural understanding and expand educational opportunities in the Maghreb region. Overall, the program was designed to analyze psychological theories on the development of gender and the relevancy of gender in everyday life in the context of contemporary Moroccan culture. While the focus of this chapter is not to analyze students’ learning about gender in Moroccan culture, the program’s foci are relevant to contextualize learners’ encounters and engagement with place. Students were enrolled in two interrelated courses (Multicultural Psychology; Gender, Culture, and Community) that were aimed at helping students understand the local Moroccan environment by providing them with a framework to interpret encounters with peoples and places.

The program director held 10 formal classes at the headquarters in Rabat, which acted as the program home base, alongside eight guest lectures by local experts on family relationships, gender, violence, and Moroccan law. On-campus curriculum was supplemented by field excursions to historical sites and NGOs, visits with local activists and Muslim and secular feminists in order to foster firsthand learning about how Moroccan society engaged with issues surrounding gender and culture. Further, traveling through Morocco, including major cities (Marrakech, Fès) and rural villages, allowed students to interact with men and women, which afforded opportunities to dispel many myths about Islam, and women’s position within Islam. To
facilitate student experiences of rhythms of daily life, student pairs lived in homestays with Moroccan families in the Agdal medina, the non-European quarter of Rabat.

**Bali.** During June 2014 eleven students participated in a four-week faculty-led study abroad program to Bali, Indonesia. The program director designed the program from the ground up with the support of an experienced Balinese guide and liaison. Student pairs lived in family-owned and operated bungalows overlooking the rice fields at the end of Jalan Kajeng, a quiet street with local shops and eateries in the Balinese village of Ubud, geographically located near the center of the island. The overall program was designed to stimulate students’ understanding of the construction of the Balinese self and society by: a) introducing students to theoretical debates on whether psychology of the self is universal or culturally specific; and b) extending these debates to understand what constitutes mental illness and how the Balinese practice prevention and healing within their culture. An additional embedded program goal was to stimulate student awareness of their own cultural lens and exotified representations of Bali.

Students were enrolled in two interrelated courses (Multicultural Psychology; Culture, Psychopathology, and Healing) which were aimed at helping students understand the local Balinese environment by giving them a framework to make sense of encounters with local people and places. Each class required intensive readings supplemented by 12 formal classroom lectures for each course, six guest lectures by local specialists in a classroom setting, five field lectures, and 12 field trips. Further, both classes required written coursework and presentations for a grade. All guest lectures and field trips were designed to illustrate or complement formal classroom lectures through experiential and place-based pedagogies.
Participants

Students enrolled in the Morocco 2014 and Bali 2014 programs were recruited for participation in this study in-person, upon arrival to each respective host country. The faculty program leader was unaware of who consented to participate. Importantly, since student narratives gathered in this study were part of program coursework, consent for coursework was obtained after grades were submitted.

Sixteen of the total of 19 participants (18 females, 1 male) in this study were undergraduates and three in the Morocco program were graduate students enrolled at the City University of New York. In the Morocco 2014 cohort, five out of eight students were born outside of the United States (Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Poland) and ages ranged from 19 to 26 years of age with an average age of about 22 years. In the Bali 2014 cohort, eight out of ten students or one or both parents were born outside the United States (Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Japan, Soviet Union) and participants ages ranged from 19 to 27 years of age, with an average age of 20 years.

Data Collection

This study employed data gathering from three sources as a strategy to provide thick description and enhance data credibility (Yin, 2014). Sources included participant-observation, narrating activities, and one-year follow-up interviews.

Participant-observation. Participant-observation was deemed critical to provide context for student experiences, thus I attended the Morocco 2014 and Bali 2014 programs to observe and participate in the physical and social spaces of the program, as well to build rapport with students. I was with students daily and attended all classes and excursions to collect field notes.
Special attention was paid to student engagement with place, including physical, cultural, and social environments, and rhythms of daily life.

**Narrative Activities.** As a part of the program coursework, students completed 8 narrative activities in the form of prompted reflective journals. Narrative activities engaged students in reflection upon classes and their experiences on field trips. Since journals were part of program coursework, consent to include them in the study was obtained post-program once grades were posted. The use of narrative activities as method allowed for exploration not only what they had learned, but importantly, *how* knowledge is produced, including the ways in which their learning experiences shaped, and were shaped through, engagement with the study abroad learning environment. For a list of narrative activities, please see Appendix A.

**Follow-up interviews.** The third source of data in this study were follow-up interviews conducted with participants approximately one-year post-program. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews lasted between 60-120 minutes. Follow-up interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed prior to conducting analysis.

**Data Analysis**

As mentioned previously, a coding system was developed that built upon findings reported in Chapter 3 (*Experiences in/of Place – Morocco*), and were enriched through the review of literature presented in the introduction to this chapter. In Table 4.1 I present the coding system used to analyze data and conduct a comparative analysis of student experiences in/of place in Morocco and Bali, as well as the role of place in the production of experiential learning space within both programs.

Line-by-line coding of data was conducted in order to identify patterns in student engagement with place, including representations of place, and instances of engagement with
physical/geographical, historical, social, aesthetic, and cultural elements of space. I do not report on my analysis of aesthetic experiences until Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali), nor do I report on patterns of student’s engagement with cultural practices directly. Instead I called upon those codes in order to make sense of student learning through other types of engagement. Data were also coded for experiential engagement with place, including coding of all visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory engagement. Data from Morocco and Bali were analyzed individually, with groups of student narrative activities serving as the unit of analysis. Following completion of individual case analysis, I conducted a comparative analysis of both programs to identify patterns across student engagement with and experiences in/of place across both programs.
Table 4.1

Coding System used to Code Research Participant Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Narrative Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGAGEMENT WITH PLACE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representations Of</td>
<td>Student presents or deconstructs conceived notions of host country, culture, or people</td>
<td>I anticipated seeing a really dry landscape. To my surprise Africa didn’t look the way I was conditioned to believe it would.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Geographical</td>
<td>Student describes physical environment of place, including natural and built</td>
<td>The path was elevated and steep, adjacent to small villages that were sunken beneath us and shaded by trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Student presents historical knowledge or unveil roots of place or organization visited</td>
<td>What amazed me the most at the Chellah, is that after it was explained, we were literally standing at one of the founding cites of Morocco.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>Student narrates about beauty or appreciation of beauty of place, including art and architecture</td>
<td>Another piece of art that caught my attention was this beautiful huge painting of a pink lotus flower with a women holding it in the palm of her hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Student describes cultural practices, traditions, or rhythms of daily life encountered in place</td>
<td>We have seen that textiles play an important social, spiritual and economic role in Balinese culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Student includes other characters encountered or observed in place within their narratives</td>
<td>At the conclusion of the ceremony I spoke with my classmates, I asked them they felt. I was informed that many of them enjoyed the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>Fellow students in program</td>
<td>Dewa occasionally walked over to a tree or bush and pulled off some greenery, explaining that it was edible and what dishes it was best in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliates</td>
<td>People directly affiliated with program such as liaisons, guest lecturers, or host family</td>
<td>We encountered what appeared to be a group of young boys dancing through the beats and sounds of what may have been traditional Berber music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>People unaffiliated or indirectly affiliated with the program assumed to be locals</td>
<td>Many tourists are willing to spend money on sarongs and batiks, either to use or to keep as decoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists</td>
<td>People or groups assumed to be tourists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Experiences in/of Place

#### Morocco and Bali

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Narrative Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiential</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with full body sensations beyond individual senses</td>
<td>As waited for my turn to step under the first stream of water I felt myself being pulled into a peaceful state of being. I was able to silence my thoughts and focus my mind on all the sensations around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with the sense of sight.</td>
<td>The entertainment varies—you could be seeing a snake charmer, a man with a trained monkey, a magician or demonstrations of Moroccan dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auditory</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with the sense of hearing.</td>
<td>Once we started to hear about all the different histories of what has happened where we were standing, I felt so grateful for this experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Olfactory</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with the sense of smell.</td>
<td>One of my favorite parts of the trip was the botanical garden that smelled and looked wonderful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gustatory</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with the sense of taste.</td>
<td>Following two delicious introductions to Indonesian cuisine, the walk back to the compound allowed for socializing as well as some introspective thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tactile</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with the sense of touch.</td>
<td>Learning how to hold the copper tool took a little getting used to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kinesthetic</strong></td>
<td>Student engages with the sense of movement.</td>
<td>Following two delicious introductions to Indonesian cuisine, the walk back to the compound allowed for socializing as well as some introspective thought.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### RELATIONALITY

- **Within Place**
  - **Similarity**
    - Similarity within host country
    - First off, all of the structures in the school are built from bamboo and the classrooms have no walls – similar to a lot of the structures in Bali.
  - **Difference**
    - Difference within host country
    - Many of the women in Marrakech don’t abide by the strict Islamic rules of dress. I found that the clothing is much more liberal in these tourist areas.

(continued on next page)
### Results

This section reports on results of analysis including representations of Morocco and Bali enacted in student narrating; relationality enacted within and between places enacted in student narrating; and engagement with place enacted in student narrating. I report on these three families of codes from data collected during the program, and then one-year later. Of note, I report patterns within this data that were present in about three-quarters of student responses (or more). On occasion and when necessary, I discuss exceptions. A final note on my reporting of data, in some sections I include visual representations of data and tables of codes to provide context for the reader. In no way are these meant to infer statistical significance; I present my data in this way as it provides the reader with context and a glimpse into how I came to ask the questions I did about my data. The purpose of this dissertation was not to infer cause and effect, but to better understand relationships between study-abroad students and place, pedagogy, and culture while studying abroad.
Representations of Morocco and Bali Enacted in Student Narrating

In effort to engage students in thinking about their expectations of Moroccan-ness or Balinese-ness, and the ways in which their conceptions had or had not changed over the course of the program, a trio of narrating activities were assigned to students. At the beginning of the program, students were prompted to narrate about their expectations of each place before departure (Journal 1 Pre-departure) and to describe first impressions upon arrival (Journal 2 Arrival). Finally, the last narrative activity (Journal 8 Return) asked students to revisit their first two journals and consider if and how stereotypes, expectations, or impressions of Morocco or Bali had shifted. In this section, first I present individual case analysis of student narratives in Journal 1 Pre-departure and Journal 2 Arrival, which demonstrated students carried with them representations of Morocco and Bali that influenced their lived experiences in/of place as soon as they arrived at their destinations. Next, I present collective case analysis of both Morocco and Bali Journal 8 Return, which indicated that many representations of Morocco and Bali were renegotiated over the programs.

Moroccan-ness enacted in student narrating. Across Journal 1 Pre-departure and Journal 2 Arrival, all but one of eight students’ narratives included discussion of representations of Morocco. As introduced in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place in Morocco), representations of Morocco, or Moroccan-ness, enacted in student pre-departure and arrival narratives included anticipation of experiencing warm weather, dry landscapes, and a conservative culture and oppressive religion that resulted in many students being worried about their safety as women:
I must admit that besides feeling excited about the newness of everything, I feel a lot more nervous about this trip than my previous trips. I am really worried about doing something unintentionally that may be perceived as offensive or dressing inappropriately.

**Wren, Morocco Journal 1 Pre-departure**

Most of my worries are that I don’t really know what to expect when it comes to how I as a woman am going to be treated. I have to be honest, but from the sort of negative feedback that I have been getting it seems that Muslim women are very oppressed and don’t really have as much rights. However, I am sure that this is just an exaggeration of what the media has kind of engraved in our heads or the image we seem to paint […]

**Paloma, Morocco Journal 1 Pre-departure**

In addition to worries about safety overshadowing underlying excitement about studying abroad in Morocco, another pattern of concern was about daily amenities. Four students described representations of Morocco that included “third world” qualities such as lack of modernity, underdevelopment, limited Wi-Fi, and dilapidated infrastructure. For example:

I know it will be different from New York but I’m not sure how safe I will feel. The airport is something that I have a screwed vision of. I’m not sure if it will be what I am expecting. I see a very run down place with narrow security and a lot of people (in my head). I wonder why I feel this way! If this what I have seen in movies throughout my life? I’m not sure what the reality will be.

**Robin, Morocco Journal 1 Pre-departure**
I cannot even imagine what to expect in Morocco and as much as I would like to stray away from others’ perceptions of a third world country, and their advice to not drink the water or to be very careful, this manipulated preconceived image of Africa paints Africa as a poor wilderness in my mind, but this is exactly why I am going, to change this image with my experience.

Violet, Morocco Journal 1 Pre-departure

As indicated in these narrative excerpts, impressionistic mental images of Moroccan-ness gathered from various sources built a vision of Morocco as place in the minds of students prior to their departure, which would ultimately shape their encounters upon arrival (supported by analysis of Journal 2 Arrival presented later). Some students, like Violet, were explicitly determined to “change this image” through experience, while others, like Wren, arrived with their guards up (“I am really worried about doing something unintentionally…offensive”). Sources of these representations of Moroccan-ness were identified by some students like Paloma, Robin, and Violet in the excerpts above, as being an “exaggeration,” “screwed,” and “manipulated” via exposure to popular culture and media portrayals of Islam and Africa, as well as conversations with peers, friends, and family who expressed concern. Nearly all students who narrated about Moroccan-ness, looked forward to experiencing Islamic culture and learning about women’s rights firsthand, in hopes of reconstructing these representations.

Indeed, abstract representations of Morocco (conceived space) were on a collision course with the observed, concrete, materiality of Morocco (perceived space) that students would enter upon their arrival to Morocco. As early as disembarkation at the Casablanca airport, representations of Morocco (conceived space) began to collide with the observed Morocco
When we finally got to the airport in Morocco I found myself in disbelief. I couldn’t believe how green everything was. I anticipated seeing a really dry landscape. To my surprise Africa didn’t look the way I was conditioned to believe it would. This is when I began to realize the impact of experiencing something first hand. […] When we exited the airport the first thing I noticed was the weather. I never expected to feel cold. I thought that 40 degrees on this side of the world meant that it was still going to be warm.

Wren, Morocco Journal 2 Arrival

I suppose my initial reaction when getting off the plane was, wow this airport is nothing like I expected. Everything actually seemed very European and Western to me.

Robin, Morocco Journal 2 Arrival

The first thing I noticed when I exited the airport were the palm trees which for some reason I could not picture in Africa. Neither could I imagine the incredibly cold weather. Even knowing what the weather would be like before arriving I would have never imagined how cold it gets during the winter.

Violet, Morocco Journal 2 Arrival

The excerpts from Wren and Violet above are but two examples of representations of Moroccan weather prevalent throughout student narratives. It is quite remarkable that despite being aware of the actual temperature in Morocco, both Wren and Violet still expected it to be warm, just because they were “on this side of the world” in “Africa,” which speaks to the strength and
persistence of these representations of place prior to first-hand experience in/of Morocco.
Renegotiation of spatial representations of Moroccan physical/geographical environment and weather were initiated at the beginning of the program, other representations of Moroccan-ness, particularly the conception of Islam as radically oppressive and conservative were generated more slowly, compounding through different moments over time. This is taken up later in the section “Representations Revisited,” following the presentation of Bali-ness enacted in student narrating activities.

Bali-ness enacted in student narrating. Representations of Bali were enacted in nine of 11 student narratives and included the anticipation of an exotic, peaceful, and tropical paradise. This fostered anticipation of a therapeutic and spiritual journey surrounded by smiling, friendly Balinese people in nearly half of students’ narrating. Underlying tones of romanticism, exoticism, and Orientalism were also prevalent:

I mean, it’s Bali, Indonesia- THE paradise destination filled with rich culture. How could I turn away an opportunity to experience Bali? I couldn’t!

Izabella, Bali Journal 1 Pre-departure

I have no idea what to expect other than it being a beautiful place since that’s what I’ve been told so far…I can’t wait to see how different their culture is… All I can say is that I hope I’ll be able to contain my emotions once I reach Bali! See you soon Bali!!

Ophelia, Bali Journal 1 Pre-departure

I have a good idea of what to expect from reading travel brochures, books, and the articles assigned, but I know once I arrive my expectations will be exceeded…I cannot
wait to be fully immersed in the culture, walk through the streets and feel the sensations and vibrations of Balinese life. [...] All in all, there are nothing but good feelings about this upcoming trip!

Layla, Bali Journal 1 Pre-departure

I have been told Bali is beautiful and peaceful so I’m expecting to arrive there and be able to feel comfortable like it is my second home.

Esther, Bali Journal 1 Pre-departure

Rather than expressing worry about cultural differences like many students in the Morocco program, the excerpts above are representative of the majority of students in Bali. Most students were anticipating being “immersed” in a “different”, “rich”, “peaceful” culture and “beautiful” scenery. Nervousness was an underlying theme; however, nerves were shaken by typical worries such as a language barrier or long plane rides, not safety within the country. Overall, excitement radiates through students’ Bali pre-departure narratives; they looked forward to arriving and experiencing Bali-ness in person and many expected it would exceed their expectations as the pictures seen online or in guidebooks could never do it justice.

As in Morocco, representations of Bali (conceived space) were also on their way to encounter the observed, concrete physicality of Bali (perceived space) upon student arrival. In Morocco what had been conceived did not match the perceived cultural landscape, and thus had to be renegotiated. However, in Bali, impressions of friendly locals and of beautiful landscapes were strengthened through students’ embodied experiences (lived space):

To be greeted by friendly, smiling faces that seemed genuinely happy to welcome you into their country quickly primed the next few [weeks] as undoubtedly positive.
Cassidy, Bali Journal 2 Arrival

The place was dark so I didn’t get a look at our view but got a sense of the tranquility of it all. Going to bed was peaceful and easy because of that. My last thought was that of how surreal everything felt; I couldn’t believe I was in Bali.

Izabella, Bali Journal 2 Arrival

When I got to the airport I was amazed by the beauty of it all, the scenery was absolutely beautiful and totally foreign to me. The trees and plants made the airport come to life, it immediately put a smile on my face.

Ophelia, Bali Journal 2 Arrival

My last thought before sleeping was, “Woah, I bet the view of the rice fields will be so beautiful when the sun rises.” I meditated on this thought and imagined how the scenery would look with the sun slowly rising revealing the natural beauty that surrounded us.

Layla, Bali Journal 2 Arrival

Again, we see the strength of representations illustrated in these quotes—even students like Izabella and Layla (who arrived in the dark) perceived the landscape as “beautiful” and even felt a sense of “tranquility.” In addition to Cassidy, three other students narrated about how friendly they found people in Bali to be the night of their arrival. Whereas representations of Morocco had to be renegotiated because they did not fit notions of Moroccan-ness, representations of Bali were more likely to be described as exceeding pre-expectations of Bali-ness in the form of beauty and friendliness. Further, while students in Morocco demonstrated awareness of potential sources of their pre-conceived notions of Moroccan-ness in their first two narratives, Bali
students did not question these representations or disclose the influence of potential sources like the media and pop culture, until the final narrative activity (*Journal 8 Return*), described below.

**Representations revisited in student narrating.** In revisiting their first and second journals, most but not all students described an awareness and/or renegotiation of Moroccan-*ness* or Bali-*ness*. Perhaps the most commonly renegotiated space of Moroccan-*ness* in *Journal 8 Return* were conceptions of Islam as radically oppressive and conservative, and Morocco as “third world.” I provide two exemplar narrative excerpts below:

Initially when I thought of “Africa,” I have to confess that poverty and the term “third world” frequently made its way into my head. Now although I wasn’t living with the luxuries that I have here in the United States, the people of Morocco are more advanced than I had imagined. By this, I mean that I slept in an actual bed and was fed quite well, not to mention my almost 24/7 access to Wi-Fi Internet. There are even trams in the richer parts of town that look cleaner and more modern than the trains I take to school every day [in New York City]. Now I’m able to say that the stereotypes we may have acquired from the little information we know about a certain place or of a certain people may be completely wrong. In fact, I’m usually the first to admit that fault and try to encourage others to not always believe what they hear until they can see for themselves.

*Jaye, Morocco Journal 8 Return*

Moroccans themselves seemed to be very heterogeneous, not only in their appearance but also in their approach to Islam. I expected a good majority of the people to be very religious and was surprised that I never saw my family pray. Interviewing young boys and girls on their perception of dating really opened my eyes to the fact that although
most Moroccans identified themselves as Muslim their religious views were very different. I thought that everyone would observe a strict adherence to the Quran but found that many people didn’t identify as being religious and practically frowned at the thought of practicing Islam.

Wren, Morocco Journal 8 Return

Modernity, diversity, and heterogeneity within Morocco were common patterns in seven out of nine student Journal 8 Return narratives following the three-week study abroad program in Morocco. Analysis indicated that diversity of people, landscapes, religious practices, and languages forced a renegotiation of homogenous Moroccan-ness—particularly that people were conservative, closed-minded, and followed the Quran blindly. Like Wren, many students identified one or more “moments” when space narrated was (re)negotiated, such as talking to Moroccans, visiting NGOs and women’s cooperatives, or visiting historical sites.

While Moroccan-ness largely shifted from homogenous to heterogeneous across the majority of students, the most common shift in conceptions of Bali-ness was an awareness of, and subsequent deconstruction of, exotified representations of Balinese culture. Enacted in eight of 11 Bali students’ narrating about their first two journals was the realization of exotified notions of Balinese culture—half of whom attributed exotic representations to popular culture and the media. I provide two illustrative examples:

Before traveling to Bali, the only context I had of what to expect came from watching the cinema version of Eat, Pray, Love. After staying in Ubud, I realized that Elizabeth Gilbert portrayed Bali as an exotic locale and was a classic example of how the West fetishizes the East and masks the cultural complexities of a foreign place. Gilbert was
patronizing and did not really take the time to present Bali as a place that is not paradise, but a place with a foreign culture that must be understood and learned about.

Grace, Bali Journal 8 Return

Throughout the program we have been exposed to both the positive and negative consequences that arise from certain beliefs of Balinese culture. One can argue that the negative consequences (highlighted through visits/lectures at [women’s health clinic], [orphanage], etc.) may be equally, if not more, important to observe, study, and experience.

Cassidy, Bali Journal 8 Return

Like Grace and Cassidy, nearly all students—even those who did not explicitly mention exotification or fetishizing of the East—described an appreciation for the complexities of Balinese cultural practice. Though diversity of Balinese cultural and religious practice was not as prevalent in student narrating as it was in Morocco, seven of 11 students did mention at least one subtle nuance of Balinese culture, such as: women not being the only individuals who make offerings (Josie); exceptions to the rule of peace and harmony among each other and the environment, for instance isolation of physically or mentally disabled children (Eliza; Cassidy) and mass amounts of litter (Eliza; Grace); and, finally just because the Balinese look happy does not necessarily mean they are free from negative emotions (Ophelia; Layla; Esther). Parallel with student narrating in Morocco, these subtle nuances were more often than not linked to particular moments within the program, including visits to the women’s health clinic and the orphanage as demonstrated in Cassidy’s narrative excerpt above, as well as interviews with Balinese peoples, particular readings, and field trips such as visits to temples and ceremonies. These moments,
which borrowing from Lefebvre (1991/1974) I term “generative moments,” will be further addressed in the discussion section where I connect these moments to the production of experiential learning space.

It is worth noting this narrating activity (*Journal 8 Return*) was not successful for every student across both programs. For example, in the case of one student in particular, there was little indication of renegotiation of space or perspective within her final narrative—instead this student focused largely on moments of her own achievements navigating the Moroccan landscape, and moments of realization about how life in New York is better than life in Morocco, for example because of “untrained” fast food service workers. She also noted that despite her worries about being harassed in her first journals, she concluded with saying ultimately it “wasn’t as bad as I imagined” since she could not understand the language, even though Moroccan men “stare” for longer than men in New York. This conclusion begs the question if this student was able to ever to take on a different perspective, much less find relatability or connection between herself and Moroccan women. Furthermore, she did not have a positive outlook on the future of women in Morocco, but took solace in the fact that she feels “safe to have the rights” that she has in her society. That being said, overall, prompting students to re-read their first two narratives (pre-departure and arrival journals) and narrate their experiences of it as a final prompt (return journal) was successful in helping students to consider representations of Morocco and Bali carried with them there, and how they may have been renegotiated. For example, at first, a few students in Morocco and Bali prided themselves on having “no expectations” for the program in their first two journals, but by their final narrative (*Journal 8 Return*), two of these students came to realize that having “no expectations” meant that they had
not put enough thought into considering what expectations, biases, or conceptions they held prior to departure.

In sum, analysis of student representations of Morocco and Bali enacted in student narrating revealed that in Morocco, students picked up on diversity of landscapes, peoples and practices, with a particular focus on exceptions to the “rule” of conservatism and homogeneous religious practices. Lived experiences engaging with place in Morocco provided glimpses into the underground, clandestine lives of Moroccans—particularly young Moroccans—which challenged Moroccan-ness as homogenous and instead produced narratives gravitating round heterogeneity. In Bali, however, student narratives addressed very few exceptions to the “rule” of practicing Balinese Hinduism, and instead focused largely on cultural complexities within Balinese daily life, and the importance of deconstructing exotified representations of Balinese culture. This finding—cultural complexity within Bali and cultural diversity within Morocco enacted in student narrating—extends beyond this trio of narrative activities as further evidenced by the line of analysis presented in the following section on relationality.

**Relationality Within and Between Places Enacted in Student Narrating**

Analysis of student narratives revealed interesting patterns in the ways in which students narrated about their lived experiences during both the Morocco and Bali programs. In this section, I present visualizations and make sense of comparisons *within place* (host country to host country) and *between places* (host country to another country) enacted in student narrating, beginning upon arrival to the host country through their return home. Importantly, in the presentation of this data I include tables with numbers of codes and line graphs *only* to provide context for the reader to understand how I came to understand and ask questions about my very large pool of data, and to guide topics that need explanation. Again, in no way am I intending to
report on or claim statistical significance, and I do recognize that each narrating activity paired with experiential learning events within and across Morocco and Bali were different (see Appendix A), and not the same activity completed over time. However, I chose to report my data in the form of a line graph as this was the most helpful way for me to ask questions about students’ engagement within and between places. Thus, it made the most sense to present the data in this way. Further, when I speak about “trends” I am using this word as a descriptive to talk about patterns, not as it is used in statistical language—the intention of this study is not to infer cause and effect but to understand relationships between students and place.

**Morocco.** As introduced in Chapter 3 (*Experiences in/of Place – Morocco*), over time, a shift occurred in the ways in which students narrated about similarities and differences within Morocco, and between Morocco and the United States (typically New York City) or another country (typically student home country if born outside of U.S.). In addition to the following bulleted list of general trends, or patterns, which are further unpacked below, these data are presented visually in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.3:

- Over time, differences *between* Morocco and places outside of the country enacted in student narrating lessened. (blue line)
- Over time, similarity *between* Morocco and places outside of the country enacted in student narrating increased. (orange line)
- Over time, differences *within* Morocco as a place enacted in student narrating increased steadily to the largest number of comparisons enacted. (grey line)
- Overall, very little with similarity *within* Morocco as place was enacted in student narrating. (yellow line)
Table 4.2

Comparisons Within and Between Places Enacted in Morocco 2014 Student Narrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>02 Arrival</th>
<th>03 Chellah</th>
<th>04 Jemaa el Fna</th>
<th>05 Tigemmy</th>
<th>06 NGOs</th>
<th>07 Sexuality</th>
<th>08 Return</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Between place means students compared host country to home/another country (e.g. Morocco to the United States); Within place means students drew comparisons within the host county (e.g. Rabat to Marrakech)

Figure 4.1 Comparisons within and between places enacted in Morocco 2014 student narrating
**Between places.** To begin our unpacking, let us explore the first two bullet points, which deal with similarities and differences between places enacted in student narrating. Following the start of the blue line in Figure 4.1 above, *Journal 2 Arrival* contained the highest number of enactments of differences between Morocco and places outside the country in student narrating across all journals (*Journal 5 Tigemmy* was a close second and reasoning for this will be interpreted below). Thus, upon arrival students were tuned in to contrasting elements between what was encountered upon arrival and that with which they were familiar. I provide two examples:

The beauty of nature in the form of beautiful flowers and trees were preserved in the streets that made it feel more genuine. I compared this observation with that of the concrete jungle we call New York City and how our buildings destroy the potential beauty that could be prevalent in our neighborhoods.

Jaye, Morocco *Journal 2 Arrival*

Although this was a big difference, people have actually been very patient and with either hand signs or a little bit of Spanish and French from some of the girls we have been able to manage some type of communication – even at the airport.

Paloma, Morocco *Journal 2 Arrival*

Narrating about the drive from the Casablanca airport to Rabat, Jaye, a U.S. born student, contrasted the landscape of the drive to “the concrete jungle we call New York City,” while Paloma, a student born in Ecuador, narrated about the language barrier, but also noted how “people have actually been very patient.” I chose excerpts from these two students to illustrate a nested pattern within student narrating between places in *Journal 2 Arrival*. As indicated by the
orange line in Figure 4.1, upon arrival there was also a high amount of similarities between Morocco and places outside of it enacted in student narrating. This is worth discussing at a within-group level, despite my general focus on narrative activities as the unit of analysis throughout this chapter.

Noticing this trend, I returned to the data and analyzed which students were narrating about similarities, and further explored what they were drawing similarities between. I found that it was largely the students who identified as having bi-cultural orientations, who narrated about similarities between places. Students who were born in the United States, two of whom had never traveled abroad before, were much less likely to draw similarities between Morocco and the United States upon arrival. For bi-cultural students, this was also the case, as similarities enacted in their narrating were drawn between their home countries and Morocco, not the U.S:

Although this was an unfamiliar country to me, this part of the town (Agdal) really reminded me of how the central part of Guayaquil, Ecuador is and it relaxed me. What was probably completely different I would say was basically just the obvious, which was the language.

Paloma, Morocco Journal 2 Arrival

I felt very comfortable getting out of the airport. In terms of aesthetics, I felt like my surroundings looked like home [Poland]. The only thing that I found to be different was the fact that the signs were in Arabic.

Wren, Morocco Journal 2 Arrival

As we headed towards [program headquarters] I continued to see plain fields for a while until we arrived into the towns. Immediately I compared it to Dominican Republic. The
dull orange yellow walls and the half suburban half city kind of style reminded me so much of my home country expect one great distinction, the styling and structure of the houses.

Violet, Morocco Journal 2 Arrival

As indicated in these excerpts, in addition to differences between Morocco and familiar countries (e.g. language, architecture), similarities between Morocco and home countries were enacted in the narrating of students with bi-cultural orientations quite early on. This finding is interesting as it suggests there may be differences in enactments of relationality with place across students with different backgrounds, particularly upon arrival, which may have implications for pre-trip pedagogy (taken up further in the discussion section, as parallel trends were found in Bali).

Continuing to follow the orange line (see Figure 4.1), despite this early “trend” of enacted similarities between places, this trend dips following Journal 2 Arrival, picks up after Journal 5 Tigemmy, and continues to rise through the remainder of the program regardless of student mono- or bi-cultural orientation. After a dip in enactments of similarity between in Journal 3 Chellah, within which students narrate about a visit to an ancient Roman necropolis described in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), similarities between places rise in Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna. This is likely due to the narrative activity, which directly prompted students to consider similarities and differences in their experience of Marrakech’s main square (this activity was also described in Chapter 3: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco). The overall trend of the orange line indicates that, while students still noticed differences (see blue line), over time, students found more similarities between Morocco and familiar places outside of it. I provide one illustrative example of this trend:
Sexuality in Morocco is very different from sexuality in the United States. Virginity is a very big focus, and so a balance of desire and social appropriateness is attempted. However, in the U.S. virginity is a focus of losing it rather than keeping it among some youth, and is not a necessity for marriage for any woman unless a personal choice. Like two different worlds, but underneath the desires seem to be the same. Everyone has sexual desires, but how, when, and with who is very influenced by your surroundings, and mandates the balance one must find to be at peace with the actions a person makes.

Savanna, Morocco Journal 8 Sexuality

This excerpt from Savanna, one of the three U.S. born students, is a great example of the ways in which all students, over time, found similarities in a cultural landscape of apparent difference. Recognizing that sexuality is “very different” in Morocco compared to the United States, Savanna noticed that “virginity is a very big focus” in both places, despite the ways in which they are focused upon being different. In Morocco, the focus tends to be on maintaining one’s virginity (“keeping it”), while in the United States the focus tends to be on “losing it.” Further, she narrated, “like two different worlds, but underneath the desires seem to be the same,” and even recognized that this is a result of one’s surroundings. Savanna’s excerpt is but one example of many students’ narrating that picked up on similarities between the United States and/or other countries with which students have cultural ties during the second half of the program. Students began to find relatability, even between their personal religion and Islam.

The aforementioned pattern in increased narrating about similarities between places goes hand in hand with the overall trend indicated by the blue line introduced earlier: that differences between Morocco and familiar places decreased over time, as indicated by the shift following Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna and Journal 5 Tigemmy. In other words, in the second half of the
program, students focused more on similarities between, rather than differences between Morocco and familiar places. An exception to this trend was Journal 5 Tigemmy, which prompted students to narrate about what their life would be like if they lived in Tigemmy (a women’s cooperative we visited outside of Marrakech) or a remote Amazigh village near Ifran in the Middle Atlas Mountains (we visited one and passed by many), which may explain the rise in narrating about difference between home/U.S. and host country. While some students narrated from the position of a Moroccan woman (i.e. imagining as if they had been born there), most students shifted between narrating as a Moroccan woman and comparing a rural life to the life they currently know, which resulted in a rise in contrasts between the life they have known in New York or elsewhere, and what was experienced in rural Morocco. Overall, trends in place comparisons and relationality, by Journal 8 Return, indicate that similarities between Morocco and other places were enacted more so than differences, which suggests that over time, students came to find some relatability to Morocco’s cultural landscape, and were less concerned with differences. Interestingly, by Journal 8 Return another pattern is screaming for attention—differences and similarities within Morocco enacted in student narrating.

Within place. Despite very little enactment of similarities within Morocco in student narrating (yellow line), similarities within Morocco can be inferred from the representations of Moroccan-ness enacted in students’ first two journals. As presented in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Morocco) and elaborated upon in the previous results sub-section, students carried with them representations of Morocco, or Moroccan-ness upon arrival. These representations were reflective of students’ pre-conceptions of Morocco as a largely homogenous country, including the landscape, people, climate, and cultural and religious practices. The renegotiation of these

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4 Amazigh is the preferred term for Berber, or the indigenous people of Morocco.
representations account for part of the trend indicated by the grey line (see Figure 4.2 above): differences within Morocco as place increased over time. In other words, students began to narrate about ways in which life in Morocco differed from place to place, and even from person to person within the same place. I provide a few examples drawn from different journals:

From interacting with the people in Morocco, at least with those who speak English, I noticed that individuals have different opinions on every subject and it is intriguing to study the two extremes especially in the matters of women’s rights…The opposite responses may have been because of the generational gap and it may be just that Morocco and its people are just as varied as Morocco’s weather.

Violet, Morocco 2014 Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna

I presume that life in the Berber villages is centered inside the home even more than in larger cities like Rabat, especially because I rarely saw any individuals outside.

Paloma, Morocco 2014 Journal 5 Tigemmy

The women we met in Tigemmy gave me the impression that they were unlike other women who live in remote areas.

Robin, Morocco 2014 Journal 5 Tigemmy

There are many contradictions between the aforementioned Penal Code and the Family Code. The Penal Code maintains the concept of the husband’s legal “authority” over their wife despite the Family Code’s elimination of the wife’s duty to obey their husband as the “head of the household.”

Jaye, Morocco 2014 Journal 6 NGOs
Also virginity is valued differently depending on the area where girls or women live. For example, for rural girls and their families, virginity means security. Since many rural areas are made up of poor communities, a girl’s virginity is her security to a better life and finding a good husband.

Jasmine, Morocco 2014 *Journal 8 Sexuality*

Together, these excerpts provide a glimpse into the ways in which study abroad students began to narrate about *differences within* Morocco as place. In the excerpts we see differences between regions of Morocco particularly urban and rural comparisons (Paloma, Robin, Jasmine), comparisons between the lives of people who live in these areas (Paloma, Robin, Jasmine), and differences with Moroccan law and social classes (Jaye, Jasmine).

As indicated in Figure 4.1 above, *Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna* and *Journal 5 Tigemmy* seem to put differences within Morocco enacted in student narrating on a fast-track. After *Journal 5 Tigemmy*, differences between places starts to decrease (blue line), similarities between places starts to increase (orange line), and differences within Morocco starts to increase (grey line). This makes sense, as these two journals were completed following a weekend trip to Marrakech, and based on two place-based experiential learning activities.

**Bali.** Like Morocco, over time, a shift occurred in the ways in which students narrated about similarities and differences within Bali as a country, and between Bali and the United States (typically New York City) or another country (typically a student’s home country if self or parents were born outside of U.S.). Again, as indicated in the introduction to the Morocco section, the reporting and presentation of my data in the form of numbers and a line graph is not to claim statistical significance but to guide the reader through topics that require explanation. In
addition to the following bulleted list of general trends, which are further unpacked below, these
data are presented visually in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2:

- Over time, differences *between* Bali and places outside of the country enacted in student
  narrating decreased. (blue line)
- Over time, similarity *between* Bali and places outside of the country enacted in student
  narrating increased slightly, but was not a primary focus. (orange line)
- Over time, differences *within* Bali as a place enacted in student narrating remained low
  until the final journal. (grey line)
- Over time, similarity *within* Bali as a place enacted in student narrating increased steadily
  before decreasing slightly toward the end of the program. (yellow line)

Prior to beginning the unpacking of data presented in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2 below, it is
worth pointing out that overall comparisons *within* and *between* places by the 11 students in the
Bali program were lower than those by the 8 students in Morocco, despite the Bali program
having three more students. The Morocco program had a total of 291 place comparisons, which
averages to about 36 per person over the course of the program, the Bali program had 277, which
averages to about 20 per person\(^5\). Despite the number of enactments being less robust in Bali
(e.g. aside from *Journal 2 Arrival* the highest number of subgroup comparisons was 18), I
present the overall trends, or patterns, as they still tell a story about student relationality; and in
the discussion section I will offer a few interpretations for this difference.

\(^5\) These are estimated per person averages; individuals were not the unit of analysis. Data reported in this
manner as an effort to give the reader an idea of the difference between programs.
Table 4.3
Comparisons Within and Between Places Enacted in Bali 2014 Student Narrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>02 Arrival</th>
<th>03 Rice Fields</th>
<th>04 TL/GS</th>
<th>05 Craft Village</th>
<th>06 Purification Ceremony</th>
<th>07 Healer</th>
<th>08 Return</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Between Places</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>277</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. Between place means students compared host country to home/another country (e.g. Bali to the United States); Within place means students drew comparisons within the host country (e.g. Ubud to Gili)

Figure 4.2. Comparisons within and between places enacted in Bali 2014 student narrating
Between places. As we did with Morocco, let us begin tracing these trends with differences and similarities between places enacted in Bali 2014 student narrating. Following the start of the blue line in Figure 4.2 above, Journal 2 Arrival contained the highest number of enactments of difference between Bali and places outside the country in student narrating across all journals. Thus, upon arrival students were tuned in to contrasting elements between what was encountered upon arrival with that with which they were familiar. I provide two examples:

I was struck by how polite the workers in the supermarket were toward us, I suppose that was me comparing my experience to the treatment I would’ve gotten in New York; this is not to say that in New York workers are necessarily nasty, but they are definitely not as attentive.

Eliza, Bali 2014 Journal 2 Arrival

Not only do these green spaces serve to bring together the indoors with the outdoors, but they also preserve the memory of the natural green environment that once was everywhere before cities such as the one I call my home replaced it. Although in a place like New York City, where much is done to constantly stay “connected,” and convenience has come to be taken for granted, I wonder at what cost does urbanization come?

Joy, Bali 2014 Journal 2 Arrival

Narrating about a pit-stop at a supermarket for students to get some snacks on the way from the airport to Ubud, Eliza, a U.S. born student, contrasted “how polite” employees she encountered in the supermarket were compared to the “typical treatment” she would have experienced in New York. Joy, a student whose parents were born in Japan, in commenting on the architecture of the
Denpasar airport, she contrasted the “green spaces that serve to bring together the indoors with the outdoors” with the “urbanization” of cities like New York. As introduced in the previous subsection, students entered Bali with pre-conceived notions of Bali, or Bali-ness and much of what they encountered in the first week appears to have aligned with these representations, including Eliza’s note that Balinese people are friendly, and Joy’s observations of the airport greenery that led to her pondering the impacts of urbanization. Joy and Eliza are but two examples of many across student narrating in Journal 2 that confirm ideas of Bali-ness.

Upon arrival, as indicated by the orange line in Figure 4.2, mentions of similarities between Bali and countries outside of it follow closely behind the number of differences enacted in student narrating. As in Morocco, this is worth discussing at a within-group level, despite my general focus on narrative activities as the unit of analysis throughout this chapter.

I returned to the data and conducted an analysis to understand which students were narrating about similarities, and further explored what they were drawing similarities between. Again, I found that it was largely the students who identified as having bi-cultural orientations, who narrated about similarities between places. Of the three students who did not describe identifying with more than one cultural identity, one of whom had never traveled abroad before, drew fewer similarities between Bali and the United States upon arrival. In fact, among these students’ two enactments of similarities between places, they focused on similarities between airports in Cuba and Shanghai to the airport in Bali. All nine students whose parents or themselves were born outside of the United States narrated similarities between Bali and their home countries. A few examples are provided:

Overall, Bali is a reminder of my home country in many ways. On the way to the hotel from the airport, I couldn’t help but compare Bali to DR [Dominican Republic]. The way
things look at a first glance are very much like DR. The motorbikes and the motorcycles were a big similarity between the two. In a way, these similarities have made me feel at home, it has made the adjustment from NY to Bali easier.

Nellie, Bali 2014 *Journal 2 Arrival*

The drive to Ubud was very pleasant. The main road that took us to Ubud reminded me a lot of Bangladesh, where my family is originally from. Because the cultures of both Bangladesh and Bali are quite different, it was surprising to me how visually similar the two places looked. In Bali as in Bangladesh, there are small little shops that sell different items lining the sides of the street.

Grace, Bali 2014 *Journal 2 Arrival*

The trees and plants made the airport come to life, it immediately put a smile on my face. As soon as I took a deep breath and closed my eyes I was reminded of the times I’ve visited my family in Colombia. I’m guessing it reminded me of Colombia because of the tropical scent that comes from the lovely trees. This only made me more ecstatic. When it comes to being different, everything was different about Bali. The people were all smiles, something that you rarely experience in New York.

Ophelia, Bali 2014 *Journal 2 Arrival*

Within each of these three narrative excerpts, in addition to *differences between* Bali and familiar countries, *similarities between* Bali and home countries were enacted in the narrating of students with bi-cultural orientations upon arrival. Grace and Ophelia’s excerpts mention both similarities and differences, and interestingly Ophelia writes, “When it comes to being different, everything
was different about Bali” after having just described how the scent from a tree reminded her of Colombia made her feel “more ecstatic.” Similarly, Nellie, who was born in the Dominican Republic, describes how the similarities between the DR and Bali (e.g. “the way things looked,” “the motorbikes and motorcycles”) not only helped her to feel “at home” but also “made the adjustment from NY to Bali easier.” Akin to Morocco, this finding suggests there may be differences in enactments of relationality with place across students with different backgrounds, particularly upon arrival, which may have implications for pre-trip pedagogy. For example, Paloma described the ways in which Morocco reminded her of Ecuador, which ultimately led to her feeling “relaxed” upon arrival. The ways in which pre-trip pedagogy may be planned to assist students in finding more things to relate to upon arrival is taken up in the discussion, and furthered within Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali), where I describe how a place-based pre-trip class at a museum may have assisted students—even those with no bicultural ties—in finding shared meaning and relatability during their first week in Bali.

Continuing to follow the orange line (see Figure 4.2), despite this early pattern of student narrating about similarities between places, this trend dips following Journal 2 Arrival, and plateaus largely until Journal 6 Purification Ceremony, where there is a rise in the similarity between places enacted in student narrating. This is likely due to the narrative activity, which directly prompted students to describe their experience of a full moon purification ceremony in a village outside of Tampaskiring, just north of Ubud, to a friend while considering how it may be similar or different than what Americans may know. Journal 6 Purification Ceremony was designed as parallel to Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna in Morocco, where the same rise was reported, indicating these prompts facilitated student narrating about similarities and differences between
places. The overall trend of the orange line indicates that after students narrating about similarities between Bali and countries outside of it was largely not a primary focus.

Following the blue line and orange line together (see Figure 4.2), we can see a general pattern that shows similarities and differences between places moved somewhat in unison, however, differences between Bali and home countries were slightly more prominent and indicate that overall, students narrated about differences less as the program went on. One exception to this is Journal 7 Healer, where differences between places rose. This narrative activity asked students to reflect upon mental illness, healing, and prevention in Bali, and was paired with a visit to a balian, or Balinese healer, who is well-known for his specialty in internal medicine. Put simply, the Balinese approach to health and wellness does not separate mind and body, takes a preventative rather than reactive approach, and believes that illness is a reflection of ill-will from a former life (more detail on Balinese culture provided in Chapter 5 Place-based Intervention – Bali). Bilians typically conduct healing sessions that are open to the community. Further, rather than the patient telling the doctor what their ailment is, the balian we visited touched parts of the head and limbs in order to assess what was troubling the patient. This is markedly different from the typical private and confidential doctor visits that most students who live in America are used to experiencing. With this in mind, it makes sense that their narratives were highly reflective of difference. That being said, some students were also able to find similarities within this difference. For example:

In an attempt to reframe the environment as positive and conducive to healing, I drew connections to a group therapy context, where the group mostly consisted of members with similar beliefs and/or desires. This framework would hold the group in a supportive role and allow for increased public discourse and interpersonal learning between the
healer, the patient, and the group. Furthermore, those viewing the healing process are able to apply information and suggestions shared with other patients to themselves.

Cassidy, Bali 2014 Journal 7 Healer

For instance, massages are good for many different things. It’s makes more sense to go before the stress hits in a way of anticipating then try to deal with it after it hits and then trying to fix it. It’s not the first time I’ve heard this before either. I have an acupuncturist back home who I see for several different reasons and she told me the same thing. She works to help alleviate pain before it happens along with trying to get my chi in line with the rest of my body.

Corinna, Bali 2014, Journal 7 Healer

In his narrative, Cassidy, a psychology major who had interned in clinical settings, attempted to deal with his feeling that our group was intruding on people’s confidentiality during the visit by relating it to something similar from his world—group therapy. On the other hand, Corinna, drew parallels between the Balinese’s preventative approach to wellness to her own experiences “back home” with an” acupuncturist” who told her the “same thing.”

Within place. Juxtaposed with Morocco where similarities within place were nearly non-existent in student narrating, similarities within Bali were arguably the hottest trend. Over time, similarities within Bali enacted in student narrating steadily increased throughout the program before decreasing slightly near the end. As presented in the previous sub-section, representations of Bali, or Bali-ness were embodied before students’ arrival in Bali. These representations were reflective of students’ pre-conceived notions of Bali as a largely homogenous island of friendly, happy locals and tropical landscapes. The lack of renegotiation
of these representations until *Journal 8 Return*, account partly for the steadily increasing focus on similarities within Bali over the course of the program (yellow line). However, rather than focusing on differences within places in Bali, as was prominent in Morocco, student narrating in Bali gravitated toward similarities within Bali:

> At this wood carver we watched as the owner, his son, and nephew carved masks…While visiting this particular craft village I was aware of what many of the masks were because we were able to go see two different type of dances called Kecak and Legong [dance performances] and many of these masks were used to tell the story…The best part of this tour was the demonstration of three masks by the owner. I enjoyed his demonstration because each mask came to life while he did the same moves we saw in the Legong [dance performance].

Esther, Bali 2014 *Journal 5 Craft Villages*

I didn’t really connect to anything because as I said earlier, all of this is very new to me. If there was anything at all that I could connect to were the shrines I saw all along the path that we walked. They just reminded me of the ones that we see around town all the time. I noticed that the colors and designs correlated to what we’ve been learning about in class and that the concept was the same. Dewa [Balinese program liaison] said that each family had their own shrine next to their path of [rice] field. I thought this was pretty cool, that even in the rice fields, they have offerings and shrines.

Corinna, Bali 2014 *Journal 3 Rice Fields*

Water is also used at prayer every single day, highlighting the inseparability of life from religion. Offerings are made (or bought) and given three times a day. Once in the
morning, fire is used through incense; fire warms. Second in the daytime or afternoon, water is used; water cools down. The third offering is done in the evening, and this involves air, the necessary element for breathing.

Joy, Bali 2014 Journal 6 Purification Ceremony

All three of the above narrative excerpts are examples of students in the Bali 2014 programs weaving together strands of aesthetic and cultural experiences within Bali. Esther draws from her previous experiences at dance performances (“Kecak” and “Legong”) to make sense of “what many of the masks were” during our visit to the mask maker. At the same time, she writes this awareness made it enjoyable for her because “each mask came to life while he did the same moves we saw in the Legong.” Similarly, on the rice field walk, Corinna describes noticing a similarity between “shrines” and “offerings” she has seen on the streets of Ubud with the shrines she encountered on the rice field walk; these ended up being one of the only things she could connect to on the walk (“If there was anything at all that I could connect to were the shrines I saw all along the path that we walked”). She says it was “pretty cool” to make this connection, and it was made possible not only through previous experience, but also “what we’ve been learning about in class” as well as what “Dewa said” (our wonderful and knowledgeable Balinese program liaison). Relating this to the bi-cultural students within Bali and Morocco who described ways in which finding relatability between the host country and their home country (not U.S.) impacted their experiences positively, it appears that finding relatability within the host country may also be beneficial for students, which again speaks to the importance of intentional pedagogies that foster shared meaning and relatability among students and the host country (this is further discussed in Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali).
The aforementioned trend in narrating about similarities within Bali increasing then decreasing at the end of the program (*Journal 8 Return*) goes hand in hand with the overall trend indicated by the grey line: that *differences within* Bali were not enacted in student narrating until the end of the program. In other words, throughout most of the program, students focused more on similarities within, rather than differences within Bali. Again, this aligns with previous findings regarding representations of Bali being renegotiated in the last journal (see previous results section to review excerpts). What is worth mentioning here is that in my analysis I noticed that Corinna, a U.S. born student who had never been abroad previously, did not narrate about *differences within* Bali in *Journal 8 Return*. In fact, she did not narrate about differences within Bali at all throughout the course of her narratives. In making sense of this, at first I thought it may be due to fact she had not traveled previously, however in further individualized analysis, I found that four more students—all of whom identified with multiple cultures—did not narrate about difference.

There are a few possible interpretations of this, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. To begin, differences within the Balinese culture are somewhat less visible to the public, in comparison to Morocco. Islam is interpreted and practiced in various ways, which was part of the program’s focus (e.g. guest lecturers on sexuality). Further, Morocco is a much larger country, with dramatically different landscapes, and over four languages spoken. Whereas in Bali, the Bali Hindu religion appears to be outwardly less contested within cultural practice. This may be a sign that pedagogy within the Bali program could be improved to help students tune in to difference rather than homogeneity. For example, narrative activities for Morocco and Bali were designed to parallel one another as closely as possible, and considering some of the differences in landscape and the ways in which culture is practiced, it is possible that the
narrative activities were not the best fit for both countries. This is related to what I will discuss in (Chapter 6: *Power of Place*) regarding the care that must be taken in designing place-responsive prompts to serve as both pedagogical and research tools. Second, part of the focus of the Bali program was on the construction of the self and healing in Bali, and as such, in *Journal 8 Return* the handful of students mentioned above who did not mention differences focused more on how they had changed, and what they had learned from the Balinese culture to apply within their own lives. All things considered, I would argue against the interpretation that students learned less in Bali, but rather that they learned differently in Morocco—students came to see Bali as culturally complex, rather than culturally diverse—which was affected by time, space, and circumstance. In the discussion section of this chapter, I will continue to make sense of this comparison between Morocco and Bali within the context of the production of experiential learning space.

**Engagement with Place Enacted in Student Narrating**

In this results section, I share findings of different engagement, or ways of knowing place enacted in student narrating. I begin with experiential, sensory engagement, then move into engagement with social, historical, and physical/geographical elements of place. The experiential is separated from the other types of engagement solely for data reporting purposes; I understand that one cannot engage with the social, historical, or physical elements of place in the absence of a sensing body.

**Experiential.** It is through our sensing bodies that we engage with place (Dewey, 1938; Humberstone, 2011; Johnson, 2008; Lefebvre, 1991/1974; Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Seaman, 2007). Analysis of sensory engagement enacted in student narrating in Morocco 2014 (see Table 4.4) and Bali 2014 (see Table 4.5) indicated that across narrating activities, the top three senses
engaged with, in this order, were visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. In other words, students described what was seen, heard, or their own movement through their surroundings the most across all narratives. Overall, reports of anything tasted, touched or smelled was written about much less frequently.

As introduced in Chapter 3 (*Experiences in/of Place – Morocco*), sensory engagement enacted in Morocco student narrating was most prominent in *Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna*. I offered the interpretation that this was due, at least in part, to the way in which the journal prompt played with audience (telling a friend) because it helped to position student bodies in space within their narrating. Thus, in my comparative analysis of the Morocco and Bali prompts, I expected to find that Morocco *Journal 4*’s parallel journal in Bali would also have the highest number of sensory engagement. However, this was not the case. Despite the Morocco program having three fewer students than Bali, in comparing sensory engagement enacted in student narrating across both programs, Morocco 2014 *Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna* was still the highest with 274 instances, compared to Bali 2014.

Instead, *Journal 5 Craft Village* had the highest amount of sensory engagement within the Bali program with 232 coded instances. The parallel journal to Morocco 2014 *Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna* was the Bali 2014 *Journal 6 Purification Ceremony*, which was the narrating activity with the second highest number of sensory engagement enacted with 182. Of note, in Morocco, the second journal within which sensory engagement was enacted in student narrating the most was Morocco 2014 *Journal 5 Tigemmy* with 168 instances, and the parallel journal in Bali 2014 was *Journal 5 Craft Village*. 
Table 4.4

Sensory Engagement Enacted in Morocco 2014 Student Narrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>02 Arrival</th>
<th>03 Chellah</th>
<th>04 Jemaa el Fna</th>
<th>05 Tigemmy</th>
<th>06 NGOs</th>
<th>08 Sexuality</th>
<th>08 Return</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditory</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesthetic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustatory</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olfactory</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>122</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>786</td>
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</table>

*Note. Journal 1 Pre-departure was not included in this analysis. Experiential was coded for instances where the embodied experience could not be narrowed to any number of senses (e.g. the use of metaphor to describe bliss or relaxation)*

Table 4.5

Sensory Engagement Enacted in Bali 2014 Student Narrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>02 Arrival</th>
<th>03 Rice Fields</th>
<th>04 TL/GS</th>
<th>05 Craft Village</th>
<th>06 Purification Ceremony</th>
<th>07 Healer</th>
<th>08 Return</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>84</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>596</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>241</td>
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<tr>
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<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>166</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1086</td>
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</table>

*Note. Journal 1 Pre-departure was not included in this analysis. Experiential was coded for instances where the embodied experience could not be narrowed to any number of senses (e.g. the use of metaphor to describe bliss or relaxation).*
A common thread that ties together these journals is that the experiential learning topics connected to the narrative prompts afforded *active participation* in some form of cultural practice within each host country. For example, in Morocco 2014 *Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna*, over a portion of two days (once at night with the organized group, and once in the day on their own) students wandered, ate food, listened to music, and shopped for souvenirs. *Souks*, or open air Arab markets, are common throughout Morocco’s medinas and are frequented by both locals and tourists. In Bali 2014 *Journal 6 Purification Ceremony*, students had the opportunity to participate in a Full Moon Purification Ceremony at Pura Tirta Empul in Tampaksiring, a Balinese Hindu water temple known for its pools of holy spring water. For over a thousand years, Bali Hindu peoples have come to this temple to purify themselves on the wake of the full moon. Out of 11 students on the Bali 2014 program, only seven participated in the ceremony—two students were not present due to health issues, and five were present but chose to observe, instead of participate, for various reasons. Participation involved joining a line formed to enter the pool and put one’s head under fountains, or spouts, lining one wall of the pool. For Bali 2014 students who participated, they recognized this more “active” participation in Balinese cultural practice:

The visit to the holy spring temple during the full moon was unique in the sense that it required participation and close observation in lieu of simple observatory practices.

Cassidy, Bali 2014 *Journal 6 Purification Ceremony*

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6 Persons who are bleeding are not allowed to enter temples because the Balinese believe blood is profane. Thus, students who were on their menstrual cycle chose to respect cultural practices and remain outside the temple. Some students also chose to observe in order to respect their personal religious beliefs.
I went to the ceremony thinking I wasn’t going to participate mainly because I felt like the people would look at me and think I’m just doing it without knowing the true purpose behind it. Things changed when I arrived to the temple, I saw everyone in the spring and an urge came over me, I wanted to experience what I was seeing. I felt more comfortable going into the spring when Dewa [Balinese program liaison] told us that we can pray to whoever and about whatever we wanted when we got in the spring. This made me feel like I at least had a purpose to be part of the ceremony instead of pointlessly attending it.

Ophelia, Bali 2014 *Journal 6 Purification Ceremony*

This experience is the first of all field trips that really challenged me to be both an active participator and observer. At first, I was simultaneously shifting between watching, learning and participating.

Layla, Bali 2014 *Journal 6 Purification Ceremony*

Data suggest the sacredness of this ceremony led to just a little over half of the students in Bali participating, which may account for the discrepancy in sensory engagement enacted in student narrating within this journal compared to the parallel journal in Morocco. Nevertheless, I provide two examples from each parallel journal to illustrate the intensity and richness of the senses enacted in the narratives across both programs, with sensory engagement in **bold**:

As you [telling to a friend] **make your way out** of the square, **the music begins to fade**, the **aromas dissipate** and the **crowd disperses**, before you realize it **you are on the main road and the liveliness of the Jemma el Fna is behind you**.

Marigold, Morocco 2014 *Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna*
But the observations on style [of Moroccan dress] were momentarily forgotten when I arrived within the lively center of the square. There were many people selling the flying lights, little toys that added to the wonder of the square. Many people were also playing music, on instruments similar to drums and guitars, but of slightly different shapes and sounds. Big crowds of people, tourists and locals all included, gatherers around each of these peoples and listened and enjoyed the music that filled the center. Some people were selling little items, all leading further in toward the smell of food and a variety of other shops…There was a variety of food all cooking, and everything seemed to move so fast.

Savanna, Morocco 2014 Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna

I would explain to them [a friend] how peaceful and relieving this experience was. The way that the fountains created a rhythm within the water allowed my body to reach a tranquil state thus allowing me to think clearly about my inner thoughts and emotions.

Ophelia, Bali 2014 Journal 6 Purification Ceremony

The actual cleansing ceremony experience was unexpectedly intense. From the moment I stepped into the pool my body became shocked and then slightly numbed by the cold water. As I stood on line, I observed others standing under the water streams with their hands together in front of their faces, seemingly praying. Others were moving from spigot to spigot filling up plastic containers with the holy water. There were many flowers floating atop the water as well as large orange, white and black gold fish swimming between our bodies. This gave the pool a tranquil atmosphere, even though there were people speaking and moving all around. Additionally, at each stone that
had water pouring from it there were offerings and incense burning, contributing a pleasant scent to the air. As I waited for my turn to step under the first stream of water I felt myself being pulled into a peaceful state of being. I was able to silence my thoughts and focus my mind on all the sensations around me.

Eliza, Bali 2014 Journal 6 Purification Ceremony

In the narrative excerpts above, not only are there a high concentration of senses engaged with, but also a wide variety within each. For example, Marigold’s 42-word excerpt contains visual ("the crowd disperses"), auditory ("the music begins to fade"), olfactory ("aromas dissipate"), and kinesthetic ("make your way out"; "you are on the main road") sensory engagement. On the other hand, Ophelia’s narrating is more difficult to divide into separate senses, as the experience she is describing an embodied experience ("rhythm within the water allowed my body to reach a tranquil state"). This is embodied experience is also present in Eliza’s narrative when she speaks of “silencing her thoughts and focus my mind on all the sensations around me.” Of course, each of these senses are embodied as well, however, Ophelia and Eliza’s excerpts are representative of instances I coded as “experiential” (see Table 4.5 above). Journal 6 Purification Ceremony, had the highest number of these codes, which makes sense as the students who participated had their bodies submerged in water to be “purified.”

Bali 2014 Journal 5 Craft Village also had an element of active participation, which many students included in their narratives. While visiting a handmade batik artisan, students had a chance to use melted wax to trace a penciled drawing of a flower on cloth, one of the first steps in making a batik cloth. Data suggest this active participation in a cultural practice, paired with the many different types of art encountered during the visit to craft villages (e.g. masks, jewelry, glass, batik) increased the sensory engagement enacted in student narrating in this journal,
making it the journal with the most sensory engagement enacted in student narrating in Bali. The Morocco journal parallel to *Journal 5 Craft Village* in Bali, was *Journal 5 Tigemmy*. In the Tigemmy journal, Morocco students were asked to reflect on what their lives would be like if they lived in Tigemmy, a woman’s cooperative, and/or one of the rural villages like Ifran that we visited or drove through in the Atlas Mountains. In imagining what their lives would be like as a Morocco woman living in one of these villages, students engaged with a slew of senses that pertained to rhythms of every life. I provide one illustrative example, again with sensory engagement in **bold**:

I suppose I would have to **wake up early**, maybe before daybreak, and **prepare a morning meal** for my family. After which, depending on my location to a water source, it **may take me several hours to get buckets of water to do the washing and daily household chores and cooking**… I can only imagine how difficult it must be to **trudge through a desert terrain with a young child while carrying buckets of water**. Having completed my daily chores and my children are settled for the day, I would probably **make my way to the collective**—if I was a member of TIGMY. At the collective, I would enjoy **working with the other women** and would spend my time **sewing** the eco-friendly bags or possibly **designing** the glassware or possibly making the glasses themselves.

Marigold, Morocco 2014 *Journal 5 Tigemmy*

As indicated by Marigold’s excerpt, data suggest that prompting students to imagine life as a Moroccan woman encouraged them to think and draw upon their experiences speaking to women at Tigemmy, and what they saw and experienced visiting more rural villages in the mountains
and desert, in order to narrate imaginatively about a day in the life of a Moroccan woman living under those circumstances. Even though Morocco students did not actively participate in the rhythms of daily life they imagined, data suggest that asking students to reflect from the position of a Moroccan woman, akin to the ways in which having students imagine they are narrating to a friend, may have had an impact on the sensory engagement enacted in these narratives. These findings align with what narrative psychologists have found regarding narrative activities that play with audience and genre—such narratives may help students engage in more psychosocial dynamics (Jović, 2014) and yield more personal stories (Daïute, Buteau, & Rawlins, 2001) with enriched descriptions of embodied experiences in/of place compared to more traditional autobiographical reflections.

The journals with the lowest sensory engagement enacted in student narrating in both Morocco and Bali were those that were not paired with experiential activities, but instead asked students to reflect upon their arrival or departure to their host countries. This is not surprising as these journals were aimed at exploring representations of Morocco and Bali and the ways in which they were renegotiated discussed in the previous sections. In Morocco 2014, it is worth mentioning that the primarily visual and auditory sensory engagement enacted in Journal 6 NGOs and Journal 8 Sexuality can likely be attributed to these two journals being paired with lectures at various NGOs and a lecture at the home base on sexuality in Morocco. The parallel journals in Bali 2014, Journal 4 TL/GS (Threads of Life/Green School) and Journal 6 Healer, had higher sensory engagement because our lectures and tours at Threads of Life, a non-profit organization that supports Indonesian women in keeping the cultural tradition of weaving alive, and the Green School, an eco-friendly nearly 100% sustainable school in Bali, included senses such as movement and touch. For example, our guest lecturer at Threads of Life allowed students
to feel several different types of cloth, and at the Green School we walked around the school’s grounds. In Morocco, our visits to NGOs consisted of sitting around a table and speaking with women and men who run the organizations.

**Social, Physical, and Historical.** A large part of getting to know a place has to do with engaging with its people, history, and physical/geographical landscapes. Overall, analysis of student narrating across the Morocco and Bali programs revealed that social engagement was enacted very little in student narrating during the program (see Table 4.6 and 4.7; however, this was not the case in follow-up interviews). When students did include people in their narratives, they typically featured lecturers, tour guides, or conversations with program affiliates. It is also worth noting that despite taking basic language classes in each country, aside from very basic words and phrases, students were restrained to speaking in English with locals. I provide a few examples, with people mentioned in **bold**:

Asking **Dewa** [our program liaison] later about the people who own the rice fields, I learned that the owners really do not make much money off the intensely hard work that they have to put in to harvest the rice.

Grace, Bali 2014 *Journal 3 Rice Fields*

What I found interesting from **William’s** [founding partner of Threads of Life] lecture was how the meaning behind the content of the textiles was unknown even to some of the Indonesians themselves, or else, the meaning varied among them.

Joy, Bali 2014 *Journal 4 Threads of Life/Green School*
[Balian, or healer] was very attentive and compassionate and understanding, and he would pause before he spoke, as if he was searching for the perfect words to express what it was I was dealing with and what I needed to do to heal myself.

Eliza, Bali 2014 Journal 7 Healer

Definitely meeting my host family was bizarre and a little nerve-racking, I thought I was going to be using my dictionary but thank god my host sister, Johara, speaks and understands English… Honestly, I felt welcome to the country and to Johara’s family.

Jasmine, Morocco 2014 Journal 2 Arrival

I recall one of the Amazigh women who was now the president of the business, at the Tigemmy meeting, who was speaking of how difficult it was for her for numerous reasons, to leave her home to pursue the opportunity that Tigemmy had provided her.

Violet, Morocco 2014 Journal 5 Tigemmy

Stephanie [last name removed] also left a huge impact on my heart. Her two articles as well as her lecture provided a wonderful learning experience for me.

Robin, Morocco 2014 Journal 6 NGOs

Alternatively, when students narrated about locals during the program, it was typically from an observational perspective with very few exceptions, typically from the same handful of students. Overall, students shared very few stories of meaningful encounters with locals in their narrating during the program, and instead shared observations of locals or encounters that were purely descriptive of attention received from locals:
What made this introduction to the rice fields a little different from the ones I’ve seen before was the ONE man working on the rice fields with only ONE long tool that had a fork like end. He was picking at the soil with this fork like tool creating a big puddle of mud in which he was barefoot in it. He just kept stabbing at the soil and turning it around. I could only imagine how much hard work that takes and how time consuming.

Ophelia, Bali 2014 Journal 3 Rice Field Walk

In Jemma el Fna the people greet you and try to form some type of conversation in order to convince you to buy something from them. They also seem to have such a great type of humor. I was proposed to twice, in one case the guy told me “that if I didn’t marry him, he would commit suicide.” In addition, when [student name removed] stopped at a stand that sold some type of ginger, cane & lime juice, the seller offered me a free sample and even though I did not like the taste still offered for us to try a chocolate, peanut butter & ginger paste. A lot of the people at Jemaa el Fna try to push you to either buy or pay for some type of service.

Paloma, Morocco 2014 Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna

Of course, sharing stories about locals, or attention received from locals provide opportunities for learning or thinking about the rhythms of daily life in each country. For example, in observing the rice field worker, Ophelia came to think about how difficult this work may be. Nearly every Bali student mentioned this solitary rice field worker in their rice field journals, and made their own sense of what it meant to them or how it helped them to understand life as a rice field farmer in Bali. On the other hand, Paloma’s account of her encounter with a Moroccan man in the square seems to be more a demonstration of attention she received masked by the idea that
Moroccan men in the market have a “sense of humor,” as she ultimately ends up describing vendors as pushy. To demonstrate the difference between Paloma’s narration of her encounter with a Moroccan shopkeeper, with a more meaningful type of engagement that does not focus on garnering attention but building a sort of openness to a relationship, no matter how temporary, I share Jaye’s description of an encounter with another shopkeeper:

The souks have beautiful items for sale, most of which you can haggle for a better price. Adil [program liaison], Violet, and I were able to buy two hand-made Moroccan sweaters for just over 200 Dirham. After stopping at a few different vendors, we came upon a very hospitable man who was able to offer us this deal. With the help of Adil, we explained that we were studying in Rabat for three weeks but wanted to venture out into the Sahara for a night and needed these sweaters to keep warm. He even offered us tea and welcomed us back to his shop to share our experience with him. In observing Moroccan culture, I’ve found that the people here are welcoming and invitational. Many of their conversations are genuine and do not always insinuate a purchase; I feel like they’re actually just interested in talking.

Jaye, Morocco 2014 Jemaa el Fna

Whereas Paloma focused on what the shopkeepers want from her, Jaye describes her transaction with this shopkeeper in a less judgmental and more open way in her story. Before moving on, I would like to share two exemplary excerpts of stories about encounters with locals—first, a conversation with a stranger on a train in Morocco, and second, a conversation with a manicurist in Bali:
From interacting with the people in Morocco, at least with those who speak English, I noticed that individuals have different opinions on every subject and it is intriguing to study the two extremes especially in the matters of women’s rights….the other day I met a woman on the train who had explained how she had just recently married. Without me asking she had told me that she wore a burqa because that is how she demonstrates that she is no longer single. She was very passionate about her Islamist religion and stated that her religion does not allow her to sit with men who are married who are not family and this is the only way Jaye and I managed to get seats on the second class train to Rabat, the booth was empty and she had only allowed us in after many men who had passed by…we also spoke about her relationship with her husband and the dynamic of her family. She was saying that she was lucky than most women because her husband helps around the house.

Violet, Morocco 2014 Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna

Tourism in Bali has both positive and negative sides to it. On the one hand, tourism brings in a lot of money and allows many Balinese to be much more successful than they would be without the income from tourists. I recently got a manicure and I was speaking with the woman doing my nails. I asked her if she liked it when all the tourists started coming through her street and she responded that yes, she likes it a lot and that all the people on the street were sad when there were no tourists. This highlights the idea that tourism is seen as a positive form of income. However, on the flipside, because there is such a large emphasis on the tourist market in Bali, many items begin to become tailored to what the tourists will want. This endangers Balinese tradition because tourist
attractions and cheap trinkets can replace the rich culture. This is where Threads of Life’s sustainability comes in.

Eliza, Bali 2014 *Journal 4 Threads of Life/Green School*

In both Violet and Eliza’s narrating about encounters with local women, they engaged in a conversation with the women that was relevant in some way to their studies. Violet describes her encounter with the woman on the train to make sense of the diversity of opinions about women’s rights, while Eliza shares her story because it was relevant to tourism’s impact on Bali from a local Balinese woman’s perspective. Study abroad research that explores the content of student narrating has shown that students rarely include locals in their narrating about cultural encounters (Freinberg, 2002), which is partially supported in this study aside from a handful of exceptions. Considering that people are such an integral part of place, it seems beneficial and relevant to include narrative activities, journal prompts, and other methods that encourage intentional engage with locals outside safety net of their American peer group. This is absolutely not to say that study abroad groups cannot learn from each other—indeed, our diverse cohort absolutely learned with and from one another (to be discussed in the following results subsection that reports on one-year follow-up interviews). However, in order to shift current discourses in study abroad away from an “abstract global venture” into “learning about someone else’s local” (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117), what better way to do this than to support students in engagement with locals, even having them imagine what life would be like as a local (e.g. Morocco *Journal 5 Tigemmy*).

The final two types of engagement with place that were analyzed included engagement with physical/geographical and historical ways of knowing place (see Table 4.6 and 4.7). By far the journal with the highest amount of engagement with both the physical/geographical
environment and historical context across both the Bali and Morocco programs was Morocco 2014 *Journal 3 Chellah*. This journal was explored in detail in Chapter 3 (*Experience in/of Place – Morocco*). Of the 87 total enactments of student engagement with historical context in the Morocco program, 63 of these came from the *Journal 3 Chellah*. In comparing both Morocco and Bali, it is evident that despite this not being an explicit program goal, both programs could have done a better job prompting students to engage with historical context.

In Bali 2014, historical context enacted in student narrating was highest in *Journal 4 Threads of Life/Green School*, as students narrated about the histories of both of these organizations. Regarding student engagement with the physical environment in both programs, it is interesting that students in both programs engaged with the landscape of Morocco and Bali highly upon arrival, which makes sense as it is their first encounter with a new landscape. Overall, the Morocco program boasted the highest amount of engagement with the physical environment in student narrating, but again this may be due in part to Chellah having 78 of the 174 instances of the physical environment being enacted in student narrating. While one may be inclined to conclude that it may be due to the fact that Morocco’s landscape may be considered more drastically varied (e.g. mountains, desert, sea, farmland) in comparison to that of Bali (e.g. beach, rice fields, volcanoes), data support this only in regard to students explicitly writing about the diversity of Moroccan landscape (this was discussed in the Representations results section as well as the Relationality results section regarding differences within Morocco).
Table 4.6

Types of Engagement with Place Enacted in Morocco 2014 Student Narrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>02 Arrival</th>
<th>03 Chellah</th>
<th>04 Jemaa el Fna</th>
<th>05 Tigemmy</th>
<th>06 NGOs</th>
<th>07 Sexuality</th>
<th>08 Return</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social

| Peers     | 12         | 0          | 8               | 0          | 0       | 0           | 0        | 20    |
| Affiliates | 9          | 0          | 0               | 12         | 7       | 8           | 1        | 37    |
| Locals    | 2          | 1          | 25              | 0          | 1       | 0           | 7        | 36    |
| Tourists  | 1          | 1          | 15              | 0          | 0       | 0           | 3        | 20    |
| subtotal  | 24         | 2          | 48              | 12         | 8       | 8           | 11       | 113   |
| TOTAL     | 55         | 143        | 91              | 27         | 20      | 10          | 28       | 374   |

Note. Social indicates the mention a peer, affiliate, local, or tourist, but does not necessarily mean they interacted directly with this person (e.g. watching a street performance).

Table 4.7

Types of Engagement with Place Enacted in Bali 2014 Student Narrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>02 Arrival</th>
<th>03 Rice Fields</th>
<th>04 TL/GS</th>
<th>05 Craft Village</th>
<th>06 Purification Ceremony</th>
<th>07 Healer</th>
<th>08 Return</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social

| Peers     | 10         | 3              | 0        | 1                | 8                        | 7        | 4         | 33    |
| Affiliates | 4          | 24             | 18       | 29               | 13                       | 11       | 6         | 105   |
| Locals    | 3          | 12             | 3        | 12               | 13                       | 0        | 9         | 52    |
| Tourists  | 1          | 1              | 1        | 6                | 2                        | 3        | 3         | 17    |
| subtotal  | 18         | 40             | 22       | 48               | 36                       | 21       | 22        | 207   |
| TOTAL     | 53         | 79             | 72       | 58               | 69                       | 21       | 25        | 377   |

Note. Social indicate the mention of a peer, affiliate, local, or tourist, but does not necessarily mean they interacted directly with this person (e.g. watching a local working on the rice fields).
One-year Post-program

Post-program interviews covered a wide range of topics (see Appendix B). For the purpose of this chapter, I conducted purposive sampling of data from targeted questions surrounding four main themes from the interviews. Purposive sampling served as a means to triangulate findings and explore elements from program participants’ experiences that remained salient one year later. First, I explore representations of Morocco and Bali revisited in student narrating one-year post-program. I analyze pre-conceived notions, or Moroccan-ness and Baliness and the ways in which students described these representations as being confirmed or debunked during their time studying abroad. Next, I present findings on relationality enacted in student narrating one-year post-program, where I focus on students’ ideas about similarities and differences within and between people, place, and culture. Third, I review engagement with place enacted in student narrating a year later by presenting place-based stories and experiences that appeared most salient across student follow-up interviews.

Representations Revisited in Student Narrating One-year Post-program

During follow-up interviews, students in the Morocco and Bali programs were asked if any of their expectations about Morocco/Bali, Moroccan/Balinese life were confirmed or debunked during their time there. The purpose of this question was to investigate which, if any, representations of Morocco or Bali were sustained, or remained negotiated.

Morocco. In student narratives during the program, the most common pre-conceived notions of Morocco were that the culture and religion would be conservative, particularly surrounding dress, and that the country itself would lack modernity, and the landscapes would be dry, and weather would be warm. Similar themes reverberated in follow-up interviews, in that
many students discussed how surprised they were to find Morocco’s people and landscapes to be diverse, particularly weather-wise, and in many places more modern than expected, for example:

Temperature was cold, I didn’t pack warm enough clothes, but that was my own fault. A really skewed view of what I was walking into there.

Robin, Morocco 2014 Follow-up Interview

Since getting off the airplane I thought, like, it’s actually not desert country.

Jasmine, Morocco 2014 Follow-up Interview

I was really surprised. Rabat was really cool in terms of being modern, uh, more industrial, um it had you know, a trans system that worked excellently and heat in Rabat was better than [in the Medina], it was definitely was better in [program home base]. And they [Rabat] had so many stores.

Marigold, Morocco 2014 Follow-up Interview

Many students also reflected on their observation that Moroccan people do not express religion in the same way, particularly surrounding the ways in which women dressed. Indeed, overall, the most common representation revisited as debunked during interviews was women’s dress, which is ultimately a note on religious expression—as nearly every student revisited this. I share an excerpt from Wren’s interview as it succinctly demonstrates this in addition to another common pre-conceived notion of Moroccan-ness that was revisited a year later—the cold weather:

One of the things that I thought was very interesting was the fact that not everyone upholds the same religious practices and the fact that not everyone was wearing a burqa and is super covered, and there were some people who were dressed very modern. I felt
like I could have brought different clothing because I was so caught up on that based on the reading I could have not worried so much about fitting in and actually being okay with like, you know, standing out in a different way than like the fact that I wasn’t Muslim. So that was interesting to see in terms of the girls and stuff. Umm, let’s see what else, you know, the temperature. I did not expect such a fluctuation in temperature where it is super cold but then it’s like very warm during the afternoon, then super cold again. I was not ready for that.

Wren, Morocco 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

Reflecting on the renegotiation of conservative dress being a part of Moroccan-ness, Wren felt she could have “brought different clothing” after she arrived and saw that “not everyone was wearing a burqa and super covered,” but “some people dressed very modern.” Only one other student commented on wishing they had packed less conservatively (though nearly every student commented on wishing they had packed more warmly!). In her narrating about Moroccans dressing more modern than she expected, like most other students, Wren still acknowledged that, through direct observation, there was diversity in the ways in which Moroccans dress. However, two students seem to have gone to the other extremes—Savanna narrated as if “everyone” dressed in a western fashion, while in her narrative, Paloma expressed she felt that being encouraged to dress more conservatively “held her back”:

Yeah, it being more Westernized than I had expected. Everyone was walking around in normal jeans and shirt. Especially because they prepared us so much saying, “don’t wear this or this, or this,” but it seemed like everyone was wearing normal clothes anyway…

Savanna, Morocco 2014 *Follow-up Interview*
Yeah, with the women, the dress code with the women, the way that our professor made it seem like when we were here and we met…she was telling us how we had to dress and whatever, I felt like that was a little bit too much because she made it seem like we really had to be so covered to the point that when I was over there I felt that type of way, but I felt like that wasn’t really the case. Like basically she said we can’t really show that much skin, cleavage, or be so tight with or jeans, like [that we should] wear loose fitting clothing and she said bring scarves and stuff. But once I got there, there was so many girls with tight jeans like, really tight jeans, tighter than what I’m wearing right now. I felt like that kind of held me back and then when I got there I’m like really?

Paloma, Morocco 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

I present these interview excerpts not as representative of the entire group as most students remarked on how it felt “good” and “respectful” to dress conservatively. I share these to demonstrate that while overall the renegotiation of Morocco as being a super conservative country resulted in students recognizing diversity within cultural practices and expression, this was not the case across the board. I draw attention to this as it shows the differing perceptions students had of Moroccan style one year later. For one, it was certainly not the case that “everyone” dressed in modern clothing, particularly in the Rabat Medina where students lived with their host families. Further, this was not the case when we traveled to places like Fès or Tigemmy and the many other rural women’s cooperatives we visited. It strikes me as interesting that some students wished they had packed differently, so that they could have worn what could only be assumed to be tighter and less clothing not only because it seems they have not totally thought out how that may have changed their experience (e.g. living with host families showing cleavage; street harassment), but also because these same students also were shocked and felt
unprepared for the cold weather. Further, Wren and Paloma were two of the handful of students who were worried about being harassed on the street before their arrival, but reflected on how that was for the most part not a problem. It seems that they have not made a connection that this is likely due to the modest way they were dressed. Another interpretation of Wren, Savanna, and Paloma’s ideas surrounding women’s dressing being less modern is that they were trying to find some more ways to relate to Moroccan women in Rabat, which is discussed in the next section.

Bali. The most common pre-conceived notions of Bali-ness enacted in student narrating during the program included the anticipation of Bali as having an exotic culture set in a peaceful, and tropical paradise. Similar to student narrating before and during the program, in one-year follow-up interviews when directly asked about expectations about what Bali would be like, and if any were confirmed or debunked, most students said they did not know enough about Bali to have many expectations aside from it would be tropical, peaceful, and that the culture would be different. Most of these expectations of Bali-ness were confirmed. For example:

Peaceful, definitely peaceful…the fact that we stayed in the rice fields and waking up to that view every day. And just like hearing the crickets and the frogs and stuff at night and walking up to like the animals and the chickens and the, you know, roosters and stuff.

Nellie, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Okay, so confirmed I would say yeah. It was very tranquil…um, and that’s probably as far as I knew about it.

Layla, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview
Aside from pre-conceived notions being confirmed, at least three students remarked in follow-up interviews that they were surprised there were so many tourists in Ubud. Regarding cultural differences, rather than viewing difference as “exotic” or “othering” students came to appreciate differences and find more similarity between themselves and the Balinese. For example:

I, although, I kind of ascribed to the school of this is going to be like an exotic sort of very other worldly, kind of thing. It definitely wasn’t, they’re just normal people, which has just been reaffirmed and reaffirmed again just like whenever I experience like some weird cultural phenomenon which is like, okay it’s different but it’s normal. That’s just like my most major take away from the program. I think it’s just having this sensibility towards really appreciating differences.

Cassidy, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

…my views of the present and the future, my views of other people and other cultures and my ability to sort of be empathetic and to see things through other people’s eyes have improved immensely…it is the ability to sort of appreciate the beauty of things and appreciate that my physical views may be completely different from what I saw there. And yeah, it’s a different culture and it’s beautiful but also understanding that it’s someone’s culture where people live. It’s not this exotic place of mystical things, you know, it’s where people live. And to sort be able to see that and the interaction of other people’s cultures.

Josie, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Both Cassidy and Josie spoke to the importance of seeing beyond the exotic in Bali in order to realize, “it’s different but it’s normal” and “it’s where people live,” which is another way of
saying “it’s different but it’s normal.” In other words, they both showed signs of no longer fixating on difference, but accepting it and being open to the alternative ways of knowing and being in the world. For example, also present within the excerpts from Josie and Cassidy’s follow-up interviews is that not only was their view of Bali deconstructed as exotic, but they also expressed that they had become more empathetic. Josie said, “my views of other people and other cultures and my ability to empathetic and to see things through other people’s eyes have improved immensely.” Cassidy similarly expressed that whenever he experiences “some like weird cultural phenomenon” he knows it is different but he now has “this sensibility” toward “really appreciating difference.” In his excerpt, Cassidy even goes so far to say that difference is “normal,” in other words, difference is a part of life. Thus, through de-exotifying representations of Bali, Cassidy and Josie were also able to apply this to other cultures that are different from their own, which speaks to heightened relationality experienced among students.

**Relationality Enacted in Student Narrating One-year Post-program**

This section explores relationality enacted in student narrating, with a focus on the ways in which students in the Morocco and Bali programs came to make sense about how places and people in/of them may be different or the same as one another post-program. The exploration of relationality in follow-up interviews was intended to build upon students’ comparisons within and between places during the program, to see ultimately how the comparisons they drew may have impacted their overall views of relationality within and between people, places, and cultures.

**Morocco.** Thoughts about differences and similarities varied somewhat across Morocco student narrating one-year post-program. To make sense of these, I have gathered responses into
two major patterns of relatedness enacted in student narrating: first, that there are no homogenous cultures; and second, despite differences in societal norms across cultures, difference is much more “normal” than we have been taught to think.

Overall, with one exception, student narrating coalesced around the idea that there is great variation in cultural practices within and across cultures. In other words, cultures are not homogenous. For example, Paloma, engaged with the ways in which women’s dress in Morocco varied:

I expected a lot of girls [in Morocco] covered, or wearing jeans but loose and then of course covering their hair or whatever, but that wasn’t always the case. So that was completely different [than I expected], even when people ask me now, like, “oh my god everybody is so covered?” I’m like, no that’s not true, because I guess it depends on your social class and whether the family, like how the family feels about it, so it’s not true… like how we [in New York/America] have different types of religions and cultures, you know sometimes we do see women covered, sometimes we don’t, that happens here too like it’s not that much of a difference.

Paloma, Morocco 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

In discussing the diversity of Moroccan women’s dress, Paloma not only narrated about how representations of Morocco were not fulfilled, “I expected…but that was not always the case,” but she also related it to the different styles of dress in New York/America and says “it’s not that much of a difference.” Further, Paloma attributed this to “social class” and “how the family feels about it.” In other words, in her narrating, Paloma related this to social norms within Morocco, and while doing so she simultaneously made sense of social norms present where she lives.
Similarly, according to Jaye and Robin, the sources of these differences are whether or not people are raised to question societal norms. After I asked Jaye to consider the ways in which she thinks about how people are different from one another, or the same following the study abroad program, she reflected on having pizza with three Moroccan girls during the process of collecting data for her research project. I share a portion of this interview exchange between myself and Jaye, in order to demonstrate that this question was a difficult one to answer for many students—which is not a reflection of student learning, but rather the intentional vagueness and openness of the question itself. During this portion of the interview, as you will see below, there was a lot of back and forth with me gently probing or bringing students back to the question:

**Jaye:** There are definitely, the really traditional Moroccan people then there are the people that live day to day just because that’s how everyone does and they’re not necessarily into the whole culture I guess… We took our 3 or 4 girls our age [for pizza] and they were all so different. One was just like us and very not Moroccan, like she dressed however she wanted and was very just liberal in a way in just [her] thinking and concepts and things like that. And they were all very good at English but she had a different way of thinking in that she was just more open minded I guess. And then the other girl, she dressed conservatively and we were asking her about her, like, daily routines and things like her traditions and she basically [said she] just did them because that’s how she was brought up and because that’s how everyone lives and she doesn’t really question anything; she just kind of takes it for what it is. And then the other girl was so traditional, like, she had met a guy and, like, hugging him was the greatest feeling in the world for her. So there were three types of girls there, that it was cool to notice it. Because one was totally like us, and the other was kind of like, “I am what I am and I
“don’t really question anything,” and the other girl was so passionate about like her faith and like praying and just the way that they lived there and she loved it. So it was different to see that, and I guess maybe you can see that [difference] within the culture […] There are just some people you could tell are more authentically Moroccan than others.

jmp: What does that mean to you, when you say you one of the girls was “very not” Moroccan? What does it mean to be “authentically” Moroccan to you?

Jaye: Like conservative, I guess, is how I think about it. Like very by the book, and like, traditional. And then there are others who don’t really, who aren’t really like that and feel more close to us because we don’t really…. It’s so hard to explain it.

jmp: I am following you, what about if you try to think about how…[interrupted]

Jaye: Okay, so because I am Catholic, also when I think of Moroccan culture, I think of a very religious base because they’re religion is so rigid, and so it’s like a lifestyle. So I am Catholic right, and the person next to me can say they are Catholic and never go to church and then the person to my right is like, “what’s that traditional Catholic thing?”

jmp: Like not eating meat for Lent or on Fridays?

Jaye: Yeah, like partakes in Lent and things like that, and like, I want to live a good life but maybe I don’t go to church every Sunday so there is like three different levels of like, being religious. So I guess, like, maybe I see that in Moroccan people. Like the people who you will never see without a head scarf or revealing their hair and things like that, and then some who will on certain occasions and are traditional sometimes, and others who kind of rebel against it as much as they can without really feeling out of place, so I guess you can make sense of that. That’s how I feel.
So you just told me about how Moroccans differ from one another, and then you used yourself and your religion as a way to think about variations in both. What do you think about that, how are people different or how are they the same, in that context?

Jaye: We are all human and want the same basic human things. Finding joy in a child for example, all of us like laughing at the little things that he does, even talking about what he’s doing, just little things like that. You can relate in a lot of ways, there is a lot of common ground. And there is a lot of things that are different too, so it’s hard to explain.

Jaye, Morocco 2014 Follow-up Interview

In this particular interview excerpt, we can see Jaye struggling a bit (“it’s hard to explain” appears both at the beginning of this excerpt, and again at the end) to make sense of what it means to be an “authentic” Moroccan, and in using her own religion to explain herself, she also questioned what it means to be an “authentic” Catholic. Ultimately, in our conversation, she comes to make sense of “three levels” of variation within both religious cultures, in order to make sense of the three “different” Moroccan girls she had pizza with. Like Paloma, in trying to understand and articulate differences within Moroccan culture, Jaye also came to understand a part of her own culture as a comparison: she ends with saying that despite these differences within and across cultures, “we are all human and want the same basic human things.”

Further, Robin reflected on the ways in which people’s surrounding environment contribute to the variability within and across cultures:

I think that all humans, kind of, are very easy to go into societal, the way society works. I think just inherently in our place, we would conform to what is around us so like we [Americans] conform, and in Morocco they conform…as humans I think that the
difference is that we are just, it’s all based on what your environment allows you to be like it. Just all based on experience and environment and what you’re pushed to think, and what you’re not pushed to think, where your brain is allowed to go, I think it all comes down to a matter of education and how you are taught to see the world or how you are taught to approach the world…And I mean that’s everywhere, I mean some people are taught here that it’s black and white—very simply what it is, what it isn’t…But even Morocco that happened you know, there is, like I said, the people in the mountains they were taught black and white; married not married; we need to make money, we need to have this living, and we need to worry about life, you know we don’t need to worry about the superfluous things…Mainly just, that was a huge part of it, it was just the environment, and seeing all the different environments and seeing how they all, they all just make it make sense.

Robin, like the majority of students in Morocco, ultimately came to see difference as a part of life (“and that’s everywhere”); a part of how each of us grows up, dependent on “what your environment allows you to be like” and “how you’re taught to see the world or how you are taught to approach the world.” Further, similar to the ways in which representations were renegotiated, Violet pointed out that representations often perpetuate ideas of difference, and make it difficult to find relationality:

Different, obviously you know like culture wise, religion wise, just country wise per geography wise, but the same as in like, with the students or the girls that I met, like we were both just like college students who were tired and would want to go home right after class you know, it was just, like, that was one of the eye opening things. Also through like the gender lens, it’s like these women aren’t like—it’s almost like the way that they
are studied—it’s like they are this objectified as oppressed all their life and that’s it. But there is never ever more information, like in your mind you don’t connect like a life to [these women]. I don’t know if that makes sense, but it’s like, you don’t connect, like maybe they have the same experiences that you do, but just the only difference is that its they are called something else, does that make sense? Like we are all like the same in a way, and that’s why I say same and different in that way.

Violet, Morocco 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

What Violet is getting at, is that representations of people and places make it where “you don’t connect a life” to these women, which can make it hard to relate. For Violet, it was through her interactions with Moroccan women that she came to forge connections between her life experiences, and the experiences of Moroccan women to at least some degree. In other words, it was through engagement with place that Moroccan women came “alive” to Violet.

It is worth mentioning here that in both Bali and Morocco, students were for the most part, limited to interacting with locals who spoke English. This may have had an impact on the overall impression gained from interacting with locals, as it limited who they were able to have deep conversations with. The same is true for Bali, however, from my overall experience there were a greater number of Balinese who spoke English on account of Ubud being a tourist hub.

Regarding differences within the study abroad group, students in Morocco felt that the age range of the group, and different motivations for studying abroad, impacted their learning experiences. Some of the group felt like a few students were not really there to learn, and overall complained too much. However, some students did find the diversity in majors as enhancing conversations and the overall learning experience, as it provided different perspectives. Unlike Bali (see below) students who explicitly narrated about how the diversity of the group
contributed to students coming to appreciate difference within the group as well as within Bali itself, in Morocco, overall aside from one exception, it seemed that group dynamics did not enhance overall relationality as greatly. This may be attributed to the mixture of graduate and undergraduate students who participated in the Morocco program.

**Bali.** Ideas about how people are different from one another, and/or how are they are the same coalesced into three major patterns of relationality enacted in Bali 2014 student narrating post-program: first, students came to realize that there are no homogenous cultures, or “typical” Americans or Balinese; second, students found relatability in difference, particularly regarding representations of Balinese emotional regulation; third, students came to appreciate difference not only among the Balinese, but also within their study abroad group.

Overall, students came to realize that there are variations within all cultures; no culture is completely homogenous. In other words, like students in Morocco, students described becoming more appreciative of difference, because it exists everywhere—there is no one “typical” Balinese person or American person. For example, when asked if and how the program changed the way she thinks people may be different from one another, or the same, Nellie responded:

> It has changed in the sense that now I have an open mind. I don’t just think that there is just one specific group of people, like, people are different… So definitely being more open minded. After Bali I am just completely open minded about everything, I don’t just have expectations of nothing. I don’t pre-judge anything. You never know what’s going to happen, you can have an idea about something or someone, and it’s just completely different when you go into it. Even once you learn about, it can still be different than what you expect because once you talk about it, you are like “wow I really thought you
were completely different and it was going to be this!” And it’s not, you know, so you really never know what you are going to get so I just try not to have any expectations.

Nellie, Bali 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

Nellie described herself as more “open minded” about her expectations of people and places, and says she no longer “pre-judges” anything. What Nellie is getting at here is reminiscent of what was discussed in the previous section regarding representations of people and places. No matter what we think we know about a place or culture, “there is not just one specific group of people” and “even once you learn about it,” the reality is that there are always exceptions to the rule.

Similarly, Ophelia described the ways in which what she learned about how the Balinese manage their emotions from articles that were part of program coursework, yet she found herself questioning just how representative these articles could be of the Balinese people as a whole:

Well, I was a little confused because we were reading about how the Balinese people are really quiet and all this stuff and how they don’t really, well not quiet, but they keep to themselves, you know? That they don’t really feel jealousy and all these things, and I was like, you know, to what extent does that really go to, you know? How can a human not really feel all these negative feelings that this book is telling me they try not to feel, you know? Or this article, but then we did the last project when we went and interviewed people and I did see that maybe that whole article wasn’t fully wholly truthful, you know, these people do- are actually very similar to us. Yeah, they do have different mindsets a little bit, but they do feel these things, but they do moderate it, and they do kind of control it. Us, Americans, we don’t really do that, we just let it free, they just control it, you know? So, I- after that, I kind of understood more how they are, but um, I think
we’re all uh, you know, the same, they just have different ways of dealing with things.

Much more positive ways I think, in dealing with things. We just indulge in whatever we feel like.

Ophelia, Bali 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

Like Nellie, we see Ophelia grappling with how “truthful” scholarly articles are in their representations of cultures, which again speaks to the Lefebvre’s conceived space and the ways in which those in power can manipulate our image of the world. Through interaction with local Balinese via interviews for their research project, Ophelia found not only that the article “wasn’t fully wholly truthful” and that the Balinese “are actually very similar to us.” Ophelia unpacked one of the major questions in psychology, which is whether or not emotions are universal. Through her experience in Bali, it seems she came to the conclusion that we are the same in that we feel the same things, but we have “different ways of dealing with things.”

This brings us to the second pattern that appeared throughout the Bali 2014 follow-up interviews: using the ways in which the Balinese express emotions to draw comparisons between themselves and the Balinese. Students seem to have been intrigued by the idea that the Balinese are represented as always happy and smiling and free from negative emotions, but as we have just seen with Ophelia’s narrative excerpt, students renegotiated this representation and were able to find ways to relate. Through this emotive comparison, students were able to come to the conclusion that who we are and who we come to be has to do with the ways in which we are raised, and the places within which we grow up. For example:

Well, I remember, like, something about how the Balinese, about their emotions…yeah, so they really don’t um, reflect their emotions or act on them and I think that kind of makes them different from what I’m used to. I mean, me personally, and what I know or
have experienced, I guess. I was never told not to express how I’m feeling so for that to be part of their culture, that was very different to me. At the same time, um, you know, they have certain traditions and things that they follow and its part of their life, and I have certain things and traditions that I follow that’s part of my life. So even though those are different, there’s still something that, you know, brings us back to who we are. So I think that makes us the same.

Corinna, Bali 2014 *Follow-up Interview*

In recognizing that the ways in which the Balinese manage their emotions are “different from what [she’s] used to,” Corinna also acknowledged that the reason for this difference is that she “was never told not to express” how she is feeling. She sees these differences, ultimately, as similarities, because the Balinese “have certain traditions and things that they follow” that are part of “their life” and she has certain things and traditions that she follows that are “part of her life.” These traditions “bring us back to who we are” and that, Corinna said, makes “us the same.” This brings us to the third pattern enacted in student narrating about relationality: the idea that despite differences, people are all trying to move toward what they deem as a “certain life,” perhaps an ideal life, but what that life looks like and the ways in which people may go about achieving that life differ:

I do feel that obviously we are different, but to a certain extent we are the same in that we are, I think we are all trying to live, I think we believe- I can’t speak for everyone- but I think we all try to live a certain life that does have harmony and does have a certain balance to it, but the only difference is that the Balinese believe in a certain religion to do that, and I think some of us do believe in religion. Like Esther, she’s really into going to
church to get balance and harmony, so is Grace as well, and I think we all, well some, have their own religious feelings; it’s just that our religion is different to achieve that. I think we all are achieving balance and harmony but we are just doing it through a different avenue you know. We all have our own way of achieving that lifestyle.

Izabella, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Izabella has made sense of different paths toward living a “certain life that does have harmony and does have a certain balance to it” through multiple practices of religion and spirituality. In her sense-making, Izabella brought up two of her fellow study abroad peers—Esther and Grace—and the “different avenues” through they find harmony and balance in their lives.

It is here that I would like to point out the ways in which data suggest that the diversity of the study abroad group helped to facilitate the appreciation of difference within and across cultures. Nearly every student commented on the diversity of Bali 2014 cohort, but I share a quote from Corinna, who puts it very nicely:

Well, we were a very diverse group. That’s one thing that I noticed. We were extremely diverse and that was very evident to me because that was the first time that I was really exposed to a lot of different people and backgrounds. I mean, I come from a predominantly white neighborhood and I grew up in a predominantly white neighborhood, so, um, this was the first time that I have really, um, interacted and come in contact with people who were from very different backgrounds than me, but I think going through the experience together, that put us all on the same level. But like I said, at the same time, we all were experiencing something different because of our backgrounds. Like, I loved the fact that our group was so diverse because not only was I learning about the culture in Bali, I was learning about a bunch of different other cultures, you know,
because, you know, Izabella is Jamaican and Ophelia is Colombian, and you know, so there even within our own group we were learning about different things aside from all of us about different things [in Bali] together.

Corinna, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Thus, not only were students “learning about different things [in Bali] together” but they were also learning about “a bunch of different cultures” within their own group. Further, not only was the Bali group diverse in that over half of the students had ties to more than one culture, but the array of religions practiced was also quite varied. In a place like Bali, where religion is a part of daily life, it makes sense that students came to think about their own spirituality, and the spirituality of their peers, like Izabella has shared above. Grace, also considered the ways in which a spectrum of religiosity enhanced her experience in Bali:

My, like, my friends in Bali were very different from my friends at home if that make-just demographically speaking. My friends at home, like in New York, are like me. Like, they look- they’re immigrant- they’re, like, children of immigrants and, um, most of my friends are also from Bangladesh. Um, I grew up with a lot of them. Um, and so going to Bali I befriended people, like, from all walks of life. Right? Like, Eliza’s, like, Orthodox Jewish, right, and I would never- I would never think of just randomly befriending someone like that, right? But at the same time, like, once me and Eliza became friends we were so close like none of that ever mattered.

Grace, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Thus, over time, not only did Bali students come to appreciate differences within the Balinese culture, but also within their own peer group. Overall, students enjoyed the diversity of the Bali
2014 cohort, and enjoyed learning about each other’s backgrounds, religions, and cultural practices, as much as they learned about Balinese culture. This finding directly challenges dominant discourses of immersion in study abroad, which warn students to not spend time with their fellow Americans, and instead immerse themselves in the local culture because that is where learning occurs (Doerr, 2013). Difference, as it was enacted in student narratives one-year post program, overall seemed to transcend habitual categories.

Engagement with Place Enacted in Student Narrating One-year Post-program

In this final result section, I present the top seven places that students in Morocco and Bali engaged with, and shared stories about, in their follow-up interviews. Places were enacted in response to interview prompts including the most memorable moments, their favorite places, and/or were featured in stories throughout the interview. Overall, data suggest that the places that engaged students’ bodies, involved active participation, and were visited more than once were likely to be mentioned in follow-up interviews.

Morocco. Data indicate that in Morocco (see Table 4.8), the two places mentioned in all eight student narrating during follow-up interviews included the Rabat Medina, where students lived, and Chellah, the ancient necropolis in Rabat visited at the beginning of the program and was the topic of Journal 3 Chellah. Seven of eight students discussed Jemaa el Fna, the large square and open air market in Marrakech that was the topic of Journal 4 Jemaa el Fna. Of the six students who went to the hammam, a public bath and steam room that many Moroccans who live in the medina visit weekly, all six mentioned this as one of the most memorable or most favorite moments of their time in Morocco despite it not being part of the official program or included in a narrative activity. Six of eight students talked about Kasbah des Oudaya as one of
their favorite places to visit, especially during their free time. Kasbah des Oudaya is situated adjacent to the Rabat Medina and is a historic citadel overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and Bouregag River. There is a small beach area below, and restaurants and areas to sit and socialize. We visited this place as a group following the visit to Chellah during the first week, and many students returned in small groups. The final two places enacted most in student narrating included the Amazigh village we visited near Ifran in the Middle Atlas Mountains, and Tigemmy, the women’s cooperative outside of Marrakech, which were both topics for Journal 5 Tigemmy. Other prominent stories included those surrounding community service where students painted a school for toddlers, and the research project students completed, which included interviews and a visual essay presentation on a topic of their choice related to the program focus.

Table 4.8

Engagement with Place in Morocco 2014 One-Year Follow-up Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Chellah</th>
<th>Hammam</th>
<th>Kasbah Oudaya</th>
<th>Rabat Medina</th>
<th>Jemaa El Fna</th>
<th>Amazigh Village</th>
<th>Tigemmy</th>
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*Note.* Dash (-) means students was not present for place-based activity. An X indicates this place was mentioned as a most memorable moment, favorite place, or featured in a story told during the interview.
Bali. In Bali, data indicated that all eleven students engaged with restaurants and areas in the Jalan Kajeng neighborhood, the areas where we lived, the rice fields, which was the topic of Journal 3 Rice Fields, and Gili Trawagan, a small island off the coast of Bali that we visited over a weekend during the program (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Engagement with Place in Bali 2014 One-Year Follow-up Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Rice Fields</th>
<th>Purification Ceremony</th>
<th>Healer</th>
<th>Gili Island</th>
<th>Volcano Hike</th>
<th>Neighborhood/Restaurant</th>
<th>Museum</th>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. An X indicates this place was mentioned as a most memorable moment, favorite place, or featured in a story during the interview. Dash (-) means students were not present for place-based activity. An asterisk (*) indicates student attended but did not participate in the place-based activity. Neighborhood/Restaurant refers to walking around or eating at restaurants on Jalan Kajeng, the street that led from our bungalows to the main road in Ubud.*
Sharing meals and getting to know restaurant owners and staff in our neighborhood were some of the most memorable moments for students. Many of them had their own favorite restaurants, which coincided with relationships with owners, waiters, and waitresses. The weekend trip to Gili was a favorite memory for some, and a most memorable moment for all. The visit to the healer, or balian, was enacted in 10 of 11 students’ narrating, and was the topic of Journal 7 Healer. Seven out of eight students who participated in the volcano hike up Mt. Batur mentioned it in their follow-up interviews, while seven of 11 students included stories surrounding the local art museum in Ubud they visited on their own, which was the topic of a reaction paper assignment (taken up in Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali). The purification ceremony was enacted in six of eight students’ narrating who attended the ceremony; it was the topic of Journal 6 Purification Ceremony. Of note, the two students who attended but did not mention it during interviews did not actively participate in the ceremony, but observed from afar. Other prominent stories included those surrounding community service at an orphanage where students cooked, cleaned, and played with disabled children, and the research project students completed, which included interviews and a visual essay presentation on a topic of their choice related to the program focus.

**Discussion**

The central question addressed in this chapter was how does student engagement with place contribute to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs? I explored this question through a longitudinal comparative case study of student narratives collected with cohorts of two study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali. In this discussion section, I interpret findings collectively and reflect on the ways in which student engagement with place contributed to the production of experiential learning space. The main take away point
in this discussion is the role of place in shaping the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs—engagement with place acted as the platform from which learning spaces in both study abroad sites were produced. Although each results section is discussed separately, it will become clear that representations of Morocco and Bali are intimately intertwined with the relationality within and between places that students experienced, which were mediated through their engagement with place in each program.

Representations of Morocco and Bali Enacted in Student Narrating

Analysis of student narrating in the Morocco and Bali programs suggests that places existed in students’ minds prior to their arrival to their host country destinations (Massey, 1995). Pre-conceived notions of Morocco, or Moroccan-ness, included representations of Morocco’s culture and religion as conservative and oppressive, that the landscape would be arid and lack modernity, and the weather warm. Many students were also worried about their safety as women entering the country. In Bali, while students had overall fewer expectations of what Balinese life would be like, most students had pre-conceived notions of Bali, or Bali-ness as an exotic, tropical island of paradise with friendly locals. Representations of Moroccan-ness and Bali-ness were largely formed as a result of students’ exposure to the media representations of these places, which is in line with recent research that documented the ways in which the media can shape student expectations for studying abroad (Nguyen & Coryell, 2015). In the media, particularly following 9/11, Islam has been touted as a religion to be feared (Raghavan & Levine, 2012), which greatly shaped student expectations of Moroccan-ness. In the case of Bali, Elizabeth Gilbert’s novel, Eat, Pray, Love and the resultant feature film starring Julia Roberts, influenced student expectations of Bali as an island of paradise where they could search for, and find themselves (Williams, 2011). Upon arrival to each of these places, student representations
were either renegotiated or strengthened via social interactions, engagement with local rhythms and histories, and intentional narrative activities. Student discussion of these representations, and their subsequent renegotiation, were also present in student narrating about representations of Morocco and Bali a year later.

While in Bali, most representations were confirmed and renegotiated quite late in the program; in Morocco representations were renegotiated rather quickly upon arrival to the airport where they found the air to be cold, the landscape to be green and covered in palm trees, and Moroccan women dressed more modernly than expected. This is likely due to the strong and more specific pre-conceived notions of students in Morocco carried with them, compared to the fewer and broader expectations enacted in the Bali student narrating. For Lefebvre (1991/1974) representations of space, such as Moroccan-ness and Bali-ness sit in the realm of conceived space—the space that holds dominant discourses, typically touted by those in power in terms of both the establishment as well as the program itself. Indeed, in their narratives, many students in Morocco and Bali recognized the media’s influence on their pre-conceived notions of place. However, upon arrival and subsequent engagement with place in Morocco and Bali, these representations of space were renegotiated. As will be discussed in the following section, over time students came to see Morocco as and Bali as heterogeneous places with diverse peoples and expressions of culture.

The collision of imagined, representations of space (conceived) with the materialization of spatial practices and rhythms of Morocco and Balinese life (perceived) can be understood as “generative moments” that allowed for renegotiation of space through embodied engagement with surrounding physical, cultural, and social environments (lived), which I argue led to the production of experiential learning space within both programs. In Morocco, some of these
generative moments included the visit to Chellah at the start of the program, where many students came to see Morocco as a place influenced by diverse people and history. Further, traveling to other parts of Morocco fostered student conceptions of Morocco as a place with diverse landscapes and peoples. In Bali, generative moments included visits to temples, ceremonies, and historical sites that cultivated an understanding of the cultural complexity of religious and cultural practice. As suggested by student narratives, imagined spaces of a homogenous Morocco gave way to renegotiated stories that represented Morocco’s landscape, people, and weather as varied, diverse, and heterogeneous. This shift was a function of both space and time, generated through student engagement with Moroccan places and rhythms of daily life. In Bali, the collision of conceived space with perceived space led to students appreciating the cultural complexities of Balinese culture, more so than cultural diversity. Engagement with surrounding environments led to a deconstruction of exotic notions of Bali, and instead fostered an appreciation of difference. Experiences in/of place, and the unique cultural environment in both of these study abroad programs contributed to the production of experiential learning space.

Returning to the Lefebvre’s idea that conceived space is the discursive space of professionals and those in power, responsibility lays with the faculty program leader in constructing a program that can help to acknowledge and challenge representations of places, people, and cultures encountered in study abroad programs, as these spaces can have a tremendous influence on the production of experiential learning space. Further, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), the program structure, readings, syllabus, and the ways in which students are guided in their engagement with place has great influence on the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs as these are also part of
Chapter IV: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali

Lefebvre’s conceived space—they are constructed by those in power. However, this can be put to good use. For example, coursework, such as the writing assignments that were a source of data in this study can be structured in such a way that supports students in recognizing pre-conceived notions, their sources, and help to reverse the colonial gaze by unpacking dominant discourses of difference, and re-inhabit conceived space with discussions of difference that do not perpetuate views of homogenous culture “others.”

**Relationality Enacted in Morocco and Bali Student Narrating**

Data suggested that the renegotiation of representations of Morocco and Bali were intimately related to relationality and student conceptions of similarities and differences within and between places. Analysis of student narratives revealed students often made sense of their experiences in/of place through relations to previous experiences in familiar places. In Morocco, at the start of the program these relations were largely comparisons to experiences in America or other countries, and focused on differences between these places, with a handful of exceptions that drew connections. Across both programs, similarities enacted in student narrating early on were found within the narratives of students with bi-cultural orientations, which is suggestive of bi-cultural students having a wider range of experiences from which to find relations in novel environments. As will be further discussed in Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali), this has implications for place-responsive pre-trip pedagogies that assist all students in finding shared meaning within novel cultural environments upon arrival.

In both Morocco and Bali, analysis revealed that comparisons between places—similarities and differences alike—had the highest combined concentration in their arrival journals. From a sociocultural perspective, it makes sense that upon arrival students used their points of reference to make sense of what they were experiencing. Considering that culture is
shared meaning, and shared activity, it was necessary at the beginning for students to relate what they were experiencing to that which they already knew. Through appropriate generalization (Rogoff, 2003), students were able to make sense of the surrounding environment, and then from that point they were able to renegotiate what did and did not fit their initial impressions. After approximately a week and a half, and the completion of between four and five journal prompts, patterns of engagement with similarities and differences within Morocco as well similarities between Morocco and other countries shifted. Similarly, in Bali students’ focus on differences between Bali and places outside the country decreased, and gave way to a focus on similarities and complexities within Bali. While students in Morocco focused heavily on differences within Morocco, it was not until the final journal that over half of the students in Bali came to narrate about differences within Bali.

It would appear these patterns are a function of time, place, and circumstance. Students in Morocco were provided with a variety of experiences. Morocco is a large country—particularly in comparison to Bali—and one that often prides itself on diversity. Thus, over time and because this study abroad program was writing-enhanced and included weekend excursions not only to Marrakech and Fès but also to remote and rural places surrounding these areas, space was created for students to engage with difference and renegotiate pre-conceived notions of homogeneity. For example, the trip began at Chellah, where many students came to appreciate the diversity of Moroccans depicted in the architecture found in the ruins. Then, after a little over a week living in Rabat, we took a weekend excursion to Marrakech. It was this trip that seems to have begun to lift the veil of homogeneity off the eyes of students. Under other circumstances, and within a different place, such as Bali, we see that these trends were different, which may be on account of place, landscapes, and culture. Overall program structure was the same in Morocco
and Bali—students completed parallel narrative activities and participated in various place-responsive experiences. In Bali, we did take excursions to other areas of the island, for example the northern black sand beaches of Lovina, and even to the neighboring island of Gili. However, the landscape did not change as drastically as it did in Morocco, even in our visits to more rural areas or in our hiking of a volcano. Instead of coming to acknowledge diversity within Bali, students came to appreciate the cultural complexities of Balinese culture. This overall finding suggests that engagement with place is fundamental to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs, which speaks to the importance of place-responsive pedagogies. For example, in Morocco, student learning centered around differences within places in Morocco and learning about the diversity of beliefs and religious expression within the country, while in Bali students drew connections to cultural practices or artifacts seen in one place to another place (e.g. visiting a mask maker then seeing a mask during a dance performance).

Across both programs, students came to find similarities between Morocco and Bali and familiar places such as the United States and other countries of origin. In other words, students were able to find similarities within difference. This was further supported in student narrating about relationality during one-year post-program interviews. Difference, as it was enacted in student narratives one-year post program, generally seemed to transcend habitual categories and instead embrace an openness and appreciation of difference. Overall students in both programs came to conceptualize difference not as something scary or exotic, but as a fact of life. Students in both programs ultimately came to the realization that there is no “typical” Moroccan, Balinese, or American—that cultural practices, beliefs, and ideas vary largely within and across places. Over time, and through movement across Moroccan and Balinese physical, social, and cultural environments students came to appreciate differences. Students’ lived experiences, through their
sensing bodies engaging with places that at first appeared foreign and different from anything they had known, came to be more familiar through generative moments that resulted in students renegotiating their ideas about difference.

Interestingly, in follow-up interviews these generative moments were almost always connected to direct interactions with local Moroccan or Balinese people. This is interesting considering that student narratives during the program did not have a high concentration of stories of interactions with local people (despite the fact that during both programs students conducted research projects that required them to conduct interviews with local people on a topic of their choice). As I will discuss in the following section, the lack of sharing stories about locals within their journals may have been a result of the structure of the narrating activities themselves. This strongly aligns with my assertion that experiential learning space is socially produced. Encouraging students to draw comparisons between and within places, engaging students in talking about difference, and writing about difference, with the goal of deconstructing what difference means to them is a key element in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs that aim to foster relationality.

Overall, analysis of relationality, particularly student narrating about differences within and between Morocco and Bali and other places they have visited, supports the idea that places continue to be represented in our minds after we visit them, which impacts future engagement with and experiences of place. Indeed, it appears that place and our experiences in/of them are in a constant state of becoming (Simonsen, 2008). In making sense of what cultures and places they encountered in Morocco and Bali, while drawing comparisons between familiar places, students were also reshaping memories and representations of places of their past and future.
Engagement with Place Enacted in Morocco and Bali Student Narrating

Data suggested that places that engaged students’ bodies, involved active participation, and were visited more than once during the program were likely to be mentioned in follow-up interviews. Further, in comparing engagement with place enacted in student narrating within journals during the program, to which places were discussed in follow-up interviews, it is evident that in both Morocco and Bali, the places with the highest amount of sensory engagement during the program were also discussed in follow-up interviews. For example, in Morocco, Jemaa el Fna, Tigemmy, and Chellah had the highest number of sensory engagements in student narrating, and all three of these also appeared in follow-up interviews. Chellah also had the highest number of engagement with historical context across both programs. Similarly, in Bali, aside from the craft village, which had the highest sensory engagement but was not a reverberating place in follow-up interviews, the top three places including the rice fields, purification ceremony, and visit to the healer also appeared in student narrating a year later.

Places that were not part explicitly part of narrative prompts or journals but were enacted in follow-up interviews, such as the Rabat Medina, the hammam, and Kasbah des Oudaya in Morocco and neighborhood/restaurant, volcano hike, and Gili Island are places that engaged student senses and/or afforded them a sense of agency or belonging. The Rabat Medina and the Jalan Kajeng neighborhood/restaurant were the areas that students lived, and by the end of the program they felt this was their home. Kasbah des Oudaya is adjacent to the Rabat Medina and thus it could be interpreted that this was considered part of their neighborhood as well. Gili Island is interesting in that about half the students enjoyed the trip, while the other half did not, largely due to the very “touristy” and “party” vibe, which was complicated by the fact that the island is largely Muslim and there were half naked tourists running around all over, which made
some students uncomfortable. Students also remarked that they missed seeing offerings and the smell of incense while they were away. This suggests that leaving the island of Bali for another island made many students miss their “home” in Ubud, and perhaps also aided students in understanding and appreciating Balinese culture and society in a deeper way.

Further, both the volcano hike in Bali and the visit to the hammam in Morocco actively engaged students in the cultural environment of each country, and both of these activities were body-centered. While the Balinese do not hike volcanos for sport, indeed some Balinese feel it is sacrilegious to summit the highest volcano, Mt. Agung, some villages do hike volcanos for ceremonial purposes. For example, we visited one site on Mt. Batur where the Balinese spend the night for a festival ceremony. The volcano hike was strenuous for many students—the hike to the summit was nearly 4 hours and the last half hour required a bit of climbing on all fours. This left students with feelings of accomplishment—not of conquering the volcano, as we had ample discussion surrounding the issue with that rhetoric during preparatory classes—but with their bodies. Similarly, the visit to the hammam was a bonding experience for the six students who engaged in this optional activity to visit a public bath in the Rabat Medina. Students donned bathing suits and entered the hammam with dozens of Moroccan women and participated in a part of Rabat Medina life—as women and men in the medina in typically visit these baths once a week. Students described this experience as helping them get in touch with their bodies and with each other.

Regarding other ways of engaging with place, such as physical, historical, and social ways of knowing, overall data suggest that narrative activities could have done a better job in engaging students in these other ways of knowing during the program. Perhaps most importantly, while narrative activities during the program featured few enactments of social stories, or stories
interacting with locals and peers, follow-up interviews were rich with stories about people. Indeed, every interview featured two or more stories about local peoples not affiliated with the program, and nearly every student discussed the ways in which being part of the study abroad group contributed to their learning experiences in some way. Being part of a diverse study abroad group, not only diverse culturally but also in majors and age, impacted student experiences, and more often than not, enriched them. Overall, students learned with and from their study abroad groups. This challenges the dominant discourse of immersion in study abroad, which has been found to discourage students from being with their study abroad peers because it takes away from the authentic experience (Doerr, 2013). Further, this is important as previous study abroad research has indicated that students write very little about other people, which has been interpreted as students not engaging with locals or other people enough, however, I would argue that, as I found in one-year follow-up interviews: just because this is not reflected in student writing, does not mean it is not happening. If this is the case, and it is a program goal, then perhaps the narrative activities or writing prompts are not designed with this in mind. Thus, if program directors are interested in social engagement, or engagement with physical or historical context, narrative activities should be structured to this end.

Overall, data indicate that engaging students with places beyond the typical visual or observational way of knowing, and instead encouraging awareness of engagement and experiences in/of places, people, and cultures with their whole bodies may be key to learning. It may aid students in becoming more open to difference by providing them with opportunities to experience what life is like for people who live in the host country. Of course, one can never know exactly what life may be like as a local Moroccan or Balinese, however even having students imagine this by drawing upon their experiences through full body awareness may
increase relationality and relatability. For example, engagement with local ways of knowing and doing art can increase relatability and help to de-exotify culture, which may be because engagement with the arts can be framed as going beyond simply looking, but experiencing a novel cultural environment (see Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali).

**Engagement as Fundamental to Learning about Someone Else’s Local**

This chapter set out to explore how student engagement with place contributed to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali, Indonesia. Both programs set out to help students think critically about and deconstruct representations of Morocco and Bali and to aid students in finding similarities between, not differences between countries. Overall, through engagement with place, data suggest that programs were largely successful in achieving these goals. As one student said in a follow-up interview: “it was great to learn about a place in a place” (Savanna, Morocco 2014). Indeed, engagement with place acted as a springboard for the production of experiential learning space within both programs—in Morocco students came to appreciate cultural diversity, and in Bali students came to appreciate the cultural complexities of Balinese society. Thus, engagement with place through place-based pedagogy is fundamental to reframing study abroad as “learning about someone else’s local” (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117) in order to narrow ideas of difference and heighten relationality. Further, narrative activities that engaged students with local ways of knowing and being were critical in the production of experiential learning space, as it is through analysis of the stories students shared that allowed for an exploration of the role place in the production of experiential learning space. Student stories about people and places were representations of them; indeed, such discourses are the basis of knowledge (Lefebvre 1991/1974). In order to move toward deconstructing power relations in study abroad, we must
recognize that the relationship between people and place is mutually constituted—places shape, and are shaped by people, who also shape place. Thus, our encounters and engagement with place shapes the stories we tell, and the stories we tell shape not only our relationship with place, but the place itself. Changing our relationships with place “involves changing the stories we tell about place” and making space for generative moments through which alternative stories about place can emerge (Somerville et al., 2011, p. 5). Exploring experiential learning at the nexus of place, pedagogy, and culture in study abroad is at the heart of achieving this change. This chapter has presented a way to systematically study student engagement with place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad that narrows ideas of difference in an effort to challenge dominant discourses through changing the stories we tell about place, and calls for more study abroad programs to follow suit.

Summary

This chapter built upon the groundwork laid Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco) to explore the ways in which student engagement with place contributed to the production of experiential learning space in study abroad. To further this work, I have conducted a longitudinal comparative case analysis of student experiences in/of place with the Morocco and Bali programs using the coding system I developed from the findings in Chapter 3. The main families of codes in this system included representations of place, relationality and ideas about difference, and types of engagement with place including experiential, social, physical, and historical ways of knowing. I have reviewed literature surrounding each of these families of codes and demonstrated that place is the point of departure in the production of experiential learning space. Analysis revealed that places existed as representations in the minds and bodies of students before they arrived to their host countries, which shaped their experiences upon
arrival. Through engagement with place, these representations were renegotiated and gave way to understandings of Morocco and Bali not as homogenous, but as heterogeneous and full of cultural diversity or cultural complexity. This line of analysis was enriched by the tracking of student comparisons within and between places throughout the course of the program, which overall supported these findings. That being said, trends of comparisons within and between places over the course of were different in Morocco and Bali—in Morocco students focused more on differences within the host country, and in Bali students focused more on similarities within the host country until the end of the program. I have suggested this indicates that that the production of experiential learning space rolled out differently in each program as consequence of place, time, and circumstance. Across both programs, it appears narrative activities contributed to the production of experiential learning space as well, and over time guided students to appreciate rather than exotify difference. Findings during the program were overall found to be sustained one-year later, as suggested by student narrating about difference, and speak to the powerful role of place in shaping experiential learning space that narrow ideas of difference and promote relationality in study abroad.

Overall, this chapter made important contributions to place-based research and pedagogy in study abroad through the development and assessment of narrative activities as well as the coding system to better understand student experiences in/of place and how it connects to their learning. In the following chapter, I continue to push place-based research in study abroad forward by conducting a longitudinal comparative case analysis of two cohorts of the Bali study abroad program, one of which received a place-based intervention, to explore the ways in which the intervention may have impacted student experiences of an exotified cultural environment.
CHAPTER V

DECONSTRUCTING THE EXOTIC THROUGH PLACE-RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY: MEDIATING STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN/OF BALINESE SOCIETY

Abstract

Arts and aesthetics are an important part of Balinese daily life, however, their meaning is often unrealized due to the island’s association with iconic exoticism. This longitudinal comparative case study explored how a place-responsive museum-based pedagogical intervention shaped student experiences of Balinese society during a 4-week study abroad program to Indonesia, and engagement with the arts one year later. Three weekly narratives and one-year post-program interviews were collected with 17 students in the 2013 and 2014 program cohorts. Ten students in the 2014 cohort received the intervention and completed two additional museum-based narratives. Using the 2013 cohort as a comparison, findings suggest the museum intervention functioned as a cultural tool that positively influenced not only how the 2014 cohort related to the Balinese cultural environment, but also how they related to the arts one year post-program. How the museum-based intervention functioned as a cultural tool is discussed alongside pedagogical implications for study abroad and experiential education.

Keywords: study abroad, pedagogy, cultural tool, museum, place-based pedagogy, exoticism, Bali, arts, aesthetics, experiential education
With the number of Americans studying abroad at an all-time high and short-term programs\(^7\) as the most common study abroad encounter (IIE, 2016), it is critical for institutions of higher education and faculty program leaders to consider intentional, place-based pedagogies that do not perpetuate exotified views of a cultural “other” frozen in time and space (Bhabha, 1994; Doerr, 2016a, 2016b). While being drawn to the exotic may be a natural response to cultures different from one’s own, the purpose of study abroad should be to acknowledge and deconstruct these “fabricated” and “representational” realities that are often unreflective of places (Morgan, 2007, p. 55). Pedagogies that are responsive to place (Wattchow & Brown, 2011) can help to position students as joining in the ongoing production of these spaces in time (Doerr, 2016a, 2016b) rather than staring romantically from a distance. Place-responsive pedagogies can also aid in inoculating the exotic by engaging students with local rhythms, meanings, histories, and significances of place. To deconstruct the exotic and foster empathy and respect of cultural differences, students need to be provided tools that allow them to participate and relate more meaningfully with alternative ways of knowing, being, and doing encountered within novel cultural environments.

Bali has long been associated with iconic exoticism—the uniqueness of the Bali Hindu religion combined with an apparent appreciation of art and aesthetics has beckoned the minds of

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\(^7\) Short-term programs most commonly refer to study abroad programs that are between one to eight weeks in length, faculty-led, and sponsored by the home institution or a private third-party (NAFSA, 2002).
researchers and travelers for decades—and has recently surged as a site of cultural and spiritual tourism (Johnson, 2002; Morgan, 2007; Williams, 2011). Renowned for their “traditional” art, music, and dance, curious minds and bodies flock to the island to experience it for themselves; however, the meaning and value of art and aesthetics as an integral piece of Balinese religion and part of daily life (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007; Samadhi, 2001) is too often unrealized (Morgan, 2007). Without the provision of tools that help visitors link Balinese arts to cultural and religious customs, Balinese art and aesthetics can become tourist spectacles and exotic showpieces (Morgan, 2007).

The exotic aura surrounding Bali was embraced as a teaching and learning opportunity in the 4-week, faculty-led study abroad program at the center of the present inquiry, which aimed at providing students with tools to deconstruct exotified notions of Balinese arts and culture. This research was grounded in a sociocultural psychology framework that views culture as shared activity (Rogoff, 2003) and shared meaning (Bruner, 1993) and consisting of material and symbolic tools that organize human activity and how one relates to her or his surrounding environment (Cole, 1998; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Drawing from the philosophy of place-based or place-responsive education, a branch of experiential education that views learning as contextualized social activity, I developed a pedagogical intervention that aimed to help study abroad students engage with the alternative ways of knowing and doing art present within Balinese society. Importantly, although this chapter focuses on the intersection of art, religion, and daily life in Bali, I wholly recognize that arts and aesthetics are but one of many important components of Balinese culture.

In this longitudinal comparative case study, I explored how a museum-based pedagogical intervention shaped study abroad student experiences of Balinese arts and society. The
intervention included a pre-trip class at the Rubin Museum of Art, which houses a Hindu arts collection and end-of-trip independent student visits to the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA) in Ubud, Bali during the last week of the program. The pre-trip museum class was carefully designed with the aim of preparing students to engage and relate meaningfully with the Balinese cultural environment. Alternatively, the visit to the ARMA in Bali was intentionally unguided, allowing students to explore and engage with the museum independently. This intervention was both socially and ecologically relevant to the Balinese cultural environment, as arts and aesthetics are important to Balinese religion and daily life (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007; Morgan, 2007; Samadhi, 2001).

The aims of the research were as follows: first, to understand how the pre-trip class influenced students’ experiences of the Balinese cultural environment; second, to explore the ways in which the intervention impacted student engagement with the arts in Bali and one-year post-program. Data in the form of three weekly narratives and one-year post-program interviews were collected with a total of 17 students from 2013 and 2014 program cohorts. The 10 students in the Bali 2014 cohort received the intervention and completed two additional museum-based narrative activities. Seven students from the Bali 2013 served as a comparison group. Findings suggest that the museum-based pedagogical intervention functioned as a cultural tool that not only mediated the Bali 2014 cohort’s experiences of the Balinese cultural environment, but also their sustained engagement with the arts. While causal links cannot be established, data imply that exposing students to, and engaging them with, the Hindu arts before departure helped to expand the meaning students shared with a previously “othered” and “exotic” culture. I found that arts engagement enacted in Bali 2014 student narrating was more prevalent, more sophisticated, and had more critical analysis of the intersections of Balinese art, religion, and
culture across written narratives and one-year follow-up interviews. Further, while analysis of follow-up interviews revealed that the program enhanced both cohorts’ appreciation of the arts, students in the Bali 2014 cohort were more likely to describe changes to their participation with the arts a year later.

This research therefore has a double contribution. First, it empirically assesses the impact of a museum-based pedagogical intervention on student experiences abroad and discusses how pedagogies that are responsive to place can help to deconstruct notions of exotified societies and static cultural “others” in study abroad. Second, this article advances research on the power of weaving arts into a multicultural curriculum by presenting long-term impacts of a museum-based intervention, which may be helpful to museum educators and institutions of higher education that are interested in promoting art and cultural engagement across their universities.

The article proceeds as follows. First, I provide an introduction to my conceptual framework, which includes situating the present inquiry within a sociocultural perspective and the philosophy of place-based education. I present the underlying notions of viewing culture as shared activity and shared meaning before introducing the philosophy behind place-based pedagogy. Next, to contextualize the role of arts and aesthetics in Balinese society, I provide a brief overview of the Balinese environment, culture, and society and situate Bali geographically, demographically, and within relevant principles and practices of Balinese Hinduism. This is followed by a methodological section, including an overview of the Bali study abroad program and detailed descriptions of each element of the museum-based pedagogical intervention. Then, I present the results of the comparative analysis, including arts engagement enacted in student narratives during the program, arts engagement enacted in student lives one year-post program, and exotified notions of Balinese art and culture (de)constructed in student narrating. In the
discussion section, I interpret the findings collectively and reflect on the ways in which the museum-based intervention functioned as a cultural tool that mediated student experiences of the Balinese cultural environment, as well as arts engagement a year later. Finally, I conclude by discussing pedagogical implications for study abroad and experiential education.

**Conceptual Framing**

**Culture as Shared Meaning and Activity**

From a sociocultural psychology perspective, culture is something we *do* not something we have (Rogoff, 2003), and consists of material and symbolic tools that are passed on socially and act as resources that organize human activity and how we relate to our surrounding environment (Cole, 1998; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). At the root of culture is shared activity (Rogoff, 2003) and shared meaning, or “a way of knowing, of construing the world and others” (Bruner, 1993, p. 513). It is through interaction and participation in cultural communities that people shape, and are shaped by, these shared ways of knowing about and being in the world (Greenfield, 2000; Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Rogoff, 2003; Scribner & Cole, 1981). In other words, people are not seen as passive recipients of culture; they play an active role in the process of mutual constitution (Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). Individuals and contexts, or surrounding environments, are enmeshed and cannot be separated—they are viewed as mutually creating, reproducing, and maintaining one another (Rogoff, 2003). Furthermore, people influence and are influenced by cultural practices, thus, culture is not static; it is a fluid process whereby cultural communities and individuals are ever-changing (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003).
Cultural tools, which are simultaneously material (i.e. observable) and symbolic (i.e. abstract), organize human activity and relations to the surrounding environment. The ways in which cultural tools organize activities and relations are referred to as mediation (Lightfoot, Cole, & Cole, 2008). Take for example, a family who practices Roman Catholicism and eats dinner together after mass each Sunday (material culture), which for this family is a holy day of the week (symbolic culture). Their religious beliefs (that Sunday is holy day) mediate their behavior on Sunday (attending mass; having family dinner). Cultural tools, inherited and transformed by successive generations (Rogoff, 2003), mediate human experiences in and of their world. Other examples of cultural tools include language, cell phones, and how birthdays are celebrated.

Understanding culture as shared meaning and activity that is continuously enacted through people’s participation within their cultural communities directly counteracts representations of an immobile, static, and exotified cultural “other” in study abroad. Instead of conceptualizing study abroad as “an encounter of two bounded cultures” (Doerr, 2016b, p. 95), situating study abroad within a sociocultural perspective can help to position students as joining in the “ongoing production of life and meanings in the host society’s space” (Doerr, 2016b, p. 95). Because we often exotify cultures that are different from our own, providing students with tools that can help them understand their own cultural heritage (Rogoff, 2003) and expand meaning shared with previously “othered” cultures is useful in study abroad. This is particularly important considering that a natural first step in encountering novel cultural environments is to draw from one’s own experiences and ways of knowing to make sense of the surroundings. Furthermore, just as fish do not see water, our own culture becomes visible upon encountering a novel cultural environment. In other words, through encountering novel cultures, we learn about
our own. Thus, tools that aid students in understanding their own cultural heritage and develop their ability to view the world from multiple, even contrasting perspectives (Rogoff, 2003), may be particularly useful for study abroad educators.

**Place-based Pedagogy**

Place-based education, a derivative of the philosophy of experiential education, is on the rise internationally (Gruenewald & Smith, 2010). Philosophically, place-based education embraces pedagogies that emerge in response to particular attributes of a place (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000), and there also tends to be a rootedness in the idea of building a sense of place, particularly within learners’ local communities (Würdinger & Carlson, 2010). Within place-based education, learning is generally viewed as a contextualized, embodied, and social activity, rather than an individualized cognitive phenomenon (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). However, the ways in which these place-based philosophies are enacted in practice differ across the globe (Waite, 2013). For example, American place-based education (e.g. Gruenewald & Smith, 2010; Sobel, 2004) tends to be school- and community-oriented, compared to place-based education in Australia and New Zealand which focuses on responsiveness to local histories, conditions, and cultural traditions, particularly within outdoor and adventure education (e.g. Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

Despite place-based education’s focus on pedagogies responsive to, and situated within, local communities and outdoor environments, I have argued in Chapter 1 (*Case for Place*) and Chapter 3 (*Experiences in/of Place – Morocco*) that place-based pedagogies are also relevant to study abroad as they may act as a form of resistance to romanticized views of “abroad-ness” and representations of an exotified, static cultural “other.” I see great potential in the inclusion of pedagogies of place in study abroad that appreciate local histories and ways of knowing, rather
than its current focus on global citizenship and global competence. This chapter joins faculty leaders of at least two study abroad programs who have recently published empirical findings on the inclusion of place-based pedagogies within their curriculum (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015; Nakagawa & Payne, 2011). Sharing the sentiments of Jakubiak and Mellom (2015), I encourage study abroad educators to reframe their programs as “learning about someone else’s local” rather than an abstract global venture (p. 117). For it is through actively and meaningfully engaging students in rhythms, dynamics, and ways of knowing, doing, and being of local places, that students can come to embrace the interconnectedness of all places (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015).

Conceptualizations of place have been debated for decades (for reviews see Lewicka, 2011; Wattchow & Brown, 2011). Importantly, my conceptualization of place differs from the somewhat persistent assertion of Tuan (1977); I do not understand place to emerge from space that has been imbued with individual meaning (Tuan, 1977). Instead, I conceptualize place as landscapes full of sociocultural and historical meanings to be engaged with, not as spaces to be colonized with meaning. Our relationship with place is dynamic; places shape us, and we shape them. I do not see the landscapes of study abroad to be empty, awaiting student sojourners to come and inhabit them with meaning—these spaces are already full of meaning; meanings that place-based pedagogies can help students engage with. Further, I understand experiences within and of place as participatory and experiential phenomena influenced by geophysical and corporeal realities, as well as cultural ideas (Wattchow & Brown, 2011). In sum, I understand place-based pedagogies as those that are responsive to particular attributes of a place and intentionally engage students in existing landscapes of meaning and ways of being.

Cultural practices cannot be understood in isolation (Rogoff, 2003); the Bali study abroad program aimed to help students understand the role of arts and aesthetics within Balinese society,
not as exotic icons, but as connected with Balinese Hindu religious customs and daily life. In an effort to provide students with the necessary tools to engage with alternative ways of knowing and doing art present in Bali, I drew from the aforementioned conceptual framework to develop and institute a museum-based pedagogical intervention into the Bali study abroad program curriculum. Of course, experiencing art at a local museum is not the same as experiencing art in Bali, however, it was hoped that through “appropriate generalization” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 257) students would be able to find relatability between each unique situation with the support of their fellow social peers and perceptions of similarity. Thus far, I have alluded to the important role arts and aesthetics play in Balinese religious practice and daily life. To demonstrate this in more detail, although in no way do I claim this review to be exhaustive, I provide an overview of the Balinese cultural environment and society with an eye toward the role of arts and aesthetics.

Balinese Environment, Culture, and Society

The island of Bali is one of over 17,000 islands (6,000 inhabited) in the Indonesian archipelago—the fourth largest nation in the world with a population of 244 million people. The majority of Bali’s 3.5 million inhabitants practice Balinese Hinduism, which is less than 2% of Indonesia’s total population, the vast majority of whom practice Islam (Indonesian Embassy, 2014). Geographically, Bali sits approximately eight degrees south of the equator and is a relatively small volcanic island spanning about 150 kilometers east-west and 90 kilometers north-south. Bali is nestled between the island of Java to the west, and Lombok to the east. The Balinese landscape is lush, tropical, and peppered with volcanoes and mountains, the tallest and most sacred of which is Mount Agung, towering 3,142 meters above sea level. The diverse landscape of Bali includes central mountainous rainforests, coast lines of white and black sand beaches, and cultivated rice terraces and paddy fields in the south. Drawing from a single water
source, the intricate water management systems \((\text{subak})\) that irrigate these rice terraces spanning from volcano slopes down to beaches led Geertz (1972) to liken southern Bali to a “giant outdoor aquarium” (p. 26).

Bali is divided into eight districts that correspond to old Balinese kingdoms. Each district is made up of villages \((\text{desa})\) that contain one or more \textit{banjar}, or neighborhood associations, which act as organizing units and are the basis of communal life within Balinese society (Periplus, 2005; Suryani, 2004). \textit{Banjar} are central to everyday life; they are linked to the central government and uphold religious customs by helping members carry out religious duties, including temple ceremonies and rites of passage (Suryani, 2004). While the typical Balinese family lives in a compound comprised of multiple nuclear families within the village (Suryani, 2004), even those who have relocated to urban areas, such as the capital city of Denpasar, maintain active ties with the village of her or his birth and participate in religious customs and ritual ceremonies (Periplus, 2005).

**Relevant Principles, Beliefs, and Practices of Balinese Hinduism**

The Bali Hindu religion is a unique branch of Hinduism that has been influenced by its Indian roots, indigenous Balinese culture and pre-Hindu animist customs, and to some extent Buddhism. Embracing a vast number of interrelated principles and customs, presenting the Balinese Hindu religion in its entirety is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, I focus on principles, beliefs, and practices that are relevant to the present inquiry and aid in contextualizing the intersection of religion, art, and aesthetics in Balinese society.

Five guiding principles of Balinese Hinduism \((\text{Panca Srada})\), and the concept of balance and harmony \((\text{Tri Hita Karana})\) are at the heart of daily life in Bali. According to Suryani (2004, p. 215-216), the five guiding principles include: the principle of one Supreme God \((\text{Sang Hyang})\).
Widi Wasa) and Its manifestation in diverse gods and goddesses (dewi and dewa); the principle of an eternal soul (atman); the principle of karma (Karma Pala), meaning that current human life is both a result of the past and the foundation of future; the principle of reincarnation (Punarbawa), which continues until one achieves the fifth principle of unity with God (Moksha) thus ending the cycle of reincarnation. Moksha, or spiritual liberation is the ultimate goal and can be achieved through good deeds and maintaining balance and harmony with humans, nature, and the gods (Tri Hita Karana). Maintaining harmony with each other is believed to be the most important to many Balinese, because one cannot achieve harmony with the gods, goddesses, and nature without first living in harmony with one another.

Dharma in Balinese society is often described as a living philosophy (Suryani, 2004; Wiryomartono, 2014) because it goes beyond recognizing order in the cosmos—much of Balinese life quite literally revolves around striving to maintain balance and harmony with all beings and forces in the universe (Tri Hita Karana), including the seen and unseen. In addition to the natural, material world seen by humans (sekala), the Balinese believe that the self also resides within a supernatural, unseen world populated with spirits, gods, and demons (niskala) (Codron, 1999; Samadhi, 2001; Shapiro, 1990; Suryani, 2004). The seen and unseen are complementary forces that hang in the balance, rather than opposing ones. Balinese cosmology situates humans between the worlds of spirits, gods, goddesses, and demons hovering above and lurking below (Suryani, 2004). Gods and goddesses are believed to be “responsible for the beauties of life and prosperity” (Codron, 1999, p. 174), and demons are believed to be the causes of disarray and disharmony. Maintaining balance and harmony between these worlds is critical not only to achieve Moksha, or spiritual liberation, but also for good physical and mental health (Shapiro, 1990; Suryani, 2004).
Arts and aesthetics act as a communicative bridge between the Balinese seen (sekala) and unseen (niskala) worlds. It is through music, dance, sculpture, and prayer offerings—no matter how meager or elaborate—that spirits, gods, goddesses, and demons express themselves and can be communicated with, making art and aesthetics a central part of Balinese life (Davies, 2007). Through different mediums, including performing arts, visual arts, architecture, and landscaped gardens, the Balinese understand each other, communicate with the spirit world, and prevent illness, all of which serve the purpose of maintaining balance and harmony with each other, nature, and the gods (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007; Suryani, 2004). What is considered beautiful (becik) to the Balinese is dependent on balance and harmony between elements and form alongside respect for the interconnection of art, life, and nature (Davies, 2007). To illustrate the intersections of art and aesthetics, religion, and daily life further, in the following section I provide illustrative examples.

**Fusion of Art and Balinese Life**

Art and aesthetics play a central role in maintaining harmony and balance (*Tri Hita Karana*) within Balinese society and this is evidenced by daily religious offerings (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007), regular ritual ceremonies (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007; Suryani, 2004) and performances (Davies, 2007; Turner, 2011), and even spatial orientation and place-making within towns, villages, and family compounds (Samadhi, 2001). Before diving into examples, it is important to note that arts and aesthetics are one important way, not the only way, that the Balinese who practice Balinese Hinduism communicate with each other and the gods in an effort to maintain harmony and balance in their lives (Wikan, 1990).

**Daily Offerings.** Offerings are a common sight all over the island of Bali; if one is unaware of their presence and significance, they are easily stepped on instead of over. Offerings
are “intrinsic to Balinese daily life” and “make the unseen visible” by representing gods (dewa) and goddesses (dewi) through “their composition, the colors of their ingredients, and their cardinal location” (Codron, 1999, p. 157). For example, daily offerings that are dedicated to the one Supreme God (Sang Hyang Widi Wasa) and all Its manifestations are typically placed on an elevated platform or shrine, while those to appease the demons and keep them from disrupting harmony find their resting place on the ground. In Figure 5.1, I provide a photographic example of a typical Balinese offering to help the reader visualize the aesthetic qualities described below.

Figure 5.1 Aesthetic qualities and elements of Balinese daily offerings. Photo: Pipitone
Daily offerings are typically handmade by Balinese women\(^8\) (Codron, 1999; Suryani, 2004). As illustrated in Figure 5.1 above, the base is crafted by hand in various circular or square shapes out of palm leaves, and elements in the center include flowers, petals, rice, leaves, rice cakes and incense to aid the offering in transcending the seen world. These making of these offerings are time consuming as they must be aesthetically pleasing for the gods and goddesses. Offerings are believed to contribute to harmony and balance between the seen (*sekala*) and unseen (*niskala*) (Codron, 1999)—the making of offerings is less about gratitude and more about reciprocity and representing a symbiotic and harmonious relationship between God, nature, and each other. In this sense, the creation, presentation, and art of making offerings can be conceptualized as acts of prayer and devotion (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007).

**Ritual Ceremonies.** The most elaborate of offerings, such as baskets of fruit or streets lined with tall ornamentally decorated bamboo poles (*penjar*), are reserved for festivals, temple ceremonies, and ceremonial rites of passage, which are a regular occurrence in Balinese society (Codron, 1999; Davies, 2007). In Figure 5.2 below, I provide photographic examples of elaborate offerings made for the June 2014 *Galungan* harvest festival. These photos were made on Jalan Kajeng, a side street off the main road in Ubud that led to the student residences. The photo on the left illustrates the grandiose stature of the *penjar* that line the streets during festival time, and the photo on the right is an example of what the base of many of these *penjar* contain. My sense-making about these offerings is as such: the *penjar* resemble fishing poles, which try to get the attention of the gods and goddesses, baiting them to join the festival and enjoy the offerings at the base, which resembles a grandly decorated mailbox.

\(^{8}\) In more elaborate offerings, like those for rituals and ceremonies, men assist women in preparing meat and gathering materials (Codron, 1999).
Ritual ceremonies are performed regularly to celebrate life, venerate the gods, give thanks to nature, solve problems, and redeem karma (Suryani, 2004). Ceremonies range from celebrations with the entire village community to those that are private family affairs such as rites of passage. To give one an idea of just how regular ceremonies occur—ritual ceremonies include those that mark the anniversary of a temple⁹, which occur every 210 days (lunar calendar); those that celebrate the human life cycle, including at least five special rites of passage between birth and cremation, each marked by a ceremony larger and more elaborate than the

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⁹ Each family compound has at least one family temple, and each village has at least three temples of special significance (pura puseh, “temple of great origin”; pura dalem “the funeral temple”; and pura bale agung “the great meeting hall”), thus there are estimated to be hundreds of thousands of temples in Bali (Periplus, 2005). It is also said that there are as many temples as people in Bali (Davies, 2007).
previous, in addition to birthdays celebrated every 6 months; and Lastly, celebratory communal ceremonies linked to the Balinese calendar, such as Balinese New Year (Nyepi), various harvest festivals (e.g. Galungan and Kuningan), and monthly full moon and dark moon ceremonies. As one can imagine, ceremonies require continuous dedication of time, effort, and resources for the Balinese, not only because of their frequency but also their presentation. Ceremonies and offerings can put a strain on Balinese families who are not well-off financially.

Ceremonies, particularly temple ceremonies and their ornate offerings and décor, are “widely regarded as art forms in their own right” (Davies, 2007, p. 23). Temple ceremonies may include music, dance, masked theatre, and shadow puppet performances, all of which simultaneously act as offerings to gods and efforts to bring them to life through art and aesthetics (Davies, 2007). Balinese gods and goddess are believed to appreciate and value beauty, and since they are manifestations of the one Supreme God, who is the source of life for the Balinese, many Balinese also exhibit a deep appreciation for arts and beauty in all things. This is reflected not only in daily offerings and ceremonies but also within the colorful palettes and intricate patterns present in everyday clothing, traditional temple garb, décor, architecture, as well as the visual and performing arts.

Performances. Balinese visual and performing arts and artists strive to embody taksu, or creative energy that connects the artist, performer, or art with the audience (Samadhi, 2001; Turner, 2011). Importantly, in dance and masked theatre taksu allows performers to embody and become the character they are portraying (Turner, 2011), which is thought to be intensely pleasing to the audience (Davies, 2007). Taksu is a central Balinese aesthetic concept, and extends to the performing arts into the visual arts, and beyond. For example, taksu can also refer
to the “spiritual inspiration and energy within a mask, puppet, or ceremonial weapon” and is sometimes even applied to everyday skills like cooking (Davies, 2007).

With the influx of tourism that began in the 1970s, Balinese performing arts were divided into the religious (wali), the intermediate (be-bali), and the secular (balih-balihan). However, all three are considered offerings to the gods—it is argued that art and religion are never truly separated—music is always devotional, and even dance and theatrical performances for tourists begin with a genuine blessing by a priest (Davies, 2007). Pressures of tourism have been noted to cause a struggle within Balinese culture regarding which dances and performances to share with tourists, and which to reserve for themselves (Johnson, 2002; Picard, 1990). For example, tourists are not allowed into the inner courtyards of temples, as they are the most sacred and thus reserved as sites for sacred dances, performances and ceremonies. Many dances and dramas are based on stories from the Hindu Ramayana; costumes are quite decadent, weighty, and include headdresses and fans. Despite the creation of some performances in the 1930s purely for cultural tourism, such as Legong and Kecak, they are still never completely separated from religious or spiritual practice. Performances, including dance, music, and theatre, are conceived as artistic efforts for the Balinese to connect with each other, nature, and the gods.

**Place-making and Spatial Orientation.** Balancing life is essential to the Balinese, and this even extends to their traditions of place-making and spatial orientation. Balinese Hindu cosmology includes a clearly articulated relationship between the natural environment and the built environment such that Balinese towns, villages, and homes must be balanced and aesthetically pleasing to maintain harmony among the different spirits, gods, demons, and humans (Davies, 2007; Samadhi, 2001). For example, Mount Agung, the highest and most sacred mountain of all, is believed to be the home of the gods, and acts as the center of the
Balinese lifeworld. Moving or facing toward this mountain is conceived as progress toward the sacred (kaja) and movement toward the sea is toward the profane (kelod) (Samadhi, 2001). Like the seen and unseen, the sacred and profane are not opposites, but complements that are to be kept in balance. Kaja and kelod are but two examples of the nine cardinal directions that make up a mandala-like matrix (Samadhi, 2001) that the Balinese use to orient themselves, objects, and the layout of their homes and temples cosmologically (Davies, 2007; Samadhi, 2001). For example, the Balinese sleep with their heads toward kaja and their feet toward kelod, and Balinese family temples are placed toward kaja, while the kitchen and bathroom toward kelod. It is through placements such as these that balance and harmony is maintained in the home and village (desa).

Architecture and spatial orientation, alongside offerings, ceremonies, and performances, are some of the principal ways the Balinese maintain harmonious relations between themselves and God, the environment, and others, thus demonstrating multiple examples of how the fusion of arts and aesthetics play out within Balinese daily life. This integration of arts and aesthetics with daily life differs from many American college student lives, where arts and aesthetics are often conceived as relegated to special occasions such as weddings, places such as museums or galleries, and often viewed as elite and or inaccessible. By exposing American students to different aspects of arts and aesthetics as an integral part of the Balinese society, this place-based pedagogical intervention intended to not only introduce students to alternative ways of doing and seeing art in Bali, but also hoped to stimulate a fresh perspective on what is considered art, and the role that art might play in their everyday lives.
Method

The present inquiry explored the impact of a museum-based pedagogical intervention within the context of a 4-week, faculty-led multicultural psychology study abroad program to Bali—a place known for “exotic” visual and performing arts which can too easily become tourist spectacles without the provision of tools that help visitors link Balinese arts to cultural and religious customs (Morgan, 2007). In this section, I provide a brief overview of the Bali study abroad program, outline the elements of the museum-based pedagogical intervention, and my approach to data collection and analysis. The methods described below were aimed at understanding how the pre-trip class influenced students’ experiences of the Balinese cultural environment, as well as exploring the ways in which the intervention impacted student engagement with the arts in Bali and one-year post-program.

Program Overview

During the summer of 2013 and 2014, two cohorts of students from the City University of New York embarked on a 4-week faculty-led study abroad program to Bali, Indonesia hosted by John Jay College. My dissertation advisor acted as program director for both years, having designed the program from the ground up with the support of an experienced Balinese guide and liaison. As part of a larger research project that focused on the production of experiential learning space in study abroad (see Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali), I joined the program as participant-researcher in 2014. Student pairs lived in family-owned and operated bungalows overlooking the rice fields at the end of Jalan Kajeng, a quiet street with local shops and eateries in the Balinese village of Ubud, geographically located near the center of the island. Although it has not always been described as such (see Dunbar-Hall, 2003 for historical review), over the last few decades Ubud has been dubbed the “cultural capital” of Bali.
as it has become known for weaving tradition and tourism into the village’s cultural fabric, including arts, crafts, music, and dance.

The overall program was designed to stimulate students’ understanding of the construction of the Balinese self and society by: a) introducing students to theoretical debates on whether psychology of the self is universal or culturally specific; and b) extending these debates to understand what constitutes mental illness and how the Balinese practice prevention and healing within their culture. An additional embedded program goal was to stimulate student awareness of their own cultural lens and exotified representations of Bali. This was nurtured early in the program by having students read an article on the exotification of Balinese arts and culture (Morgan, 2007) as well as a reflexive piece written by an ethnographer describing the inside/outside predicament of doing research in Bali focused on Balinese dance (Turner, 2011). Nearly every aspect of the program was linked to Balinese art and aesthetics because the study of the Balinese personhood and society is largely, as demonstrated previously, a study of Balinese art and aesthetics.

Before journeying to Bali, students attended three pre-trip sessions to help them prepare for departure. The purpose of pre-trip sessions was to begin student engagement with the Balinese cosmos. Pre-trip sessions included required readings and discussions, and in 2014, as part of the museum-based intervention, a pre-trip class at the Rubin Museum was organized (described below).

Students were enrolled in two interrelated courses (Multicultural Psychology; Culture, Psychopathology, and Healing) which were aimed at helping students understand the local Balinese environment by providing them a framework to make sense of encounters with local people and places. Each class required intensive readings supplemented by 12 formal classroom
lectures for each course, six guest lectures by local specialists in a classroom setting, five field lectures, and 10-12 field trips. Further, both classes required written coursework and presentations for a grade. All guest lectures and field trips were designed to illustrate or complement formal classroom lectures through experiential and place-based pedagogies.

I provide an example of the program’s pedagogical process. Students read about mask carving as an aesthetic prop used in dance, as a channel of emotional communication between the dancer and the public, and as a vehicle to contact the world of spirits. Following readings and class discussions, students visited a renowned mask carver who explained the role of masks in generating emotions. They subsequently had extended discussions with a Balinese dancer and teacher, and attended two Balinese dance performances. Students were then asked to evaluate their impressions of intersections between emotional expression, dance, and Balinese personhood in class discussions and written coursework. Other examples of field trips included visiting historical sites, attending temple ceremonies, hiking a volcano, partaking in community service, and weekend trips to experience other regions of Bali. Throughout visits and lectures, as well as writing assignments, students were asked to integrate and compare American (or country of origin) experiences with the Balinese cosmos.

Museum-based Pedagogical Intervention

Taking into consideration the central role of arts and aesthetics to Balinese identity and society, in 2014 the Bali study abroad program was altered by including a museum-based pedagogical intervention aimed at preparing students to engage and relate more meaningfully within the Balinese cultural environment. The intervention had two elements: a pre-trip class at the Rubin Museum in Manhattan, NY and an end-of-trip visit to the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA) in Ubud, Bali. Each element is described below.
**Pre-trip Class at the Rubin Museum.** The purpose of the pre-trip class was to introduce students to Hinduism and the arts experientially before their departure, as well as give them space to consider their own personal relationship with the arts. This specific local art museum was chosen because it houses a number of Hindu art galleries. While the collections are not specifically Balinese Hindu, the faculty program leader and I collaborated over several weeks with the Head of Adult Education to carefully construct a pre-trip class that would be meaningful and connected to the Bali program. The class included preparatory readings, a walking tour and guest lecture by the Head of Adult Education, a gallery writing and drawing activity, and finally, a reaction paper as homework.

Prior to attending the class, students were assigned two readings. The first was the opening chapter from Diana Eck’s (1998) *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, which was selected not only as an introduction to Hinduism and visual arts, but also to introduce students to the concept of *darśan* as a tool for both understanding their own personal relationship with the arts as well as considering how the Balinese, who practice a branch of Hinduism, may view art. *Darśan*, “seeing” or “gazing” upon the divine is described as an act of Hindu worship—the deity is believed to be present within an image, whether it is a statue or painting, thus gazing upon the image is imbued with religious meaning (Eck, 1998). *Darśan* is simultaneously an act of devotion and a way to receive divine blessings. In Hinduism, an “imaginative” “image-making religion,” the “sacred is seen as present in the visible world” (Eck, 1998 p. 10). The appropriation of this concept by Balinese Hindu is illustrated by their use of arts and aesthetics in their daily lives to communicate with the unseen world and maintain balance with each other, nature, and God.
To assist students in making this connection, they were also assigned a second reading focused on Balinese place-making and spatial orientation, within which the author uses a mandala as an example to draw connections between Hinduism and Balinese Hinduism (Samadhi, 2001). Thus, in addition to leading a lecture and discussion on 

darśan

as part of the tour, we arranged for the Head of Adult Education to include an introduction to Hindu arts, space, and emotional aesthetics by using a Tibetan Mandala to describe and demystify the ways in which the Balinese lay out their villages and homes.

Following the guest lecture and tour, students participated in a gallery writing and drawing activity. Students were given small stools and asked to choose a piece of Hindu art, sit in front of it for 20 minutes, and complete the gallery activity worksheet. The worksheet asked students to respond to a few questions, including why they chose the object, how it made them feel, if it reminded them of anything else, and how they experienced the “gaze” of the object. Finally, on the back page, students were prompted to create a drawing of the artwork, or a piece of the artwork. The integration of a drawing assignment served as an additional modality for students to actively “look” and experience their own “gaze” of the Hindu arts.

Lastly, to help students make sense of their pre-trip class experiences, as a homework assignment, students were prompted to complete a reaction paper about their experiences of the lecture, tour, and gallery activity (see Table 5.1). The reaction paper was due before departure to Bali. Three out of the ten students visited the museum on their own to complete the assignment and gallery activity as they were unable to attend the pre-trip class due to scheduling conflicts. The gallery activity worksheet and reaction paper were used as data to understand the meaning students made of their museum experience and personal experience with Hindu artwork.
End-of-Trip Independent Visit to the ARMA in Bali. During the fourth week of the Bali program, as part of program coursework, students visited the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA) in Ubud, Bali, which houses a mixture of traditional and modern Balinese art. This museum visit was designed intentionally as unguided to allow students a chance to experience an art museum independently, or in small groups of no more than three. Following the visit, students completed a reaction paper that prompted them to reflect on their unguided visit to the museum and if and how their “gaze,” or way of seeing, had changed.

Participants

The seven students enrolled in the Bali 2013 program and the 10 in the 2014 program were recruited via different strategies. Participants in the Bali 2013 program were recruited via email to complete a one-year follow-up interview and give consent to include coursework previously submitted to a web-based course management program in this study. Since I attended the program in 2014 as participant-researcher, participants in the Bali 2014 program were recruited, in-person, upon arrival. Importantly, to ensure voluntary student participation, since student narratives included in this study were part of program coursework, consent for coursework was obtained from the Bali 2014 cohort after grades were submitted.

All 17 participants (16 females, 1 male) in this study were enrolled at colleges within the City University of New York and nearly all were studying forensic psychology, psychology, or a related social science. In the Bali 2013 cohort, four out of seven students or their parents were born outside of the United States (Dominican Republic, Guyana, Montenegro, Thailand). One student had never been abroad previously, and one student had nearly a decade of experience as a dancer. In the 2014 cohort, eight out of ten students or one or both parents were born outside the United States (Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Japan, Soviet
Union). One student identified as having never been abroad previously, and two students had a previous relationship with the arts (e.g. theatre minor/actress; arts educator). Participants ranged from 19 to 30 years old, with an average age just above 22 years. All students had above the required 2.5 GPA for acceptance into the program.

Data Collection

Student narratives. As part of program coursework, all students completed a series of narrative activities in the form of journals and weekly reaction papers. Narrative activities or prompts were aimed at helping students personalize and contextualize their experiences within the Balinese cultural environment by drawing from readings, lectures, and field trips. From this larger pool of coursework, I purposefully selected three sets of student narratives that were written in response to the same prompts—most 2014 journal prompts were restructured in an effort to improve student engagement and critical thinking (see Chapter 2: Methods). These narrative prompts are shown in Table 5.1, below, and included one journal prompt (Week 2 Craft Village) and two reaction papers (Week 1 Cultural Comparison; Week 3 Balinese Dance), for a total of three parallel sets of narratives collected with both Bali 2013 and 2014 cohorts (see Table 5.1). To review the full list of prompts, please see Appendix C. The Bali 2014 cohort completed two additional narratives in response to the pre-trip class at the Rubin (Pre-trip Rubin) and the week 4 visit to the ARMA Bali (Week 4 ARMA), which allowed me to compare their experiences over time. I also used the gallery worksheets completed during the pre-trip class as supplementary data.

Follow-up interviews. The second source of data in this study were follow-up interviews conducted with participants approximately one-year post-program. Semi-structured, open-ended
interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes. Follow-up interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed prior to conducting analysis. To review a sample interview protocol, see Appendix B.

Table 5.1

Elements of Data Collection for Comparative Analysis Presented Visually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Pre-trip</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>1-year Post-trip</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Rubin Prompt</td>
<td>Cultural Comparison Prompt</td>
<td>Craft Village Prompt</td>
<td>Balinese Dance Prompt</td>
<td>ARMA Prompt</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cultural Comparison Prompt</td>
<td>Craft Village Prompt</td>
<td>Balinese Dance Prompt</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Data Analysis

Data were coded using content analysis to identify patterns in student engagement with the arts and aesthetics (e.g. description; analysis; values; functions; historical context; participation), student responses to the arts (e.g. self-awareness; emotional response; critical thinking; appreciation), as well as student experiences of the Balinese cultural environment (e.g. collectivism; balance and harmony; ceremonies; offerings; religion; dance). Data were also coded for student engagement with exotified notions of Balinese art and culture (e.g. impacts on people, tourism, art, economy, environment). I was particularly interested in exploring if and how students related to and made sense of the Balinese cultural environment through arts and aesthetics. Data were analyzed using the 2013 cohort as a comparison. Responses to each prompt were compared for content and, when appropriate, for the percent of the narrative dedicated to discussing a particular topic (e.g. what percentage of the narrative was dedicated to
deconstructing exotification). The two additional museum-based narratives completed by the Bali 2014 cohort were also compared to explore patterns in student experiences of both museums.

**Results**

**Arts Engagement Enacted in Student Narrating**

**Pre-trip class at the Rubin Museum.** Analysis of worksheets revealed that students experienced a myriad of emotions when engaging with the object or artifact of their choosing. Some students described feeling a sense of calmness, balance, unity, safety and freedom, while others described feeling a sense of fear, empowerment, and invincibility. Further analysis showed that many students made meaning of their choice, experience, and “gaze” of the object by connecting it to their personal lives. The gaze and drawing activity was meant to challenge students to think about the artifact’s “gaze” and their own “gaze” through a non-traditional medium; it allowed them to self-analyze their engagement with a piece of art on multiple levels, including physical, emotional, and kinesthetic. In Figure 5.4 below, I provide two samples of student drawings from this activity to demonstrate their engagement with the activity.
Further, analysis of student pre-trip reaction papers showed students found the gaze and drawing activity enjoyable, and three students described it as refreshing change to how they are typically expected to express themselves—through words. For example:

I definitely loved the drawing aspect of the activity because that is my hobby. I actually felt that I put more emphasis on my drawing than the actual content of my work. I didn’t want to put into words what I felt, but more so show it through my drawing which I did.

Izabella, Bali 2014 Pre-trip Rubin

Each student narrative contained various modes of engagement with the arts in their narrating, including: comments on the structure and design of the museum; connections between the readings, their experience, and the tour; detailed descriptions and analysis of one or more artifacts they encountered; and how the experience made them feel. Like Nellie and Josie whose narratives are sampled below, most students used the pre-trip reaction paper to describe in more detail what drew them to the artifact they engaged with in the activity:
I chose the Six-armed Makahala because it had heads around its waist. I chose it because of what it represents. I like the fact that the wrath is wearing those heads with pride and he is also showing strength by being on top of the elephant/men. He looked very victorious. It was a reminder that everything we do and accomplish we should be proud of it no matter what it is.

Nellie, Bali 2014 Pre-trip Rubin

I ended up picking the Mandala of Hevajra because it reminded me so much of the mandala my brother had brought back to me from Thailand. It was not as big or colorful as some of the other mandalas in the exhibit, but its more tattered state caught my attention. It was quite different from the others, and seemed almost out of place among the more well preserved mandalas.

Josie, Bali 2014 Pre-trip Rubin

Additionally, in student narrating about their “gaze,” it was evident that many had begun to consider the lens through which they view the arts following the darśan reading and gallery tour. For example, in her narrative, Eliza unpacks her initial reaction to one of the museum rooms:

My favorite room in the museum was the room with the pictures of the murals on the walls. I didn’t understand most of what was depicted, but it was apparent that the images expressed a very rich culture with fascinating beliefs. My initial reaction based on the small amount the guide explained to us was how bizarre the Buddhist beliefs were compared with mine. But this led me to think that my beliefs only seem “normal” to me because I grew up with them and am used to them.

Eliza, Bali 2014 Pre-trip Rubin
Lastly, six of ten students explicitly discussed the ways in which they felt or hoped their experience may be applicable to their upcoming experiences in Bali:

In a way it has prepared me for the trip to Bali by teaching me about Buddha, wrathful deities.

Nellie, Bali 2014 *Pre-trip Rubin*

Overall, the trip to the Rubin Museum was wonderful and I hope I will be able to apply what I’ve learned to life in Bali.

Corinna, Bali 2014 *Pre-trip Rubin*

I hope I can use at least some of the knowledge I gained visiting the Rubin during my time in Bali.

Josie, Bali 2014 *Pre-trip Rubin*

The statutes in Tibetan Shrine room gave me a vision of what to expect when we visit temples in Bali.

Esther, Bali 2014 *Pre-trip Rubin*

Overall analysis of student gallery activity worksheets and reaction papers indicate students in the Bali 2014 cohort had positive reactions to the pre-trip class at a local art museum and found it to be a valuable learning experience.

**During the Bali program.** Comparison of the Bali 2013 and Bali 2014 student narratives in response to the reaction paper completed during the first week in Bali (*Week 1 Cultural Comparison*) provided the first indication that the pre-trip class had an impact on 2014 cohort experiences of the Balinese cultural environment. The week one prompt had two parts. First, it asked students to comment on their first impressions of Balinese culture and how it differs from
their own. In 2014 cohort responses, eight out of nine students who completed the assignment focused on the ways in which the Balinese express their cultural and religious beliefs, namely maintaining balance and harmony (*Tri Hita Karana*), through the arts, including: daily offerings, ritual ceremonies, song, dance, performance, and statues of gods and goddess. However, in the 2013 cohort of seven students, just one discussed the arts in detail, and only two mentioned the arts at all. Instead, all seven Bali 2013 students focused on the ways in which cultural and religious beliefs were expressed through collectivism, family dynamics, and/or community. The second part of the week one prompt (*Week 1 Cultural Comparison*) gave students the choice of writing about how to avoid exotifying a new culture or, how to analyze gender without colonizing the subject. In 2014, of the seven students who chose to write about exoticism, six of them included Balinese arts in their discussion, compared to three of seven students in the Bali 2013 cohort.

Further comparative analysis of *Week 1 Cultural Comparison* narratives revealed another pattern. Despite it only prompting students to focus on cultural differences, seven of nine students in the Bali 2014 cohort also identified similarities and ways in which they related to the Balinese culture, compared to three out of seven in the Bali 2013 cohort. All three students who found some common ground in the Bali 2013 cohort, as well as the five of seven in the Bali 2014 cohort, identified with two or more cultures. This may be an indication that students with bicultural orientations or close ties to multiple cultural contexts have a wider range of cultural behaviors, values, practices, and identifications (Schwartz & Unger, 2010) to draw upon to find some common ground with novel cultural environments. Interestingly, the two students in the Bali 2014 cohort whose parents were born in the United States and expressed no ties to multiple cultures were among the seven students who identified both similarities and differences between
their culture and Balinese culture. While in no way definitive, this may be an indicator that the pre-trip class aided students in the Bali 2014 cohort in relating to the Balinese cultural environment.

The Bali 2013 cohort did come to recognize and discuss the role of the arts in Balinese religious practices and daily life, only this appeared later when explicitly prompted to do so in the narrative prompts for weeks two (Week 2 Craft Village) and three (Week 3 Balinese Dance). Comparative analysis between Bali 2013 and 2014 cohort responses to these two prompts, which directly related to the arts, provided yet another indicator that the pre-trip class may have impacted student experiences of the Balinese cultural environment: students in the Bali 2014 cohort were more likely to conduct deeper and more critical analysis of the intersections of arts, aesthetics, religion, and Balinese culture, compared to Bali 2013 students. I further explicate these findings individually below.

In week two (Week 2 Craft Village), students were prompted to reflect on their visit to craft villages (e.g. mask maker, silversmith, and hand batik maker) and how tourism has helped or hindered the crafts. Across both cohorts, students described the process of making one or two crafts in detail and the function of the crafts within Balinese society. Further, nearly all students described a deeper appreciation of the arts after learning about and witnessing firsthand the art-making process. However, despite students in both cohorts dedicating roughly 30% of their week two (Week 2 Craft Village) narratives to discussing ways in which tourism has helped and hindered the craft industry, differences were evident in the types of impact that were discussed across cohorts. While most students indicated tourism can help the craft industry by boosting the economy and providing artisans with jobs, but may hinder the industry by putting pressure on artists to create crafts that appeal to tourists, students in the Bali 2014 cohort were more likely to
go beyond these broader impacts to consider more nuanced impacts tourism has on the artists themselves. For example, one of seven students in Bali 2013 compared to five out of 10 in Bali 2014 discussed the impact of mass-produced and machine-made products on the livelihoods of the artists who work by hand. I call upon an excerpt from Grace, a student in Bali 2014 who was “astonished to learn that some of the batiks she had been admiring over the last two weeks were handmade.” To illustrate:

On the one hand, because of the exorbitant amount of tourists in Bali, there will always be a market for batik items like sarongs and clothes. Westerners see these items as exotic and representative of Balinese culture and consume these items in huge quantities. However, on the other hand, I feel as if most tourists (like myself, unfortunately) do not have a discerning eye when it comes to distinguishing between handmade batik items and machine-made batik items. Therefore, when the choice is between paying more for a handmade batik sarong or less for a machine-made sarong, invariably tourists will choose to pay less since they both look the same. This brings down the price of handmade batik items and the cycle of poverty continues.

Grace, Bali 2014 Week 2 Craft Village

In this excerpt, Grace has narrated about the ways in which top-down approaches to the production of batik may impact the lives of artists. In this consideration, she has acknowledged multiple layers of tourism’s impact on the livelihood of Balinese artisans (production, consumption, small-scale impact). She goes beyond the ways in which tourism may boost Bali’s overall economy via the arts, and considers a more nuanced way in which the exotification of
batik may cloak details regarding its source (“consumption in large qualities”), ultimately impacting the livelihood of artisans who craft batik by hand (“the cycle of poverty continues”).

Similar patterns emerged in comparative analysis of the week three (Week 3 Balinese Dance) prompt that asked students to share their experiences of a Balinese dance performance, which concluded a horse trance, by drawing from the readings and a guest lecture. Both cohorts provided detailed descriptions of the role of dance and its function in Balinese society and described their experiences of the dance thickly. However, Bali 2014 students were more likely to go beyond the prompt into critical analysis. Only one of seven students in the Bali 2013 engaged with any critical analysis beyond description of dance, its function, history, and relationship to Balinese personhood:

A specific dance form that is popular among the Balinese is something known as trance. This is when the performers go into an altered state of mind (or dissociate) and claim to be possessed by the witch Rangda. Although this act is usually faked for tourist attractions, it is completely genuine during temple ceremonies.

Luce, Bali 2013 Week 3 Balinese Dance

Luce, drawing from the guest lecture, was the only student in Bali 2013 who acknowledged that dances for tourists may differ from temple or ceremonial dances, but even so, this is as deep as her analysis goes. Alternatively, seven of nine students in the Bali 2014 cohort engaged in critical analysis in some form, ranging from discussions of why they believed the horse trance to be purely for entertainment, the commercialization of dance, the adaptation of dances for tourists, and the iconic exoticism that is often associated with Balinese dance. To demonstrate, I
provide one example of a student’s concluding statement after a paragraph-long deconstruction of the positive and negative impacts of the commercialization of Balinese dance:

I believe the apparent separation between the commercialized dance and ceremonial dance settings can protect the traditional from becoming commercialized.

Cassidy, Bali 2014 *Week 3 Balinese Dance*

Overall, data suggest that Bali 2014 students were more critical in their analysis of the arts, and used more sophisticated language to describe their engagement than students in the Bali 2013 program. This suggests the pre-trip class may have had a positive impact on students’ relationship and engagement with the arts in the Bali 2014 program. In the following section, I review Bali 2014 student narratives in response to their independent visits to the ARMA.

**End-of-trip visit to an art museum in Bali.** Analysis of student narrating about their experiences visiting the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA) in Ubud, Bali during the last week of the program revealed this end-of-trip visit served as space to reflect back on their experiences in Bali with a particular focus on their understanding of, and relationship with, the Balinese arts. All 10 students reflected upon how their view of Balinese arts and aesthetics had changed over the course of the program on account of the knowledge they gained about Balinese cultural and religious practices. After spending four weeks in Bali, most students described a sense of familiarity with the more “traditional” artwork that depicted Balinese life (e.g. rice fields, temple ceremonies, dance performances) and noted that drawing from their experience, they could make sense of some of the meaning and significance behind the artwork. Further, eight out of 10 students extended this change in perspective surrounding the arts in Bali to a change in the way they appreciate art and artists on a broader scale.
The ARMA’s inclusion of modern Balinese art alongside traditional art did not go unnoticed in student narrating about their end-of-trip museum experience. Four students critically analyzed modern art and discussed how it made them realize that art in Bali extends beyond “traditional” representations, and it also guided them to acknowledge the presence of self-expression by the artist:

I was fully expecting to see the same traditional and modern-tradition art styles I’ve seen thus far. Entering the first room and seeing art so heavily influenced by Western contemporary and modern styles was certainly surprising, albeit only initially and pleasantly so. Having spoken to several artists that have, they stress the importance of art for purposes of self-expression rather than for purposes of tourism or to please anyone other than the creating artist, which is certainly a tenet of modern artistic philosophy and a departure from the culture so often theorized as collectivist.

Cassidy, Bali 2014 Week 4 ARMA

I had become so immersed in the art of the past and the importance of tradition in Balinese life that I had completely looked past the modern generation. It reminded me so much of the West, this critique of the social order and the idea of a strict and ordered way of living. Usually, I am not the biggest fan of modern art, but this Balinese style intrigued me; I had not yet met a Balinese individual who actively and publicly refuted the traditions of Bali. Through this artwork, I could see the individuals attempting to create a new identity for themselves separate from the generations before them, rather than completely rejecting the traditional ideals… Without realizing it, I had captured Bali in a single era of its time – traditional, religious, static… unconsciously, I was viewing Bali from a tourist viewpoint, believing that all Balinese were fully engaged in and enthralled
by temple ceremonies, dances, and performances. In visiting the [local museum in Bali], I was hit by this wave of creative individualism that screamed a new and different generation.

Josie, Bali 2014 Week 4 ARMA

In comparing student pre-trip class narratives (Pre-trip Rubin) to those completed following the end-of-trip visit (Week 4 ARMA), despite the end-of-trip visit being unguided, it appeared students were more comfortable writing about, describing, and analyzing artwork and the overall layout of the museum itself. This included descriptions of appreciating the artistic talent behind the pieces, analyzing the artwork for meaning and significance, and relating to the arts on a personal and emotional level. Students also described a de-exotification of their view of the arts over time. Six out of eight students who explicitly compared their experiences during the pre-trip class to their experiences at the local museum in Bali discussed the ways in which, looking back at their engagement with the arts during the pre-trip class, they realized they were viewing art from a “distanced” or “exotified” view that appreciated the arts only for their “foreignness” or “unfamiliarity” instead of their cultural or artistic appreciation.

Art Engagement Enacted in Student Lives a Year Later

Sustained engagement with the arts. Follow-up interviews suggest the Bali program had a positive impact on student relationships with the arts one-year post-program across both programs. With the exception of one student from the Bali 2013 program who described no change in her appreciation of, or engagement with the arts, students across both years described positive changes and often linked them to program activities. Program visits to the craft villages were especially salient—many students described these visits as contributing to their continued
appreciation of how much work goes into making pieces of art, whether it is a mask, a piece of jewelry, cup, or textile. Students who described themselves as having frequented museums or art events regularly prior to the Bali program were more likely to describe qualitative, not quantitative changes to their engagement with the arts. These students often described no change in how often they engaged with the arts over the post-program year, but did describe seeking out forms of art outside of their normal scope, such as spoken word, live music, or dance performances. Students with little to no experience with the arts prior to Bali were more likely to describe increased visits to museums and interest in exploring the arts.

However, there was one notable difference between the types of engagement with the arts described by Bali 2013 and 2014 cohorts—nearly half of the 2014 cohort, compared to none in 2013, described a change in their participation with the arts. To illustrate changes in participation, I provide a few examples. Corinna, who previously stated in her Week 3 Balinese Dance narrative that she had limited exposure to dance, joined the West Indian Club’s social dance team at her school the semester following the Bali trip, and continued to seek out opportunities to dance one-year post-program. She describes herself as falling in love with dance and cites the change as something that would not have happened if it were not for her experiences in Bali. Following the Bali trip, Cassidy became interested in the philosophy of aesthetics and actively studied the subject on a subsequent trip to Copenhagen. And Izabella credited her experiences in Bali for transforming how she prepares for theatrical performances; now, she considers the character’s lifestyle and culture, as well as what the character she is portraying might value or believe. While it is not possible to infer a causal relationship, it appears that in comparing Bali 2013 and 2014 cohorts, the museum-based intervention may not have impacted quantitative engagement with the arts overall, however, it may have impacted the
ways in which students engage with the arts, as well as how they describe their relationship and engagement with the arts, as described in the following subsection.

**Qualitative differences in narrating about arts, aesthetics, and culture.** Further analysis of follow-up interviews suggested that discussion of the arts and aesthetics in the Bali 2014 cohort were more prominent, and description and analysis of the link between the arts and culture, more sophisticated than students in the 2013 cohort, which also aligns with analysis of student written narratives. For example, in describing the environments where they lived and traveled during the program, overall, the Bali 2014 students mentioned the Balinese aesthetic environment, such as statues, offerings, textiles, and the importance of aesthetics in rituals for the maintenance of harmony between each other and the gods more often than the Bali 2013 cohort. I provide one illustrative example. Josie, a student in the 2014 cohort, mentioned the many statues scattered over Ubud at several different points during the interview. Noticing this pattern, I asked her to think about and share what drew her to these statues:

The [large] ones in the middle of the roundabouts were awesome but also the ones, the small ones outside of the temples, and they were everywhere and I just liked that… I don’t know, it was peaceful and they [the Balinese] would bring daily offerings there I think it was so cool to see these… I don’t know why I was so drawn to them… to see these things that looked like they had been built a while ago and kind of actively being used in everyday life… and it’s different here [NYC] because most everything is new and modernized all the time… I feel like they [the Balinese] actively try and use history and old things in a, like a, a way that is useful and beneficial to their everyday life; they use it for rituals. Like, it looks old but used and it’s useful in the present and I really like that.

Josie, Bali 2014 *Follow-up Interview*
Here, in actively unpacking why she was drawn to these statues, Josie not only noted that she was drawn to the awesome presence of these statues, but she also considered the ways in which the Balinese *use* statues as part of their everyday rituals and to connect to their histories. This demonstrated her ability to perceive and articulate the interaction between art for enjoyment and art that serves a purpose aside from simply viewing it.

While Bali 2014 students did not make explicit connections in follow-up interviews regarding how the museum-based pedagogical intervention impacted their experiences in Bali and beyond, in their discussion of arts and aesthetics, Bali 2014 students engaged more deeply in analysis and description of the arts, and their relationship with it compared to the Bali 2013 cohort. Thus, it is possible that the additional museum experiences helped to provide Bali 2014 students with language and widened perspective to notice, analyze, and describe their relationship with the arts in an enriched way. Take for example, the ways in which these two students described how their relationship with the arts had changed, while simultaneously comparing arts across cultures:

I never cared about that [the arts], but their [the Balinese] art is crazy and it’s everywhere and it depicts their religion. Their art is more scary, there is more demon arts. In Thailand it’s more gold and fancy, in Bali it’s mostly wood and I don’t like wood that much…. I notice it [art] more, definitely and I appreciate it.

*Amber, Bali 2013 Follow-up Interview*

Yeah, definitely in relation to the dance and performances and stuff because, I…I’m into art, obviously, but I realize physical [art] and paintings don’t impact me as much as music dance and stuff like that…and the trance [performance], it was a visceral reaction
more than any other thing and it’s right there, and it’s bright. The chanting, the Kecak
dance, it was incredible and I now have such an appreciation for different expressions of
religion, spirituality, and culture. Dance is one of my favorite things to watch…there’s so
much, like yeah, it’s similar but the message is different.

Josie, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

While both students described an increased appreciation of the arts, Josie from Bali 2014 used
markedly more sophisticated and developed language to describe realizations about, and changes
in her relationship with the arts. She goes beyond simply saying she appreciates art; instead she
describes *how* she appreciates it as different expressions of “religion, spirituality, and culture” as
well as *why* she prefers dance and performance to visual arts—because of the “visceral reaction”
she has to dance and performance. Lastly, Josie noted that despite dances being similar in form
across her experience of it in New York City and Bali, “the message is different,” which
demonstrated deeper engagement in thinking about the meaning of performances. The student
from Bali 2013, Amber, also related art to religion and compared her experience of art in two
different cultures—Bali and Thailand, but does so in a much less developed manner, as she
sticks to surface descriptors such as “crazy,” “scary,” and “fancy,” and simply states that she
“does not like wood that much” instead of describing why she preferred gold.

To further illustrate the qualitative differences in the way students across programs
described their connection with the arts, I provide an example of how two students described
their appreciation of the work that goes into making art:

Knowing what goes into making something, yeah I never realized what goes into
making the details into a ring. Knowing how much time and effort goes into making
one piece of jewelry, changed my view on arts and crafts and music. Seeing the hard work that goes into it, even just making clothes and how they stitch everything, yeah.

Luce, Bali 2013 Follow-up Interview

Everything is art. Now I consider things art that I may not have before—batik, buildings, parks, statues, even the patterns of clothing—it makes you think [...] Because here you see different things, and things, like, there everything is art, the temples are art, they are pieces of art. You can consider things that you weren’t thinking were art as art; you can think about the work that went into them and whenever I see a cup…I still have the glass they gave us…it makes you think about the work that goes into art. And how we saw the Batik and how they paint it, so in that sense I have a different appreciation. Buildings are in a sense freakin’ art, when you walk to parks and see monuments or statues, when I see people with clothing with patterns and stuff…depending if it comes from a person or machine, yeah, art.

Nellie, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Despite both of the students discussing an enriched appreciation of the arts that stemmed from their time in Bali which uncovered the time, effort, and work that goes into making art, Nellie took the impact one step further in describing how now, she sees “everything” as art. Nellie’s experience of the temples and craft villages in Bali helped to widen her perspective of what is “art” back home in New York City. The two above examples are a sample of multiple student narratives that demonstrate despite both Bali 2013 and 2014 students’ sharing experiences of enriched connection with the arts, how they made meaning of their experiences differed, with the Bali 2014 students engaging more deeply and with more detail in the sharing of their stories. Again, though the Bali 2014 students did not explicitly acknowledge the museum-based
intervention as playing a role in their experiences during interviews, it is possible that the intervention impacted their experiences without them realizing it.

**Exotified Notions of Balinese Art and Culture (de)Constructed in Student Narrating**

Consistently across narratives in both cohorts, with the exception of one student in 2014, students cited being aware of the lens through which they see the world, and actively learning and respecting the culture, as ways to enjoy the newness of Bali without objectifying or exotifying the newness of their experiences. When narrating about how to be respectful within novel cultural environments, students used examples such as dressing appropriately, refraining from making photos of people praying at inappropriate times and places like ritual ceremonies, and not stepping on offerings. When narrating about educating oneself about cultural beliefs and practices as prompted to do so in *Week 1 Cultural Comparison*, students used examples such as learning about the history and meaning behind practices, asking questions in class, and talking to individuals without assuming their answer is representative of all Balinese. I provide a few illustrative excerpts from student narratives in both cohorts:

Like I said earlier though, due to the media and other types of attention [*Eat, Pray, Love*] that’s on Bali, it neglects to fully educate people on their belief system or culture. The best way to stop people from objectifying this beautiful place is to get the right information out there that there’s so much more than the ‘unique religion’ and ‘exotic and culturally rich’ concepts. There’s an entire belief system that’s just overlooked. So when people come here unaware of that, ultimately the Balinese pay because they have to endure a population of ignorant tourists looking for a good time.

*Corinna, Bali 2014 Week 1 Cultural Comparison*
The Indonesian island of Bali is more than an exotic island, as it consists of different cultures and traditions. The Balinese culture and tradition should be appreciated as whole by knowing the principles and background.

Amber, Bali 2014 *Week 1 Cultural Comparison*

I feel like I can enjoy the newness to all these wonderful traditions without exoticising them by first educating myself. Knowing what their traditions are really about and understanding why they do things enables me to interact with the people on a deeper level.

Ophelia, Bali 2014 *Week 1 Cultural Comparison*

It is difficult to enjoy a new culture when you aren’t aware of already formulated prior ideas or assumptions. To avoid doing this I try to get to know everyone individually. I do not assume that a person operates or behave a certain way because of their culture. When I see someone behaving in a way that is different from my mode of operation, I try to formulate questions that are not offensive that will help me understand why they do what they do.

Rosalee, Bali 2013 *Week 1 Cultural Comparison*

Despite being able to present ways to avoid objectifying or exotifying the Balinese culture, further analysis of student responses revealed some important differences in patterns of their narrating about the application of these practices. First, Bali 2014 students spent on average 46% of their narrative responses discussing exotification compared to an average of 27% of Bali 2013 students. Secondly, Bali 2014 students were more likely to share personal stories about their own experiences and efforts to be aware of exotified views. Taken within the context that
they also wrote longer narratives, this makes sense, as sharing personal stories often requires more explanation and more words.

Five of eight students in Bali 2014 used personal stories to discuss the challenges and effort it takes to be aware of one’s lens and not exotify newness of experiences, compared to just three students in Bali 2013 who discussed applications on a personal level. For example, Eliza in Bali 2014 shared a story about her internal struggle in knowing when it was okay to use her religious experiences to understand Balinese religious practices; her main concern was how she can do this while still appreciating that what may look similar on the outside may have more nuanced meaning under the surface. Josie, another Bali 2014 student acknowledged her own struggle with encountering new cultures:

> It can be distressful when approaching a culture you know nothing about and exoticising what you see because you have never seen anything like it before…As someone who has to and gets to live in Bali for a month, I worry about exoticising the culture when I tell people how amazing the island is…I believe that there is a fine line to be found between respecting and celebrating a culture, and fetishizing it. We travel the world to see new and exotic things…It’s natural to want to explore and immerse yourself in a culture so different from your own. However, when you start picking the best parts of a culture and putting them on a pedestal, and sexualizing a culture to an extreme, then an issue starts to arise.

Josie, Bali 2014 Follow-up Interview

Bali 2013 student narrating about exotification was different from Bali 2014 not only in length and the number of students who shared personal stories, but also in the types of stories that were
shared. While the majority of students in Bali 2013 discussed what could be done to avoid exotification without examples, when examples were provided, their personal experiences were typically celebratory—all three students described their own successes of not objectifying the Balinese culture by comparing their behavior to other more typical tourists. Further, one of the personal stories shared was saturated with exotified undertones of Balinese culture by assuming [as she refers to it] the presence of a “REAL Bali.” In narrating about her experience of waiters and waitresses being open to talking with her at restaurants if she was respectful of their culture during the start of the Bali 2013 program, Lily made sense of this by drawing on a law in Ubud established to keep the town from being overrun by tourism, as has happened elsewhere in Bali:

In Ubud, it seems that the Balinese are determined to make sure the tourist do not change the rituals and traditions of their culture like the tourist did in Ketut. To guarantee the fallen culture of Ketut won’t happen here, the government made a law that shops and restaurants cannot be open any later than midnight…I love that we have decided to stay in Ubud where we get to experience the REAL Bali [original emphasis] not the tourist attraction but the culture, the kindness in the people, the genuine joy to help others.

Lily, Bali 2013 Week 1 Cultural Comparison

While her intentions in this narrative are good, her exclamation that Ubud is representative of the “REAL” Bali, which assumes that one real, true Bali even exists and is saturated with exotified undertones. Further, she does not acknowledge the ways in which this law may be supported or opposed by some Balinese in Ubud, nor does she consider how the law or her ideas of a “real” Bali may put pressure on Ubud’s residents to act like “real” Balinese. Another student seemed to celebrate exotification and provided no discussion of the dangers of exotification, nor of practices that can be assistive in not objectifying the culture:
According to Morgan (2006/2007), among the things that attract tourism and makes Bali such a desired destination is the richness of the culture. I loved learning from the Balinese about their culture and traditions, to the point of participating in a temple ceremony. I liked experiencing wearing traditional Balinese clothing like a Sarong. I enjoyed eating their food and learning their language. Being able to compare the Balinese culture and tradition to that of my Dominican and American side was one of the best things.

Nellie, Bali 2014 Week 1 Cultural Comparison

Considering Nellie is the only student across both cohorts who did not attempt to deconstruct exotified notions of Bali in her Week 1 narrative, it makes one wonder if she actually read past the first page of Morgan’s (2007) article, or paid attention during class discussions in the first week. That being said, the remaining students in the Bali 2013 and Bali 2014 cohort were not completely immune to using some language that was indicative of overextending their personal experiences of Balinese culture to all Balinese (e.g. writing “the Balinese” rather than “the Balinese tend to” or “some Balinese”). However, since the prompt specifically asked students to narrate from their own experiences as part of their coursework, and keeping in mind they were writing for their faculty leader as an audience, it is more difficult to ascertain if this language was reflective of exotified of objectified views of Balinese culture.

Excluding the end-of-trip prompt (Week 4 ARMA) that only the Bali 2014 cohort completed, in the remaining weekly program narratives and one-year follow-up interviews, discussion of the exotification of Balinese culture and arts was not an explicit reverberating theme. For instance, when asked if any of their expectations about Bali or Balinese culture were confirmed or debunked during their time there during follow-up interviews, the most common thing debunked across both cohorts was that they expected to be studying abroad on or near a
beach—an expectation that nearly half the students attributed to the movie and book *Eat, Pray, Love*. Other signposts that suggested students had at least somewhat retained a deconstruction of exotified views of Balinese society were more implicit in their discussion of Balinese everyday life, the environment, and their religious practices. For example, when asked to share thoughts on how people are different from them, and how people that are the same, most students across both cohorts talked about different ways that people within and across cultures express themselves while also explaining that different does not mean better or worse—that fundamentally, we are all human (this was detailed in *Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali*).

Students in the Bali 2014 cohort also spoke about how diverse their study abroad group was, and how that diversity also contributed to their learning and understanding about within- and across-cultural differences (this was also detailed in *Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali*). To conclude, I share one quotation from a student in Bali 2014 that nicely sums up patterns scattered implicitly throughout Bali 2014 follow-up interviews regarding how views shifted following the program:

…”my views of the present and the future, my views of other people and other cultures and my ability to sort of be empathetic and to see things through other people’s eyes have improved immensely…it is the ability to sort of appreciate the beauty of things and appreciate that my physical views may be completely different from what I saw there. And yeah, it’s a different culture and it’s beautiful but also understanding that it’s someone’s culture where people live. It’s not this exotic place of mystical things, you know, it’s where people live. And to sort be able to see that and the interaction of other people’s cultures.

Josie, Bali 2014 *Follow-up Interview*
Consistent with Jakubiak & Mellom’s (2015) push for re-framing study abroad as “learning about someone else’s local” (p. 117) through place-based pedagogies, overall findings suggest that this place-responsive intervention acted as a cultural tool that assisted the Bali 2014 cohort in de-exotifying Balinese arts and aesthetics: “It’s not this exotic place of mystical things, you know, it’s where people live.” I elaborate on the ways in which the place-responsive intervention acted as a cultural tool in the discussion section that follows.

**Discussion**

The central question addressed in this chapter was *how might the inclusion of a place-responsive pedagogical intervention shape student experiences in/of an exotified cultural environment*? I explored this question through a longitudinal comparative case analysis of two cohorts of a study abroad program to Bali, one of which received a museum-based pedagogical intervention, while the other did not. In this discussion section, I interpret the findings presented in the results section collectively and reflect on the ways in which the museum-based intervention functioned as a cultural tool that mediated student experiences of the Balinese cultural environment, as well as a year later. Finally, I conclude by discussing pedagogical implications for study abroad and experiential education.

**Museum-based Intervention as a Cultural Tool**

This paper described one study abroad program’s effort to help students deconstruct exotified notions of Balinese art and culture by providing them with tools to engage with the alternative ways of knowing and doing art present in Bali. Cultural tools organize human activity and how individuals relate to their environment through mediation (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Overall, findings suggest that the museum-based pedagogical intervention functioned
effectively as a cultural tool that mediated not only how students related to the Balinese cultural environment, but also how they related to the arts one-year post-program. Below, I discuss the ways in which the museum-based intervention mediated student engagement and relationships with the arts during the Bali program and one-year later.

**During the program.** Comparison of arts engagement enacted in student narrating within the three parallel weekly student narratives collected with the Bali 2013 and Bali 2014 cohorts indicate that that the pre-trip class at the Rubin Museum better prepared the 2014 cohort to understand and relate to the Balinese cultural environment through the arts. First, students in the Bali 2014 cohort were more likely to engage with the arts in their narrating, particularly when unprompted. In week one narratives (*Week 1 Cultural Comparison*) when commenting on their first impression of Balinese culture, compared to just three students in Bali 2013, nearly all students in the Bali 2014 cohort focused on the ways in which the arts are woven throughout Balinese daily life, culture, and religious practice. Instead, students in the Bali 2013 cohort focused on individualism and collectivism, and did not begin discussing the arts until prompted to do so in week 2. This demonstrates that the Bali 2014 cohort had an earlier and more nuanced understanding of the intersections between Balinese art, religion, and culture than the Bali 2013 cohort. This may be due in part, to the degree of relatability between the culture(s) of the 2014 cohort and the Balinese culture expressed in student narrating. However, more students in Bali 2014, including those without ties to multiple cultural contexts, were more likely to identify similarities or ways to relate to the Balinese culture in addition to cultural differences. These differences in shared meaning suggest early exposure to the Hindu arts during the pre-trip class may have contributed to their more nuanced understanding of Balinese culture. It appears given the opportunity to reflect upon their understanding their own relationship with the arts during the
pre-trip class, that Bali 2014 students were better prepared to understand the alternative ways of seeing and doing art present in Bali. Thus, I situate the pre-trip museum class as a cultural tool that helped to expand the meaning shared with a previously “othered” and “exotic” culture by engaging students with the arts before departure. Data also suggest this shared meaning helped to facilitate meaningful engagement and participation with the visual and performing arts for the Bali 2014 cohort, evidenced by the second main finding.

The second main finding reported was that the Bali 2014 cohort was overall more likely to go beyond descriptive narrating to engage in deeper and critical analysis of the intersections of art, Balinese culture, and daily life even when writing prompts were linked to the arts, as they were in weeks two and three. In their discussion of the ways in which tourism helps or hinders the craft industry in Bali, the 2014 cohort went beyond broad, overarching impacts linked to the economy and the types of crafts created, and discussed more nuanced impacts tourism has on artists and their livelihoods, particularly within the context of machine-production. Similarly, in narratives linked to Balinese dance performances (*Week 3 Balinese Dance*), seven of 10 students in the Bali 2014 compared to three of seven in 2013, engaged in critical analysis in some form, ranging from the commercialization of dance to the iconic exoticism that is often associated with Balinese dance. Together, these two main findings are an indicator that the pre-trip class mediated arts engagement enacted in Bali 2014 student narrating in the program.

I use Rogoff’s (2003) concept of “appropriate generalization” to make sense of the how students were able to find relatability between their experiences of art and culture during the pre-trip class to their experiences of the arts in Bali. Considering the similarity of patterns within the Bali 2014 cohort’s narrating about the arts in Bali, I posit that their fellow social peers, with whom they shared the experiences of the pre-trip class, supported their enhanced understanding
of the arts. Through these shared experiences with one another, I purport that the Bali 2014 cohort was able to together find relatability with the alternative ways of doing and seeing art present in the Balinese culture. The students did not progress through the Bali program alone; they were within a social group, which needs to be kept in mind—during and following their experiences touring the craft villages and experiencing Balinese dance performances, students discussed and analyzed their experiences together, and with Balinese locals, which may account for some of the similarities in their narrating about the arts.

Although I found both Bali 2013 and 2014 cohorts narrating demonstrated they were engaged in efforts to deconstruct exotified representations of Balinese arts and culture, I did find some important differences in their narrating. Students in Bali 2014 began deconstructing exotified views of Balinese arts earlier than students in the 2013 cohort. Further, the students in Bali 2014 dedicated on average one-fifth more space in their narratives to discussing exotification. Bali 2014 students were also more likely to share personal stories and examples of their encounters and subsequent deconstruction of the exotic. The Bali 2014 cohort’s use of personal stories suggests that their understanding of their own cultural heritage may have been mediated by their previous experiences during the pre-trip class. Thus, the museum-based intervention appears to also have had at least some impact on the Bali 2014 cohorts’ deconstruction of exotified notions of Balinese arts and culture.

**One-year post-program.** Comparison of Bali 2013 and Bali 2014 follow-up interviews further support the assertion that the museum-based intervention functioning as a cultural tool that positively influenced the Bali 2014 cohort’s understanding of the role of arts and aesthetics in Balinese daily life. Findings demonstrated qualitative differences in student narrating about arts, aesthetics, and Balinese culture between both cohorts even a year post-program, aligning
with what was found in the analysis of student narratives completed during the program. The Bali 2014 cohort’s discussion of the arts and aesthetics were more prominent throughout the interview, and their description and analysis of the link between arts and culture, more sophisticated than students in the 2013 cohort, suggesting the museum-based intervention had a long-term impact on how students relate to the arts.

Follow-up interviews also revealed the program enhanced both cohorts’ appreciation of and engagement with the arts (e.g. museum visits; attending concerts). However, nearly half of the 2014 cohort, compared to none in 2013, described meaningful sustained engagement beyond appreciation via participation with the arts a year later (e.g. joining a dance team; focusing graduate studies on philosophy of aesthetics; applying Balinese cultural concepts to theatre performances). It appears that although the museum-based intervention may not have impacted quantitative engagement with the arts overall, it seems to have impacted the ways in which students engage with the arts, as well as how they describe their relationship and engagement with the arts. Further, Bali 2014 students’ continued engagement with the arts may have played a role in the sustained qualitative differences found in student narrating about the arts during the post-program interview. As a cultural tool, the museum-based intervention appeared to facilitate particular ways of thinking and relating to arts, and provide students with frameworks and personal experiences to better relate to arts across cultural contexts and communities.

**Pedagogic Implications and Conclusions**

The discussion thus far has demonstrated the ways in which the museum-based intervention functioned as a cultural tool that mediated student experiences of arts and culture in the Bali study abroad program and one-year later. Overall, my empirical findings suggest that study abroad programs would benefit from the integration of more place-based pedagogies into
their curricula—specifically pre-trip programs that aim to provide students with tools that allow them to more meaningfully engage and participate in the ongoing production of knowledge and culture within their host countries (expanded upon in Chapter 6: Power of Place).

Further, this study speaks to the power of engaging students in activities that facilitate shared meaning as well as discourses that deconstruct the static and exotified cultural “other,” with a particular focus on multicultural education through the arts. This study joins other work (e.g. de Silva & Villa-Boas, 2006) in suggesting that educators use integrative arts approaches in multicultural education as they have the potential to alter student perceptions of cultural differences and encourage the development of student respect for diversity across cultures. What this research adds is empirical evidence that demonstrates engaging students in the arts pedagogically may have long-term impacts on their engagement with the arts. This is particularly significant in light of research that suggests engagement with the arts provides a gateway to lifelong resources, including sense of meaning and purpose in life (Martin et al., 2013) and positive impacts of mental health and life satisfaction (Cuypers, Krokstad, Holmen, Knudtsen, Bygren, & Holmen, 2011).

Summary

This chapter demonstrated the power of a place-based pedagogical intervention in deconstructing exotified notions of Balinese art and society. It speaks to the power of art in opening students up to alternative ways of knowing, and alternative ways that the world is represented. Place-based pedagogies that encourage learning about place through local art may be helpful in teaching interdisciplinary classes that engage with diversity and multiculturalism, and foster relationality through a common medium. The Bali study abroad program was an ideal setting for an applied exploration of place-based pedagogies and the production of experiential
learning space in study abroad that narrow ideas of difference and foster relationality as Bali has been long associated with iconic exoticism (Morgan, 2007).

In this chapter, I have described the development and assessment of a place-responsive museum-based pedagogical intervention that aimed to help Bali 2014 study abroad students engage with the alternative ways of knowing and doing art present within Balinese society. Through purposive sampling, I conducted a longitudinal comparative case analysis of Bali 2014 student narratives with parallel data collected in the Bali 2013 study abroad program during my pilot study to explore how the inclusion of a museum-based pedagogical intervention shaped Bali 2014 cohort experiences of Balinese society and engagement with the arts a year later. I have suggested that the museum-based pedagogical intervention functioned as a cultural tool that mediated the Bali 2014 cohort’s experiences of the Balinese cultural environment, as well as their sustained engagement with the arts a year later. I found that arts engagement enacted in Bali 2014 student narrating was more prevalent, more sophisticated, and more critical in the analysis of the intersections of Balinese art, religion, and culture across written narratives and one-year follow-up interviews.

In addition to heightened appreciation of the arts described by both cohorts, the Bali 2014 cohort was more likely to describe changes to their participation with the arts a year later. Students also came to “see” art differently—many of them came to see it as part of their everyday in the forms of fashion, architecture, and urban design. This aligns well with Dewey’s (1932) call in *Art as Experience* for a redefining of art as more of an everyday concept instead of a term relegated to the fine arts of museums. That being said, this study did look to the Rubin Museum as a vehicle to help students relate to, and engage with, alternative ways of doing and seeing art in Bali. Thus, it is not that we should do away with looking to museum art as a
pedagogical tool, but instead change the way in which engage students with this form of art. For example, let us not put fine art and museum art on a pedestal, but instead provide students with the tools to understand that this is but one form of art that can act as a gateway to noticing the art that surrounds as well as the alternative ways of knowing and being in the world. Considered together with the previous two chapters (Chapter 3: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Chapter 4: Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali), this chapter further strengthens our understanding of the pedagogical power of place, which is taken up in the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER VI

THE POWER OF PLACE

Places are never finished but always becoming.
Kirsten Simonsen, 2008

This project was motivated by my dissatisfaction with current research in study abroad and experiential learning regarding the role of place in shaping learning experiences. As a firm believer in Dewey’s (1938) assertion that experience is not inherently educational, I sought to explore the relationship between engagement with place and knowledge production. Uniting Dewey’s democratic philosophy of experiential education with Lefebvre’s (1991/19174) theory on the (social) production of space, the overarching question of this research project asked: *What is the role of place in the production of experiential learning space in study abroad?* This question is important, as literature in study abroad has primarily concerned itself with individual learning outcomes, such as intellectual development, cultural adaptability, and global citizenship (e.g. McKeown, 2009; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014). Rather than focusing on the individual as the unit of analysis, I was interested in wider phenomena of experiential learning, including understanding how knowledge was produced in study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali, with a focus on place. I have introduced the concept of experiential learning space, and argued that it is socially produced through engagement with place, and therefore enveloped in a perpetual process of becoming (Simonsen, 2008).
To ground my inquiry into place and its pedagogical potential, I have framed this dissertation as a response to problematic trends in study abroad that (re)produce hierarchies of power and colonialism, perpetuate views of a cultural “other,” and privilege tourism over education (Barbour, 2012; Doerr, 2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Zemach-Bersin, 2009). Thus, I was interested not only in how knowledge was produced in study abroad via engagement with place, but also in how to produce experiential learning space that can foster awareness of the self in relation to “other”, cultivate relationality, deconstruct the “exotic,” and engage students with alternative ways of knowing, doing, and being.

In this concluding chapter, I braid together major findings from the three preceding chapters and highlight what they suggest about the potential power place-based pedagogies have to foster relationality within the context of a novel cultural environment. To begin, I present theoretical and pedagogical contributions of this work, including a visual framework of Lefebvre’s spatial triad that includes the elements of engagement with place relevant to the production of experiential learning space. Next, I review overarching findings surrounding student experiences in/of place and what shaped them, including study abroad program intentions and reflections on the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture. In this section I discuss what worked, and what could be improved, with a focus on the narrative activities that were central to this research. Reflecting further on how the findings of this study can inform program development and practice, the section that follows envisions a pedagogy of place for study abroad that is informed by Lefebvrian and Deweyan perspectives. I offer five epistemological commitments and several pedagogical strategies for the development of future programs. Finally, I conclude by asking the reader to imagine what embracing the revolutionary
ideas of John Dewey and Henri Lefebvre could mean for the future of study abroad and experiential education for social change.

**The Production of Experiential Learning Space**

**As a Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical contribution of this work resides in deepening our understanding of how knowledge is produced in study abroad programs through engagement with place. Situated within a socio-spatial perspective (Lefebvre, 1991/1974), I have conceptualized *experiential learning space*, not as residing within the head of the individual (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), but as socially produced and socially producing, with engagement with place as the point of departure in production. Such a perspective embraces meaning-making, and the production of knowledge, as participatory, collaborative, and relational processes mediated through bodily engagement with surrounding environments. Findings from the Morocco and Bali programs not only suggest engagement with place was central to the production of experiential learning space, but also help us to operationalize “engagement with place” for place-based theory, research, and practice.

Based on the interpretation of Lefebvre’s spatial triad I presented in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco), I have developed an understanding of engagement with place as consisting of three interrelated elements: how place is thought about, or engaged with abstractly (conceived space); how place is seen, or engaged with materially (perceived space); and how place is felt, or engaged with experientially (lived space). In order to understand the production of experiential learning space in study abroad, we must consider these three interrelated elements that produce it. I present this theoretical framework in Figure 6.1.
Figure 6.1. Elements of engagement with place relevant to the production of experiential learning space (adapted from Lefebvre’s spatial triad 1991/1974)

Elements of program design and pedagogy combined with the cultural environment and participants’ embodied experiences in/of place produce experiential learning space. The double arrows in Figure 6.1, represent the interconnectedness of the three elements that together in the ongoing process of knowledge production. Thus, the production of experiential learning space in study abroad depends, in part, on how place is engaged with abstractly, including how the program is designed, as well as the ways in which the host country and places within it have been represented to participants. Program design and pedagogy reside in this space, as faculty program leaders and their respective institutions have power over how the host country is represented to students via advertising of programs, syllabi, activities, discussions, and readings—ultimately impacting engagement with a novel cultural environment. These elements are parallel to Lefebvre’s conceived space, as this is the space of professionals, planners, and
those in power. As demonstrated across the programs within this study, student embodied experiences in/of place and how place was seen were both influenced by pre-conceived notions of Morocco and Bali, as well as the program design; had the program design and pedagogical strategies been altered, for instance if the program did not include narrative activities, the findings of this study might have been different. Narrative activities, along with the pre-trip pedagogical intervention described in Chapter 5 (Place-based Intervention – Bali) served as cultural tools that helped students engage with what was felt, seen, and thought within a novel cultural environment.

The cultural environment and rhythms of daily life, or the ways place is engaged with materially, must also be considered in order to understand the production of experiential learning space. The daily routines, cultural practices, and built environment are considered part of Lefebvre’s perceived space, as it includes spatial practices, patterns, and routines that are rooted in physicality. What is seen, for example practices, routines, and locations, influence and are influenced by program design and representations of place, as well as embodied experiences in/of place. For example, this was supported by student encounters with artistic expression in Bali and architecture in Morocco, as both were influenced by program design and pedagogy, as well as students’ representations and embodied experiences. In this study, the cultural environments of Morocco and Bali, and the ways in which students engaged materially and abstractly with them, were different—in Morocco students came to appreciate cultural diversity, while in Bali students came to appreciate cultural complexity. While the type of knowledge produced in each program differed, representations of Morocco and Bali, as well as how the cultural environment was experienced experientially and materially, shifted over time.
Finally, the embodied experiences of participants, or how place was engaged with experientially, mediated the production of experiential learning space in both programs. It is through our sensing bodies that we experience place, and through place we can come to understand our bodies, thus embodied experience is positioned at the top of this theoretical framework as it aligns with Lefebvre’s lived space—our sensing bodies mediates how place is engaged with abstractly and materially. We must acknowledge that how a place is experienced by participants is influenced by their embodiments as members of a specific race, gender, class, as well as their life histories and level of privilege—these embodiments shape participants’ interactions with each other, locals, and participation in cultural communities. The ability to travel is also dependent on privilege—physical, mental, emotional, and financial. Queer or transgender persons, persons with physical or mental disabilities or emotional issues, and/or persons of color may experience places quite differently depending on the level of comfort afforded by the program and cultural environment.

Although this study focused on the wider phenomena of experiential learning by using narrative activities as the unit of analysis, rather than individual experience, the production of experiential learning space cannot be disentangled from participants’ embodiments, for instance as members of the large, public, urban, and diverse City University of New York. Further, all but one participant identified as female, and the majority of students identified as having bi-cultural orientations and/or had some experience traveling abroad. Had the participants in this study been all male, from a small, private, rural institution with little experience with other cultures, the findings of this study may have differed as what was felt, and how place was engaged with experientially as individuals and as a group, may have differed. In future analysis, building upon the foundation from the current study, I plan to return to my data with an eye toward individual
changes in participants’ experiences in/of place over time, as it has the potential to enrich our understanding of how the sensing body, with all its embodiments, mediates the production of experiential learning space.

These three elements of engagement with place—how place is engaged with abstractly, materially, and experientially—make it difficult to conceptualize experiential learning in study abroad as an individualized, cognitive, phenomenon. Rather, experiential learning space is produced through participatory, collaborative, and relational processes enacted by embodied experiences in/of place, combined with the cultural environment and pedagogical strategies. Learners are not decontextualized, individual passive consumers of knowledge, but play an active role in the ongoing process of making sense of themselves, the world, and the places within it. This theoretical framework can be applied beyond study abroad programs into local and outdoor experiential education programs, as each of the elements of engagement with place are relevant regardless of location. As I argued previously, “abroad-ness” is a social construction; culture exists everywhere, whether it is in the wilderness or in one’s own backyard.

In sum, the production of experiential learning space is dependent on the embodied experiences of participants, program design, pedagogy, and representations, as well as the cultural environment and rhythms of daily life—in other words, how place is engaged with experientially, abstractly, and materially—all of which should be considered in program development, research, and practice.

**As a Pedagogical Tool**

This theoretical framework (see Figure 6.1) also offers a useful tool for pedagogical practice. Its relational structure affords educators the opportunity to focus on how learning spaces are socially produced via engagement with place, rather than on individualized
phenomena such as learning cycles. It helps to operationalize engagement with place as consisting of three interrelated elements: how place is engaged with abstractly (conceived), materially (perceived), and experientially (lived). As introduced in Chapter 3 (*Experiences in/of Place – Morocco*), and further supported by Chapter 4 (*Experiences in/of Place – Morocco and Bali*) and Chapter 5 (*Place-based Intervention – Bali*), engagement with place was enhanced through the integration of pedagogical approaches that introduced some trouble (Bruner, 1990), or conflict, into student experiences of place by way of conceived, perceived, or lived space. Since each of these elements are interrelated, introducing some trouble into one entry point impacts all three. For example, using the conceived as an entry point, I had students write about their expectations of Morocco and Bali pre-departure. These representations, or how place was thought about abstractly, did not always match what students experienced during the trip (lived), which influenced how they saw place (perceived). This trouble necessitated renegotiation of representations (conceived), and I have argued such trouble in the collisions of how place was felt, seen, and thought about acted as generative moments that contributed to the production of experiential learning space.

Putting this framework into practice, how place is thought about (conceived), seen (perceived), and felt (lived), can serve as pedagogical entry points for educators to engage students in experiences that trouble their representations (conceived), trouble how they see place (perceived), or trouble how they experience or will experience place (lived). I provide a few examples. Educators could begin by unpacking pre-conceived notions of the host country before students arrive, which would likely impact how the country is seen and experienced upon arrival. In this study, I engaged students in this work through writing, however, the unpacking of representations could have been enhanced through group discussion during pre-trip classes. I
also suggest that this type of work remain ongoing throughout the program—instituting additional and continuous group discussions surrounding the unpacking of trouble in experiences of how place is seen, felt, or thought about can help to decenter the Western perspective, and uncover power relations. Further, considering that representations of Morocco and Bali, or Moroccan-ness and Bali-ness, reverberated throughout this study, educators can look to the lived space as pedagogical entry point to engage students in unpacking their own culture and how it may be represented, for example American-ness, before departure and throughout study abroad programs. Engaging students in thinking about their own cultural identity may help to reverse the colonial gaze that is so often present in study abroad programs. Encouraging students to unpack multiple layers of their identity, as well as their embodiments as members of a specific race, gender, class, may assist them in understanding their own embodied experiences in/of place, how these are socially produced, and how they may shift according to context.

Finally, as introduced in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco) using the perceived as an entry point, educators may have students approach or encounter place from different “frames” as Preston and Griffiths (2004) did, in order to trouble the ways in which they typically view place. Engaging students with the historicity of place can facilitate meaning-making, and be used as a way to situate inquiry and reflect on historical relations within and between countries. Another frame through which educators can engage students with place materially is the aesthetic. Learning about places through local ways of knowing and doing art can also help to decenter the Western perspective by troubling widely accepted notions of beauty and the function of art. I suggest that educators balance the pedagogical strategies drawn upon to trouble how place is engaged with place abstractly (conceived), experientially (lived), and materially (perceived) in order to deepen the learning experience as well as reach learners who
undoubtedly have different ways of knowing the world. Regardless if educators deliberately craft experiences or activities that influence trouble into one of these domains, some mismatches between perceived, conceived, lived are bound to happen if learning is to occur—thus, this framework may also be useful for educators to understand, respond, and unpack such conflicts in study abroad.

**Experiences in/of Place in Morocco and Bali**

Throughout this dissertation I have intentionally used “in/of” to trouble the implied separation between humans and place associated with the preposition *in*—and encourage the thinking that we are *of* place, that we shape and are shaped by place. Place is situated between the spaces of grounded materiality and discursive representation (Somerville et al. 2011), and as demonstrated in the previous section, engagement with place is fundamental to the production of experiential learning space. Together, findings suggest student experiences in/of place, were shaped and shaped by the production of experiential learning space, mediated through:

(a) engagement with local rhythms, meanings, and histories;

(b) social interaction with locals, each other, and participation in cultural communities;

(c) and cultural tools that engaged students in alternative ways of knowing and being in the world before and during the trip, including intentional narrative activities and a pre-trip pedagogical intervention.

In this section, I review these overarching findings surrounding student experiences in/of place and what shaped them, including study abroad program intentions and reflections on the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture. I focus on how this study encouraged the acknowledgment and unpacking of representations of Morocco and Bali, and fostered
relationality, while at the same time guided students in the unpacking of their own cultural baggage.

**Study Abroad Program Intentions**

Student experiences in/of place were shaped by the intentions and structure of the Morocco and Bali study abroad programs, which simultaneously shaped the production of experiential learning space. Both study abroad programs intended to resist representations and dominant discourses of Morocco and Bali through learning about a place in a place. Transcending categorical hierarchies of cultural difference requires encouraging students to appreciate and embrace difference while at the same time finding some common ground or relationality within their experience in/of place while studying abroad. To understand how to foster relationality and narrow ideas of difference, I analyzed place-based pedagogies and intentional narrative activities to find out and if and how they mediated the generation of stories about place that reverse the colonial gaze, the promotion of discourses that deconstruct the notion of a cultural “other,” and engagement of students in local ways of knowing and being in the world. Findings suggest this method resulted in students comparing their experiences in/of place to familiar places within and outside the host country, demonstrating the pedagogical power of place to not only foster learning about novel cultural environments, but also the students’ own cultures.

I engaged with calls for study abroad programs to reframe themselves not as an abstract global venture, but as “learning about someone else’s local” (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117). Places existed in the minds of students before embarking on their study abroad journey, and I suggest it is the responsibility of program educators to help students acknowledge these representations in order to generate experiential learning space that allows for renegotiation of
these representations through lived experiences. Whether pre-conceived notions representations were of an oppressive religion or exotic culture, these homogenous representations of place shaped student experiences in/of place, and were renegotiated by engaging students with place experientially, materially, and abstractly while abroad.

Though the Morocco and Bali programs had different program foci and learning goals, embedded intentions of both programs were aimed at helping students critically assess and deconstruct representations, and find differences and similarities within and between host and home countries. Analysis of student narratives during the program and one year later revealed that students renegotiated their homogenous views of Morocco and Bali, resulting students understanding Morocco as culturally diverse, and Bali as culturally complex, while at the same time appreciating difference and embracing relationality. Pedagogies that engaged students with place paired with narrative activities were key in the production of experiential learning space on both study abroad programs. These findings are critical as they demonstrate that study abroad program educators do not need to sacrifice their program’s learning goals in order to foster relationality and narrow ideas of difference; teaching at the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture can enhance existing program curricula and promote the production of experiential learning space in study abroad that engages students in “learning about someone else’s local” (Jakubiak & Mellom, 2015, p. 117).

**Reflections on the Intersection of Place, Pedagogy, and Culture**

Based on Lefebvre (1991/1974), I have described experiential learning space not as residing in the head of the individual, but as situated within sociocultural (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1962) and socio-spatial perspectives. This perspective informed my exploration of the ways in which student experiences in/of place were socially produced and socially producing
through engagement with place in Morocco and Bali. Through analysis of student narrative activities, I have uncovered the centrality of three interrelated elements of engagement with place—how place is felt, seen, and thought about—to the production of experiential learning space. Engagement with place was the springboard that launched generative moments in the production of spaces that allowed for renegotiation of representations, deconstruction of the exotic, and enhanced relationality between self and other. In other words, teaching at the intersection of place, pedagogy, and culture also played a role in the production of experiential learning space.

Place: “it’s not this exotic place of mystical things…it’s where people live.”

Engagement with place was critical to the production of experiential learning space in the study abroad programs to Morocco and Bali. Rather than conceptualizing place as space imbued with meaning (Tuan, 1977)—which can promote colonial hierarchies—place was conceptualized as landscapes full of sociocultural and historical meanings with which students could engage. Places were not seen as empty spaces to be colonized, but as the launch pad for the production of experiential learning space. The coding system I developed out of my socio-spatial analysis of the Morocco study abroad program allowed me to systematically research student engagement and experiences in/of place in Morocco and Bali. I plan to continue to refine and strengthen this coding system through repeated use with study abroad programs in the coming years, as it has shed light on the ways in which student representations of place, relationality, and engagement with place shift over time and contribute to the production of experiential learning space.

Engaging students with the local rhythms of daily life (i.e. the ways of knowing, doing, and being in the world) in each host country allowed them to deconstruct exotified notions of a cultural “other” and instead realize that these cultural practices, just like cultural practices in
their home countries, are meaningful, not mystical. Intentional engagement afforded students opportunities to renegotiate pre-conceived notions, as well as notions gathered across different places within the host country. Not only is place “where people live,” but it also shapes and is shaped by how people live. Meaningful engagement with place does not necessarily just happen in study abroad—instead, it needs to be fostered through intentional pedagogies that include narrative activities and pedagogies that are responsive to place.

**Pedagogy: “it was definitely great to learn about a place in a place.”**

Part of what makes study abroad so attractive from a pedagogical standpoint is that it affords an opportunity for students to “learn about a place in a place,” yet recent research has uncovered dominant discourses in study abroad marketing that promote tourism over education (Michelson & Valencia, 2016). As an attempt to move away from study abroad as a touristic venture, I included pedagogies responsive to place as part of my research methodology with the Morocco and Bali programs, including narrative activities in the form of reflective journals and a pre-trip pedagogical intervention in Bali 2014, all of which were overall well-received and valued by students a year later. The place-based intervention undertaken with Bali 2014 students was largely successful in deconstructing exotified notions of Balinese culture and ways of knowing and doing art compared to Bali 2013, while place-based pedagogies in Morocco 2014 and Bali 2014 were largely successful in renegotiating representations of place and fostering relationality. While such changes may be expected, this dissertation helps us understand not only that pedagogy is a process that shapes and is shaped by engagement with place, but also what pedagogical practices mediate these changes. As outlined in the introduction of this section, these changes were mediated through: engagement with local rhythms, meanings, and histories; social interaction with locals, each other, and participation in cultural communities; and cultural
tools that engaged students in alternative ways of knowing and being in the world before and during the trip, including intentional narrative activities and a pre-trip pedagogical intervention. In the following section, I reflect on the ways in which the structure of narrative activities helped organize students’ activity and how they related to a novel cultural environment.

**What worked.** At the heart of the production of experiential learning space in both programs were the more than 10 narrative activities in the form of journals and reaction papers completed within each program. As such, I focus on what worked and what can be improved surrounding these prompts. Each of the study abroad programs in this project embraced narrative activities as opportunities as *writing to learn*, rather than learning to write. While some study abroad educators may be hesitant to include a great deal of writing in their programs due to the time it takes to grade student writing, understanding that the goal of these writing assignments is to encourage learning *through* writing, which can help alleviate the pressure to edit student grammar and instead emphasize the big ideas that are enacted in the students’ narration, saving time. Further, if educators embrace study abroad programs as a dual opportunity to teach and conduct research, for example collecting data related to program evaluation, this may become more rewarding. Taking time to craft narrative activities that work in tandem with experiential learning activities and discussing these prompts with students can also help to make clear the intentions of these assignments. Conceptualizing narrative activities as little interventions that may act as generative moments and contribute to the production of experiential learning space can help to make these assignments more meaningful for students and educators.

**What can be improved.** In any study, there are areas that can be improved; in the case of the narrative prompts used in the Morocco and Bali study abroad programs, greater transparency about how these assignments would be graded could have alleviated the confusion some students
expressed regarding how their writing would be assessed, given that many were writing about personal experiences in/of place. For future programs, the following changes may help to quell student anxiety surrounding how their writing will be graded when it is in the form of a journal. First, the program director can begin the program by writing a letter to students that alerts them that the study abroad program is writing enhanced, discusses overarching program goals, and suggests how much time should be dedicated to each assignment. The instructor should inform the students that the purpose of this writing is to learn, not to exhibit perfect prose. A second option is to create a holistic rubric and distribute it to students so they are clear on what is expected.

Narrative activities used in this study could also be improved to better engage students with their senses, other people, and historical context while studying abroad. Noting that students narrated about locals in follow-up interviews much more than they did during the program suggests that it could be fruitful for future narrative activities to engage students in narrating from the perspective of local peoples. Considering that the two narrative activities that prompted students to “tell a friend” about an experience in/of place resulted in the highest amount of sensory engagement, I also suggest including more prompts that play with audience and genre in study abroad programs. A final area of note regarding narrative activities is the tension between crafting prompts for narrative research and pedagogical purposes. For example, this project initially aimed to conduct narrative analysis (Daiute, 2011) of student prompts; however, it was decided that prompts needed to be restructured to conduct such an analysis.

To this end, as introduced in Chapter 3 (Experiences in/of Place – Morocco) I have launched a follow-up project with the Morocco 2017 program where I have begun to apply these findings and suggestions. In restructuring and revamping prompts for the Morocco 2017
program, in addition to drawing upon what was learned in this study regarding the utility of engaging students in narrating from different perspectives, I consulted with a narrative psychologist to balance the prompts for narrative research and coursework. New prompts include a three-part series that asks students to imagine they are writing a blog for their school’s study abroad office website. The first prompt, entitled “Diaries of a non-tourist,” asks students to narrate about what it is like living in the Morocco medina after one week of being in the program. The second prompt in this series, entitled “Diaries of a Moroccan: Rabat,” asks students to narrate about what life is like living in the medina from the perspective of a Moroccan. The third prompt, “Diaries of a Moroccan: Aghmat,” engages students in narrating about what life might be like living in a small rural town outside of Marrakech. Further, *Journal 5 Jemaa el Fna*, which originally prompted students to describe the market square to a friend, was restructured to prompt students to imagine they are writing a transcript for a podcast that will be aired on their school’s website about Jemaa el Fna. It is hoped that these revamped prompts that balance narrative activities as both pedagogical and research tools will encourage students to interact with local Moroccans and Moroccan life in a way that will allow for analysis of student narrating from multiple perspectives. I also plan to obtain consent for, and use the personal essays students completed when applying to the program as a baseline. Further discussion on what can be improved is included the end of this chapter, where I reflect on a vision for the future development of study abroad programs from Lefebvrian and Deweyan perspectives.

**Culture: “it’s different, but it’s normal.”** Thinking in categories is part of human nature; it helps our brains process information more quickly. The current inquiry aimed at understanding how to produce experiential learning space that would narrow ideas of difference
and foster relationality between students and the novel cultural environments encountered in the host countries. Not only did students come to see difference as “normal” within the cultural environments encountered while studying abroad in Morocco and Bali, but they also came to see differences within their diverse study abroad groups as a part of life. In other words, they no longer saw difference as solely residing within a cultural “other.” Students found shared meaning within their experiences in/of place in these countries, and also with each other. The cohorts of students in both programs were unique in that over half of the students in both programs identified as having bi-cultural orientations, or connections with more than one culture. Interestingly, bi-cultural students found similarities and shared meaning within the places they were studying earlier than their mono-cultural counterparts. I suggest this speaks to the importance of providing all students with opportunities and experiences to find shared meaning within their experiences early on, ideally before departure. This was supported in Chapter 5 (Place-based intervention – Bali), where the Bali 2014 cohort was exposed to the Hindu arts during a pre-trip pedagogical intervention. Student narrating in the Bali 2014 cohort, by both bi-cultural and mono-cultural had higher enactments of shared meaning earlier on upon arrival, compared to their counterparts in the Bali 2013 program who did not receive the intervention.

This speaks to the importance of engaging students in pre-trip classes that introduce them to the host culture and ways of being, as it can jump start the process of fostering relationality and rethinking what difference means. Findings of this study also suggest that pre-trip classes may also make the transition easier for mono-cultural students and students who have had limited exposure to cultures outside of their own, as it can help students join in the ongoing production of culture and knowledge present in host countries (Doerr, 2016a)
Envisioning a Pedagogy of Place for Future Programs

As this project has come to a close, I have found myself considering a vision for the future; a vision for how the findings of this study can be put to work in the current political moment when social change beckons. I see parallels between problematic trends in study abroad that (re)produce hierarchies of power and colonialism, perpetuate views of a cultural “other,” and privilege tourism over education (Barbour, 2012; Doerr, 2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b; Zemach-Bersin, 2009) and the current political climate where across the globe, nationalism, capitalism, and a focus on a fear of the “other” are seemingly on the rise. Thus, reflecting further on how the findings of this study can be applied as a response to such problematic trends, I return to the work of Henri Lefebvre and John Dewey, whose revolutionary ideas energized this dissertation, in order to engage more critically with the power of place and consider its action potential. Dewey’s philosophy of experiential education, which was revolutionary in that it considered it the responsibility of education to cultivate a more just, democratic, and equitable society, and Lefebvre’s critique of capitalism can offer guidance in this endeavor.

The current promotion and commodification of neoliberal global citizenship in study abroad goes hand in hand with the aforementioned problematic trend of privileging tourism over education, as they are both guided by the extractive hand of capitalism. Benefits of study abroad are too often framed as individualistic and economical, which can reproduce the colonizing gaze by encouraging students to extract what they can from their experiences for their own benefit in order to compete in the global market. For example, study abroad program marketing frequently features words such as “explore,” “discover,” and “adventure” in their promotional materials (Barbour, 2012; Doerr, 2012), which represent countries outside of the United States as awaiting colonial conquest by students. Even calls to connect and engage students with local
communities’ ways of knowing within host countries risks being extractive without connecting the local to global, and considering larger power and structural issues. In order to push back on the ways that study abroad trips can reproduce the colonizing gaze, I call for place-responsive pedagogies that are not only responsive to the local, but also connect the local to the global. At least one study abroad program has explicitly embraced such principles in their program design: Jakubiak & Mellom’s (2015) “Language and Culture Service Learning in Cost Rica” introduced students to ecojustice theory and principles, including ideas of the commons, the local/global dialectic, and how language and social practice can produce how we perceive and relate to the world through place-based education. Although their focus is on service learning programs, such principles can be adopted by study abroad programs beyond service learning, and across the disciplines. To inform the future development of study abroad and experiential learning programs that can counter the reproduction of colonial hierarchies and an exotified cultural “other,” guided by Dewey and Lefebvre, and drawing upon the findings from this dissertation, I offer five epistemological commitments and several pedagogical strategies for the development of future programs below.

**Epistemological Commitments**

Drawing from epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, I chose the term “epistemological commitments,” in order to acknowledge that in developing experiential education programs, whether we realize it or not, we are committing ourselves to particular theories of knowledge production. The epistemological commitments below are presented as a means to guide program development and pedagogy, as well as the production of knowledge in study abroad toward a more democratic and critical pedagogy of place.
Chapter VI: Power of Place

1. Decenter the Western perspective
2. Acknowledge the power of the local to build a global perspective
3. Cultivate forms of relationality that transcend categorical differences
4. Unpack “trouble” in the collision of how place is felt, seen, and thought about
5. Recognize engagement with place as fundamental to learning about someone else’s local

**Pedagogical Strategies**

With the above epistemological commitments in mind, I offer some useful pedagogical strategies for educators to adopt. Earlier in this chapter, I focused on the importance of including intentional narrative activities that engage students in local ways of knowing, being, and doing. I also presented a theoretical framework for engaging students with place, and how it can be used as a pedagogical tool. Thus, in this section I focus on broader strategies, and provide some specific examples that engage with the five epistemological commitments above.

On a broader program scale, I suggest instituting additional meetings, formal or informal, to engage students in discussions surrounding their experiences of American-ness, their embodied experiences in/of place (e.g. addressing issues of race, gender, class, privilege, and power dynamics), as well as unpack “trouble” in the collision of how place is felt, seen, and thought about. These meetings should take place before the program and continue throughout program duration. As results of this study have suggested, pre-t...
depends on program duration. Shorter programs should include more pre-trip classes, as students will have less time to engage with local ways of knowing, being, and doing in the new destination. For example, if a program is three to four weeks in length, three pre-trip classes may be ideal, with reflective meetings every few days throughout the program. However, if a program is one week in length, up to six pre-trip classes may be necessary, with reflective meetings daily during the program. For semester-long programs, one to two pre-trip classes may suffice, with bi-weekly check-ins during the program run by a program facilitator. As suggested previously integrating writing throughout the program is also highly encouraged as it can assist students in making sense of their experiences in/of place, and help prepare students for group discussions.

Regarding more targeted pedagogical strategies, in terms of decentering the Western perspective, I have suggested that educators engage students in reflecting upon their own cultural identity, for example American-ness, as well as other embodiments of race, gender, class, sexuality, and privilege, and how they will may be perceived by locals in their new destination, which can help to reverse the colonial gaze. Too often, educators focus on how study abroad students encounter locals, without also considering how locals encounter study abroad students. I also suggest that educators include readings from non-Western perspectives, ideally some written by local scholars and experts. Educators may also support students in forging connections between local issues and well global ones, in accordance with program topics—for example international trade agreements. Educators can also engage their students in discussions surrounding current and historical relationships between host and home countries, for example relations between American and Morocco, which can help to deconstruct power relations and build a global perspective. Further, program coursework could include assignments that have students conduct research in order to situate the host country within a global environment. In
other words, in order to acknowledge the power of the local to build a global perspective, educators should augment local, place-based education with wider theories, international law, history, subaltern narratives, and non-Western perspectives when possible.

In an effort to cultivate forms of relationality that transcend categorical differences, approaching study abroad from a more democratic perspective may also be a strategy to engage students more meaningfully with place. Thus far, I have mainly offered suggestions that reside in what Lefebvre would have considered conceived space, the power of professionals, as most suggestions have dealt with top-down program design. In terms of a more democratic approach, drawing from participatory action research, an approach to research that embraces doing research with, not on or about participants, educators may put more agency in the hands of their students. In other words, educators can structure a program in such a way that students take more of an active role in their own learning. For examples, students can take on the role of ethnographers, perhaps studying both their home country before departure via multimedia methods (e.g. photography, video), and their new destination upon arrival, and conduct comparative analysis. In this type of approach, students can raise questions and concerns that are worthy of inquiry. Further, considering that research projects are a somewhat common part of study abroad programs, educators may encourage students to take the same type of approach to the communities in which they are living. Typically, to complete research projects, students work individually or in small groups, but perhaps embracing a more participatory and inclusive approach, the entire cohort can do a research with the local community. Or, if the small group approach is more amenable, perhaps instead of having students decide their research topics, they can talk to community members about what issues are most important to them, and then share their findings with the local community.
Importantly, the epistemological commitments and pedagogical strategies I have offered thus far are not reserved for solely for study abroad programs—they can be embraced locally as well. For example, after completing data collection and analysis, I was eager to apply my research with study abroad programs to local contexts. I co-founded *NarratingNYC*, a community-based initiative undertaken with students at Bronx Community College. This project aimed at fostering participants’ sense of agency and ownership over the communities to which they belong. Using bi-weekly photo narrative missions, my co-facilitator and I invited students’ perspectives on the issues in their communities that mattered to them, and how they saw their role in the existing state of affairs. Preliminary findings suggest students experienced blatant socioeconomic disparities characteristic of NYC neighborhoods as they traversed from one place to another, which impacted their sense of engagement and investment in certain communities. The students articulated the notion that they are “the one side of the two cities,” illustrating a sense of “otherness” from the rest of the city. This finding was also supported by the geolocations of their photo making, which clustered within the “small radius” in which their lives take place. The project hosted a photo exhibition, “Photo Narratives for Change: Toward Sustainable, Inclusive Communities in the South Bronx” that was open to, and shared with, the South Bronx community. In sum, embracing a more democratic, critical approach to place-based pedagogy locally and abroad, may be one way to cultivate students who have the direction and confidence to be advocates for social change.

**Study Abroad and Experiential Learning for Social Change**

This dissertation does not claim that the study abroad students who participated in my study became advocates for social change, nor was this a central question to my study. However, in the spirit of revolutionaries like John Dewey and Henri Lefebvre, it is worth recognizing this
project makes a contribution—no matter how small—to the development of a pedagogy of place that may cultivate students who embody the values and potential to become advocates for social change. Thus, I conclude my dissertation by imagining what the future of study abroad and experiential learning could be, and what impact this might have on our society. I invite readers to imagine a future in which we embrace the aforementioned epistemological commitments in order to develop and refine pedagogies that resist hierarchies of power and colonialism that may be present in teaching and learning locally and abroad. I invite readers to imagine a future in which we continue to appreciate and support the arts not only as expressions of material culture, but also as a pedagogical tool in multicultural contexts and a gateway to lifelong learning; a future in which together with our students, we embrace diversity, promote inclusivity, and work towards a more just, equitable state of the world.

Make no mistake—embracing these values takes work. We must provide our students with tools that facilitate this and promote an understanding of interconnectedness despite what we have been taught to view as difference. We must aim this work at cultivating a new generation of relationality where we no longer fixate on representations of self and other along the lines of categorical difference, nor view difference as existing in the “other,” but instead train ourselves to be open to the unknown and to relish in the glimmering moments of insight into alternative ways of knowing, being, and doing that exist in the world (Somerville et al., 2011), through engagement with place.

Places have so much to offer us; they are a never-ending, ever-changing well of collective knowledge and experience. Perhaps this is the “remarkable” power of place that Aristotle was referring to in the introductory quote to this dissertation—that places are in a constant state of becoming (Simonsen, 2008) and that we continuously drink from and refill
places not once, but many times throughout our lives, as the wisdom sipped and digested one day is never the same as the next. The human-environment relationship is ever-changing; as educators we must also embrace pedagogies that respond to these changes, and advocate for social change when needed. The remarkable pedagogical power of place is that experiences in/of them are never finished—thus, as educators, our work is never done.
Appendix A

MOROCCO 2014 AND BALI 2014 NARRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Case I: Rabat, Morocco

Journal 1: Pre-departure
What are your expectations for the upcoming trip to Morocco? How are you feeling? What have you done to prepare yourself for the changes, if anything?

Journal 2: Arrival
What did you feel when you stepped off the plane? When you exited the airport? What was familiar? What was different? How did it feel to meet your host families? What were you last thoughts before sleeping?

Journal 3: Chellah
What did you feel as you were introduced to Chellah? Why do you think this? What aspects of Chellah did you like best and why? Is there anything you did not connect to and why?

Journal 4: Jemaa el Fna
If you were telling a friend about Jemaa el Fna in Marrakech, how would you do so without exoticising it and yet making it attractive? You may want to use in this journal: a) your reaction and feelings; b) considering what you have learned about Moroccan culture and its complexity thus far without being reductionist; c) how it’s different from or similar to what Americans may know.

Journal 5: Tigemmy
Reflect on how your life would be if you lived in Tigemmy or one of the remote Berber villages you passed during your bus ride/excursion out of Marrakech.

Journal 6: NGOs
Pick one or two NGO visits/lectures to organizations that focus on women's rights. Reflect on what you have learned and how that relates to your experiences as a woman. Propose a solution that is non-judgmental of the current conditions, and yet offers real change for women that you believe will improve their lives.*Please note that to do this journal justice, you will need to write at least 2 pages or around 750-1000 words

Journal 7: Sexuality
Reflect on Professor Dialmy's lecture, particularly on sexuality including but not limited to having sex for pleasure over intimacy and or duty, premarital sex as a way of learning about one's bodies, protecting one's virginity while engaging in sex, free access to birth control, managing desire and yet living according to religious rules, and the double standards for rich
compared to poor woman. How did this lecture inform or bring to awareness some aspect of your own sexual identity? Did any part of the lecture make you uncomfortable? Why?

**Journal 8: Return**
Re-read your first two journals. What stereotypes, expectations or impressions of Morocco, if any, have changed in the past three weeks? What new ideas, if any, have you gained?

**Case II: Bali, Indonesia**

**Journal 1: Pre-departure**
What are your expectations for the upcoming trip to Bali? How are you feeling? What have you done to prepare yourself for the changes, if anything?

**Journal 2: Arrival**
What did you feel when you stepped off the plane? When you exited the airport? What was familiar? What was different? How did it feel when you arrived to your hotel? What were your last thoughts before sleeping?

**Journal 3: Rice Fields**
What did you feel as you were introduced to the rice fields? Why do you think this? What aspects of the rice field walk did you like best and why? Is there anything you did not connect to and why?

**Journal 4: Threads of Life OR Green School (TL/GS)**
Select Threads of Life or the Green School visit or both. Using class lectures, guest lectures, and field trips, reflect on the notion of tradition, material cultures, and sustainability as it pertains to cultures, traditions, and environments. How do you think Threads of Life and/or the Green School can improve the lives of the local people? *Please note that to do this journal justice, you will need to write at least 2 pages or around 750-1000 words*

**Journal 5: Craft Villages**
Reflect on your experiences walking through the craft villages. Was there a particular art or craft that appealed to you? How is nature used or depicted in the different crafts? How has tourism helped the crafts? How has it hindered?

**Journal 6: Purification Ceremony**
If you were telling a friend about the Purification Ceremony in Bali, how would you do so without exoticizing it and yet making it attractive? You may want to use in this journal: a) your reaction and feelings; b) considering what you have learned about Balinese culture and its complexity thus far without being reductionist; c) how it’s different from or similar to what Americans may know.
**Journal 7: Healer**
Reflect on the discussions and readings surrounding mental illness, prevention, and healing in Bali. Include some impressions gathered during the visit to the healer. How do these collections of visits and lectures inform some aspect of your own emotional regulation and well-being? Did any part of the visit to the healer make you uncomfortable? Why?

**Journal 8: Return**
Re-read your first two journals. What stereotypes, expectations or impressions of Bali, if any, have changed in the past four weeks? What new ideas, if any, have you gained?
Appendix B

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(1) Had you ever traveled abroad before Morocco/Bali? Where? When? Why?
   
   PROBES: Tourism? Study?
   IF YES: For how long? How old were you? By yourself, or with others?

(2) How was the Morocco/Bali trip different—if it was?
   
   IF YES: In what way? How you felt? What you saw? Anything else that comes to mind?

(3) What made you want to study abroad? What did you want to get out of it?

(4) Why Morocco/Bali? Were you looking for something special there?

(5) Did you find what you were looking for? In what way?
   
   PROBE: How did you know? What was happening that told you that you found it?

(6) Can you describe how you were feeling before departure?
   
   PROBES: What were you excited about? What were you nervous about?

(7) What were your first few days in Morocco/Bali like, starting with stepping off the plane, and meeting your host family/hotel?

(8) Were any of your expectations about Morocco/Bali, Moroccan/Balinese life, confirmed or debunked during your time there?
   
   IF YES: Can you describe these moments in detail, including when it happened.

(9) What is the environment in Morocco/Bali is like?
   
   PROBE: Where you lived? Where you travelled? What activities you observed? How is any of this different from what you are used to?

(10) What was the best/most memorable parts of the experience? Anything else?

(11) Is there anything you wish you had done differently?
Chapter VI: Power of Place

(12) Considering everyone that you came in contact with—the Moroccan/Balinese people, your host family/locals—do you have any thoughts about how people are different from one another, or how they are the same?

PROBE: What about your fellow students?

(13) In Morocco/Bali you lived with your host family/hotel, shared a room with a roommate, and attended most classes and trips with the group—what was it like for you to travel and learn as a group with your fellow students?

PROBE: What was your relationship like with other students? Any meaningful relationships?

(14) We’ve established that most activities were done with the group, so there was limited time for you to be alone. What did you do in your alone time?

(15) Did you ever find (or create) a place (or space) that you felt was uniquely yours (i.e., your favorite place, place you felt comfortable/connected)?

PROBE IF YES: Describe this place (or space). How did it make you feel? What did you do here?

(16) Tell me about some of your other favorite places (or spaces)? What about least favorite?

PROBE IF YES: Describe this place (or space). What did you like about it? How did it make you feel? What was happening in your body that told you it was your favorite?

(17) Sometimes in travel, we encounter some tough or unusual circumstances. What sticks out in your mind?


PROBE: How did you know it was tough or unusual? What was happening in your body that told you it was tough or unusual?

(18) Think about how you dealt with these challenges. How did you cope?

PROBES: What worked for you? What didn't?
(19) Take me on a trip with you—take me to a big challenge-and then take me to how it was overcome. Be very descriptive—I want to feel like I am there with you.

   PROBE: How did you know it was challenging? What was happening in your body that told you it was challenging?

(20) What stays with you after as saying something about who you are now after encountering these challenges?

   PROBES: Your physical self? Your emotional self (feelings)? What about the way you approach challenges and scope out a solution now?

(21) How did you feel returning to the US? What was it like for you?

------10-MINUTE INTERVIEW BREAK ------

(22) Would you change anything about the trip? If so, what would you change and why?

(23) Can you give some feedback about the overall program and coursework? What was the coursework like for you?

   PROBE: Frequently we had class readings, guest lectures, and discussions followed by related excursions and trips to NGOs. How did this affect your learning experience? What worked? What didn't? Can you give me some examples?

   PROBE: Another assignment was keeping notes on our field trips and excursions, then writing a journal about it—a prompt you often did not know what to expect. What was note-taking like for you? How did journaling impact your experience? How did you feel when writing the journals? What was happening in your body? Can you give me a few examples?

(24) Overall, do you think that you’re the same person that you would have been if you hadn’t studied abroad to Morocco? Or have you been somehow changed?

   PROBES: What about you is the same? What about different? Anything else?

(25) Have you traveled since returning from Morocco/Bali?


(26) Is there anything else you’d like to share about Morocco/Bali that we didn’t discuss?
Appendix C

BALI 2013 AND BALI 2014 NARRATIVE ACTIVITIES

(Chapter 5: Place-based Intervention – Bali)

**Pre-trip Prompt (pre-trip class at local art museum):** Reflect on our pre-trip class visit to the Rubin Museum and comment on your impressions of the visit, lecture, and activity. Some guiding questions include: What was this experience like for you/was it what you expected? Was this your first time visiting a museum, or do you visit often? What was the Gaze + Drawing activity like for you/how did it make you feel? Connect to Eck (1998) and Samadhi (2001) readings if appropriate.

**Week 1 Prompt (cultural comparison):** This is a two-part paper. Everyone should answer part 1 and chose one of two options for part 2. Drawing from your readings in the Multicultural Class, particularly Greenberg, (2000) comment on what aspects of Balinese culture are different from your own, at a first impression (1-2 pages).

Next, select either:

a) comment on how to enjoy the newness of the culture, while not exotifying or objectifying it, drawing from Morgan assigned in the Culture and Psychopathology class (1-2 pages)

b) or comment on how to analyze gender without colonizing the subject, drawing from Volpp.

**Week 2 Prompt (craft village):** Reflect on your experiences walking through the craft villages. Was there a particular art or craft that appealed to you? How is nature used or depicted in the different crafts? How has tourism helped the crafts? How has it hindered?

**Week 3 Prompt (dance):** Comment on your impression of the dance performance and its relationship to larger Balinese sense of personhood, including but not limited to how spirituality is viewed, created and lived. You may choose to comment on your own personal relationship to the arts and dance and how it is similar to, or different from the Balinese. Integrate the lecture by Ms. Ballinger and or readings into your commentary.

**Week 4 Prompt (end-of-trip visit to museum in Bali):** Reflect on your unguided visit to the ARMA museum. What was this experience like for you after a month in Bali? Has your gaze/lens changed at all?

**museum-based intervention, Bali 2014 only**
References


