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NATIONAL IDENTITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE GUARDIANSHIP OF A KINGDOM

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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DEDICATION

To my three boys – RJ, Grant, and Brett

Never be afraid to dream.

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When one starts an endeavor such as this, they quickly learn that this is not a journey that they are taking on their own, but that it takes the support and encouragement of many unique individuals to accomplish such great things. To my dear and loving husband, I thank you for supporting me, caring for our boys, and giving me the time I needed to complete this process. You are my heart. To my children, it is my hope that you grow to understand more and more each day that knowledge is power and that you are three very powerful young men. Use your power to be a voice for the voiceless within this world. I love you. The three of you are my greatest accomplishment!

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ABSTRACT

Changes in the structure of higher education in Saudi Arabia and through advanced scholarship programs abroad have resulted in an educational reformation within the country. Though the Saudi Monarchy desires to create a knowledge-based society through higher education (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012; Romani, 2009), there is also the desire to use education as an instrument of political and social control (Moughrabi, 2009). As more Saudi students' participate in higher education abroad, a greater likelihood exist that they will gain a heightened awareness of the world around them, participate in political discourse and begin to scrutinize their ruling body (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006). Therefore the purpose of this research was to explore how, if at all, Saudi students talked about making meaning of their national identity since participating in a study abroad opportunity in higher education in the United States. This was accomplished through critical discourse analysis using the lens of a new collective identity model that was structured through a borderlands approach. The findings from the study revealed that Saudi students make meaning of their national identity by examining and reflecting on their perceptions of self in relation to their environments both in Saudi Arabia and the United States, as well as by recognizing and coming to terms with their preconceived perceptions, both real and non-existent, of others based on their commitment to their own individual constructs of identity and that of their collective. Recommendations for future research and program development are included.

Keywords: identity development, collective identity, social constructs of identity, Saudi Arabia, higher education, women's rights, Saudi educational systems

CHAPTER 1: SAUDI STUDENTS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVES

An Educational Reformation

An educational reformation is occurring in Saudi Arabia as increased numbers of Saudi students are entering newly structured higher education institutions within their country and taking advantage of government sponsored opportunities to study abroad (Clary & Karlin, 2011; Institute of International Education, 2015a). With increased exposure to higher education, the Saudi Monarchy is able to provide its people the opportunity to develop themselves from within and hence to create an indigenous body of knowledge. Indigenous knowledge in this sense is a move toward a more educated society that maintains the delicate balance of the acquired social and cultural norms of the overall Saudi society while promoting advancement through technology, diversity, open-mindedness, and the organic-growth of human intelligence and creativity. However, such bold moves in educational reformation are not absent from the growing pains that are often experienced as changes through development occur. Therefore, it is the intention of this research to explore how Saudi students perceive the advancements in the structure of their higher education systems due to government initiatives, the impact of internationalization, and the development of their national identities.

A Global Educational Divide

Every year, the number of international students studying abroad has increased across the globe (Douglas & Edelstein, 2009; Institute of International Education, 2015a; Thomas, 2013). In the 2011-2012 academic year, the number of international students studying in the United States of America increased by six percent to a record breaking number of 764,495 (Marklein, 2012). By the 2012-2013 academic year, this

number increased to 819,644, and by the 2014-2015 academic year, there were 974, 926 international students studying within the United States (Institute of International Education, 2015a). In particular, China, India, South Korea and Saudi Arabia contributed to the bulk of the growth in international student attendance in the United States. China contributed the largest population of study abroad students to the United States in 2014-2015 with a total of 274,439 students, India had 102,673 students, South Korea had 68,047 students and Saudi Arabia contributed 53,919 students (Institute of International of Education, 2015a). Equally, foreign students have brought increased economic benefits to the nations where they study (Institute of International Education 2012; LaFranchi, 2011). In the 2011-2012 academic year, International students brought in $22.7 billion to the United States economy (Marklein, 2012). By the 2013-2014 academic year, total contributions equaled $24 billion (Thomas, 2013), and by the 2014-2015 academic year, the international student market brought in a total of $30.5 billion to the United States economy (NAFSA, 2016). Therefore it is not surprising that within the United States, the presence of international students has clearly created a service-sector market for higher education (LaFranchi, 2011).

Specifically, Saudi Arabia has experienced one of the largest increases in the exportation of study abroad students to the United States with a double-digit growth index over the last eight years (Institute of International of Education, 2015b). The influx of Saudi students to a total of 24 countries across the globe including the United States, Western Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and other Arab-speaking countries can be directly linked to the King Abdullah Scholarship program that was initiated in 2005 (Denman & Hilal, 2011). Through the scholarship program,

the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education sends nominated candidates to study abroad in one of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's preferred science, technology, engineering and math fields, also referred to as STEM (Denman & Hilal, 2011; Saudi Embassy, 2011a). The focus of the King Abdullah Scholarship program is five-fold and includes: sponsoring qualified Saudi citizens to study in the best universities around the world; bringing a high level of academic and professional standards to Saudi citizens; exchanging scientific, educational and cultural experiences with countries worldwide; building up a qualified and professional Saudi staff for the work environment; and raising and developing the level of professionalism among Saudis (Saudi Embassy, 2011b).

The scholarship program is not the only outreach that has been initiated by the Kingdom. Since 2004, the national budget of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education has nearly tripled to $15 billion in order to create more public colleges and universities within the Kingdom (Clary & Karlin, 2011; Krieger, 2007). Likewise, there has been an ongoing push in the privatization of higher education as King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud has looked to his own personal finances and industries such as Saudi Aramco and the King Faisal Foundation, to assist in funding private sector educational institutions (Clary & Karlin, 2011; Krieger, 2007). The king gave $10 billion of his personal wealth to create the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, also known as KAUST (Krieger, 2007). KAUST, while funded by the king, was established under the direction of the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources as a graduate-level university and is the sixth wealthiest university in the world. In order to promote further growth of private institutions like KAUST, the government lifted the

former ban on private institutions and offered free land and over $10 million toward scholarship funding and building costs.

Much of the growth that has occurred in the higher education industry in Saudi Arabia, as well as the Middle East, has been attributed to the impact of globalization and internationalization (Romani, 2009). According to Al-Sultan and Alzaharnah (2012), as the industry sector within the Kingdom has moved toward economic growth due to an increased focus on research and development, it has also dictated the need for a strong knowledge-based system (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012). However, many of the "efforts to stimulate innovation and enhanced competitiveness at the national level have confronted serious human resources challenges" (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012, p. 89). The number of Saudis educated in engineering and science has increased at low rates compared to that of other industrialized nations; therefore, the need for the indigenization of knowledge and the transformation of that knowledge by Saudis into a useful product within the Kingdom has created a necessary link between industry and higher education (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012).

Furthermore, the lack of highly educated nationals within the industry sector is also a shared concern within systems of higher education. Romani (2009) noted that important positions within many of the Gulf countries' newly-formed educational systems have required an increased need for cross-border exchanges of both professionals and information for continued advancement to occur. However, it may take ten to fifteen years for the Gulf universities to be able to hire the majority of their Ph.D. instructors from within, and until that time they must remain dependent upon foreign faculty. Similarly, Moughrabi (2009) argued:

> Education remains a key instrument of political and social control as the Arab countries seemingly prefer to produce subjects rather than citizens. They continue to use traditional methods of pedagogy while rapidly growing countries in other parts of the world tend to incorporate inquiry-based learning with focus on problem-solving and modes of critical inquiry. Furthermore, there are few opportunities for life-long learning throughout the regions. (p. 26)

In 2009, Saudi Arabia had 40,000 university staff members with an estimated 100,000 needed by 2013 in order to accommodate the projected growth in Saudi's higher education sector (Sawahel, 2009). Despite this need, Saudi Arabia decided not to follow the lead of educational expansion set by neighboring Middle Eastern nations such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates by allowing foreign branch campuses to be established within the Kingdom, but instead kept higher education institutions localized to state control (Lindsey, 2010). However, this did not stop the Kingdom from signing over 300 agreements for foreign faculty members to teach and conduct joint research agendas with Saudi professionals within Saudi institutions (Lindsey, 2010).

The need for a knowledge-based society (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012; Romani, 2009) and the desire to use education as an instrument of political and social control (Moughrabi, 2009) creates a point of conflict within the Arab world. As a larger proportion of youth begin to participate in higher education, many of the students from Gulf nations are developing a heightened awareness of the world around them resulting in a greater likelihood for those who are studying abroad and/or in newly structured higher education institutions at home to participate in political discourse (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006). This in turn "could result in a greater degree of instability as present ruling arrangements will inevitably be the object of greater scrutiny" (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006, p. 25).

In the case of Saudi Arabia, the push for advancement in higher education by the Monarchy has been driven by the need for a knowledge-based society to improve economic growth through research and development (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012). This concept supports a neoliberal influence on the Saudi higher education system where government policy fosters competition within the Kingdom and problematically, stands to create an oppressive power structure that can be both limiting and oppressive to the abilities of the marginalized (Apple, 2006; Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Olssen, 1996). The expansion and marketization of Saudi's higher education system as a private commodity may produce unforeseen outcomes amongst Saudi students studying abroad as they begin to become more aware of their global surroundings. Research tells us that understanding the relationship between one's nation and other nations is key to the symbiotic principle of a global society - the ability for everyone to prosper mutually with the benefit of equal rights and privileges (Byung-Jin, 2003). Therefore, fostering the coexistence between nations through means of a comparative education (Byung-Jin, 2003). Hence, the problem that this research seeks to explore is the conflict Saudi students may or may not experience in making meaning of their national identity as a result of their higher education experiences outside of Saudi Arabia and, specifically, in the United States as they begin to become more aware of their national identity in relation to other nations' educational systems.

This is important because research tells us that higher education for both individuals and society creates the desire for more democratic institutions, human rights, political stability, lower state welfare and health care costs, while setting the stage for subsequent economic growth (Baum & Ma, 2007; McMahon, 2009;

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012). Subsequently, higher education builds knowledge-based economies and assists in sustaining global prosperity (Wildavsky, 2010). In the United States, higher education fosters civic empowerment and civic engagement for democratic revitalization (Peters, Alter, & Schwartzbach, 2010). Therefore, building a knowledge-based society through enhanced opportunities for higher education in the United States through such initiatives as the King Abdullah Scholarship program and study abroad opportunities may unintentionally result in Saudi students developing a conflicting view of their national identity due to their exposure to Western ideology in comparison to their Saudi heritage. As Lynch (2012) noted:

> [Arab] monarchs would like their own people and the outside world to believe that they survive because of their effective and benevolent leadership, their unique political culture, and their distinctive legitimacy, which requires no great concessions to meaningful democratic political participation…that very myth can blind them to the ever more urgent calls by reformists for just such political inclusion, transparency, an end to corruption, and equality of citizenship. (p.6)

As Saudi students are exposed to Western ideology through higher education, they may or may not gain new insights to their country's initiatives to create a knowledge-based society and this new insight may or may not influence how they view their roles as Saudi nationals, their government's educational initiatives, and their national identity.

The purpose of this study is three-fold: to explore how Saudi students perceive the unique structures of higher education within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United states, to discover how Saudi students perceive the impact of internationalization on current trends in reforming Saudi's higher education systems and on higher education systems in the United States, and to understand how Saudi students view their national identity in relation to their educational experiences within the United States. In

particular, this study seeks to answer the following research question: in what ways, if at all, do Saudi students talk about how they make meaning of their national identity since participating in higher education in the United States?

Higher Education Structures within Saudi Arabia

Within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there are currently two distinct branches of higher education: those institutions that are created and maintained under the auspices of the Kingdom's Ministry of Higher Education and those that are brought in through the private sector by means of sponsorship. While each branch serves the purpose of what Krieger (2007, p. A1) referred to as "the government's efforts at 'Saudification', or the shifting of jobs away from foreign workers," they do so in different ways.

The Ministry of Higher Education

As aforementioned, the Ministry of Higher Education has nearly tripled its budget since 2004 in order to create more colleges and universities across the Kingdom (Clary & Karlin, 2011; Krieger, 2007). Similarly, in the last decade the Ministry has made a concerted effort to increase the number of public universities from seven to twenty-four (Clary & Karlin, 2011). One of the challenges faced within the public sector of higher education is the allegiance that the House of Saud, the linage line of the royal family, made early on to support conservative institutions in exchange for their backing of the monarchy. However, this partnership of support now seems to be creating a tension that constrains movements for change and modernization of both the economy and society within the Kingdom (Clary & Karlin, 2011).

Specifically, education within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and much of the Arab world still relies heavily on traditional methods as opposed to inquiry-based models resulting in few opportunities for the promotion of life-long learning capabilities amongst the population (House, 2012; Moughrabi, 2009). Much of the public higher educational system has been set up based on rote teaching and learning styles which have created a lack of critical thinking skills that many employers seek out amongst their future employees (House, 2012; Krieger, 2007). Equally, "the conservative culture will very likely prove a serious roadblock to recruiting top professors and make it difficult to persuade ambitious Saudis to earn their degrees at home rather than abroad, as thousands now do. Saudi Arabia's universities also suffer from … a stifling bureaucracy bent on centralized control" (Krieger, 2007, p. A1). As Moughrabi (2009) noted in his research, if the Arab world does not move toward creating a healthy knowledge-based society with adaptability, critical thinking, and life-long learning skills, it may risk creating and perpetuating failed economies.

While the Kingdom is pushing for *Saudification* (Krieger, 2007; Onsman, 2011) within higher education, it is also dealing with the lack of equality and equity within the bureaucracy of its own higher education system. There are at present two generations of higher education institutions within the Kingdom, the older institutions which date back to before 1998 and those that were established thereafter. The older generation consists of established institutions such as King Saud University and King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (Onsman, 2011). These institutions benefit from their longevity within the Kingdom and tend to attract the most experienced academics despite the fact that there are relatively few who are exclusively Saudi and even fewer

that have been trained within the Kingdom (Onsman, 2011). Likewise, their upper administrative positions are predominately held by well-educated and established Saudi nationals.

The newer universities established after 1998 are predominately regional institutions with little emphasis on research. Newer universities are of lower status than the older institutions and tend to employ more non-Saudi staff that, despite their lack of knowledge and adaptability to the Saudi culture, is more experienced and well-rounded in the area of academics (Onsman, 2011). The newer universities' upper administrative staff, while still predominately Saudi nationals, tend to be trained abroad and inexperienced as leaders, thus creating a tension between inexperienced administrators and experienced academics when "the Kingdom is deliberately promoting Saudi nationals into positions of power in the Academy" (Onsman, 2011, p. 522). Similarly, there seems to be an avoidance for the use of quality assurance systems that would force staff to accept responsibility for educational outcomes (Onsman, 2011).

Another obstacle the Ministry of Higher Education faces is that of communication. When institutions use English as the medium of instruction and require no competency standards for staff or students, this results in a breakdown in the quality of education being provided within the Kingdom (Onsman, 2011). Many of the senior academics studied in English speaking countries; therefore, based on their own educational experience in the English language, they are resistant to formal evaluation and inquiries by supervisory staff of their academic abilities and competencies within the English environment (Onsman, 2011, p. 522).

The issues associated with the expansion of education through the Ministry of Education are in a large part due to the trends in global massification or "the tremendous expansion of enrollments that has taken place worldwide in the past 30 years" (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010, p. 31). The Kingdom is working to promote a stronger Saudi economic infrastructure in order to develop a leading position within the Gulf Cooperation Council states "by creating a centrally controlled Higher Education system that operates in a series of modern regionally based institutions that will accommodate and educate all Saudi students without impacting negatively on the local culture" (Onsman, 2011, p. 522).

The Private Sector of Higher Education

In an effort to improve the quality of higher education within the Kingdom, promote *Saudification* (Krieger, 2007, p. A1), and continue to support conservative institutions in exchange for their backing of the monarchy (Clary & Karlin, 2011), King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud has looked to industries such as Saudi Aramco and the King Faisal Foundation to assist with the privatization of higher education (House, 2012; Krieger, 2007). The emergence of private universities funded outside of the Ministry of Higher Education (Clary & Karlin, 2011) and with the guidance of many non-Saudi scholars (Onsman, 2011) has opened the door for a more progressive push toward creating technical human resources, science-based economic development, a knowledge-based society and has even opened the door for foreign researchers to apply for Saudi Citizenship (Sawahel, 2009).

The King began this portion of his educational plan by working with the private sector to open two universities with Western-style systems in September of 2009 – the

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, also known as KAUST, and Al-Faisal University (Clary & Karlin, 2011; Krieger, 2007). Similarly, KAUST serves as a graduate university and Al-Faisal an undergraduate program, both focusing predominately in the STEM fields and privately funded outside of the Ministry of Higher Education (Krieger, 2007). In particular, KAUST receives a large portion of its private investment, second only to Harvard, from personal donations made by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud (Clary & Karlin, 2011; House, 2012) and is governed by an international board of directors which is made up of academic, corporate and philanthropic leaders (Lindsey, 2010).

According to the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, in 2010, thirty-nine percent of colleges and fifteen percent of universities within the Kingdom were funded and maintained by the private sector (Denman & Hilal, 2011). Likewise, the Kingdom negotiated partnerships with outside universities to jointly hire professors and even to offer monetary gifts to partnering institutions for aiding in building their academic institutional reputations (Krieger, 2007). For example, KAUST has built partnerships with top institutions around the globe such as Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the National University of Singapore, Institut Fracasis du Petrole, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the American University in Cairo, Technische Universitate Munchen, the University of California (KAUST, 2008), Cornell, Stanford, and Texas A&M (Lindsey, 2011). Unlike universities in the United States and most of the Western world, researchers do not have to spend a large portion of their time seeking outside funding. Faculty at KAUST are provided research grants that vary from $3 million to $5 million over a five-year period of time. The university

also provides researchers with the availability to use $1.5 billion worth of laboratory equipment (Lindsey, 2011).

Despite these efforts, the Kingdom must still learn to balance the use of a Western-style educational system with a non-Western culture (Kéchichian, 2013; Krieger, 2007). "Obviously the culture is initially going to constrain what they can do in terms of reforming education. But in that struggle, education will also shape the culture and open many more opportunities for the future" (Krieger, 2007, p. A1). However, one of the main focuses of these Saudi institutions is to recruit Saudi students in order to advance scientific elites within the country. Unfortunately, Saudi student make up only 30 percent of KAUST's student population (Matthews, 2012). The rest of the student body is constructed of 30 percent from the Americas and Europe, 30 percent from Asia and the Middle East, and 10 per cent from Africa (Matthews, 2012). Part of the issue in recruiting students lays within the curriculum design which requires strong English, knowledge of the scientific method, and well-developed critical inquiry skills (Lindsey, 2011). The number of students meeting these criteria are limited due to the traditional rote methods of teaching and learning embedded within educational models across the Kingdom (House, 2012; Krieger, 2007; Moughrabi, 2009; Murphy, 2012) as well as the competition for Saudi students by other international institutions (Lindsey, 2011).

The Broader Benefits of Higher Education

There are many economic and social benefits that students can garner from higher education. Based on a review of higher education in the United States, Baum and Ma (2007) indicated that education pays in more ways than just financially and those

benefits extend from the individual to all of society. On an individual basis, Baum and Ma (2007) found a positive correlation between higher education and higher earnings. Additionally, college graduates have a reduced likelihood of having reliance on public assistance and are more likely than those without a college degree to have health insurance and pension benefits provided by their employers (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2005). On a societal basis, having a higher education corresponded to lower unemployment and poverty rates, a greater contribution of tax revenues and a lower likelihood of dependency on social programs (Baum & Ma, 2007; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998). Overall, the higher the education the more likely individuals were to participate in civic responsibilities such as, volunteering, voting and giving blood (Baum & Ma, 2007; Institute for Higher Education, 2005). Baum and Ma (2007) also stated that the children of college graduates benefited from their parents education through the ability to achieve higher levels of school readiness and a greater likelihood of going to college themselves. Notably, those who have completed a college education are more likely to be open to the differing views of others (Baum & Ma, 2007).

In another study focused on higher education policy within the United States, McMahon (2009) used a modern human capital approach in analyzing the benefits of higher education at both the market and non-market level. Market level benefits included higher salaries, more job availability, and overall economic growth (McMahon, 2009). The non-market benefits were divided into two categories – social and private. Non-market social benefits were directed at others in society including future generations. Therefore, non-market social benefits within the study focused on

contributions to democratic institutions, human rights advocacy, political stability, reduced crime rates, civic action, and charitable institutions all of which tend to foster a positively enhanced future for society (McMahon, 2009). Non-market private benefits focused on improved health care, improved quality and longevity of life for children and adults, and improved cognitive development in children.

In particular, McMahon's (2009) research identified several points of discussion that must be addressed in order for the American higher education system to continue to meet the needs of society. For instance, continued advancements in technology require advanced skills which are greater than those received through a high school diploma in order to enter the job market. McMahon (2009) noted:

> The impacts of technology on the economy and the kinds of skills and numbers of graduates required are much more important to higher education's mission. When combined with the impacts of globalization as higher-paying but medium- to lower-skill manufacturing jobs are outsourced internationally, these powerful forces are together much more likely to determine higher education's future. (p. 21.)

Therefore, McMahon (2009) noted that policy issues concerning access, affordability, and funding for higher education must be addressed while 80 percent of students within the United States graduate high school, but only 27 percent finish college. Likewise, for higher education to serve as the venue from which a knowledge-based society is structured and grows, investments in higher education must be balanced between both private and public funding (McMahon, 2009). By appropriately funding research institutions, master's and PhD graduates serve to educate undergraduates and/or fill research and administrative roles in private and public sector firms and governmental programs (McMahon, 2009). Because research within higher education also holds a key role in both the creation and dissemination of knowledge, "research

conducted at universities impacts national economic productivity and the gross national product (GDP) as well as improving the quality of leisure time and community life throughout the world" (McMahon,2009, p.256).

On a more global scale, there were similar benefits for individuals who have completed a higher education as those aforementioned (OECD, 2012; Wildavsky, 2010). Though there still remained an earnings gap for women globally at all levels of education and a significant difference in voting behaviors in most countries associated with educational attainment, longevity of life, higher forms of civic engagement as well as greater satisfaction with one's life were found to be benefits of higher education (OECD, 2012). Therefore, individual and societal benefits from attaining a higher education both in the United States and abroad were indicative of contributions to democratic institutions, human rights, political stability, lower state welfare and health care costs and set the stage for subsequent economic growth for all of society (Baum & Ma, 2007; OECD, 2012).

Neoliberal Influences on Higher Education

Pasque (2010) noted in her research that scholars who speak with an advocacy voice with a call to action between higher education and society share two patterns of thought. First, that there is an interdependence between public and private good, and second, higher education is facing a crisis requiring that leaders take action "to change the focus of education from a capitalistic, privatized, market-driven model to one that better serves an inclusive and diverse public good in order to promote educational equity and justice" (Pasque, 2010, p. 31). However, many national and even international movements in higher education have been highly influenced by neoliberal

suppositions which lie in opposition to the aforementioned. Neoliberalism supports the marketization of higher education as a private commodity and tends to perpetuate inequities within society (Apple, 2006; Cuban, 2004; Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Torres, 2005). Olssen (1996) noted that neoliberalism calls for state policies that create competition. The state's responsibility then becomes centered on the management of such systems of competition (Olssen & Peters, 2005). In its application to public education, neoliberalism reproduces oppressive power structures, creates roadblocks to participation in politics for the underprivileged, and further oppresses marginalized populations (Lahann & Reagan, 2011).

Relative to social action, Amthor and Metzger (2011) explored the presence of United States institutions of higher education abroad in terms of neoliberal global environments. The focus of the study was to look at the impact of American universities in Eastern Europe (Amthor & Metzger, 2011). The authors concluded that "exported institutions of higher education act at the intersection of local imperatives and global influences and may be able to attend to democratic educational imperatives" (Amthor & Metzger, 2011, p. 78). In other words, exported institutions of higher education provide a road map for individuals and group entities to facilitate the flow of information or knowledge to and from the local, national and international levels that they represent.

This informational highway creates the potential for open communication bridges to be built between borders. As these bridges are built, information is processed and either accepted or rejected based on the interpretations that occur during the cross border exchange (Amthor & Metzger, 2011). Students within these institutions then

become translators, or for lack of a better term, switchboard operators, along these highways. They learn to negotiate the information or knowledge being passed between borders from multiple lenses and worldviews. This in turn provides an avenue for social action and change to occur within their home communities (Amthor & Metzger, 2011).

As is evident from the aforementioned article that students and scholars have opportunities to cross international borders in order to further their education and/or research. For example, Knight (2011) reviewed the impact of six global educational hubs and their contribution to the internationalization of higher education. In particular, Knight (2011) looked at how the competitiveness within the field of higher education is impacted by cross border movements of students and scholars, along with the formation of foreign educational providers and branch campuses. Knight (2011) concluded that educational hubs represent a new investment in internationalization, but require considerable resources – policies, human capital, infrastructure and investment in order to remain sustainable within the countries where they exist.

Ariely (2012) furthered the discussion by looking at the impact globalization has on citizens in terms of national identity in a study that spanned across sixty-three nations. Ariely's (2012) study indicated that as opportunities for globalization increased within these nations patriotism, ethnic identity and citizens' willingness to fight for their country declined. On the other hand, the study indicated that globalization did not result in citizens' diminished empathy toward their national identification, nor their view of their country as better than that of another's country – nationalism. Thus, Ariely (2012) concluded:

> While the impact of globalization does not erode people's national identification or their sense of nationalism, it seems that it does reduce

> their ethnic conceptions of membership in the nation as well as their explicit pride in their country. It also erodes their willingness to participate in one of the most demanding tasks that a nation can request – to participate in war. (477-478)

Hence, exported institutions of higher education (Amthor & Metzger, 201) and the resulting educational hubs that they create (Knight, 2011), while an investment in the internationalization of a continuously growing global society, may in fact result in differing constructions of national identity within countries (Ariely, 2012). It is for this reason that in this study, a focus is placed on national identity as it pertains to one particular country, Saudi Arabia, due to the unique changes occurring in its higher education system, the implementation of the King Abdullah Scholarship program and the motivational push for educational reform by the Saudi Monarchy.

Elyas and Picard (2013) critically examined the impact of 9/11 on higher education reformation initiatives in Saudi Arabia and revealed the adoption of a neoliberal educational policy promoting globalization through means of marketization. However, differing thought patterns as to why reformation of the Saudi educational system exists. Some researchers believe educational reform was brought about by the 1950's oil revenues which heightened the Kingdom's ability and responsibility to provide free education to its people (Elyas & Picard, 2013). Though the curriculum remained predominately founded in Islamic teachings and Arab nationalism, it proved to lack in rigor until after the events of 9/11. Others argued that educational reform within the Kingdom was the result of criticism toward the Saudi educational system due to the link between educational curriculum and Wahhabi religious values which promote intolerance, anti-Semantic, anti-American, and anti-Western views, and was

perceived as partially responsible for Islamic extremism that led to 15 of the 19 terrorist from 9/11 originating from Saudi Arabia (Elyas & Picard, 2013).

Continued social and political debates over educational reformation within the Kingdom have resulted in constraints on the ability of educators to:

> Provide access only to the desired elements of neoliberal discourse that will enable operation in a global economy, i.e. greater marketability, access to knowledge and technology, and individual creativity and critical thinking skills, yet at the same time rigidly govern the individual's social activity and knowledge construction. (Elyas & Picard, 2013, p. 37)

As a result of their research, Elyas and Picard (2013) suggested that a glocalization policy of educational reformation be put in place; through glocalization or the acknowledgement of both local and global stakeholders within the Saudi market, higher education can remain driven by the state and supported by religious entities within the Kingdom while still competing in a competitive global market.

A Knowledge-based Society

A knowledge-based society requires the ability to "process information and knowledge in ways that maximize learning, stimulate ingenuity and invention, and develop the capacity to initiate and cope with change" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3). Therefore, such a society would require educational leadership that "promotes deep cognitive learning" and "collegial teams or professional learning communities" (Hargreaves, 2003, pp. 24-25). However, the indigenization of knowledge takes time and a potential shift in the educational paradigm for Saudi Arabia. Likewise, trends in educational reform are bound to create political implications. Such can easily be seen in the influences of the Bologna Process in Europe. What can be learned from the political implications of the Bologna Process can dually serve as an insight to the

educational reformation within Saudi Arabia and the impact that this might have on future political ties and advancements within the Kingdom in terms of globalization, internationalization, political reformation and most importantly, national identity.

The Bologna Process

In June of 1999, a meeting occurred in Bologna, Italy in order to create a declaration that "emphasized the role of higher education in supporting European economic growth and the international resurgence of the Continent" (Gaston, 2010, p. 2). Originally, the Bologna Process sought to accomplish just six broad actions: create comparable degrees, organize higher education into two main cycles, create a recognized system of credits, encourage educational mobility through cross-border opportunities, develop a strong commitment to quality assurance, and promote the necessary dimensions in European higher education (Gaston, 2010; Hartman, 2008). These actions occurred and outlasted initial expectations in that more than a decade later the Bologna Process is still well under way and participants in the process are now viewing the Bologna Process as a global model for educational reformation (Gaston, 2010).

In terms of political implications, the Bologna Process has forced the governmental systems of Europe to look at their practices across the strata of educational requirements and standards, workforce accessibility, economic disparities and even competing interests in order to create a broader knowledge-based society (Gaston, 2010; Hartman, 2008). This in turn has made European higher education more competitive internationally – a long term goal for which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia additionally seeks to accomplish (Onsman, 2011, p. 522). In addition, the Bologna

Process has created an avenue by which "the general approach to teaching and learning and the competencies the students are expected to acquire during a given course or program of study are expected to become more comparable across Europe" (Kehm, 2010, p. 44).

However, even within this process, a coupling system has been revealed showing that on local, national and international levels there is tension within higher education and its battle with both equity versus selectivity of admissions criteria and the availability of student resources. Kehm (2010) describes:

> On the one hand, European higher education systems are making efforts to accommodate additional numbers and types of students, especially those from non-traditional groups, as well as viewing advanced education as a lifelong undertaking. On the other hand, rankings, league tables and national performance-measuring exercises have generated an intense competition among universities, which contend for faculty and student talent – especially if the outcomes of rankings are linked to funding decisions, as they are in the national performance measurements. (p. 45)

In essence, there is a push for a more mainstream process to be put in place for educating the general populace of Europe with ease of transferability across borders. However, the competition for resources, including knowledge, has intensified in the process requiring the need for European governments to conduct further evaluation of ranking systems in relation to funding (Kehm, 2010). As it stands, partnerships and cross-border negotiations within the university system have unintentionally produced tension in the competition for resources (Kozma, 2008; Hartman, 2008).

Comparatively, it appears that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is experiencing these same tensions over the competition for resources within its system of higher education. Within the Kingdom, universities under the Ministry of Higher Education are not receiving equitable resources compared to universities sponsored by the private

sector in terms of management, curriculum, financing and academic structure (Krieger, 2007; Lindsey, 2011; Moughrabi, 2009; Onsman, 2011). For the ebb and flow of a knowledge-based society (Hargreaves, 2003) within the Kingdom to follow the path of the Bologna Process, the Saudi Monarchy will need to find a way to balance resources equitably between both the public and private sectors of higher education.

Globalization and Internationalization

Research has shown that globalization and internationalization are intricately interwoven concepts that reciprocally support one another (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Bassett, 2006; Knight, 2004; Maringe & Foskett, 2010). While this research study will predominately focus on internationalization in higher education, it is important to note that internationalization cannot be explored nor defined without first creating a solid understanding of globalization and then addressing the relationship between the two.

Specifically, globalization has worked as an accelerant to institutional internationalization through advancements in technology, global economics, cross-border movements, common currencies and shared languages (Maringe & Foskett, 2010)/. Maringe and Foskett (2010) defined globalization as:

> a multidimensional concept that relates to creating a world in which the social, cultural, technological, political and ideological aspects of life become increasingly homogeneous and in which economic interdependence and growth are driven by the principles of the free market. (p. 24)

As a response to globalization, research suggests that higher education policy makers looked to internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Bassett, 2006; Knight, 2004; Maringe & Foskett, 2010). Altbach and Knight defined internationalization as "policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions – and even individuals – to cope with the global academic environment" (2007, p. 290). The

internationalization of higher education is motivated by many factors such as economics, curriculum enrichment, and the acquisition of knowledge and language (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Currently, the majority of literature on globalization and internationalization specific to higher education is a result of work produced within the Western world and by Western writers (Maringe & Foskett, 2010). Therefore, Maringe and Foskett (2010), in an effort to broaden the scope, conducted a global study to explore how key senior university staff around the world had interpreted and defined globalization and internationalization, what strategic choices universities were making globally in terms of internationalization, and to create a global map of practices in internationalization.

Maringe and Foskett (2010) defined three globally specific categories by which to report their results: Western universities (USA, Canada, Australia, UK and continental Europe), non-Western universities (South America, Africa South of the Sahara, China, Japan and Korea) and universities found within North Africa and the Middle East. The results of their study showed that Western universities were pro-globalization while non-Western universities met the concept of globalization with uncertainty and those found in North Africa and the Middle East displayed clear feelings against globalization. While the majority of participants in the study viewed internationalization as higher education's response to globalization, it should be noted that in North Africa and the Middle East the approach to internationalization was more concerned with enhancing the quality of the curriculum while in Western universities the focus was more directed toward recruitment of students, collaborative teaching and research (Maringe & Foskett, 2010).

Likewise, the majority of the universities participating in the study described themselves as international with half of them holding a separate strategy document for internationalization (Maringe & Foskett, 2010). Of those without a separate strategy document, over two-thirds were in non-Western universities and universities within North Africa and the Middle East. Therefore in Non-western Universities and North Africa and the Middle East, internationalization was of lesser importance to participants responding to the survey than to participants of Western universities.

Direction of the Work

In this chapter, the advancement and structure of the Saudi higher educational system has been introduced. Likewise, the impact of neoliberal influences on higher education have been discussed along with the importance of creating a knowledge-based society. The Bologna Process and globalization and internationalization have also been discussed and defined. Moving forward in chapter II, an educational framework of both the Saudi and United States educational system is provided in order to establish a foundational understanding of the historical educational differences within the two countries along with a review of international student study abroad experiences. Chapter III offers a theoretical framework to identity development taking into account both individual and collective identities in order to present the foundation by which this study will explore the possible changes of Saudi Students' perception of their national identity that may occur while they are studying in the United States. Chapter IV outlines the construction of the research design, and chapter V details the findings of the study. In chapter VI, a discussion is provided along with implications and recommendations for future research. Chapter VII provides a brief conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER II: A BRIEF HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY LITERARY FRAMEWORK

Educational Framework

The following chapter is focused on defining the structures of the educational systems found both within Saudi Arabia and the United States and defining pertinent aspects of the study abroad experience. Understanding each countries educational system aids in understanding how national identity is preserved within the social memory of each of these nations (Worden, 2014). Social memories influence perceptions of who and what we are in the past, present and future and are preserved through "teaching, telling stories and talking about the nation" (Worden, 2014, p. 15). Because national identity may be expressed in multiple ways depending upon group characteristics, historical events, individual members' sense of belonging, and other cultural markers, it is important to note that these collective perceptions of ourselves aid in constructing national cultures with which we identify (Byung-Jin, 2003; Hall 1993). The classroom then becomes the curator of social or collective memories of a shared past and serves as the primary means for fostering their longevity through the development of students who become citizens of a nation (Worden, 2014). In this sense, Worden (2014) notes:

> Educational reform is controversial. Changes— even proposed changes —to curricula, textbooks, and other determinants of what is taught in a nation's classrooms excite heated discussion. The temperature of the debate reflects a belief held by many that education is fundamental to creating a common people. Part of this education includes the teaching of a common history, which is widely thought to instill national values, foster national identity, bolster social cohesion, and perpetuate a nation's story for generations to come. (p.1)

Therefore by exploring the structure of both the Saudi and United States educational systems, a foundational understanding of how each nation preserves their social memories and develops their national identities through education can be formed and compared. For the purpose of this work, national identity will be defined as an individual's sense of belonging to a collective such as a state or nation for which social memories, histories, cultures, languages, governance, laws, institutions, and ceremonies are shared and developed through both formal and informal educational opportunities.

Equally important is an understanding of the pertinent aspects of the study abroad experience. Since the focus of this research study seeks to gain knowledge of the ways in which Saudi students talk about how they make meaning of their national identities when participating in a study abroad experience within the United States, it is important to have a full understanding of the nature of study abroad programming and how it impacts learning outcomes and lived experiences.

The Creation of Two Countries

Additionally, how both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States were created is pertinent to this study in understanding the underlying principles of citizenship for each nation. What is now thought of as modern Saudi Arabia was not established until 1932 following a long series of wars that eventually united much of the Arabian Peninsula (House, 2012). Former King Sharif Hussain bin Ali of Mecca ruled over the Hejaz which encompassed the former Arabian Peninsula from northern Jordan to the Asir region in the south from 1916 until 1924. By 1925, Sharif had been defeated and expelled from the region through a war fought by Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan, a brutal Bedouin militia that sought to enforce a purified form of Islam under a Wahhabism

ideal forcing individuals to choose between conversion and death (Aarts & Roelants, 2015). Unfortunately, the Ikhwan over estimated their power and by 1929, Ibn Saud turned against them in order to protect his relationship with the British and more importantly to solidify his power over his Kingdom. Where persuasion failed Ibn Saud, a use of power could uphold the submission of his people in what has for generations remained a delicate balance between religion and the Monarchy. "As is clear by now, the [Saudi] regime perpetually performs a delicate minuet, dancing closer at times to the religious establishment and at other times to modernizers, but always focused on retaining Al Saud control" (House, 2012, p. 23). However delicate the dance, the Saudi Monarchy has continued to implement reforms to advance the country even though these reforms are not aimed at sharing power, but to maintain the Monarchy's power structure.

On the other hand, the United States was founded through settler colonialism (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). Settler colonialism is "the founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft" (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, p. 2). In 1492, Columbus sailed upon the Bahamas in the Caribbean Sea and made first contact with the indigenous people. His quest was for gold and wealth to repay his investors in Spain for funding his expedition; however, what he sought came to no avail. With the pressure of an unpaid debt and the desire to further his quest, he enslaved the indigenous people and opened the door for further conquest and conquers including the English settlers who later took claim of what is now modern day Virginia and Massachusetts (Zinn, 2003). By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, settler colonization was in full force within the

soon to be United States. The indigenous population was decreased from one hundred million to just ten million through an unnamed genocide that occurred via illness, deportation, enslavement, malnutrition, starvation, and the slaughtering of indigenous people in order to take possession of their land (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). By 1776, the United States consisting of just 13 colonies declared itself an independent nation ruled by the constitution of the United States, but the forced removal of the original indigenous people continued on as the country expanded West past the Mississippi river. English settlers were drawn to the promise of *free* land, while the indigenous people paid the cost (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014).

Education in Saudi Arabia

Quality education brings not only economic growth to a country, but also promotes human development (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998, 2005; Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, & Abouchakra, 2014; McMahon, 2009). There are many obstacles yet to overcome as Saudi Arabia works diligently to reform its educational programs in pursuit of economic growth and human development. Specifically, Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, and Abouchakra (2014) argued that the Kingdom faces five key challenges. The first challenge is the need to expand the Kingdom's educational system which is currently being addressed through increased financial support from the government (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2012). Second, the Kingdom's success rate as defined by the ratio of student who become skilled workers entering the workforce and who are achieving social goals as a result of educational reformation will need to be measured (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, & Abouchakra, 2014). Third, Maroun et al., argue that Saudi Arabia must learn to embrace

globalization while holding true to cultural traditions and values in order to compete in the global market. Fourth, technology must be incorporated into the curriculum. Finally, the Kingdom's "national identity must be protected from a cultural invasion by technology and mass media communication, using a balanced approach that would allow the use of technology within cultural limits" (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, & Abouchakra, 2014, p. 24).

According to the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia (2012) in Washington, D.C., the Kingdom recognizes that its citizens are the key to the nation's development and future. Approximately twenty-five percent of the annual budget has been invested into educational initiatives for Saudi's growing youth population. Over five-million students are enrolled in Saudi's primary schools with a 96 percent overall national literacy rate. Likewise, the Kingdom has created partnerships with universities world-wide to create opportunities for advancement through shared academic programs within both public and private national colleges and universities. And in order to promote learning at the global level, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program has been implemented sending over 130,000 Saudi students to more than 20 countries world-wide.

In addition, ongoing initiatives in the Kingdom's educational programs play a vital role in the advancement of the nation and its people. Prokop (2003) noted:

> The challenge is two-fold: first, the skills of graduates must be matched with the demands of the employment market, which involves a move from quantitative expansion to qualitative improvement of the educational system. Second – and by far the most daunting challenge – sufficient employment opportunities must be created by increasing the proportion of native Saudis in the workforce, introducing economic reforms to attract investment and encouraging the participation of the private sector in employment creation. (pp. 87-88)

The skills obtained by Saudi's graduates must match the demands of the market and advancements within the private sector must be made in order for employment opportunities to be created. The number of government jobs available in the past will not provide sufficient enough employment opportunities for future graduates. In order to make these necessary changes, it will require more than just the creation of new educational institutions, but also an improvement to the quality of education housed within these institutions (Prokop, 2003). Similarly, Prokop (2003) argues that economic reform must be considered to promote investment in the private sector.

History of Saudi's Educational System

Saudi Arabia's educational system has undergone several transitions since the establishment of the Kingdom in 1932 (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2013). Initially, only the children of the very wealthy were privileged to an education within the Kingdom, and it was not until the 1930's that a formal primary education system was established. In 1945, King Abdulaziz bin Abdelrahman Al-Saud began a six year process to establish schools across the Kingdom. By 1951, approximately 266 schools had been established with a total enrollment of 29,887 students and by 1957 the first institution of higher education, King Saud University, was established in Riyadh, the country's capital (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2013). The continued growth and demand for education within the Kingdom led to the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1954 and the Ministry of Higher Education in 1975. Currently, within Saudi's educational system there are over 25,000 public schools, 24 public universities, and 8 private universities offering a free education, books and health services to all Saudi citizens.

Ministry of education. When initially established, the Ministry of Education's most important responsibilities were to: create an administrative plan, construct and improve the Kingdoms standards of education, and to lay the appropriate foundation for higher education (Ministry of Education, 2011). Furthermore, the Ministry was to provide education to every citizen of learning age by investing in the construction of new schools, renovation of existing educational institutions and improving curriculum. Most notably, the Ministry of Education was charged with an initiative to eliminate adult illiteracy within the Kingdom.

The First Development Plan to improve the quality of education in Saudi Arabia was created in 1970 by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2011). Once the plan was initiated, the student population grew six-fold between the 1970s and the 1990s and the number of full-time teachers grew more than nine-fold. This reduced the ratio of teachers to students within the Kingdom down to one teacher per every fifteen students – one of the lowest ratios in the world (Ministry of Education, 2011). Since the initial implementation of the Development Plan, illiteracy rates within the Kingdom have been reduced, but there is still work to be done. Overall literacy rates within the Kingdom were estimated at 87.2 percent in 2011 with males averaging 90.8 percent and females at 82.2 percent (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Likewise, the Ministry of Education is responsible for providing free general educational services to disabled people and for upkeep of the antiquities and museums within the Kingdom (Ministry of Education, 2011).

Educational structures. By 1958, a uniform educational system was adopted both by Saudi Arabia and other members of the Arab League (Ministry of Higher

Education, 2006). The uniform educational system consisted of a 6-year elementary program, 3-year intermediate program and a 3-year secondary program (Table 1). In addition to the aforementioned levels, Saudi Arabia also created a pre-elementary program where children ages four and five attend nursery school and then transition to preliminary school in preparation for elementary. Pre-elementary is not mandatory, but is available for those parents who would like their children to attend.

Elementary school is compulsory and considered the foundational basis for all education within the Kingdom (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). At age six children begin elementary school which consists of two 15-week semesters each year for a total of six years. After completing grades 1-4, students will begin to take yearly two-week exams that they must pass before moving to the next consecutive year of school. From elementary school forward, boys and girls attend separate schools.

Following elementary school students are enrolled in Intermediate (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). Intermediate school is for children between the ages of twelve and fourteen and follows the same pattern as elementary with two 15-week semesters each year. Likewise, students will take two-week exams each year which they must pass before moving to the next consecutive school year. In intermediate school students are required to take English each year. At the end of intermediate school an examination is given to determine completion. Students who pass the exam will receive an Intermediate School Certificate which serves as the prerequisite for entering secondary school. Those who do not pass will need to repeat appropriate coursework as defined by the intermediate school until they pass their exam and can move forward to secondary school.

Table 1

Saudi Arabian Educational Ladder

	Age	Grade							
							Colleges & Universities		
Higher Education Level	25 > to Apply	Graduate School	General Education	Technical Education			Masters & Doctorates	Masters & Doctorates	
		Five						Undergraduate Programs in Medicine & Engineering	
		Four		Technical College			Undergraduate Programs		
		Three							
		Two							
		One							
Secondary Level	17+	Sixth	Secondary Education	Technical Assistant	Agriculture	Commerce	Industry	Secondary Education	
	16+	Fifth							
	15+	Fourth							
Intermediate Level	14+	Third	Intermediate Education						
	13+	Second							
	12+	First							
Elementary Level	11+	Sixth	Elementary Education						
	10+	Fifth							
	9+	Fourth							
	8+	Third							
	7+	Second							
	6+	First							
Pre-Elementary Level	5-6	Preliminary	Optional (Students are not required to attend Nursery or Preliminary School)						
	3-4	Nursery							
	Under 4	Infant	Home						

Saudi Arabian Educational Ladder

Note. Source data compiled from the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, www.mohe.gov.sa (2013).

Secondary school is a three year program for students between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). Students in secondary school will study the same curriculum for their first year and then select one of three programs for their final two years of education: administration and social sciences, natural sciences, or Sharia and Arabic studies. Preference for the natural science program is given to students who maintain high marks in mathematics and physical science during their tenth grade year. Following elementary and intermediate format, secondary school consists of two 15-week semesters each year and yearly two-week exams. In order to complete secondary school, students must pass all required credits and the individual subject examinations with no less than a fifty percent.

Ministry of higher education. In 1975 a royal decree was initiated creating the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). See Figure 1 for the current structure. The Ministry was specifically asked to establish higher education institutions offering programs in specialized fields in order to meet the needs of Saudi and international job markets. Though the Saudi higher education system is set up much like that of the United States, special consideration was taken to incorporate Islamic culture into differing aspects of the educational process in order to maintain culturally sustainable human resources within the Kingdom (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). Along with creating and administering higher education institutions, the Ministry was also asked to increase the communications and coordination between institutions and agencies within the job market in order to assess and create targeted research centers for knowledge production. Finally, the Ministry is

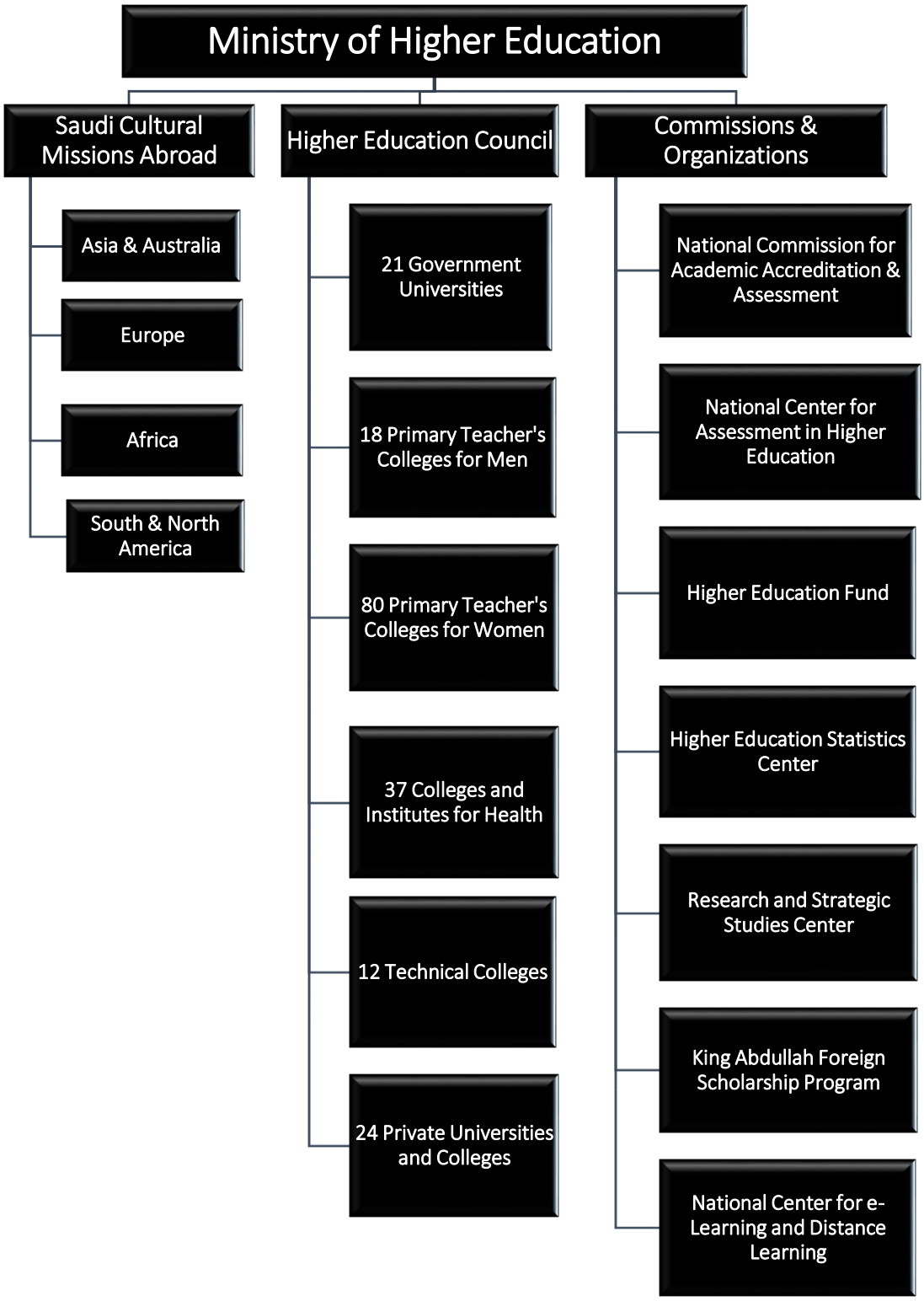


Figure 1. Branches of the Ministry of Higher Education. Source data compiled from the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, www.mohe.gov.sa (2014).

also in charge of representing the Saudi government abroad in over 32 countries concerning educational and cultural affairs.

The Ministry of Higher Education has implemented a strategic plan, the Horizons Project, which spans over 25 years and is focused on the continued development of the Kingdom's higher education programming (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). In particular, the Horizons Project seeks to build knowledge economies within the Kingdom through the development of higher education by preparing Saudi citizens with the necessary skills needed for an advanced labor market. Under the Horizons Project, the Ministry of Higher Education is given management over three dominant entities: the Higher Education Council, the Kingdom's commissions and organizations for the advancement of higher education, and the Saudi Cultural Missions Abroad (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). Each of these entities play a leading role in the management of higher education through expansion, self-evaluation, program initiation, and the creation of organizations for both local and global advancements of the Kingdom. See Figure 1 for a specific breakdown of each branch of the Ministry of Higher Education and their responsibilities.

Higher education council. The Higher Education Council has authority over all higher education institutions within the Kingdom except for those used for military purposes (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). See Table 2 for a specific list of institutions under the management of the Council. Each institution is held accountable for the education of the Kingdom's citizens through an evaluation based on the guidelines provided by the Horizons Project. Likewise, the Council is responsible for ensuring that educational policy is enforced, the development of educational programs

Table 2

Saudi Arabian Institutions of Higher Education Listed in Alphabetical Order

Saudi Arabian Institutions of Higher Education		
Government Universities	**Private Colleges**	**Private Universities**
Al Baha University	Albaha Private College of Science	Al Yamamah University
Al Jouf University	Al-Farabi Dentistry College	Alfaisal University
Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University	Al-Ghad International Medical Science Colleges	Arab Open University
Almajmaah University	Almarifah College for Science and Technology	Dar Al Uloom University
Islamic University	Arriyadah College of Medical Sciences	Effat University
Jazan University	Batterjee Medical College	King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
King Abdulaziz University	Buraydah College for Applied Medical Sciences	Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals	College of Business Administration	Prince Sultan University
King Faisal University	Dar Al-Hekma College	Prince Sultan University for Tourism and Business
King Khalid University	Global Colleges	
King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences	Ibn Sina National College for Medical Studies	
King Saud University	Mohammad Al Mani College for Medical Sciences	
Najran University	Prince Fahd Bin Sultan College	
Northern Borders University	Prince Sultan College for Tourism & Management	
Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University	Qassim Private Colleges	
Qassim University	Riyadh College of Dentistry and Pharmacy	
Salman Bin Abdulaziz University	Saad College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences	
Shagra University	Soliman Fakeeh College for Science and Nursing	
Taibah University	Sulaiman Al Rajhi Colleges	
Taif University		
Umm Al-Qura University		
University of Dammam		
University of Ha'il		
University of Tabuk		

Note. Source data compiled from the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, www.mohe.gov.sa (2013).

Table 3

Saudi Higher Education Commissions and Organizations

Commission and Organization	Role in Higher Education
National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment	The National Commission for Academic Accreditation is responsible for Quality Centers which have been established in each university and college as a prerequisite to accreditation.
National Center for Assessment in Higher Education	The National Center for Assessment in Higher Education is responsible for ensuring equal opportunity in higher education by monitoring admissions requirements, standardized testing, the collection of funds to cover operating expenses for testing, and research based reporting on test results across institutions within the Kingdom.
Higher Education Fund	The Higher Education Fund is to aid students whose majors will directly contribute to the economic development of the Kingdom under the Horizons Project, for the establishment of scientific and academic programs at universities, and to establish new colleges and expand existing ones.
Higher Education Statistics Center	The Higher Education Statistics Center is responsible for the collection of statistical information on higher education and its archiving, analization, publication and dissemination to related organization within and outside the Kingdom.
Research and Strategic Studies Center	The Research and Strategic Studies Center works in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Central Department of Statistics and Information and the Ministry of Higher Education to reduce waste in the educational process by streamlining programming and providing recommendations to the Ministry of Higher Education concerning expansions to higher education institutions ability to accommodate public education.
King Abdullah Foreign Scholarship Program	The King Abdullah Foreign Scholarship Program was established to provide funding for Saudi students participating in foreign study at bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels within areas of study that meet the needs of the Kingdom's economic development plan.
National Center for e-Learning and Distance Learning	The National Center for e-Learning and Distance Learning was established to promote and bring education to all people within the Kingdom.

Note. Source data compiled from the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, www.mohe.gov.sa (2014) and The National Report (2009).

and research and the creation and enforcement of regulatory rules of compliance within each higher education institution (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014).

Commissions and organizations. In order to remain in compliance with regulatory guidelines created through the Horizons Project and in alignment with government policy, the Ministry of Higher Education has established several commissions and organizations for the purpose of maintaining quality in higher education commissioned to promote a knowledge-based economy through the development of human resources. See Table 3 for specific information on each commission and organization. The commissions and organizations that have been created and maintained under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education serve the sole purpose of aiding in the restructuring of higher education within the Kingdom and in government sponsored study abroad programming (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). The Ministry is diligently working to create partnerships between higher education and the labor sector by fostering relationships with graduating students and the labor market through skills knowledge development. Through radical changes in educational practices, funding, and research, the newly developed commissions and organizations serve to raise internal efficiency and provide quality checks for accreditation of universities and colleges.

Saudi missions abroad. The Saudi Arabian Cultural Missions located across the globe implement educational initiatives and training policies for qualified Saudi citizens studying abroad at some of the best colleges and universities in twenty-three qualifying countries. See Table 4 for a list of qualifying countries where Saudi students attend. Likewise, the cultural missions abroad disseminate information on Saudi culture,

programming (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). Each of which has been and traditions, and Arabic culture through participation in cultural, educational and social activities within the countries where they are housed. See Table 5 for a list of the four divisions of Saudi cultural missions globally and their corresponding international offices.

The cultural missions abroad are also responsible for the oversight of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program recipient's educational programming and funding distributions (Ministry of Higher Education, 2014). The program was initially designed to last for a period of five years starting in 2005. Upon the successful completion of the initial program in 2010, the Ministry of Higher Education requested that King Abdullah renew the scholarship program for an additional five year period. The King Abdullah Scholarship Program provides opportunities for Saudi students to pursue undergraduate and graduate university education abroad in academic disciplines that meet the needs of the Saudi government's private sector and labor market. These include the following

Table 4

Approved Countries for Saudi Students to Study Abroad

Approved Countries for Saudi Students to Study Abroad		
United States of America	Canada	United Kingdom
Ireland	France	Spain
Italy	Australia	Germany
The Netherlands	Poland	New Zealand
Austria	Hungary	Czech Republic
Singapore	South Korea	Japan
People's Republic of China	Malaysia	India
South Africa	Turkey	

Note. Source data compiled from the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, www.mohe.gov.sa (2014).

academic fields: Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Medical Sciences, Engineering, Computers, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Law, Accounting, e-Commerce, Finance, Insurance, and Marketing.

Gender and educational opportunity. In terms of education, gender-segregation in Saudi Arabia must be viewed in light of the historical complexity of gender roles which are deeply embedded within the culture and the very foundations of the nation. In particular, the inequity often noted revolves around the roles of women in higher education. Hamdan (2005) surmised that "the uniqueness of Saudi women's situation is derived from their presence and yet non-presence in the public sphere" (p. 45). It is the non-presence particular to education that is most concerning in terms of educational equity and equality within the Kingdom. According to Doumato (2000), even before the establishment of Saudi Arabia as a nation, education was associated

Table 5

The Four Continental Divisions of the Saudi Cultural Mission

Continents	Established International Offices	International Offices Under Construction
Asia & Australia	Malaysia, Australia, India, New Zealand, Japan	Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen, Pakistan, China, Singapore, South Korea
Europe	France, Austria, The United Kingdom & Ireland (combined), Germany	Italy, Bosnia & Herzegovina (combined)
Africa	Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco	Sudan, Mauritania
North & South America	United States, Canada	

Note. Source data compiled from the website of the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, www.mohe.gov.sa (2014).

with religious learning and left to the responsibility of the religious and/or the individual family. Therefore, the economic status of the family and/or the availability of educators within the local mosque were many times the determining factor for individual's ability to participate in the educational experience. Consequently, reading and writing for girls was considered non-essential and remained extremely unpopular up until as late as the 1960s.

Perhaps the most noted reason for this practice evolved from a friendship that developed in the eighteenth century between Ibn Saud and Muhammad ben Abdel Wahab, a religious fundamental reformer (Baki, 2004). From this friendship, the Sunni Islamic practice was transformed creating the strict orthodox Wahabi religious movement. At this same time, the Saudi nation was being formed by Abdel Aziz ben Saud who proclaimed himself king after uniting through military force the entire Arab peninsula. The Kingdom, in accordance with Islamic practice, then adopted the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's Hadith as the law of the land also known as Shari'a or Islamic law. With the adoption of Islamic law came a strong Wahabi interpretation of the Qur'an causing much controversy in terms of women's rights and abilities within the Kingdom. While the Qur'an encourages the education of both men and women and gives women the right to work, the Wahabi interpretation of the Qur'an strongly cautions against the mixing of the sexes among unmarried and unrelated men and women. Based on the Wahabi interpretation of the Qur'an as the law of the land, women's educational rights, as well as many others, became marginalized due to religious restrictions. As Doumato (2000) noted:

> The disparity between boys and girls in the distribution of religious learning can be seen as a logical reflection of gender hierarchies in the society as a whole, as

> a means by which these hierarchies could be reinscribed back into society: girls were taught enough to buy into an assigned role, a role in which they were subordinate to men, but not enough to challenge it. (93)

However, the practice of secluding Arab Muslim women from the public sphere has not always been common (Hamdan, 2005). According to Hamdan (2005), Muslim Arab women traditionally had the ability to participate in political, economic and social endeavors. However, an attempt by a Muslim extremist, Juhayman al-Otaybi, and his followers to take over the Grand Mosque of Mecca on November 20, 1979 as an act to end what he viewed as the Westernization of the nation brought a transformation in the view and role of women in Saudi society (Hamdan, 2005; Trofimov, 2007). From that point forward in history, women's issues became the catalyst of any conversation for change or progress within the Kingdom and their role in Saudi society as a voice in national development diminished. According to Trofimov (2007) prior to the siege, Saudi women were just beginning to emerge in society and could be seen publically through the workplace and even on TV.

Though the 1979 siege of the Grand Mosque of Mecca was not particularly focused on women's roles in society, it did set the stage for women's seclusion within society which in turn impacted women's educational opportunities (Hamdan, 2005). As aforementioned, the Wahabi interpretation of the Qur'an strongly cautions against the mixing of the sexes which directly impacted women's opportunity for education and participation in many public forums (Baki, 2004). After the attack on the Grand Mosque, the monarchy set out to strengthen its relationship with the 'ulama, the conservative religious scholars of the Kingdom, due to Juhayman al-Otaybi and his followers' connection to religious factions within the Kingdom and likewise, due to the

delicate balance the Monarchy must maintain between progress and Islamic tradition. As a part of their response to the attempted siege of the Grand Mosque, one of the pledges the Monarchy made was to confirm its adherence to Islam through the restriction of women's rights (Arebi, 1994).

Education in the United States of America

Unlike some countries abroad, there is no strong national policy for higher education within the United States (Bok, 2013). While the federal government provides funding in the form of financial aid for students and through research grants to professors, creating uniformity for a national agenda is complicated due to the multiple interests groups found within federal agencies who distribute government research funds. See Table 6. Likewise, higher education within the United States also receives funding through public donations, industry, state governments and public and private foundations. The federal government does hold some influence over higher education through general legislation restricting drug use and discrimination, and similarly, state governments also have some regulatory control through state laws (Bok, 2013).

Though the federal government has a limited role in running the United States educational system, it does provide leadership in educational policy development (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008). While non-governmental associations work to provide leadership on national issues in education and function as representatives for organizations, the federal government plays an important role in the collection, analysis, and publication of national education statistics. In addition, the federal government along with other private organizations, universities, and foundations financially supports educational research.

History of America's Educational System

Education within the United States can be traced as far back as pre-colonial America and the initial cultural exchanges that occurred between the early Europeans and the Native inhabitants of the New World (Urban & Wagoner, 2014). While these early interactions and exchanges of ideals were by no means equal in acceptance and more often than not ended in the dominant conquest of European cultural traditions and values, there were lessons learned from the natives that provided the early Europeans a means of survival within the New World (Urban & Wagoner, 2014). As the New World developed and turned into a nation through the colonization and cultural transplantation of its new inhabitants, its educational system also grew and developed creating the foundation of the nation's current academic system.

Table 6

Federal Agencies: Contributing to Educational Assistance and Supporting Research, Training, and Development

Federal Agencies	
U.S. Department of Education	U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of State	U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Agriculture	U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Department of Commerce	U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Labor	U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. National Science Foundation	U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs
U.S. National Endowment for the Arts	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities	U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services

Note. Source data compiled from the website of the U.S. Network for Education Information, http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-org-us.html (2008).

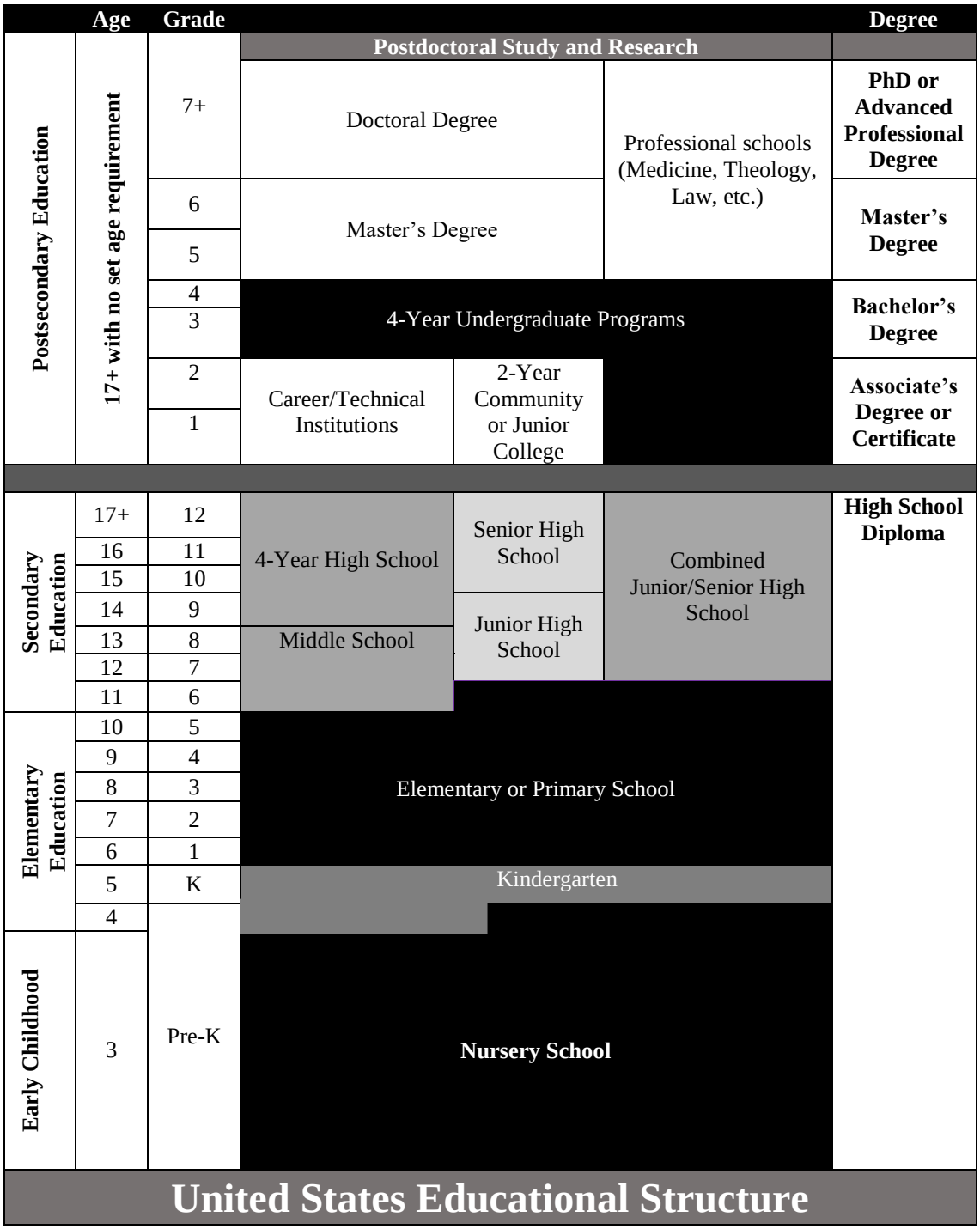
Colonial education in the United States consisted primarily of reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion (Gelbrich, 1999; Monaghan & Barry, 1999). For those who could afford an education, the most commonly used books were the Bible, a primer, and a hornbook (Gelbrich, 1999). Boys and girls were educated very differently depending upon their future roles and location within the colonies (Chesapeake College, 2010). Families with a strong social and economic status would educate their boys at home with a male tutor and if the family had ability, would then send their sons to England for higher education. Girls from families of social and economic status were taught at home by a governess, but higher education was not considered important for their roles. Children of poor families did not receive education, but were often assigned to apprenticeships to gain skills to ensure their futures. Early grammar schools did not develop until the 1700s due to the growth of the middle-class (Chesapeake College, 2010; Webb, 2006). By the nineteenth century, educational reformers began to create statewide common-school systems in order to preserve social stability and to work to prevent crime and poverty (Chesapeake College, 2010). By the 20th century, free public education provided by the states was common practice and attendance was mandatory.

K-12 Programming.

K-12 educational structures within the United States vary depending upon type, ownership, and governance (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008). State governments maintain authority over public preschool, elementary and secondary education. In addition, state governments are also responsible for the oversight of school curriculum, educational standards, and administrative policies and procedures. Most states regulate K-12 programming through state departments and boards of

Table 7

The Structure of Education in the United States



Note. Source data compiled from the website of the National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/figures/fig_01.asp (2012).

education; however, there are some national specialized agencies that also assist in this process.

Public schools. Schools are organized into four categories: pre-school, elementary, middle, and high schools (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008). Early childhood includes preschool education, nursery school, and some kindergarten levels depending on the institutional structure. Early childhood is available in most communities and in many states has been made mandatory within individual school districts (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008).

Elementary education refers to primary or elementary schools (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008). As can be noted in Table 7, the exact level at which elementary schools and middle schools separate can vary. Elementary school typically begins at grade 1 and ends somewhere between grades 4 and 7 depending upon the policies set forth by the state and individual school district.

Similarly, middle school begins between grades 5 and 9 depending upon the policies set forth by the state and individual school districts (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008). The majority of middle schools within the United States range between grades 6 thru 8; however, those in the upper range of grades 7 thru 9 are often referred to as junior high schools.

Secondary education generally consists of high schools that include grades 9 thru 12, but some variations in grade level can be found (U.S. Network for Education Information, 2008). At the high school level, there are a wide variety of subjects offered and students within the same school can follow very different educational tracks.

Private schools. Private schools within the United States exist at all levels and are attentive to state and local practices in terms of graduation requirements. This is vital for students who attend private schools, because the ease of transferability between public and private institutions and into higher education is very important.

Higher Education

Higher education in the United States can be traced all the way back to the colonial period and the foundational establishment of America (Thelin, 2004, 2014). Many historical educational institutions bore witness to and housed social, religious, and political movements that gave birth to the United States as a nation. Harvard became the foundational first institution of higher education in the United States in 1636 followed by other historically significant institutions such as William and Mary, Yale, King's, Philadelphia, Queen's, and Dartmouth (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin & Gasman, 2011). Initially, higher education models within the United States were set up following the structure of those found in England. Curriculums followed the models particular to Oxford and Cambridge with religion dominating students' campus activities (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004). In their infancy, these institutions served to educate the future leadership of the nation. Likewise, the curriculum focused on religious foundations and the procurement of qualities expected of refined gentlemen of the privileged class of America which was the audience of choice within the classroom. These early institutions conferred both the bachelor and master degree programs.

By the early 19th century, there were a variety of colleges and universities across the United States serving a multitude of purposes and constituents (Cohen & Kisker,

2010; Geiger, 1999, 2000; Thelin, 2014). The rise of higher education in the United States within this century gave birth to multiple educational movements such as the evolution of student life and extracurricular activities (now termed "co-curricular" to indicate the importance of in and out of classroom learning), the advancement of women in higher education, the predominance of scientific studies within the curriculum, and the emergence of the American model of higher education (Geiger, 2000). Student life and all extracurricular activities were at first governed by the students themselves, but this left room for many disciplinary issues such as hazing and other issues associated with classism (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; Pasque & Vargas, 2014). Many institutions began to provide funding and sponsorship within their ranks in order to hinder these disciplinary issues.

Women emerged within higher education during the 19th century for differing reasons (Geiger, 2000; Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001; Thelin, 2014). In the South, women's colleges were more predominant providing a liberal education for the refinement of future wives of the elite and in the North they served as training facilities for future teachers (Geiger, 2000). Unfortunately, women were often seen as intellectually inferior and were not provided the same opportunities in education as their male counterparts. "Another reason for the deep-seated hostility to women's higher education was that it derived from the thought patterns of a period when learning was the absolute prerogative of a priestly and leisure class which was predominantly male" (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004, p. 65). Despite these issues, women still pushed forward not just as students in higher education, but also in educational leadership (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001). Nidiffer and Bashaw (2001) noted that women served in

roles as disciplinarians, deans, and eventually college presidents. Similarly as accessibility for women into higher education increased and ideologies began to shift, the focus of the curriculum for women evolved and the discussion of what to teach women broadened (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004). Finally in 1833, Oberlin College became the first institution to welcome both men and women from its start into higher education with a shared curriculum. From this point forward, coeducational movements began to evolve.

Another shift within higher education in the 19th century was a move to a more technological and scientific curriculum (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; Geiger, 2002). Three major fields were finding a predominant place within the curriculum – agriculture, polytechnics, and science. The introduction of these fields led to the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; Geiger, 2000; Thelin, 2004). The Morrill Act of 1862 was passed in order to establish institutions of higher education in each state with access to all social classes and provided a gateway for expansion in fields such as agriculture, military training, and engineering (Thelin, 2004). "The federal legislation [second Morrill Act] of 1890 that helped to create the black land-grant colleges expanded access to higher education for an underserved racial minority but gave no consideration to the issue of racial integration on the campus" (Thelin, 2004, p. 150). The reforms in higher education established between 1880 and 1910 expanded higher education but did not address discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and class within higher education.

With the consistent growth and expansion of curriculum, the 19th century also ushered in a new way of thinking about higher education and thus, educators began to

re-evaluate the American system in light of specific elements found within the German model (Geiger, 2000). In particular, the German model appealed to American institutions in terms of preparatory studies, the advancement of knowledge through research, independence of both students and professors to research, and the establishment of the Ph.D. degree (Geiger, 2000). According to Geiger (2000):

> Both professors and students began also to look upon the Ph.D. as certifying this sort of training. The degree was a foreign transplant brought in, repotted, watered, and beloved only by professors; it appealed, at first, to no other occupational group. Not surprisingly most of the candidates for it hoped to become professors. Thus the degree itself became linked to professorial training – especially training in the skill that distinguished the high-powered new-model professor from the tattered older version: research. This linkage was reinforced by the centrality of specialized research in the careers of German professors, even though the educational program of German universities did not focus on research. The Ph.D. was, in Germany, the ordinary arts degree. But as the professor's degree in America, it acquired the character of the German professor rather than of the program in which he lectured. (p. 236)

The American system of higher education indulged in the advancements found in the German higher education system and borrowed vital components of their system in order to give birth to the American model of the university (Geiger, 2000). Hence the creation of the American Association of Universities and the setting of standards for the administration of higher education in the United States by the early 1900's.

As the 20th century took hold and the great World Wars subsided, the role of higher education in America began once more to evolve. Members of the American Legion aided with this process by introducing to law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act more commonly known as the GI Bill of 1944 which provided American service men and women paid access to higher education (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; The American Legion, 2008). Through the GI Bill, post-war unemployment was meant to be kept at bay by increasing the skilled labor market through enrollment in institutions of higher

education (McBain, 2008). In 1937, only 15% of 18 to 20 year olds were enrolled in college, but with the initiation of the GI Bill, enrollment in higher education increased from 1.5 million in 1940 to 2.7 million in 1950 (Hunt & Tierney, 2006). Increased enrollments caused a surge in the need for institutions of higher education and thus resulted in the development of the community college. The community college aided in the growth of the middle class in America by providing training for a skilled labor market. However just as quickly as the boom in education occurred, a drop in high school graduates, decreased population growth around areas where institutions were formed, and the end of the military draft stalled enrollments and the overall appeal of higher education (Thelin, 2007).

By the 21st century, higher education in the United States began to face differing issues of advancement than those that were so profound within the past centuries. One such challenge has been the internationalization of higher education and the role it has played in creating a knowledge-based product on the shelf of a global market (Altbach & McGill Peterson, 1999). It is not feasible in a knowledge-based world led by technological advancements, for the United States to only seek to advance educational opportunities within its borders. Therefore, the United States and many countries abroad face similar issues with linking educational opportunities to the employment market, keeping up with technological advancements, recruiting and retaining students in a mobile world, competing for resources due to the privatization of higher education, and competing with emerging academic systems worldwide that differ in comparative structures.

Study Abroad

Study abroad programs play a vital role in universities across the globe as an avenue for internationalization (Choudaha & Kono, 2012; Chow, 2011; Denda, 2012; Firmin, Holmes, Firmin, & Merical, 2013). For both, Saudi Arabia and the United States, this is certainly true. As students gain more and more opportunities to experience new countries, cultures and differing ways of learning, they are also gaining new perspectives on who they are and how they fit into a much larger global community. Because opportunities to study abroad are provided in a multitude of formats, durations, and various pedagogical approaches (Engle & Engle, 2003), students are gaining ground in cultural competence, maturity and important communications skills through their study abroad experiences. Various opportunities to study abroad have created a new market in higher education and students have learned the importance of networking with their peers and academic professionals across the globe in order to make the most of these global opportunities (Choudaha & Kono, 2012). As the market increases and more options become available for global networking, study abroad opportunities are creating enhanced learning outcomes, variable durations of stay in host countries and new lived experiences for students.

Markets

According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) executive summary, a research study was conducted in joint partnership with IIE and EducationUSA to determine students preferred study destinations, reasons for international study, perceived obstacles, potential information sources about study abroad opportunities and their opinion of the United States as a study abroad destination compared to other

options globally (Chow, 2011). A total of 9,330 students participated in the surveys that were conducted in eleven countries: Vietnam, India, Mexico, Thailand, Hong Kong, Brazil, Germany, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and South Africa. Overall, results indicated that the United States was a destination of choice for the majority of participants, and 76 percent of those surveyed felt that the United States' higher education system was of high quality. Likewise, 76 percent of those surveyed felt that there was a broad array of schools and programs to select from within the United States. Though cost was seen as the primary obstacle to study abroad opportunities in the United States, respondents were just as concerned with their ability to procure a study abroad visa. However, 69 percent of students surveyed felt that the United States was a welcoming destination for study abroad. Students across all 11 countries sited many different ways in which they gathered information about study abroad locations including: professors, college fairs, the internet, EducationUSA, English Institutes, business representatives from organizations such as the Educational Testing Service Test of English for International Communication (ETS TOEIC), the Test of English as a Foreign Language Institutional Testing Program (TOEFL ITP) and the Secondary School Admissions Test (SSAT), the Fulbright Commission, advisors, parents, friends, and even classmates.

In another study conducted by Choudaha and Kono (2012), budget cuts and limited financial resources for higher education institutions in the United States were cited as an incentive for universities to search for emerging international student markets for recruitment. Since the international student market is self-funded, it provides a resource rich benefit to higher education institutions. According to the study,

one of every two international students in the United States comes from China, India or South Korea; however, many American institutions are beginning to be cautious about recruiting from just a few large markets (Choudaha & Kono, 2012). An institution takes on financial risks by limiting its recruitment pool to just a few large markets which could be detrimental should populations shift with a drastic decrease in students coming from those markets.

Therefore, seeking out emerging markets for recruitment is seen as an optimal strategy. Based on survey results, Choudaha and Kono (2012) discovered that the top four emerging markets for international student recruitment are Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Vietnam and Turkey. Likewise, it was noted that improved strategies for recruitment were needed in order to best reach these markets. Suggestions for improved recruitment efforts included cultivating financial relationships through offering institutional scholarships and engaging foreign institutions for partnerships in order to deepen relationships as well as tapping into social media to improve word-of-mouth recruitment.

While students from across the globe are being recruited to come to the United States to study, there are also interests by American students to study abroad. In a collaborative research study conducted by the American Council on Education, Art & Science Group LLC, and the College Board (2008), the interests of American high school students in study abroad opportunities were assessed. The study was based on the responses of a national sample of 1,509 senior high school students who participated in the SAT assessment exam. The results of the study showed that students were interested in study abroad despite issues of global terrorism and conflict, and that an

increasing number of students have already participated in international experiences prior to starting college. However, the results of the study also noted that a lack of proficiency in a foreign language and the cost associated with study abroad experiences were the strongest indicators for not participating in study abroad opportunities. In contrast, students felt that study abroad opportunities would broaden their cultural knowledge, improve their future job prospects, and help them to build global friendships. Though almost 50 percent of the students in the study stated that they wanted to study abroad, less than 5 percent who enroll in college actually do.

There are several reasons that lead students to decide to study abroad. Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2008) reviewed the accumulation of social and cultural capital in its relation to the predisposition of students to study abroad. Participants in the study completed the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at the beginning of their freshman year and again at the end of their freshman year. In total, the sample size included 2,772 individuals across 19 colleges and universities that represented a variety of sizes, institutional types, and geographical locations. The results of the study indicated that socioeconomic status of a student's family was indicative of a student's intent to study abroad. Specifically, students qualifying for financial aid were less likely to intend to study abroad. Likewise, the research revealed that the educational level of the parents was also positively related to the student's likelihood to plan to study abroad. In essence, the more education a student's parents had acquired, the more likely the student was to intend to study abroad. Social and cultural capital accumulated before attending college also positively enhanced a student's desire to study abroad. High interest in reading and writing and openness to diverse ideas and

people also revealed an increased intent to study abroad. Students who attended liberal arts institutions and who were in social science majors were also indicators of an increased interest in study abroad. Therefore, researchers concluded that the intent to study abroad reflected the three stages of the college choice process – predisposition, search, and choice.

Networking

Once the decision to study abroad has been established, students must then select their destination of choice. With so many options available, students have learned to use global networking as a technique to select their host institutions. Accordingly, Ding and Li (2012) conducted a study of 95 higher education institutions within the United States with a total of 6,198 Chinese faculty members to look at the influence of social networks and personal contacts on Chinese students' selection of schools to attend within the United States. The exact number of Chinese graduate students participating in the Chinese government's Graduate Students Joint Training – GSJT – program was unavailable to the researchers. GSJT was established in 2007 to provide opportunities for doctoral students in China to participate in a study abroad experience in a developed country for 6 to 24 months with funding from the China Scholarship Council – CSC. Since the students were already a part of a graduate program in China there was no need for them to apply for entrance into a program in the United States; however, they were required to receive an invitation from an American faculty member to serve as their co-advisor. In order to do so, students interested in participating in the GSJT program would need to network with faculty members within institutions of higher education in the United States.

The results of the study indicated that social networks have a strong effect on the number of Chinese students hosted within the United States (Ding & Li, 2012). The availability of Chinese faculty in American universities and the international openness of the universities had a strong effect on the acceptance of Chinese students into the program. Likewise, institutional type also had an impact on acceptance as public institutions were far more likely than private institutions to accept Chinese students. Students were also strategic in their networking efforts. Students selected schools by rank as opposed to location. Location showed no effect on selection.

Ding and Li (2012) suggested that social networking was an effective way to increase international students from foreign universities. Due to China's increased ability to send students abroad as a result of rapid economic growth and Chinese students' growing financial independence, Ding and Li (2012) suggested that the Chinese government and universities seek out more formal social networking opportunities. This would allow Chinese students to be connected with more preferred world class universities. By creating formal social networking opportunities, biased favoritism and/or placement based on non-academic motives can be reduced. The authors also suggested that universities within the United States should actively work to establish formal and informal social networks with Chinese universities in order to recruit the best Chinese students and create opportunities for American students to study in China.

While networking is key to discovering a students' preferred host institution, it is also vital to the success of the study abroad experience. Dewey, Ring, Gardner, and Belnap (2013) conducted a research study to better understand how successful social

networks are cultivated during a study abroad experience. The study consisted of 71 learners of Arabic studying at two intensive Arabic programs – one in Jordan and one in Egypt. The participants had each studied four semesters of Arabic before participating in the study abroad and all spoke English as their native language. The data for the study was collected via the Study Abroad Social Interaction Questionnaire, also known as SASIQ.

The results of the study indicated that most students searched for friends by cold contacting, striking-up a conversation with people they encountered in public places. However, the majority met friends through people they knew who were either natives to the host country or other study abroad participants who had established friendships. The study also noted that respondents indicated that time, personality, and language learning were common factors that could either facilitate or inhibit the creation of friendships. Gender was also a determining factor for networking. Most friendships were made with those of the same gender as the participant; however, female participants had more difficulty developing closer friendships with the opposite gender than did males (Dewey, Ring, Gardner, & Belnap, 2013). Participants also noted that the most successful program intervention that aided in networking was the two hour requirement to speak in Arabic each day.

Overall, the study revealed that location to areas where native speakers gathered within the community, increased opportunities for communication, and introductions from both native speakers and non-native speakers within the study abroad program assisted participants the most with creating their social networks. Likewise, an institutionalized policy for required target language use was also vital to the networking

process. It should also be noted that compatible personalities and interests are also important to the process, but the researchers felt that there was little control over this by study abroad programs.

Learning Outcomes

In addition to global networking, the study abroad experience offers many diverse learning opportunities to students. Firmin, Holmes, Firmin and Merical (2013) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study with 23 American students who participated in a study abroad experience at New College at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. The study reviewed the perspectives of study abroad students through personal interviews and revealed two major themes. First, the study abroad experience provided students the opportunity for maturity development. Students stated that they were challenged to stretch their abilities and increase their independence. Second, the study abroad experience provided an opportunity for personal development. Students reported that through their academic endeavors abroad they were able to broaden their thinking to a more global-centered perspective, and that their experiences abroad had a life-changing impact that would have long-lasting effects on their lives and future professional careers. Students who participated in the study abroad program were able to re-evaluate what they had thought to be the norm in light of their cross-cultural experience.

Similarly, Braskamp, Braskamp and Merrill (2009) conducted a study that looked at how educational environments through study abroad impacted students' global learning and development. Specifically, they sought to discover how students' lives reflect a global perspective by administering a pre-/post-test, the Global

Perspective Inventory (GPI), at 10 different study abroad centers scattered throughout the world. The inventory looked at three domains of student development: cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal. Based on the results of the study, students showed that they had learned to analyze and understand cultural differences, viewed themselves with greater self-confidence, gained a global perspective in their knowledge of intercultural differences, and developed a greater commitment to assisting others in a global world. However, participants did not show progress in knowing how to relate cultural differences with thinking about truth and knowledge. Overall, the study abroad experience fostered holistic student development, but did not show progress in students' abilities to "think using multiple perspectives, integrate their cultural experiences into a more refined sense of self, and become more committed to an interdependent life style" (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009, p. 113).

Doyle (2009) conducted a research study in response to Central College of Pella, Iowa's call for a more comprehensive and holistic way to measure students' growth and development in cultural awareness and sensitivity after a study abroad experience. To this end, the college elected to distribute the Global Perspectives Inventory or GPI to all students who studied abroad during the 2007-2008 academic year. As a complement to the GPI, Doyle (2009) conducted a qualitative component of interviews at pre-departure, mid-point immersion, and re-entry. Seven Central students were selected to participate in the study, but only six were interviewed. Of those selected, all participated in an immersion program in Vienna, Austria. The results of the study showed that emergent themes aligned with those relevant to the GPI dimensions of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal students' perceptions of growth. The

cognitive dimension of the GPI assessed both knowing and knowledge. Pre-departure and re-entry interviews reinforced the GPI results in that students placed high value on their knowledge gained of the Austrian culture and increased skill level in the German language. The intrapersonal dimension of the GPI assessed opportunities that students had to "develop more complex views of themselves, their cultural background and core belief systems" (Doyle, 2009, p. 147). Accordingly, the interviews were in alignment with the GPI and found that students were able to articulate how their study abroad experience had offered "them the opportunity to assess their life situations personally, empowering them with self-confidence and the understanding that they have matured in meaningful ways" (Doyle, 2009, p. 150).

The interpersonal dimension of the GPI assessed how students study abroad experience aided them in cross-cultural interactions. In alignment with the GPI, interviews revealed that students did make efforts to balance developing relationships with the Austrians and their American cohorts. Overall, students participating in the immersion program in Austria gained interpersonal skills that aided them in becoming careful listeners, patient, respectful and able to display empathy. In a combined review of the GPI and interviews conducted, Doyle (2009) noted that the study abroad experience provided students with opportunities to build "community across cultural and social boundaries" (p. 151). Doyle (2009) suggested combined qualitative and quantitative analysis provided a more complementary data review of student study abroad experiences and provided the most complete set of data in assessing student growth and development.

Likewise, Gu (2012) examined the experiences of 600 Chinese students studying in the United Kingdom. The results of the study indicated that most international students learned to adapt and developed and achieved within different learning and living environments. Students reported having a transformational experience that allowed them to mature and gain intercultural knowledge. In other words, they were able to experience life with a new sense of self as they related to both their home and host countries. Key observations made in the study were that students achieved academically, cited academic achievement and personal independence, and were able to manage the influences and challenges to their existing identities. Likewise, it was noted that students' self-efficacy was related to their sense of belonging, and students noted changes in their intercultural experiences, maturity and intellectual development. The majority of students stated that their study abroad experience was highly valuable to their career progression, knowledge and work ethic and had improved their ability to communicate, solve problems and manage time. Overall, students exposed to different social and educational opportunities constantly engaged in reflexive processes of change, adjustment, and development that upon return to their home countries provided them with new cognitive, social, and emotional ways to engage.

In another study, Yang, Webster and Prosser (2011) examined the experiences of 214 Chinese undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Hong Kong in terms of their study abroad goals, experiences and learning outcomes. Specifically, the research investigated to what extent students' perceptions of their learning outcomes aligned with their perceptions of achieving their study abroad goals and how

achievement of their study abroad goals related to their host country experiences. The data collected for the study was part of an institutional research project on international education in context with the Undergraduate Curriculum Reform movement sponsored by the Hong Kong Government Special Administrative Region (Yang, Webster, & Prosser, 2011). The results of the study indicated that students developed intercultural, personal, and career-related competencies that aligned with their study abroad goals. Likewise, personal changes correlated with students' intercultural experiences and study/work experiences in their host countries. The authors concluded that students' study abroad goals, host country experiences and learning outcomes were interrelated. Therefore, in order for students to benefit from their experiences abroad, they should set challenging, but realistic goals that are focused on the three aforementioned dimensions of development.

Duration

Learning outcomes achieved through the study abroad experience are often dependent upon the duration of students stay within the host country. Behrnd and Porzelt (2012) investigated how preparatory intercultural training benefited study abroad participants who had prior experiences abroad as opposed to those who did not through two different studies. The first study examined the influence of prior experience abroad on intercultural competence. For this study, 72 German students participated in an ex-post-facto study using a pre- and post- design that measured the effectiveness of intercultural training. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between intercultural competence and the duration of the study abroad experience. Likewise, having prior experience abroad along with and the

duration of the study's time abroad provided an impact on cognitive intercultural competence with 10 months being the critical duration for effective intercultural competence development.

The second study focused on the effect of experiences abroad on social, individual and strategic intercultural competence (Behrnd & Porzelt, 2012). For this study 255 German students participated in an ex-post-facto study measuring the effectiveness of ensuing intercultural training on intercultural competence. Participants in this study varied in experiences abroad with 61.2 percent having prior work or study abroad experience, and none of the participants having had any intercultural training before going abroad. The treatment applied was an experimental intercultural training given to 161 of the participants after having participated in the initial survey. Then 114 of those who had attended the training took the survey again. The results of this study indicated that there was a significant correlation between the duration of the stay abroad to strategic intercultural competence. Students with prior study abroad experience and who participated for longer periods of time abroad were able to solve problems and developed individual intercultural competence. The results of the study showed that six months was the critical duration for effective strategic intercultural competence to develop for those who had been abroad.

According to Behrnd and Porzelt (2012), the first study indicated that study abroad was a benefit to students' intercultural competence if combined with adequate duration of stay in the host country. The second study indicated that study abroad benefited participating students more if intercultural training occurred allowing for the development of higher problem solving abilities, and social, individual and strategic

intercultural competence depending on the duration of time abroad. Therefore, both studies indicated that the longer the duration of a study abroad experience, the greater the opportunity to develop intercultural competence.

In another study, Omachinski (2013) investigated how engineering students experience cultural adjustment through a short-term study abroad program in Germany. The program provided a 25 day structured curriculum teaching German in the mornings and engineering classes in the afternoon. There were a total of 13 participants in the study from an American Midwestern university. Data for the research was collected from structured journals, narrative interviews, and participant observation. The results of the study showed that American students faced barriers to cultural adjustment due to both time and language. Time was regulated by the students' rigid curriculum which allowed for little free time to explore the local area. Language frustration occurred often as many of the participants had never studied a foreign language prior to studying abroad. Interesting to note, students not only struggled in their German language courses, but also with communications with students from other native English speaking countries. Students found that idiomatic phrases in English did not translate equally from country to country creating further communication barriers.

Participants in the study were also noted to have created a number of strategies to overcome the time and communication barriers (Omachinski, 2013). Students learned to adjust their routines to accommodate their rigid program schedules and learned to embrace the opportunity to try new things. Likewise, students learned the importance of adhering to local norms including punctuality and longer meal time experiences. Students also noted that language barriers were more often overcome with their host

families when they practiced their German language skills with their homestays. The study also revealed that the friendship bonds these students made with each other evolved from sharing the same experiences and fostered a desire to work globally in engineering. As engineers, the participants, noted that through experiential learning outside of the classroom with their host families they were able to see how much further advanced Germans were in the field of engineering which aided in creating a real-world application of the skills they were there to learn (Omachinski, 2013). For these students, the duration of their period abroad was limited, but their commitment to interact with the nationals and the quality of the activities they engaged in during their stay proved effective despite the short duration.

Lived Experiences

Students lived experiences prior to and during study abroad can impact their learning outcomes. Wiers-Jenssen (2002) presented data on the viewpoints of Norwegian students who had spent one or more years studying abroad. Research data was collected during the 1998-1999 academic year from 1,159 students through a 16 page postal survey. According to survey results, 71 percent of the participating students reported that either one or both parents had a higher education and 35 percent of the participants had parents who had also participated in a study abroad experience for three or more months. Students primary reasons for wanting to study abroad varied by field of study; however, the two strongest answered reasons were interests in studying in a foreign environment and a love of adventure. Students also noted that language was a decisive factor in their choice of where to study. Students' choice of host country was often related to their desire to study in a particular educational institution and based on

the reputation of that institution. The importance of the cost of attendance for students' institution of choice was often related to its eligibility for support through the State Educational Loan Fund in Norway.

The survey also revealed that students encountered linguistic, cultural and social adaption challenges. For survey participants, the greatest challenges were related to their ability to learn and understand the bureaucracy of the host country. Likewise, students reported that they were amongst the top 25 percent of students at their institutions and some considered themselves superior to their peers academically. The majority of students felt that their educational institutions were of good quality. In particular, those in North America showed the greatest satisfaction with the quality of the education they were receiving. In addition, non-academic experiences also met expectations of the majority of students studying abroad. Overall, Norwegian students who participated in the study displayed high satisfaction with their study abroad experiences. However, it should be noted that the majority of the Norwegians abroad who participated in the survey chose to study in countries similar to their own, faced low economic challenges due to their socio-economic level and/or ability to qualify for the State Educational Loan Fund, and had low academic, social, cultural and/or linguistic barriers to overcome. Likewise, they had all already participated for at least one year abroad.

Unfortunately, not all study abroad experiences are positive. Goldoni (2013) conducted a study that investigated the study abroad experiences of 44 students from a large public university in the southeastern United States. Each student participated in a study abroad program at one of three different locations in Spain during either the 2007,

2008 or 2009 calendar year. Along with the 44 students who were interviewed, 98 other individuals were observed and/or interviewed including the staff involved in the study abroad programming, faculty members, residence halls employees, Spanish students, international resident students, and host families. The study was conducted using ethnographic and case study approaches and line-by-line coding was used to discover emergent themes. Four themes emerged within the analysis: cultural artifacts, social interactions, learning, and resourcefulness.

The results of the study indicated that students had either a negative or positive experience depending upon their ability to be agentive in creating connections with others outside of the classroom; participating in activities of personal interests, volunteering, or service-learning; and by making the most of their time spent with their host families (Goldoni, 2013). However, some students did not enter their study abroad program with the appropriate preparation to lay the foundation for a successful experience. Within the study, it was noted that at times students expected their host culture to be similar to their own culture. Some students entered the study abroad experience with an ethnocentric perspective and had difficulty viewing events and situations from any other lens than their own. Likewise, some students met difficulty or even resisted mingling outside of their American cohort. Students who reported successful integration into their study abroad experience discussed reaching out and making connections outside of the classroom with natives, especially through their host family interactions, community service, and service-learning opportunities. The author noted that learning was a social process and therefore interaction with others was vital to the process. Likewise, interaction with a knowledgeable guide who understood the

goals of the study abroad experience could better support students in acquiring a broader and deeper attainment of knowledge and skills while abroad. Students who were more willing to engage in the culture of their host country and seek out interactional partners in the target language found more legitimacy in their membership within the host community.

Goldoni (2013) noted that in cases where students were able to cultivate their cultural capital through service opportunities and activities, they were also able to develop social capital through the relationships they built with the natives of the host country. Therefore, the implications of this study indicated that personal preparation is important for the study abroad experience. Prior to entering a study abroad program, students must recognize the reality of their language levels, be encouraged and/or required to establish contacts and communication within the host communities, and be able to identify their values and goals while abroad. Similarly, study abroad opportunities should challenge students' preconceived ideas and provide an opportunity to learn about the natives of a host country through the natives' lens. Though instances of culture clash may occur, program directors and coordinators can aid in this process by better preparing students for the study abroad experience.

Jones, Neubrander, and Huff (2012) conducted a research study that compared the quantitative results of the Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity, ICCS, with the qualitative themes analysis of journal entries from ten bachelor level nursing students. In addition to the ten nursing students there were also two nutrition students, one recreational therapy student, and a student who was double majoring in Spanish and Communication. However, the Spanish and Communications major was not required to

keep a journal during the immersion experience. Participants in the study were self-selected based on their willingness to participate in a 10-day international traveling medical unit to Ecuador course. There were also fourteen students who did not attend the travel course who served as the comparison group for the study. The ICCS inventory was administered to both groups three weeks after returning from the immersion experience with the exception of the two nutrition students who did not participate in the ICCS inventory assessment.

Accordingly, the results of the ICCS inventory suggested that positive attitudes toward cultural differences were present in the immersion group, but were not of statistical significance. However, journal entry themes suggested that students either confirmed or questioned their career choice in nursing, shared frustrations with language barriers as well as the new experience of being a minority. Likewise, students shared feelings of helplessness in their inability to provide services to patients as they could in the United States and reflected on feelings of being changed through their immersion experience. The ICCS inventory provided no indication of significant change to students' cultural attitudes; however, the analysis of the students' journals did indicate a change. Overall, students expressed a new understanding of how "we are all connected as human beings, despite our cultural differences, and some students expressed appreciation for the 'simplicity' of life found within this culture [Ecuador's culture]" (Jones, Neubrander, & Huff, 2012, p. 8). Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that journaling be encouraged in immersion experiences, that instructors provide guided questions for journaling exercises, and that within a few weeks of returning from immersion trips, instructors meet with students in groups to

share and discuss the themes that arise from students' journal entries and allow students to have reflective conversations about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences through focus group settings. This in turn would strengthen instructors' understanding of the overall process for students.

In another study, Ee (2013) conducted research on international students' experiences with discrimination in the United States based on language proficiency, accent, race, ethnicity, and gender. The participants within Ee's study were predominately members of his English classes. The stories were collected as class assignments from students who were studying English as a Second Language – ESL or English Composition. The majority of students in the study were from Asian countries including China, South Korea, and Taiwan. Students within the study reported incidents of bullying, physical assault, sexual assault, race-based discrimination and language-based microaggressions and discrimination. In particular, female students seemed to experience more microaggressions on a personal level than did males. Ee's (2013) research was focused on presenting an awareness to negative issues faced by international students studying in the United States and to suggest that as more students take advantage of the study abroad experience, schools in the United States need to be more proactive in educating international students and domestic students at all levels on diversity in an effort to create characteristics of global citizenship.

Dolby (2004) conducted a qualitative study interviewing 26 American students enrolled in a Midwestern university who participated in a study abroad in Australia. The purpose of the research was to "examine how the study abroad experience shapes [American] students' perceptions of their national identity" (Dolby, 2004, p. 154). The

participants in the study were both American citizens and residents, and some reported having prior though limited international experiences. At the time the study was conducted, an unexpected international event had just occurred, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This unintentionally allowed Dolby the opportunity to discover "how the study abroad experience frames and shapes the meaning of the American nation, and national identity, in the twenty first century" (Dolby, 2004, p. 156). One of Dolby's arguments was that in a global context, such as that provided in a study abroad experience, one's national identity shifts from passive to active. However, she did concede that, though unintentional, the events of September 11, 2001 had become part of her research data and despite this occurrence and its timeliness with her research, she did not assume students responses to interview questions about their national identities were determined by the terrorist attacks.

The results of the research showed that "most of the American students began their stay in Australia with an unreflexive understanding of what it was to be an 'American' and similarly only vague and incomplete knowledge of the United States as a state and a political actor both historically and in the contemporary world" (Dolby, 2004, p. 172). Many of the participants in the study while in Australia were faced with the image of America as defined by those outside of the United States – a land of opportunity, prosperity, and where one's dreams can be made real. With this in mind, Dolby (2004) concluded that many participants began to embrace the American self with the notion that it can be decentered and reconstructed as a form of cosmopolitanism and others combined the notion of nation and state to form an ethnocentric nationalism. "Thus, the perspectives that students bring back with them are

part of public discourse in the United States and have implications for the future of American democracy, the public good, and the constant renegotiation of the material and imaginative space that is America" (Dolby, 2004, p. 173).

Summary

This chapter has provided a brief historical framework of both the educational systems within Saudi Arabia and the United States. Likewise, it has addressed relative literature on the study abroad experience in relation to available markets, networking amongst institutions and individuals, students learning outcomes, durations of stay and lived experiences. The framework provided within this chapter lays the foundation for subsequent chapters in that it provides a brief comparative understanding of these two nations – Saudi Arabia and the United States, and the complexities of their educational systems. Moving forward, chapter three will examine the theoretical framework of identity development and present a new comprehensive collective identity model based on a borderlands approach that layers multiple theoretical lens in order to more deeply study and understand how identity is constructed within a collective.

CHAPTER III: IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical Framework

As aforementioned, the focus of this research is to investigate in what ways, if at all, Saudi Arabian students talk about how they make-meaning of their national identity since participating in higher education in the United States. Thus, it is pertinent to this discussion to first exam how identity is constructed both individually and collectively based on the existing literature, to review the significance and complexity of national identity development, and then to introduce through a borderlands approach modeled after, and in alignment with Anzaldúa (1987) and Jones and Abes' (2013) work, a new comprehensive collective identity model by which this research will be guided. The purpose for constructing a new collective identity model is to aid in expanding current research on collective identity with a model that can be utilized broadly across a variety of collective groups. In addition, it aids in recognizing the uniqueness of each individual within a group and how each individual, while maintaining their unique individual identities, also adheres to the group/collective identity traits.

Individual Identity Development

Notably, Buckingham (2008) states that the term identity when literarily translated evolved from a Latin root meaning *the same*; however, in context infers both ideals of similarity and difference. Thus identity is unique and distinguishes each individual from one another, but at the same time and in a broader sense, may suggest a more collective and/or social construct such as that found in a group (Buckingham, 2008). For example, within the United States there are many Americans, but not all Americans are Christian. Some American citizens are Christians, some Muslims, some

Buddhists, and so forth. While all of these individuals are American, they all hold different religious identities (Buckingham, 2008).

Theorists agree that identity is shaped by how we organize experiences within the environment around us and socially constructed in the sense that our knowledge of self and others is created through social interactions such as systems of power and disparity (Torres, Jones & Renn, 2009; Jones & Abes, 2013). Therefore, as individuals our identities are developed and influenced by our social groups, the social context of the norms and expectations of society and the differing labels of identity which we adhere to in our own lives – race, class, ethnicity, gender, and so forth (Jones & Abes, 2013; Torres, Jones & Renn, 2009).

With this in mind, it is imperative that two aspects of identity development be reviewed for this research. The first is in relation to identity as a social construct both individually and as a collective. The second is to define the importance of the relationship between institutions of higher education and identity development. In order to accomplish the task of addressing both aspects of identity development, four foundational models of identity development are presented: The Ecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000), the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007), and the Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & Abes, 2013). To be sure, the models are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but build upon each other over time. From these models, research on collective identity formation and a review of the significance of national identity, a new model of collective identity is constructed that is

unique to this dissertation and to be used as the bases for this research. This new model uses a borderlands approach while applying the dimensions of multiple theories in order to create a more complete understanding of identity (Jones & Abes, 2013) and will be described in more detail at the end of this chapter.

The Ecological Model of Human Development

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1994 &1995) Ecological Model of Human Development, the environment and the individual are shaped by one another. Consequently, individuals are not static, but continually growing and restructuring who they are and how they want to be perceived based on their interpretation of their environment and their proximity within the environment to differing sets of nested structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1994 & 1995).

> The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate setting in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21)

These nested structures are typologically arranged within a concentric pattern that shares the same axis point or core - *person* (Bronfenbrenner, 1977 & 1979). *Person* is then the individual in their present state of development and with characteristics that allow for different ways of engagement within different settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These differing forms of engagement and settings are what Bronfenbrenner (1977) referred to as context. According to Bronfenbrenner (1977), the progression and mutual accommodation within these nested structures or environmental systems over the time of an individual lifespan are affected by relationships within and between these immediate environments, as well as a larger social context. These five environmental

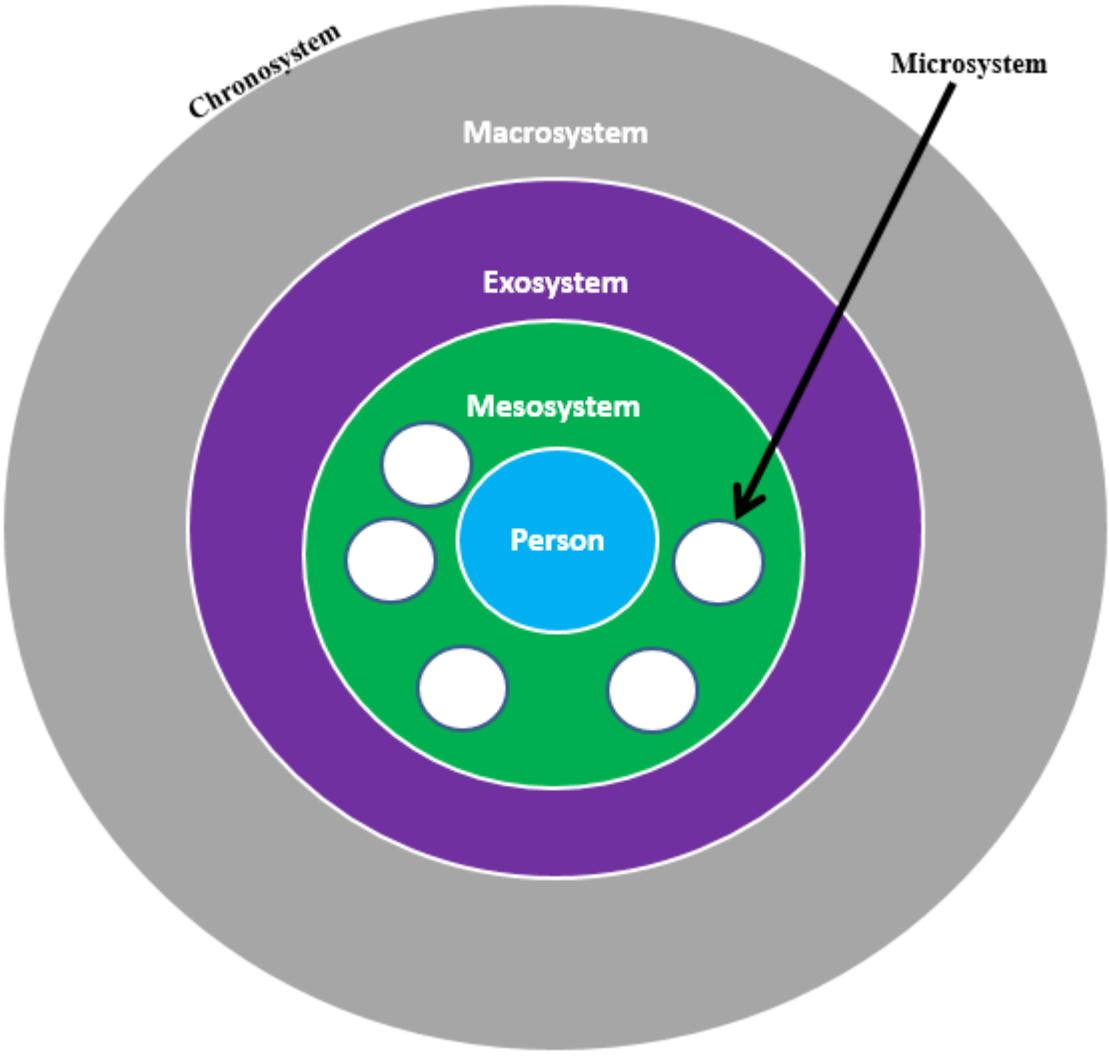


Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Human Development. Source data taken from Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

systems were identified by Bronfenbrenner (1994) as micro-, meso-, exo-, macro – and chrono- systems. See Figure 2 for a depiction of Bronfenbrenner's model.

The microsystem refers to the immediate surroundings of an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This can be inclusive of a person's family, peer groups, school, workplace and neighborhood. The most direct interactions with social agents take place within the microsystem, because the individual does not just act as a passive recipient of experiences within this environment, but as someone who actively constructs the social setting.

The mesosystem refers to the relationships and/or links between the different microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, the links between family experiences and school experiences, and school experiences and work experiences containing the developing person all represent the functioning of the mesosystem. In essence, a man who has experienced difficulty with the registrar losing paperwork at his former university may in turn experience distrust with the ability of his new university's transfer office to provide transcripts to a future employer. The negative impact of the man's prior experience with the registrar has now been expanded to his new experience with the transfer office.

The exosystem is made up of linkages between two or more settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). One setting contains the developing person while other settings may not. This can be seen in the relationship between children and their parent's work. For example, a husband's experience at home may be influenced by his wife's experience at work. The wife may be asked to attend a conference for the next three days as a part of her professional development at work. Due to the mother's travel

for professional development, the father may have to change his work schedule in order to pick up their children from school and care for them in place of the mother. In this sense the mother's work has affected the pattern of interactions for the father with his child.

The macrosystem contains cultural expectations, social forces, historical trends and events, but is not defined as culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Instead, macrosystems describe the culture in which individuals live in terms of the ways of people such as bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, hazards, and ideologies associated with specific cultures and subcultures. For example, an individual cannot determine the laws and legal processes of her culture. These norms are often established before she was born by the collective of her society. Though the laws and legal processes may change over time, it is not likely that change will occur based on the individual's choice.

The chronosystem is found on the parameter of all of the other nested systems structures and represents two aspects of time – personal or the sequencing of events in one's lifetime and historical or the events which occur within the historical context of one's life span (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, how a person deals with the death of a spouse over time or the increased opportunity to pursue an education and get a better job are both representative of the chronosystem.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model of Human Development provides a foundational framework from which to build upon in terms of identity development. Through his work, identity has evolved into a fluid and contextually based concept with both the individual and the environment interacting as agents of change.

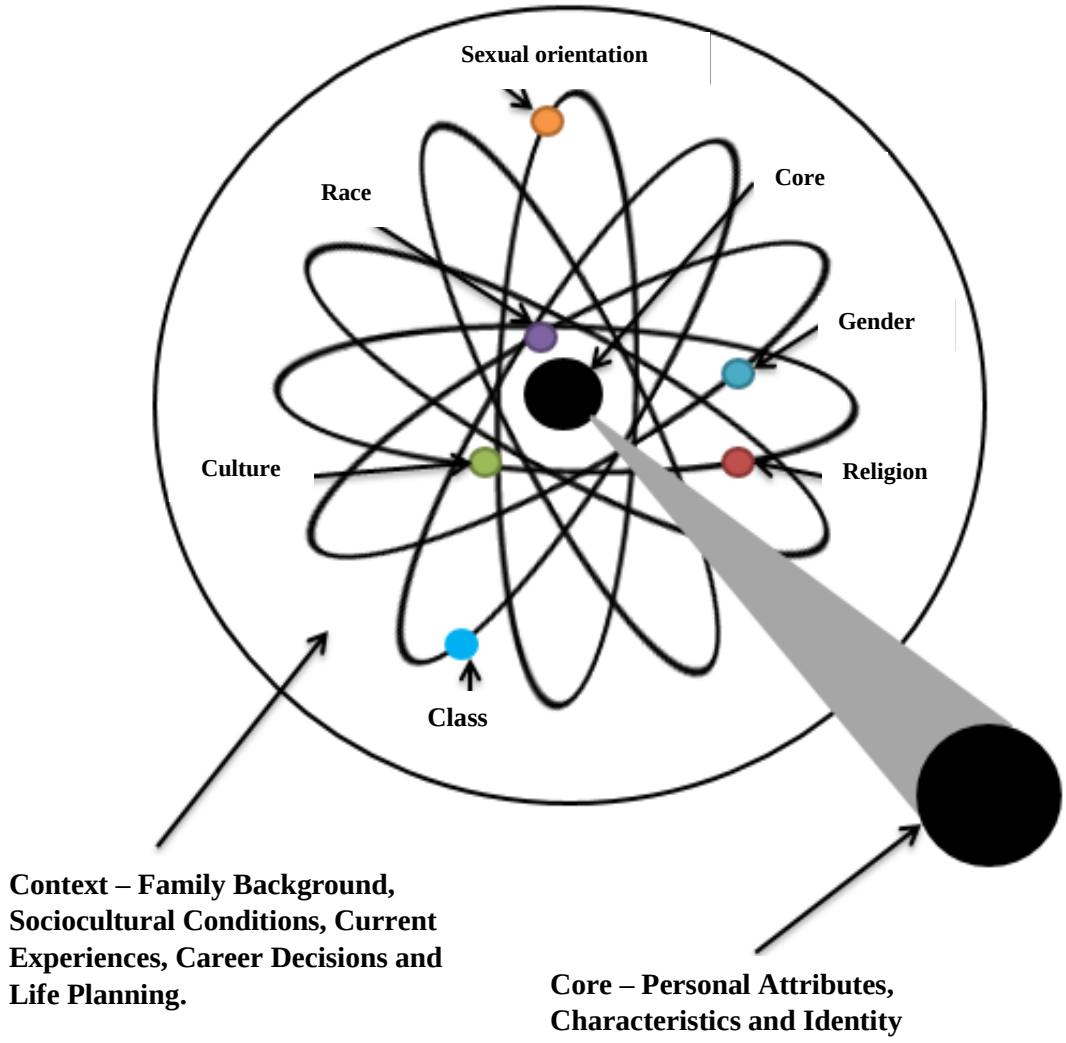


Figure 3. The Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. Source data taken from Jones, S. R. & McEwen, M.K. (2000). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. Journal of College Student Development, 41(4), 405-414.

Bronfenbrenner's model has been used in various identity research studies, including that of mixed-race students (Renn, 2004), Muslim women (Seggie & Austin, 2010), and children (Jones & Deutsch, 2013).

The Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

In a study conducted by Jones and McEwen (2000), an effort was made to advance a more complex understanding of identity and to introduce a model that better represented the multiple dimensions of identity development. See Figure 3. Within this model is a core that symbolizes a sense of self or one's personal identity along with intersecting circles that surround the core representing one's significant identity dimensions such as race, sexual orientation, culture, class, gender, and religion and all of this is housed within one's contextual influences such as family backgrounds and life experiences (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

The study focused on how students understand their own identity, experience difference, and how multiple dimensions of identity influence their evolving sense of self. Jones & McEwen's (2000) results suggested that a greater responsibility existed for educators "to help students from majority identity statuses understand the implications of taken-for-granted identities" (pp. 412-413). Equally, the results indicated that educators need to be cautious about making assumptions that particular identity dimensions are salient or significant to students in traditionally marginalized groups. This multiple dimensions approach broadened and deepened Bronfenbrenner's (1979) concept of person or core by emphasizing the corresponding relationships between our core identity and our socially constructed identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000). The research conducted by Jones and McEwen (2000) in the formation of the

Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity has become one of the foundational models used today in the field of Student Affairs. This model has been utilized by a number of research studies on student identities within recent years (Jones, 2013; Mackey, 2011; Miville & Ferguson, 2014; Porter & Maddox, 2014; Schwartz, Donovan, &Guido-DiBrito, 2009; Tyler, 2014).

Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

Based on the results of a study of lesbian college students by Abes and Jones (2004), Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) reconceptualized Jones and McEwen's (2000) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity by integrating meaning-making into the process of identity development. Based on their research, Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) recognized the need to incorporate interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive domains of development into the discussion of identity. Intrapersonally, the relationships between social identities such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation already existed in Jones and McEwen's (2000) model. Likewise, they had already expanded the conceptualization of the relationship between personal identity and social identities that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model had not clearly addressed. It was the cognitive domain that the authors determined was lacking from Jones and McEwen's (2000) study. Therefore in the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) sought to advance a more complex understanding of the meaning-making process in identity development.

The reconceptualized model expanded on Jones and McEwen's (2000) earlier model by adding a filter that represents meaning-making capacity. See Figure 4. In order for complex meaning-making to occur, contextual influences such as one's peers,

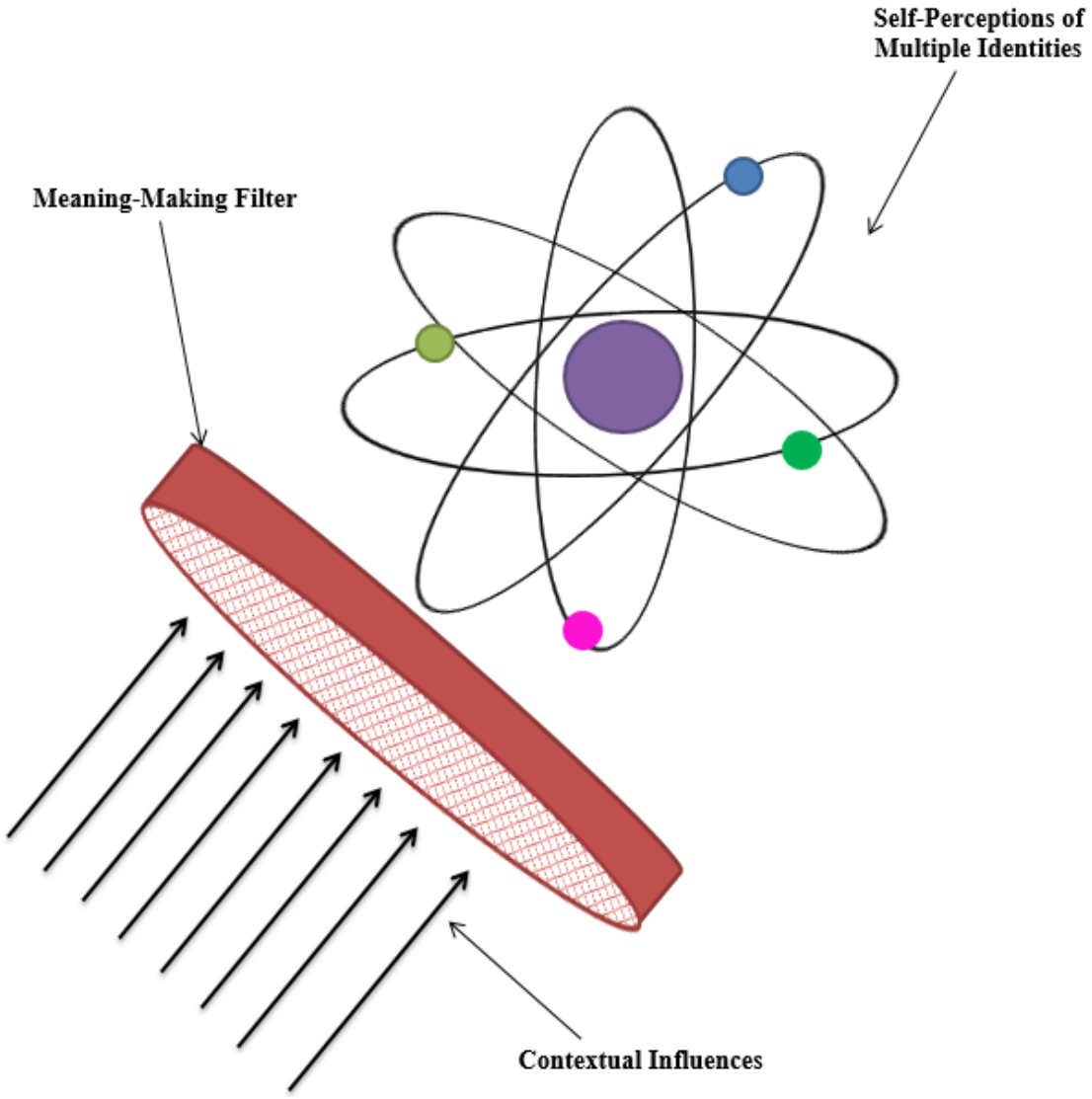


Figure 4. Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. Source data taken from Abes, E.A, Jones, S. R. & McEwen, M.K. (2007). Reconceptualizing the model of multiple dimensions of identity: The role of meaning-making capacity in the construction of multiple identities. Journal of College Student Development, 48(1), pp. 1-22.

family, social norms, stereotypes and so forth would have to pass through a meaning-making filter. From this filtering process, three forms of meaning-making presented – formulaic, transitional, and foundational. In formulaic meaning-making, minimal filtering occurs allowing for minimal awareness of relationships amongst one's multiple identities (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007). In transitional meaning-making, there is apparent tension and conflict evident in the meaning-making process due to the limitations placed on individuals by stereotypes, and the limited social labels available for individuals to use in describing their own identity. Those participants able to more complexly utilize their filters were able to resist stereotypes and consistently present their identity despite environmental influences due to a "greater ability to determine the relationship between context and perceptions of identity" (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007, p. 11).

The implications of Abes, Jones, and McEwen's (2007) study were three-fold. First, fluidity which describes the needed performativity and salience in current theory on identity development. Second, too few holistic models of student development include "the complex and fluid intersection of epistemological (or cognitive), psychosocial, and social identity domains of development" and third, there is a lack of in-depth professional knowledge in the "complexities and holistic aspects of existing theories" (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007, p. 17). This model has been utilized by a number of research studies on student identities within recent years (Harper, 2011; Holland, 2014; Marine, 2011; Renn & Reason, 2013; Torres, 2011).

Collective Identity Framework

Pertinent to the discussion of identity is not just that of the individual and her development, but also that of a collective. Collective identity concerns individuals' identification within a group (van Stekelenburg, 2013). This identification can be based on recognized characteristics or attained conditions, but is particular to a group of connected people outside of an individual self (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). The link between collective identity and social identity is group identification.

> Collective identity is an interactive, shared definition of the field opportunities and constraints offered to collective action produced by several individuals that must be conceived as a process because it is constructed and negotiated by repeated activation of the relationships that link individuals to groups. (Melucci, 1989, p. 793)

Therefore, as personal identity surrenders - in part - to different aspects of social identity, individuals with shared aspects of social identities begin to think, feel, and act as group members (van Stekelenburg, (2013). At this point, as shared characteristics become salient within the group, boundaries are drawn that are neither stable nor precise, but that attribute to shared meaning within a collective (van Stekelenburg, 2013). These boundaries assist in the creation of a consciousness or awareness of group membership and of the group's position in society.

Likewise, collective identity is a multidimensional concept (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Collective identity implies "not only a belief in categorical membership …but also a set of cognitive beliefs associated with that category, such as stereotypic traits thought to be shared by category members or ideological positions that define the group's goals" (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 82). According to van Stekelenburg (2013), through negotiation the group becomes more

aware of its collective identity, and this awareness results in transforming the group's relationship to its social environment.

In comparison to Bronfenbrenner's (1994 & 1995) Ecological Model of Human Development where the environment and the individual are shaped by one another, collective identity development occurs through not just an individual's interactions with her environment, but also her interactions with others. The shared environment, stereotypic traits and ideological positions of individuals set the foundation for shared meaning making which allows individuals to identify beyond self as a collective (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004).

In addition, the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity added a filter to aid in the meaning making process which allows fluidity in one's ability to move between identities (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007), while collective identity development fosters an awareness of group identity through negotiation of relationships and awareness of one's social environment (an Stekelenburg, 2013). Whether individual or collective in nature, the meaning making process is pertinent to this research study. How individuals negotiate their identity in and among different geographical, ideological, and emotional borders guides their view of self, belonging within a group, and how they interact within the world (Anzaldúa, 1987; Koshy, 2006).

National Identity

Moving from the broader discussion of individual and collective identity development to a more specific area of emphasis with relevance to this research study, this section focuses on a particular aspect of identity; one's national identity. Understandably, it is almost impossible to have a discussion about one's national

identity without doing so in collaboration with a discussion of nation and nationality. The concept of nation consists of the fundamental structures as defined by a common culture and history (Miller, 1995; Smith, 1991). Nationality then refers to belonging to a particular nation by birth or naturalization as well as by the commonality of one's language, race, religion, culture, customs and traditions without a particular connection to political unity (Miller, 1995). One's national identity is then revealed through ones values, memories, language, laws, institutions and ceremonies as recognized within their nation.

De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999) conducted a study analyzing various political speeches, newspaper articles, posters, slogans and direct-mail advertisements in relation to the Austrian Republic and its neutrality before the European Union membership referendum. For their research, they conducted focus groups and interviews to gain insight on different aspects of national identity. Within their review, De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak (1999) noted of a nation that:

> Members of even the smallest nations do not know the majority of their fellow-citizens, do not meet, do not hear from one another. And yet they are convinced that they belong to a unique national community – not because they read to a large degree the same newspapers, watch widely the same television programmes, listen widely to the same radio programmes, etc. Nations are perceived as limited by boundaries and thereby cut off from the surrounding nations, because no nation identifies with humanity in its entirety. (p. 154)

On the other hand, De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak (1999), noted that nationality is the narrative that people tell about themselves in order to make-meaning of their social world. To move from the concept of nation to nationality and then national identity is a process. The authors relied on Pierre Bourdieu's (1994) concept of *habitus*, both structured and structuring, as the pathway by which individuals create their national

identity. According to Bourdieu and Passerson (1977), *habitus* symbolizes the beliefs, attitudes, desires, perceptions and values that an individual obtains through his or her home and school environments as well as social class. All of these attributes of one's *habitus* then serves to frame and constrain the individual's choices. Consequently, the combination of what we learn from the schools of thought about nation provided by our educational systems, what we commit to our memories in the learning process and what serves as our individual histories or nature in sum constructs our perceptions of our national identities (De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999). De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak's study concluded that "the discursive construction of national identities is a multidimensional phenomenon" (1999, p. 170) and requires more in-depth critical discourse analysis from everyday life and experiences in order to comprehend the relationships within discourse and social practice.

In another article by Bazić and Anđelković (2011), an investigation of national identity was conducted in relation to the reformation of curriculum content amongst the faculty of teacher education programs in Belgrade and Zagreb in light of the Bologna Process. Bazić and Anđelković stated:

> National identity and education have a common ancestor; both stem from the culture of a particular nation and are developed through the all-encompassing processes of the social development, including entire cultural value systems. As a form of collective self-awareness, national identity is an important factor of the general and humanistic education. (Bazić & Anđelković, 2011, p. 7)

Likewise, Bazić and Anđelković (2011) recognized *nation* as a social group identity while contrasting that *national* identity plays the role of socialization in education by aiding individuals in gaining knowledge about ways of living within particular communities through social interaction. "In these contexts, social interaction

helps people learn and develop cultural patterns, mutual solidarity as well as the awareness of belonging to a particular nation" (Bazić & Anđelković, 2011, p. 207). Bazić and Anđelković (2011) concluded that an individual's national identity can be viewed within two dimensions: first, as an ethnic characteristic, and second, as a predisposition for creating a globalized identity. Therefore, furthering the agenda for a neo-liberal strategy in social development via the reformation of higher education in Europe, the Bologna Process. This process of Europeanization, then emphasizes a nation's awareness of its historical roots and traditions, but also contributes to an awareness of the commonalities of all peoples across physical borders and metaphorical boundaries (Bazić & Anđelković, 2011).

In contrast, Cinpoes (2008) research assessed if national identity and European identity have any degree of mutual exclusivity. In particular, Cinpoes (2008) wanted to know if the processes in place to create a European identity would require the wearing away or erosion of national identity with an end result of a dominant European identity. The implications of the study noted that while national identity did not create a barrier to developing a European identity, the concept of nationalism did create a barrier due to its ability to provide a sense of allegiance or loyalty against anything that threatens a nation. The research revealed that the relationship between individuals and their nations are built upon embedded historical common cultures independent from political institutions, while European identity had been constructed around political institutions with minimal that is shared in the sense of a historical common culture (Cinpoes, 2008). Therefore, Cinpoes (2008) concluded that it is nationalism that works against the development of European identity.

In terms of education and national identity, Byung-Jin (2003) discussed the movement of the world toward a knowledge-based society and how this impacts Symbiotic Globalization or the ability for everyone to prosper mutually with the benefit of equal rights and privileges. Byung-Jin (2003) stated that national education serves the purpose of homogenizing the people of a nation in order to form a national identity. National identity then may be perceived from three perspectives: by the establishment of the nation-state, by the combined concept of nation and country, and/or by one's sense of belonging to a group while also having a self-awareness of that group (Byung-Jin, 2003). Despite the perspective one chooses in defining national identity, it was argued that the approach to understanding was more important. Byung-Jin (2003) concluded that understanding the relationship between one's nation and other nations was key to the symbiotic principle of a win-win global society. In other words on a globalized scale, coexistence between nations can be accomplished through comparative education. However, Byung-Jin (2003) identified three guidelines for comparative education that would first have to be set in order for this to occur. First, there should be a push to understand other countries educational systems instead of importing other countries' merits. Second, comparative education should promote co-existence through educational relationships while providing opportunities for the internalization of co-existence. Third, comparative education should aid individuals in developing their identities while co-existing. Byung-Jin also concluded that this would require re-thinking national identity as a "target of understanding rather than as a target of reconstruction" (2003, p. 340).

National identity is significant to this study in that educational institutions are key to the formation of our national identities (Worden, 2014). As Saudi students move from the nation of Saudi Arabia to the United States of America to study, they are introduced to a different educational system and a different perspective of national identity. As aforementioned in chapter one, higher education in the United States fosters civic empowerment and civic engagement for democratic revitalization (Peters, Alter, & Schwartzbach, 2010). As Saudi students experience education in the United States they may very well experience a conflicting view of their national identity due to their exposure to Western ideology in comparison to their Saudi heritage. Therefore, this research seeks to discover how these students make meaning of this experience and how, if at all, it impacts their national identity.

Borderlands

Based on the aforementioned review of foundational and current trends in identity development research, it is apparent that multiple theoretical perspectives exist on how identity is developed both individually and collectively (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007; Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Bronfenbrenner, 1977 & 1979; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Jones & Abes, 2013; Melucci, 1989; Torres, Jones & Renn, 2009; van Stekelenburg, 2013). Therefore deciding which theoretical perspective to use in framing this research on identity development becomes almost a grey area of complexity; identities are very complex structures. Abes (2012) noted that despite the contradictions that might be found within differing theoretical perspectives, multiple theoretical lenses should be used in the study of identity. Working from multiple theoretical perspectives or theoretical borderlands does not necessarily indicate the

emergence of a new theory, but the realization that there are multiple realities from which to view identity development (Jones & Abes, 2013).

> Speaking to the relationships among her identities, Anzaldúa described a borderland identity as a third space where individuals move between two worlds, participating in both and wholly belonging to neither… Abes adopted the idea of borderlands to explain how researchers apply multiple theories, using notions from each to portray a more complete picture of identity. (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 261)

Anzaldúa (1987) argues that individuals are always negotiating borderlands between each other, race, gender, class, and other aspects of identity. These negotiations across borders are fundamental to understanding identity development. Anzaldúa (1987) further defined a borderland as "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition" (p. 3). In addition, she states that our beliefs are formed by the perceived reality communicated through culture and include structures of power, privilege, and oppression defined by differing cultural norms.

Just as individuals negotiate multiple borderlands in understanding the development of their identities, research can utilize multiple theories in investigating the complexity of identity development. The use of a borderlands perspective as a theoretical framework for research reduces some of the limitations found in a single theory and has the potential to "lead to new ways of thinking about the nature of identity" (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 261). It is in this sense that a borderlands theoretical framework, the new Collective Identity Model introduced below, which is both individual and collective in nature has been created for utilization in this research study.

Collective Identity Development Model: A New Borderlands Approach

In alignment with the borderlands perspective, there are multiple realities from which to view identity development and by using multiple theoretical models the limitations found within a single theory are reduced (Jones & Abes, 2013). With this in mind and building upon the aforementioned models of identity development, this research study intentionally introduces a newly formed collective identity development model that draws its foundation from the layering of the aforementioned identity development research. Guided by Anzaldúa and Abes's borderlands approaches in the previously described literature, the new model is unpacked in the following passages and figures. Specifically, the complexity of this new Collective Identity Model is defined and described using examples where appropriate. See Figure 5 for a representation of the new Collective Identity Model.

Core Identities

Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979) referred to the central axis point of his Ecological Model of Human Development as the core or *person* and then went on to define *person* as the individual in their present state of development with the ability to engage in different ways within different settings. Bronfenbrenner's concept of the core identity is vital to the current new model and current research study because it allows for fluidity within one's identity in that the core captures an individual's identity in a present state of development indicating that not only can it change but there is an expectation of change. Therefore, each glimpse at an individual's core identity over a period of time has the ability to reveal a different outcome. For example, an individual's core identity in their teen years may look different in their mid-thirties.

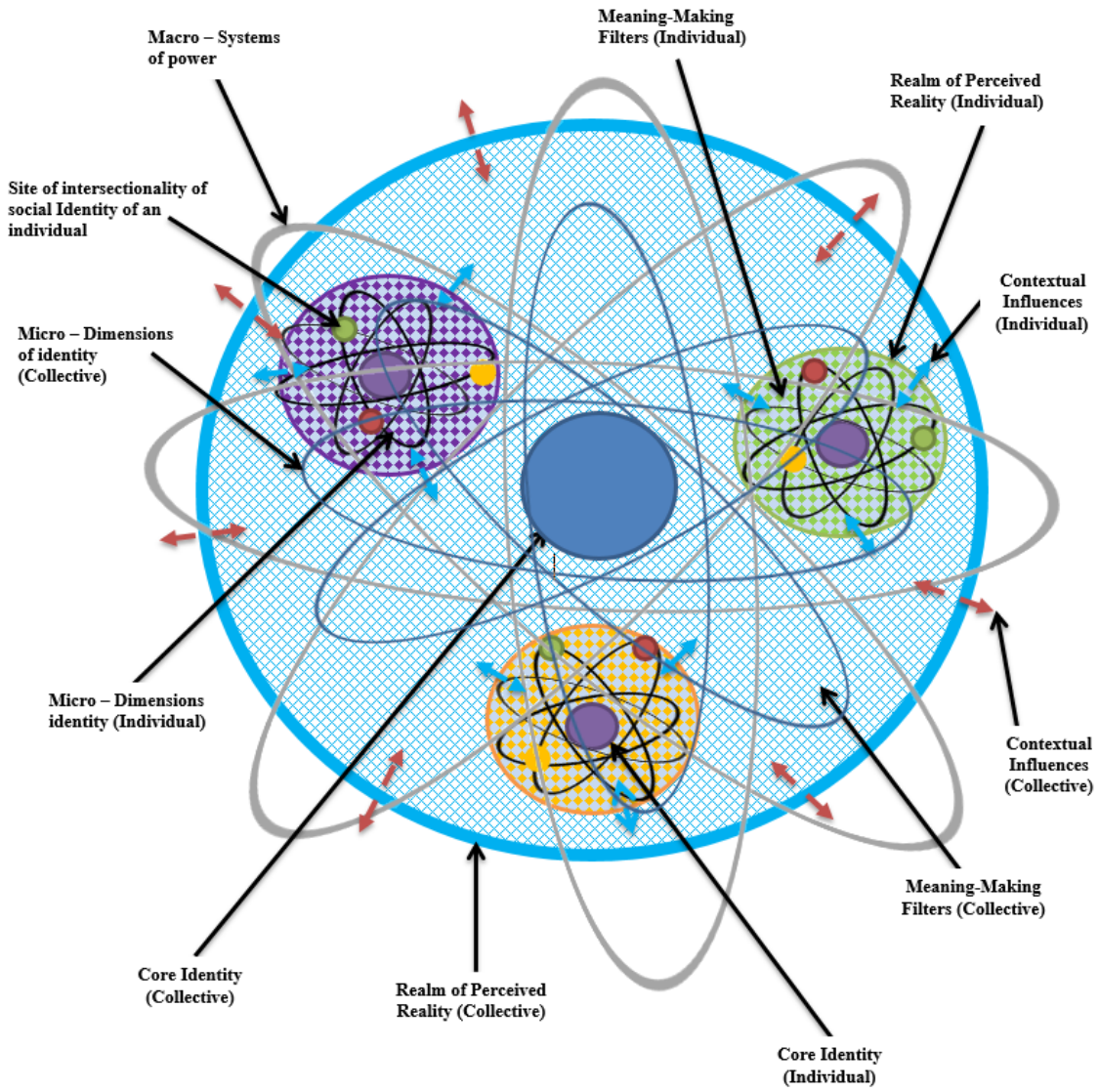


Figure 5. Collective Identity Model.

In a broader arena, defining a collective core identity requires identifying the central traits, themes, and beliefs that define membership in a group (van Stekelenburg, 2013). Group membership parameters may display themselves in a prescribed formula, but still contain the fluidity to change through the passage of time based on collective group needs. "Hence, collective action can be an important instrument to change collective identities" (van Stekelenburg, 2013, p.2). Like Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) core identity of the individual, this allows for fluidity within the group/collective in that based on group needs a collective core identity can change resulting in new parameters of prescribed membership over time. To be sure, some theorists reject the concept of a core identity (hooks, 2004; Collins, 2000); however, for the purpose of this study, a core identity has been embraced both individually and collectively.

Micro-Dimensions of Identity

The micro-dimensions of one's identity are social constructs such as race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, socio-economics, and additional identities that evolve around one's core identity (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007; Jones & Abes, 2013). Note that in Figure 6 micro-dimensions of identity are depicted as micro analysis in the Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity found in Jones and Abes (2013) text, *Identity Development of College Students: Advancing Frameworks for Multiple Dimensions of Identity*. The micro-dimensions of identity also referred to as social constructs of identity, "cannot be fully captured as they change with evolving contexts and relationships" (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007, p. 2).

Within the context of a collective identity, micro-dimensions of identity can be found encircling those individuals' identities that hover around the collective core

identity and the collective core itself. See Figure 5 for a depiction of this concept. In other words, the micro-dimensions or social constructs of race, class, gender, and the like represented in the Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity in Figure 3 can be replicated in a broader context for the concept of collective identity.

Macro-Systems of Power

Macro-systems of power including structures such as government, work, church, corporations, military, and so forth are also rung around ones individual identity. "Situating the individual within power structures illustrates how the micro and macro are inextricably connected" (Jones & Abes. 2013, p. 162). Jones and Abes argue that macro- systems of power do not need a filter as a part of the Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity because "intersectionality suggests that these larger structures of power are always present" (2013, p.162). A display of the relationship between macro- and micro-dimensions of individual identity can be found in Figure 5.

In agreement with Jones and Abes (2013) that larger structures of power are always present, macro-systems of power have been included in the depiction of the new Collective Identity model introduced with this research and found in Figure 5. For a comparison of macro-systems of power for both an individual and a collective identity see Figure 5 and 6.

Intersectionality

One must be cautious when engaging in a discussion of intersectionality due to the challenges and limitations of its application in research (Jones, 2010; Jones & Abes,

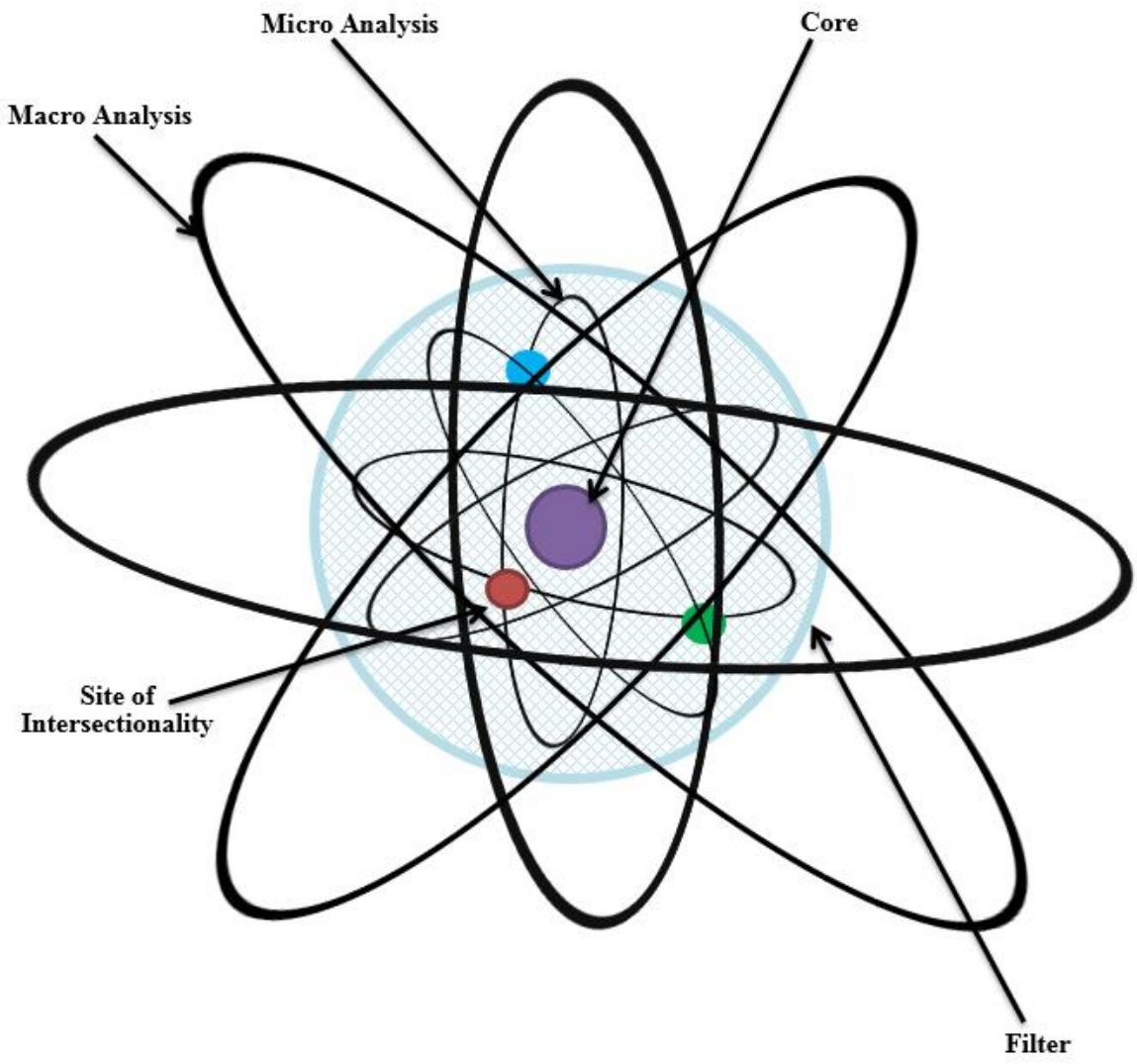


Figure 6. Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. Source data taken from Jones, S.R. & Abes, E.A. (2013). Identity development of college students: Advancing frameworks for multiple dimensions of identity. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

2013; McCall, 2005). McCall (2005) defined intersectionality as the "relationships among multiple social dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (p. 1771). In short, intersectionality is the way in which an individual's intersecting social identities interact and guide engagement within her environment (Davis, Brunn, & Olive, 2015; Collins, 2000; Museus & Griffin, 2011). It has been suggested that there is a significant importance in applying socio-historical inequalities to individual participants' stories though the participants may overlook the associations themselves (Abes, 2012; Bowleg, 2008; Jones, 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013). It is for this reason that the relationship between both the macro-systems of power and micro-dimensions of identity are so important to the meaning-making process within identity development. However, it is also important to note that each individual has multiple identities and life experiences that are distinct from others, and therefore, result in different intersectional relationships (Museus & Griffin, 2011).

Space and mobility. Equally, key to the discussion of intersectionality is the concepts of space and mobility. Space can be the current physical and/or geographical location in which an intersection occurs or it can be the metaphorical sense of location to which an intersection occurs (Gildersleeve & Kuntz, 2011; Kuntz, 2009). Similarly, mobility refers to a person or people's fluidity or ability to maneuver, change or adapt in actuality or in a metaphorical sense based on the environmental and/or contextual influences in the world around them (Anzaldúa, 1987; Jones & Abes, 2013).

Four types of intersectionality. In terms of this study, there are four types of intersectionality to be addressed – the site of intersectionality of social identity for an individual, the site of intersectionality of identity between individuals, the site of

intersectionality of identity between collectives and the site of intersectionality of identity between individuals and collectives. Intersectionality of social identity for an individual occurs at a micro-level when two or more of her social constructs of identity meet and/or are layered on top of each other creating a new form of identity (Jones & Abes, 2013). See Figure 6 for an example of intersectionality of social identity for an individual. For example, an individual may have historically held her social construct of gender as her predominate identifier, but due to an act of war in her country that has taken the lives of many women she may discover an awakened or heightened sense of not just her gender identity, but also her national identity which now moves her to more readily identify as a Sudanese woman. On the macro-level, this same individual may recognize that her government is doing very little if anything at all to protect women from the effects of war. This results in an identity conflict or crisis in the sense that she feels a strong bond with the women of her country because she too is a Sudanese woman, but feels unprotected by the same Sudanese government system that holds power over her safety. During this time of identity crisis, she may conduct an intense analysis and exploration of how she views herself (Erikson, 1970). See Figure 6 for a depiction of this type of intersectionality.

Intersectionality of identity between individuals occurs when the micro-dimensions or social constructs of identity of two or more individuals meet and/or are layered. An example of this can be found in religious identity construction. An individual may find mutual bonding in relationship to someone of the same religious faith as him/herself, and likewise, may find mutual mistrust in someone who identifies in a religiously different way. On a macro-level, two individuals may find identity

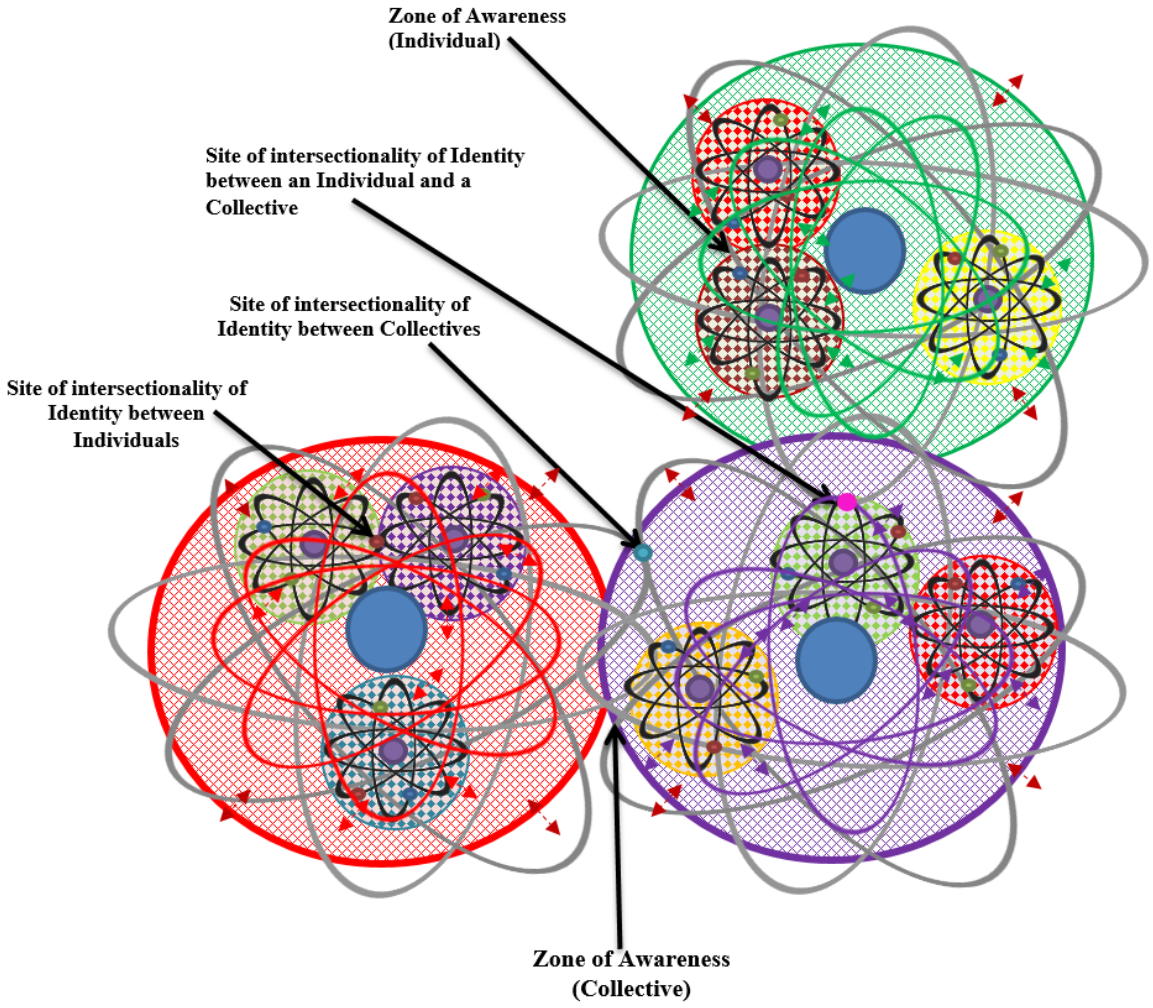


Figure 7. Intersectionality of Multiple Collective Identities.

conflict in the case of war where they are both fighting for their governmental power systems on opposing sides. Vice versa, two individuals may find a mutual bonding when they are raising up against their government in the case of civil unrest much like was witnessed during the Arab Spring protests (Manfreda, 2011). According to Manfreda (2011), the Arab Spring unified secularists, Islamists, left wing groups, advocates of liberal economic reform, the middle class and the poor to remove the power of the corrupt elites and restore their nations for the people. See Figure 7 for a depiction of this intersectionality.

Similarly, intersectionality of identity between collectives can occur on a micro-level when there is a meeting or layering of identity. For example, during Hajj Muslims across many nations gather for a religious pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia based on their shared social identity of religion. Micro-dimensions of identity meeting and/or layering between nations can also result negatively – conflict of identity. This can be seen when militant Muslims in Sudan meet militant Christians in South Sudan and commence fighting based on their religious social constructs. Likewise, intersectionality of identity between collectives can occur on a macro-level. When two or more nations' governing bodies hold differing collective ideals or viewpoints on the need to manufacture weapons of mass destruction a war could result – collective conflict of identity. Conversely, an event such as flooding in India causing mass destruction of homes and the displacement of many children who have been orphaned due to this event may cause the bonding of multiple nations in order to bring aid to India. See Figure 7 for a depiction of this type of intersectionality.

The final, and perhaps most important to the subject of this research study, is that of the intersectionality of identity that can occur between individuals and collectives. For example, an individual from within one collective identity of a nation may physically cross-borders to enter the collective identity of another nation. This type, of intersectionality between individual identities and collective identities is a more complex and layered occurrence for which this study seeks to investigate in terms of meaning-making due to the multiple filters, contextual influences, modes of mobility, and shifts of locations/spaces that occur.

There are multiple possibilities as to why such an event might occur, but the focus of this research study is concerned with the meaning-making that occurs due to the intersectionality experienced when the individual identity of a Saudi student crosses borders with their collective identity as a Saudi national by modality of the King Abdullah Scholarship program, another scholarship opportunity, or private funding into the collective identity of the United States to study as an international student within American universities. This specific type of intersectionality may have the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope – a global conception of identity, have no affect at all, or may grow her allegiance to her nation of origin. See Figure 7. This study seeks to explore the various possibilities of collective and individual Saudi students' identities in order to discover how, if at all, higher education through the study abroad experience may result in Saudi students developing a differing view of their national identity due to their exposure to Western ideology in comparison to their Saudi heritage.

Filters and Realms of Perceived Realities

According to Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007), our meaning-making capacity relies on the use of a filter and how contextual influences move through that filter. "Regardless of differences in meaning making, context influences identity perceptions; differences in the depth of the filter and size of the grid openings incorporate contextual influences in qualitatively different ways" (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007, p. 6-7). This is represented in Figure 4 by the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity as a cylinder separate from the self-perception of multiple identity dimensions. Conversely, the new Collective Identity Model places the filter spherically around the core and micro-dimensions of identity for the individual as is depicted in Figure 6 for the Intersectional Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity as well as spherically around the core, micro-dimensions of identity and individuals found within the collective identity. These filters can be seen depicted in Figure 5 allowing for a more holistic understanding of how our filters aid in the process of meaning-making in that our filters cover all dimensions of our identity to differing degrees as do we face contextual influences from all aspects of our being.

Likewise, our filters assist in the creation of realms of reality both as individuals and in the context of a collective identity. In other words, through our experiences in the meaning-making process within the context of our individual selves and the collectives we have membership within our filters assist us both overtly and covertly in defining what we perceive to be our truths and/or realities. These truths and/or realities, while fluid in nature based on our space and mobility within, assist us in defining the parameters of who we are as individuals and how we select and maintain our

memberships within collectives. These realms can be identified in the Collective Identity Model found in Figure 5.

Context and Contextual Influences

It is pertinent to the discussion that the context in which meaning making occurs is considered. Context can be defined within three distinct realms: the spaces in which meaning making occurs – critical geography (Gildersleeve & Kuntz, 2011; Kuntz 2009; Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz & Gildersleeve, 2012); one's identity salience as "determined by the larger sociohistorical context, and not just by the importance an individual attaches to specific identities" (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 158); and the existing structures of privilege and oppression particular to an individual's identified social identities (Adams et al., 2013).

Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) defined contextual influences of the individual as peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions and the like. For this research and in consideration of the collective, contextual influences are defined as broader institutional systems such as government, education, health and welfare. Likewise, just as our individual and collective identities experience contextual influences, we also influence our realms of reality through the meaning-making process. For example, Monfreda, Wackernagel, and Deumling (2004) surmised that as humans move across the earth they leave an ecological footprint of their presence. In essence, where we go, live, take from the earth and give back can be traced through our ecological pathway or footsteps, and our consumption and distribution patterns cannot only be tracked, but measured. For the purposes of this research study, it is accepted that our identities – who we are – also leaves a footprint on our environments and most

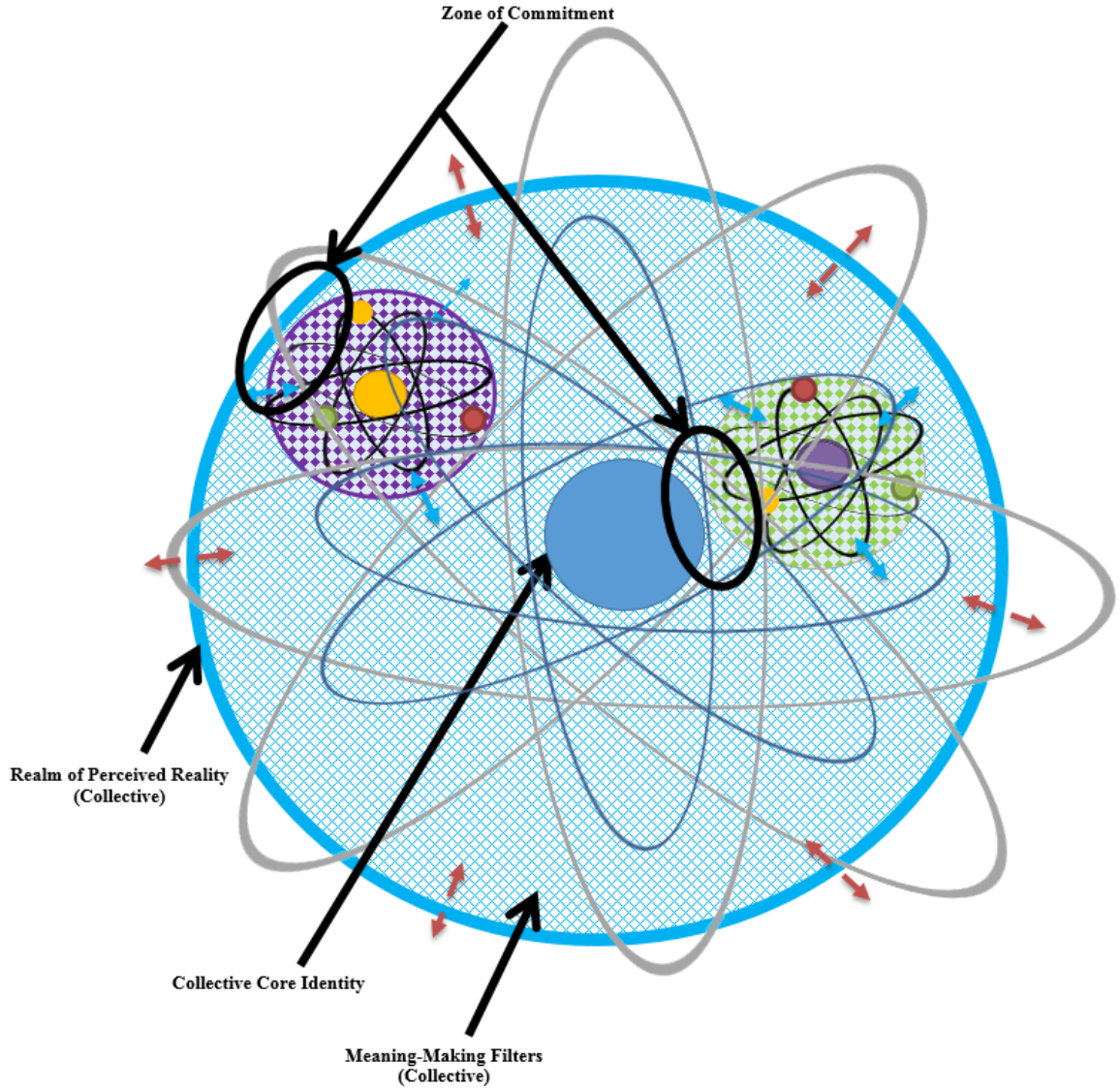


Figure 8. Zone of Commitment within the Collective Identity Model.

importantly on those with whom we share our environments. In other words, just as we are filtering in our contextual influences in contribution to how we make-meaning, we too are filtering out our concepts of meaning impacting both our realms of reality and others.

Zone of Awareness

Another term to introduce to the discussion of identity development for the purpose of this research study is that of the zone of awareness. The zone of awareness can be defined as the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces. This type of awareness is much more than just an issue of distance, but also of knowledge. Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz and Gildersleeve (2012) argued that the spaces in which learning occurs can be just as transformative to the learning process as the social relationships that occur within them. For the purpose of this research, it is argued that skewed or empirically correct knowledge about the lived world and those with which we share it - close or at a distance - also impacts our perceptions of self and others, as well as, our perceptions of reality.

In Figure 7, the zones of awareness have been identified in terms of the proximity between individuals and collectives not at points of intersection, but where filters and realms of reality overlap. This signifies that while they occupy in some way each other's spaces there does not necessarily have to be intersection, but they do so acknowledging each other's presence. In some ways, it is like a ride on an elevator. You access the elevator with all of its passengers, you may know no one on the elevator, but you are aware that you are not alone. You may even note that there are things about the other around you that you find familiar and/or similar to yourself, but

because no relationship/intersection occurs this knowledge is just an awareness that you have, and perhaps, not enough to engage in a relationship.

Zone of Commitment

Likewise, the zone of commitment can be seen within the collective identity in terms of the proximity between individuals that make up the collective and the core identity of the collective. For example, an individual may be one of many members of the Catholic faith, but in comparison to other individuals, he/she may have a different level of commitment to the traits, themes, and/or beliefs that define membership in the Catholic faith. In this sense membership in the Catholic faith is the collective identity and the traits, themes and/or belief systems of the Catholic faith define the core of the collective. Therefore, some individuals who have a strong sense of commitment to the Catholic faith and identify as Catholic based on the core traits, themes, and/or beliefs may be found closer to the core within the collective. Others who are perhaps not as committed to the Catholic faith, but still value membership and define themselves as Catholics can be seen closer to the realm of perceived reality and the meaning-making filters. These individuals value their membership in the collective, but are not as committed to the overall traits, themes, and/or beliefs compared to other members. It is perhaps easier to think of this in terms of the individual Catholic who is committed to attending every service and the individual Catholic who attends service only on major Catholic holidays. Both are Catholics, but with different levels of commitment to the Catholic faith. See Figure 8 for a depiction of both of these examples of the zone of commitment.

Choice

The philosophical perspective on free will versus determinism has incurred much debate with many connecting the concept of free will to that of moral responsibility or being responsible for one's actions (O'Connor, 2013). Therefore, the individual has a choice to either act as they have chosen or to act differently. Glasser (1998) noted that choice or the will to choose is but indeed a component of our personal freedom and how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space is within our control. For this research, as we think about the concept of choice and the relationship of our choices to our sites of intersectionality, we must also take into consideration how our choices impact our meaning-making processes.

Vohs and Schooler (2008) explored the value of believing in free will. Through their research two experiments were conducted in order to determine if persuading participants to believe that human behavior is predetermined would encourage them to cheat. In order to conduct the research experiments, beliefs related to free will were manipulated through deterministic readings and then their influence on morality was measured through cheating behaviors. In the first experiment, this was done by exposing participants to readings that encouraged beliefs in determinism or text that were neutral in content. The deterministic text portrayed human behavior as the result of environmental and genetic factors. The results of the first experiment showed that exposure to deterministic text resulted in increased cheating on the assigned task participants were given after the readings. In the second experiment, participants were given either deterministic statements or statements that encouraged free will. Those who

read the deterministic statements were more likely to cheat on the task given them after the readings. Knowing "that brief exposure to a message asserting that there is no such thing as free will can increase both passive and active cheating raises the concern that advocating a deterministic worldview could undermine moral behavior" (Vohs & Schooler, 2008, p. 53). While the results of this study neither confirms nor denies the existence of free will, it does show that the dismissal of free will can lead to unethical behavior and may even provide an excuse for some to act in a way that is immoral.

In another article by Giesinger (2010), the implications of free will on education was discussed. Giesinger (2010) pointed out that the intent to educate is also associated with the "aim to influence, to guide, to control or determine someone else's behavior and development" (p. 515). Determinism in this sense is driven by education, and the individual learner is absent of the ability to clearly execute free will due to the influences of the educator. However in other instances, free will is compatible with education in that, "we can only see ourselves as free agents, if we are the ultimate (causal) source of our actions" (Giesinger, 2010, p. 516). Therefore, individuals have the ability to either accept or refute the information provided by the educator, and the ability to do the opposite of what might be expected of them based on their ability to reason. Therefore, the individuals reasoning can be based on what they have learned and/or experienced, but the individual also has the free will to determine if what has been learned and/or experienced will be used in the reasoning process.

Summary

We can liken the complexity of our identities to that of the complexity of our individual biological strands of DNA in that they are formed by many smaller parts,

molecules if you will, that individually are very intricate and indicative of our particular traits, but in combination are the sum of who we are. Like a strand of DNA, a strand of our identity sells us short of our total being or narrative and yet is far too complex to be explained in and of itself without the lens of a very strong microscope.

The same can be said for the focus of this research in that the individual identities of each Saudi student studying abroad within the United States is very unique and yet each Saudi student is a member of a larger collective. Therefore, it is pertinent to this research to take into consideration how Saudi students perceive the advancements in the structure of their higher education systems due to government initiatives, the impact of internationalization, and the development of their individual identities within the collective Saudi identity while studying in the collective identity of the United States. Figure 9 provides a depiction of this research focus.

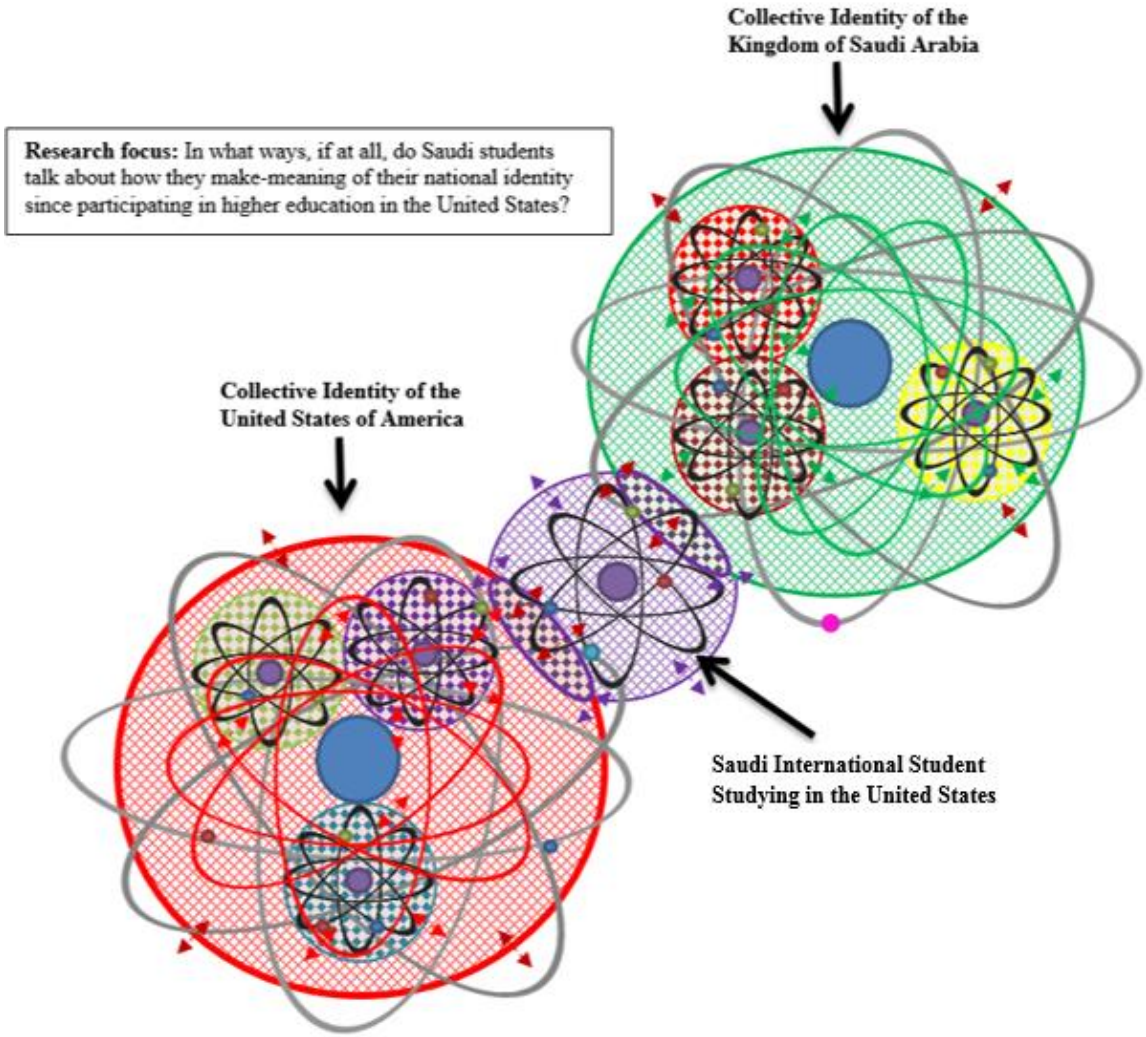


Figure 9. Research Focus.

CHAPTER IV: CONSTRUCTING THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Design

The research design of any study is foundational to its success and functions to ensure that any evidence obtained addresses the research problem (Schwandt, 2007). This study explores the discourse Saudi students utilize to make meaning of their national identity as a result of their higher education experiences in the United States. As Saudi students transition from one collective identity to another, they are afforded the opportunity to interact with the world as they know it from a Saudi perspective and as they have experienced it within higher education in the United States. Johnstone (2002) notes that "discourse is shaped by the world, and discourse shapes the world" (p. 9). This is important because as Saudi students study in the United States, they are provided an opportunity to experience the world through a higher education system that purports to foster civic empowerment and civic engagement (Peters, Alter, & Schwartzbach, 2010). Likewise, as individuals make meaning of their experiences, language is created and language creates more meaning (Johnstone, 2002). Thus, the research design for this study seeks to discover how Saudi students talk about and make meaning of their national identity once they have been exposed to Western ideology through higher education in the United States.

Theoretical Perspective

As a theoretical perspective, this research will use the new and earlier outlined Collective Identity Model from chapter three, original to this research study and created utilizing a borderlands approach by layering multiple identity development models (Anzaldúa, 1987; Jones & Abes, 2013). These models include Bronfenbrenner's (1977

& 1979) Ecological Model of Human Development, Jones and McEwen's (2000) Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, Abes, Jones and McEwen's (2007) Reconceptionalized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity and the framework of collective identity as presented by van Stekelenburg (2013), Ashmore, Deaux and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) and Melucci (1989). Both individual and collective in nature, the new Collective Identity Model is best suited for this research. As previously noted, a borderlands approach to research as a theoretical framework reduces some of the limitations found in a single theory and has the ability to build upon multiple theories with the potential to "lead to new ways of thinking about the nature of identity" (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 261).

The concept of a borderlands theoretical framework evolved from the work of Anzaldúa (1987) in her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The new Mestiza*. Anzaldúa (1987) did not explicitly define a theoretical framework of borderlands, but rather presented the concept of borderlands as a fusion or hybrid of different types of borders – geographical, ideological, and emotional. Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of borderlands led to a clearer understanding of the concepts of "them", "us", and "other" (Anzaldúa, 1987; Koshy, 2006). Where borders meet, knowledge of one's identity become both clearer and abstract. For Anzaldúa (1987), a borderland identity meant living between spaces or worlds where the individual is not a member of either space or world, but has the ability to participate in both (Jones & Abes, 2013). Abes (2012) expanded on Anzaldúa (1987) concept of borderlands in order to explain how researchers may utilize multiple theories to create a more holistic view of identity. It is in this sense that the Collective Identity Model presented in chapter three builds a borderlands theoretical

framework that is both individual and collective in nature. This type of theoretical framework aids in the exploration of how, if at all, Saudi students talk about and make meaning of their national identity in relation to their higher education experience in the United States between and among different geographical, ideological, and emotional borders.

Methodology and Methods

For the purpose of this research, a subjectivist epistemological view was chosen. Epistemology refers to the study of knowledge or how we know what we know (Dew & Foreman, 2014). Within a subjectivist epistemological view, "our ideas and understanding of reality are shaped and influenced by the world in which we live" (Dew & Foreman, 2014, p. 50). Therefore, a subjectivist epistemology implies knowledge cannot exist without individuals to construct it and the world can only be understood through an individual's perspective. Likewise, knowledge is socially and historically constructed through subjectively accessing the external world (Wong, Musa, & Wong, 2011).

Consistent with this epistemology, the research that this study seeks to investigate is best explored through the lens of a qualitative methodology due to the way in which qualitative research relies on the premise "that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). In particular, this study will take a critical qualitative research approach. Critical qualitative research accepts that there are multiple realities and these realities can be positioned within differing contexts including those that are of a political, social and cultural nature (Cannella, Pérez & Pasque, 2016; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith 2008;

Fishman & McLaren, 2005; Lather, 2007; Martínez-Alemán, Pusser, & Bensimon, 2015). Also, critical qualitative research seeks more than to just investigate how individuals construct meaning through interactions within their world, but also, to promote social change in order to create a "more just, democratic and egalitarian society" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 285). Fishman and McLaren (2005) note that realities "are constructed in and through people's linguistic, cultural, social and behavioral interactions which both shape and are shaped by social, political, economic and cultural forces" (p. 33). Therefore, critical qualitative research is interpretive in practice and seeks to make the world visible through critical approaches that seek to deconstruct cultural practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) while discovering, examining, and critiquing assumptions within society that both construct and limit differing ways of thinking and being in the world (Martínez-Alemán, Pusser, & Bensimon, 2015; Steinberg & Cannella, 2012). Critical qualitative research in this sense "encourages the use of qualitative research for social justice purposes" (Cannella, Pérez & Pasque, 2016).

Critical Discourse Analysis. The particular critical qualitative methodology selected for this research is critical discourse analysis, hence forth referred to as CDA (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Johnstone, 2002; Rogers, 2011; van Dijk, 2003; Wodak, 2001). Some of the principles of CDA can be found in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Rasmussen, 1996), as well as emerging from work within critical linguistics, also referred to as CL (Fairclough, 1989; Fowler et al., 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979; van Dijk, 1985; & 2003; Wodak, 2001). Up until the 1970's, CL research dealt primarily with the prescribed aspects of language, but not the relationship between

language and power structures (Wodak, 2001). By the early 1990's, the focus of CL and CDA began to find congruence between language and power structures. As CDA developed and expanded, its counterparts could be found in multiple fields, such as: Rhetoric, Linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, Socio-Psychology, Cognitive Science, Literary Studies, Sociolinguistics, and Pragmatics (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

CDA is centered on three key concepts – power, history, and ideology (Wodak, 2001). Accordingly, discourse is regulated by structures of power that have the potential to apply both positive and negative pressures as well as to cultivate resistance. Similarly, discourse is embedded within the historical contexts of time and space, and takes on a historical importance in that it can only be understood with reference to historical context – culture, society, and belief systems. Subsequently, structures of power and historical contexts shape the ideology imbedded within discourse. CDA as a methodology can be utilized to investigate the meaning making process within the context of discourse and can provide insight and understanding as to how discourse can create, reproduce and resist power struggles and/or social inequality (van Dijk, 2003).

In so stating, it is not enough to just analyze texts or talk, but also, to interpret discourse in terms of its reception and social affects (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001; Rogers, 2011). "The goal of CDA is thus to uncover the ways in which discourse and ideology are intertwined" (Johnstone, 2002, p. 45). Further, Rogers (2011) noted that, "critical analysis of discourse is an analysis not only of what is said, but of what is left out; not only what is present in the text, but what is absent" (p. 15). Hence, CDA as a methodology can be used to uncover social problems, power relations,

and provide an understanding of discourse as a form of social action (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

According to van Dijk (2003), critical research on discourse can only be completed if specific objectives are recognized through the research process. Hence, CDA should focus on social problems and political issues, explain discourse structures in terms of social interactions and social structures, and focus "on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society" (van Dijk, 2003, p. 353). Van Dijk noted the following eight tenets of CDA: 1. CDA addresses social problems; 2. power relations are discursive; 3. discourse constitutes society and culture; 4. discourse does ideological work; 5. discourse is historical; 6. the link between text and society is mediated; 7. discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; and 8. discourse is a form of social action (as cited in Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 271-280).

CDA is the appropriate choice for this research based on its view of discourse as "a form of social practice" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258) as reflected through language (Johnstone, 2002; Wodak, 2001). In other words, the discourse that Saudi participants provide has the potential for social problems, power relations and social action to be uncovered (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) in terms of the meaning-making process that occurs when Saudi Students transition across and among geographical, ideological, and emotional borders from one collective identity into another.

Research Team. A research team is vital to the success of the research design due to its ability to provide a method of creating consistency and reliability of design,

practice, triangulation, and congruence of analysis. Eide and Allen (2005) discuss the importance of recognizing that the majority of researchers within the United States approach research from an individualistic orientation that removes the participants from the development of the research design. For participants that come from a collectivistic orientation this may be uncomfortable and even offensive (Eide & Allen, 2005; Lyons et al., 2013). Therefore, members of the research team were selected for various intentional reasons and roles within the research process (Lyons et al., 2013). For this study a three-person research team was established consisting of the researcher and author, an insider, and an outsider. The attributes of the researcher will be discussed under the heading of *Reflexivity and Positionality.*

As participants originate from Saudi Arabia and are bilingual at differing levels in Arabic and English, it was vital that the research team have a member who is fluent in both languages and preferably a national of Saudi Arabia in order to aid in the research design, data collection, and analysis. The presence of a research team member who has the ability to translate from Arabic to English and vice versa, as well as a similar background to the participants provided an insider perspective that could ease tensions and assist in building trust due to familiarity with the participant community (Kerstetter, 2012; Merton, 1972).

In addition, at least one research team member with an outsider perspective in relation to Saudi nationals and who is a national of the United States was needed on the research team to assist with review of recordings, transcripts, and triangulation of analysis. The outsider perspective provides a different insight due to the distance and lack of familiarity with the participant community (Kerstetter, 2012; Merton, 1972). In

this way, the research could be triangulated between members of the research team and congruence of analysis could be established. All research team members maintained IRB guidelines of confidentiality for research processes and participant identification. Additionally, all research team members were compensated for their work with a dinner provided by the researcher.

Participant Selection. Participants for this research study were purposely selected in order to collect rich information for in-depth review (Patton, 2002). In other words, the participants were selected based on their relevance to the research. Specifically, this study is focused on participants in a study abroad experience in the United States who are from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and who are classified as English Language Learners; graduate or undergraduate students. Students participating in this study were entering the university for the first time through the university English Language Institute program, as students who gained entry via national and university required assessments, or as transfer students coming from other institutions within the United States and/or abroad. Students may be just beginning their educational endeavors, mid-way through, or even in their final semester. In this way, the research team was able to explore any similarities and/or differences based on time in the United States, if any at all.

Likewise, it was expected that the majority of participants would be of the Sunni sect of the Muslim faith due to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia being classified as a predominately Sunni Muslim nation (Nevo, 1998; U.S. Department of State, 2011). It is estimated that approximately 89-90 percent of Muslims in Saudi Arabia are of the Sunni sect belief system and 10-11 percent are of the Shi'ite sect belief system

(Armanios, 2004). Therefore, participation by either sect of the Muslim faith was possible though unequal representation was expected.

Participants within this study were initially recruited through a designated student association at a mid-sized research university (20,000 to 40,000 student population) within the Southwestern United States. Likewise, the students may or may not have been recipients of the King Abdullah Scholarship program, are representative of both male and female identities, and are at or over 18 years of age, but less than 55 years of age. Because gender roles within the Kingdom are clearly defined by law, social expectations, and culture (Manea, 2013), gender identification options for the purpose of this study will be limited to cis gender, in other words, gender will be assumed to correlate with the biological sex – male/female - that participants were assigned at birth (Wood, 2013).

After IRB approval had been granted, the primary investigator used the relationships that had already been established through initial emails with the student association's leadership in order to gain access to participants. Initial face-to-face contact was made during an event planned by the designated student association where the researcher was introduced to the study population by the leadership of the student association at an association sponsored activity, in order to advertise (See Appendix A for the advertisement template) the need for volunteers to participate in the study. The researcher was then able to contact the participants face-to-face for recruitment purposes during the activity and through follow-up phone calls afterwards with those who showed interest by completing the interest to participate form. Participants were notified of the nature of the study by receiving an advertisement describing the purpose

of the study. Interviewees knew in advance that they were free to decline to take part in the project at any time and could decline to answer any questions without penalty.

The Event. The designated student association's leadership consisting of the president and leadership team suggested that they be allowed to introduce the need for volunteers to participate in order to aid in building trust with participants and to provide a sponsored activity that would afford the opportunity to bring all of the designated student association's members and associated Saudi students within the university together. This event was held at the university and included a celebration of Saudi students who had graduated for the semester, a presentation by Saudi Aramco on preparing for the workforce, and fellowship amongst group members. The event aided in establishing rapport with possible participants prior to interviews being conducted and provided an avenue for recruitment of participants.

In this way, the designated student association's leadership acted as gatekeepers (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). Gatekeepers are in a position of authority formally and/or informally and are able to grant access to a research setting or participant pool. Working with the designated student association's leadership was advantageous in that, as gatekeepers (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014), they were able to support the research team and shared an insider perspective (Kerstetter, 2012; Merton, 1972) that assisted with facilitating initial access to participants who may otherwise have been difficult to contact, assisted with clarifying cultural nuances, and provided advice on communicating with participants. See Appendix B for a copy of the interest to participate form that was developed in both English and Arabic to collect contact information from participants in order to follow-up with appointments.

Participants. The participants for this study were identified late in the 2015 spring semester during a designated student association event attended in its entirety by the primary investigator that lasted 2.5 hours with approximately seventy-five Saudi student participants in attendance. The primary investigator met 30 minutes prior to the event with the leadership of the student association in order to obtain instructions on when advertising for the research study would occur at the event. At the end of the designated student association event, the primary investigator was given the opportunity to share on stage with the Saudi students in attendance her research and to request volunteers to participate in her study. The researcher was also provided a table at the back of the room throughout the event where interested students could visit, learn more about the research study, and be provided a copy of the advertisement for the research, as well as sign up to participate. Of those in attendance, fifteen students met with the researcher after the event and filled out the interest to participate form providing initial contact information, designating preferred times and places to meet, and if so desired, were given the opportunity to submit requests for a translator. In total, fifteen students (7 females and 8 males) volunteered as prospective participants. There were no request made for a translator to assist with interviews and all prospective participants reported being within the age limits of the study.

Within twenty-four hours following the designated student association meeting, the researcher began contacting by phone the students who had volunteered for the study to set appointments to meet for the following week. In total 19 initial calls were made to set-up appointment times for interviews with each participant. Four participants had to be called twice due to scheduling conflicts. All but one participant requested to

meet in a reserved room at the university. The remaining participant requested to meet in a conference room area located within the participant's apartment complex. All participants agreed to be tape recorded. All but two of the prospective participants set appointment times. Two prospective participants decided that they would no longer be able to take part in the study. There was no reason given for declining to participate by either; however, they were both thanked for their time and willingness to initially sign-up as possible interview prospects. This left 6 males and 7 females to participate in the research study. The remaining 13 participants were each called again to confirm times and locations the day before their interviews were scheduled to occur.

Yin (2016) stated that it is important to note the number of participants interviewed in a qualitative research study. However when reviewing the number of participants required to be interviewed for qualitative research the consensus among many researchers is that "it depends" (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 3). It depends upon resources, the research question(s), whether or not saturation has occurred, the purpose of one's research and accessibility to and availability of potential participants (Baker & Edwards, 2012). In this exploratory research study focusing on the perception of Saudi student's national identity after studying within the United States, saturation was garnered in the analysis though the participant numbers are limited due to the small population of Saudi's compared to the overall college population during the spring of 2015 which was just at 22,514 for all students and inclusive of the 116 (0.5%) that were Saudi.

Successfully completed qualitative dissertations researching the Saudi student population have varied in participant numbers consisting of as few as three in studies

such as Albalawi's (2013) on the academic and cultural challenges of Saudi students within the United States; nine participants within Heyn's (2013) and sixteen participants within Abo Rabia's (2015) studies on Saudi students' experiences in the United States; and 25 participants within Shaw's (2010) study on Saudi student experiences and strategies for academic success. Alajlan (2016) conducted a mixed methods study on Saudi students' attitudes toward mental health issues that included only 10 Saudi participants for the qualitative portion of the study. With populations that are difficult to access for qualitative research, such as Saudi students (Abo Rabia, 2015; Alajlan, 2016; Albalawi, 2013; Heyn, 2013; Shaw, 2010), a small number of participants "may be extremely valuable and represent adequate numbers for a research project" (Baker & Edwards, 2012, p. 8). Shotton, Lowe, and Waterman's (2013) work on understanding Native students in higher education pointed out the significance of hearing the voices of those who may not present as a statistically significant population on campus. Though, "Native American enrollment and retention in institutions of higher education remain the lowest compared to other populations….The issues, needs, and characteristics of this population are multifaceted and unique" (Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013, p. 1), and therefore, their voices and those of other statistically small marginalized populations should not be silenced.

All of the participants for this study were majoring in STEM fields. Likewise, their academic levels varied from language acquisition at the English Language Institute, to all levels of undergraduate study (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), and one graduate student. Participants' initial status upon entering the university can be categorized into five areas:

- Studying English in order to enter another university (1 participant).
- Studied and completed study at this institution's English Institute and plan to continue on at this institution (4 participants).
- Entered and studying at the university without needing to study at an English Institute; English proficient (6 participants).
- Transferred to the university from another university in the United States (1 participant).
- Transferred to this university from another university in Saudi Arabia (1 participant).

Additionally, three of the participants were receiving funding to study in the United States through the Saudi Aramco College Preparatory Program which is corporately sponsored by Saudi Aramco, a state-owned oil company of Saudi Arabia (Saudi Aramco, 2016b). Through the Saudi Aramco College Preparatory Program, top Saudi high school students who have graduated from the natural science secondary education program and who have met the GPA requirement, Qiyas (exam score), and company English and math placement scores are sponsored to study a company required STEM discipline bachelor's degree abroad (Saudi Aramco, 2016a). The remaining 10 participants were receiving funding to study in the United States through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program outlined in earlier chapters. For a specific breakdown of participant self-identified information gathered from the demographic information form, see Table 8 which includes the assigned pseudonyms for the thirteen participants.

Data Collection. Initially, a phone call was made to a member of the leadership of the designated student association in order to begin conversations about the intent of the research study and to request permission to advertise for the study at a student

Table 8

Research Study Participant Self-Identified Information

Pseudonym:	Gender:	Attending as:	Major:	Initial Status entering the University:	Funding for study:
Yahya	Male	Graduate Student Masters and PhD	Computer Science	I transferred to this university from another university in the United States.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Hussain	Male	Undergraduate Senior	Economics	I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Aaliyah	Female	Eng. Lang. Learner Eng. Lang. Institute	Medicine	I am studying English in order to enter another university.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Aisha	Female	Undergraduate Sophomore	Biomedical Engineering	I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Khalid	Male	Undergraduate Junior	Petroleum Engineering	I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.	Saudi Aramco
Amara	Female	Undergraduate Junior	Petroleum Engineering	I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.	Saudi Aramco
Fahad	Male	Undergraduate Sophomore	Industrial Engineering	I studied and completed at this institution's English Institute and continued on at this university.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Nadia	Female	Undergraduate Senior	Chemical Engineering	I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Samira	Female	Undergraduate Sophomore	Environmental Engineering	I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Nasir	Male	Undergraduate Freshman	Environmental Science	I studied and completed at this institution's English Institute and continued on at this university.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Zahra	Female	Undergraduate Sophomore	Chemical Engineering/ Pre-Biomedical	I studied and completed at this institution's English Institute and continued on at this university.	King Abdullah Scholarship
Safa	Female	Undergraduate Sophomore	Industrial Engineering	I studied and completed at this institution's English Institute and continued on at this	King Abdullah Scholarship
Rashad	Male	Undergraduate Junior	Petroleum Engineering	I transferred to this university from another university in Saudi Arabia.	Saudi Aramco

Note. Source data compiled from the Interest to Participate form and the Demographic Information form filled out by participants.

association event. This was followed by a series of six emails between the primary investigator and two of the leadership members of the student association making preparation for the announcement at the event. Once the event had occurred and the participants had been identified and called to set-up times and locations for interviews, all of the appropriate documentation for consent to interview was prepared.

Interviews were conducted either in a reserved room at the university or at another participant designated public area mutually agreed upon between the participant and the interviewer. This decision was based on advice provided by the designated student association's leadership and insider research team member. It was suggested to offer a variety of options for interview locations in order to accommodate student needs and build trust with possible participants. With participant permission, interviews were tape recorded, and a small gift or token of appreciation costing no more than $5.00 was provided by the researcher to each participant at the end of the interview session as is consistent with the culture of hospitality in Saudi Arabia (Cohen, 2014). See Appendix C for a copy of the consent to participate in the research form.

During the interview sessions, participants were greeted and provided with the informed consent to participate in a research study form (Appendix C) and the demographic information form (Appendix D) which allowed the primary investigator to collect participants' current involvement in higher education in the United States and/or abroad. Participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions that they had about the forms and clarification was provided when so desired. See Table 8 for an analysis of the demographic information collected. Upon completion of the forms and any clarification needed, the interview question process began.

Semi-structured interview questions were used as the method by which data was collected (Wodak & Chilton, 2005). Interviews as a method of data collection provide the opportunity for richer and more in-depth responses as compared to a standard survey process. In particular, semi-structured interview questions are set-up in an asymmetrical structure (Berg, 2004). The interviewer initiates the questions that guide the conversation, has the ability to use probing questions when needed, and may also add or delete probing questions between subsequent participants as needed. Also, questions may be re-ordered during the interview process and the interviewer can adjust the language level to meet the needs of the participant. This was important in case the participant needed the question asked in a different way using modified language due to misunderstanding of vocabulary based on English as a second language. Likewise, the interviewer had the ability to answer any questions the participants had and to make clarification when needed.

Participants were informed in advance that interview sessions could possibly last as long as 1 to 1.5 hours depending upon each individual's responses. Total time spent for interview sessions was 18 hours and 25 minutes. Interviewees knew in advance that they were free to decline to take part in the research study at any time and could decline to answer any questions without penalty. In alignment with advice provided by the designated association's leadership and the inside research member, the public place to be interviewed was mutually agreed upon by the interviewee and the interviewer in order to establish trust. The interviews were tape recorded with permission from the interviewees using two Sony IC Recorders. One recorder served as a back-up to the other in case there was an issue with equipment malfunctioning. No interviewees

declined being recorded. Interviews were then conducted over a consecutive five-day period. See Appendix E for a complete list of the interview protocol including introductions and probes.

In preparation for the interview process, the primary investigator conducted a pilot interview with the insider research team member who is Saudi and two friends who were from Saudi Arabia in order to assist in identifying questions that may be confusing or even misinterpreted by the study participants. For this process, the insider research team member and two Saudi friends each met one-on-one with the researcher to complete mock-interviews and then met all together to collectively discuss the interview questions and their responses. This helped to determine if any changes to the interview questions were warranted before the study began. The pilot test was conducted prior to submission of IRB and is not a part of the research data set. As is consistent with research for classroom purposes (Institutional Review Board, 2010), an official timeline for interviews with participants for the study was set once prospectus defense had been successfully completed and the IRB approval had been granted.

In anticipation that participants may have had varying levels of English proficiency, all documents were provided in both English and Arabic. Translation from English to Arabic was provided by the insider research team member (See Appendix F for the Attestation for Translated Documents form) who is fluent in both languages and a citizen of Saudi Arabia. In addition to written documents, a translator who was fluent in both languages and a citizen of Saudi Arabia was available if requested by participants during the interview process to assist in translation of interview questions. However, no participant made request for a translator. See Appendix G for the consent

to confidentiality and the interview protocol to be followed by the translator if requested to be present during an interview session.

In addition to the recorded interview sessions, the researcher also took time to record nine audio field notes and wrote eight pages of field notes within a Mead composition book. Likewise, 22 jottings (Bernard, 2012), brief scratch notes of personal significance to the researcher, were taken in order to remind the researcher of key ideas or references made during the interview process. These were kept within the margins of the field notes and on Post-it-Notes. All of the aforementioned would later be used to ensure that any notes, thoughts or concerns that may have arisen during the interview process were acknowledged during the transcription and analysis process (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Schwandt, 2007). Every effort was made to reduce and/or eliminate risks to the interviewees for this research. See Table 9 for a complete breakdown of the data collection and data analysis tools utilized during the data collection and analysis process.

***Transcription*.** For this research study, a denaturalized method of transcription was used due to its compatibility with CDA (Bucholtz, 2000; Davidson, 2009; Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). CDA is more focused on the meanings within a transcript than on the analysis of the speech itself (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). Equally, denaturalized transcription does not focus attention on the mechanics of speech like its Cis transcription process selected directly relates to the best method to answer the research questions. Similarly, Bucholtz (2000) noted that the transcription process must contain a reflexive component in which the researcher recognizes both the choices that were made during transcription and the limitations of those choices on the overall

Table 9

Utilization of Data Collection & Data Analysis Tools

Data Collection & Data Analysis Tools	Context	Totals
Phone call to initiate contact with the Student Association	1 member of leadership Primary Investigator	1 phone call
Emails between Primary Investigator & Student Association Leadership to set-up opportunity to advertise for participants	2 members of leadership Primary Investigator	6 emails
Phone calls to set up interviews	2 non-committed participants 13 participants Primary Investigator	32 phone calls
Audio recorded participant interview Sessions	13 participant interview sessions	18 hours 25 minutes
Audio recorded field notes	9-Primary Investigator field notes	21 minutes
Word-for Word Transcriptions	1-set/ 4-parts	82 pages
1st Review to Denaturalize Transcriptions – avoiding description of accent and other involuntary sounds (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). (Including word-for-word transcriptions for reference)	1-set/ 4-parts	119 pages
2nd Review of Denaturalized Transcription - addressing Arabic phrases and meanings. (Including word-for-word transcriptions for reference)	1-set/ 4-parts	120 pages
3rd Review of Denaturalized Transcription - addressing inter/cross-cultural communication. (Including word-for-word transcriptions for reference)	1-set/ 4-parts	132 pages
4th Review of Denaturalized Transcription - final for formal analysis – coding. (Including word-for-word transcriptions for reference)	1-set/ 4-parts	128 pages
Phone calls for clarification	4 participants Primary Investigator	4 phone calls
Field Notes	1 Mead Composition Book	8 pages
Jottings or scratch notes	Mead Composition Book; Post-it Notes	22 jottings
Poster-Board Flip Chart with Denaturalized Transcription used for Coding	1-set/4-parts	13 using front and back 22in x 28in Poster Boards
Post-it Notes – no lines	1 pad (100 sheets)	72 – 3in x 3in sheets
Post-it Notes – with lines	1 pad (90 sheets)	39 – 4in x 6in sheets
Coding Documents – Codes	1-set/ 4-parts	4 pages
Coding Documents – Sub-codes	1-set/ 4-parts	6 pages
Coding Documents – Cis Gender	1-set/ 4-parts	6 pages
Coding Documents – Theoretical Lens	1-set/ 4-parts	9 pages
Emails Between Research Team Members	3-person team	45 emails
Phone Calls Between Research Team Members	3-person team	9 calls

research process. The researcher must be self-aware of how she both presents the interpretation of the transcript and its representation of the speaker's discourse while also continually providing within the discourse analysis any choices that were made. Bucholtz (2000) noted:

> Because these are not always evident to us, we must work from tapes rather than transcripts as much as possible. We must seek reactions from colleagues, from laypeople, and especially from the speakers whose voices we record – not to find validation for our own decisions but to discover other ways of hearing and transcribing. (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1462)

According to Mero-Jaffe (2011), the researcher, the interviewer, the transcriber, the interviewee, the equipment, and place of transcription all have the possibility of influencing the quality of the transcript. The primary investigator served as the researcher and interviewer, and worked collaboratively with the research team to transcribe and analyze all recordings for this study. Since some of the recordings consisted of Arabic phrases it was important that the research team, which consisted of an insider who can translate from Arabic to English and vice versa was involved with the transcription process. Likewise, the insider member of the research team was able to offer interpretation of meaning for unique idiomatic phrases presented within the Arabic language. Additionally when the researcher also serves as the transcriber, the quality of the transcript can be strengthened by the reduction of compromising influences such as limited knowledge of the research subject, preconceptions of the interviewees, and differences in class, culture and language (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

Initial transcription was recorded word-for-word from the tape recordings compiling a total of 82 pages. This was completed in order to assist with the denaturalization process. During denaturalization, an additional four sets of

transcriptions evolved. Each set was aimed at assisting with the denaturalization process. In particular, each set addressed very specific contextual concepts of the denaturalization process when working with participants who communicate between two languages. The first denaturalized set of transcriptions consisted of 119 pages including the word-for-word transcription as a continual reference and addressed the removal of socio-cultural characteristics within the data collection, as well as accent and other involuntary sounds (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The second denaturalized set of transcriptions including the original word-for-word transcription consisted of 120 pages and addressed the need to define Arabic phrases that had been used by some of the participants when they could not state what they were wanting to say in English. This concept is known as a *lexical gap* or the use of a specific word or phrase whose concept cannot be equally translated into another language without the use of an interpretive phrase explaining its meaning (Šipka, 2015). For example, Fahad noted the following:

> When I came here, it was like the weather. We see all the trees and it is open. I do not know how to describe it. In Arabic,
> افتحت نفسيتي للدراسة. تقبلي للدراسة وللضغط الجامعي صار أفضل بكثير
> [Coming here gave me an appetite to study. I am more willing to study and the pressure is low.]

During the denaturalization process the Arabic phrase was carefully and thoughtfully reviewed by the research team to ensure that the English translation found in brackets below the Arabic was summative of the participant's intent in meaning. Ultimately, a phone call had to be made to clarify meaning and confirm the use of the English translation provided in brackets for this participant. In total, four phone calls were made for clarification during the denaturalization of transcriptions. Creswell (2014) refers to this process as member checking. Member checking allows the researcher to compare her understanding of what was said or meant by an interview participant with the

participant in order to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is accurate (Creswell, 2014).

The third denaturalized set of transcriptions also included the word-for-word transcription as a point of reference and contained 132 pages. It served to address intercultural and cross-cultural communication issues that arose from *literal translation* such as when the participants utilized the English language with their native Arabic grammar rules and idiomatic expressions creating phrases that could lead to multiple equivalencies in meaning (Šipka, 2015). For example, Safa stated, "I like wearing hijab here. Especially with other people. *They will put a red line*. They will respect you more." In English, the appropriate idiomatic phrase might be to *draw the line* implying in context that others will not cross the proverbial line of decency or respect. However, there is an importance to the use of the color *red* in the Arabic language that requires leaving this statement just as it is during the denaturalization process. In Arabic, red, while associated with many positive aspects such as love and passion, is also associated with a negative meaning, death. "In the Arabic culture, the person who is going to be executed wears red color to refer to his punishment or the end of life" (Hasan, Al-Sammerai, & Kadir, 2011, p. 210). With strongly defined historical gender roles within Saudi Arabia (Hamdan, 2005; Manea, 2013), Safa, reveals through her use of the color red in her statement the depth of the proverbial line or respect - a respect that is worth losing one's life over - that she feels by wearing the hijab or head scarf. Safa has partially borrowed an English expression or idiom, and has changed the meaning to one that is similar in English, but yet literally different in meaning (Husni & Newman, 2015). "This has significant implications and the translator has to be wary not to assume

meaning is always transferred with form" (Husni & Newman, 2015, p. 29); therefore, calling and clarifying/member checking with the participant, Safa, was necessary.

The fourth denaturalized set of transcriptions again inclusive of the word-for-word transcription contained 128 pages and was the result of a total review of all of the transcriptions that had been completed. It took into consideration all of the specific contextual concepts of the denaturalization process for participants who communicate between two languages. By layering the review of these transcriptions, a final denaturalized transcription evolved for use with the intertextual analysis.

***Storage*.** Study data was handled as confidentially as possible. When results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information about the participants will not be used. To minimize the risks to confidentiality, all tape recordings, transcriptions and identifiable information were placed in an encrypted file that only the primary investigator had access to; similarly, all printed documents, permissions to research and identifiable documents have been kept in a locked file with access limited to the primary investigator. Any participants' identifiable information was coded in order to protect their identity, such as the institution where the research was conducted and the name of the student association. Each participant was assigned a participant identification number which correlated to a pseudonym that was randomly selected from a list of popular Arabic names retrieved online (Mebron, 2014). See Appendix H for the list of names that were selected for this process, and Appendix I for the master list form that was used only by the primary investigator to identify participant identifiers with actual participant names. No participant was assigned a pseudonym that was the name of another participant within

the study. When the research was completed, the tapes, notes and all participant identifiable information was securely maintained and shall remain so until the study has been defended. At that time, all identifiable information will be destroyed.

***Analysis*.** The data collected from this research was analyzed using a method referred to as intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1986; Bloom & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Johnstone, 2002; Kristeva, 1980, 1986). Kristeva (1986) is credited with first coining the term intertextuality as a result of her review of Bakhtin's work. According to Kristeva (1980), texts can be viewed in the form of two axes. The first a horizontal axis that connects the author to the reader of the text, and the second a vertical axis that connects the text to other texts (Al-Massri, 2013; Kristeva, 1980). However, meaning is not necessarily a fixed point between the axes from this perspective, but instead meaning is developed within the relationship that is built between the author, reader, and texts.

> It has nothing to do with matters of influence by one writer upon another, or with the sources of a literary work; it does, on the other hand, involve the components of a textual system…as the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position. (Kristeva, 1980, p. 15)

For the purpose of this research, the authors of the discourse are the participants, the readers are the researcher and the research team, and the texts are the denaturalized transcriptions of the discourse from the responses to the semi-structured research questions. See Figure 10. In this sense, each participant's discourse may be reviewed vertically as it connects to other participants discourse and horizontally as the participant connects to the researcher and research team. Bloom and Egan-Robertson (1993) note that intertextuality also involves connections built on social meanings. In

other words, participants may introduce shared experiences or intertextual links within their discourse that excludes some while building a social relationship or insider reference for others. Similarly, Bakhtin (1986) argues that our discourse contains the words of others at varying degrees, and we adjust and rephrase these words to create what he refers to as "varying degrees of otherness and varying degrees of 'our-own-ness', varying degrees of awareness and detachment" (p. 89). In other words, we have the ability to manipulate the distances between our shared discourses in such a way that allows us to communicate how we define who we are and who we are not, what we

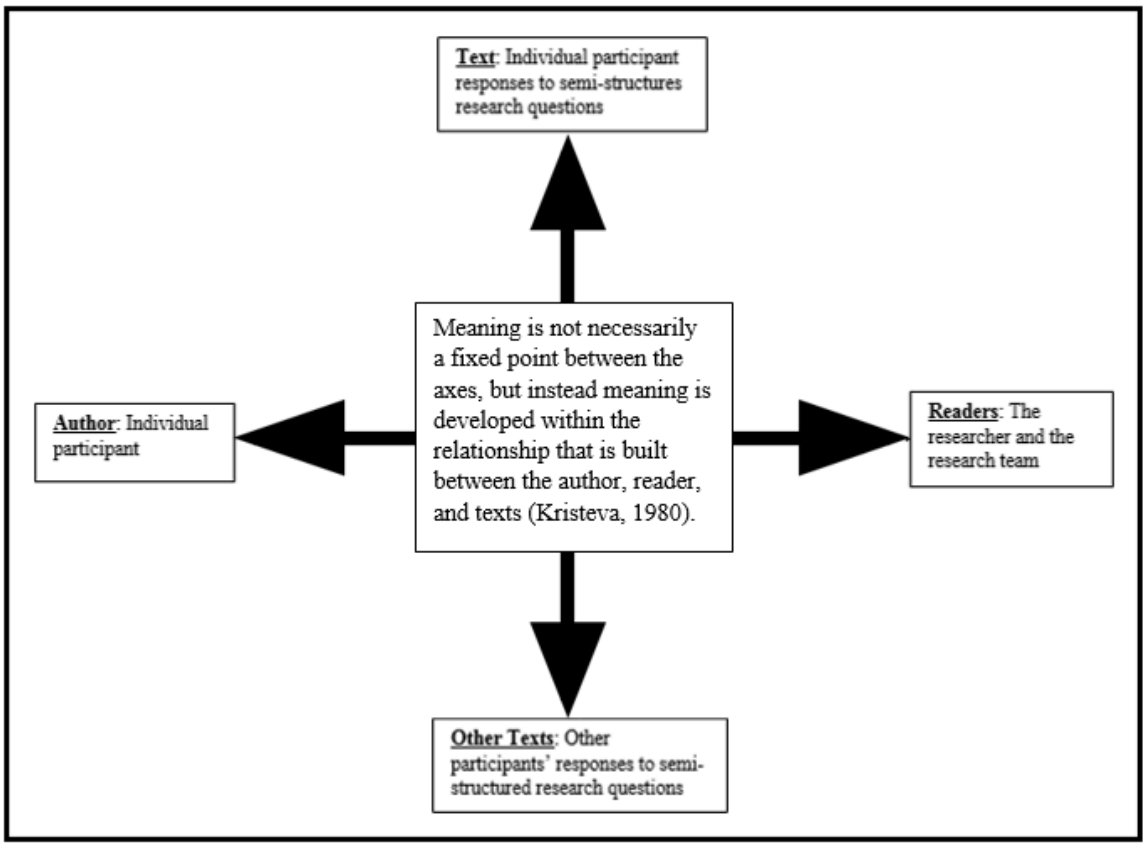


Figure 10. Intertextuality as related to the research process. Adapted for this research study from Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

adhere to and what we refute. Therefore, we are able to define when we adhere to our collective identities through shared group agreement and when we adhere to our own independent identities separate from the group or collective.

Fairclough (1992) argued that intertextual relationships may uncover power relations and would allow researchers to view a text in terms of what its meanings are in relation to other aspects of meaning held within the society framing a particular text.

> The concept of intertextuality points to the productivity of texts, to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones. But this productivity is not in practice available to people as a limitless space for textual innovation and play: It is socially limited and constrained, and conditional upon relations of power. The theory of intertextuality cannot itself account for these social limitations, and so it needs to be combined with a theory of power relations and how they shape (and are shaped by) social structures and practices. (Fairclough, p. 270-271)

Therefore, social practices have the ability to control and even exclude structural possibilities. For example, when a school district votes to move from a rote method of teaching curriculum to one that requires the use of greater critical thinking skills, the school districts decision to change practice has the possibility of limiting or expanding, transforming, and/or restructuring existing student discourse.

In addition, Fairclough (2003) points out that in the analysis of discourse, intertextuality seeks to discover which of the relevant voices are included and/or significantly excluded, where other voices are included and if they are recognized specifically or non-specifically, and quoted directly and/or indirectly. Additionally, intertextuality seeks to discover how other voices are textured in relation to the author's voice and/or in relation to one another. With this in mind, intertextuality can be used not only to explore how texts are interrelated, but also as a way to discover social practice

that involves particular socially regulated ways of producing and interpreting discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

Intertextuality was the appropriate form of analysis for this research study. It aided in discovering how Saudi students talk about their exposure to Western ideology and how through these experiences in higher education they may or may not have been provided the opportunity to gain new insights to their country's initiatives to create a knowledge-based society. Likewise, intertextual analysis aids in defining how, if at all, this new insight may or may not have influenced the way in which they talk about and make meaning of their national identity.

In charting the path for analysis, it is important to note that the researcher and the research team were very much a part of the research in that they were the readers within the intertextual analysis and could not be completely removed from the data analysis process. While this may seem to pose problematic issues in relation to researcher bias, it is important to note that precautions were put in place to aid in limiting bias such as the triangulation of data collection processes, transcriptioning, and analysis with a research team that included both insider and outsider membership (Kerstetter, 2012; Merton, 1972), as well as the researcher keeping field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Schwandt, 2007) and consulting with the research team. The researcher recognized that shared aspects of identities (religious, ethnic, cultural, etc.) exists between the researcher, the research team and the participants which may influence positionality; however, the researcher takes responsibility for understanding this positioning and for documentation of how the researcher and research team's identities impacted the research process and its outcomes.

For this research, a collaborative approach to coding was performed by the three members of the research team - the researcher, insider research team member, and outsider research team member - because the multiplicity of thought provided by the research team brought an advantageous outcome to the analization of the data through triangulation (Schwandt, 2007). A research team collaboratively forms codes through shared interpretation and understanding of the subject being studied while also providing a triangulated approach that aids in bias prevention.

In addition, it is important to note that coding serves as a method of linking. Richards and Morse (2007) stated that "it [coding] leads you from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea" (p. 137). Therefore,

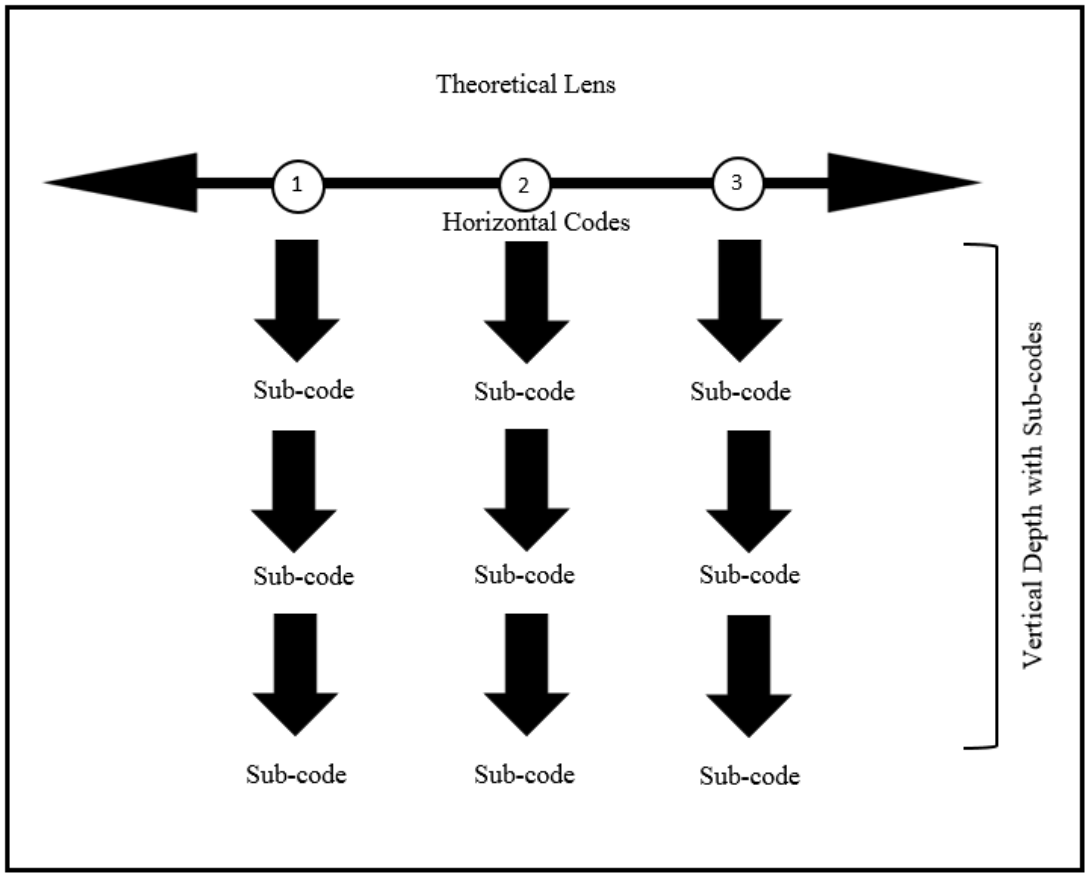


Figure 11. Visual outline of the intertextual coding process.

intertextuality coding may need to occur in layers or cycles in order to render the richest data for establishing categories from which themes evolve and can be viewed through the lens of the theoretical framework of the research study. See Figure 11.

A system of coding was put into place utilizing the theoretical lens of this study as the context of the meaning making process as noted by Kristeva (1980) developed between the authors, texts and readers. Initially, the researcher printed out a copy of the final transcriptions and cut them into groupings based on the four sub-categories of the interview questions. The sub-categories were all printed in a different colors in order to assist with keeping the groups identifiable. Each question and its corresponding transcriptions (word-for-word and the final transcription) of the 13 participants were then stick-glued onto separate pages of a 22in x 18in poster-board flip chart. Utilizing both the front and back of each poster-board page, one side for each question, a total of 13 flip chart pages were utilized. This processes assisted the research team with the analysis by allowing them to look at each individual question from each of the four sub-categories along with the corresponding 13 participants' responses at the same time. As words, phrases, and sentences that described a specific phenomenon under each question were identified, they were highlighted on the flip chart. Additional notations were made via Post-it Notes and stuck to the poster-board flip chart where appropriate.

Four sets of coding tables were then developed for each of the four sub-categories of questions that were designed to assist the research team in identifying initial codes. See Table 10 for an example of sub-category A questions for the initial or first coding table. The research team looked collectively at the highlighted words, phrases, and sentences and Post-it Notes for each question and moved them into

Table 10

Codes

Group A Questions: Getting Started
Let me first take a moment to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.
Cordiality
How are you doing today?
Cordiality
Can you tell me about yourself before you came to the United States? Who were you? How would you have described yourself?
Codes: Prior education; Personal traits; influential relationships
Before you came to study, how would you have described the United States?
Codes: Influencers; Concepts of freedom
What made you decide to study in the United States?
Codes: Future opportunities; Personal opportunities; Choice
How, if at all, has your perspective or view of the United States changed since studying here?
Codes: Perceived fears; Acts of oppression; Personal challenges; Advocacy
How would you describe who you are now that you are studying in the United States compared to before you came?
Codes: Questioning Identity; Recognizing identity
How, if at all, has your perspective or view of Saudi Arabia changed since studying in the United States?
Codes: Need for change; Identifying needed changes; Changers

designated categories. Each category was then assigned a specific common code that best described the category, and this common code was then listed on the initial coding table for each question.

The second set of coding tables were created to capture the sub-codes for each coded question. The research team went back through the flip chart and reviewed the highlighted words, phrases, sentences Post-it Notes for each question and discussed and analyzed how they related to the common code. Based on this process, the research

Table 11

Sub-Codes

Group A Questions: Getting Started
Let me first take a moment to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.
Cordiality
How are you doing today?
Cordiality
Can you tell me about yourself before you came to the United States? Who were you? How would you have described yourself?
Code: Prior education **Sub-Codes:** High school graduate; College student; College graduate
Code: Personal traits **Sub-Codes:** Ambitious; Smart; Insufficient
Code: Influential relationships **Sub-Codes:** Spouse; Mom/Dad; Siblings
Before you came to study, how would you have described the United States?
Code: Influencers **Sub-Codes:** Media; Peers; Education
Code: Concepts of freedom **Sub-Codes:** Speech; Action; Beliefs
What made you decide to study in the United States?
Code: Future opportunities **Sub-Codes:** Education; Level the playing field; Employment
Code: Personal opportunities **Sub-Codes:** Different experience; Self-discovery/Who am I?; Emotionally rewarding; Independence
Code: Choice **Sub-Codes:** Imposed upon negative; Imposed upon positive; Self-selection
How, if at all, has your perspective or view of the United States changed since studying here?
Code: Perceived fears **Sub-Codes:** "We heard…"; "I thought…"; "I was expecting…"; "I heard…"
Code: Acts of oppression **Sub-Codes:** Othered; Islamophobia; Black/white racism; Racial cliques
Code: Advocacy **Sub-Codes:** "I will fire back…"; Challenge to status quo
Code: Personal Challenges **Sub-Codes:** Everyday living; Independence; Responsibilities
How would you describe who you are now that you are studying in the United States compared to before you came?
Code: Questioning Identity **Sub-Codes:** Internal conflict; Who am I; What do I believe
Code: Recognizing Identity **Sub-Codes:** Independent; Responsible; Confident; Grown-up; Leader
Code: Advocate of change **Sub-Codes:** Social responsibility; Open minded; Value diversity

team developed sub-codes from the initial descriptors that had been used to categorize and create each common code. These sub-codes provided vertical depth to the analysis. Table 11 provides an example of a few of sub-category A questions with sub-coding.

The third set of coding tables were created to assist the research team in identifying the specific cis gender of the participants based on the coding in order to determine if gender mattered. The research team once again referred back to the flip chart and the original highlighting and categorizing that had occurred. By reorganizing the appearance of the coding table the team would be able to analyze each sub-code under each common code to determine if it was representative of a particular cis gender

Table 12

Cis Gender

Group A Questions: Getting Started		
Let me first take a moment to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.		
Cordiality		
How are you doing today?		
Cordiality		
Can you tell me about yourself before you came to the United States? Who were you? How would you have described yourself?		
Code: Prior education	Cis Gender	
- High school graduate	M	F
- College student	M	F
- College graduate	M	
Code: Personal traits	Cis Gender	
- Ambitious		F
- Smart	M	F
- Insufficient	M	
Code: Influential relationships	Cis Gender	
- Spouse		F
- Mom/Dad	M	F
- Siblings	M	F
Before you came to study, how would you have described the United States?		
Code: Influencers	Cis Gender	
- Media	M	F
- Peers	M	F
- Education	M	F
Code: Concepts of freedom	Cis Gender	
- Speech	M	F
- Action	M	F
- Beliefs	M	F

or both cis genders. In cases where only one cis gender identified with a sub-code, the other cis gender was not recognized (written) on the coding table. See Table 12 for an example of this utilizing some of sub-category A questions.

The final coding table utilized was created in order to capture how the overall coding and sub-coding of participant responses related to the theoretical lens by which the study was being conducted. For this process, the research team once again went back to the poster-board flip chart and reviewed not just the highlighted words, phrases, sentences and Post-it Notes, but also the total context within each participant's responses as they related to the questions being asked. To aid in this process, a copy of the theoretical lens as presented in chapter 3 was printed out and hung on the wall around the poster-board flip chart for easy reference as the research team discussed issues such as participants awareness (zone of awareness) of with whom they shared their spaces; how they defined their truths and/or realities (realms of perceived realities) in relation to their responses to interview questions; and how their individual and collective identities intersected (intersectionality) as they made meaning of their experiences in higher education within the context of the American higher education system (filtering). Table 13 represents a brief overview of the final coding table utilized in the analysis of the research. For a full review of all of the sub-category (A, B, C, and D) questions with the final and summative coding charts please refer to Appendixes J, K, L, and M.

Table 13

Theoretical Lens

Group A Questions: Getting Started			
Let me first take a moment to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.			
Cordiality			
How are you doing today?			
Cordiality			
Can you tell me about yourself before you came to the United States? Who were you? How would you have described yourself?			
Theoretical lens: Individual Core Identity - personal attributes, characteristics, and identity	**Code:** Prior education - High school graduate - College student - College graduate	Cis Gender M M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Individual Core Identity - personal attributes, characteristics, and identity	**Code:** Personal traits - Ambitious - Smart - Insufficient	Cis Gender M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Contextual Influences – (individual) peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions	**Code:** Influential relationships - Spouse - Mom/Dad - Siblings	Cis Gender M M	 F F F
Before you came to study, how would you have described the United States?			
Theoretical lens: Contextual Influences – (individual) peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions	**Code:** Influencers - Media - Peers - Education	Cis Gender M M M	 F F F
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities – (individual to collective) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Concepts of freedom - Speech - Action - Beliefs	Cis Gender M M M	 F F F
What made you decide to study in the United States?			
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Future opportunities - Education - Level the playing field - Employment	Cis Gender M M M	 F
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Personal opportunities - Different experience - Self-discovery/Who am I? - Emotionally rewarding - Independence	Cis Gender M M 	 F F
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Choice - Imposed upon negative - Imposed upon positive - Self-selection	Cis Gender M	 F F F

Trustworthiness, Credibility, and Dependability

Trustworthiness is not something that occurs on its own in the research process, but is instead something that must be established through well-defined procedures that ensure the avoidance of researcher and participant bias (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006; Padgett, 1998). Threats to trustworthiness can be overcome through the use of several strategies. These strategies can be found imbedded in the criteria used to ensure that findings, to the best of the researcher's ability, reflect the meanings described by the participants (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). In order to establish the trustworthiness within this research study, two criteria of trustworthiness were taken into account in relation to the research process. These criteria included credibility and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004).

Credibility of research refers to the confidence one has in establishing the congruence of the findings with reality or the confirmation that the study measures what it was intended to measure (Shenton, 2004). This may be accomplished through multiple approaches; however for the purposes of this study, the following approaches were used: the use of established research methods that are well documented within the research design of this study; triangulation; member checking; and debriefing between the researcher and research team and the researcher and dissertation chair. The research method utilized in this study can be found in the works of several qualitative researchers (Adendorff, 2004; Marston, 2000; Seale, 2012; Wodak & Chilton, 2005) and has been clearly outlined in the research design for this study.

Triangulation is a procedure used to establish the integrity of the research (Schwandt, 2007) and was established in this research through individual interviews of

multiple participants at one site and the community room at the apartment complex of one participant; use of a research team in reviewing transcripts, recordings, and analysis for accuracy and congruence; the use of a borderlands theoretical lens (Anzaldúa, 1987) which utilizes multiple theoretical perspectives; and the use of member checking (Creswell, 2014) when clarification was warranted. In this sense, member checking was only used when the primary investigator and/or research team required a clarification of a participants' statement(s). The primary researcher also used debriefing of the research process, progress, and problematic issues/concerns that arose with the research team and the dissertation chair.

Dependability relies on the researcher showing that the findings are consistent and if necessary, replicable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Replicability refers to the extent to which a research study may be re-conducted with findings that repeat the initial study's results (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004). In order for replicability of a study to be accomplished, sufficient information about the initial study's research procedures must be clearly outlined and followed for the re-study. This is accomplished by providing a detailed theoretical approach, methodological description, and methods followed (Schindel & Given, 2013).

Reflexivity and Positionality

Reflexivity refers to the process of critical self-reflection in relation to the research, and offers the researcher an opportunity to recognize some of their own sources of bias (Schwandt, 2007). More importantly, reflexivity reminds the researcher that she "is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 260). As a critical researcher, reflexivity is agent to

establishing validity. Specifically, Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) suggest that the researcher pose the following three question to herself: 1. why am I drawn to this research; 2. what biases and assumptions do I have; and 3. what is my relationship to the participants? The first and third question must be answered based on the positionality of the researcher to the study. “Positionality describes the relationship between the researcher and his or her participants and the researcher and his or her topic” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006, p. 31).

The researcher for this particular study shares similar attributes with the participants and is involved within a broader Arab community within the United States and Saudi Arabia. In particular, it is expected that this researcher’s religious identity as a Sunni Muslim will coincide with the majority of participants and, though the researcher is not of Arab descent, her partner is from Saudi Arabia, studied in higher education in Saudi Arabia, worked in education in Saudi Arabia, and arrived in the United States of America as an international student and recipient of the King Abdullah Scholarship program. The researcher and her partner also have family members who have participated in higher education in Saudi Arabia, studied abroad, and also worked in education in Saudi Arabia. The researcher through her work in higher education with international students, private family life, and local Arab community is consistently immersed between both the Arab and American world.

In addition, the researcher has participated in multiple study abroad and travel opportunities abroad during her own educational experience which have changed the way that she views the world around her, including politics, governmental systems, health care, and social justice. Her family also participated in multiple opportunities to

provide short-term homestays for international students studying within the United States and who were representatives from Saudi Arabia, Japan, China, Thailand, Kenya, Turkey, and Syria. It is the relationship between the researcher and her immediate and extended family members, her experiences studying abroad, and her interactions with international students through her homestay experiences that draws her to this research. Likewise, it is those same relationships that could also create bias in the research process. Therefore, the researcher has elected to implement fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) throughout the research process and consultation with team members as a method of triangulation throughout the research process.

In addressing the second question posed by Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) and concerning the biases and assumptions that the researcher brings to the study, it must be noted that the researcher feels both an insider and outsider relationship to the participant pool (Kerstetter, 2012). Though the researcher may share religious identity with the majority of participants and be an active member within the Arab community at large which provides an insider relationship, she is an American born citizen who was raised of a protestant background and reverted to Islam which, at times, has made her an outsider to the Arab community and her United States community. Through religious identity she has found acceptance in many aspects of the Arab community, but her U.S. American national identity, limited knowledge of Arabic, and strongly spoken concerns for issues of equity and equality through social justice have also posed negative issues of acceptance within the same Arab community. These issues bring concern to the researcher as they are related to her perception of how others may perceive her from the Saudi Arabian community. Again, these issues were addressed

through fieldnotes, consultation with research team members, and discussion with her dissertation chair as a method of remaining cognizant of researcher positionality and reflexivity as related to the study.

Summary

As aforementioned in this chapter, the research design of any study is foundational to its success and works to ensure that any evidence obtained addresses the research problem (Schwandt, 2007). As this study explores the discourse Saudi students utilize to make meaning of their national identity as a result of their higher education experiences in the United States, it also provides insights into how they negotiate their identities while living between two worlds. In the following chapter, the findings of this research study are reviewed in relation to each sub-category (A, B, C, and D) of the interview protocol and are presented along with detailed quotes from the participant interviews.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS

In the following chapter, each question from the interview protocol will be reviewed in light of the participants' responses. The interview protocol has been divided into four groups: getting started, perceptions of higher education, perceptions of internationalization, and defining national identity. Each group of questions provides brief samples of responses from the participants in light of the intertextual analysis that has been conducted along with how these responses connect to the relevant literature and theoretical lens as defined within chapters three.

Interview Protocol

Participants were presented with four groups of questions (see Appendix E). Some students responded partially in Arabic and others used only English. As aforementioned, interviews were tape recorded, translated when needed by the insider research team member and denaturalized transcription was utilized. Analyzation of responses in relation to the theoretical lens defined in chapter three were triangulated amongst the research team. In the following sections, a review of each group of questions and responses is presented based on the triangulated data.

Group A: Getting Started

Group A questions included two initial statements for the purpose of cordiality, participant background questions, and questions about participants' perspectives on the United States and Saudi Arabia prior to and after studying within the United States. The first two questions for this group were used to thank the participants for their willingness to meet and interview and to establish their well-being for the day. Saudi culture is known for its politeness and cordiality (Cohen, 2014); therefore, this formality

in conversation was important to the start of the interview process. See Appendix J for an intertextual analysis of each question specific to Group A and that utilizes different aspects of the theoretical lens to support the codes and sub-codes within the data while recognizing cis gender specific trends.

In verbally describing their identity prior to studying in the United States, participants made references to their prior educational experiences, personal traits, and influential relationships from their home countries. Viewing these responses from the comprehensive theoretical lens defined in chapter three, prior educational experiences and personal traits provided insight to these individuals' core identities – participants' identities in their present state of development. Representative examples of participants' core educational identities include, but are not limited to:

> Yahya: I finished my bachelor's degree [from a University in Saudi] and then I worked… I can say that I am open-minded and that I respect others. I feel like education is the most important thing in our lives because by education you can do whatever you want.
>
> Hussain: My life was all about studying medicine. I took off from this to come to the United States to study English.
>
> Fahad: I am just a normal Saudi guy. I finished high school with very good grades. I was accepted into [a Saudi university] where I studied for two years. I decided it was not the best for me and I came here to [a university in the United States].
>
> Nadia: I was very ambitious. I attended school until the ninth grade in Saudi Arabia, and then, I moved to [another Middle Eastern country] to stay with [a relative] in order to attend a private American school to complete my high school. I knew English before going to high school, because I was taught in English and with an English curriculum. Because I was able to experience the American way of testing, I was better prepared to come to college.
>
> Nasir: There are a few things that you have to have in order to study at a university in Saudi Arabia - a good university, and one of those things is a good grade on the entry exam for college. I did not do really well on the test. I did not get a good grade; so, I told my father that I would like to go to the United States

> to study. There was a school in Saudi that I was able to study at for a couple of months to improve my grades in order to get a government [King Abdullah] scholarship.

Individual participants cited above defined their core identities both in past and present terms, who they were prior to arriving in the United States and who they were at the time of data collection/the interview, showing fluidity or the ability for core identity to change in development (Bronfenbrenner 1977; 1979). In addition, Fahad and Nasir made note of their secondary public school experience in terms of grades and the individual subject examinations required in order to enter a Saudi university (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). Yahya, Hussain, Fahad, Nadia and Nasir all included their prior educational experiences as a way of defining their core identities at the time of data collection.

Aisha and Khalid shared who and what their contextual influencers were from Saudi Arabia and how they had encouraged them and/or guided them in the decision to study abroad in the United States. Aisha noted:

> I was married during my second year of high school and my third year of high school was very difficult being both married and in school. However, I made a 99.7% on my final high school exam. My husband supported me [financially], and I did not have any children at the time. After graduation, I had three acceptance letters from three different colleges in Saudi Arabia. … I only had one week to make a decision on what I wanted to do. I chose a nursing program and was able to start and complete two weeks of the program [in Saudi Arabia], but I had also registered for the King Abdullah Scholarship. After my second week of nursing school, I received notification that I was approved for the King Abdullah scholarship. … I changed all of my plans to come here to the United States.

Aisha brings attention to the contextual influence of her strong academic history based on her high school exams (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006) and her ability to qualify to not one, but three colleges in Saudi Arabia. In addition, she received

acceptance to the King Abdullah scholarship program to study in the United States (Denman & Hilal, 2011; Saudi Embassy, 2011a & 2011b). Aisha's academic credentials privileged her ability to study in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and abroad. On the other hand, Khalid did not share his academic standing, but instead noted that it was expected of him to attend college just as his siblings had done. He notes:

> I am the youngest of four siblings. All of them [siblings] have completed their higher education. …So, it was really expected of me to do the same thing, and there is a lot of competition in my family, as well. None of them have actually studied outside of Saudi Arabia. … It was really a different decision that I made to leave the Kingdom and study abroad.

Khalid's contextual influence to study abroad in the United States was not based on his prior academic performance, but falls in alignment with Abes, Jones and McEwen's (2007) definition of contextual influences which was his family and their expectation of him to follow in the footsteps of his older siblings and complete a higher education. Notably, Khalid committed to the expectation of completing a higher education, but made a choice (Glasser, 1998) to define the manner in which he would complete his higher education – through a study abroad in the United States.

Before studying in the United States, some participants defined their truths and/or realities of what they perceived the United States was going to be like based on the information that they had gathered from what they had learned from media outlets and what they had heard from their peers who had already studied in the United States. This information was filtered and processed through their realms of perceived realities resulting in an array of mixed ideologies. Representative examples of participants' perceived truths and/or realities about studying in the United States include, but are not limited to:

Yahya: I was informed of the culture by movies – American movies.

Aaliyah: The only idea I had about the United States was from movies. So, we think that there are a lot of breaks, and that there is always a party; also, there is always crowded places. At first, I was surprised when I arrived here [in the United States] because there was empty spaces and the people lived a normal life.

Aisha: I could not imagine what happens in the United States. I had just read about some experiences that my friends had, and I was actually proud that I was going to be here, but I had no idea what it was going to be like [in the United States].

Fahad: That is a funny question because of all the ideas that I had about the United States. What I had imagined was all from the movies and TV shows. So, I expected to see very high buildings. I expected to see a lot of people; I imagined it was a very dangerous place with lots of robberies and stuff like that.

Rashad: Since a young age, I have met people who have gone outside of Saudi Arabia to study abroad. I did not know why they [former Saudi study abroad participants] always characterized study abroad as being a good education. The college that I went to in Saudi Arabia was one of the top engineering schools. I had a lot of students there that encouraged me to apply to study abroad, and I thought it was a good idea.

For Yahya, Aaliyah, and Fahad, the Unites States was best defined by media outlets such as American movies and TV shows. They had defined the United States by what they had seen on the big screen with tall buildings, violence, crime and crowded spaces. Due to their distance from the core collective identity of the United States, their zones of awareness were skewed, as were their perceived truths and/or realities about the United States. As Aaliyah noted, "At first, I was surprised when I arrived here…"

Aisha and Rashad stated that though they had knowledge of the United States from their peers and others who had been to the United States or who had studied abroad, they did not have any set preconceptions of what the United States was like. Aisha was proud to be coming to the United States to study and Rashad "thought it was a good idea."

Students perceived that the United States was a land of many freedoms. This included freedom of speech, actions, and beliefs. In particular, the ability to believe in one's own religious ideals without challenges and to speak and act without the concern of others. For example, Amara and Samira each describe:

> Amara: I was really scared, because it was the first time in my life that I traveled without my parents, without anybody. … I did not know what to expect. It was most definitely the bravest thing that I have ever done in my whole life. I thought that because I wear a headscarf it was going to be the opposite experience. I thought that it was going to be easier [to blend in]. I would not be identified by my headscarf. … I mean that is what I thought before coming to the United States, especially before coming to [this state]. I had no idea that it was a really religious [predominately Christian] state compared to other states.
>
> Samira: [I thought it was] a country of freedom, I guess. I get to do whatever I want. People do not really care, and there is freedom of speech. You get to say whatever you want. You do not have to care about it.

With so many restrictions to women's rights within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia based on historical religious events (Arebi, 1994; Baki, 2004; Doumato, 2000; Hamdan, 2005; Trofimov, 2007), Amara has noted that traveling alone to the United States to study was a scary event. It has only been within the last five to six years that Saudi women have been allowed to travel without a male guardian who is a relative as a companion (Faqiha, 2012). This has limited the number of Saudi women allowed to study abroad in the United States and elsewhere (Faqiha, 2012). In addition, Amara and Samira came to the United States, a land of many constitutional freedoms including the freedom of religion, to study. Amara who wears a headscarf based on her faith to Islam does not specifically state a positive or negative impact, but does imply that she was in some way identified by her headscarf – it made a difference in how she perceived others' perceptions of her. Her micro-dimensions of identity based on her personal faith intersected with the macro-systems of power found within the normed majority

religious identity of the state in which she had chosen to study. Samira, on the other hand, noted that she thought the United States was a land of freedom and one could say what they wanted to say without fear – "you do not have to care about it."

When asked why they decided to study in the United States, participants noted that they had various levels of choice, were seeking out personal opportunities, and/or preparing for their future opportunities. Participants indicated that the choice to study was either imposed upon them by their parent(s), their partner or that they self-selected to attend the university in the United States. Specifically, one participant, Aaliyah, noted, "It is the last year for my husband to study [in the United States]; so, I got married" indicating that the choice to study abroad for her was perhaps imposed upon her by her marriage. She had noted that she stopped her medical studies in Saudi Arabia to come with her husband to the United States where she would study English until he completed his last year of his education and then return to Saudi Arabia.

Another participant, Nadia, noted that when she was trying to figure out what and where she wanted to study, that she approached her parents and asked, "Is the United States not an option?" She then stated that her parents responded with "It is your only option. …We prefer you going somewhere with your older brother, so we will feel safe because you are our oldest daughter" implying that for her this was perhaps a positively imposed decision because she wanted to study in the United States, but that her parents felt strongly about her being with her older brother - a male guardian who is a relative (Faqiha, 2012). Though Nadia desired to study in the United States, and needed confirmation from her contextual influencers – her parents, she was limited in her range of mobility (Anzaldúa, 1987; Jones & Abes, 2013), ability to physically

maneuver between countries, due to the collective core religious beliefs of her Saudi collective identity. Her parents' response may have been different had she chosen another country where she had no male sibling(s) already studying. As was the case for Nadia, the choice to study abroad was made independently or independently with conditions set by contextual influencers for other participants, as well. For example, Fahad, Nadia, Samira and Aisha share:

> Fahad: When I graduated from high school, I really wanted to go to the United States because of what I heard about people having better opportunities because they had graduated from very good schools like those here in the United States. So, I really wanted to go to the United States, but my father refused at first, because I was still 18 years old and he felt it was not the right time. Therefore, I went to the university [in Saudi Arabia] as I explained earlier. After two years, I said that it was not for me, and so [I came to the United States] for a better school and better education.
>
> Nadia: I know that the universities here [in the United States] are very good. You do not hear very much about the universities in Europe. You hear about Stanford, Harvard, and places like that. The states are more famous - Boston, California, and so forth. Everyone wants to come the United States. Ever since I was younger, it has been an option for me to come to the United States. Even my parents approved of this option.
>
> Samira: I did experience studying outside of Saudi [in high school]; so, I did see the difference, but whenever my friends and I would study outside of Saudi, they would ask why I was making a big deal out of it [studying abroad], but because I have seen the difference, there was no way that I was going to study college [in Saudi] knowing that college was going to be a lot harder than high school. So, I had to just come right here [to the United States]. All of my siblings studied here [in the United States]; so, I thought that was not fair. I am coming to the United States, too.
>
> Aisha: I want to be a Doctor. That is why I decided to come to the United States. I heard that the doctors from the United States are very different from the doctors from the outside [other countries], and my family supported me on this. [They said] you have to study in the United States; so, I chose that. Also, it is a good opportunity for my husband to study here, because he cannot study in Saudi Arabia. He is 33 years old, and too old to study in Saudi.

Samira independently decided that she would study in the United States based on her prior experience studying outside of Saudi Arabia in high school, her knowledge of higher education in the United States, her siblings' experiences and her desire to do so. Samira had more freedom in mobility (Anzaldúa, 1987; Jones & Abes, 2013) and space, her geographical and/or metaphorical sense of location (Gildersleeve & Kuntz, 2011; Kuntz, 2009) to select where she wanted to study.

Nadia, Fahad and Aisha independently decided to study in the United States, but did so with conditions set by the context of their situation and/or their contextual influencers. Both Nadia and Fahad wanted to study within the United States, but their parent(s), contextual influencers, set the conditions under which this would be allowed.

However, Aisha's decision to study in the United States was made more specifically based on contextual influences such as the existing structures of privilege and oppression that were particular to her and her partner's social identities (Adams et al., 2013). Aisha noted that she wanted to become a doctor and that she had heard that doctors from the United States are very different than those from other countries. Though her parents supported this decision, she did not note that their approval was required. More importantly by studying in the United States, her partner who is older than her (33 years old) would also gain the right to study, because he was considered too old to study in Saudi Arabia. Her partner's age set the context under which she made the decision to study abroad.

In reference to the opportunities, both future and personal, sought by participants in making their decision to study in the United States, individuals defined the decision making process in different ways. Futuristically, participants wanted a

better education, and to level the playing field in meeting job requirements for employment. Some participants noted:

> Yahya: The United States in one word is the best country in the world for education.
>
> Hussain: We had the King Abdullah Scholarship program, and it allowed for only specific countries to study abroad - the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. Basically, we had only four choices. The United States is the most popular choice for us because of the educational system. At least, this is true for me.
>
> Rashad: There are a lot of people who graduated from abroad. They come here [to the United States] and I wanted to come here to make sure that I am on the same level [as others who graduated from abroad].

As noted earlier in chapter two, Saudi Arabia has worked diligently to reform its educational programs in the pursuit of economic growth and human development while recognizing that this comes with some challenges including the need for skilled workers to enter the workforce (Maroun, Samman, Moujaes, & Abouchakra, 2014). Yahya, Hussain and Rashad recognize the advantages of a higher education and how it can aid them in not just entering, but also advancing within the workforce.

In terms of personal opportunities, participants noted that they were looking for a different experience in order to discover who they really are, to find their independence, and to gain emotional rewards. The following participants noted:

> Khalid: First of all, I decided to leave the Kingdom because I was aspiring for a whole new experience. I knew that Saudi Arabia was not going to do it for me. … There is nothing to actually build your self-worth or develop you personally. So, I thought that coming to the United States would provide some insight for me, prove to my family that I can actually take care of myself and that it is not going to be much of a problem. Studying here will enhance my language and enhance my culture. … Basically, studying in the United States is just like an orientation to what I am going to be doing for the rest of my life in some of the best locations.

> Zahra: If I came here to the United States, I could learn many more things than just my studies - driving a car, living by myself, and learning about life. My English would be better, and I would know more people.
>
> Samira: I knew that education here [in the United States] was a lot better and it would be emotionally rewarding.

Khalid, Zahra and Samira reveal that they are seeking to develop their individual identities and acknowledging that they are not static, but continually growing and restructuring who they are and how they engage with their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994 & 1995). Likewise, Khalid, Zahra and Samira emphasize that they have an evolving sense of self, they are multi-dimensional, and recognize the relationship between how they define themselves, their individual core identities and their socially constructed identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

When asked if their perspective or view of the United States had changed since studying in the United States, participants revealed that their zones of awareness – the degree to which an individual or collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces – had changed. They had both disavowing and confirming experiences based on prior perceived ideologies and stereotypes of the United States, Americans, and American Culture. Positively speaking, participants noted that some of their expectations and perceived truths were false or that they had no experience to prove their perceived truths to be a reality. The following participants noted:

> Yahya: It is not like what we heard before that people [in America] hate other people.
>
> Hussain: One thing is that I think the people in general in the United States have all these stereotypes and generalizations about people from other countries, and specifically, from the Middle East. Especially since what happened [reference to 9-11]; so, I was expecting to see reactions and certain types of treatment, but when I came here, even here [to this state], where it is considered conservative and knowing all of the stereotypes about the people here, I was not really

> affected, nor were any other people that I know whether within the university environment or within the community.
>
> Nasir: I thought that there would be a lot of people who would hate us as Arabs and Muslims, but here at the University they are for the most part friendly, because there is a lot of different cultures and different nationalities.
>
> Safa: I heard that people are racists and I was kind of worried about being Muslim and Saudi, but it [my idea] changed a lot. People are really friendly and they are accepting of others and actually, I did not put an idea in my mind. I kept hearing they were racist and stuff, but I did not want to judge before really experiencing and seeing how it goes.

Because 15 of the 19 terrorist from 9/11 originated from Saudi Arabia (Elyas & Picard, 2013), Yahya, Hussain, Nasir and Safa entered the United States to study with preconceived ideas about how they may be negatively perceived or even treated by Americans. Here again, their realms of perceived realities were skewed from their actual experiences upon entering the United States to study.

Conversely, there were those who found that their realms of perceived realities did but indeed hold value and verified their truths. For these participants, they either witnessed or experienced for themselves a heightened zone of awareness of the negative aspects of those with whom they shared their spaces within the United States. Khalid and Amara noted:

> Khalid: I have a few friends who were here, and we all had a similar idea about the social life here in the university. Basically, it does not exist. That is why they usually keep to themselves - the Saudi community, the Kuwaiti community, the Qatari community. You see that they intertwine with each other, because they do not feel accepted or that they fit in with other social groups at the university.
>
> Amara: Since I came [to the United States], I realized that even though they say there is no racism, I have actually realized that it is the opposite. This is not just for Muslims, but even for white people, black people, and everyone. I do not know if it is only in this state, or maybe in other major cities like New York where it is more open, but I realize that here it is all about cliques and groups,

> groups by their race. I was surprised by this. I knew that if I came here I would have to depend on myself and that is exactly what happened.

Khalid noted that within the context of the university there is division not just between Saudi and American collective identities, but also between other Arab collective identities – Kuwaiti and Qatari; however, the differing Arab collective identities do at times share their spaces, "you see that they intertwine with each other…" In addition, Amara recognized that it was not just ethnic social identities that did not get along within the context of the university, but also social groups who identify by racial and religious social identities. This is important to note, because how individuals negotiate their identity in and among different geographical, ideological, and emotional borders guides how they view themselves, their belonging to a group and their interactions with the world around them (Anzaldúa, 1987; Koshy, 2006).

For one participant, a heightened zone of awareness also resulted in a heightened zone of commitment to her collective core identity. Samira noted that she had heard the negative ideals about Americans and America prior to coming to the United States; however, she had not personally experienced this because she was not one to set back and accept negative status quo ideology about herself or her people. Samira stated:

> I do not know if it is just personal or if it happens with everyone, but I have always heard people saying Americans do not like Muslims. I have heard comments from others on their experiences [in the United States], and how they say Americans look and dress. Personally, I have not gone through any of that, and maybe that is because I stand up for myself. I do not like it when somebody says something. I am not the kind of girl that just sits there and does nothing. I fire back. So, I guess people know that about me, and it is not like it is not true. When people say that all Muslims are terrorists, it is not the same way with Americans. It's not that all Americans are rude or do not love Muslims. That is a view that has changed a lot for me.

Samira felt that people recognized her ability to take a stand and therefore, did not cross that line in her presence. Her heightened zone of awareness to the stereotypes some Americans may have about Muslims made her more committed to who she was as a collective member of the Muslim community.

Participants also noted that since studying in the United States they had faced some personal challenges in terms of the intersectionality of their individual identities and the structure of the collective identity of the United States. In particular, participants noted that everyday living and studying within the United States posed some difficulty. Living within the larger collective identity of the United States requires more responsibility, independence, and action. Accordingly, Aaliyah and Aisha noted:

> Aaliyah: They [Americans] live normal lives and do normal things. I think it is more difficult to live here than I thought before, because there are a lot of things we need to do here; for example, renting an apartment. Before coming, they [Saudis] all thought coming here was going to be easy, but I think it is hard. It is a very different lifestyle. So, I think it is hard to live in the United States without knowing how they [Americans] live their everyday life. It is harder.

> Aisha: I get away with many things. It has changed my characteristics, also. The difference is that I was not in a bad setting for many years. It was not hard. I saw a lot of my friends who studied in Saudi Arabia, and did not study the whole semester. They only studied for the final, and here [in the United States], we have to study every day, all of the time, every moment. It is very difficult. Also, living here [in the United States] is very difficult for us; sometimes, I say that I cannot do it.

Both Aaliyah and Aisha struggled with adapting to cultural changes and their individual roles within the collective identity of the United States. Their individual identities were based on social norms that they had learned within the collective identity of Saudi Arabia. While in the United States, these individual social norms no longer existed within a context that they could relate to, existed in a new context which made the ability to make meaning of one's identity more obscure (Gildersleeve & Kuntz,

2011; Kuntz, 2009) due to changes in the larger sociohistorical context of the United States (Jones & Abes, 2013) and/or their individual social norms were impacted by the existing structures of privilege and oppressions (Adams et al., 2013) found within the United States.

In describing who they are now compared to who they were prior to studying in the United States, one participant, Khalid, noted that since coming to the United States to study, he had become more reflective about who he is and what he does and does not believe. Through the intersectionality of his own social identities and how they have evolved and changed since studying in the United States, he has experienced a bit of an identity crisis (Erikson, 1970). Khalid shared:

> Well when I look at myself right now, I really find myself to be very different than I was the minute I stepped into the United States. A lot of ideas that I had drawn conclusions about before coming [to the United States] have changed drastically. Some of these changes sometimes interfere with my relationship with my family. Basically, we are not on the same page. Some changes have occurred during these years [while studying in the United States]. Mostly, I stopped really thinking about things from one perspective. I started seeing them from three, four, five different perspectives. That made things easier and harder at the same time, because sometimes, that can cause a conflict of interests and a conflict with who you really are and what you really believe in.

As his social constructs of identity met and/or layered on top of each other, Khalid developed a new form of identity at a micro-level (Jones & Abes, 2013). He began to question himself, his ideals, and how he viewed and assessed his world. In addition, he also reflected on his social constructs of identity in relation to his study abroad experience within the United States from a macro-level resulting in an intense analysis and exploration of how he views himself in this new context. Erikson (1970) referred to this as a time of identity crisis or conflict. Khalid revealed that he was struggling internally with who he is and what he really believed in.

For other participants, there was an intensified recognition of their individual core identities. In particular, some of the females were able to acknowledge that they were more independent, responsible, confident and grown-up since studying in the United States. One participant, Safa, even noted that she had developed leadership experience. “My personality has changed, and I think I have more leadership experience from my involvement with the international organizations on campus.” Other participants also echoed this sense of empowerment by stating:

> Zahra: I am driving. I can do everything by myself. I am more efficient.
>
> Amara: I am more confident about myself and my abilities. Back home, I was really dependent on my family for everything. I think because I was the middle child; so, I did not have any responsibilities. I was not expected to have responsibilities, but when I came here [to the United States] things changed. I have to do everything by myself or it is not going to happen. So, I think it has made me stronger, because I have been engaged with people other than what I would normally be friends with in my area. I think I am more open to ideas. I have a different mindset than when I was in Saudi Arabia.
>
> Samira: I feel like I have grown up … I feel like I am more responsible now and independent. Before, I would not even be able to call a restaurant and order something. Now, I feel like I have to do everything … Nobody is going to do it for me. So, yeah, I feel like I have grown up. I feel more independent and responsible for everything.
>
> Aisha: I became independent. I can do many thing that I could not do in the past; for example, I have a car. I can drive. I can take care of my house, my children, and all my homework. But in the past, I was a lazy girl. I did not do anything. We had a housemaid. She did everything for me. She even made my bed and everything. So, I have changed a lot.

Safa, Zahra, Amara, Samira and Aisha all shared concepts of empowerment such as those noted in Doyle’s (2009) study. They were able to view their individual core identities within the greater context of their study abroad experience in the United States compared to who they were at home in Saudi Arabia. Just as noted by Firmin, Holmes, Firmin and Merical (2013), the study abroad experience provided an

opportunity for maturity development through the stretching of these students' abilities to adapt and increase their independence while also providing an opportunity for personal development with a life-changing impact.

Some of the male participants noted that studying within the context of the United States has opened their minds to the importance of thinking differently, taking on responsibilities within their communities, and valuing diversity. They noted:

> Fahad: This is my second year here in the United States, and I am more open-minded. I learned a lot about different cultures. I learned a lot about the Western culture in the United States. When I first came here, it was hard to accept some of the cultural differences, but now I am more open to them. I can understand people who are not like me. There are different people, different ideas, and different ways of thinking.
>
> Yahya: I feel I am so much better than before. As I told you, education is a very important thing in my life and once I have something in my life, I can also extend it to others, and I feel I can do multiple businesses at the same time, or I can really find a way to do something good for my community, for my family, for my country. I consider this social responsibility exactly, yes.
>
> Hussain: I have spent almost five years in the United States which is a long time. So, a lot of the things that I was used to are different now on a personal and professional level. Staying here makes you get involved with different people. People in the school or university setting have the greatest impact on shaping your future aspirations and everything. I think that this is the most important change that I have had. It is the change in outlook. It makes you diverse. If I would have stayed in the university back home [in Saudi Arabia], it would have been fun, but I would not have had the chance to see all these different cultures or all other aspects [of life].

Fahad and Hussain both shared that their study abroad experience had enhanced their ability to work with and understand diversity. In addition, Yahya noted that he could find a way to give back to his community as a form of social responsibility. This is in alignment with Gu's (2012) study concluding that the study abroad experience was highly valuable in that upon return to their home countries, students had new cognitive, social, and emotional ways to engage.

When asked how, if at all, their perspectives or view of Saudi Arabia had changed since studying in the United States, one participant noted that he had changed the way that he viewed his country. He was able to identify specific changes that needed to occur and who the key change agents needed to be. The zone of awareness for his collective identity had grown more critical in scope. Hussain noted:

> I have been able to see different models. I feel this gives you an opportunity to see things more critically. If you stay here [in the United States] for a long time like me - five years, and probably, I will stay a few extra years, it gives you a chance to be able to see from the outside what things look like. You will be more critical, obviously. You can see very clearly in social media and the news how people have come here to study or work and are criticizing and looking at things from a clearly different perspective. That is not to say that people who have not been outside [of Saudi Arabia] did not have a chance to see other models, but it obviously gives you a chance to be able to see or think outside the box from a different perspective.

Hussain's ability to view his collective identity from his educational viewpoint within the United States, as well as to negotiate his individual identity changed the way he viewed his belonging within his collective identity – a more critical lens - and how he is interacting with his world – from a different perspective (Anzaldúa, 1987; Koshy, 2006).

Within their zone of awareness, some participants were able to identify needed changes within the Saudi collective core identity. Participants noted a need for change in the way education was structured within Saudi Arabia, a desire for more rights for women, a greater depth of diversity, and an end to corruption. Likewise, some participants were able to articulate not only the changes needed, but why those changes were important. They stated:

> Fahad: When I was in Saudi Arabia, I did not think my country needed a lot of improvement, but when I came here I realized that there are a lot of things that we need to do to improve our country and to improve our living there. I think

this is the most important thing for me. This is the most important perspective about making a lot of changes in my country.

Amara: Honestly, what has really changed about [my perspective] is women's rights. I realize that they have rights that they do not even know that they have; so, they do not actually ask for them. They never knew that they had these rights. We all agree - even the people who did not go and study in the United States. They know that Saudi Arabia is not fair to women. They already know that, but I think that I realized that more when I came to the United States, and compared the two situations. … We do not have a really strong system or you could say a fair system. So, if the base is not good, you actually cannot change the situation. I realized that compared to the United States, we [Saudis] are not organized. Everything is messed up. Actually, I think that Saudi Arabia is based on the wrong stuff. If you have more money, you are going to go farther which actually you do not expect in Saudi Arabia. You think it is an Islamic country based on Islamic laws, but there is a lot of corruption. In the United States, there is a strong system. If you are bad, they are going to catch you. They are going to do something, but in Saudi Arabia, it is all about your name and the amount of money you have. So, I realized that.

Aisha: [I see] both countries are the same, but I think professors here are more respectful to their students than there [Saudi Arabia]. Also, most of the professors there are Saudi rather than from other [countries].

Samira: It is really hard, but you know here I feel like they want you to understand the material more than just memorize it. Back home they just want you to memorize stuff.

Rashad: Obviously when you compare Saudi Arabia with the United States you really are at the end of the two opposite poles of the earth. They are already apart in terms of culture and education. If education was compared between Saudi Arabia and the United States, the college that I went to in Saudi Arabia was good, but Saudi lacks a sense of diversity.

Fahad, Amara, Aisha, Samira and Rashad note that there are changes that need to occur and by identifying these changes they present a collective call to action. van Stekelenburg (2013) referred to collective action as an important instrument in creating change for collective identities. By recognizing that change is needed and specifically what those changes are in terms of the neoliberal influences on higher education (Apple, 2006; Cuban, 2004; Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Torres, 2005), these participants

acknowledge that based on group needs a collective core identity can change, has fluidity, and can set new parameters of prescribed membership.

Participants also noted not only their awareness of needed changes, but of who has the responsibility to make those changes. Based on the context of their studies within the United States and the contextual influencers from within and outside of the classroom, participants concluded that they (those who have studied abroad), their government and the common Saudi people have to serve as the element of change for their country. Khalid and Zahra stated:

> Khalid: I think Saudi Arabia is transforming in a way. I do not know what is going to be the final transformation, but I hope it is going to be in the right direction. [Saudi] is definitely not what it was when I left four years ago; so, I think we are headed in the right direction, especially with the huge number of people coming back from the United States, Australia, the UK and other countries. We actually think that they are going to make a huge difference.
>
> Zahra: I see my country differently. I see many things that have to be changed there, but some of the changes are dependent upon the government. It is under the control of the government. Many things are under the control of the people, as well, but it is difficult to change them [the Saudi people].

Khalid and Zahra clearly define the change agents needed to enact collective change (van Stekelenburg, 2013) for the core identity of Saudi Arabia. Khalid even acknowledges that change is occurring because "Saudi Arabia is transforming in a way." However in order for Saudi Arabia to achieve change and develop their indigenous body of knowledge, increased exposure to higher education must be provided. While clearly noting that some of these changes are dependent upon the government, Zahra also states that many things are in the control of the people whom she believes are "difficult to change". Khalid identifies those who have studied abroad

as change agents, but does not appear to be inclusive of himself when he states, "We actually think that *they* are going to make a huge difference."

Group B: Perceptions of Higher Education

Group B questions were focused on discovering participants' perceptions of higher education. Questions focused on participants' educational experiences within the United States, their understanding of higher education within Saudi Arabia, a comparison of the two countries educational systems and what they believed the purpose of higher education to be. Appendix K provides an intertextual analysis of each question specific to Group B and utilizes different aspects of the theoretical lens to support the codes and sub-codes within the data while recognizing cis gender specific trends.

In discussing their educational experiences within the United States, participants revealed that their individual identities often intersected with what they perceived the macro-systems of power to be within the collective educational structure of the United States. In particular, they noted that the United States educational model including faculty and facilities held distinct differences to those they had experienced within Saudi Arabia. Participants noted:

> Yahya: I can say that the education system here is very unique, and it is totally different than what I learned in my country. Here, I can really feel it myself. When I do assignments, projects, and work with a team, I can grow step-by-step. I can also put what I have learned in the right direction for my life; so, I can find it - how I can use it - theory to practice. This is a big difference for me to be honest, because what I learned there [Saudi Arabia] was just in books. I cannot use it at all, but here I can really use it on each assignment not just after one semester. It is a foundation.
>
> Khalid: I thought it was just going to be studying some stuff that was more difficult than high school. I thought that the person in front of you [teacher/professor] was going to be competent enough to provide you the

information you need; however, I realized that this is not exactly how this university works - not about the competency part, but basically, they provide you with a lot of key points for what you should go and research by yourself. So, going to class is not about getting information, it is about getting what you need to learn this week. They give you key points and you have to read about it, find more information, do your research, and this is your homework.

Aisha: I thought that it was going to be easy… When I came here, I saw it was very difficult, and we had to study hard to get what we want. Also, I did not think that it would be that hard to go to medical school, but when I came here, I saw a lot of requirements ... A lot of things that we have to do. One of them is a higher GPA or extremely high GPA; so, it changed me. When I came here, I did not think that the student should do more than what the professor does. [Here] you have to work on yourself to get the degree more than you depend on the teacher or professor. I did not think that, because in Saudi Arabia the teachers explain all of the books to the students which is not like here. You have to study all the books and notes. So that is pretty different.

Fahad: When I came here, it was like the weather. We see all the trees and it is open. I do not know how to describe it. In Arabic,
افتحت نفسيتي للدراسة. تقبلي للدراسة وللضغط الجامعي صار أفضل بكثير
[Coming here gave me an appetite to study. I am more willing to study and the pressure is low.] … I expected to go out more and not spend so much time in classes, because all of what we do in Saudi Arabia is just sit in class and try to memorize everything... not getting your hands dirty with practice, but learning with books.

Aaliyah: Many classes were wasted in Saudi Arabia, because there were no screens, tools, or equipment - technology. It exists, but where I do not know. I do not know. They are prepared [with technology] in the United States for teaching.

Yahya, Khalid and Aisha noted that the methodology for instruction within the United States educational model was different and in some ways more rigorous than what they had prepared for or initially believed it to be compared to the educational system within Saudi Arabia. Elyas and Picard (2013) had likewise noted that prior to 9/11 the Saudi educational curriculum had remained steeped in Islamic teachings and Arab nationalism, but that it often lacked in rigor and thus gave reason for needed educational reformation. In addition, both Khalid and Aisha noted the quality of the

faculty in relation to their role in the classroom were specifically different than their prior Saudi educational experience in that the faculty were competent, but there was an expectation that students would take on the full responsibility to study and/or research for their classes – the learning processes is dependent upon how well the student prepares and not just the faculty.

Equally important, Fahad and Aaliyah both recognized the impact of the environment in which learning occurs. In particular, Fahad noted the external environment such as the weather and landscaping and how it enhanced his desire to learn, and both Fahad and Aaliyah noted key observations about the internal environment of the classroom – time spent in the classroom and the availability of technology. Unfortunately, social and political debates over educational reformation in Saudi Arabia have constrained the ability of educators to provide access to technology within the classroom in the same sense in which it is present within the United States (Elyas & Picard, 2013).

Nadia revealed that how she had perceived Americans' educational abilities was challenged by her experience within the United States. Her perceived realm of reality was not what she had expected based on perceived social constructs of the other. She had allowed stereotypes she had heard about Americans to filter into her meaning making processes and assigned those stereotypes as social constructs of identity for her American peers. Nadia stated:

> I do not know where I heard it, but I always understood that American people are not that smart. You hear that Asians and others are really smart. Once I came here, I was in intensive Math and Chemistry courses and I realized that Americans are really, really, really smart. They actually are really, really, really smart, and you have to catch-up, because all of them [American students] come to the university [prepared for the] courses. … They knew the material, and I

> knew English, but [my] learning was by memorizing things. I memorized things in English and I had memorized in Arabic. I had to switch my way of thinking.

Nadia seemed to be struggling with how she made meaning of preconceived stereotypes that she had about differing ethnic groups and the recognition that her own learning style was insufficient for the context of the American classroom. Nadia's struggle may have been fostered by the fact that the larger portion of the educational systems within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are set up based on rote teaching and learning styles with limited critical thinking skills embedded within the curriculum (House 2012; Krieger, 2007). In addition, Abes, Jones and McEwen (2007) pointed out that in order for complex meaning-making to occur, contextual influences such as one's peers, family, social norms, stereotypes and the like have to pass through a meaning-making filter. It appears that Nadia's transitional meaning-making suffered apparent tension and conflict due to the limitations she had placed on individuals by use of stereotypes and other limiting social labels (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007).

Samira, on the other hand, discussed how the context of her prior educational experiences should have prepared her for her initial study in the United States; however, because she was so nervous about starting college, those contextual influencers did not seem to filter through to her expected emotional response. Samira shared:

> I remember the first day before I started college. I was so nervous that I actually cried which was weird, because I have been in so many different schools and I have met a lot of people and it is exactly the same. Because this was college, I was really overwhelmed and my friends said why you are making a big deal out of it. The funny thing is that I was not taking my Engineering courses. It was just Spanish and English, but somehow, I was overwhelmed and it was scary.

Samaria's meaning-making process was more formulaic in that limited filtering occurred allowing minimal awareness of relationships amongst her multiple social

identities to occur (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007) in the context of her educational experiences. Therefore, even though she was aware that she was not enrolled in more challenging engineering courses and she had experiences in multiple types of schools with diverse individuals, she was just overwhelmed with moving to her next stage in life – college.

When asked about education in Saudi Arabia and what, if any, changes had been made and by whom, participants noted that the educational system was in a transformational stage - evolving in structure, but also, faced many obstacles. Based upon their individual social constructs, participants were able to identify how micro and macro aspects of their collective Saudi identity were being challenged in order to produce a shift or collective action with the possibility of a core collective identity change. Participants stated:

> Yahya: The King [is making changes in Higher Education]. The idea is King Abdullah's, but a lot of people around him disagree with what he wants. He said no, and if we think about it, he created more than 22 universities in just a few years and an international university, like Harvard, but it is not Harvard. This year, we have more than 120,000 students in the United States. This does not include those in Britain, Australia, and other countries. So, it is a lot of money, but who is the person behind it? It is the King [King Abdullah]. Because he is the King, he can give orders to others to try to help. All the people around him can help. King Solomon will do the same, but not as openly as it has been.

> Hussain: I believe that the biggest change is the creation of these universities, and the other major change is the great scholarship program. Obviously, it has helped hundreds of thousands of students. I believe this is going to dramatically change things. It is going to take time for the students to come back and have any kind of tangible influence. It is always the case that the higher authority in the country basically [is making the changes]; not even the simplest level of government can do this. It [the higher authority] is way up because it is so centralized. Even the universities themselves cannot make all of the decisions without talking to or going back to the Minister [of Higher Education] for approval. Even for simple things at times which is a hurdle. It really is up to the educational process for things to advance.

> Aaliyah: I think the power is in the hands of the teachers, because they can revolt over the teaching process.
>
> Khalid: Right now, King Abdullah has introduced about 20 universities in the Kingdom and other areas that had no previous universities, and the problem is that we still lack the staff, competent staff to be in those areas. He also introduced the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology [KAUST] in Jeddah. That university's only focus is on graduate studies, masters or PhD. They have the best equipment known globally. Whatever happened during the last 5 to 8 years in Saudi Arabia has changed higher education making it easier for people who are thinking of going to the United States to be thinking why should I leave on a 22 hour flight while I can go to the university next door, because it has been improved over the last [several] years. … Which is creating more problems in the religious part of Saudi Arabia. They are not very ok with it, but we are getting there.
>
> Nadia: I do not feel like all colleges in the United States will give you a higher education that is better than Saudi Arabia, but I feel like they will give you a different education; for example, diversity.
>
> Nasir: Education is changing. Last month they [the Ministry of Higher Education] sent us an email stating that it is not going to be as easy as it was to get a scholarship, because they do not want to send everybody to the United States and there is a really good reason. Universities in Saudi Arabia and the Saudi people should think of joining their home institutions and not just say that they want to go to the United States, because there are thousands [of Saudi students] here in the United States. They are trying to minimize that because every year 5,000 to 15,000 students are sent to different countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia to study, and they want to minimize that. … The government wants Saudi students there. The government that controls the department of education says this.

Yahya, Hussain, Khalid, and Nasir noted that education in Saudi Arabia is evolving due to an increased effort by the government and specifically the King to increase educational options within the Kingdom. The Saudi government has dedicated twenty-five percent of its annual budget to educational initiatives, created partnerships with universities world-wide for shared academic programming, and has sent thousands of Saudi students abroad to study (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 2012). Education as a macro-system of power within a collective identity such as Saudi Arabia has the

ability to grow and develop indigenous knowledge - a more educated society that maintains the delicate balance of the acquired cultural norms of the overall Saudi society while promoting advancement through technology, diversity, open-mindedness, and the organic-growth of human intelligence and creativity.

Likewise, Hussain, Khalid, Yahya, and Nadia also recognize that though education is evolving, there are also some obstacles to be addressed in this process. These include, but are not limited to overcoming government hurdles for advancement (Clary & Karlin, 2011), pressure from religious leaders to maintain strong Wahabi ideals (Doumato, 2000), shortages of indigenous faculty (Romani, 2009), a need for diversity (Kéchichian, 2013; Krieger, 2007), a change in the methodology used for curriculum and teaching (House 2012; Krieger, 2007; Prokop, 2003), and increased access to education (Elyas & Picard, 2013).

Yahya, Hussain and Aaliyah pointed out through their heightened and more critically assessed zone of awareness that there are those who can serve as change agents within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to improve education, as well. They include, but are not limited to the government leaders, students who study abroad and return to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the educators themselves. However, as earlier noted these same change agents can also serve as obstacles to change; therefore, creating an ongoing tension between progress and preservation of the status quo. If Saudi Arabia is going to create a strong knowledge based society, it must have the ability to "process information and knowledge in ways that maximize learning, stimulate ingenuity and invention, and develop the capacity to initiate and cope with change" (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3); therefore, change agents who represent a variety of

positions within the society will have to aid in negotiating educational change while still advocating for the preservation of societal norms.

When asked to make a comparison between education in the United States and education in Saudi Arabia, participants noted that there were both positive and negative aspects for both, as well as perceived similarities and differences. Participants have used their educational experiences in both countries to create their realities/truths about the educational systems within the collective identities of the United States and Saudi Arabia with both educational systems being macro-dimensions of power within their respective collective identity. Participants noted:

> Hussain: You have the higher quality in virtually all aspects here [in the United States], especially in higher education. In virtually all aspects that you would use to examine an educational system, they [the United States] surpass without a doubt; however, that is only limited to the two-hundred top universities in the United States.
>
> Aisha: Here [in the United States] most of the students want to study because they think that education is very important, but in Saudi Arabia they study because of society and not because they want to study.
>
> Khalid: In Saudi Arabia, the text books that we use are printed in America; so, the resources that we use here in the United States would be similar to a Saudi university.
>
> Fahad: My University here [in the United States] is much older than my university [in Saudi Arabia]; so, you would expect a new university to have better classrooms, but they do not. Here the classrooms are better than our classrooms due to technology.
>
> Nadia: Diversity wise, I would say yes [it is better here in the United States] and having your freedoms. [In the United States] it is a big outdoor campus. I think males [in Saudi Universities] have this, but females do not. They are more closed, because of hijab and things; so, the whole environment [here in the United States] feels better to me than back home [in Saudi Arabia].
>
> Safa: I think both are equal in rigor.

> Rashad: It depends on which college [in Saudi] you have studied in, but they try to follow the same curriculum as the United States colleges.

In comparing education within the two collective identities – Saudi Arabia and the United States – participants noted stark differences, but also unique commonalities within set parameters. While American universities were older, Fahad acknowledged that their classrooms were considered better due to their access to technology. In addition, Khalid stated that since Saudi Arabia utilizes American textbooks, he felt that both had similar resources, but Rashad noted that both educational systems are the same only when comparing certain colleges in Saudi Arabia to those in the United States. Similarly, Hussain noted that only the top 200 American universities surpassed Saudi universities. Safa stated that both shared equal rigor, but provided no evidence of why she felt this way. Aisha shared her assumption that Americans study because they want to, but Saudis do so because it is expected. In short, participants felt that both educational systems shared positive and negative macro-dimensions of power, but neither was completely equal and/or equitable to the other.

Participants viewed the purpose of higher education as a way to advance both themselves and society. In some instances, advancement of individuals within the collective was viewed as advancement for the collective. Again, the context of their educational experiences and the contextual influencers within both the collective identity of the United States and Saudi Arabia provided participants with the ability to filter their realms of reality and make meaning of the higher education experience. Participants shared:

> Yahya: Higher education is our path to our goals. Whether it is our country's goals, our personal goals, or our community's goals, we have to do our best for a higher education in order to reach our goals.

Hussain: I plan to go back and be a member of any university as faculty; so, I have a special interest in higher education and the educational process itself. Higher education is a necessity for these times. It is really the big generator or driver of any country or economy. So, with all of the economic and social paths that a society has, it really is what differentiates people from other societies.

Aisha: [Higher education is] to make a better generation - an intelligent generation that has a lot of knowledge, knows what is happening in this world, and invents many things to make life better. Maybe they can change lives. That is why education is important - getting better jobs and higher wages.

Khalid: Once you go into higher education, you are going to have a focused discipline. You are going to know the ends and outs of whatever you want to improve, and this is something that you feel passionate about. It is something that is actually needed for the people that actually can be used. I am being critical, but that is basically what I think Higher Education is.

Amara: It is for knowledge, for power. I believe that higher education is for everything. You cannot, especially in today's society, go anywhere without a degree, without higher education. You cannot go higher even if you were born with a lot of money. You cannot have power with your name and respect if you do not have a good education.

Samira: By going to college, you will at least have a job afterwards. You can provide for yourself. You never know what is going to happen. Not every girl gets married and has a husband who can provide for her. I feel like it is better to be responsible for yourself and independent.

Zahra: [Higher education is] to get a deeper [understanding] of your major, to get a specialty and learn to apply it. It is to expand knowledge.

Rashad: There is one obvious reason. You want to get a job. Many people are pursuing higher and higher educations. They want a master's and PhD. It is getting hard [to get a job]. It is just the nature of the industry that is out there. They need people with at least a bachelor's degree.

Yahya, Hussain, Aisha and Khalid all noted that higher education provided an avenue for improving the lives of one's community and the greater society. Individuals with an education would have the power to change lives and make the overall life better. These four participants viewed higher education on a broader scale of not just providing benefits to themselves and their futures such as through employment and self-

fulfillment as Amara, Samira, Zahra and Rashad had noted, but that higher education could contribute to "a better and more just society for all" (McArthur, 2011, p. 738).

Group C: Internationalization of Higher Education

Group C questions were focused on discovering participants' perceptions of internationalization in higher education. Questions focused on participants' perceived understanding of how both the United States and Saudi Arabia educates students, faculty, and staff about different cultures and social groups and how relationships have been developed by both countries with colleges and universities abroad. In addition, questions focused on the importance participants placed on cross-cultural and international relationships between colleges and universities globally and their interpretation of cross-cultural and global education. Appendix L provides an intertextual analysis of each question specific to Group C and utilizes different aspects of the theoretical lens to support the codes and sub-codes within the data while recognizing cis gender specific trends.

Participants were able to articulate their zones of awareness when discussing their perceptions about how the United States educates students, faculty and staff about different cultures and social groups. Participants discussed organic (non-planned) interactions they had where they were able to meet others within and outside of the university's community and spatial (planned) interactions they had where the American university purposely provided a space for them to interact within the university's community. Organic interactions were not always positive, but provided participants with a unique awareness of the cultural knowledge of the individuals with whom they interacted and with whom they shared space. Some participants noted:

Nasir: For the [American] students, I would say not at all. They have to educate themselves by themselves. If they go to an event and see something, they will know more about other cultures. For example, if they come to one of the Saudi Association ceremonies, they have a lot of different opportunities to show all different cultures, but a lot of students will ask do you ride camels to school. Many are serious. They have not been educated at all on that. There is nothing at the university where they educate other students. However, faculty at the university have been taught [about different cultures and social groups], because the faculty have studied, have higher educations - some masters, and they have been teaching these [international] students for a long time and know about different cultures - Chinese, Saudi, all different cultures, but the university, they do not teach their faculty about different cultures… The staff... I do not think they really know a lot and I do not think that they really care about it. It is like their job is not to know.

Khalid: They definitely fail their students. Americans are still asking questions like do you still ride camels in Saudi Arabia. Do you live in tents or does your mom know your dad. These are stupid questions that you would think people in college would actually know the answer to, but apparently, they do not.

Amara: Even if I think they do a good job of covering that, I think it is based on their families and how they were raised, because they can study one year about that and then if their parents themselves taught them differently, they are actually going to be more convinced by how they were raised. Being a child, you actually receive more [from your upbringing] and it is going to stick in your mind.

Nadia: Very badly. When I first came, I did not know how to drive. So, I was in [driving school]. My brother refused to teach me, and while I was driving with this guy who was a fourth grade teacher, he said to me you are from Saudi Arabia? I teach kids about Saudi Arabia, but what I teach them is that they [Saudi women] have to cover everything, wear gloves and cover their face and I was super mad! I was like what? No! I think people [Saudis] are sometimes more religious than they have to be, and so, they believe extreme things. But no, some people interpret the Quran in that you have to cover up your hair and dress modestly, and other people believe it is only [to dress] modestly. How they [American teachers] teach kids about extreme things in their books frustrates me, and whenever I meet Americans and they ask me are you supposed to wear a hijab, I ask them are you Christian? You are not supposed to drink, right? Why do you drink? You have all of these rules, but some people choose to do them, and some people perceive them in a different way. So, it just seems like they need to be just a little more educated about these things, and not just about Muslims or Saudi Arabians, but other countries, as well - Africans, Asians and so forth. They [Americans] have a perception of them [non-Americans], but I feel they need a better education about nationality, religion, and things like that.

Nasir, Khalid and Nadia were surprised by how limited American students' and community members' knowledge was of their Saudi culture. Both organic (non-planned) and spatial (planned) interactions with Americans on campus or in the community resulted in a heightened awareness of how others perceived participants and their culture. Notably, while studying in the United States, the participants are gaining first-hand knowledge of American culture along with their education, but they are also serving as ambassadors for their own country to American students and those that they meet within the local community (Saudi Embassy, 2011b). This is a point that Yahya made clear at the end of his interview session when he stated, "Saudi students are not international students studying in universities…. Saudi students are ambassadors studying in international universities with the goal of educating others about Saudi Arabia and [our] culture".

However, Amara took a different stance on cultural awareness. She believed that education was not the defining factor in what others understood about cultural differences, but instead, it was an individual's upbringing and one's family that aided in determining cultural awareness and acceptance of others different than one's self. In addition, Nadia pointed out that while Saudis are conservative, not all Saudi's practice the same commitment to conservatism. As an example, she used her interaction with the driving school instructor over women's dress. Nadia, who is a non-hijabi (does not wear a headscarf), describes the varying zones of commitment Saudis have to dressing modestly and her frustration with how others perceived realities do not match her own.

In situations where the American university provided a purposeful space for interaction, participants noted that sometimes their perceived zone of awareness of others was challenged by their interactions. Samira, Hussain and Rashad shared:

> Samira: I love all of these events that happen, because, sometimes, I am not trying to be rude or anything, but the Americans rely on the media. I, too, sometimes rely on the media, because I heard, for example, about Africa. I thought all Africans were poor, but it is not true. Maybe the media is just wrong, and when you get to meet people from different parts of the world and go to events depending upon what your college provides, it is amazing to see everyone's differences.
>
> Hussain: It is different, because you have a pre-arrival with all of the students coming to the university. You have pre-established perceptions and ideas, but I can only speak for the experience that I have had here [at the university], because I am pretty sure it is different across the United States. Here you have the greatest opportunity to get involved and to be able to interact with all the different cultures and societies. In some cases, I would describe it as really good, really rich and fulfilling, because before you come you are coming out of high school. I am pretty sure it is the same for United States students, as well. They [students] encounter a lot of different groups. Universities are really great places to integrate with differences.
>
> Rashad: I was at a cultural event and I had to present on Saudi Arabia. We had a booth and there were high school students coming in, and I was dressed in a thobe [traditional Saudi clothing for men], we had Saudi flags, and several Arabic scripts laying on the table. I asked a student if he knew where I was from, and he said maybe Israel. I was shocked. My conclusion was that people outside of the university were not educated. That is the reward of getting a higher education. The most important thing is that you get to meet people from all over the world.

Samira and Hussain noted how their interactions with other students on the campus broadened their cultural awareness. Researchers have noted that this is key to the process of internationalization on campus (Choudaha & Kono, 2012; Chow, 2011; Denda, 2012; Firmin, Holmes, Firmin, & Merical, 2013). Students who have opportunities to experience new cultures and different ways of learning also learn new perspectives on who they are and their role in a much larger global community with

greater global opportunities (Choudaha & Kono, 2012). Rashad expressed both his shock with the limited cultural knowledge of the visiting high school students, as well as his ability to make meaning of this experience in light of his college education. He concluded that "This is the reward of getting a higher education. …you get to meet people from all over the world." He had gained global cultural knowledge.

When asked about their perceived understanding of how Saudi Arabia educates students, faculty and staff about different cultures and social groups, participants spoke of extremely limited and in some cases non-existent organic and spatial interactions, as well as the concept of self-education about non-Saudi cultures and social groups. Participants shared:

> Hussain: That is a major thing that we do not have. Saudi Arabia is not really a mixed society. You have a main streamed society. Religion shapes virtually everything; so, for you to discuss other people, it would mostly involve touching outside of the norm. It would be mostly in a negative way. Some places in Saudi Arabia, education institutions, have mixed students and they have scholarships for students to come. You can see the difference these students have in ideas and perspectives, but overall, you do not see that at all in all major universities and major school districts.
>
> Aaliyah: (Student laughs) Saudi Arabia is just Saudis. I think that people from outside Saudi Arabia are not allowed to gain admissions to all universities.
>
> Khalid: None. Zero. Nothing. They did not educate anyone about different cultures. Nothing. It did not happen. We have diverse ethnicities and religious parties. We are talking about Sunnis and Shi'ites. Shi'ites come from Qatar or Khobar to study … and they face all sorts of racism as you call it. Just because they are from that area, just because they are Shi'ites, they will not fit in with the other students. They will always be looked down on. They will always be excluded in any of the group activities if there are any group activities. I am not making everyone to look bad, but this is like 90% of the time. You may have 10% of the people who are actually educated and they are actually multi-cultural, but for the most part they do not. Nobody was educated. You must even look at the history of the instructor. Where does he come from? Is he from a tribe? What tribe is he from? You get into this [tribal affairs] when you go to Saudi Arabia. You are going to see that he hates this person because his tribe has a problem with my tribe; so, I have to have a problem with him. That is how

it goes. It gets really complicated and it is not changing anytime soon. Since, you have that tribal influence and that tribal effect in Saudi Arabia.

Safa: I did not learn much about different cultures in Saudi. I did not experience that.

Samira: I guess it depends on your personality and if you have the kind of personality that likes to read things outside of your school work. I like to read things, and I like to watch things about different cultures, nationalities, and everything. My friends think it is weird sometimes, and question why. If you do not do that and then travel around, it is going to be a culture shock. But if you read about it and you go somewhere, you will expect it. You know what is coming. I will give you an example. We used to live in England. We have always known that this was a peace sign. [Holds up first two fingers in the shape of a V.] In England, that is really bad. So, if you do not read about that and you do that to someone there, you may cause a lot of problems. So, it is better to read about it. It is not provided to you at school; so, just do it yourself. You have to self-educate. I think if I did not actually go to an international school, I would not really know a lot about that until college which is pretty late to know about it.

Yahya: They just focus on the English language. We have nothing about French or Japanese. If I want to know about this, I have to do my best for it - independent study. I cannot get any kind of help from the education system; so, they focus on the English [language] in general and also the countries that speak English.

Fahad: I think this is a problem in Saudi Arabia, because we do not learn much about different cultures. When I first came here, I had no idea about anything like Christianity and the people here. I have heard a lot about the United States and how they teach their students about Islam and the like, but we do not study much back in Saudi Arabia. I think this is a problem, because we need to learn about different cultures, different religions, because it is very important. If they taught me about the Western culture - other religions, I would have been more open when I first came here. It was not easy for me to be honest to be open to every idea. Everything was shocking. For example, how girls [in the United States] do these things [different cultural things]? Now, I have changed a lot. I have changed a lot.

Yahya and Khalid expressed that there was limited opportunity provided within Saudi Arabia's educational system to foster educational opportunities to learn about differing cultures and social groups for students, faculty and staff. In particular Yahya noted that the predominant focus for diversity was limited to learning in English and

about English speaking countries (Lindsey, 2011; Onsman, 2011). Additionally, Khalid stated that there was "zero" emphasis placed on learning about other cultures and social groups, but that diversity did exist in the form of differing religious sects – Sunni and Shi'ite; however, there was unequal representation and the Shi'ites were often shunned (Nevo 1998; U.S. State Department 2011). He also noted that students' tribal affiliations could negatively impact students' interactions with each other.

Conversely, Hussain, Aaliyah and Safa stated that Saudi Arabia did not educate on different cultures or social groups. Hussain admitted that there were programs to scholarship individuals from outside of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to come and study, but that it was limited. KAUST graduate university is perhaps the best example of this, but KAUST is a privately funded university that serves only a limited number of Saudi students – 30 percent of the total university population with a majority of students coming from foreign nations (Krieger, 2007; Matthews, 2012).

Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, and Pascarella (2008) discussed the association between accumulating social and cultural capital to students' desire to study abroad. For Samira, self-education through reading and watching TV shows about other countries assisted her in this process, but she also noted that she had already lived abroad prior to her experience in the United States. Samira had already accumulated social and cultural capital through her prior lived experiences. To the opposite, Fahad had no prior experience with differing cultural and social groups prior to arriving in the United States. In particular, Fahad noted that he would have liked to have known more about Western religious beliefs prior to arriving in America. He identified as a Muslim who had no knowledge of other religious beliefs. This became a challenge for his core

identity. Both, Samira and Fahad spoke of culture shock – feelings of uncertainty, confusion or even anxiety that a person may experience when exposed to a new culture and/or environment that is different than their own (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001); however, Samira with all of her prior knowledge and contextual experience understood how to avoid culture shock, while Fahad with no prior knowledge or context of different cultures to relate to, suffered from it.

When asked if they perceived that the United States had developed relationships with colleges and universities abroad, participants noted that there were points of intersectionality between macro systems such as United States educational institutions and other country's governments, educational institutions, and corporations. At times this created a collective bonding between the macro systems and at other times this caused conflict. Hussain and Khalid stated:

> Hussain: One of the main things that I saw was the exchange program. I had no idea that the universities did this. If you have the opportunity to go and take a semester or academic year abroad, it is an enormous thing. This is a major thing that they [Saudi Arabia] have to develop - all of these relationships. Also, you have all kinds of corporate agreements whether it is in research or teaching. Most universities have visiting scholars, instructors, programs and the like. By having all of these interconnected programs with all different types of educational systems, students and faculty have a really enriched [learning] environment. So, I think this is the most amazing thing that I saw personally.
>
> Khalid: I cannot speak for the United States as a whole, but I think that this university has enhanced their programs a lot whether it is in France, Peru, or even Jordan for people in the Arabic flagship program. The problem is that they only choose a few students to go; so, it is not really influencing the people here on campus. In addition, the people that they actually bring from other universities as exchange students or otherwise do not meet a very welcoming environment. You cannot really get to know them one-on-one and be friends. Once you are in class, it is just like high school. You have cliques and everybody is setting with their clique. Nobody talks to anybody else. You set there til you finish the class and then you leave. It is not really that integrated. They are not really that involved with each other I would say.

Hussain recognized that the relationships between institutions in the United States and other countries brought benefits to the academic environment, students and faculty. Hussain viewed these relationships as positive impacts on the educational experience. Khalid agreed, but could only speak to what he had witnessed from his current institution. Though the programs existed, Khalid provided a key observation in stating that the relationships were not influential to the college community because only a few students were selected to take advantage of these opportunities. However, according to a study by the American Council on Education, Art & Science Group LLC, and the College Board (2008), the issue may actually be very different than what Khalid perceives. The study showed that 50 percent of those American students surveyed were interested in study abroad, but less than 5 percent actually do study abroad because of needed proficiency in a foreign language and the cost associated with such an adventure. However, Saudi students, such as Khalid, have the advantage of learning English as the predominate foreign language in their secondary school experience, studying intense English through Saudi Aramco's College Preparatory Program prior to arriving in the United States, and having the full cost of their study abroad experience paid for by the company (Saudi Aramco, 2016a & 2016b).

In addition, participants' realms of perceived realities brought them to the conclusion that students, corporations and the governments were all benefiting from the relationships that were being developed by the United States and colleges and universities abroad. Nadia, Amara and Yahya stated:

> Nadia: I feel like things are changing a lot, and I feel like people who have studied abroad and come back [to the United States] are learning to give other people opportunities. People who do not have parents who can send them abroad

> do not know how good it is. I think things are changing right now, and the United States is trying to build relationships with other countries.
>
> Amara: I think they [the United States] have done it with KAUST. I think if it is a good university, reliable. There are no problems. I think if they [students] have studied in different universities in different countries, they are going to know how to solve problems and to do things differently. They might have skills that their own people do not have - maybe languages, everything.
>
> Yahya: They have a lot of relationships now. When I went to a conference last year in Riyadh, I was surprised by the number of American universities that were there. For some, it was there second, third and even sixth time [to attend]. There are a lot of relationships between the Saudi Arabian Scholars and those in the universities here in the United States. For example, my university is under the Royal Commission, and it is an important university in Saudi, because it is all about petro chemicals. Prior to this scholarship, petro [companies] really wanted great relationships with specific universities such as in Indiana and another one in Texas, because they wanted to focus on Chemistry and Engineering. Yes, they have strong relationships.

Nadia recognized the financial difficulty that some American students suffer in order to study abroad, but also noted that those who had gone abroad were working as advocates for others to share in the same experience. Both Baum and Ma's (2007) and McMahon's (2009) studies revealed this same ideal in that a benefit of a higher education includes a social responsibility to advocacy. Amara added that studying abroad creates problem solving skills and the ability to do things differently. Gu's (2012) study also noted that study abroad students exposed to different social and educational opportunities were able to better employ reflexive processes of change, adjustment and development which allowed them to engage in new cognitive, social and emotional ways. Yahya noted that American institutions have built relationships between not only educational institutions, but also, Saudi industries. This benefits the economic growth of the Kingdom's industry sector by providing an increased focus on

both research and development and builds the foundation for a strong knowledge-based society (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012).

Participants had similar feelings about how Saudi Arabia has developed relationships with colleges and universities abroad. Participants noted that there were points of intersectionality between macro systems such as Saudi educational institutions and other country's governments, educational institutions, and corporations, and as with the United States, this at times created a collective bonding between the macro systems and at other times this caused conflict. The following participants stated:

> Khalid: This is a new thing that I am seeing. There are new programs and different universities in Saudi Arabia that can offer you a chance to go and study abroad for a semester or two… I think it is also working to their benefit. It is definitely at the beginning stages. This was not happening before. It is new and it is working.
>
> Amara: I think they are doing a great job sending a lot of students to study in Europe and everywhere, but I think they have to be more precise in who to send. They send literally everyone who wants to go. They should set the requirements higher; so, whoever goes abroad is serious about his education, but they are doing a good job.
>
> Nasir: Does Saudi reach out for help? Yes, but not a lot. Aramco would reach out, but not a lot. If you went inside the borders of Aramco, you would see yourself in America. You would see American houses and the American culture. You would even see a church there, American teachers, and Aramco would reach out to the United States and they would bring teachers. So, you would have differences. The government is not like Aramco the company when it comes to education, but private universities in Saudi Arabia would do as much as Aramco. However, Aramco will do more, and they are working for profit.

Khalid, Amara and Nasir all agree that Saudi Arabia is working to do more to develop relationships with colleges and universities abroad. This can definitely be assessed as Saudi Arabia has experienced a double-digit growth over the last eight years in study abroad students to the United States alone (Institute of International of Education, 2015b). However, Nasir noted that Aramco, a state-owned Saudi oil

company (Saudi Aramco, 2016b), is and will do more than Saudi Arabia's public educational system to develop relationships with colleges and universities abroad because they are working for profit. Currently, Aramco and the King Abdullah Scholarship program (Saudi Embassy, 2011b) are the leading initiatives to assist Saudi students to study abroad, but the Saudi Aramco College Preparatory Program offers more than just an education abroad to students; it also offers job security (Saudi Aramco, 2016a). Saudi students sponsored by Aramco are contracted to work for a set number of years with the company after college graduation ensuring that the company makes a return on its educational investment and providing job security and experience to its graduates.

Some participants noted that the relationships being developed by Saudi Arabia benefited students, corporations and their government. Through their realms of perceived realities, participants even predicted that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wanted change, but that change would take time to occur. Likewise, some participants had difficulty perceiving that students from other countries would want to participate with an exchange program within the Kingdom. In addition, participants noted that students are often not the focus of these types of collaborative relationships. Nadia, Fahad, and Hussain shared:

> Nadia: Our scholarship is basically to get people to the United States and not just the United States, but also Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand for medical school. It is not like they want to keep people in Saudi Arabia. They know that if they are going abroad, they will implement change in Saudi Arabia. I feel like they want to change, but it is not like this is a new rule that everything is going to change. This is going to be very slow and gradual.
>
> Fahad: I do not know, if they are trying to bring students from other countries. Who would prefer to study in Saudi Arabia?

> Hussain: Recently, they have started making cooperative agreements, but in the past, there was really no cooperatives. For the most part, it was you teach us or help us to establish or refine our processes and even design facilities, labs, but I think in some parts, we have created cooperatives in research and teaching. In some places, there are exchange programs. [One Saudi university] has an exchange program with some of the finest universities in the United States, but mostly on petroleum and some other related fields. I am not aware of any other programs, but I think each and every university in Saudi Arabia has some kind of formal agreement with different institutions. …but you do not see the impact. It is administrative collaborations. Students come last.

Nadia expressed that she believes that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wants students to study abroad because they will return and make change within the Kingdom. For students in the King Abdullah Scholarship program like Nadia, the program serves to build a qualified and professional work force (Saudi Embassy, 2011b). However, research does tell us that higher education also promotes change by creating the desire for democratic institutions, human rights and political stability while promoting economic growth (Baum & Ma, 2007; McMahon, 2009; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012). As Saudi students complete their academic degrees and return to the Kingdom, change is being noted with marked increases in entrepreneurship, the generation of new institutions and Saudi citizens who are working to replace the expatriate professional labour force that in prior years was heavily depended upon by the Kingdom (Ahmed, 2015).

Fahad questioned if there were any students from other countries who would want to study in Saudi Arabia. However, during the 2012-2013 academic year, there were 71,773 international students from predominately Arab countries including Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Jordan studying within Saudi Arabia (Durrani, 2016). Perhaps Fahad's question arises in light of the fact that while many students are

studying abroad in Saudi Arabia, there is not a diverse population of students from non-Arab countries represented.

Hussain suggests that cooperative agreements between Saudi higher education institutions and colleges and universities abroad exists, but that these agreements do little to impact Saudi students' experiences on their home campuses. An increased focus on research and development has been seen within the industry sector of Saudi Arabia linking education with industry needs (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012) and fostering agreements between foreign faculty members to teach and conduct joint research with Saudi professionals within Saudi institutions (Lindsey, 2010); however, this link has not necessarily trickled down to Saudi student's individual experiences on their home campuses.

In addition while studying in the United States, participants were placed in a new context with different contextual influencers than they had experienced prior to leaving the Kingdom. Due to these new experiences and contextual influencers, the information filtered into the meaning making process challenged their ways of thinking and their views of Saudi Arabia's efforts in higher education. In particular, one participant noted that there was a need to change the higher education learning environment in Saudi Arabia and the participant hoped that he and other Saudis studying with him would have the opportunity to be a part of that change. Hussain noted:

> After seeing this first-hand [in the United States], you understand this is a necessity that all universities must have. It is something that must change. We need to have these environments where students can get involved, because I can see from my friends and families experiences that students do not relate to their universities or anything at all. We do not have that environment. We do not have the type of community that I saw here [in the United States]. Every time we see

> the university president or other administrators in the university talking about our community and our student body, I wonder what that is like back home [in Saudi Arabia]. Coming here and seeing all of this, I can definitely see things are different and that things must change. Hopefully in the future, we will be part of that change.

Hussain speaks in advocacy of an enhanced learning environment that is inclusive of administrators who relate to their student body and has aforementioned that he wants to return home to work as a faculty member in a university. Therefore his observations about the learning environment are important to this study, because as Pasque (2010) noted in her research, scholars who speak with an advocacy voice, a call to action, recognize there is an interdependence between public and private good and that higher education leaders must take action to change the focus of education in order to promote inclusivity, equity and justice for the public good.

In the process of making meaning of their own experiences within the context of the United States and the filtering of the contextual influences within the everyday aspects of their lives, participants found cross-cultural and international relationships within higher education to be very important. Participants stated that cross-cultural and international relationships between colleges and universities promote a different type of learning that fosters diversity, advancement, equality, and in some instances instills a desire to advocate for change. These participants shared:

> Yahya: It [cross-cultural and international relationships] is very important for Science, our community, and also it is very important for us, because we can learn more from others and be involved with them - what they learn, discovered, and what they have. For example, we do not have NASA, but we can learn from this kind of relationship and do our best to translate resources from a site like NASA. So, I think it is very important.

> Hussain: It [cross-cultural and international relationships] is of the utmost importance, because when you create an environment where students can relate, be engaged, and involved as much as possible, that is the richest environment.

> Colleges like this are built so that students can formulate their future aspirations and plans. When the university is just a place where you get a degree and leave, that is where there are issues, because four, five, six, or ten years of your life should be spent in a place where you can get the most out of the experience.
>
> Fahad: I think it [cross-cultural and international relationships] is very, very important, because being here at the university with all these international students, I will graduate with a very good experience and with different international students. If I am going to work somewhere far from my home, it is going to be okay. It also opens your mind to new ideas. Now your mind is ready to accept everything, not just the culture, but even technology. You are open to everything and can accept everything, because now you are open to understanding. So, I think it is very important.
>
> Nasir: It [cross-cultural and international relationships] is important because it helps Saudi Arabia. I really like Saudi Arabia and I really appreciate all that I am learning, but girls study alone and guys study alone [in Saudi Arabia]. This has to change. Here [in the United States] it is different. Guys are not always studying with guys and girls are not always studying with girls. It is different. You share everything with everyone. Everyone is the same. If you are in Saudi Arabia, you have to be with that guy or you have nothing.
>
> Rashad: I think it [cross-cultural and international relationships] is very important for several reasons. The simplest program is the exchange program. It fixes a lot of prejudices and preset ideas about countries. So, if you have an exchange program even if just for a one-week cross-cultural exchange, it can fix a lot of current ideas.

Cross-cultural and international relationships were very important to these participants, because these relationships allow participants to broaden their thinking to a more globally-centered perspective and positively impacts their lives and future professional careers (Firmin, Holmes, Firmin & Merical, 2013). These participants' attribute their ability to think differently, with more open-mindedness, equitability and about equality to their cross-cultural and global education within the United States. They have made the connection between education and advocacy (Pasque, 2010).

When asked their interpretation of cross-cultural and global education, participants acknowledged that for them it meant creating community, opening a means

of communication, and providing the ground work for an ideal model for higher education. Accordingly, the following participants stated:

> Khalid: Cross-cultural and global [education] is about accepting different people regardless of whatever category they can be divided into. When you think of how many ways you can divide people into whether, it is about looks, skin color, gender, religion - even if you are the same religion, cross-cultural education is just how to accept a person without filtering them and using these filters. It is about what you think, your mindset, and I guess their mindset. It is something purely professional. You do not have to get personal or make it about personal differences as long as they are not doing any harm to you. It is about being able to accept differences. You do not have to change yourself in front of other people just to adapt to what they do. At the same time, you have to accept who they really are. Not all people do whatever they can all over the world. When you come from Saudi Arabia to the United States you are not going to have the same things that we do in Saudi Arabia. The same is true for Americans that go to Saudi Arabia. They are not going to have the same things that they do in the United States. So, accepting that and being okay with it and being okay within yourself that is what cross-cultural and global education is about.
>
> Amara: Actually, I think to move forward in the world, there must be [cross-cultural and global education]. So, I think it is really important.
>
> Rashad: We have to have programs to be educated about other countries. That is what I like here [in the United States]. They have a lot of cultural programs, not just an evening of dancing and food or things like this, but people reaching other people about cultural differences, backgrounds, and presenting outside of the university about culture. That is something good. That is something we do not have in Saudi Arabia - not just globally, but internally to be honest.
>
> Safa: I would like international students and classes about cultures like the Middle Eastern culture and African culture; so, students know what is going on [in the world].
>
> Zahra: I would hire instructors from many countries and not just one country. I am not sure how, but I would do anything to have many students from many countries. We can make the materials or subjects we teach not just about the local area, but cross-cultural.
>
> Amara: I would create an institution that requires a class for freshman to learn about all cultures and every two weeks you would learn a new culture. You need to know what other cultures are like, why they do different things, and how they communicate.

Participants interpret cross-cultural and global education as a means of fostering co-existence, acceptance, advancement, respect and awareness of those with whom they share not just their spaces, but their world. They advocate that this is all achieved through shared knowledge of each other and local, global and even glocal (Elyas & Picard, 2013) communication which can be accomplished through the implementation of an educational model that acknowledges and accepts differences, educates about the world and the people in it, and empowers individuals to learn about those who are different than themselves.

Group D: National Identity Defined

Group D questions focused on how participants define their national identity. In particular, the questions concentrated on how participants defined being American, being Saudi, and how studying in the United States impacted the way they felt about being Saudi. Participants discussed how they compared both male and female identities from both nations and how studying in the United States impacted the way they felt about being a Saudi male/female. In addition, participants were asked about their future goals and how they planned to use their education. Appendix M provides an intertextual analysis of each question from Group D utilizing different aspects of the theoretical lens to support the codes and sub-codes within the data while recognizing cis gender specific trends.

Participants were asked how they defined being American or of the United States. In their responses, participants noted that they made meaning of the United States identity based on individual freedoms, personal traits, and differing aspects of the culture that they had noted through the context of their educational experiences.

Zahra: They have freedom and they are more open-minded about how they treat people, and how they live together. The bad side of it is that I think maybe they do not have strong family relationships like in Saudi Arabia. They do not have strong customs, because they have people from different cultures.

Nadia: They have a lot of freedom. A lot of freedoms with a lot of things. Sometimes, they seem a little bit arrogant like they are better than other countries, and they have everything and everybody is coming to their country for that reason, as well.

Fahad: To be American, you will have all the freedom to say and do anything you want. You will have the freedom to make your own choices. It is different from back in Saudi Arabia. When I first graduated from high school, all I wanted to do was study engineering and my father chose the major for me. I did not have a choice. I did like my major back there, but he made the choice for me. Also, my mother will choose a wife for me [laughs]. It is like here or may be it is not. Maybe, it is just culture. The American citizens have freedom to do anything they want. If they want to say anything, there are people to hear them. As much as you work hard here to get what you work for which is very good [laughs]. What more can I say about this?

Amara: I think your passport [the American passport] is going to be your power. You are going to have more rights. You are going to have more freedom if you have the United States passport. It is going to give you more faith to do whatever you want, because you know your country is backing you up. They [the American government] are going to stand for you if something happens.

Khalid: An American citizen is somebody who knows what he wants and he actually gets it whether the government wants it or not. The government is not that much of an issue here as long as they do not find out about it. It is someone who believes in freedom and the freedom of what they want to be. They feel a little bit superior to other races - just a little bit. I guess other races of the world - Europe, Africa or even Asia or the Middle East. They are against everybody; so, it plays well with their character. You can see that they have a special charisma. For the most part, they are pretty professional, and they are fun to get to know once you get past the superiority thing.

Rashad: I feel that I would describe them as nice people and maybe sometimes ignorant. Maybe a lot of the time. [They are] ignorant of other cultures.

Aisha: It depends on if he is black or white, and if it is a man or a woman. Some of them just want to do things for themselves. They do not want to help us even if they have the ability to help us. I do not know what I should say about them, but some of them are selfish. A lot of them are selfish, but some of them are helpful. So to define them as an American, it is not fair to say if they are

> selfish or not. The personality of the person makes the difference, but most of them respect us.
>
> Hussain: I think this idea of American identity is something that I developed when I came here. It is a great sense of pride, a sense of unity. I cannot really say culture, but within the United States, there is not really what I can call American culture. The United States has so many cultures, and so many societies. If you are from the south, I would imagine that you would be really proud and really into local traditions, history, and all of that. That is one of the things that certain groups [of Americans] identify themselves with.

Participants noted that Americans have many freedoms, but despite their freedoms they can at times come across as ethnocentric – seeing their own ethnic group and/or culture as superior to others with whom they interact (Goldoni, 2013). Nadia noted that that Americans "seem a little bit arrogant" and Khalid stated that Americans "feel a little bit superior to other races." Rashad pointed out that Americans are often ignorant of other cultures and Aisha noted that race and gender matter as well as the personality of the individual when it comes to defining what it means to be American. Research by Jones and Abes (2013) and Torres, Jones and Renn (2009) shows that our individual identities are developed and influenced by our social groups, the social context of the norms and expectations of society and the differing labels of identity which we adhere to in our own lives – race, class, ethnicity, gender, and the like. This being said, the Saudi participants note both good and bad aspects of differing labels of identity for Americans based on their contextual knowledge of what is considered the norm for Americans and their preconceived expectations of the American society when viewed and filtered through their Saudi lens.

Participants were also asked how they defined being Saudi. They made meaning of their Saudi identity based on structural aspects of their culture such as religion and

family, personal traits and negative experiences that they had encountered during their higher education experience. The following participants stated:

> Yahya: I am proud of everything to be honest. If I am thinking on the side of religion, we have the Holy City and really great people there. If I think of the culture, the culture is unique. Nobody can understand it until they get there. We love it, because we have great family relationships. The culture is around us. They [the government] really supports us to do well. If I am thinking of the business and money or financial stuff, Saudi is the best. There is *alhumduallah*, the petroleum - oil. It is a gift from God. I can visit Riyadh, Jeddah, and Mecca like [Washington] D.C. and Chicago. Still, we do not have the kind of buildings that are there, but we have technology, friendly people, and we do also have great infrastructure.
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> Hussain: Religion is the overall Arab identity; so, there is something that we can relate to all of the [Middle Eastern] countries around us. So, we do have that sense of brotherhood and integration. As you may well know, Saudi Arabia has many foreign workers and that is not just those who come in and work out of fear and then leave, but also, the Egyptians, Lebanese, and all the other people who were born there and lived their whole lives there. You have that sense of connectedness with all of the other people, but being Saudi and what it means and what I see and hear people speak their minds about it is the urgent need to change some parts, certain aspects. The need to catch-up basically in certain areas, and also the changing circumstances that change in the region and that change our views and our priorities as a nation or as an identity. Not me personally, but I know of certain parts of society that crave the dramatic change of Saudi in all aspects - religion, social, and all of that. I cannot say I am one of those, but I know of those who are.
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> Aaliyah: I think the main difference between being Saudi and being anything else is that our religion defines our personalities. So, I think this is the thing that most of the people do not understand. Why do we not do some things? Why do we act like that? Most would say that it is because of our religion. I think this is what makes the Saudis the most different from other people. We have this in our tradition and our culture.
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> Aisha: I like being Saudi. I see my religion in my personality. I like my religion, my culture. I see a lot of good things that we do that they [others] did not and do not know about. I like the love our families have - the connection that we have as a family for the Saudi family. I like to talk to other people about my scholarship and how our country loves us by giving us this big scholarship or this big opportunity to learn. Most of them [others] want to be Saudi just for the scholarship, but being a Saudi is not just for the scholarship. We love our country, because we are from there and we love that. We love that we belong to the most religious city in our country.

Amara: For a woman, it really sucks, but maybe for a man there is not really much difference. I do not like it and it is not only about the passport. It is for everything - the hospital system. I think if a United States citizen actually heard about our rights [women's rights] and what we can do and what we cannot do without a guardian, I do not think he is going to believe that in this world this is actually happening. I do not think they actually realize it - that they realize it is actually a problem. Your parents are really good people and they are going to give you as a woman the freedom you do not actually have on paper, but if you marry the wrong person and he has your papers, he is your new guardian. Actually, he can take everything. He can control your life... if you get to go to the hospital or not. So, I do not think it is good.

Fahad: I do not know how to describe that. Let's say 20 years ago we did not have as much freedom as we have now with social media, and now things have been changed a lot in Saudi Arabia. The government is more understanding than they were before. They give more opportunities to the young people to improve the country. We do not have the freedom to do anything we want. It is not just the law, the government, but also the culture. We have a very conservative culture compared to here in the United States. So, even if the law allows you to do something, sometimes your culture will not allow you to do that. Even your parents will have control over you past 18 years. It is not like here in the United States.

Samira: [Laughs] that depends on how patriotic you are… for me, you know we went from one country to another. I feel really proud that I am Saudi, but sometimes, that does depend on the people you communicate with. I guess some Saudis are very closed minded, and they do things that make you feel ashamed, sometimes. I feel really bad for saying that, because you know you have to love your country. It is not a rule, but you are blessed with a lot of things and I am blessed.

Nasir: Grateful. Happy. Strict. Strict in regards to freedom of speech. If you want to change something, you cannot just go and speak of it and post it to YouTube. You can actually, but you do not have freedom of speech like in the United States. In Saudi Arabia, I would say you have freedom - freedom from debt, freedom from danger.

Rashad: If anyone from the United States is ignorant, I feel that many more people in Saudi are ignorant about cultural differences.

Participants recognized the overall fundamental identity of being Saudi based on Islamic faith and values, economic issues, family and a collective desire for change. In particular Nasir, Amara and Fahad all spoke of the concept of freedom in a very

different way than prior participants had defined freedom for Americans. In particular, Fahad noted that Saudis do not have the freedom to do anything they want, but that this is not in whole based on government intervention through laws or decrees, but is attributed to the conservative Islamic culture and family values (Baki, 2004).

Nasir redefined freedom in comparison to the freedom experienced by Americans. He noted that Saudis have most importantly freedom from debt and danger as opposed to true freedom of speech; however, Amara clearly stated that for women there is no freedom. Women's rights do not exist. Gender hierarchies have placed the role of women in the hands of their guardians (Doumato, 2000) which is passed from the parents to their daughter's future husbands. Women are oppressed not just by the marginalization that is present due to religious restrictions (Baki, 2004), but also by the restrictions woven into the very culture and law of the land (Arebi, 1994; Baki, 2004; Doumato, 2000).

On the other hand, Samira notes that how one defines being Saudi depends on one's patriotism to the country of Saudi Arabia. Due to her experiences living in other countries outside of the Kingdom, she shares her reflective observations of varying zones of commitment amongst the Saudi people to their collective core identity. She states that the actions of some Saudis shame her, because she is proud to be Saudi, but yet, she still recognizes that some Saudis are closed minded and that this is not what she identifies as appropriate behavior. Rashad, too, notes that while Americans may be ignorant of other cultures, Saudis are even more so.

Conversely, Yahya, Hussain, Aaliyah and Aisha define being Saudi positively in terms of their Islamic faith with family values, culture and traditions all structured upon

Islamic principles. Interestingly, Hussain also notes that "religion is the overall Arab identity", but then shares that there are some members of the Arab society that would like to see change even within the Islamic faith.

Participants were also asked how studying in the United States made them feel about being Saudi. Both male and female participates in the study shared similar but differing realms of perceived realities. Males, in particular, noted that they were proud, felt an increased social responsibility for change, were able to reflect on their experiences, and shared a loyalty to their country. They noted:

> Yahya: I feel like the education system here has really improved me a lot and at the same time shows me how my country is great, because when I was there, I did not feel it. I did not see it, but when I feel like I am away from it... now, I can touch it, I can feel it, and I want to go back and stay there.
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> Hussain: When you come here and see all of the different people with all their identities and cultures, you reflect back on yourself, and think I am glad that I am the way I am. You think about what you do, if it is right, and you go back and assert this to yourself. So, being here probably makes you think of that, because I see all these people who have conflicting ideas about who they are after they spend four or five years here. My wife and I, we have come to the conclusion that we are glad about who we are and it makes you grab on and hold it.
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> Khalid: The Saudi community is really large and they have diversity of different schools of religion - Shi'ite and Sunni. So, basically, it has exposed me to the Shi'ite community much more than I had in Saudi Arabia. I just found out a lot of things about them that I did not know before. Some that I like and some that I did not like. I discovered that there are different types of people within them. I mean that just because they think one way they are made up of different types of people within [the Shi'ites].
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> Fahad: Studying here did not affect how I feel about being a Saudi. It is just sometimes, it makes me more proud of my country, and maybe also the culture or the religion itself. I do not know how to say it, but sometimes, I see how many problems there is for having this much freedom. I am not talking about freedom to party, sleep with girls. This side of it, yeah, I feel proud of being Saudi - having my culture. I mean no offense. I am so sorry, but for other parts, like freedom of speech and to do what you think is good for your country, and for your people to have their voice heard by the government and stuff like this.

> So, these things maybe I am not very proud of them [in my country], but one reason for all of these students being here in the United States is to come back and improve our country. So, we are working on it [laughs].
>
> Nasir: Being Saudi did not change my opinion about anything, but it made me realize that my country does a lot for me to come and study here and just wants me to give the information back to them by serving, by working. But when I look at Americans and they do not get money, and if they get a scholarship, they do not get a full scholarship. If they did get it, someone is really lucky, but they still have debts to pay back. It did not change anything, but it made me know what my country does for me to learn. I recognize what I have, yes.

Yahya and Hussain both make reference to their reflections on their experiences engaging with peers, educators, and even their own interactions while in the United States and how this has guided them to embrace their Saudi identity. Guided reflection provides students with an opportunity to discuss what they have learned and to discern ways that they can apply their new knowledge (Engle & Engle, 2003). Through reflection for both of these participants, there was a sincere appreciation for being Saudi and a longing to reconnect with their native identity at home in Saudi Arabia.

Khalid shared that studying in the United States opened his eyes to differing ways of being Saudi in relation to religious sects – Sunni and Shi'ite. With the majority of Saudis identifying as Sunni (Armanios, 2004; Nevo, 1998; U.S. Department of State, 2011), there are definite divides in the relationships between the two sects within the country including geographical locations (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2009). Studying within the United States provided the opportunity for Khalid to learn more about the Shi'ite sect of Islam than perhaps he would have taken advantage of within the Kingdom. Bronfenbrenner (1994; 1995) noted that individuals are not static, but continually growing and restructuring who they are and how they want to be perceived based on their interpretation of their environment and their proximity within the

environment to differing sets of nested structures. While Khalid had access to those of the Shi'ite sect of Islam within his home country of Saudi Arabia, he had not purposely taken the opportunity to engage with them in a more personal manner. As the properties of his immediate setting changed due to his study abroad experience within the United States, Khalid was placed in a position where this interaction could and did occur resulting in a change how he perceived them to be.

Both Fahad and Nasir stated that studying in the United States has made them proud to be Saudi while also helping them see all that their country has done for them in terms of their education. In addition, it has encouraged them to want to give back to their country – to work for them, share their knowledge (Saudi Embassy, 2011b), and to create change (Khalaf & Luciani, 2006; Lynch, 2012).

Female participants noted that studying in the United States empowered them, made them proud of being Saudi, provided a new sense of confidence, and a desire to have more rights in their own country. They stated:

> Aaliyah: It makes me like myself more. I hold tight for what I am and my religion, because I know what it would be like to be without the religion. … It makes me hold tight to my identity. It makes me see the best of things about who I am and my life back in Saudi Arabia. Actually, it also increases my eagerness to improve myself.
>
> Aisha: I question why we do not have the right to drive. This is the only thing that I think about. We have it here, and we do not have it there? That is the only thing that has changed. It has changed my way of thinking, but not that much. I still have my cultural rule [referring to religion] of thinking.
>
> Amara: I am still proud to be Saudi, but I think there is a lot of things that I want to change. Even though I really cannot change, because the more you actually search about it, you read about it, it is a hopeless case. You cannot really do anything. There is people who tried to do something and it back-fired on them. It never went through. So, I think the most important thing is that you are not ignorant about what your situation is. You actually know even though you cannot really do anything.

> Nadia: I am very proud about being Saudi. Maybe because I was always surrounded by Saudi Arabians from the Middle East, I never got the chance to appreciate me being Saudi Arabian. I kind of like our culture being conservative and things like that.
>
> Samira: I am proud that I am Saudi. I am proud that I am Arab, and I am proud that I am Muslim. I feel like that is one of the ways to explain to people about what we are really like instead of just watching the news and hearing the media. Sometimes, I feel so bad that these people have this idea in their mind about us and I feel like I am not leaving until you know what I am actually trying to say even though I have a hard time describing myself. I feel like sometimes people come and ask me if in Saudi people do this. Some girls feel really ashamed even though it is a bad question, and sometimes, I do, but I feel like I am glad that you asked me, because that way I get to tell you what is actually the truth instead of you actually thinking that this is how it works and you just live your life knowing that Saudis do this and Saudis do that.
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> Zahra: Maybe it makes me feel stronger about being open and not affected by other people's ideas. I am confident about what I think. I have the right to my own ideas and opinions.
>
> Safa: Being in the University gave me the opportunity to share my culture with other people and to talk more about it. Saudi gave me the opportunity to come here and to learn about other cultures. Being here gave me the opportunity to share my own culture with other people. It makes me proud.

Aaliyah, Aisha and Amara speaks of empowerment in three different ways. Aaliyah feels empowered and confident in who she is and her ability to continue to grow and improve herself. Aisha is empowered to question her rights as an individual. She states, "I question why we do not have the right to drive… We have it here and we do not have it there?" Amara's empowerment seems limited, but is still noteworthy in that she wants change, but states the importance and/or empowerment of having the knowledge of your situation. She states, "I think the most important thing is that you are not ignorant about what your situation is. You actually know even though you cannot really do anything."

Nadia and Samira speak of their pride in their nationality as a way of self-identifying who they are. Samira even goes as far as to speak of the pride she has in multiple dimensions of her identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000) – national identity, ethnic identity, and religious identity. Jones and McEwen's (2000) research on one's multiple dimensions of identity focuses on how students understand their own identity, experiences difference and how multiple dimensions of identity influence how we interpret our evolving sense of self (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Samira has used this knowledge as a form of empowerment to educate others on who she is and who she is not as a Saudi.

Similarly, Zahra and Safa shared a sense of self-confidence in who they are in comparison to how others may perceive them. Zahra states, "I am confident about what I think" and Safa shares that Saudi gave her the opportunity to study abroad which educated her about other cultures while allowing her the confidence to also teach others about her culture. She is proud of this – confident in who she is. Doyle's (2009) study also pointed out that the study abroad experience can empower individuals with self-confidence and the knowledge that they have matured in a meaningful way.

Both male and female participants were asked how they would compare being a United States male to being a Saudi male. Participants had very different realms of perceived reality when making this comparison. Male participants perceived American males to face more dangers, to be independent, and to have more freedoms. Likewise, American males were perceived to have to be more responsible at a younger age, and were perceived to tend to use a 'we' versus 'them' mentality. Saudi males were

perceived to have more restrictions and to be more responsible overall. Male participants noted:

> Yahya: It is dangerous to be a male in the United States, because sometimes, it is not a good way to be honest. In Saudi Arabia, because we do not have that type of obligation, we have rules and that actually comes from the religion. So, I feel it is more protected there and great. You can know what you want, what you can do, and what you cannot do. Here I do not feel it to be honest. I can see [this in] one of my American friends. He does not have what we have.
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> Hussain: We versus them is one thing and the other is their outlook on life. Each year many Saudis discuss the ideas that we need to improve. We need to change. Whereas you almost never here that from the American. So that is one thing.
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> Khalid: Saudi men are expected to know everything by the age of 16 - everything. They are expected to take their father's place by the age of 16. They do everything. They go everywhere. They finish everything as a guy who is a teenager at the age of 16… However a United States male does not have that much of an issue. Yes, he is expected to be an adult by the age of 16. Yes, he shares his responsibilities and whatever, but by the age of 18 he is an adult which is something that we do not have in Saudi Arabia. There is this individualism in the United States and once you are 18 you can be whatever you want to be. We are sorry, we did our job. If you want to stay in the family, you are very welcome, but if you want to leave the door is wide open for you. The Saudi male does not have that. You are with your family until you die, which is a good thing, but it comes with pros and cons. As a United States male, you really do not have that. As a United States male, when it comes to marriage they have 100% control, and in Saudi Arabia, you do not have that much control unless you fight for it with your family and you choose not to be like everybody else. It does not work out very well. In the end, it is going to come down to the choice of either us [your family] or her. It gets really complicated. For United States males, they do not have much of an issue. Also for the United States males, they have more opportunities than a Saudi male. I mean I do not see United States males studying in Saudi Arabia just for the experience of it - for the college experience that they can have in Saudi Arabia. So, I think they have more opportunities; however, we do not have student loans which is a big opportunity for us. It kind of weighs each other out; so, it depends on how I compare United States males to Saudi males. Where do you put the Saudi male and where do you put the United States male may be the comparison. It depends on where they are. I cannot give you a straight comparison.
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> Fahad: I think that here the American males are more responsible for themselves, because they have taken care of themselves since they were 18. I have heard a lot about them. When they are 18, they go to work, even if they are

> still in high school, they go to work. In Saudi Arabia, we do not do that. My father will still pay for my studying, even for my car until I get my job even after I have graduated. To come here [to the United States], I had to sell my car, but my car was bought by my father; so, he is the one paying for my studies. I do not know. I feel they are more responsible than the Saudi guys even with their young age. I feel they really work hard and they really play hard [laughs].
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> Nasir: They are different where they have more freedom. Here the male will just sit with a girl. They will go out. They will have fun. You would sit next to a girl in a classroom and you would learn, as much. There is not a difference if you are a male or female. A male in Saudi will not have as much freedom to sit next to a girl, but they have the same rights and everything, but they are not together. Here you can just go, but there, as a male you are not as involved with females.
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> Rashad: I think that maybe Saudi men have more responsibilities, because it is the culture, and there are a lot of restrictions on women that are the responsibilities of the men. Anything that females cannot do, you [the male] have to take care of it.

All of the male participants in some form or another speak to the complexity of gender roles within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Hamdan, 2005; Manea, 2013). The complex issues of gender within Saudi society are intertwined with aspects of religious, political and cultural ideology that are not always easily discussed separate of one another. Therefore, Yahya speaks to the protection he feels as a male within Saudi Arabia and how Saudi provides clear limitations to what is okay and what is not okay in terms of his male identity. In addition, Hussain notes that in comparing being American to being Saudi there is a "we versus them" outlook on life. In other words, Americans view themselves as independent of others while Saudis focus on how they can help each other and make needed changes for improvement.

Both Khalid and Fahad reference the American concept of adulthood based on the legal age defined to be an adult, 18 years, within the United States as a factor in viewing the difference between a United States male and being a Saudi male (U.S.

Department of State, 2016). These two participants believe that because American males work at a younger age, including while in high school, they are better equipped to take on adult roles and responsibilities in comparison to Saudi males who will live at home and have the protection and support of their families well past their teen years.

Nasir and Rashad discussed the comparison between United States males and females in terms of the relationships and/or mixing of men and women in public (Baki, 2004; Doumato, 2000). For Nasir, he felt that male Americans have more freedom in their interactions with women, because they do not have to be concerned with how their presence with women outside of the immediate family will be perceived by onlookers. Men and women have the freedom to mix and work together freely within the United State; however in Saudi Arabia, women and men are restricted from these types of interactions without guardianship (Doumato, 2010). Conversely, Rashad pointed out the burden that guardianship places on men who are responsible for the care of their female family members due to the strong adherence to Islamic principles which limit women's roles within the Arab society (Arebi, 1994; Doumato, 2010; Hamadan, 2005). In this sense, Rashad believes that Saudi's carry greater reasonability than their American counterparts.

Conversely, female participants perceived that Saudi males have more responsibilities, tend to have power over and disrespect women, and that American males share responsibilities, are equal to women, and respect women. Female participants noted:

> Aisha: There is a difference. Saudi males think that they have all of the responsibility to all of the things for themselves and their family. American males think that they have to share the responsibility between them and the females. So if the female has to do this thing, then the male has to do this thing,

but in Saudi Arabia - no. All of the responsibility is under the male even if the woman has to take care of the house, all of that is under the male. The Saudi male changed when he came here [to the United States]. In the United States he does things like the American male. For example, one time we went to the restaurant with my cousin, he is male, and he opened the door for us. He said that he is not going to do it in Saudi Arabia, because this is just for here. So, he changed that just because of the culture here, but when he goes back to Saudi Arabia he will not do it again. They try to change a little bit. Also, when my husband came here, he changed his way of thinking on sharing [responsibilities]; so, he takes my children to the day care. We are sharing, but not all of us are under his responsibility.

Nadia: I feel like there is a lot of discrimination between females and males and so, an American male will be respectful to a female and sometimes, if she is his best friend, he will treat her like a male. They will not have that boundary sometimes. Saudi males.... I either love them or really hate them. When you are out in a mall or something, I hate males. When you are with your friends and cousins, you love males. Saudi males are very.... They never see a female sometimes. Some families even prevent them from seeing their female cousins, and so, whenever they are out, they just treat a girl like she is an animal or something. I do not know. I hate it. I hate males. I hate interacting with them; so, whenever I came to the university, whenever I saw a Saudi male, I would never say hi or smile or say *salaam* or something. I would just never know what type of male they were until maybe they approached you with a friend or something. Then you would be like okay you are a decent person and I can be friends with you. So, I feel like American males are easy to approach. For me, it was easier to approach a male American that it was to approach a Saudi male who is from my home country and probably considered like a brother. Freshman year, it took me a semester to talk to any of the male Saudis that were with me in class until one of them came and talked to me.

Samira: I think Saudi guys have a different way of thinking when it comes to girls. I mean all guys in general when it comes to girls have a certain idea in their head, but for American guys... when I talk to American guys, it does not necessarily mean that there is something more than friendship. For Saudi guys, because we are not used to being mixed together, they think there is something more than friendship, and that really, really bothers me. I just do not like it especially that sometimes other Saudi guys if they see me talking to a Saudi guy they ask why is she talking to him? When they see me talking to an American guy they are like oh he is just her classmate. It is just really weird, because they are both just my classmates. It may not be necessarily true, but that is how I see it.

Zahra: Maybe males are the same everywhere. Males in Saudi Arabia have the same abilities as those in America. They depend on themselves, but they let women do their stuff.

> Safa: For some reason, Saudis are afraid to come to talk to you, because we are not allowed to in Saudi, but it is not like this with American guys. So, I think that sometimes we [Saudi girls] get along better with Americans because of that reason. There is this hesitation with Saudi guys.

Aisha perceives that Saudi males think that they have more responsibilities than American males, because of their Saudi cultural norms which makes them responsible for the care of their female family members (Arebi, 1994; Doumato, 2010; Hamadan, 2005). However, she also notes that they can change their way of thinking which proves there is fluidity within their core identity (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007) and cites an instance when her male cousin did so in opening the door for her, as well as how now her husband shares in responsibilities with their children.

In comparison, Nadia notes that Saudi males outside and in some cases within the family do not know how to appropriately interact with Saudi females – "they just treat a girl like she is an animal or something… I hate it. I hate males." In this instance, it is the lack of exposure to different ways of interacting with and thinking about females that has greyed the lines of appropriate and acceptable behavior on the part of Saudi males. However, Nadia perceives the opposite of American males and their interactions with females. She notes, "An American male will be respectful to a female and sometimes, if she is his best friend, he will treat her like a male."

Samira had similar perceptions and noted that particular to the American male was the ability to share a friendship without the expectation of a more personal relationship which was of concern when interacting with Saudi males. Safa added that because Saudi males and females are not allowed to interact in their home country (Doumato, 2010), it is easier to work with American males who have never faced

restrictions placed on their ability to interact with females. Zahra, on the other hand, believes that males are the same despite where they come from, and that Saudi and American males have the same abilities.

Participants were also asked how they would compare being a Saudi female to being a United States female. Males' realms of perceived realities left them with the perception that Saudi females have more rights, are dependent on males, lack freedom, but are more respected. Likewise, one's class made a difference in how females were perceived, but in the United States, females were perceived to be more independent. Male participants remarked:

> Yahya: Females in Saudi Arabia are way better than here [in the United States], because they can get all of the rights they want by the religion more than anything that I know. This kind of culture [American] is not as good from what I know. For example, the way females dress and the way they want to drive a car for their needs. I am pretty sure you know this, but it is more about culture than religion. It is not religion at all. We read the history and we know that our females have ridden camels, and have gone with many freedoms. So, this is culture, actually. So, if you want to know how my country should be, think of Dubai or Qatar. I hope it will be like them. They will give her [females] more freedoms to have the rights that she wants, but in another way. Women there [in Saudi Arabia] have more than here. For example, the relationships with the men in her family. They take care of her - money and how people around her can support her. Here after 18 years she is on her own.
>
> Hussain: The major [difference is] superficial. What other societies view about Saudi females is really different than what we experience first-hand. I can see this in my classes and how people think about our society. I know for sure that it is not really different. We have some differences in the way females can live and go on about their daily lives, and we have these differences, as well for men. So, it is not always about females. I think the major thing is the outlook on life. In Saudi Arabia, and no offense this is not all of the time and certainly it depends on where you come from as to how you see it, but you have a lot of females who have all these ideas about graduating from school and possibly going to college, but when the chance comes and someone is purposing [marriage] things change and from what I have seen many females, many Saudi women are really okay with that because they have the idea that once I get married, I will be relieved and I do not have to worry about my future in terms of making money. I will have the Saudi man obligated to take care of the family

> and all. This is one of the things that is totally different, because here [in the United States] males and females should at least have the same outlook in life. They must consider a career, getting a job, getting educated, and getting the degree so they can get the best job. Mostly, you see this in high school where I think Saudi girls do not really care, because they have this idea they will get married and not have to worry about it.
>
> Rashad: I think that the females who come here would see a huge difference compared to back in Saudi Arabia, because being here makes you more dependent on yourself. It is harder for the females to have a life and be independent in Saudi.
>
> Nasir: The females in Saudi are more respected. If you were in Saudi and a guy harassed them [females], that guy would go to prison or have an investigation about him and he would be asked what he did. If she [the Saudi female] wants to press charges, she can. It is the same here [United States], but they [females] are more respected in Saudi. Everyone will respect the female in Saudi, but in America they do not respect those [females] as much. Saudi girls do not have to show everything for a guy to come and talk to them or to be engaged. In America, I met an American female that almost walked naked in order to be noticed.

Yahya and Hussain both bring the positionality of the researcher (Kerstetter, 2012) to the forefront of the analysis process as both an insider and outsider in that they note what they presume to be the researcher's familiarity with and acceptance of Saudi culture, the Islamic faith and even how she defines her identity as a female in hopes of gaining what seems like buy-in to the discussion. Yahya states, "I am pretty sure *you* know this, but it is more about the culture than religion. It is not religion at all," when he references Saudi women's desire to drive and assumptions about how they dress. He even goes as far as to make a historical reference to Saudi women's prior privileges within the kingdom when they had the ability to participate in political, economic and social endeavors (Hamdan, 2005; Trofimov, 2007), but falls just short of an amicable approach when he notes their ability to ride camels.

Hussain, on the other hand, asks that the researcher not take offense to his perception of Saudi women's views on education and marriage. He states, "No offense" but once a Saudi woman is proposed to, she is relieved because, she "will have the Saudi man obligated to take care of the family" as if the researcher accepts and or acknowledges that a Saudi woman must have or needs a Saudi male to take care of her. This disconnect in the both Yahya and Hussain's knowledge of the researcher and perception of her zone of commitment to the principles of the Saudi core collective identity shows there acceptance of her as an insider within the Saudi community and likewise, their limited knowledge of her as an outsider – American advocate of social justice.

Rashad points out that when Saudi women come to the United States to study, it makes them more independent than they have the ability to be within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Doumato, 2010). However, Nasir argues that females in Saudi will be met with a greater amount of respect, because there are laws that will protect them from harassment. He also noted that he perceived that American women have to dress provocatively to gain attention from American men, while Saudi women do not have to "show everything for a guy to come and talk to them or to be engaged." This is in direct opposition with some of the female participants' earlier statements concerning the harassment they endure from Saudi males. Again, Nadia stated that Saudi males "will not have that boundary sometimes… they just treat a girl like she is an animal" and Samira noted "they think there is something more than friendship, and that really, really bothers me." It appears that male and female participants' realms of perceived realities about each other's identities conflicts in the meaning-making process based on

stereotypes that they have of each other and their inability to separate contextual influences from their perceived truths (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007).

Saudi females' realms of perceived realities left them with the perception that Saudi females are often defined by their religion as opposed to their gender, and are more respected. They perceived United States' females to have more rights, but to also be more judgmental of the other. Female participants noted:

> Aisha: Saudi females are more than the American female, because they can do everything that the male does, but they do not. Even if they think they can do most of the things the same, they are still different because they are following the Holy Qur'an. There is a difference between men and women. I think our religion makes us different. That's all.
>
> Zahra: I cannot tell because the religion plays a role here. Maybe in America they have more rights. They can drive here.
>
> Amara: The female that is a United States citizen is equal to the male in the United States, but when it comes to Saud Arabia, it is not the same. So, as I mentioned before, there are no rights [in Saudi Arabia] and the women in the United States have all of the rights.
>
> Safa: There are differences. I really like my culture. I like wearing hijab here. Especially with other people. They will put a red line. They will respect you more. American women get respect, but it depends on if they know the guy, and if they are more familiar with him they will interact with him more.
>
> Nadia: United States females have a lot of freedom. They act like they do not understand their boundaries like maybe Saudi females do. For example, I do not wear hijab, but I am very conservative. …A Saudi female has a lot of boundaries that are not just put on her. She wants them for herself.
>
> Samira: They [United States' females] look at us like what are you wearing? You know when you are looking at people from the corner of your eye? That happens a lot with American girls looking at you, but with the guys, they want you to see this. They just treat us normally and sometimes they are even too shy to bring this up. I am okay with them [American guys]. I am okay going with people who ask me questions about my scarf or anything, but with girls, they are just….tsss [makes hissing noise].

Aisha, Zahra and Nadia all relate a level of respect for Saudi females to their faith in Islam. Both Aisha and Nadia give reference to the freedoms that American females have and that they, too, share, but state that their religious faith and personal convictions set the boundaries as to how far they can take those freedoms. In particular, Aisha notes, "they can do everything that the male does, but they do not… our religion makes us different" and Nadia states, "A Saudi female has a lot of boundaries that are not just put on her. She wants them for herself." Research shows that these "boundaries" are more than just self-imposed, but are also the result of political and religious pressures within the Kingdom (Arebi, 1994; Baki, 2004; Doumato, 2010; Hamdan, 2005; Trofimov, 2007).

Conversely, Amara recognizes a level of equality between American males and females, but holds to her earlier claims that "there are no rights [in Saudi Arabia]" for Saudi females. In partial agreement, Safa states that there are differences between American and Saudi females, but she likes her culture and wearing the hijab (headscarf) which has enabled others to "put a redline" of respect toward her. Samira, on the other hand, disagrees with this and has noted that American females tend to be judgmental in the way that they look at Saudi females in hijab. Ee (2013) noted that female students studying within the United States seemed to experience more microaggressions and discrimination on a personal level than did their male counterparts.

When asked how studying in the United States impacted the way they felt about being a Saudi male, it was noted that the males made meaning of their Saudi identity based on the context, contextual influences and filtering through their American

educational experiences to define their personal traits and desire for advocacy. Male participants stated:

> Yahya: First of all, to be away from your family gives you more responsibility to control yourself, your mind, and your goals. Once I study here [in the United States] and gain a bit more experience [with life], I feel like I can try my best to change what I can in my country or even here [in the United States]. My community likes Saudi people around. ….I am very proud of the experiences I have had here, the education I received here, because it has really woke me up and changed my personality.
>
> Hussain: This does not really relate to being male, because I cannot really say it has affected me in that regard. I still have all the ideas that I had before, and in some cases I, as a Saudi male, think many changes for our society must occur in regards to how we treat families and women, specifically. …We have our own lifestyle – our identity. We do not necessarily have to be like other people, but we definitely have to look and see where changes must be made and we do have many of those areas where we need to shed more light. …Especially with regard to the treatment of women.
>
> Khalid: It has made me more appreciative of my country and the Saudi male. …It made me realize that I have more to achieve and more to offer to the country and to the nation as a whole. Since I have been offered this opportunity, it made me realize how much opportunity I am going to have once I go back [to Saudi Arabia]. It made me realize there may be some problems with the country and there are some problems with this and that, but some of them have to do with your actual education and some of them have to do with you as a human being. So, it does make me realize that you cannot be silent anymore. Once you see something bad happening, you should really talk about it.
>
> Fahad: I think it has an impact on being a Saudi, but not a male Saudi.
>
> Rashad: I feel like back in Saudi I did not have many options, but when I came here I faced a variety of options. In college, I was apart from my family; so, I was less frequently interrupted and I could choose my own way of life. I guess I may have some difficulty if I go back there [to Saudi Arabia] and they [my family] try to guide me.

Yahya and Rashad both speak to how studying in the United States has impacted their personal identity and how they perceive themselves. Yahya shares that he has become more responsible and aware of needed changes within Saudi Arabia. He has taken a voice of advocacy in stating, “I can try my best to change what I can in my

country or even here [in the United States].” Likewise, Rashad recognizes all of the options that he has been given by studying in the United States and how this has aided him in becoming more independent. He notes, “I could choose my own way of life.” However, he cautions that this will not come without challenges as he reflects on his concern for returning home and finding it difficult to accept guidance from his family now that he has been empowered to make many decisions on his own. As aforementioned in this study, higher education works to foster civic empowerment (Peters, Alter, & Schwartzbach, 2010), allows students to develop new ways of looking at their identity and provides students with the self-confidence needed to understand “that they have matured in meaningful ways” (Doyle, 2009, p. 150).

Hussain and Fahad noted that studying in the United States has not really impacted how they feel about being a Saudi male, but instead has impacted how they feel about being Saudi in general. Specifically, Hussain states that studying in the United States has brought attention to how he views change within his country and what changes need to be made – especially in regard to women. Khalid shares that his study abroad experience in the United States has given him a call to social action and change (Amthor & Metzger, 2011). He shares, “It does make me realize that you cannot be silent anymore. Once you see something bad happening, you should really talk about it.”

In response to the same question, Saudi females noted that they also made meaning of their Saudi identity based on the context, contextual influences and filtering through their American educational experiences in defining their personal traits, but

added that it had also enhanced their personal desires for freedom, equality, and a voice. Female participants stated:

> Aaliyah: It has made me proud of myself. It increased my enthusiasm to develop myself, to improve my skills, to share my knowledge with my friends, and to teach them and my family, as well.
>
> Aisha: Being a Saudi woman… When I came to the United States, I was free. I did not have to have permission to travel out. In Saudi Arabia, if we get divorced, for example, he [the ex-husband] has the opportunity more than me to take my child, but here – no. So, I like to be here, to keep all of my rights, but I still love being Saudi.
>
> Amara: I think even if the society is telling you, you have no voice, you have no power, but actually, you know that you have, because you have been in a county that respects that. So, you have your inner power. I guess even if those around you are saying the opposite, you know better, because you have lived in another country.
>
> Samira: People in Saudi are very sexist. So, it is all about the guy in Saudi. I have actually heard stories about my classmates that you know a girl does not really have to finish college because all she is really going to do is get married and have kids. She has to raise them [her kids], but again he has to [finish college], because he has to provide for his family, but a woman also has the right to study and finish her college degree. That can also impact the way that she raises her children in the future, and I feel like here [in the United States] it is just equal. You know a woman gets to do what a man gets to do.
>
> Zahra: As a Saudi woman, studying here makes me feel that this is the life, but I want my family here [with me].
>
> Safa: It is totally different. I feel like here [in the United States] I can do more – especially for leadership. …It has been really different and it makes me feel like I know who I am and what I can do. I have a voice.

The role of women in Saudi Arabia stands as the proverbial pawn on a chess board in the majority of religious and political decisions that desires both their presence and non-presence within the public sphere (Hamadan, 2005). This has caused much controversy over their rights and abilities to interact within the Kingdom (Baki, 2004; Doumato, 2010) and has in many ways marginalized their voice. However, this study

has revealed that female Saudi participants all stated that they felt a sense of empowerment while studying in the United States. Aaliyah shared that she was proud of herself; Aisha stated that she was free to make her own decisions; and Amara stated that she had power and respect. Samira noted that there were inequalities between males and females in her own country, but in the United States she felt she was equal to her male counterpart. And Zahra and Safa summed it up best by stating "this is the life" and "I have a voice."

When asked what their future goals were, participants shared similar ideals of relocating outside of the Kingdom, taking on their own social responsibilities, and working toward their own personal attainment. Their responses represented their own personal choices for their futures. See participant responses below:

> Khalid: In the next five years, I hope to complete my degree and then to return home [to Saudi Arabia] for two to three years before returning to either find another job outside of the Kingdom or pursuing my higher education…graduate studies with my wife [he is not yet married] or not depending on what happens.
>
> Safa: Because I want to get a job here, I am not sure if I will stay here or go back [to Saudi Arabia].
>
> Rashad: That is the question that I have had in my mind for four or five years. At least, I want to impact the community. I do not see the point of getting the degree and not doing anything with it. You have to pay back the community. Not just working, but other responsibilities – social responsibilities. I guess I kind of need to tell the people [in Saudi Arabia] about the experience I have had here and tell them to get out of their bubbles.
>
> Hussain: Finishing school, going back home and being a part of a university or a higher education process whether it is a research center or any kind of program and hopefully, bringing some of the best things from here [in the United States] and applying them there [in Saudi Arabia].
>
> Fahad: To finish school with as many good grades as I can get, to get as much experience as I can get to get prepared for the job market, and to get a good job – good position. I am studying hard to get good grades and a good position so that I can help to improve what I see as wrong in my country or

things that I feel need to be improved. My goals are to get my bachelor's degree now and then go back to get some work in the field. Then, I will be back here studying my master's degree and my PhD so that I can have the power to change if I have a good education.

Nasir: My future goals are not to fail. My future goals are to manage myself better and to realize that I need to work on myself better.

Aisha: I want to go to medical school, and go back to work to do my duty for my country. I am also going to teach my sons how to be… how they can come [to the United States] being born in the United States of America and from Saudi Arabia, and how they can learn to have success in their lives.

Nadia: I want to use what I have learned in college. We know what goes on in the bases in the field and things like that …I want to work in the field and girls cannot work in a field back home. My dad told me that the best way to get experience is to get thrown in the field somewhere. So, I know a couple of girls that begged for their department and bosses to throw them in the field and they would get to go to the field for a few days and then come back like it was a field trip. You do not actually get to work there. I mean the environment there is not suitable for women to work, because males are full of discrimination. A good majority of them have studied in the states, but the foremen and the maintenance people are all not people who have studied outside [of Saudi Arabia]. They are local people. So, their women are probably home cooking and taking care of the kids and cannot even leave the house without them. Why would they be okay with a woman outside in the field? It is very hard to implement that change; so, I actually started applying for jobs here [in the United States].

Zahra: I want to do more than just graduating. I want to participate in the research that helps the community.

Aaliyah: I want to finish medical school, and I want to take my specialty [in medical school] in the United States after three years. Finally, I want to have a family.

Amara: I still want to have a family. After I graduate, I am going to go back and study and hopefully, get married.

Some of the participants have decided that they want to relocate outside of Saudi Arabia in order to obtain the type of work that they desire. For Khalid this is not an immediate desire as he wants to go home first and spend some time with his family and perhaps get married, but for Safa and Nadia there are alternate reasons for wanting to

stay in the United States to work – they will be allowed to work in their fields. As Nadia has clearly stated, returning home to work does not ensure that the workforce is prepared for her or any woman to be out in the field. She shares that "the environment there is not suitable for women to work, because males are full of discrimination." The local workers who have not traveled outside of Saudi Arabia for education or training are not prepared for women in the workforce as intelligent and educated equals within their fields.

Rashad, Hussain, Fahad and Zahra all intend to return home to make a difference in their communities and country. Rashad feels an obligation and/or social responsibility to give back to his community and to help them get outside "of their bubbles". Hussain desires to apply his knowledge from the United States to aid in his country in building a knowledge-based society (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah, 2012) through research and teaching in a university. Fahad's goal is to continue on with his education to a masters and perhaps even PhD in order to gain the power that he needs through his academic endeavors to create change, and Zahra wants to participate in research that can make a difference for her community.

Nasir has taken a more internal assessment of his future goals for the time being and has stated that for now, he just wants to focus on working on himself – his core identity (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Aaliyah and Amara want to complete their degrees and start families of their own. However, Aisha is looking toward the future, not just hers, but that of her American born children and how they will learn and meet success in their lives.

When asked specifically how they were going to use their education, participants again referenced relocation and personal attainment, but also discussed their desire for community activism. These were choices that they were making based on their actions, reactions and interactions with individuals and their educational endeavors during the time that they had spent studying within the United States.

> Yahya: When I studied in another state, I would also participate in volunteer work on the campus. Even if I do not have money, when I do something for no money, I get something. I am still doing that, because I learn more and more.
>
> Khalid: I want to use my education to make common knowledge….I want it to be something that kids from age five to 18 or 19 can actually talk about and provide them with the appropriate information that they need in a really simple format.
>
> Fahad: I want the power to make change and to have this power you must have a good education.
>
> Nasir: I want to use it to work here in the United States. The reason is I have more freedom. I would have more freedom to do whatever I want. I will get a lot of freedom, but there are negatives. If I started working here, I would get a green card, I would have to pay taxes, and I would have to buy a house and pay for a lot of different things. So, there are a lot of negative things here, but still, I want to experience that life. I want to live here and work here and get an internship in other countries and go work there for a while and come back here. I am just looking for opportunities.
>
> Aaliyah: I will improve research, and raise awareness of how important research is.
>
> Nadia: I would like to go back home at some point and help change the way people in the community think about sending their children to live in another culture due to fear of change.
>
> Zahra: I want to do research.
>
> Safa: I really want to stay here and go to graduate school.
>
> Amara: I am going to work with the company that gave me the scholarship. I will have a 15 year contract with them, but five years is already counted in my education. So, I have 10 years left. I do not think for a female I am going to find a better situation, because the company wants females in their company to have

> a better relationship when it comes to Europe and the United States; so, I do not think that they want women because they think they are smart or they think they are going to be productive or have any new ideas. I think they mostly want diversity in their company, but I will have rights with that company.

Yahya, Khalid, Fahad, Aaliyah and Nadia all speak of using their education to aid in community activism. They want to improve education, volunteer in their communities, promote public health, create change and foster the desire for other families to send their children abroad to study. Peters, Alter and Schwartzbach (2010) referred to this as civic engagement for democratic revitalization. Fahad, Aaliyah, Safa and Amara also cited that they wanted to gain personal attainment from their education in the form of employment, further educational attainment, and the ability to take what they have learned to further their research agendas.

Summary

This chapter has provided an in-depth look at the research questions, which seeks to explore in what ways, if at all, Saudi students talk about how they make meaning of their national identity when participating in higher education in the United States. Specifically it explores each group of questions within the interview protocol, as well as several samples of the participants' responses in relation to the intertextual analysis, relevant ties to the literature and the theoretical lens as defined within chapters three. Moving forward, the following chapters will analyze and discuss more specifically the research findings in relation to the methodology used – critical discourse analysis – and the relevance of the new borderlands approach to a comprehensive collective identity model by which this research was guided.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion: Intertextual Analysis

In the following chapter, the research findings will be discussed along with the implications of these findings and recommendations for future programming and research. With critical discourse analysis utilized as the methodology for this study, it is important to reflect upon its role in the research, as well as to confirm the vitality of the new borderlands comprehensive collective identity model which was used as the lens through which analysis occurred. This includes a discussion of the intertextual analysis of the participants' definitions of their individual identities, higher education, internationalization and how they are making meaning of their national identity since studying in the United States.

Defining Perceptions of Individual Identities

Through Group A questions, participants were able to define their perspectives of their own core identities prior to studying in the United States and how their identities had evolved and/or changed since studying abroad in the United States. Students were able to specifically identify the context and contextual influencers that had caused their evolution and/or change in identity along with the impact that the intersectionality of the macro-systems of power within the context of their environments and micro-dimensions of their individual and collective identities had on this process. In general terms, studying within the United States impacted the way participants viewed who they were prior to participating in a study abroad and who they had become at the point of the interviews. For example, Khalid stated:

> Well when I look at myself right now, I really find myself to be very different than I was the minute I stepped into the United States. A lot of ideas that I had

> drawn conclusions about before coming [to the United States] have changed drastically.

In particular, Khalid was able to view himself through a very reflective lens noting that who he was prior to his study abroad in the United States was not who he felt he was the day of his interview – data collection. This gives credence to the new collective identity model in terms of fluidity of the core identity. Bronfenbrenner (1977; 1979) noted that one's identity is fluid and can be captured in its present state of development; however, over time not only will it change, there is an expectation of change. These changes come about due to an individual's ability to maneuver, change and/or adapt to their environment and/or as a result of contextual influences in the world around them (Anzaldúa, 1987; Jones & Abes, 2013).

It is important to also take into consideration the way in which an individual's intersecting social identities interact and guide engagement within one's environment – intersectionality (Davis, Brunn, & Olive, 2015; Collins, 2000; Museus & Griffin, 2011). Though Khalid may overlook the significance of how socio-historical inequalities have impacted his social identity construction (Abes, 2012; Bowleg, 2008; Jones, 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013), it is important to note how the relationship between both his macro-systems of power and micro-dimensions of identity relate to his ability to make meaning of his identity in its present state of development. Because CDA serves "to uncover the ways in which discourse and ideology are intertwined" (Johnstone, 2002, p. 45), Khalid's reflective discourse on who he was at the time of data collection can be understood in relation to his current social interactions and social structures while studying in the United States and to those social interactions and social structures he experienced prior while in Saudi Arabia.

In addition, participants gained perspective on not just their present being, but also on what they wanted to become and how this study abroad experience had impacted their core ideologies. In essence, their educational experience in the United States had moved them closer to a more inclusive and global conception of identity. Yahya shared:

> I feel I am so much better than before. As I told you, education is a very important thing in my life and once I have something in my life, I can also extend it to others, and I feel I can do multiple businesses at the same time, or I can really find a way to do something good for my community, for my family, for my country. I consider this social responsibility exactly, yes.

Yahya brings to light a very important aspect of this study as revealed through CDA. CDA as a methodology can be used to uncover social problems, power relations, and most importantly in reference to Yahya's statement above, CDA provides an understanding of discourse as a form of social action (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Yahya concludes that because of his education, he has gained something in his life that is worthy of sharing – "I can also extend it to others". It is not something just for him. He consciously acknowledges that he has the ability to improve the lived experience not just for himself, but for his family, community, and country. These are the beginning stages of the development of a global conscience, an awareness of the greater world around you, which in turn will aid Yahya and others in developing a global conception of identity, a recognition that they are not alone as individuals within this world, and that they are a part of not just one, but many collective identities which are interconnected and inclusive of a much larger collective identity – our world. See Figure 12 for a depiction of a global conception of identity.

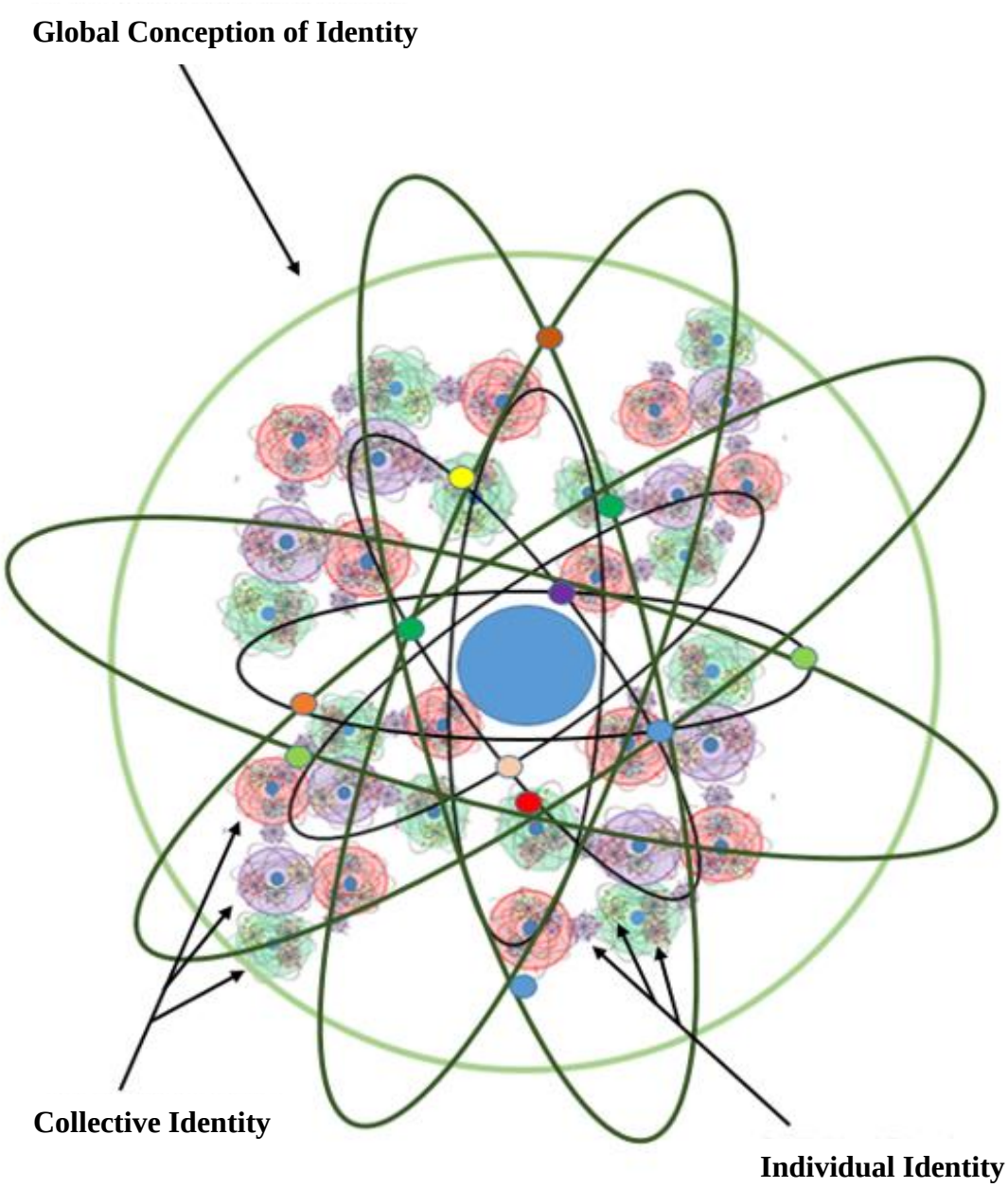


Figure 12. A Global Conception of Identity.

Participants were also able to gain a clearer perspective on how they viewed the United States and their own country of Saudi Arabia. They shared a heightened sense of their zones of awareness, as well as their zones of commitment to their collective core identities as Saudis. Participants noted that how they had viewed the United States, Americans, and American culture had changed at various degrees once they participated in their study abroad experience in the United States. Some of their realms of perceived realities about the United States, Americans, and American culture were challenged while other aspects were confirmed. Nasir and Amara explained:

> Nasir: I thought that there would be a lot of people who would hate us as Arabs and Muslims, but here at the University they are for the most part friendly, because there is a lot of different cultures and different nationalities.
>
> Amara: Since I came [to the United States], I realized that even though they say there is no racism, I have actually realized that it is the opposite. This is not just for Muslims, but even for white people, black people and everyone. I do not know if it is only in this state, or maybe in other major cities like New York where it is more open, but I realize that here it is all about cliques and groups, groups by their race. I was surprised by this. I knew that if I came here I would have to depend on myself and that is exactly what happened.

As observed in Nasir and Amara's statements above, certain aspects of CDA include a focus on social problems and political issues, explain discourse structures in terms of social interactions and social structures, and look at how discourse structures can "enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society" (van Dijk, 2003, p. 353). Nasir and Amara have had two very different experiences in relations to how they perceived the United States in terms of racism, xenophobia, islamophobia, and the like. While Nasir had no social interactions to confirm his preconceived ideas, Amara appears to have witnessed concerning social problems through her interactions in the study abroad experience.

Prior to arriving in the United States to study Nasir perceived that he would experience some form of xenophobia and/or islamophobia; however, he states, "here at that university they are for the most part friendly, because there is a lot of different cultures and different nationalities." His zone of awareness to the greater struggles within the United States to address just such oppressive issues as xenophobia and/or islamophobia (Bodine Al-Sharif & Pasque, 2016) was limited by the space in which he studied – the university – and his mobility or lack thereof amongst mainstream American students, the local community, state, and/or nation. On the other hand, Amara had not expected to experience or witness racism, xenophobia or islamophobia and realized after her arrival that it is in existence and that it does impact more than just Muslims, but also "white people, black people and everyone."

In addition, participants' realms of perceived realities about Saudi Arabia, Saudis, and Saudi culture were also challenged while other aspects were confirmed. Fahad noted that he was now able to view Saudi Arabia from a new and different perspective. Fahad shared:

> When I was in Saudi Arabia, I did not think my country needed a lot of improvement, but when I came here I realized that there are a lot of things that we need to do to improve our country and to improve our living there. I think this is the most important thing for me. This is the most important perspective about making a lot of changes in my country.

Because CDA as a methodology investigates the meaning making process within the context of discourse, it can provide insight and understanding as to how discourse can both create, reproduce and resist power struggles and/or social inequality (van Dijk, 2003). However for this to occur, the individual(s) must first recognize that power struggles and/or social inequalities exist within their realms of perceived realities

and second, be able to filter and make meaning of their existence in such a way that warrants action and/or in-action based upon one's choice (Giesinger, 2010). Fahad's discourse shows an acknowledgment of inequity and inequality within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in addition to a call to action – social action (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

It is important to note that participants' decisions to study in the United States were based on their realms of realities prior to coming to the United States and the choice that they made or that was imposed upon them to come to participate in a study abroad within the United States. The truths and/or realities that they held about the United States, Americans, American culture and even American higher education may or may not have led them to participate in their study abroad experience. However, their involvement in the study abroad experience did impact how they defined their identities at the time of the interview in comparison to prior to coming to the United States. Accordingly, Fahad shared:

> I am more open-minded. I learned a lot about different cultures. I learned a lot about the Western culture in the United States. When I first came here, it was hard to accept some of the cultural differences, but now I am more open to them. I can understand people who are not like me. There are different people, different ideas, and different ways of thinking.

Because discourse is interpretative and explanatory (as cited in Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, pp. 271-280), one can find voice in his/her experiences, vocalize ideals, and analyze and explore differing views. At first, this may lead to a bit of an identity crisis (Erikson, 1970), but over time and within differing spaces it may also lead to the ability to examine the world with a more critical lens recognizing that different is not good or bad, but just different.

Defining Higher Education

Group B questions provided an avenue for participants to define their understanding of higher education. They were able to define their expectations of higher education within the United States prior to arriving and comparatively after experiencing it, and to discuss the evolving changes that they see in the Saudi higher education system, the individual(s) responsible for these changes, and why they are occurring. Participants revealed that due to the various types of intersectionality that occurred within and between their multiple layers of identity both collective and individual in nature, that they see higher education in the United States as a more advanced system in terms of the use of technology. They felt that the quality of the educators differed between the United States and Saudi Arabia and that the American higher education environment promoted diversity in a positive learning environment. Aaliyah, Aisha and Nadia noted:

> Aaliyah: Many classes were wasted in Saudi Arabia, because there were no screens, tools, or equipment – technology… They are prepared [with technology] in the United States for teaching.
>
> Aisha: When I came here, I did not think that the student should do more than what the professor does. [Here] you have to work on yourself to get the degree more than you depend on the teacher or professor. I did not think that, because in Saudi Arabia the teachers explain all of the books to the students which is not like here. You have to study all the books and notes. So that is pretty different.
>
> Nadia: I do not feel like all colleges in the United States will give you a higher education that is better than Saudi Arabia, but I feel like they will give you a different education; for example, diversity.

This confirms the new comprehensive collective identity model in that intersectionality between macro-dimensions of power and micro-dimensions of identity aid in defining how we perceive, experience, and talk about our world. Larger (macro-)

structures of power such as our governments and educational systems are always present (Jones & Abes, 2013), and often times provide the context for which our social constructs of identity (micro-) are situated (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007). In examining these three participants' responses, it can be noted that their discourse is regulated by higher education as a structure of power that serves to apply both positive and negative pressures, as well as to cultivate resistance (Wodak, 2001). Aaliyah states that America has technology in the classroom – positive; Aisha states that she has to do more than the professor – negative; and Nadia proclaims neither is better than the other, but they are both different – resists comparison.

Participants viewed the Saudi system of higher education as a system in transformation. They cited advancements and growth in the number and types of higher education institutions being established, but also noted a need for advancement in the knowledge of their instructors and teaching methods. They gave credit to former King Abdullah for his work within the Kingdom in making these advancements in higher education, and gave recognition to the need for more work to be done. Khalid shared:

> I think Saudi Arabia is transforming in a way. I do not know what is going to be the final transformation, but I hope it is going to be in the right direction. [Saudi] is definitely not what it was when I left four years ago; so, I think we are headed in the right direction, especially with the huge number of people coming back from the United States, Australia, the UK and other countries. We actually think that they are going to make a huge difference.
>
> Right now, King Abdullah has introduced about 20 universities in the Kingdom and other areas that had no previous universities, and the problem is that we still lack the staff, competent staff to be in those areas.

Because CDA requires more than just an analysis of texts and talk, but also for an interpretation of discourse to be completed in terms of reception and social affects (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 2001; Rogers, 2011), it is important to look

deeper into Khalid's discourse as stated. His words are revealing of his perception of the changes in Saudi Arabia and his role in those changes. Khalid recognizes that his country is not as he knew it prior to coming to the United States, and he has made a connection between its transformation and the return of other Saudi Arabian students who have studied abroad. However, he speaks as if from an outsider perspective. He is Saudi. He is studying abroad. He will eventually return to the Kingdom; yet, he states, "We actually think that *they* are going to make a huge difference." Khalid has removed himself as a change maker and has taken the position of an onlooker. Just as Saudi Arabia is in transition, it appears that Khalid is too.

In reference to the purpose of higher education, Participants cited it as a way to advance society and their individual goals while acknowledging that their higher education experience also gave them a social responsibility to give back to their families, communities, and country. In particular, Yahya noted:

> Higher education is our path to our goals. Whether it is our country's goals, our personal goals, or our community's goals, we have to do our best for a higher education in order to reach our goals.

Yahya perceived higher education as the conduit for which advancement to everyone's goals could occur. In this sense, the attainment of a higher education is the initial step in creating change and/or advancement. Higher education empowers the change agents of today and tomorrow with the knowledge that they need to transform our world.

Defining Internationalization

Group C questions gave participants the opportunity to define their concepts of internationalization within higher education both within the United States and Saudi

Arabia. Participants were able to discuss how educated the faculty, staff and students were on different cultures and social groups. They showed a keen sense of awareness of the differences between the two countries practices in educating on differing cultural and social groups. Within the United States, participants shared that there were ample opportunities to work with diverse faculty from all of over the world, as well as to interact with international students from countries other than their own. Hussain shared:

> Here you have the greatest opportunity to get involved and to be able to interact with all the different cultures and societies. In some cases, I would describe it as a really good, really rich and fulfilling, because before you come, you are coming out of high school. I am pretty sure it is the same for United States students, as well. They [students] encounter a lot of different groups. Universities are a really great place to integrate with difference.

Here Hussain confirms the importance of intersectionality within the new comprehensive collective identity model. Intersectionality requires interaction between one's social and/or collective identities and those of others. Because each individual has multiple identities and life experiences that are distinct from others, interactions with all different cultures and societies result in different intersectional relationships (Museus & Griffin, 2011) which can be rewarding as noted above and/or disappointing.

In addition, they felt that the United States had created opportunities for students to take classes that were either constructed around diverse and global concepts or that included readings and materials from diverse authors and cultures; however, they perceived American students to lack diverse knowledge of other cultures and countries. Khalid shared:

> They definitely fail their students. Americans are still asking questions like do you still ride camels in Saudi Arabia. Do you live in tents or does your mom know your dad. These are stupid questions that you would think people in college would actually know the answer to, but apparently, they do not.

While Saudi students recognized their zone of commitment to their core collective identity and their zone of awareness as to with whom they shared their spaces, they also recognized the proverbial distance in which American students were far removed from the Saudi core collective identity. With limited exposure to Saudis and Saudi culture, American students relied on stereotypes to develop their realms of reality in reference to Saudi culture and Saudi students much the same way that the Saudi students participating in this study have aforementioned their realms of reality in reference to American culture and American students. While this may not have been a positive learning experience for the Saudi students, it did provide an opportunity for them to educate those with whom they were sharing their spaces. In this sense, the spaces in which learning occurred was just as transformative to the learning process as was the social relationships developing within them (Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz & Gildersleeve, 2012).

In Saudi institutions of higher education, students felt that there were limited opportunities for interaction with professors, staff, and students who represented diverse backgrounds. Participants noted that professors visiting from abroad were often limited to just those who spoke English as a first language, and amongst the student body diversity most commonly could be found between religious sects – Shi'ite and Sunni – more so than by geographical global location. However, due to religious tension between Shi'ite and Sunni tribal affiliations, opportunity for diverse religious interactions were not encouraged. Yahya, Hussain and Khalid provided the following information:

> Yahya: So, they focus on the English [language] in general and also the countries that speak English.

> Hussain: That is a major thing that we do not have. Saudi Arabia is not really a mixed society. You have a main streamed society. Religion shapes virtually everything; so, for you to discuss other people, it would mostly involve touching outside of the norm. It would be mostly in a negative way. Some places in Saudi Arabia, education institutions, have mixed students and they have scholarships for students to come. You can see the difference these students have in ideas and perspectives, but overall, you do not see that at all in all major universities and major school districts.
>
> Khalid: They did not educate anyone about different cultures…. We have diverse ethnicities and religious parties. We are talking about Sunnis and Shi'ites. Shi'ites come from Qatar or Khobar to study… and they face all sorts of racism as you call it.

By viewing these statements with a critical lens, the discourse shared uncovers some social problems and issues with power relations within the Kingdom (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). According to Yahya, the promotion of diversity is limited to the English spectrum which also limits Saudi students' and Saudi citizens' ability to grow and develop a global conception of identity which is inclusive of all peoples and all cultures. In addition, Hussain shares that religion shapes almost every aspect of Saudi culture which makes discussing or mixing with those who are not Saudi outside of the norm. Again, this shows that Saudi students and citizens have a limited zone of awareness to those with whom they share their spaces at a global level. Finally, Khalid points out a religious power structure that is oppressive to Shi'ites while privileging those who are Sunni and of the normed majority (Nevo, 1998; U.S. Department of State, 2011). Through their discourse, participants share the social practice within Saudi Arabia (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Though some participants noted that there were many Arab students from within the Gulf region that attended colleges and universities within the Kingdom, these Arab students represented a broader shared culture from the Gulf region while other

geographical areas and cultures were absent. Additionally, participants stated that activities such as those found within the American model of Student Life were perceived to be for the most part non-existent from the higher education experience. Diversity within the curriculum, classroom and student body in the Saudi higher education system was not perceived to be valued. Accordingly, Hussain shared:

> After seeing this first-hand [in the United States], you understand this is a necessity that all universities must have. It is something that must change. We need to have these environments where students can get involved, because I can see from my friends and families experiences that students do not relate to their universities or anything at all. We do not have that environment. We do not have the type of community that I saw here [in the United States].

Hussain recognizes the value of educating others on diversity through inclusive learning environments and yet again proves the value of the new comprehensive collective identity model. By creating a space – physical and/or geographical location or metaphorical in concept (Gildersleeve & Kuntz, 2011; Kuntz, 2009), there is an opportunity for intersections of identity which are both individual and collective to occur. These intersections can foster mobility in the fluidity of one's core identity. This fluidity is the bases by which one can evolve, change and/or adapt based on the environmental and/or contextual influences that guide how one makes meaning of the world around them.

In discussion of the development of relationships between colleges and universities globally, participants noted that relationships between institutions of higher education in the United States and abroad carried importance not just for education, but also for government and corporate relationships while providing benefits to both, as well as students. They noted that these same attributes were also true for Saudi

institutions of higher education, but were not as advanced nor developed as those found in the United States. Hussain stated:

> Recently, they have started making cooperative agreements, but in the past, there was really no cooperatives. For the most part, it was you teach us or help us to establish or refine our processes and even design facilities, labs, but I think in some parts, we have created cooperatives in research and teaching.

Hussain points out an important comparison between the Saudi higher education system and the American higher education system. In his assessment, Hussain notes that the intersectionality between macro-systems of power such as the American system of higher education and other countries systems of higher education have been in existence for a longer period of time than those between the Saudi higher education system and other countries systems of higher education. Therefore, Saudi is still developing and/or transforming in order to making meaning of these types of intersections. As these macro-systems of power in higher education which are deeply rooted in the historical context of each country intersect and transform the meaning making process, new educational ideologies will be produced (Wodak, 2001).

As a result of these evolving educational ideologies, participants agreed that cross-cultural and international relationships between colleges and universities globally are important in advancing an understanding of diversity, equality, and even advocacy for change that would positively impact the greater Saudi society. Participants interpreted cross-cultural and global education as a way to create a more inclusive global society with the ability to share knowledge for advancement and collaboration, as well as promoting a more ideal model of higher education. In particular, Rashad stated:

> It is about being able to accept differences. You do not have to change yourself in front of other people just to adapt to what they do. At the same time, you have to accept who they really are. Not all people do whatever they can all over the world. When you come from Saudi Arabia to the United States you are not going to have the same things that we do in Saudi Arabia. The same is true for Americans that go to Saudi Arabia. They are not going to have the same things that they do in the United States. So, accepting that and being okay with it and being okay within yourself that is what cross-cultural and global education is about.

Rashad points out the importance of being aware of and accepting difference. He views this as the embodiment of cross-cultural and global education. Likewise, it can be argued that this is also the foundation of a global conscience, an acknowledgement of the differences between and among cultures and countries in the world around us, and as stated earlier, this is fundamental to developing a global conception of identity acknowledging where and how we fit in this world.

Defining National Identity

Group D questions gave participants the opportunity to define their perception of their national identity since studying in the United States. There were marked differences between how male and female participants defined their national identities. Males had a tendency to define their national identity based on the context of a variety of Saudi cultural structures and their own interpretation of Saudi personal traits. Male participants made meaning of their Saudi national identity after studying in the United States based on aspects of their religious identity, the economic benefits for education given by their government, their tribal affiliations, family relationships and their ability to recognize the need for change in their own country. Conversely, Yahya shared:

> I am proud of everything to be honest. If I am thinking on the side of religion, we have the Holy City and really great people there. If I think of the culture, the culture is unique. Nobody can understand it until they get there. We love it, because we have great family relationships. The culture is around us. They [the

> government] really supports us to do well. If I am thinking of the business and money or financial stuff, Saudi is the best. There is alhumduallah, the petroleum - oil. It is a gift from God. I can visit Riyadh, Jeddah, and Mecca like [Washington] D.C. and Chicago. Still, we do not have the kind of buildings that are there, but we have technology, friendly people, and we do also have great infrastructure.

Yahya shared the dynamic positive attributes of his country that made him proud to be Saudi, but not how his study abroad in the United States had impacted his perception of his national identity. He noted what his country offered him and others. In addition, he compared and contrasted what Saudi had that other countries, in particular the United States, did not have. Likewise, he acknowledged what the Kingdom is still missing in terms of infrastructure – buildings such as those in Washington D.C. and Chicago. Consequently, Rogers (2011) noted that, "critical analysis of discourse is an analysis not only of what is said, but of what is left out; not only what is present in the text, but what is absent" (p. 15). Yahya has left out of his discourse the many concerns that other participants have aforementioned such as a lack of diversity, the limited rights of women and the need for a more inclusive educational environment. While Yahya is proud to be Saudi, he has either avoided answering the question or has not fully reflected on the impact of his study abroad in the United States to his conception of his national identity.

Like Yahya, many male participants were proud to be Saudi. They shared a social responsibility to create improvements and change within their country, and were reflective about who they were and what they wanted to do to take action for change in their country after they had completed their education. In particular, Rashad shared:

> At least, I want to impact the community. I do not see the point of getting the degree and not doing anything with it. You have to pay back the community. Not just working, but other responsibilities – social responsibilities. I guess I

> kind of need to tell the people [in Saudi Arabia] about the experience I have had here and tell them to get out of their bubbles.

van Stekelenburg (2013) referred to collective action as an important instrument in creating change for collective identities. As Rashad and other participants not only identify the changes that need to occur, but also recognize and take action on their role as change agents, they confirm the validity of the new collective identity model in that there is fluidity, change can occur and new parameters of prescribed membership can be set within the collective as group needs shift.

Though not all participants shared the desire to return home to Saudi Arabia, they did share a sense of loyalty to their Saudi national identities. More importantly, male participants noted that studying in the United States enhanced their ability to look at their own country and cultural context with a more critical lens. They expressed concern for women's rights and a desire to use their voice for change. For instance, Hussain shared:

> I still have all the ideas that I had before, and in some cases I, as a Saudi male, think many changes for our society must occur in regards to how we treat families and women, specifically…We have our own lifestyle – our identity. We do not necessarily have to be like other people, but we definitely have to look and see where changes must be made and we do have many of those areas where we need to shed more light. …Especially with regard to the treatment of women.

Through Hussain's discourse, women's rights are being acknowledged as an issue that requires change within Saudi society and culture (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). However, the fight for women's rights have historically been the catalyst of any conversation for change or progress within the Kingdom (Hamdan, 2005; Trofimov, 2007). This being said, a move from the marginalized rights of women to one of equity and equality would require a complete ideological shift in core religious beliefs and

could stand to impact the delicate balance between the move toward progress by the Saudi Monarchy and the desire for the preservation of Islamic tradition by the ulama – conservative religious scholars within the Kingdom (Arebi, 1994; Baki, 2004; Doumato, 2000; Hamadan, 2005; Trofimov, 2007). Hence, true change and progress within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hinges not only on the Kingdom's ability to increase and improve indigenous knowledge, but also on the Kingdom's ability to address women's rights and abilities to function both equitably and equally within Saudi culture and society.

Female participants also defined their national identity based on the context of a variety of Saudi cultural structures and their own interpretation of Saudi personal traits, but discussed marked differences based on their gender. Female participants made meaning of their Saudi national identity after studying in the United States based on aspects of their religious identity, family relationships, and their ability to recognize the need for change in their own country and in particular for women. Amara stated:

> I think even if the society is telling you, you have no voice, you have no power, but actually, you know that you have, because you have been in a county that respects that. So, you have your inner power. I guess even if those around you are saying the opposite, you know better, because you have lived in another country.

Amara has had a shift in her core individual identity recognizing that she has both a voice and the power within to seek change. Her discourse amplifies the relationship between language and power structures (Wodak, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) in that Amara has recognized through her study abroad experience within the United States that she can have rights and freedoms different than those she has experienced within the Kingdom.

For female participants, their higher education experience in the United States was empowering, built their confidence as women, and gave them a desire to have more recognized rights. They were patriotic and proud to be Saudi nationals, but sometimes felt judged by others, ashamed of how they had been portrayed in the media, and that others, including Saudi males, were sometimes closed minded to their desires for change. Samira and Nadia both explained:

> Samira: I am proud that I am Saudi. I am proud that I am Arab, and I am proud that I am Muslim. I feel like that is one of the ways to explain to people about what we are really like instead of just watching the news and hearing the media.
>
> Nadia: I mean the environment there is not suitable for women to work, because males are full of discrimination. A good majority of them have studied in the states, but the foremen and the maintenance people are all not people who have studied outside [of Saudi Arabia]. They are local people. So, their women are probably home cooking and taking care of the kids and cannot even leave the house without them. Why would they be okay with a woman outside in the field? It is very hard to implement that change; so, I actually started applying for jobs here [in the United States].

Samira holds tight to her identity as Saudi, Arab and Muslim. She is empowered by who she is and where she comes from, yet is distraught by how those outside of her collective define her – take away her voice, her identity and her sense of being. Conversely, Nadia recognizes that all is not equal nor equitable in the Kingdom, and though she is equipped with a good education and the ability to work at home, the Kingdom is not quite ready for her to work in the field. The procurement of indigenous knowledge takes time to acquire at all levels of the societal spectrum. While the Kingdom has worked diligently to expand the educational opportunities for its youth (Clary & Karlin, 2011; Krieger, 2007), little has been done to prepare the rest of the Kingdom's population for the new roles the youth will play in Saudi society due to their educational experiences.

Female participants also noted that their experience in higher education in the United States gave them opportunities to participate in leadership, made them feel respected, and instilled a sense of equality between them and their male counterparts. Safa noted:

> I feel like here [in the United States] I can do more – especially for leadership… It has been really different and it makes me feel like I know who I am and what I can do. I have a voice.

Safa was empowered by her study abroad experience and the opportunity that she was given to serve in a leadership capacity. Through her discourse, she shows that she was able to resist power struggles and social inequalities (van Dijk, 2003) in order to establish her voice within her educational experience.

Though not all female participants felt that change could occur in Saudi Arabia giving them more rights and freedoms nor that they wanted to return home, some did share that they had a new perspective on their rights. Female participants desired more freedom, equality, and the opportunity to have a voice in their own country. Amara and Zahra stated:

> Amara: The female that is a United States citizen is equal to the male in the United States, but when it comes to Saudi Arabia, it is not the same. So, as I mentioned before, there are no rights [in Saudi Arabia] and the women in the United States have all of the rights.
>
> Zahra: Maybe it makes me feel stronger about being open and affected by other people's ideas. I am confident about what I think. I have the right to my own ideas and opinions.

Amara's study abroad experience heightened her zone of awareness to the rights she did not share with her American female counterparts. Her discourse carried an air of discontent and defeat with her situation within Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Zahra noted that her experience studying abroad in the United States gave her confidence and

reaffirmed that she had the right to her own ideas and opinions. Again, these two participants' responses clearly highlight social issues related to women's rights within the Kingdom (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2003).

Based on their education and future goals, all participants voiced a choice to take on a sense of social responsibility and a desire to participate in community activism through a variety of programs including education, volunteerism, public health and community change. They intended to use their educations for work, as a foundation for more education, research, and as a way to gain power for voicing their concerns within their communities and country. Fahad summed it up best when he stated, "I want the power to make change and to have this power you must have a good education."

Implications

Study abroad experiences provide individuals the opportunity to evolve and/or change their sense of identity. The more students are exposed to different ideologies through diverse educational outlets the more likely they are to develop a global conception of identity. However, making the choice to study abroad is not the only factor involved in developing a global conception of identity. Some of the participants did not make the choice to study abroad just because they wanted to, but because of marriage and/or family decisions. Therefore, it is important to note that no matter what the method is that places an individual in a unique educational experience abroad, the individual's perceptions of reality, openness to learning, interactions within the context of their environment and reliance on or lack-there-of their contextual influencers (Jones & Abes, 2013; Torres, Jones & Renn, 2009) will impact how they make meaning of their experiences and how they view their core, individual and collective identities.

Another implication of this study shows that with higher education comes a desire for social responsibility. Participants recognized that higher education provided them with a privilege in their life to be able to give back to those with whom they could work as contextual influencers in various ways be it medical care in their communities through their career path, as returning educators and researchers, and/or as community activists (Pasque, Hendricks, & Bowman, 2006). Participants' acquired knowledge through higher education gave them a desire to do more than just get a job after graduation. Therefore, institutions and/or international study programs should seek ways to incorporate programming that intentionally connects international students with local community agencies in order to provide opportunities for community activism (Bell & Griffen, 2007; Bringle, & Hatcher, 2009; Cipolle, 2010; Pasque, Hendricks & Bowman, 2006). This can include service-learning programming that develops community-university engagement such as that with local foodbanks, homeless and domestic abuse shelters, affordable housing programs and the like.

Based on the findings of the study, students perceived the impact of internationalization in higher education whether it be in the United States, Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else abroad as vital to the educational process. As Qiang (2003) noted, with an increased demand for products and human capital infiltrating the role of higher education, a much "broader definition of internationalization, which embraces the entire functioning of higher education and not merely a dimension or aspect of it, or the actions of some individuals which are part of it" (p. 249) is needed.

In addition, participants noted that internationalization promotes and creates the desire to learn differently. In other words, students are able to recognize that what they

have learned is not wrong, but it is also not the only way to learn, and that they have much more learning to do through diverse experiences with faculty, staff and a student body of diverse backgrounds, as well as diverse curriculum and classrooms; therefore, producing a shared desire for a more global educational experience and community. This is very much in alignment with Knight's (1993) definition of the internationalization of higher education where an international and/or intercultural dimension is integrated into differing aspects of the educational experience in order to promote the functions of higher education in teaching, research and service to society.

Participants' experiences within the United States higher educational system also helped them to develop a global conscience, an acknowledgement of the differences between and among cultures and countries, with the ability to pull the best ideologies and practices from both in order to improve the lived experience for themselves, their families, their future generations, their communities, their country, and their world. This confirming Dolby's (2004) argument that in a global context, such as that provided in a study abroad experience, one's national identity shifts from passive to active in seeking ways to improve the lived experience for all. Byung-Jin's (2003) concluded that understanding the relationship between one's nation and other nations is key to the symbiotic principle of a win-win global society where coexistence between nations can be accomplished through comparative education and re-thinking of national identity as a "target of understanding rather than as a target of reconstruction" (2003, p. 340). Thus it is vital that institutions of higher education make it an institutional priority to create and fund more robust opportunities for collaborative educational programs, research, and training partnerships with institutions and corporate partners abroad for

their students (Lewin, 2009). Examples of these types of agreements include but are not limited to: sequential degrees, dual degrees, joint degrees, internship programs, joint research programs, faculty exchange, distance education collaboration via distance technology and the like.

In terms of national identity, participants' experiences studying abroad in the United States provided the opportunity for them to strengthen their national identities from a more global perspective, thus creating a globalized identity (Bazić & Anđelković, 2011). Even if students did not want to immediately return home after completing their education or felt a lack of freedom in their home country, they still spoke with pride and allegiance to their identities as Saudi nationals and shared desires for improving their country across a variety of social justice issues including and most predominately women's rights, health care, and education.

Specifically, some of the female participants noted that they would not be allowed to work in their fields of study in equal and/or equitable roles compared to their male counterparts once they returned home due to the traditional roles of women within the Kingdom. This concern was impactful enough that some were even considering staying within the United States to seek employment after graduation. For these students, there may be a fear that their voice and newly acquired academic abilities will be lost to the deeply rooted historical social and cultural norms of the Kingdom that so often restricts women's rights (Arebi, 1994; Baki, 2004; Hamdan, 2005).

For female participants, the decision to stay in the United States and/or to seek employment in another country outside of Saudi Arabia works in complete opposition to the Kingdom's desire to create a knowledge-based society (Al-Sultan & Alzaharnah,

2012). This confirms that true change and progress within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not only reliant upon the Kingdom's ability to increase and improve indigenous knowledge, but also on the Kingdom's ability to address women's rights. Should the Kingdom select to ignore this mounting concern, the end result could lead to brain drain (Ferracioli, 2014) for Saudi Arabia where highly educated individuals from within the Kingdom, especially women, begin to relocate outside of their nation in order to seek out a better quality of life and opportunities to utilize the skills that they have gained through their study abroad experience.

Recommendations

Many things have been learned from this research that can benefit those working in the field of international student services, and that can also provide a pathway for future research in international education and identity development. Based on the findings of this research, recommendations for future programming for international students participating in a study abroad experience are being made along with an agenda for further research.

Programming

In terms of programming, this study revealed that as we move toward a more global concept of identity, we must create more opportunities for diverse populations to meet and share complex cultural differences through study abroad educational experiences outside of their own cultural norms. In addition, we must find ways to make these experiences affordable for students who may otherwise not have the means to partake in the process. The participants for this study were all provided scholarships through their government and/or a governmentally run organization. Not all

governments nor institutions of higher education have the ability to sponsor diverse educational experiences for large numbers of students. This being said, it is recommended that institutions look for more affordable options for students to study abroad through collaboration with international organizations of higher education and/or through cooperative sponsorships that help to connect students not only to an international educational experience, but also to the job market at home and abroad.

In addition, if the purpose of higher education for our student bodies is to "contribute to both their overall wellbeing and to a better and more just society for all" (McArthur, 2011, p. 738), we must find ways to create opportunities within the educational process to promote a more inclusive and global view of social responsibility. Therefore, it is recommended that institutions of higher education find ways to define society through a broader lens than just their own communities, countries, and cultures. Educators and institutions of higher education must define and promote acts of social responsibility through local communities, countries, and global opportunities; hence, broadening the concept of giving back to ALL peoples.

This research also revealed that for the participants, national identity was enhanced from a global perspective and created a global conscience due to participants' ability to study abroad. Saudi students were able to talk about how they make meaning of their national identity when participating in higher education in the United States by examining and reflecting on their perceptions of self in relation to their environments both in Saudi Arabia and the United States, as well as by recognizing and coming to terms with their preconceived perceptions, both real and non-existent, of others based on their commitment to their own individual constructs of identity and that of their

collective. Therefore, higher education served as the catalyst for change in their views of the *other* in that it provided a forum for internationalization, and internationalization was seen as a first-step in broadening their worldview. Thus, it is recommended that universities and colleges continue to enhance the ways in which they seek to promote internationalization on their campuses through means of ongoing communication and assessment with their student bodies. For example, an institution may want to perform a campus-wide survey on a regular basis to assess student, faculty, and staff's understanding of multiculturalism, international issues and concerns, global citizenship, and/or intercultural competence. Through assessment, additional opportunities for dialogue and programming can be developed for the benefit of all.

Cis gender mattered in the sense that real change and advancement within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be dependent upon the changes made in consideration to the role of women in culture and society. While male participants and female participants both spoke openly about the need for change specifically in women's right at home in Saudi Arabia, female participants expressed a greater depth of desire for freedoms than did their male counterparts. Male participants spoke of women's situations within the Kingdom in terms of their historical roles and their imposed dependency upon their male guardians to take care of them. However, female participants spoke of their increased desire to be able to take care of themselves, work equally within their fields of study and to be able to make their own decisions. Female participants desired to have their voices heard. Therefore, it is recommended that institutions of higher education must recognize issues of inequity and inequality within marginalized international student groups, and find ways to create safe spaces on their

campuses where these students can discuss their concerns, develop a network of allies and prepare to return to their home countries. For example, campuses could create spaces for interfaith forums, intergroup dialogue courses and/or co-curricular opportunities to promote dialogue on issues of social justice, privilege, oppression, and/or current events (Bodine Al-Sharif & Pasque, 2016).

Research

Based on students' desires for a more global learning environment and community, it is recommended that a broader review and more research be conducted to explore how differing higher education systems, governments, and foreign relations impact the ability to foster opportunities to create global educational environments both at home and abroad. The internationalization of higher education starts with the ability to recognize and accept differences. If we are unable to do this at a higher level through governmental relationships and foreign policy, we will surely struggle in terms of global education.

In addition, it is recommended that further research with Saudi students maintain an indigenous framework. Indigenous peoples have often suffered at the hands of imperialism and colonialism around the world (West, Steward, Foster & Usher, 2012). "In many cases, they have been displaced and become minorities in lands where they once held traditional ownership" (West, Steward, Foster & Usher, 2012, p. 1582). Therefore, Rigney (2001) coined the term *indigenism* to refer to the adoption of methods within research that acknowledge the diversity of indigenous experiences, interests, and ambitions. Accordingly, research from an indigenous perspective can give

privilege and voice to indigenous peoples while moving away from racialized and oppressive methods that stand to foster xenophobia and ethnocentrism (Rigney, 2006).

Future research must continue to focus on how individuals across an array of national identities negotiate and develop a global conscience within their multiple layers of identity – core identities, individual identities, and multiple collective identities – while living in an ever changing world and taking into consideration individual development over time and through differing lived experiences. With this being said, further work must be done to confirm or disconfirm the newly introduced collective identity model for this study taking into account the differences of opinion amongst theorist on the existence of a core identity. The more that we can learn about the complexities of our individual and many collective identities, the more we can learn about how we negotiate and network within our world. Likewise, through a borderlands theoretical approach, we can also better asses the depth of our relationships and knowledge of the *other*.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

As we create discourse and reflect on our own individual and collective identities, we begin to view ourselves, our communities, our countries, and our world differently. We begin to understand that the whole of who we are is far greater than our individual parts, and yet no less important. We begin to recognize that we are members of many differing collective identities that make up our global world. This research was limited to just one collective lens, but there are many others by which research can and should be conducted that include multiple aspects of who we are. By better understanding all parts of our identity and the context and contextual influences within our learning environments, we can begin to better understand how we make meaning of who we are as individuals based on the choices that we make or that are imposed upon us. In addition, by using multiple theoretical lenses to investigate our multiple layers of identity, we broaden the borders of our truths and/or realities to encompass a much more holistic perspective of the world in which we live and our role(s) within the world. Therefore in knowing who we are, we can better work toward who we want to become.

For the participants of this study, their discourse revealed that by studying abroad in the United States they have changed and/or evolved as individuals and as members of a collective Saudi identity. This change cannot be labeled as good or bad, but only as different, evolved, or new in perspective. They have gained insight to who they are and who they want to become and likewise, have made choices as to what aspects of their identity they will hold on to and what they have or will let go. Their experiences through study abroad have aided them in moving toward a more inclusive

and global conception of identity. They now have a different perspective in which they view their nation and their national identity.

As for Saudi Arabia, it is a country in transformation. It is developing and growing its indigenous knowledge through advancing educational opportunities at home and abroad while cautiously maintaining a very fine balance with Islamic traditions. Saudi students are gaining ground on the world in which they live through these educational experiences, but they are not losing sight of their heritage nor their national identity. They are making meaning of their national identity through a global perspective and developing a global conscience that allows them to see the world around them from multiple perspectives and equips them to view their nation from a more critical lens. Their educational experience within the United States has given them pride in who they are and where they are from while at the same time instilling in them a sense of advocacy for social change. As these students complete their educational endeavors, they will be equipped to move forward as change agents and guardians of their Kingdom.

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APPENDIX A

Advertisement Template

NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE GUARDIANSHIP OF A KINGDOM

Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif
IRB number: 5215

The purpose of this study is three-fold: to explore how Saudi students perceive the unique structures of higher education within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United states, to discover how Saudi students perceive the impact of internationalization on current trends in reforming Saudi's higher education systems and on higher education systems in the United States, and to understand how Saudi students view their national identity in relation to their educational experiences within the United States.

- **Description of study procedures:**
  - Interviews will be conducted either in a reserved room at the university or at another participant designated public area mutually agreed upon between the participant and the interviewer.
  - With participant permission, interviews will be tape recorded using two Sony IC Recorders. (One recorder will serve as a back-up to the other in case there is an issue with equipment malfunctioning.)
  - For those interviewees who do not wish to be recorded, notes will be taken during the interview session and immediately afterwards.

- **Qualifications to participate:**
  - Participants in this study are in a study abroad experience in the United States who are from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and who are classified as English Language Learners; graduate or undergraduate students.
  - Students participating in this study may be entering the university for the first time through the university English Language Institute program, as students who gained entry via national and university required assessments, or as transfer students coming from other institutions within the United States and/or abroad.
  - Students may be just beginning their educational endeavors, mid-way through, or even in their final semester.
  - Participants may be either male or female and must be between 18 and 55 years of age.

- **Length of participation (time involved):**
  Participants will be asked to participate in an interview that will take approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.

- **Compensation:**
  Participants will receive a Starbucks card as compensation for their participation in this study.

- **PI contact information:**
  Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif
  (405) 420-3675

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

نموذج الإعلان

الهوية الوطنية: رعاية المملكة

ماري آن بوداين الشريف

رقم IRB : 5215

الغرض من هذه الدراسة ثلاث اشياء: أولاً، لاستكشاف نطرة الطلاب السعوديين إلى الهياكل الفريدة من نوعها للتعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية و الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. ثانياً، لاكتشاف كيفية نطرة الطلاب السعوديين لتأثير التدويل على الاتجاهات الحالية في إصلاح أنظمة التعليم العالي في السعودية و الولايات المتحدة. وأخيراً، لمعرفة نظرة الطلاب السعوديين لهويتهم الوطنية فيما يتعلق بتجربتهم التعليمية داخل الولايات المتحدة.

- **وصف إجراءات الدراسة:**
  - سيتم إجراء مقابلات إما في غرفة محجوزة في الجامعة أو في منطقة معينة عامة أخرى يتفق عليها الطرفان عليها بين المشارك والمحاور.
  - وبإذن المشارك، المقابلات سوف تكون مسجلة صوتيا باستخدام اثنين من مسجلات سوني IC (احد المسجلين سيكون بمثابة نسخة احتياطية في حالة وجود مشكلة مع المعدات.)
  - بالنسبة لأولئك الذين لا يرغبون في أن تسجل مقابلتهم، سيتم كتابة الملاحظات أثناء وبعد المقابلة مباشرة على ورق.
- **المؤهلات للمشاركة:**
  - المشاركون في هذه الدراسة هم من المملكة العربية السعودية. ويتمتعون بخبرة الدراسة في الخارج في الولايات المتحدة تحديدا. سواء كانوا طلاب مرحلة اللغة الانجليزية أو الدراسات العليا أو طلاب المرحلة الجامعية (بكالوريوس).
  - الطلاب المشاركون في هذه الدراسة قد يكونوا في السنة الجامعية الأولى من خلال إلتحاقهم ببرنامج معهد اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعة أو إستيفاء شروط القبول في الجامعة أو طلاب محولين من كليات و جامعات داخل الولايات المتحدة أو خارجها.
  - الطلاب الذين بدؤا للتو في مشوارهم التعليمي أو أنهوا نصف المدة أو على وجه التخرج.
  - المشاركة مفتوحة للذكور و الأناث، ويجب أن يكون عمر المشارك بين 18 و 55 سنة.
- **طول المشاركة (الوقت المستغرق):**
  الوقت الذي تستغرقه المقابلة حوالي الساعة إلى الساعة و النصف تقريبا.

- **التعويض:**
  سيحصل المشاركون على بطاقة ستاربكس كتعويض لمشاركتهم في هذه الدراسة.

- **معلومات الباحث الرئيسي:**
  Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif
  (405) 420-3675

جامعة أوكلاهوما هي مؤسسة تكافؤ الفرص.

APPENDIX B

Interest to Participate Form

1. Name: _____

2. Are you at least 18 years of age or older: □ Yes □ No

3. Gender: □ Male □ Female

4. Date and Time of Availability (Check all that apply):

Date	10:00 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm		01:00 pm 02:00 pm 03:00 pm		04:00 pm 05:00 pm 06:00 pm		07:00 pm 08:00 pm		Suggest a Time:
Date	10:00 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm		01:00 pm 02:00 pm 03:00 pm		04:00 pm 05:00 pm 06:00 pm		07:00 pm 08:00 pm		Suggest a Time:
Date	10:00 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm		01:00 pm 02:00 pm 03:00 pm		04:00 pm 05:00 pm 06:00 pm		07:00 pm 08:00 pm		Suggest a Time:
Date	10:00 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm		01:00 pm 02:00 pm 03:00 pm		04:00 pm 05:00 pm 06:00 pm		07:00 pm 08:00 pm		Suggest a Time:
Date	10:00 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm		01:00 pm 02:00 pm 03:00 pm		04:00 pm 05:00 pm 06:00 pm		07:00 pm 08:00 pm		Suggest a Time:
Date	10:00 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm		01:00 pm 02:00 pm 03:00 pm		04:00 pm 05:00 pm 06:00 pm		07:00 pm 08:00 pm		Suggest a Time:

5. Preferred Location of Interview:
   - □ Reserved Room at the University
   - □ My home located at: _____

     _____

6. Preferred Contact Number: _____

7. Preferred Email: _____

8. Would you like a translator: □ Yes □ No

Participant Identifier: ____

نموذج المشاركة

.1 الإسم _____

.2 هل انت على الأقل 18 سنة من العمر أو أكثر: □ نعم □ لا

.3 الجنس: □ ذكر □ أنثى

.4 تاريخ ووقت الإتاحة (شيك كل ما ينطبق):

أقترح موعد:	مساءً 07:00		مساءً 04:00		مساءً 01:00		صباحاً 10:00	
	مساءً 08:00		مساءً 05:00		مساءً 02:00		صباحاً 11:00	التاريخ
			مساءً 06:00		مساءً 03:00		ظهراً 12:00	
أقترح موعد:	مساءً 07:00		مساءً 04:00		مساءً 01:00		صباحاً 10:00	
	مساءً 08:00		مساءً 05:00		مساءً 02:00		صباحاً 11:00	التاريخ
			مساءً 06:00		مساءً 03:00		ظهراً 12:00	
أقترح موعد:	مساءً 07:00		مساءً 04:00		مساءً 01:00		صباحاً 10:00	
	مساءً 08:00		مساءً 05:00		مساءً 02:00		صباحاً 11:00	التاريخ
			مساءً 06:00		مساءً 03:00		ظهراً 12:00	
أقترح موعد:	مساءً 07:00		مساءً 04:00		مساءً 01:00		صباحاً 10:00	
	مساءً 08:00		مساءً 05:00		مساءً 02:00		صباحاً 11:00	التاريخ
			مساءً 06:00		مساءً 03:00		ظهراً 12:00	
أقترح موعد:	مساءً 07:00		مساءً 04:00		مساءً 01:00		صباحاً 10:00	
	مساءً 08:00		مساءً 05:00		مساءً 02:00		صباحاً 11:00	التاريخ
			مساءً 06:00		مساءً 03:00		ظهراً 12:00	
أقترح موعد:	مساءً 07:00		مساءً 04:00		مساءً 01:00		صباحاً 10:00	
	مساءً 08:00		مساءً 05:00		مساءً 02:00		صباحاً 11:00	التاريخ
			مساءً 06:00		مساءً 03:00		ظهراً 12:00	

.5 الموقع المفضل للمقابلة:

□ غرفة محجوزة في الجامعة

□ بيتي اللذي يقع في: _____

_____

.6 رقم الاتصال المفضل:_____

.7 البريد الالكتروني المفضل:_____

.8 هل ترغب في مترجم: □ نعم □ لا

Participant Identifier: ____

APPENDIX C

University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title:	National Identity: The Guardianship of a Kingdom
Principal Investigator:	Mary Ann Bodine
Department:	Adult & Higher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study. This study is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are participating in a study abroad experience in the United States, are from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and are classified as an English Language Learner; graduate or undergraduate students.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study
The purpose of this study is three-fold: to explore how Saudi students perceive the unique structures of higher education within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United states, to discover how Saudi students perceive the impact of internationalization on current trends in reforming Saudi's higher education systems and on higher education systems in the United States, and to understand how Saudi students view their national identity in relation to their educational experiences within the United States.

Number of Participants
About 100 people will take part in this study.

Procedures
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview at a time and location of your choice. With your permission, interviews will audiotaped and notes will be taken during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you do not wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time. Only one interview is expected; however, follow-up may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by e-mail and/or phone to request any such clarification.

Length of Participation
The interview process should last about an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

Risks of being in the study are

None.

Benefits of being in the study are

None.

Compensation

You will be reimbursed for your time and participation in this study. Participants in this study will receive a $5.00 gift card from Starbucks at the completion of the interview.

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

There are organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis. These organizations include the OU Institutional Review Board.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No

Future Communications

The researcher would like to contact you again to recruit you into this study or to gather additional information.

_____ I give my permission for the researcher to contact me in the future.

_____ I do not wish to be contacted by the researcher again.

Contacts and Questions

If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at the following email address pasque@ou.edu or by phone

(405) 325-5976, Dr. Penny Pasque. Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions, or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Participant Signature	Print Name	Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent
Date

Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Witness (if applicable)	Date

Print Name of Witness

Participant Identifier: ____

المشاركة في بحث

الهوية الوطنية: الحفاظ على مملكة

المقدمة والغرض: إسمي Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif (ماري آن بوداين الشريف) . أنا طالبة دراسات عليا في (جامعة أوكلاهوما) University of Oklahoma أعمل مع مستشارة هيئة التدريس ، Dr. Pasque, Associate Professor ، أستاذ مشارك في Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education قسم Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. أود أن أدعوكم للمشاركة في بحثي الدراسي والذي يستكشف كيف يرى الطلاب السعوديين البُنى الفريدة للتعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية، وتأثير التدويل (دمج التدفق المعرفي عبر الحدود، ومعارف العاملين والطلاب في التعليم العالي) على الاتجاهات الحالية في مجال إصلاح نظم التعليم العالي السعودية، وكيف ينظرون إلى هويتهم الوطنية فيما يتعلق بالخبرات التعليمية داخل الولايات المتحدة.

الإجراءات: إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذا البحث ، سوف أقوم بإجراء مقابلة معك في الوقت والمكان الذي تختاره. المقابلة تشمل أسئلة عن هياكل التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية، والتدويل، والهوية الوطنية. ولن تتجاوز الساعة إلى الساعة و النصف. سيتم تسجيل المقابلة صوتياً مع كتابة الملاحظات و هذا بعد أخذ الإذن والموافقة منكم. إذا اخترت عدم التسجيل، سوف تُكتب الملاحظات بدلا من ذلك. الغرض من التسجيل الصوتي هو فقط لضمان دقة المعلومات. ولن يستخدم للنشر أو أي أغراض أخرى. إذا شعرت - في أي وقت- أثناء إجراء المقابلة بعدم الإرتياح من التسجيل، بإمكاني إيقاف التسجيل بناء على طلبك. أو إذا لم تعد لديك الرغبة في الإستمرار، بإمكانك التوقف في أي لحظة. مقابلة واحدة فقط هي المطلوبة; ومع ذلك، قد تكون هناك حاجة إلى المتابعة لتوضيح معلومة أو إضافة معلومة. إذا كان الأمر كذلك، سوف نتصل بك عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني و / أو الهاتف لطلب أي توضيح من هذا القبيل.

الفوائد: ليس هناك فائدة مباشرة لك من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. ومع ذلك، من المؤمل أن البحث سيكون لصالح المجتمع في فهم أفضل لكيفية التعليم العالي على مستوى الأفراد والمجتمع و خلق رغبة للمزيد من المؤسسات الديمقراطية وحقوق الإنسان، والاستقرار السياسي، وانخفاض تكاليف رعاية الدولة والرعاية الصحية، واعداد مرحلة لاحقة للنمو الاقتصادي.

المخاطر: ليس هناك أي مخاطر تعريفية بمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة البحثية. ومع ذلك، أرجو أن تعلم أن لك الحرية المطلقة في رفض أي سؤال لا ترغب في إجابته، أو إيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت. وبالمقابل، فقد تم وضع كافة الجهود لضمان سرية ردودكم في المقابلة و عدم المساس بها.

السرية: سيتم التعامل مع بيانات الدراسة الخاصة بك بسرية تامة بقدر الامكان. إذا نشرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أو عُرضت لن يتم استخدام أسماء الأفراد وغيرها من المعلومات الشخصية. وللحد من المخاطر على السرية ، كافة التسجيلات، والمدونات و المعلومات التعريفية ستكون في ملف مشفر. فقط الباحث الرئيسي لديه حق الوصول إلى هذا الملف. وبالمثل، جميع الوثائق المطبوعة، و أذونات البحوث والوثائق التعريفية ستكون في ملف مؤمن مع محدودية الوصول اليه الا عن طريق الباحث الرئيسي، أو حسب الاقتضاء من أعضاء فريق البحث. المعلومات

التعريفية للمشاركين ستكون مُشَفره من أجل حماية هويتهم. عند اكتمال البحث، سيتم تدمير جميع الوثائق (التسجيلات، ملاحظات المقابلة، ومعلومات تعريفية، الخ).

المكافأة: لكي أُبدي شكري لمشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة، ستحصل على$5.00 بطاقة هدية من Starbucks بعد الانتهاء من المقابلة.

المشاركة: مشاركتكم في هذا البحث هو تطوعي تماما. لك مطلق الحرية في التراجع عن المشاركة في هذا المشروع في أي وقت. وبالمثل، يمكنك رفض الإجابة عن أي أسئلة. سواء اخترت المشاركة ام لا في الدراسة وسواء اخترت أن تجيب على سؤال أو مواصلة المشاركة في المشروع أم لا، لن يكون هناك عقوبة لك أو فقدان المزايا التي يحق لك خلاف ذلك.

أسئلة: إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذا البحث، لا تتردد في الاتصال بي. يمكن الاتصال بي على 405-420-3675 أو mariam2@ou.edu.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة عن حقوقك أو المعاملة كمشارك البحث في هذه الدراسة ، يرجى الاتصال ب:

the University of Oklahoma's Office of Human Research Participant Protection/IRB at

405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu

الموافقة على المشاركة في البحث

سوف تحصل على نسخة من نموذج الموافقة لتحفظها في سجلاتك

إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، الرجاء التوقيع وكتابة التاريخ أدناه.

_____

اسم المشارك (يرجى طباعة)

_____ _____

توقيع المشارك التاريخ

Participant Identifier: ____

APPENDIX D

Demographic Information Form

1. Name: _____

2. I am attending as an:

    □ English Language Learner at the English Language Institute

    □ Undergraduate Student at the University
    □ Freshman □ Sophomore □ Junior □ Senior

    □ Graduate Student at the University
    □ Masters □ Ph.D. □ M.D. □ Ed.D. □ J.D.

3. My major is/will be: _____

4. Check which phrase best describes you:
    □ I am studying English in order to enter this university.

    □ I am studying English in order to enter another university.

    □ I studied and completed at this institution's English Institute and continued on at this university.

    □ I studied and completed at another institution's English Institute and continued on at this university.

    □ I entered and am studying at this university without needing to study at an English Institute.

    □ I transferred to this university from another university in the United States.

    □ I transferred to this university from another university in Saudi Arabia.

    □ I transferred to this university from another university abroad, but not in Saudi Arabia.

    □ Other: _____

5. Are you here in the United States studying with:

    □ King Abdullah Scholarship Program □ Institutional Scholarship □ Self-pay

    □ Other: _____

Participant Identifier: ____

المعلومات الديموغرافية

1. الاسم:_____

2. أنا ملتحق كا:

□ متعلم اللغة الانجليزية في معهد اللغة الإنجليزية

□ طالب بكالوريوس في الجامعة:
□ مستجد (السنة الأولى) □ السنة الثانية □ السنة الثالثة □ السنة الأخيره

□ طالب دراسات عليا في الجامعة:
□ Masters □ Ph.D. □ M.D. □ Ed.D. □ J.D.

3. تخصصي الرئيسي هو / سيكون:_____

4. إختر العبارة التي تصفك:

□ أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية من أجل الإلتحاق بهذه الجامعة.

□ أدرس اللغة الإنجليزية من أجل الإلتحاق بجامعة اخرى.

□ درست وأكملت في معهد اللغة الإنجليزية لهذه الجامعة ومستمر في هذه الجامعة

□ درست وأكملت في معهد لغة الإنجليزية آخر ومستمر في هذه الجامعة

□ دخلت وأدرس في هذه الجامعة دون الحاجة للدراسة في معهد اللغة الإنجليزية
انتقلت لهذه الجامعة من جامعة أخرى في الولايات المتحدة.

□ انتقلت لهذه الجامعة من جامعة أخرى في المملكة العربية السعودية.

□ انتقلت لهذه الجامعة من جامعة أخرى في الخارج، ولكن ليس في المملكة العربية السعودية.

□ أخرى: _____

5. أنت هنا في الولايات المتحدة تدرس ب:

□ برنامج خادم الحرمين الشريفين للابتعاث الخارجي □ منحة دراسية مؤسسية □ حسابك الخاص

□ أخرى:_____

Participant Identifier: ____

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol

Research Question: In what ways, if at all, do Saudi students talk about how they make meaning of their national identity when participating in higher education in the United States?

1. How do Saudi students perceive higher education in the United States and Saudi Arabia?
2. How does internationalization impact the perception of higher education in the United States and Saudi Arabia?
3. How does gender and other social identities matter, if at all?

Group A Questions: Getting Started

1. Let me first take a moment to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.
2. How are you doing today?
3. Can you tell me a little about yourself before you came to the United States?
   - Who were you?
   - How would you have described yourself?
4. Before you came to study, how would you have described the United States?
5. What made you decide to study in the United States?
6. How, if at all, has your perspective or view of the United States changed since studying here?
7. How would you describe who you are now that you are studying in the United States compared to before you came?
8. How, if at all, has your perspective or view of Saudi Arabia changed since studying in the United States?

Group B Questions: Perception of Higher Education

1. How would you describe your educational experience in the United States?
   - What did you expect education to be like in the United States before you arrived?
   - Once you arrived in the US, what did you discover about education?
2. How would you describe education in Saudi Arabia?
   - What, if any, changes have been made to education in Saudi Arabia?
   - If changes have been made, who do you believe has made these changes and why?
3. Please describe how education in the US compares to education in Saudi Arabia?
4. What do you believe is the purpose of higher education?

Group C Questions: Perceptions of Internationalization in Higher Education

1. How, if at all, do you perceive that the United States has educated students, faculty, and staff about different cultures and social groups?
2. How, if at all, do you perceive that Saudi Arabia has educated students, faculty, and staff about different cultures and social groups?
3. How, if at all, do you perceive that the United States has developed relationships with colleges and universities abroad?

4. How, if at all, do you perceive that Saudi Arabia has developed relationships with colleges and universities abroad?
5. How important do you feel cross-cultural and international relationships are between colleges and universities globally? Why?
6. What is your interpretation of cross-cultural and global education?

Group D Questions: Defining National Identity

1. How do you define being US?
2. How do you define being Saudi?
3. How has studying in the US impacted the way you feel about being Saudi?
4. How would you compare being a US male to being a Saudi male?
5. How would you compare being a US female to being a Saudi female?
6. How has studying in the United States impacted the way you feel about being a Saudi male/female?
7. What are your future goals?
8. How do you plan to use your education?

أسئلة المقابلة

سؤال البحث: ما هي الطرق التي، (إذا وجدت). يتحدث الطلاب السعوديين عن كيفية استخراج معنى لهويتهم الوطنية عند المشاركة في التعليم العالي في الولايات المتحدة؟

1. كيف يرى الطلاب السعوديين التعليم العالي في الولايات المتحدة والمملكة العربية السعودية؟
2. كيف يكون تأثيرالتدويل على مفهوم التعليم العالي في الولايات المتحدة والمملكة العربية السعودية؟
3. كيف يمكن ل الجنس والهويات الاجتماعية الأخرى تأثير، إذا وجدت؟

أسئلة المجموعة A: الشروع في العمل

1. اسمحوا لي أولا أن نتوقف لحظة لأشكركم على الموافقة على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.
2. كيف حالك اليوم؟
3. هل يمكن أن تخبرني قليلا عن نفسك قبل أن تحضر إلى الولايات المتحدة؟
   - من كنت؟
   - كيف وصفت نفسك؟
4. قبل أن تأتي للدراسة، كيف كانت روئيتك للولايات المتحدة؟
5. ما الذي جعلك تقرر للدراسة في الولايات المتحدة؟
6. كيف، (إذا وجدت) تغيرت نظرتك أو روئيتك في الولايات المتحدة منذ أن درست هنا؟
7. كيف يمكن أن تصف من أنت الآن وأنت تدرس في الولايات المتحدة مقارنة مع قبل أن تأتي؟
8. كيف، (إذا وجدت). تغير منظورك أو رؤيتك في المملكة العربية السعودية منذ الدراسة في الولايات المتحدة ؟

أسئلة المجموعة B : تصور التربية والتعليم العالي

1. كيف يمكن أن تصف التجربة التعليمية الخاصة بك في الولايات المتحدة؟
   - ماذا كنت تتوقع أن يكون التعليم في الولايات المتحدة قبل وصولك؟
   - بمجرد وصولك إلى الولايات المتحدة، ما الذي اكتشفته عن التعليم؟
2. كيف تصف التعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية؟
   - ما هي، (إن وجدت) التغييرات التي طرأت على التعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية؟
   - إذا كانت هناك تغييرات حصلت، من تعتقد قام بهذه التغييرات ولماذا؟
3. الرجاء وصف التعليم في الولايات المتحدة مقارنة بالتعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية؟
4. ماذا تعتقد الغرض من التعليم العالي؟

أسئلة المجموعة C : تصورات التدويل في التعليم العالي

كيف، (إذا وجدت)، تعتقد أن الولايات المتحدة وفرت التعليم للطلاب وأعضاء هيئة التدريس. والموظفين حول مختلف الثقافات والفئات الاجتماعية؟

كيف، (إذا وجدت)، تعتقد أن المملكة العربية السعودية وفرت التعليم للطلاب وأعضاء هيئة التدريس. والموظفين حول مختلف الثقافات والفئات الاجتماعية؟

كيف، على كل حال، هو تصورك أن الولايات المتحدة طورت علاقات مع الكليات والجامعات في الخارج؟

كيف، على كل حال، هو تصورك أن المملكة العربية السعودية طورت علاقات مع الكليات والجامعات في الخارج؟

ما مدى أهمية هو شعورك بين الثقافات والعلاقات الدولية ما بين الكليات والجامعات على مستوى العالم؟ لماذا؟

ما هو تفسيرك ل التعليم بين الثقافات المختلفة والتعليم العالمي؟

أسئلة المجموعة D : تعريف الهوية الوطنية

1. كيف تُعَرّف الأمريكي؟
2. كيف تُعَرّف السعودي؟

3. كيف الدراسة في الولايات المتحدة أثرت على الطريقة التي تشعر بها عن كونك سعودي/ سعودية؟
4. كيف تقارن الذكور في الولايات المتحدة مع الذكور في المملكة العربية السعودية؟
5. كيف تقارن الإناث في الولايات المتحدة مع الإناث في المملكة العربية السعودية؟
6. كيف أن الدراسة في الولايات المتحدة أثرت على الطريقة التي تشعر بها حول كونك ذكرا سعودي / أنثى سعودية؟
7. ما هي أهدافك المستقبلية؟
8. ماهو تخطيطك لإستخدام تعليمك؟

APPENDIX F

Attestation for Translated Documents

Date

Re: Attestation for translated documents

I have translated the Interest to Participate Form, Advertisement Template, Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study, Demographic Information Form, and research questions based on the current English version of the aforementioned.

I am qualified to translate because Arabic is my native language.

By signing this letter, I attest to the best of my knowledge that the Arabic version of each document represents an accurate reflection of the English version.

Sincerely,

Translator

APPENDIX G

Interview Protocol for Translators

The translator will be trained to uphold the following guidelines when working with the primary investigator during interview sessions.

- **Trust**. Participants must feel comfortable answering questions honestly. In order to build this type of trust, participants will need to be ensured that the research team is focused and will keep the information they share private. Therefore, the translator must:
    - Sign this confidentiality statement prior to the start of the interview session.
    - Participate as an active listener.
    - Relay information to the research participants in their native language without elaboration that may present bias.
    - And ask for clarification when needed in order to ensure that information is appropriately translated.
- **Conduct**. The display of a strong reaction and/or emotion to a participant's response may cause the research participant to adjust the way in which they respond to interview questions. This may result in incomplete or inaccurate data collection. Therefore, the translator must:
    - Refrain from displaying emotional responses.
    - Refrain from disapproving facial expressions.
    - Display empathy.
    - Maintain a neutral observer's presence.

- **Control.** It is important to note that the interviewer should always be in control of the interview session**.** This aids in keeping the research participant from straying off topic during the interview session and also gives credibility to the interviewer. Therefore, the translators must:
    - Refrain from answering any questions without first redirecting the question back to the interviewer for a response.
    - Provide the response back to the research participant without elaboration that is outside the realms of translation and may present bias to the study.
    - Refrain from interrupting both the research participant and the interviewer to inject personal ideas or responses.

Consent to Confidentiality and to Follow Translator Interview Protocol:
You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records. If you agree to follow the above listed translator protocol, please sign and date below.

_____
Translator's Name (please print)

_____ _____
Translator's Signature Date

Participant Identifier: ____

APPENDIX H

Pseudonyms for Participants

Part. ID	Male Names
1.	Yahya
2.	Hussain
3.	
4.	
5.	Khalid
6.	
7.	Fahad
8.	
9.	
10.	Nasir
11.	
12.	
13.	Rashad
14.	Aimen - withdrew
15.	Mustafa - withdrew

Part. ID	Female Names
1.	
2.	
3.	Aaliyah
4.	Aisha
5.	
6.	Amara
7.	
8.	Nadia
9.	Samira
10.	
11.	Zahra
12.	Safa
13.	
14.	
15.	

APPENDIX I

Participant Master List Form

Part. ID	Male Participant Names
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

Part. ID	Female Participant Names
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

APPENDIX J

Coding for Group A Questions

Group A Questions: Getting Started			
Let me first take a moment to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.			
Cordiality			
How are you doing today?			
Cordiality			
Can you tell me about yourself before you came to the United States? Who were you? How would you have described yourself?			
Theoretical lens: Individual Core Identity - personal attributes, characteristics, and identity	**Code:** Prior education - High school graduate - College student - College graduate	Cis Gender M M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Individual Core Identity - personal attributes, characteristics, and identity	**Code:** Personal traits - Ambitious - Smart - Insufficient	Cis Gender M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Contextual Influences – (individual) peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions	**Code:** Influential relationships - Spouse - Mom/Dad - Siblings	Cis Gender M M	 F F F
Before you came to study, how would you have described the United States?			
Theoretical lens: Contextual Influences – (individual) peers, family, norms, stereotypes, sociopolitical conditions	**Code:** Influencers - Media - Peers - Education	Cis Gender M M M	 F F F
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities – (individual to collective) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Concepts of freedom - Speech - Action - Beliefs	Cis Gender M M M	 F F F
What made you decide to study in the United States?			
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Future opportunities - Education - Level the playing field - Employment	Cis Gender M M M	 F
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Personal opportunities - Different experience - Self-discovery/Who am I? - Emotionally rewarding - Independence	Cis Gender M M 	 F F
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Choice - Imposed upon negative - Imposed upon positive - Self-selection	Cis Gender M	 F F F
How, if at all, has your perspective or view of the United States changed since studying here?			

Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness - the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Perceived fears - "We heard…" - "I thought…" - "I was expecting…" - "I heard…"	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	
		M	
			F
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness - the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Acts of oppression - Othered - Islamophobia - Black/white racism - Racial cliques	Cis Gender	
		M	
			F
			F
			F
Theoretical lens: Zone of Commitment: proximity between individual and collective core identity	**Code:** Advocacy - "I will fire back…" - Challenge to status quo	Cis Gender	
			F
			F
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (individual to collective) the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope	**Code:** Personal Challenges - Every day living - Independence - Responsibilities	Cis Gender	
			F
			F
			F
How would you describe who you are now that you are studying in the United States compared to before you came?			
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality of social identity – (individual/macro-micro dimensions) identity crisis	**Code:** Questioning Identity - Internal conflict - Who am I? - What do I believe?	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	
		M	
Theoretical lens: Individual Core Identity - personal attributes, characteristics, and identity	**Code:** Recognizing Identity - Independent - Responsible - Confident - Grown-up - Leader	Cis Gender	
			F
			F
			F
			F
			F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Advocate of change - Social responsibility - Open minded - Value diversity	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	F
		M	F
How, if at all, has your perspective or view of Saudi Arabia changed since studying in the United States?			
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness - the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Need for change - Outside looking in - Critical lens	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	F
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness - the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Identifying needed changes - Education - Women's Rights - Diversity - Corruption	Cis Gender	
		M	F
		M	F
		M	F
			F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Changers - Students who study abroad - Saudi government - Saudi people	Cis Gender	
		M	F
			F
			F

APPENDIX K

Coding for Group B Questions

Group B Questions: Perception of Higher Education			
How would you describe your educational experience in the United States? What did you expect education to be like in the United States before you arrived? Once you arrived in the US, what did you discover about education?			
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (individual to collective) the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope	**Code:** Educational model - Rigor - Methodology	Cis Gender M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (individual to collective/micro-macro) the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope	**Code:** Faculty - Quality - Preparation	Cis Gender M M	 F
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (individual to collective/micro-macro) the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope	**Code:** Facilities - External environment - Internal environment	Cis Gender M M	 F
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities Intersectionality – (individual to individual/micro) social constructs of identity of two or more individuals meet and/or are layered	**Code:** Peers - Stereotyping - Achievement	Cis Gender M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Emotional Response - Nervous - Overwhelmed - Scared	Cis Gender 	 F F F
How would you describe education in Saudi Arabia? What, if any, changes have been made to education in Saudi Arabia? If changes have been made, who do you believe has made these changes and why?			
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (individual to collective/micro-macro) the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope	**Code:** Evolving - Facilities - Resources - Subject matter - Methods available	Cis Gender M M M M	 F F F F

Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (individual to collective/micro-macro) the potential of assisting an individual in moving from the immediate construction of social identities to that of a broader scope	**Code:** Obstacles - Religious sector - Government - Environment - Methodology - Faculty - Diversity - Access	Cis Gender M M M M M M	 F F F F
Theoretical lens: Collective Action of Collective Core Identity - an important instrument to change collective identities	**Code:** Change makers - Government Leader - Study abroad participants - Educators	Cis Gender M M 	 F F
Please describe how education in the US compares to education in Saudi Arabia?			
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (collective to collective/macro) collective bonding; collective conflict; Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual to collective) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Education Systems - Positives - Negatives - Similarities - Differences	Cis Gender M M 	 F F
What do you believe is the purpose of higher education?			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Advancement - Society - Self	Cis Gender M M	 F F

APPENDIX L

Coding for Group C Questions

Group C Questions: Perceptions of Internationalization in Higher Education			
How, if at all, do you perceive that the United States has educated students, faculty, and staff about different cultures and social groups?			
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness – the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Organic Interactions - Student – student - Student – faculty - Student – community	Cis Gender M M M	 F F F
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness – the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Spatial Interactions - Hiring diverse faculty - International students - Curriculum - Clubs and organization	Cis Gender M M M	 F F F
How, if at all, do you perceive that Saudi Arabia has educated students, faculty, and staff about different cultures and social groups?			
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness – the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Limited Organic Interactions - Student – professor - Student – student - Shi'ite – Sunni	Cis Gender M M M	 F
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness – the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Limited Spatial Interactions - Hiring English speaking faculty - Multiplicity of Arab students - Curriculum	Cis Gender M M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Zone of Awareness – the degree to which an individual or a collective is aware of those with whom they share their spaces.	**Code:** Self-educated - Family - Friends - Media - Travel - Research	Cis Gender 	 F F F F F
How, if at all, do you perceive that the United States has developed relationships with colleges and universities abroad?			
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (collective to collective/macro) collective bonding; collective conflict	**Code:** Relationships - Education – government - Education – education - Education – corporate	Cis Gender M M	 F F F
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities – (collective) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Benefactors - Students - Corporations - Governments	Cis Gender M M M	 F F
How, if at all, do you perceive that Saudi Arabia has developed relationships with colleges and universities abroad?			
Theoretical lens: Intersectionality – (collective to collective/macro) collective bonding; collective conflict	**Code:** Relationships - Education – government - Education – education - Education – corporate	Cis Gender M M 	 F F

Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities – (collective) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Benefactors - Students - Corporations - Governments	Cis Gender	
		M	F
			F
		M	
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Product - Different learning environment - Advancements	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	
How important do you feel cross-cultural and international relationships are between colleges and universities globally? Why?			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Promotes Learning Differently - Diversity - Advancement - Equality - Advocacy	Cis Gender	
		M	
			F
		M	F
		M	
What is your interpretation of cross-cultural and global education?			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Global Community - Acceptance - Co-existence - Advancement - Respect - Awareness	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	
			F
		M	
		M	F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Communication - Collaboration - Shared knowledge	Cis Gender	
		M	
		M	F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Ideal Model - Faculty - Types Classes - Curriculum	Cis Gender	
		M	F
			F
		M	

APPENDIX M

Coding for Group D Questions

Group D Questions: Defining National Identity			
How do you define being US?			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Freedom - Speech - Choice	Cis Gender M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Personal Traits - Arrogant - Superior - Proud - Nice - Patriotic - Powerful - Selfish	Cis Gender M M M 	 F F F F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Culture - Social responsibility - Family structure - Debt - Location	Cis Gender M M M	 F
How do you define being Saudi?			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Structural - Religion - Economic - Debt free - Tribal - Family - Need for change	Cis Gender M M M M M	 F F F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Personal Traits - Proud - Ignorant - Loyal - Strict - Patriotic - Conservative	Cis Gender M M M M	 F F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Negatives - Judged - Shamed - Closed minded	Cis Gender 	 F F F
How has studying in the US impacted the way you feel about being Saudi?			
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Male Perception - Proud - Social responsibility - Reflective - Loyal to country	Cis Gender M M M M	
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Female Perception - Empowerment - Proud - Confident	Cis Gender 	 F F F

	- Desire for more rights		F
How would you compare being a US male to being a Saudi male?			
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Male Perception	Cis Gender	
	- US dangerous	M	
	- US independent	M	
	- US we vs. Them	M	
	- US Freedom	M	
	- US responsible at younger age	M	
	- Saudi Restricted	M	
	- Saudi more responsible	M	
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Female Perception	Cis Gender	
	- Saudi have more responsibilites		F
			F
	- Saudi are over the women		F
	- Saudi disrespect women		F
	- US share responsibilities		F
	- US equal to women		F
	- US respect women		
How would you compare being a US female to being a Saudi female?			
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Male Perception	Cis Gender	
	- Saudi have more rights	M	
	- Saudi dependent on men	M	
	- Saudi lack freedom	M	
	- Saudi more respected	M	
	- Saudi depends on class	M	
	- US more independent	M	
Theoretical lens: Realms of Perceived Realities - (individual) how we define our truths and/or realities	**Code:** Female Perception	Cis Gender	
	- Saudi defined by religion		F
	- Saudi more respected		F
	- US have more rights		F
	- US are judgmental		F
How has studying in the United States impacted the way you feel about being a Saudi male? (male responses only)			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Personal Traits	Cis Gender	
	- Independent	M	
	- Responsible	M	
	- Proud	M	
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Advocacy	Cis Gender	
	- Critical lens	M	
	- Women's rights	M	
	- Use of one's voice	M	
	- Positive change	M	
How has studying in the United States impacted the way you feel about being a Saudi female? (female responses only)			
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Personal Traits	Cis Gender	
	- Respected		F
	- Proud		F
	- A leader		F
Theoretical lens: Context, Contextual Influences, and Filtering – Making meaning	**Code:** Personal Desires	Cis Gender	
	- Freedom		F
	- A voice		F

	- Equality		F
What are your future goals?			
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Relocation - Outside of Kingdom	Cis Gender M	F
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Social Responsibility - Improve country - Become educator	Cis Gender M M	
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Personal Attainment - More education - Become a leader - Work - Start a family	Cis Gender M M 	 F F F
How do you plan to use your education?			
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Community Activism - Improve education - Volunteerism - Public Health - Community Change	Cis Gender M M 	 F F
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Relocation - US	Cis Gender M	F
Theoretical lens: Choice - how we act, react and interact as we move through relationships, time and our environment/space; act as chosen or act differently	**Code:** Personal attainment - Work - More Education - Research - Power	Cis Gender M M M	F F F