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5 Study Abroad in Diverse Contexts

A Comparative Analysis of the Role of the Linguistic and Cultural Setting in Study Abroad Through the Erasmus Program

Vasilica Mocanu

Introduction

This chapter aims to answer the following research question: how does a Northern, Eastern, and Southern European host context influence students' sojourns abroad and their respective linguistic and cultural learning processes?

In accordance with the research question, the present chapter focuses on linguistic and cultural gains in study abroad (henceforth SA). It is based on the premise that “study-abroad outcomes should be conceptualized as the development of intercultural communicative competence and analyzed in conjunction with linguistic development” (Taguchi & Collentine, 2018, pp. 557–558).

In order to examine how the contexts of SA shape the students' experiences of cultural and linguistic learning, the three levels of language learning identified by the Douglas Fir Group—the micro level of social activity, the meso level of sociocultural institutions and communities, and the macro level of ideological structures (Fukui & Tomoko, 2021, p. 270)—are considered. Data is elicited through content analysis of semi-structured interviews with 13 higher education students enrolled in a period of SA at a foreign university in 1) Oulu (Finland); 2) Bucharest (Romania); 3) Lleida (Catalonia) within the academic year 2015–2016. A varied sample of participants was selected, attending to their nationalities, destinations, gender, and fields of study (Appendix Figure 5.1).

First, the expectations of the Erasmus students at each of the three universities concerning their SA experience are analyzed. The first objective is to understand how students frame a desire to study abroad in each of the three contexts in terms of potential personal and professional goals, among which language-related skills play a determinant role. Secondly, the perceived degree of accomplishment of students' initial expectations in each of the three contexts when they are at the end of their sojourn abroad will be examined. In this way, we will delve into the reported relationship between the discourses behind the program, which associate different types of capital to be gained to an Erasmus sojourn in Finland, Romania, and Catalonia, and the actual impact of the experience in each of the three contexts.

Study Abroad in the Sense of a Context

SA has been defined as “a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes” (Kinginger, 2009, p. 11). In the present chapter, SA refers to a period at a foreign university that can last for one or two semesters where the study of or studying through a second language(s) is implied, even though it might not always be the primary purpose of the sojourn. SA has shown to be one of the best contexts to learn a second language due to its unique combination of in-class (instructed) and out-of-class (uninstructed) learning (Freed, 1995; Collentine, 2009). Hence, it is also a key factor with a determinant role in SA experiences (e.g., DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Köylü & Tracy-Ventura, 2022).

Research on the role of the host context has mainly focused on how the host culture, together with the program characteristics, can shape opportunities for language learning. Kinginger (2009) identifies three primary settings in which students are believed to have variable access to communicative interaction: (1) educational institutions and classrooms; (2) place of residence; (3) service encounters and other informal contacts with native speakers. However, SA is not a magic formula for language learning *per se*, and programs that foster student observation, participation, and reflection about the sociolinguistic context are recommended (Deardorff, 2009; Kinginger, 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012).

Since the SA setting refers to contexts where the L2 is “allegedly institutionally, socially, and functionally implemented” (Llanes et al., 2016, p. 293), feelings of being rejected by the host culture or a certain degree of superficiality in the relationship with the host members can lead to withdrawal and reduce success in second language acquisition. Furthermore, the positions the learners adopt when encountering sociocultural and linguistic differences may also play a role in restricting or facilitating their access to the target communities (DuFon & Churchill, 2006).

In relation to intercultural gains, cultural distance has shown to be positively related (Wells, 2006; Che et al., 2009). Furthermore, not just cultural distance but also the characteristics of the host context seem to be determinants of SA experiences (Davis & Knight, 2021). On this note, Tarchi et al. (2019, p. 125) state that there is a need “to consider a range of programs in different contexts to develop a more general understanding of how cultural distance influences student learning in SA programs”.

Regarding language learning objectives, oral fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and socio-pragmatic skills are the domains that benefit most from SA. For instance, Llanes et al. (2016) show how a SA period in a non-Anglophone country had a positive effect on students’ general L2 proficiency and written lexical complexity in English, thus demonstrating the contribution to the improvement of English of SA contexts where English is used as a *lingua franca*. However, Taguchi and Collentine (2018, p. 564) make the point that “(h)aving recognized the ‘study abroad myths’, scholars no longer believe that spending time abroad automatically leads to measurable gains in linguistic and cultural learning”, and they encourage researchers to examine SA at both an individual and a societal level.

Discussion of Methodological Approach

A sample of interviews with 13 participants was chosen for the present chapter, attending to the principle of variety in terms of country of origin, gender, destination, and field of study. The names of the participants were changed to preserve their anonymity.

The three settings (Finland, Romania, and Catalonia) were chosen to examine three contexts in Europe believed to be different at the cultural, social, economic, and linguistic levels. Despite differences between the contexts not being empirically founded, they are well-established in the collective imaginary and exist and operate at many levels. For instance, at a mere geographical level, the United Nations Statistics Division¹ separates the European continent into Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern Europe.

Each of the three chosen contexts belongs to a different area: Eastern, Northern, and Southern Europe. While Finland’s first official language is Finnish (a language unrelated to the Latin family of languages), Romanian, Catalan, and Spanish belong to the Latin language family. Although the three are Roman languages, essential differences exist. Spanish has a very high international profile, spoken by hundreds of millions of people and taught as a foreign language on five continents. The international projection and prestige of Romanian, instead, are much lower. Finally, while Spanish and Catalan are similar, the colossal dimension of the former, both at the national and international level, significantly overcomes the dimension of the latter, which is a minority language within Spain. From an economic and political point of view, the three countries belong to the European Union. However, while Spain accessed the EU in 1986, Finland was admitted in 1995, and Romania did not enter the EU until 2007.

PRE and POST versions of a semi-structured interview (Appendix, Figure 5.2) were used to elicit the data at the beginning and the end of the sojourn abroad. The selected interviews were transcribed using a number of transcription conventions (Appendix, Figure 5.3). Content analysis was employed to find similarities and contradictions in the participants’ accounts, which were eventually contrasted and compared.

What Have We Found?

Beginning of the Stay – Setting Expectations

At the beginning of their sojourn abroad, the participants were asked to reflect upon the following questions:

Q1: What were the reasons that determined you to enroll in a mobility program? What role did languages play?

Q2: Why Oulu (Finland)/ Lleida (Catalonia)/ Bucharest (Romania)?

Oulu, Finland

At the beginning of their sojourn abroad, students in the Oulu group said they were motivated by the attraction of Finland's outstanding role in education and social welfare, the English proficiency of the Finns, and the high standards of Finnish education. Claudia and Jennifer depict Finland as an English-speaking country: "CQ: all the countries we could choose/ none was English spoken/ (...) / and we chose Finland for English/" in a discourse that shows how they are lured by their image of Finland: "CQ: they are very advanced/ so just for that/ I don't mind not doing anything (...) but simply seeing how they do it/; JC: you feel like staying in the university/(...) not like in Spain that you feel like going home/". Similarly, Stefaan points out having chosen Oulu because of the quality of the game industry: "the industry is really big over here", and Mila also highlights Finnish education as one of the rationales for her choice.

Bucharest, Romania

In the Bucharest group, the participants appear to have different reasons for choosing Romania. For Kalina, geographical, cultural, and social proximity between Romania and her home country appears as a determinant: "I want to meet Romanian people/ and be close to home and learn Romanian/ (...) Romania and Bucharest is like Bulgaria/ is like Sofia/ a little bit better/". Jesús remarks on the opportunity to travel to a European location that allows him to get to know the area: "it is a very big opportunity to travel being centered in an area that allows me to see all the rest of Europe/".

Federica chose Bucharest, expecting it to be an excellent place to learn English: "English/ because we speak English in Bucharest/".

Finally, Sami and Jussi highlight that they chose Bucharest for being the only place where they were allowed to go together and for the opportunity to get a very different cultural perspective: "SN: we had decided long ago that we will go to the same place/; JN: we'll get a new perspective about how people live in other countries/ very different countries than Finland/".

Lleida, Catalonia

In the Lleida group, Mildri mentions Spanish as the main incentive for her destination choice. She reports on not having Lleida, but Spain as a destination, for which she displays some sort of fascination: "I think that somehow/ (...) maybe in another life I was born in Spain/ (...) in a country where Spanish is spoken/ because I wanted very much to go to a country where Spanish is spoken/ (...) there were two options/ A Coruña and Lleida/ ah a friend of mine chose A Coruña, and I was left with Lleida, and I was happy with it because I was going to Spain/". Finally, for Radka, Lleida appeared to be a more open place for English-speaking students: "I could choose two universities from Spain/ and Lleida was much more open for English speaking students/". By the

way, language perception, either English as ELF or any other local language, during the traditional SA contradict our findings in part two and three of the current volume.

End of the Stay – Aligning Expectations with Reality

At the end of the stay, the participants were asked the following questions with regard to the context where their experience took place:

Q1: What were your expectations before going to Oulu/Lleida/Bucharest? What about languages? Would you say they were accomplished?

Q2: Did you feel welcome by the society where your stay took place? What about the institutions?

Oulu, Finland

In Oulu, Jennifer and Claudia were highly disappointed: "CQ: we thought it would be six months and in the end, it was five/ I think that was the only reason I could bear it/; JC: also that you spend twelve euros on two coffees/ it's nonsense/; CQ: I also felt a little...not very well...treated or valued/; JC: at the moment of the practicum I didn't feel well; CQ: one has to face many problems/ many/ many/ (...) regarding the healthcare system...; JC: exactly/; CQ: awful/".

All in all, their feeling of not being well-treated or valued in the host country led to an enhanced national pride: "CQ: I was very disappointed about the basic cures by the Finns/ because one thing is to be cold and the other one is to be a son of a bitch/; JC: awful/ awful/ I think that on the basic/ on the basic... at a cultural level/; CQ: I said/ let's see/ they'll speak about Spain/ but Spain is a gem/". Jennifer and Claudia are, by far, the participants that show the most prominent contrast between a considerably high degree of expectations at the beginning and a significant lack of enthusiasm at the end of the sojourn. However, the participants declare that their English proficiency has improved: "JC: I arrived, and my English was non-existent/ and on my return I was assigned a hospital where many tourists come/ and certainly I felt super well because I can communicate with them/; CQ: the nurses come to look for you/ (...) please/ translate for me/ because I don't understand anything/ and you go there/ with your English/".

On a similar note, Stefaan stresses that the experience was not as good as he initially thought: "I expected it to be...different/ but it's hard to describe what I expected to be different/ (...) Finnish people/ I already knew what they would be like/ sort of/ but still they were a bit shier than I expected/ (...) and I expected the education to be a little bit better/". In relation to Finnish, the participant remarks that he didn't learn it because of its complexity and the English proficiency of Finns: "it's impossible to learn/ (...) Finnish people speak excellent English/ so I didn't really see why I would/".

Diego expresses positive feelings with regard to the treatment he received, but the coldness of the locals prevented them from making contacts and speaking Finnish: "all the teachers/ the...all the staff from/ (...) the international relations were great actually/ (...) the only thing with the local people there/ since they are really very cold/ we didn't make many friends/ (...) I had little contact with the Finns/ I didn't really need it/ there everybody spoke English".

On a different note, Mila expresses she was expecting to have a great time in a country with a high quality of life and to find new friends, which was a reality: "I had expectations of having a really good time/ to live in a country with a higher quality of life/ to enjoy it/ this all happened/ to find new friends". The participant brings to the fore, once more, that the high proficiency in English of Finns prevented her from learning Finnish: "everybody was speaking so well English that I/ you didn't need to strive so much learning Finnish".

Finally, Meyer remarks that he did not have high expectations about Oulu, except for better grades. Both things were accomplished, and the experience is described as good overall: "I thought that I would have like better grades than I would get in Germany and this also turned out to be true/ (...) overall a good experience". The complexity and reduced size of Finnish also determined him not to invest in learning the language: "I took the basic Finnish/ it was extremely hard, and then I compared like OK there are five million people in this world/ speaking like this fucking hard language/ so the effort is maybe not really worth it".

Bucharest, Romania

In the Bucharest group, Federica stresses that she changed some prejudices about Romanian people: "in Italy often the Italian people have not a good idea about Romanian people/ (...) my idea changed because the Romanian people is very friendly/ and they have a good student/ a good people". In relation to language learning, she did not invest much in Romanian, and she emphasizes that she would instead learn French before: "I did some Romanian courses in Bucharest/ (...), but I want to learn before French/ and after Romanian".

Sami, who declares he had no expectations but hoped the experience was going to be a life-changing one, also shows satisfaction with his sojourn: "I had absolutely no expectations/ in the culture and the country really but/ I was hoping that it's gonna be a life-changing experience/ and it was". He declares significant improvement and investment in sounding like a native speaker of English: "I've been working on my own/ English/ a lot/ I'm trying to sound like some/ native speaker".

Similarly, Jussi affirms he felt welcomed by the local society: "well/ yeah/ many people were interested/ a:/ like/ why we came there/ where're we from/ (...) so/ we felt welcome". The participant also declares improvement in English proficiency: "everyone improved their English/ got used to it/ easier to listen".

Jesús also seems to be entirely satisfied with the context, a basis from where he could discover other places and improve his level of English: "I had the

intention to travel a lot/ learn other/ English and improve it/ (...) I wanted... to pass all subjects/ (...) I think they were accomplished/ also the one about traveling was... I overcame it". In relation to Romanian, he emphasizes his lack of effort to learn it was due to the high English proficiency of Romanian people: "firstly is laziness/ (...) I didn't have much contact with people with whom I needed Romanian".

Finally, Kalina points out that the experience overcame her expectations: "I definitely didn't expect this to be that good and that interesting" and she emphasizes the metalinguistic knowledge she's gained through the stay that enables her to understand Romanian and Italian people when they speak English: "well for me it was easier to communicate with a:h/ Italian people and with Romanian people/ (...) Italian people in general they speak slower/ so they are easier to understand when they pronounce words and a:h/ Romanian people they have the s... exactly the same sounds as we have in Bulgaria".

Lleida, Catalonia

In the Lleida group, Mildri affirms she didn't have many expectations before her arrival: "I didn't have that much expectations/ (...) in my apartment they were very nice to me, and class people were nice/ maybe not everyone was so open to get to know me like after class". However, when it comes to the treatment she received from the institutions in Lleida, Mildri highlights the refusal of some professors to speak Spanish who confronted her with the question of why she had chosen Lleida as a destination given her lack of proficiency in Catalan: "usually yes/ but for example, when the professors refused to speak Spanish/ or they asked me why I come to Lleida when I don't speak Catalan/ I didn't feel that welcome". The participant also highlights that her improvement in Spanish might have negatively affected her English level: "no/ I don't think so/ (laughs)/ maybe it got worse because I started thinking in Spanish".

Mădălina explains that she did not expect to meet as many kind people as she did: "actually I didn't expect to find so many people with such a good heart/ (...) and I'm very thankful/ thankful for that". The participant is satisfied overall, but she highlights the limited contact with local people: "I felt very welcome by the office of international relations in Lleida/ (...), but I didn't have much contact with Catalans". However, the participant improved her Spanish level, but due to a surprising reason, her flatmate was Mexican. English proficiency has not been improved: "I hope very much that I improved my Spanish/ (...) because I lived with a Mexican/ since she was my best friend then we always spoke Spanish/ (...) I didn't improve my English".

Finally, Radka brings to the fore that she felt somehow ignored by her teachers since they did not seem to care about her being an Erasmus student, nor did she receive any material in English: "I didn't expect that/ that the classes would be in English/ (...), but I thought they would be more open for Erasmus students/, but actually they were not so:". However, the participant seems to be satisfied with the treatment she received in Lleida: "international students'

office made really good job/ (...) then it was a little bit harder on my university/ (...) they really wasn't/ weren't that warm as I expected but...". Radka is also the only participant who seemed to have improved both Spanish and English during her sojourn. However, Catalan remained on a basic level: "Actually, I improved even my English because I had to work with many English material so at least reading/ reading texts/ (...) I did some improvement in this/ and then I learnt also Spanish/ I/ I had only some basis before I came to Spain and I enrolled to a Spanish course/ it was really useful/, and I also got some basis of Catalan language/".

Some Reflections upon the Findings of the Three Contexts

We learnt that the context and its linguistic landscape play an important role in deciding what kind of sojourn abroad students would like to have and, most significantly, what languages they are willing to invest in and the expected benefits associated with each location. However, the participants' accounts at the end of their sojourn signal that the initially imagined contexts and how they eventually turn out to be could be considerably different, which are correlated to either positive or negative feelings towards the respective settings and the people that inhabit them.

In the Oulu group, expectations are considerably high. Finland is praised for its outstanding role in education, its social welfare, and the high English level of the Finns. In fact, it is described as an English-speaking country by some participants, while the existence of Finnish is ignored. However, it is precisely the Finnish context that appears to have deceived the participants the most, to the extent that a few display a significant amount of critique towards it. Indeed, there are different degrees of satisfaction, but overall, it appears that students' initial expectations in Oulu are far from their actual experiences. English proficiency appears to be among the few benefits of the stay. It is a general opinion among the participants that their English skills are better at the end of the sojourn. However, the high English proficiency of Finns and the complexity of the Finnish language, together with what seems to be a perceived low economic reward for Finnish proficiency, are factors that determined the participants not to invest in learning the local language.

Bucharest seems to follow the opposite trend. Initially, it is generally described as an affordable city that might prove suitable for learning English. Interestingly, while four of the five participants in Bucharest have chosen the destination for its exoticism and difference, the Bulgarian participant declares it was due to the similarity between the host context and her home city, which promised a comfortable stay. In the end, the sojourn is described as surprisingly positive, and the participants remark on the friendliness and kindness of Romanian people and even a change in their prejudiced ideas about Romania. In fact, it seems that the sojourn in Bucharest has been beyond the students' expectations, which contrasts with the fact that their expectations from the Romanian context were relatively low or inexistent. The English proficiency of

the participants in Romania is also declared to be better. However, none of them invested in learning Romanian beyond an elementary level, primarily due to the high English proficiency of Romanians.

Finally, Lleida (which equals Spain in the students' imaginaries) is imagined as a context that would offer an excellent opportunity to learn Spanish, and in some cases, as a location that is friendly to English-speaking students. The most significant expectation is probably its imaginary linguistic landscape, whose description is adorned with a fascination for the Spanish language and culture. In the end, it seems that the sojourn in Lleida has proved quite positive in improving Spanish proficiency. The significant presence of Catalan at the university and what is described as the refusal by some instructors to speak any other language but Catalan has negatively affected the sojourn of the participants. No investment in the Catalan language is reported, and just one participant declares having improved her English, though mainly through learning materials.

Students are also discontent with the reduced presence of English at the university and the limited contact with local people. Important to note is also the fact that some participants declare a lack of expectations, in some cases due to their conscious desire not to be disappointed. This deliberate lack of expectations signals that students are highly uninformed about the host contexts and also that, in some cases, the SA experience might be seen as an experience to be sought in itself, regardless of the context.

Conclusion

While the vast majority of students pick up a context according to the objectives (often linguistic) they believe a certain context might satisfy, many of them do not build any expectations in relation to the context, which is deliberate in some cases. Together with the students' linguistic expectations, this shows the substantial need for pre-departure information in SA in Europe. In the cases where students have built expectations, the higher ones are correlated to relatively disappointing results, while low expectations lead to surprising satisfaction. These outcomes point to substantial variations in Erasmus students' abroad opportunities to learn and the learning outcomes of the experience, which might be due to individual, but also to social factors (related both to the adoption of social discourses that can either idealize or underestimate a given context), "indicating that study abroad is far from a monolithic construct and needs to be examined at multiple levels (individual and societal)" (Taguchi & Collentine, 2018, p. 564). Due to this fact, pre-departure training focuses on the reality of each context, preferably combining a theoretical part that introduces the student to the intricacies of life in a foreign country and a practical side that includes meetings with former SA participants in each of these host contexts will "help students become aware of their sociocultural identities, cultural values, learning goals, and program expectations as well as to invest in their own learning and prepare to engage in sustained and meaningful ways with

members of the host culture" (Goldoni, 2013, p. 359). In the next chapter, we will demonstrate how one and the same context impacts the key mobility experiences foreseen for the international exchange actors.

Note

1 <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.

Appendix

<i>Pseudonyms</i>	<i>Age and gender</i>	<i>Field of Study</i>	<i>Country of origin</i>	<i>Country of SA location</i>
Claudia	22, female	Nursing Degree	Spain	Finland
Jennifer	22, female	Nursing Degree	Spain	Finland
Jussi	24, male	Construction Engineering	Finland	Romania
Sami	24, male	Construction Engineering	Finland	Romania
Mila	22, female	English Studies	Bulgaria	Finland
Stefaan	22, male	Computer Science	The Netherlands	Finland
Meyer	21, male	Business Administration	Germany	Finland
Jesús	22, male	Physics	Spain	Romania
Radka	23, female	Sports and Biology Teaching	The Czech Republic	Catalonia
Madalina	20, female	Journalism	Moldova	Catalonia
Federica	21, female	Business Studies	Italy	Romania
Mildri	25, female	Medicine	Norway	Catalonia
Kalina	22, female	Political Science	Bulgaria	Romania

Figure 5.1 Respondents' demographic data

1. What's your name and where are you from?
2. Which were the reasons that determined you to enroll in a mobility program?
3. Why Oulu/Lleida/Bucharest?
4. In which ways do you think this mobility plan will influence your life?
5. How would you define yourself? Do you feel you belong to a country/a province/ Europe?
What makes you feel this way?
6. Do you think a mobility plan can have any effects on your sense of belonging?
7. Are you planning to socialize more with local/Erasmus/people from your own country?
 - Do you think Erasmus students usually get along together?
 - Why?
 - Which is the common language of the Erasmus communities?

8. Which were your expectations before coming to Oulu/Lleida/Bucharest? How has your stay here been so far?
9. Which are your hopes with regard to your stay here? And fears?
10. How do you see your role in this new society?
11. How do you see yourself in 5 years? And where do you see yourself?
12. Had you had any experiences with foreign people before coming here?
 - Which kind of experiences?
 - How do you react to different manners to do things?
 - Do you think they affected your choice to be here in any way?
13. Which kind of jobs do you imagine yourself having in the future?
Do you think this experience will help you with that?
14. Do you think that the Erasmus programs are a place to make friends for a life?
How will you stay in contact with them?
15. Do you think there are any elements that define the European culture/identity?
16. Do you think the fact you belong to a European country made your stay here easier?
17. How do you see the world in the future? Do you think it will resemble more and more an Erasmus community?
18. How do you see the future of the European Union?

Figure 5.2 Pre-interview guiding questions

/- indicates the minimal but clear pause between phrases? Sentences in normally-paced speech
 ... - indicates pause of significant length (more than 0.5) seconds
 : - indicates the elongated vowel
 " " - indicates that the speaker is overtly voicing her/ himself or someone else
 X - indicates incomprehensible speech
 ? - indicates rising intonation (including questions)

Figure 5.3 Transcription conventions

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6 Ground Realities of International Students in China

Identity, Social Network, Language and Literacy Socialization

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Introduction

Owing to processes of globalization and internationalization of higher education (IHE), international student mobility (ISM) has witnessed unprecedented growth and garnered mounting research attention in the past few decades (Wen et al., 2018). However, extant scholarship features fragmentation are characterized by the scattered, repetitive, and conflicting discussions on how the IHE landscape evolves as international students' mobility trajectories demonstrate greater diversity and complexity (Yang, 2022). Notably, ISM research has been dominated by a neoliberal discourse that emphasizes the economic outcomes of international education and views international students as a vehicle for IHE, thereby reducing mobility decisions to strategies that increase social capital and maximize social advantages (Page & Chahboun, 2019). Despite the increasing attention to individuals' mobility experiences (Montgomery, 2010), a deficit and "othering" discourse persists in portraying international students, especially those from less privileged social and educational backgrounds, as incompetent outsiders in need of linguistic and academic assistance through interaction with host community members (Page & Chahboun, 2019; Lipura & Collins, 2020). It nevertheless imposes expectations on international students without considering their own demands and goals and providing sufficient space for a personal agency (Tran & Gomes, 2017). Furthermore, studies remain skewed toward Westward mobility, reinforcing the presumed value of Western university degrees while downplaying non-Western education as inferior or undesirable choices (Lipura & Collins, 2020). In light of new mobility patterns that challenge the West as a traditional, prestigious, and leading international education provider (Kondakci et al., 2018), it is important to give voice to those underrepresented international students and consider how they mobilize their cultural and intellectual resources when undertaking academic studies in "less favored", "periphery" educational contexts.

This chapter intends to engage with the aforementioned research gaps by providing a discussion of the mobility experiences of international students in China, an under-researched population, to augment the understanding of ISM ground realities and actual outcomes. Following this introductory section, the