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ABSTRACT

This study examined the long-term effects of youth exchange, specifically the degree to which former participants actually utilized results of the exchange after their return to their home country. The research focused on Germans and Americans who, as teenagers, experienced home stays in the other country between 1951 and 1987. Respondents were queried through a combination of in-depth exploratory interviews with 40 students and comprehensive survey questionnaires based on the findings from the exploratory phase. A total of 1,187 former exchange students received the survey with 661 responding. The study also included a comparison group of 384 individuals, each nominated by a returnee, who had not participated in a high school-level exchange but was of the same gender, similar age, and similar educational background. Analysis indicated that long-term benefits of the exchange experience included growth in self-confidence, acquisition of instrumental skills and extra resources for problem-solving, foreign language proficiency, and generalized coping skills. The findings support the idea that exchange should be viewed in longitudinal, even lifelong terms. It is an experience that contains positive benefits that endure beyond the time abroad. (Contains 41 references.) (Author/JLS)

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*Utilizing the Effects of
Youth Exchange:
A Study of the Subsequent Lives of
German and American High School
Exchange Participants*

*By David J. Bachner
and Ulrich Zeutschel*

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of German and American
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**David J. Bachner
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About the Authors

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Abstract

This paper highlights results of a research study that examined the long-term effects of youth exchange—specifically, the degree to which former participants actually utilize the results of the exchange after their return to their home country. The research focused on Germans and Americans who, as teenagers, experienced homestays in the other country between 1951 and 1987. Respondents were queried through a combination of in-depth exploratory interviews and comprehensive survey questionnaires that were based on the findings from the exploratory phase.

A total of 1,187 exchange returnees received the survey, with 661 (56%) responding. The study also included a comparison group of 384 individuals, each nominated by a returnee, who had not participated in a high school-level exchange but was of the same gender, similar age, and similar educational background as the nominator.

From a broad array of findings, this article reports on how the exchange experience is subsequently applied in the areas of: self-reliance; problem-solving, research, foreign language, and coping skills; academic, career, and other life choices; empathy and respect for differences; commitment to international and other socially contributory activities; and cultural mediation.

In conclusion, recommendations are offered for alumni activities, more systematic utilization of alumni, linking secondary and post-secondary exchanges, further research on the topic of utilization, and the qualitative aspects of exchange.

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support received from The German Marshall Fund of the United States. Thanks are due to Marianne Ginsburg, Ulrich Littmann, Richard Lugar, Josef Mestenhauser, Ken Myers, Stephen Szabo, Judith Torney-Purta, and Hans Tuch for serving on the project's advisory committee, to William M. Woessner and Ulrich Zahlten for their cooperation and substantive contributions, and to the many staff, volunteers, and alumni of Youth For Understanding in Germany and the United States who participated in this effort.

Introduction

Background

Throughout the 1980s and thus far in this decade, teenage youth exchanges have grown significantly both in participant numbers—now estimated to be at a base level of tens of thousands per year worldwide—and the variety of programs offered. Three factors that contributed to this growth were the implementation of President Reagan's Youth Exchange Initiative among the Economic Summit nations in the early '80s, the opening of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to the West, and a growing emphasis on intra-European mobility with a view toward establishment of the open European Market in 1993. The expansion of high school exchange programs was driven by what Bachner (1988) has called the "Good Effects premise"—namely, that they are fundamentally beneficial, provide effective educational experiences for the participants, and further cross-cultural cooperation and understanding.

In fact, a consistent "animating expectation and justification" of international educational exchange at all age levels has been that it somehow contributes to a more informed, intelligent, cooperative, and peaceful world order, as well as to positive personal changes in the majority of individual participants (Spaulding and Flack, 1976). An increased internationalist orientation, an enhanced knowledge of the world, greater maturity and interpersonal skills, an overall reluctance to perpetuate stereotypes and distortions of other cultures (Detweiler, 1984), and the desire to act as "bridges" between cultures (Wilson, 1985a) are some of the individual characteristics identified as results of exchanges. At the societal level, exchangees' potential impact on foreign policy goals and governmental sensitivity to other nations' interests has regularly been predicted (Alger, 1980), or actual impact assumed (Richardson, 1980). Moreover, because the participants in youth exchange are at a relatively impressionable age, especially in high school level exchanges, there is reason to believe that major long-term benefits are gained (Richardson, 1981).

These claims are attractive and compelling in an increasingly interdependent and turbulent world. Unfortunately, the literature on exchange and study abroad contains a relatively small number of studies that have adequately investigated such claims. Methodological weaknesses abound in exchange research generally. With certain notable exceptions (e.g., Detweiler, 1984 and 1989; Hansel, 1986; Van Den Broucke *et al.*, 1989), this broad assessment applies specifically to research on pre-university exchanges.

In view of the significant personal and financial investments on the part of participants and their families, the efforts of program staff and volunteers, as well as contributions of foundation, corporate, and public funds granted for scholarships and other forms of support, more systematic attempts to identify exchange effects are required. Specifically:

What do people do with their lives as a result of participating as teenagers in an international educational exchange? How do they behave? What are their attitudes? What choices do they make, especially with respect to academic and professional directions? In short, what are the utility and applicability of exchange?

Such evaluations need to assess both programmatic and impact dimensions of exchange. One helpful distinction in these regards was made by AFS International/Intercultural Programs (1984), which differentiated between the "merit" and "worth" of exchange programs. Merit pertains to exchangees' short-term satisfaction (primarily with the organizational, logistical, and support aspects of the experience), which is often evaluated immediately upon completion of a program. Dimensions of worth, on the other hand, may only be investigated in the long term; they consist of lasting effects and are usually not even discernible to recent participants.

Focus and Objectives

This paper is based on a research study (see Bachner and Zeuschel, 1990) that investigated both the merit and worth of youth exchange, although with a much greater emphasis—and the singular emphasis here—on worth, i.e., long-term impact. Through a research grant from The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Youth For Understanding (YFU) International Exchange examined the ways in which both YFU German and American high school students have been affected by their experiences in the other country. The study was conducted by a binational research team composed of German and American investigators who collaborated on all project

phases. An advisory committee, comprised of prominent international educators, researchers, and public servants with an interest in German-U.S. relations, was actively involved in the project from its early stages.

The central research question addressed in order to explore long-term impact of participation in youth exchange was posed as follows:

To what extent and in what ways do former high school exchange students claim that the exchange experience has influenced the subsequent course of their lives?

In support of this exploration, the study sought four objectives, namely: (a) to increase understanding of the long-term effects of German-U.S. exchange; (b) to stimulate greater utilization of returnees in their home countries as resources for reinforcing German-U.S. friendship; (c) to increase awareness of exchange benefits and opportunities on the part of the public, educational, and governmental sectors of both countries; and (d) to develop more advanced theoretical and research models for the exchange field.

The present article is concerned with objectives (b) and (c). These are generally relevant in that both Germany and United States espouse goals of respect for diversity and multicultural tolerance, and are especially relevant in light of the recent upsurge in acts of violence and discrimination against migrants and refugees in Germany. The need for intercultural understanding and mediation in all aspects of daily life is obvious. Assuming the validity of these students' claims—which is in fact the essential object of this inquiry—youth exchange programs have a greater responsibility than ever to foster socially practical contributions of insights and skills by alumni after their exchanges are over.

This article therefore focuses on the ways in which former exchange participants are actually utilizing the insights, beliefs, skills, and behaviors gained during their stay abroad. "Utilization" refers to outcomes and activities that are fundamentally enduring effects. A number of utilization effects were expressed as recurrent themes by exchange alumni explaining the reasons for their evaluations of the exchange experience. Chief among the themes in their open-ended responses were educational direction, professional orientation, exchange-related follow-up activities, multiplier or "ripple" effects, and future perspective/plans. These themes indicate the range of utilization effects that participants themselves described as relevant in their retrospective evaluations.

Methodology

Some weaknesses in the body of research on exchange include: few attempts to develop theory or formulate hypotheses; a dearth of longitudinal studies that focus on the enduring residual effects of exchange; an inattention to the concrete behavioral manifestations of change; a lack of background data on, or of the context for, persons responding; an overreliance on tabulatory survey techniques; and a seeming reluctance to use less conventional but highly promising "depth" approaches (e.g., life stories, autobiography, intensive taped interviews) from sociology and anthropology (Breitenbach, 1980; Spaulding and Flack, 1976; Useem and Useem, 1980).

This paper's research attempts to alleviate several of these deficiencies by incorporating a long-term historical scope, multiple methodologies, varied focal dimensions, qualitative and quantitative data, the articulation of grounded hypotheses, and cross-national collaboration. This is not to say that the study is devoid of shortcomings. It relies on subjective, retrospective assessments of motives, experiences, and effects, which prevent the more confident causal inferences that are possible from true longitudinal studies. Also, one must be cautious in generalizing about the study's findings; the object of inquiry is a teenage homestay experience whose essential characteristics distinguish it, and possibly its effects, from sojourns by non-teenagers and individuals of any age who did not live with volunteer host families abroad.

An in-depth description of the research methodology used in the study can be found in Bachner, Zeuschel, and Shannon, 1993. A summary discussion of the methodology's main features follows.

Retrospective Approach

The complex issue of long-term impact cannot be resolved by establishing clear cause-and-effect relationships. Rather, such impact needs to be identified retrospectively, primarily by relying on subjective judgments of the

participants/respondents themselves; respondent recall or memory loss in attributing changes to experiences “back then” can present a major difficulty. Nevertheless, exchange research has traditionally relied upon—and will continue to rely upon—retrospective data, since most important independent variables for education abroad are “attributive variables” that cannot be manipulated experimentally (Breitenbach, 1980). The issue is not so much to describe participants’ past experiences, but to confer a certain meaning on those experiences by evoking concrete examples of behavior in the present that may have been caused, in the respondent’s view, by the exchange sojourn. In effect, such *ex post facto* inquiry generates hypotheses about the present that are then subject to survey and confirmation at later points in the research process (Bachner, 1982).

This study has attempted to utilize *ex post facto* data as systematically as possible by juxtaposing qualitative and quantitative recollections and assessments of the exchange experience. The expectation is that this approach will help offset an inherent disadvantage of *ex post facto* research—that neither control of the independent variable nor randomization is possible. The “treatment” has already occurred with the respondent’s participation in the exchange program. So this study started with the observation of dependent variables (i.e., alterations in knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors, choices, directions, activities, and plans) as reported by respondents, then studied the independent variable—the exchange experience—in retrospect in order to understand its possible effect on and relation to those dependent variables.

Exploratory Interviews

Previous sociological studies suggest that 20 interviews suffice as a quota sample (Bertaux, 1981; Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, 1981). As a basis for constructing an extensive survey questionnaire, then, the two principal researchers conducted a series of in-depth interviews with 20 YFU alumni in the United States and 20 alumni in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). For reasons of logistics and financial practicality, we concentrated on geographical regions in which YFU programs have been most strongly represented throughout their existence: the lower Michigan region around Ann Arbor in the United States, and the northwestern region around Hamburg and Bremen in the FRG. In both countries we included five persons from each decade of program participation in the interview sample, with men and women equally represented.

The interviews, which lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, were loosely structured by general questions guiding the interviewees from the socio-political context of the times just prior to their exchange year through the decisions and preparations for program participation, the sojourn itself, the reentry phase, and then to the course of their lives since the exchange year. In the last section, the interview specifically addressed the meaning their exchange experience still held for them, as well as exchange-related follow-up activities, and possible influences on their educational and professional orientation and training.

Responses drawn from these interviews served to structure an extensive "empathic" (see Alderfer and Brown, 1972) survey questionnaire consisting of open-ended as well as multiple-choice items that incorporated actual wording of interview responses.

Sampling of Exchange Participants and Peers

In order to contrast the experiences of YFU alumni with those of non-participants in secondary school exchanges, we included a comparison group in our written survey. Due to data protection regulations, it was not possible to identify a matched sample of non-participants through schools or other institutions. We therefore opted for a peer-nomination approach by asking the former exchange participants in our principal sample to identify a friend or acquaintance of similar age, similar educational background, and the same sex who had not participated in a secondary-level exchange. The means for choosing non-participants and for distributing the questionnaires was somewhat different in the two countries. In the United States, each of the 550 participant questionnaires sent out was accompanied by an equivalent comparison questionnaire, which recipients were asked to pass on to a peer. In Germany, potential survey participants were requested to nominate a peer who would be willing to take part in the survey. Corresponding peer questionnaires were mailed directly to 411 persons thus nominated, as well as 637 participant questionnaires to YFU alumni.

Peer nomination, which was chosen to decrease non-exchange-related variance, tends to make the comparison group more similar to the "treatment" group, since acquaintances are likely to have a similar background, values, and demographic characteristics. The resulting increase in similarity between the exchange-participant and comparison groups would seem to benefit the central issue of the study, in that any differences in survey responses are more likely to be due to the exchange experience itself. (For

relevant precedents utilizing this approach, see Detweiler, 1984 and 1989, and Hansel, 1986.)

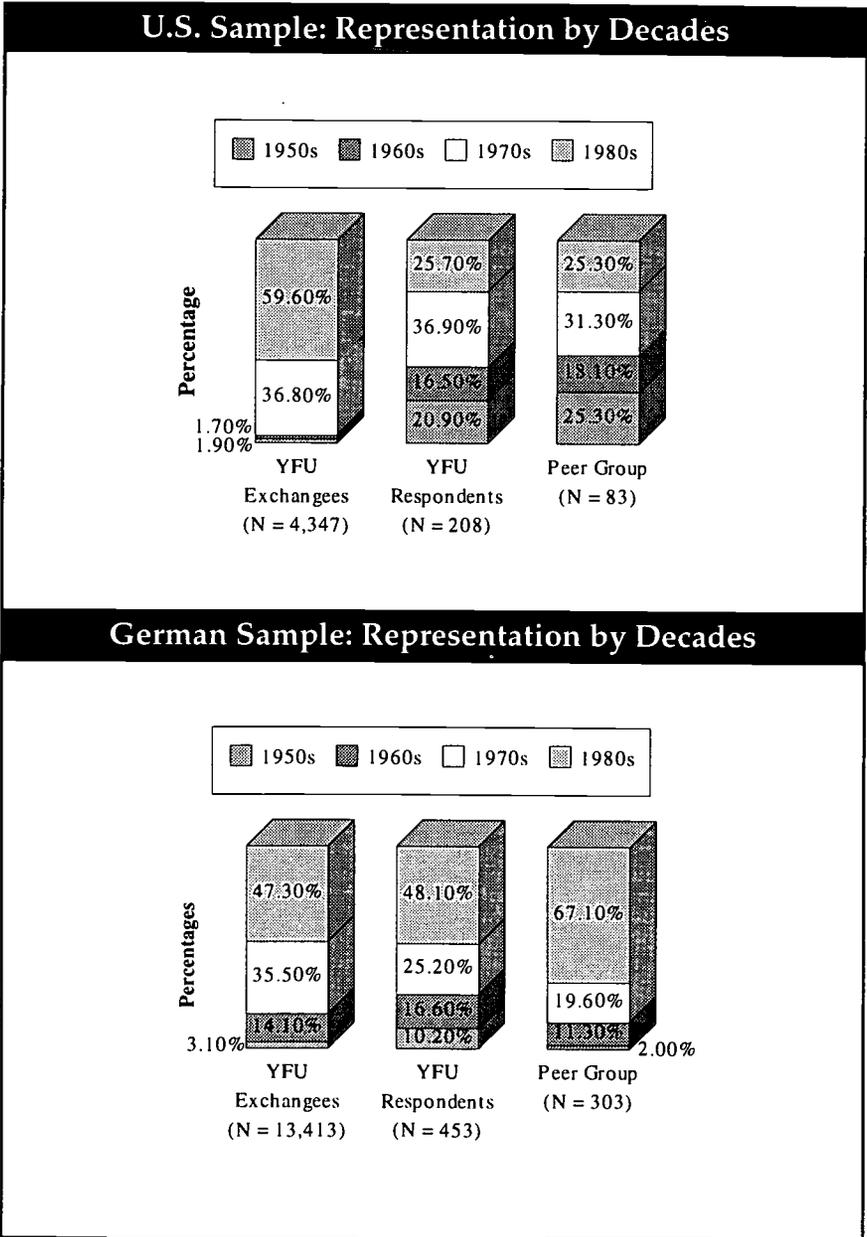
The response rate for the principal sample in both countries was 56 percent (1,187 total questionnaires mailed divided by 661 returns), an excellent result for field research going back so many years. Response rates in the comparison samples vary between the U.S. and Germany due to the different methods of peer identification employed in both countries: in the United States, it only amounted to 15 percent (83 questionnaires returned out of 550 sent), while in Germany, a "high-committal" approach yielded a 74 percent return (303 questionnaires out of 411 distributed). Looking at the ratios of peer responses to exchange participant responses, however, reveals less disparity with a ratio of 40 percent for Americans (83:208) and 67 percent for Germans (303:453), or 51 percent in total (386:756). In purely numerical terms, these ratios would seem adequate for purposes of useful comparison between participants and peers.

As shown in Figure 1, nearly half of the German alumni in the survey had participated in the YFU academic year program in the 1980s, which corresponds to the distribution of German YFU program participants in general. Alumni from the 1950s, on the other hand, are overrepresented in our sample (10.2%) when considering their share among total program participants (3.1%). This overrepresentation of older alumni resulted from our initial efforts to include the same number of former program participants from each decade. We therefore tried to draw exhaustive samples from 1950s program participants. Even with these efforts, we only received (mostly due to invalid addresses) questionnaires from 46 out of 417 alumni in Germany from that decade, compared to 43 out of 74 in the United States.

The sample of U.S. program participants is more evenly distributed among the four decades. However, exchange programs with Germany only involved substantial numbers of participants since the 1970s (amounting to 96.4% of all exchangees up to the program year 1986-87), so the 43 and 34 respondents from the 1950s and 1960s, respectively, are clearly overrepresented in the survey sample. At the same time, respondents who exchanged in the 1980s only constitute a quarter of the sample as compared with more than half among the overall pool of U.S. exchangees.

It should be noted that 28 percent of the U.S. respondents had participated in the Academic Year program to Germany, 64 percent in the Summer program, and 7 percent (primarily in the 1950s and 1960s) in the YFU Chorale program, a short-term group travel offering with homestays in

Figure 1
 Overview of the Study Samples



several European countries. The German sample, on the other hand, consisted entirely of former participants in the Academic Year program, which has been the only program available for German YFU exchangees to the United States. The difference in composition of the two samples somewhat limits their comparability, as program duration can be expected to have an effect on the degree of subsequent utilization, an expectation that was supported in our study.

In the German comparison group, peers of program participants from the 1980s were clearly overrepresented (67%), while those nominated by alumni from the 1960s and 1950s were underrepresented, which means that the comparison group contains a larger share of younger persons than the exchange participant sample. Responses from the comparison group regarding educational perspectives and professional directions are therefore likely to be more speculative than among older exchange participants who can draw upon their actual biographies to a larger extent.

International Experiences of Peers

In order to assess influences of non-exchange sojourns among comparison group members, we asked them to evaluate significant international experiences they might have had since leaving secondary school. For that purpose, the comparison questionnaire presented the same questions and criteria that had been employed in the participant questionnaire with regard to the exchange experience.

In the German peer sample, 84.5 percent reported an extensive international sojourn, averaging 5.8 weeks in length. In 80 percent of those cases the nature of that sojourn was described as tourist travel, followed by university study abroad, in which approximately 13 percent of the international sojourners had engaged. Permanent residence abroad (3.5%), professional or vocational training (2.0%), and business travels (1.6%) were named by a small minority.

In the U.S. sample, on the other hand, only 42.2 percent indicated that they had significant international experience. With an average duration of 18.2 weeks these sojourns tended to be more extensive than in the German sample. Tourist travel was clearly less frequent in this group (58.8%) than among German peers, while permanent residence abroad (13.7%) and foreign business travel (11.8%) were reported by a quarter of the comparison group. The rate of foreign study sojourns (15.7%) was comparable to that in the German comparison sample.

Exploratory Findings

From the 40 in-depth exploratory interviews conducted at the outset of our investigation, we identified recurring themes. Consistent with grounded theory approaches (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967), these themes served as categories to structure the information gained from the interviews. They were continuously refined and differentiated during the course of conducting interviews and were subsequently corroborated in a systematic analysis of the data from all 40 interviews with the aid of "Ethnograph," an analytic software package designed especially for use with qualitative data. The essential themes, or core categories, that emerged provided the basis for incorporating the most relevant items into the survey questionnaire.

Six emergent categories were particularly germane to the theme of exchange-effects utilization:

- *Manifestation of Exchange Effects:* Skills, insights, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors acquired during the exchange that respondents say they have been able to apply to their lives and activities since the exchange.
- *Pursuit of Exchange/Follow-up:* Involvement in exchange activities, or related international education activities, after the YFU exchange experience itself (e.g., participation in other exchange programs, study abroad, hosting, returning to the host country, volunteer work on behalf of exchange, employment in an exchange or related organization).
- *Educational Choice/Direction:* Academic areas of concentration pursued by respondents during and especially after the YFU exchange.
- *Career Choice/Direction:* Professional specializations, avocations, and areas of employment chosen by respondents during and especially after the exchange.
- *Effects of Exchange/Changes/Consequences:* Alterations in behaviors, skills, knowledge, attitudes, goals, values, circumstances, and life choices that respondents claim may have been influenced by the exchange experience.
- *Ripple Effects:* Incidents reported by respondents in which they influenced others as a direct result of changes or consequences they themselves experienced during the exchange program.

As a further attempt to grasp the variety of experiences and personal accounts presented in the interviews, during the several weeks we conducted interviews, we formulated a set of 11 theoretically based dimensions, or continua, describing the range of responses in specific topic areas. Three continua directly related to utilization of the exchange experience were defined as follows:

- ***Focus: Specific vs. Encompassing Application***

This continuum refers to the application of behaviors, skills, attitudes, knowledge, or insights gained during the exchange. An example of specific utilization would be German language ability that has served a respondent in subsequent employment. An example of encompassing utilization might be an attitude of social concern or ecological sensibility that a respondent has incorporated into his or her post-exchange lifestyle.

- ***Degree of Overttness: Private vs. Public Manifestation***

The exploratory interviews demonstrated that the multiple effects of exchange manifest themselves in both private and public ways in the lives of former participants. Quite explicitly, a number of respondents bring exchange-induced attitudes, skills, and perspectives to the institutions where they work and their professions. In many other cases, however, the manifestation of effects is more subtle. A person's work or outward lifestyle may have nothing to do with the exchange experience or with international matters, yet upon scrutiny, the person's approach to that work, or something in his or her personal style or interests, has clearly been affected by the experience abroad.

- ***Geographical Perspective: Bilateral vs. Global Orientation***

The literature frequently notes that reduced ethnocentrism is a result of exchange. While this was generally reinforced in the exploratory interviews, a number of respondents evidenced what has been referred to as "bilateral ethnocentrism," or an exclusive emphasis on German-U.S. relations. Others claimed that their exchange experience produced an attitude of globalization, or an increased international perspective

(e.g., an interest in Eastern Bloc-U.S. relations, or world affairs in general). This continuum reflects the possibility that some exchangeees acquire a singularly strong focus on the host country, while others use the experience in the host country to extend or transfer their interests to the international realm in general.

Study Hypotheses

Consistent with grounded theory development (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the data-based continua served as points of departure in the construction of study hypotheses. With specific regard to the concept of utilization and the above continua, four (out of a total of 18) hypotheses were derived:

- The majority of respondents will attribute current and future educational directions to exchange.
- The majority of respondents will claim some sort of ongoing involvement with exchange, ranging from host family contact to other post-program exchange experiences to actual or potential international activity spurred by their YFU experience.
- The majority of respondents will claim they have applied what they learned during the exchange and have influenced others with that learning.
- The majority of respondents will claim an exchange-induced attitude of internationalism, rather than an exclusive or even primary focus on the host country, since their participation in the YFU program.

Findings

Five areas of survey findings had direct bearing on the hypotheses concerned with utilization: (1) personal impact; (2) influences on choice of academic major and professional direction; (3) "instrumental value" of the international exchange experience; (4) subsequent international involvement and travel; and (5) "ripple effects" reported by exchange alumni.

Personal Impact of the International Exchange Experience

A major questionnaire item listed 26 abilities, skills, and beliefs—previously mentioned in the exploratory interviews—as being related to the impact of the exchange experience. Both former exchange participants and members of the comparison group were asked to indicate in what way their international experience had influenced the respective ability or belief on a rating scale marked "strongly negative," "somewhat negative," "neutral," "somewhat positive," and "very positive." As a further category, the comment "Don't know/doesn't apply" could be checked.

As expected, large majorities of exchange participants and peers in both national samples gave positive ratings. To allow a more differentiated view of the results, the frequencies of ratings indicating "very positive influence" are depicted as dark sections in the bar graphs in Figures 2a and 2b.

These graphs give results of a selection of sub-items relevant to academic training and professional development. Response rates in the figures refer to percentages of questionnaire returns for the respective sub-samples.

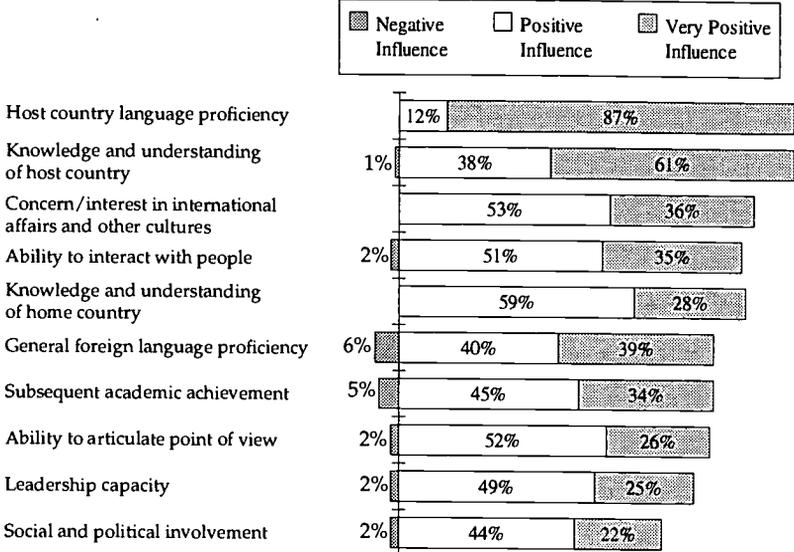
Exchangee Ratings

In both national samples, nearly all exchangee respondents indicated that knowledge and understanding of the host country had been positively influenced by the exchange experience; more than 60 percent rated the effect as "very positive." Host country language proficiency was rated even more

Figure 2a

Impact of the International Experience

German Exchange Participants



German Peer Group

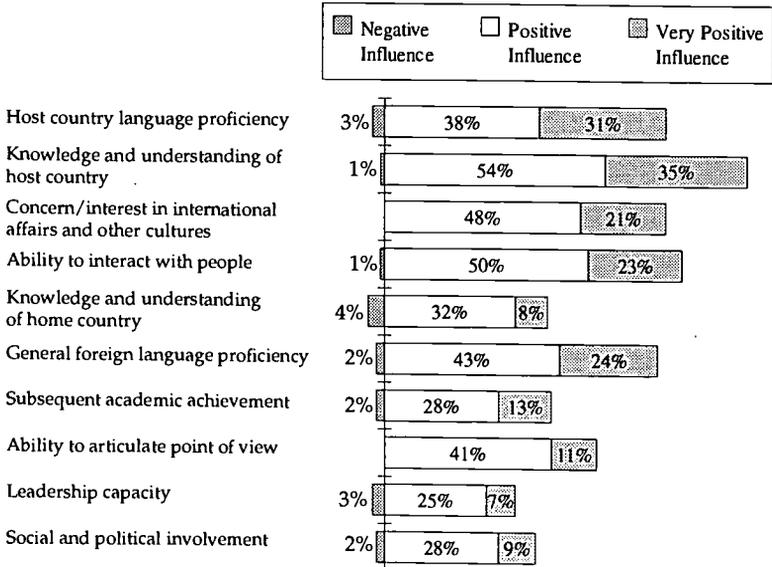
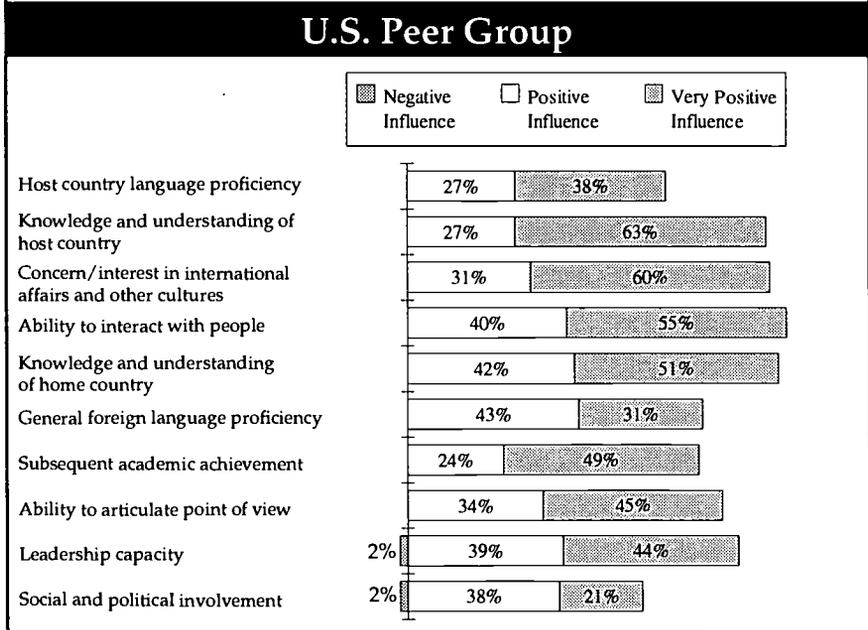
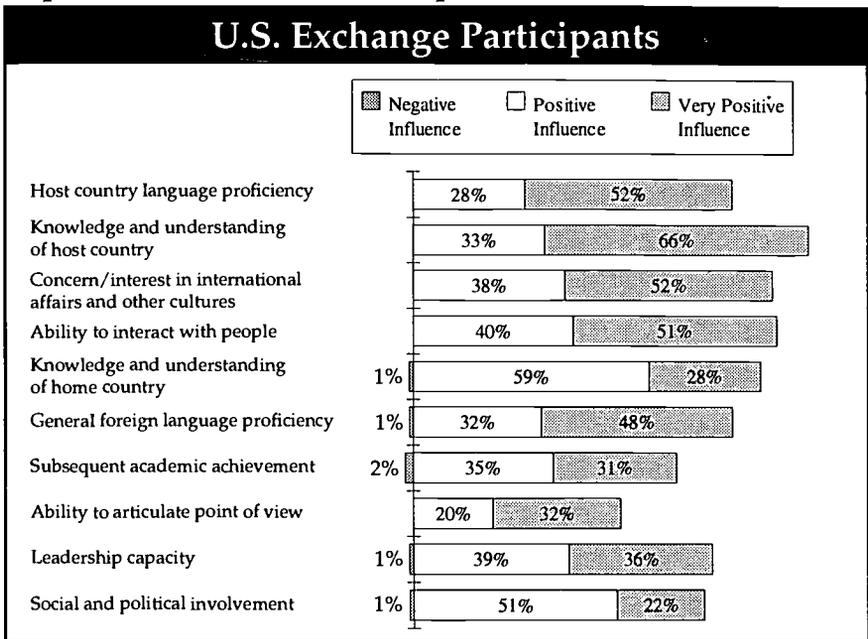


Figure 2b

Impact of the International Experience



highly by German exchangeees, while approximately 80 percent of U.S. exchangeees mentioned positive effects. This may be due to the inclusion of short-term summer program and YFU Chorale participants, for whom German language proficiency was less of a necessity. Concern for and interest in international affairs and other cultures was seen as positively enhanced by approximately 90 percent of exchangeees in both national samples; more U.S. than German respondents indicated "very positive" effects, possibly due to the wider range of international experiences competing with the exchange year in the German sample.

It should also be noted, however, that small percentages of German exchange participants reported negative effects of the exchange on their general foreign language competence (6%), as well as school and academic achievements (5%). Open-ended comments imply that these adverse effects were due to a lack of opportunities for a positive transfer of insights and skills gained during the exchange in their academic and professional training upon return. Similar complaints were reported by a sample of U.S. exchange returnees in a survey by Wilson (1985b, pp. 285ff). While negative effects were indicated by relatively few respondents in the present study, their negative evaluations should be taken seriously, as they are likely to be even more frequent among the general population of exchangeees (assuming a slightly positive self-selection of the respondent sample).

Peer Group Ratings

Positive ratings are generally less frequent in the German comparison group, and there is an even more pronounced difference for them for the "very positive" rating. Especially clear differences were found in the following categories:

Knowledge and understanding of the host country
(87% vs. 40%)

Subsequent academic achievement
(79% vs. 41%)

Leadership capacity
(74% vs. 32%)

Social and political involvement
(63% vs. 37%)

Figure 3a

Influences on Academic and Professional Direction

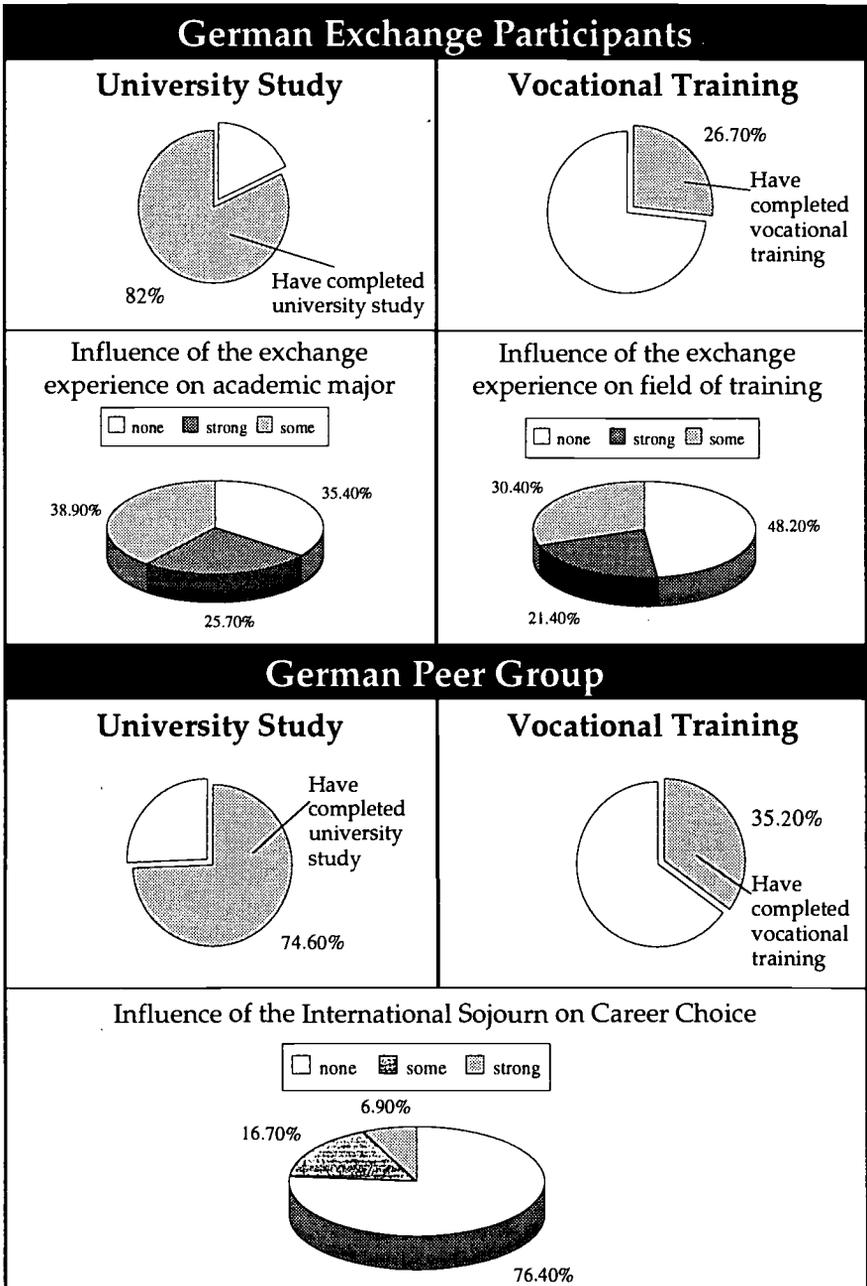
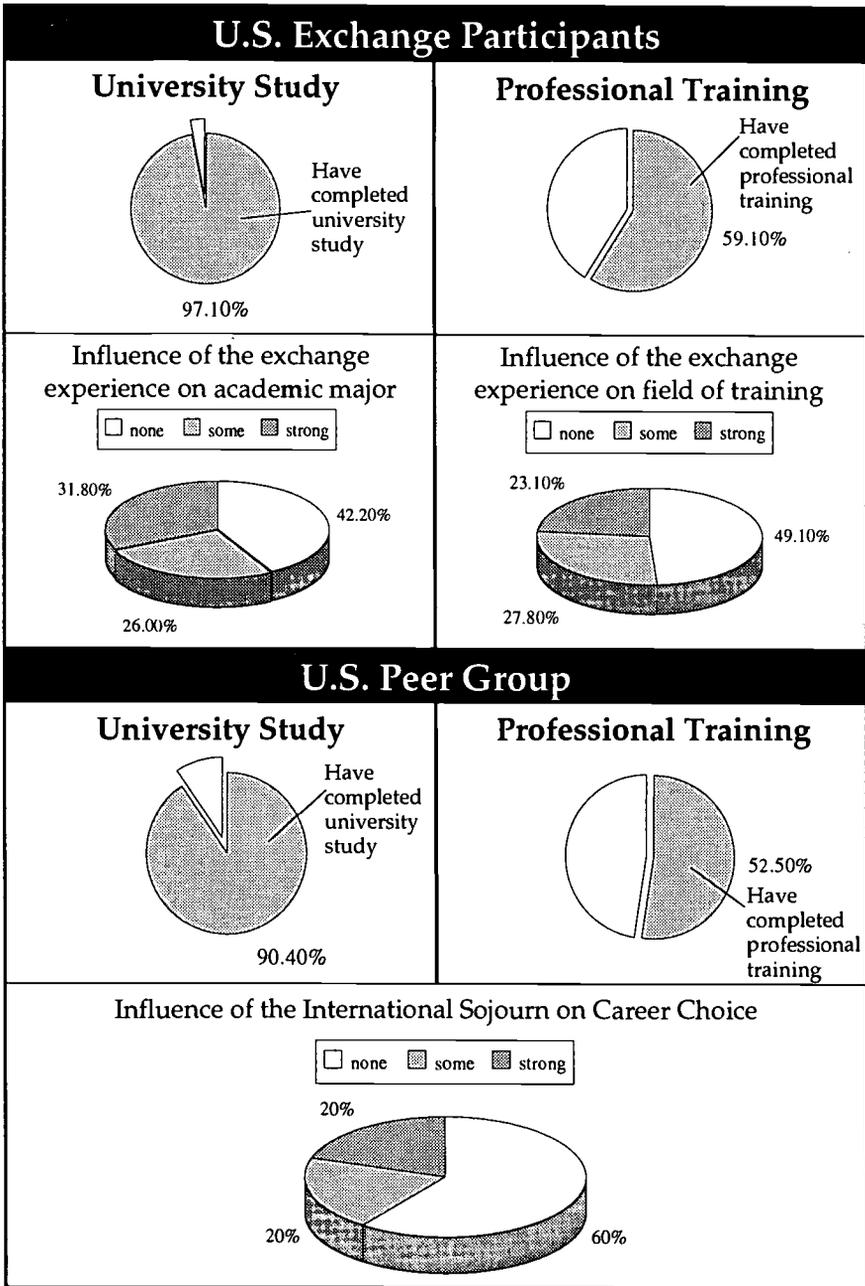


Figure 3b

Influences on Academic and Professional Direction



Ratings of U.S. comparison group members, by contrast, were much more similar to—and in some cases even higher than—those of former exchanges. Only with regard to host country and language-related skills, as well as social and political involvement, are positive and very positive effects indicated more frequently by exchangees than by comparison group members. The relatively large impact of international sojourns in the U.S. peer sample is likely to be related to the longer duration of their time spent abroad, as well as the greater frequency of more “substantial” experiences: less tourist travel, and more business travel and permanent residence abroad.

Influences on Choice of Academic Major and Professional Direction

In the German sample, 82 percent of the exchangees had completed university training or were planning to do so, while another 8 percent were still undecided (Figure 3a). This percentage of university training is much higher than in the general population: according to the statistical yearbook 1991 for the Federal Republic of Germany, only 8.5 percent of the (West) German population between ages 15 and 55 are engaged in or have completed university level training (*Statistisches Bundesamt*, 1992, p. 410). Even in the peer sample, the rate of university training was lower (74.6%), although exchange alumni participating in our survey had specifically been asked to nominate peers with comparable educational background.

When asked to rate the effect of the exchange experience on their choice of university major, 64.6 percent of the German alumni indicated that the exchange year had been influential, with 25.7 percent even qualifying the influence as strong.

Figure 4
Summary of Reliabilities

Scales	Items	United States		Germany		Total Sample	
		Alpha	(n)*	Alpha	(n)*	Alpha	(n)*
Educational Effects (ED)	4	.76	(142)	.61	(110)	.40	(252)
Professional Effects (PROF)	7	.92	(169)	.78	(417)	.83	(586)

* n = number of cases used in reliability analysis was based on those having complete data for each item on the scale

Completed or intended vocational training is less prevalent in the exchangee (26.7%) as well as in the peer group (35.2%). Influence of the exchange experience on choice of professional direction is lower (51.8%) than the influence on university training, with only 21.4 percent rating it as strong.

Due to different item formulation in the peer questionnaire, influence of the international sojourn could only be assessed with regard to career choice in general, i.e., without differentiating between university and non-university training. The international experience is seen as influential by only 23.6 percent of the comparison group, and only 6.8% rated the influence as strong. This percentage is also proportionally smaller than in the ratings of exchangees.

In the U.S. sample, differences in educational levels between YFU alumni and members of the comparison group are less pronounced, as shown in Figure 3b, above.

Very high percentages of exchangees (97.1%) and peers (90.4%) completed undergraduate studies or intended to do so. More than half (57.8%) of exchangees indicated that their choice of major had been influenced by the exchange experience, nearly a third (31.9%) indicating that the influence had been strong.

Figures were lower for graduate or professional training: 59.1 percent (as compared to 52.5% of peer respondents) had completed or intended to do so, while another 26.1 percent had not yet made up their minds. Half of the exchangees (50.9%) said that their specialization had been influenced by the exchange experience, and nearly half of these (23.1%) qualified that influence as strong.

As in the German sample, fewer members of the comparison group (40%) reported an influence of their international sojourn on career choice; exactly half of these (20%) rated that influence as strong.

In order to corroborate these descriptive findings by statistical measures, two scales of items were formed to assess the educational and professional effects of the exchange or international experiences. The reliability estimates of these two scales are summarized in Figure 4. The reliability of each scale was evaluated separately, and only those respondents who had complete data on each item from the scale were included in the analysis.

The educational effects (ED) scale consisted of four items from the survey questionnaire: (1) effects of exchange on academic achievement; (2) its effects on foreign language proficiency; (3) the extent of the exchange's

influence on choice of university major; and (4) the extent of influence on choice of graduate or professional specialization. Internal consistency reliability estimates were calculated for the sample of participants from the United States ($\alpha = .76$) and Germany ($\alpha = .61$), as well as the total sample of participants ($\alpha = .40$).

The professional effects (PROF) scale consisted of seven items common to both the participant and peer surveys. These items pertained to the influence of an international experience on: (1) the identification of a career direction; (2) confirmation of a career choice already made; (3) a change or correction in the choice already made; (4) improvement of chances in finding a job; (5) improvement of chances in finding an international job; (6) improvement of chances in finding a job involving interesting assignments; and (7) improvement of chances to earn a higher income. Internal consistency reliability for this scale was estimated at .83 overall, with that of the U.S. sample at .92 and the German sample at .78.

Figure 5 summarizes responses to items addressing the question:

Is there a difference between participants and their peers in terms of the professional effects of the international experience?

This question was answered using a two-group multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Two separate MANOVAs were performed, both using group membership (participant, peer) as the independent variable. The first analysis was performed to examine the extent to which participants from the United States differed from their peers, while the second addressed the same question for the German sample. Follow-up univariate F-tests were performed to identify the specific variables on which these two groups differed.

Both analyses revealed a difference between participants and peers in terms of the professional effects of an international experience. Both the participants from the American and German samples perceived the experience as more influential for their professional career than did their respective peers. Overall, the American participants perceived the international experience as more influential to their future career (Hotellings $T^2 = .09661$, $p = .043$). However, follow-up tests failed to identify specific univariate differences between these two groups.

The results of the discriminant analysis for the German sample also revealed a significant multivariate difference between participants and their peers (Hotellings $T^2 = 4.45551$, $p < .001$). The results from the follow-up

Figure 5

Comparison of Participant and Peer Samples on Professional Effects

United States MANOVA: Hotellings $T^2 = .09661, p = .043$		Univariate F-Tests with (1,161) D.F.			
Items "To what extent do you think that your YFU exchange experience/your first international experience..."	Participants (n = 135)		Peers (n = 28)		F ratio
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	
...helped you identify a career direction?	2.22	(1.36)	1.93	(1.33)	1.03
...confirmed a career choice already made?	1.87	(1.18)	2.04	(1.83)	.43
...changed or corrected a choice already made?	1.67	(1.15)	1.61	(1.23)	.08
...improved your chances of finding a job?	2.31	(1.22)	2.00	(1.25)	1.49
...improved your chances of finding an internationally oriented job within your country or a job abroad?	2.22	(1.46)	2.11	(1.47)	.14
...improved your chances of finding a job involving interesting assignments?	2.13	(1.32)	2.25	(1.48)	.20
...improved your chances of earning a higher income?	2.16	(1.30)	1.86	(1.18)	1.25

Germany MANOVA: Hotellings $T^2 = 4.45551, p < .001$		Univariate F-Tests with (1,415) D.F.			
Items "To what extent do you think that your YFU exchange experience/your first international experience..."	Participants (n = 247)		Peers (n = 170)		F ratio
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	
...helped you identify a career direction?	2.09	(1.19)	1.91	(1.89)	2.29
...confirmed a career choice already made?	1.88	(1.21)	1.21	(0.67)	42.94 ^a
...changed or corrected a choice already made?	1.53	(0.98)	0.08	(0.27)	354.79 ^a
...improved your chances of finding a job?	2.71	(1.33)	3.80	(0.76)	93.28 ^a
...improved your chances of finding an internationally oriented job within your country or a job abroad?	2.93	(1.40)	0.54	(0.50)	457.13 ^a
...improved your chances of finding a job involving interesting assignments?	2.64	(1.34)	1.24	(0.53)	169.75 ^a
...improved your chances of earning a higher income?	2.04	(1.28)	0.81	(0.40)	148.10 ^a

^a = $p < .001$

univariate tests help clarify these results. Specifically, the participants indicated that the international experience was more influential in: (1) confirming a career choice they had already made, (2) changing or correcting a choice already made, (3) improving chances of finding an internationally oriented job, (4) improving chances of finding a job involving interesting assignments, and (5) improving chances of earning a higher income. The peer groups considered the international experience to be more influential in improving their chances of finding a job in general.

Figure 6 summarizes responses to items addressing the question:

Is there a difference between participants from the United States and Germany in terms of the professional effects and educational effects of the international experience?

This question was also addressed with a two-group MANOVA. Two separate analyses were performed, both using group membership (U.S. participant, German participant) as the independent variable. The first MANOVA analysis was performed to examine the extent that the educational effects of these two groups of participants differed, while the second addressed professional effects. Follow-up univariate F-tests were performed to identify the specific variables on which these two groups differed.

Over all, a multivariate difference in the educational effects of international exchange was found between participants from the United States and Germany (Hotellings $T^2 = .39354$, $p < .001$). Specifically, the German participants indicated that their choice of a university major was more influenced by the exchange experience than was indicated by the American participants.

The German participants also differed from U.S. participants with respect to professional effects (Hotellings $T^2 = .15649$, $p < .001$). German participants indicated that the exchange experience was more influential in terms of: (1) improving their chances of finding a job; (2) improving their chances of finding an internationally oriented job; and (3) improving their chances of finding a job involving interesting assignments.

“Instrumental Value” of the International Experience

As an overall judgment of the instrumental value of the exchange or international sojourn, respondents were asked to rate how valuable or

Figure 6

Comparison of U.S. and German Participants on Educational and Professional Effects

Educational Effects MANOVA: Hotellings $T^2 = .39354, p < .001$	Univariate F-Tests with (1,250) D.F.				
Items	United States (n = 142)		Germany (n = 110)		F ratio
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	
To what extent is/was your choice of [college/university] major influenced by your YFU exchange experience?	2.61	(1.44)	5.35	(3.48)	72.13a
To what extent is/was your choice of [graduate school/professional] specialization influenced by your YFU exchange experience?	2.32	(1.35)	2.12	(1.29)	1.49
How would you rate the effect of your YFU exchange experience with respect to subsequent academic achievement?	4.07	(0.81)	4.02	(0.85)	0.25
How would you rate the effect of your YFU exchange experience with respect to your foreign language proficiency?	4.38	(0.75)	4.22	(1.14)	1.87

a = $p < .001$

Professional Effects MANOVA: Hotellings $T^2 = .15649, p < .001$	Univariate F-Tests with (1,380) D.F.				
Items "To what extent do you think that your YFU exchange experience/your first international experience..."	United States (n = 135)		Germany (n = 247)		F ratio
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	
...helped you identify a career direction?	2.17	(1.34)	2.09	(1.19)	0.94
...confirmed a career choice already made?	1.86	(1.19)	1.88	(1.22)	0.004
...changed or corrected a choice already made?	1.64	(1.125)	1.50	(0.95)	1.76
...improved your chances of finding a job?	2.28	(1.22)	2.68	(1.32)	8.46 ^a
...improved your chances of finding an internationally oriented job within your country or a job abroad?	2.20	(1.45)	2.92	(1.40)	21.52 ^b
...improved your chances of finding a job involving interesting assignments?	2.11	(1.31)	2.62	(1.33)	13.03 ^b
...improved your chances of earning a higher income?	2.15	(1.32)	2.01	(1.26)	0.75

a = $p < .01$ b = $p < .001$

useful they thought the experience was—had they acquired abilities or traits that they had been able to utilize afterwards?

Among U.S. returnees, 57 percent rated their experience as “extremely useful,” another 35 percent as “basically useful,” compared to 33 and 43 percent, respectively, of their peers. In the German sample, the contrast was more pronounced, with 59 percent of the returnees rating their exchange year as “extremely useful” and another 38 percent evaluating it as “basically useful,” while only 18 and 45 percent of the German peers gave the corresponding ratings with regard to their first significant experience abroad. Again, the much lower ratings in the “extremely useful” classification are probably due to the higher rate of tourist travel, a “low-impact” type of sojourn, among the German peers.

Subsequent International Involvement and Travel

A major questionnaire item addressed internationally oriented follow-up activities that respondents had engaged in since their sojourn. Respondents were asked to indicate how extensively they had engaged in 12 different activities that had been mentioned in the exploratory interviews. Each activity was mentioned twice, once with regard to the former host country (e.g., “Giving formal presentations about Germany or your experiences there”) and once referring to international pursuits in general (e.g., “Giving formal presentations about your international experience or about international affairs generally”). Response categories were labeled “no,” “no, but I intend to,” “yes, once or twice,” “yes, occasionally,” and “yes, frequently.” A further category was marked “Can’t recall/does not apply.”

Response rates for exchange participants (EP) and peer groups (PG) in both national samples are given in Figure 7a and 7b, which summarize the responses in the three “yes” categories.

Except for giving presentations about the host country or about international topics, a larger percentage of German exchange participants and peers tend to engage in internationally oriented activities than their U.S. counterparts. This difference is especially strong with regard to active and passive use of foreign languages, where the opportunities are much more prevalent for the German returnees. Similarly, strong differences between

Figure 7a
Internationally Oriented Activities
 Exchange Participants (EP) vs. Peer Groups (PG)

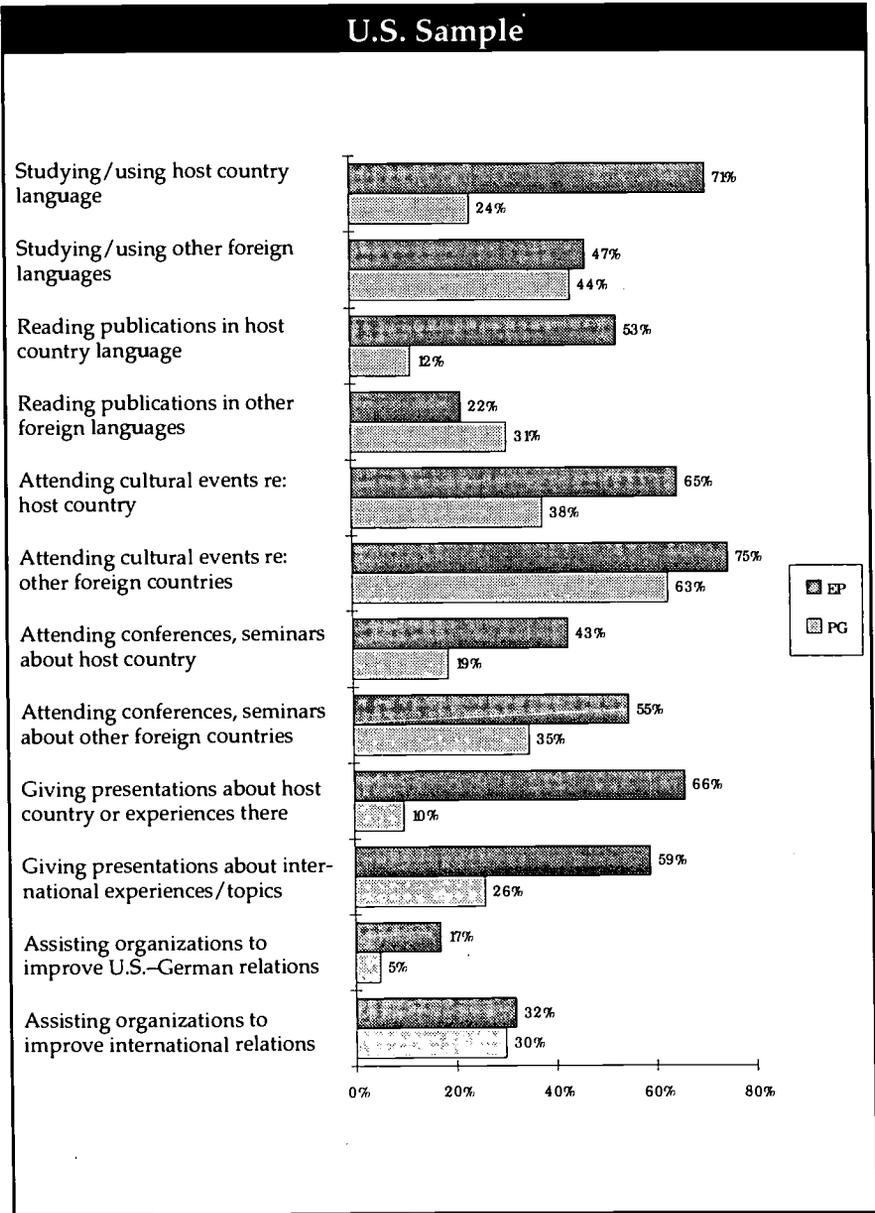
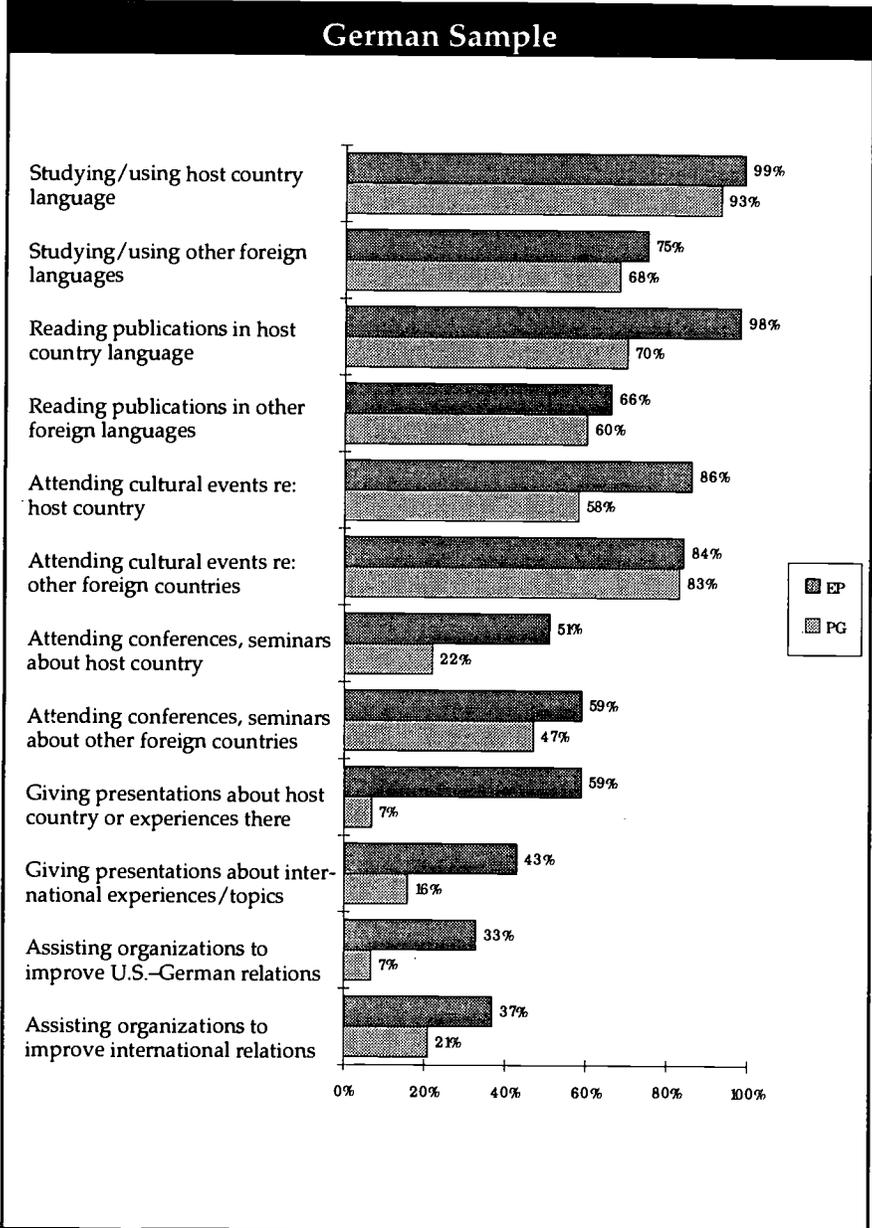


Figure 7b
Internationally Oriented Activities
 Exchange Participants (EP) vs. Peer Groups (PG)



German and U.S. exchange returnees were found in organizational involvement aimed specifically at U.S.–German relations—an indication of the relatively high percentage of German alumni who become involved in the national Youth For Understanding committee, which has a strong tradition of recruiting its volunteers from among former exchange students.

Comparing exchange participants and peers it becomes evident that consistently larger percentages of the participants are involved in follow-up international activities. The contrast is especially pronounced in the more “difficult” pursuits, such as giving presentations or working in organizations. The only exceptions to this are the U.S. peers, who are nearly as active in international organizations as former exchangees.

In order to assess patterns of subsequent international sojourns in the various sub-samples, respondents were asked to indicate travel formats such as tourist travel, study abroad, or foreign residence separately with regard to their former host country and to other countries. Response rates of exchange participants (EP) and peer groups (PG) in the two national samples are given in Figure 8a and 8b.

In both countries, a larger percentage of exchange alumni (United States, 53%; Germany, 68%) have returned to their former host countries as compared to their respective peers (United States, 41%; Germany, 37%). This does not seem to be due to their greater tendency to travel, as both groups report the same rate of travels to other countries. With few exceptions, larger shares of German respondents traveled abroad than their U.S. counterparts, one exception being German peers, who chose the U.S. less frequently as their destination for tourist travel (26%) than U.S. peers who visited Germany (41%). More importantly, college/university study in Germany was clearly more frequent among U.S. returnees (13%; peers, 5%) than study sojourns in the other direction (4%; peers, 1%). This points to the facilitating effect of established study abroad programs (e.g., junior year abroad) at U.S. universities that are not available to any similar extent at German universities. The lower rate of business travel and job-related foreign residence among German respondents is probably due to the overrepresentation of young persons in that sample who have not reached a corresponding stage in their professional lives.

Figure 8a
Subsequent International Sojourns
 Exchange Participants (EP) vs. Peer Groups (PG)

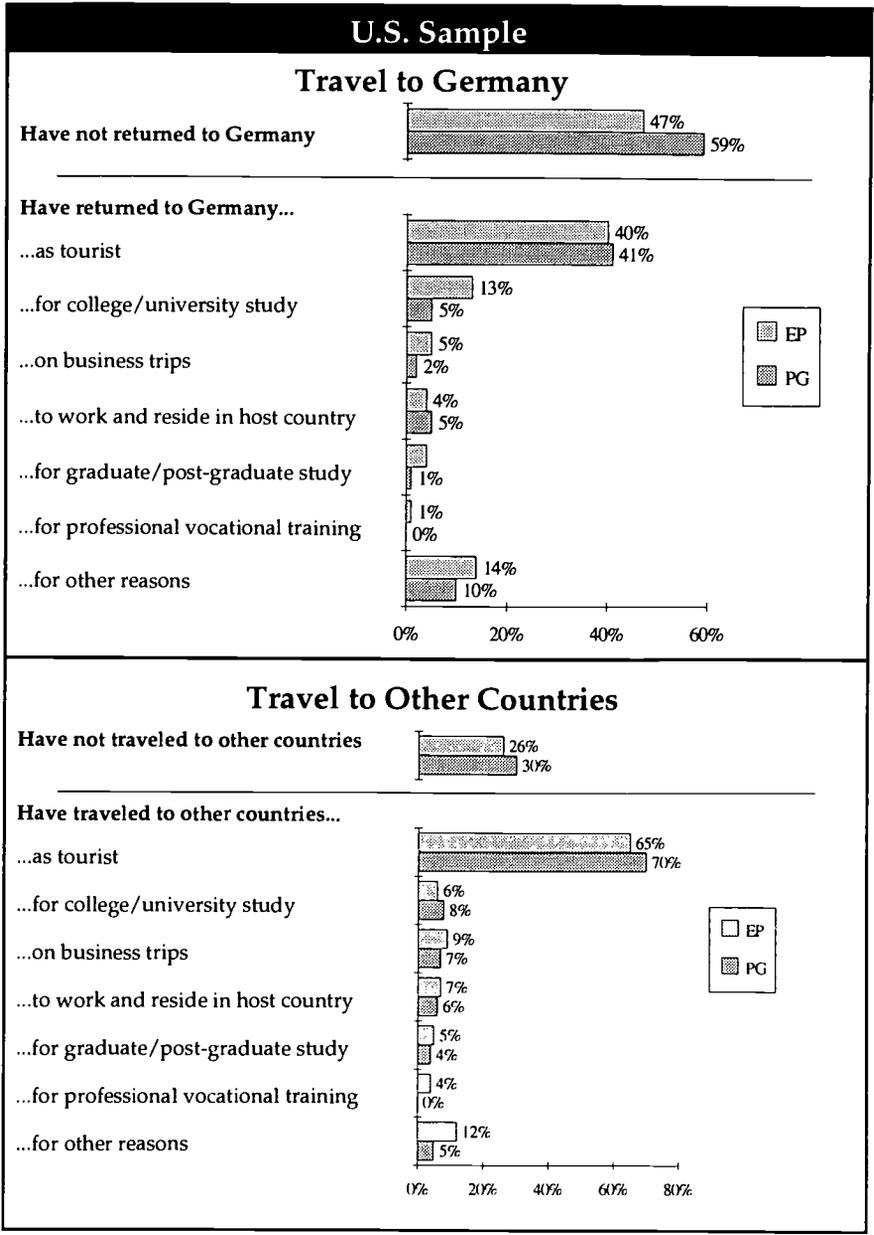
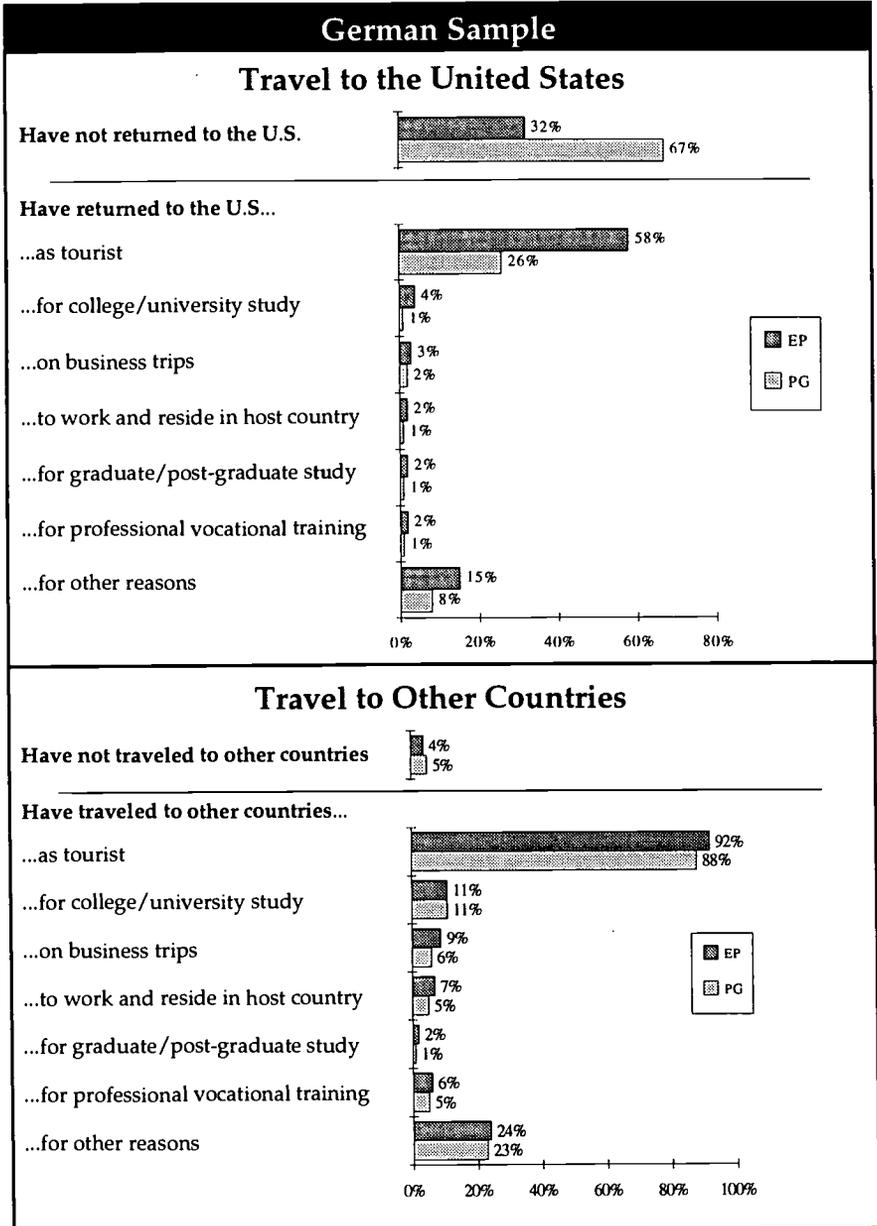


Figure 8b

Subsequent International Sojourns

Exchange Participants (EP) vs. Peer Groups (PG)



“Ripple Effects” Reported by Exchange Alumni

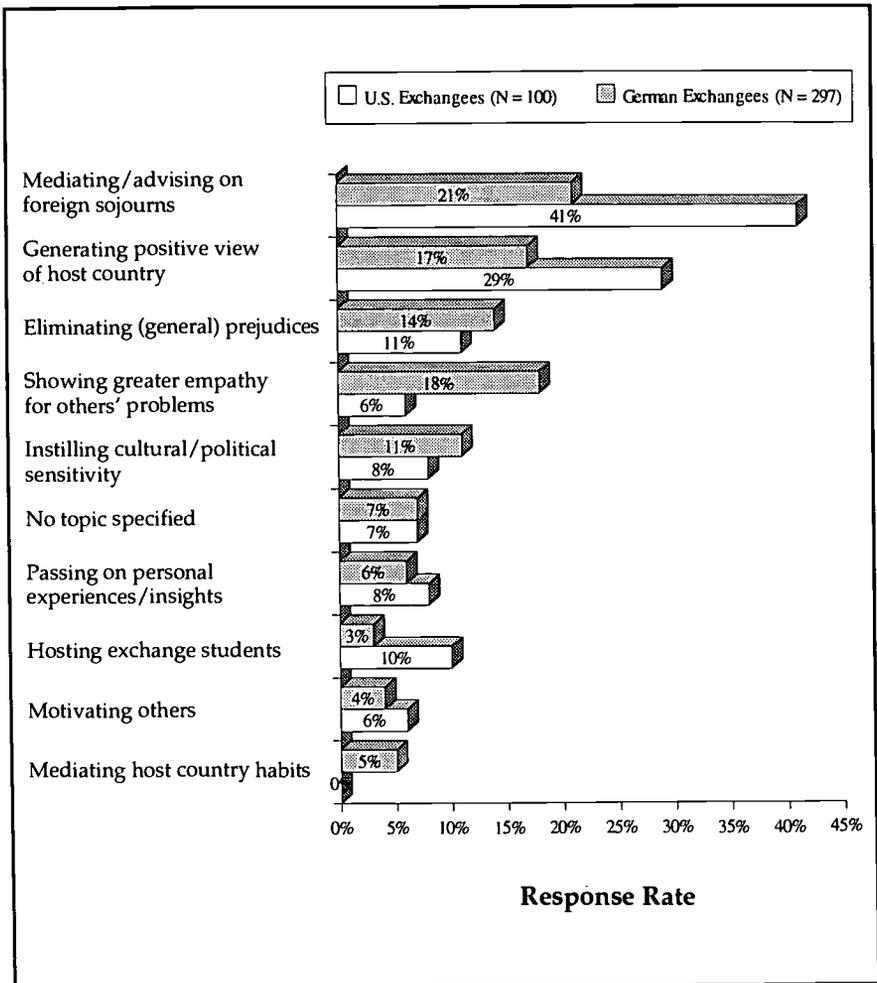
A number of returnees interviewed during the exploratory phase had recounted instances in which something they themselves gained during the exchange subsequently had a “ripple effect”—an impact on other people’s actions or way of thinking. To gain a broader picture of such “ripple effects” or mediation experiences, an open-ended item in the participant questionnaire requested former exchange students to describe one or more instances in which they influenced a person or situation because of what they had learned during the exchange.

Responses were given by 100 U.S. returnees and 297 German exchange alumni. These were content-analyzed by a team of decoders according to two sets of empirically derived categories, one set referring to target persons, the other set enumerating topics that were mentioned in the described instances. Frequencies of responses in both national samples are given in Figure 9 for mediation targets, and in Figure 10 for topics of mediation, with each set of categories listed in order of overall frequency. It should be noted that percentages for each national sample add up to more than 100 percent, because in a number of accounts—especially by U.S. respondents—more than one target or topic were mentioned.

The order of response categories indicates that mediation activities are largely restricted to the immediate social environment of friends and family. “Official” targets (i.e., students or clients and younger exchange participants) are next in line, while socially more distant targets such as community groups, foreigners, and colleagues at work are least frequently addressed.

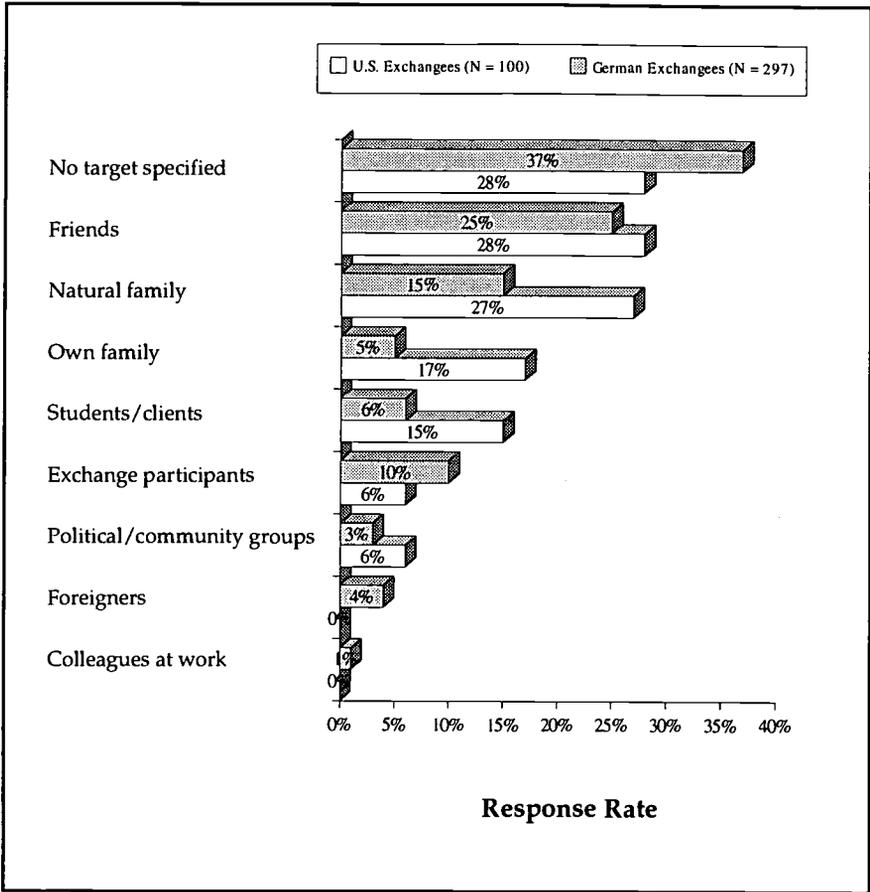
Comparing the two national samples, it becomes apparent that U.S. returnees are more frequently active as mediators in their natural families, possibly because of less international exposure of U.S. parents and siblings than of their German counterparts, who may be more experienced through relatively frequent tourist travel abroad, as well as more knowledgeable about U.S. matters through broader media coverage. The fact that “own family” and “students/clients” are mentioned less frequently by German returnees may again be due to the overrepresentation of young returnees. As noted before, the higher rate of volunteer involvement of German exchange alumni in the national YFU committee explains their more frequent mention of “exchange participants” as targets of mediation.

Figure 9
 "Ripple Effects": Topics of Mediation



As to topics of mediation, specifically international themes were addressed most frequently, particularly by U.S. returnees whose international experience was possibly regarded as more salient by their social environment. Interestingly enough, however, more generalized areas of mediation (e.g., eliminating general prejudices or showing greater empathy) are men-

Figure 10
 "Ripple Effects": Mediation Targets



tioned by substantial numbers of respondents, especially German returnees, whose YFU orientation programs have traditionally placed strong emphasis on more general, abstract insights.

Conclusion And Recommendations

The research study upon which this paper is based (Bachner and Zeuschel, 1990) examined in depth the notion that international educational exchange at the high school level results in positive, enduring, and socially contributory changes in the majority of German and American participants. In investigating these claims, a study design was constructed that would alleviate some of the more endemic inadequacies of exchange research by emphasizing cross-national collaboration, qualitative-quantitative approaches, attention to historical context, hypothesis formulation and testing, and a long-range (i.e., 36-year) perspective.

The findings from the study largely support the common assumption that, at least in respondents' subjective estimations, exchange participation results in meaningful, long-lasting changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors. Additionally, the findings indicate that the totality of these purported exchange-induced changes fosters an overall attitude of internationalism that would seem to have positive implications for enhancing world peace and cooperation.

Excerpting from the broad array of study findings, the present article has focused on those specific results that shed light on what former high school exchange participants claim they do to utilize the fruits of their exchange experience. The following findings substantiate exchange's long-term applicability inasmuch as the great majority of individuals report that they have:

- grown in self-confidence, a growth attributable to the necessity for self-reliance and autonomous action in a culturally different environment;
- acquired instrumental skills and extra resources for problem solving, ranging from specific abilities such as typing (not taught in German schools), research techniques (likewise), and foreign language proficiency, to more generalized abilities, such as coping successfully in unfamiliar situations;

- become more aware of and clarified personal interests and strengths, often to the extent of propelling one to make definite academic, career, and other life choices;
- experienced (and mastered) different subject matter, teaching methods, and academic systems (curriculum, school structure, etc.);
- capitalized on relationships with host family members, peers, school personnel, and also other exchange participants as reference persons and “culture guides” for everyday learning;
- increased their capacity for empathy because they have had to explore the possible reasons that others think or behave differently;
- developed a commitment to support international activities (such as exchange organizations) and other socially contributory efforts either as paid or volunteer staff;
- functioned as cultural bridges and mediators.

These findings are highly optimistic and salutary, especially when one considers the impressive number of individuals who experience exchange annually. Its obvious merits and worth notwithstanding, however, international educators and exchange administrators consistently face daunting challenges in their efforts to legitimize, institutionalize, fund, and extend program offerings. Progress has at best been intermittent on such major fronts as visa regulation, credit granting and other academic incentives, host family access, counterpart organization access, imbalanced exchange flows, pre- and on-program participant support, quality standards, systematic post-program reinforcement and involvement, and broad-based donor interest.

Nevertheless, several practical approaches can stimulate a greater number of individuals to experience exchange, glean its benefits, and—most important—apply what they have learned to improve their societies after exchange. Following are six recommendations in these regards:

Recommendation 1: Reinforce Alumni Activities

Too often, exchange is considered in a limited frame of reference by being defined purely as the period abroad. The findings from this study support the notion that, far from being limited to the time abroad, exchange should be viewed in more longitudinal—possibly lifelong—terms. Clearly, it is an

experience that contains positive effects that endure beyond the time abroad for the majority of individual exchangees. Moreover, the findings indicate that the effects pertain, directly or indirectly, beyond the individual exchangees to their hosts, to their natural families, to others in the home country, and to the exchangees' fields of endeavor. As Bachner (1988, p. 283) has noted:

Alumni of high school exchange programs exist in considerable numbers.... The number climbs into the millions if host families and other volunteers are included in the definition of alumni. This pool represents a tremendous repository of firsthand knowledge about sojourns in general and the effects of exchange in particular. Systematic follow-up with alumni would reinforce the value of their exchange experience and might increase alumni involvement with current students and families. Involvement can take many forms but would be especially helpful in orientation and support. With training, alumni resources could build upon their own intercultural experience and offer singular understanding, empathy, and assistance to participants before, during, and after the exchange.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen Expectations for Returnees to Serve as Cultural Mediators

In a recent review of the role of international educational exchange in reducing conflict, Bachner (1993) observes that, at least in theory, exchangees should make excellent mediators insofar as they can reasonably be expected to facilitate contact and communication, bring to bear a respectful multicultural perspective, and establish a non-partisan credibility. While there is little systematically acquired evidence that exchangees would make effective cultural mediators or for how long after the exchange, extrapolations from research findings do suggest that former exchange students become successful mediators to the extent that they have developed positive intercultural attitudes, act as bridges between cultures because of these attitudes, and help correct distorted cultural stereotypes.

Bachner (1993) goes on to say that the exchange experience by itself does not necessarily engender mediatorial attributes. Rather, he suggests that adoption of a mediatory role by returnees will depend on three conditions: (1) the development of a transcultural frame of reference and identity (what Ventura, 1977, has termed a "third culture of internationalism") whose norms transcend national and monocultural boundaries (Bochner, 1981); (2) relevant programmatic purposes and formal institutional expectations

that exchangees are, in fact, to act as mediators (Eide, 1970; Klineberg, 1981); and (3) training that will prepare exchangees to assume a mediatory role and also confer a legitimacy, or formal status, for them to do so (Bochner, 1981; Rose, 1976). Bachner (1993) concludes that exchange programming—inclusive of purposeful, planned outcomes and the preparation necessary to realize those outcomes—must be much more proactive if instances of exchangee mediation are to be other than inadvertent. Additionally, it should be noted that exchangees often require explicit requests to become mediators in order to counteract the oft-lamented feeling that nobody is really interested in their experience or exchange-related insight.

In the specific programmatic context of the research reported here, the workings of “formal expectations” can be seen in the larger share of U.S. returnees giving presentations about their experience, while German alumni have ample opportunity to act as mediators toward younger exchangees when volunteering as orientation staff. Such follow-up and training activities provide important additional benefits to the degree that they deepen personal insights about one’s own exchange experience and also reinforce international educational exchange’s widely held goal of lifelong intercultural learning. In the broader societal context of both Germany and the United States, where the multicultural reality of everyday life continues to provoke alarming racist and nationalistic sentiments and actions, the transfer of intercultural insights gained during the international educational exchange experience has great potential significance.

Recommendation 3: Establish a Formal Continuity Between Exchange Levels

There is a logical continuity between secondary and post-secondary education abroad. Too often, however, an artificial disjuncture is imposed between the two levels of learning. Ironically, this disjuncture is less pronounced between high school and university generally, due to measures such as college prep courses, advanced placement etc., but it is certainly at work in international educational exchange, where the corresponding levels rarely seem to be thought of in their interrelated and essentially complementary natures.

A survey conducted in early 1992 among 153 U.S. alumni of the 1987/88 program year of the Council on International Educational Exchange’s (CIEE) School Partners Abroad exchange indicated that 44 percent of the respondents subsequently participated or intended to participate in study abroad programs at the undergraduate level (CIEE, 1992 and 1993). In

terms of actual participation, 11.4% of the respondents studied abroad in the same country as their high school exchange, while 17.4% went to a different country.

Thirteen percent of the respondents in the CIEE study were majoring or had a second major in the language of their former host country. The report states that:

the overwhelming majority of respondents felt that [high school] study abroad had influenced subsequent academic studies and career objectives. In fact, many of the respondents indicated that their choice of a college or university had been based on the international curriculum or study abroad program offered by the institution (CIEE, 1992, p. 5).

The National Task Force on Undergraduate Education Abroad (1990, p. 4) suggests that:

By the year 2000, ten percent of American college and university students should have a significant educational experience abroad during their undergraduate years. Achieving this will require substantial growth in the number and type of opportunities provided and a more pervasive integration of education abroad into institutional strategies aimed at strengthening the international dimension of U.S. higher education.

Indeed, the Task Force's recommended goal of increasing the number of American students who study abroad to at least 10 percent by the turn of the century would be enhanced considerably by a systematic and formally recognized "feeder" arrangement, whereby individuals who exchanged during high school are sought out and encouraged to continue their international pursuits via study abroad opportunities in college.

Such a feeder system could be collaboratively developed by colleges and secondary-level exchange organizations. Colleges would benefit by being able to target recruitment to exchange organization alumni (through organizational mailing lists and orientation events), many of whom would be interested in knowing what study abroad opportunities are offered by colleges. The college study abroad programs would also benefit by having more participants with cross-cultural sojourn experience and, in many cases, foreign language proficiency. These skills would enable exchange alumni to focus more readily on academic requirements in their majors than those who are abroad for the first time. This ability to manage one's major

while in a host institution abroad would seem to have positive implications vis-à-vis curricular requirements. College students could also complete internships with exchange organizations prior to and after the sojourn, which offers another, quite practical way to reinforce the international curricular emphasis.

The reciprocal benefit for exchange organizations is that they could tell potential high school-age participants, their parents, and their teachers that the secondary-level exchange experience really is valued by post-secondary institutions. Colleges could offer tangible demonstrations of this with credit options to high school exchange students according to strict academic criteria and appropriate measurements (e.g., research projects, essays, tests).

Finally, it is worth noting that a growing body of research conducted with alumni of youth exchange programs has yielded findings that could be of real assistance to college study abroad advocates, since similar dimensions of impact (for example, expansion of students' international knowledge and commitment) are often investigated in such research. Also, since certain of these studies, including the present one, investigate effects that extend well beyond the high school exchange itself (e.g., choice of college major and choice of profession attributed to the exchange experience), they often include data on returnees' college-level study abroad experiences as well.

Secondary level and post-secondary level exchanges, in short, form important segments in the continuum of lifelong learning. These two links will become all the more significant when the connection between them is systematically reinforced.

Recommendation 4: Utilize Returnees as Classroom Resources

A great deal has been written about the need to establish a global perspective among pre-university youth, and numerous practical attempts have been made to develop curricular and other learning activities in these regards (see, for example, McCabe, 1992). Both formal classroom and extracurricular global education efforts could be helped considerably by careful programmatic incorporation of returnees' exchange-related knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. Specifically, returnees would be able to serve as:

- resources in discussions on intercultural topics (e.g., relating personal experiences);

- resources in host-country language instruction (e.g., in fine-tuning pronunciation);
- “culture guides” or peer mentors for foreign students (cf. Zeutschel, 1988);
- role models for communication strategies to overcome limited language competence;
- “cultural sensitizers” in intercultural conflicts in the classroom.

Recommendation 5: Conduct Further Research on the Topic of Utilization

This study is founded on respondents’ repeated claims of actual behavioral changes that they attribute to exchange. As is the case with the majority of findings in this study, behavioral changes reported by respondents are not independently verifiable; we must take their word for it, and do.

At the same time, however, it would be desirable and valuable to have research results that assess the degree of convergent validity in behavioral changes—that is, changes confirmed by sources other than the former exchange student. An example of one means of assessment would be a study in which exchangees’ parents and friends are asked to appraise the impact of exchange and to test, over time, the congruence between their perceptions of change manifested by the exchangee and the exchangee’s own perception. Another possibility might be to select a range of individuals who really seem to have “made a difference” in the world according to some yet-to-be-determined set of criteria and *then* ascertain whether or not they had ever participated in an exchange.

In connection with further research, it is also worth noting that a number of utilization-related findings from this study have implications extending beyond exchange, *per se*, to such fields as social psychology, educational psychology, communications, and international relations. Examples of such findings include: (a) the apparently enduring nature of reported changes; (b) the high incidence of behavioral manifestations of reported changes, which connotes some congruence between attitude and action; (c) reductions in negative stereotyping; (d) increased language proficiency; (e) positive intergroup attributions; and (f) constructive efforts, or intended efforts, on behalf of international relations.

Programs should be developed that set out to realize these goals for greater numbers of people. At the same time, however, research designs

focusing on corroboration should be developed along with the programs so that desired effects can be more readily achieved in future programs. To the extent that the implications of exchange effects for utilization will be of interest to several disciplines, coordination between programmers and researchers with different and complementary disciplinary perspectives is necessary.

Recommendation 6: Emphasize the Qualitative Aspects of Programming

In discussing the development of basic program standards for youth exchanges, Bachner (1992) observed that the proliferation of international student exchange programs over the past decade is a mixed blessing. On the one hand, proliferation may be viewed as salutary in that more students are afforded an opportunity to experience life in another culture firsthand. It is salutary also to the extent that those organizations charged with administering youth exchange programs have been encouraged, through the incentives of funding and visibility, to conduct themselves responsibly by providing well-developed and well-supported educational experiences for participants. Indeed, the results of this study offer many reasons to strengthen the belief that major benefits in personal learning, cross-cultural understanding, and subsequent action really do occur as a result of the exchange experience, and that programmatic quality will enhance these outcomes.

Portions of the exchange literature, on the other hand, also force the recognition that tremendous difficulties can arise in sojourning generally (Brislin, 1981), and study abroad specifically (Fry, 1984; Klineberg, 1976). Research indicates that a sizeable number of post-secondary foreign students may become disillusioned or even antagonistic towards their host country (Spaulding and Flack, 1976); in such cases, exchange may inadvertently serve to reinforce, rather than remove, cultural barriers (Altbach, Kelly, and Lulat, 1985). At the secondary level, moreover, some research (e.g., de Alencar and Hansel, 1984) and, certainly, the day-to-day experience of youth exchange organizations indicate that high school students exchanging in other cultures are by no means immune to the problems experienced by older exchangees. In fact, the impressionability that characterizes teenagers might increase the likelihood of major problems occurring.

Sojourn difficulties are an occupational reality at all levels of exchange. They are exacerbated, however, when organizations responsible for facili-

tating exchange programs fail to act ethically and ensure quality. In such instances, increases in the volume of exchange present a liability rather than an opportunity, and the potential for good effects is eroded by the incidence of failure in and dissatisfaction with the exchange experience. To the extent that individual participants suffer psychologically, emotionally, or physically, the field as a whole suffers damaged credibility. When administering organizations fail to respond professionally and competently to the inevitable difficulties that arise in youth exchange, the field risks increased liability as well.

Increased volume, then, has brought increased exposure, and increased exposure has engendered greater sensitivity within the exchange community to the level of quality of youth exchange programs. Several groups—among them NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the United States Information Agency (USIA), and the Council for Standards on International Educational Travel (CSIET)—have taken the lead in articulating and attempting to implement standards in an effort to prevent abuses in the administration of youth exchange programs.

The attention to standards is not coming from regulatory agencies or professional associations alone. Individual youth exchange organizations have also been addressing the issue (see AFS, 1984; YFU, 1989). The present study's results lend credence to the notion that responsible programming by exchange organizations can promote learning, positive impact, and post-program multiplier effects/applications. This is especially true with respect to the provision of educational materials and activities as well as logistical and emotional support to participants before, during, and after the exchange experience itself. Conversely, proper support can reduce the potential for negative impact. This being the case, exchange organizations should make every reasonable effort to articulate and implement basic program standards. These will provide the exchange field, educators, and the general public with a litmus test for quality and results, and a means for judging organizations accordingly.

In sum, higher program quality promises more positive impact. More positive impact, in turn, enhances the degree to which former participants will utilize and apply the effects of exchange.

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