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Beyond Bologna and Bolashak:
Work & Travel U.S.A. as a Context for Student Agency
in Kazakhstan's Internationalization of Higher Education

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Abstract

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This thesis examines student participation from Kazakhstan in the Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. program. Kazakhstan's government emphasizes the Bologna Process, the government-funded Bolashak scholarship, and the new elite Nazarbayev University as pillars of educational internationalization. The Work & Travel program forms an alternative avenue for Kazakhstan's students to reach the United States. Semi-structured interviews with students, faculty and administrators in the U.S. and in Kazakhstan (N = 22) and a survey of popular media publications indicated that students and their parents know about persistent quality issues that have plagued the Work & Travel program, but sign up nonetheless. This thesis seeks to determine why, despite

known risks, significant numbers of students from Kazakhstan continue to participate in the Work & Travel program. Analysis of perceived risks and benefits inherent to the program and of strategies that students use to cope with challenges suggests that Kazakhstan's students prefer flexible exchange programs that accommodate their strong group solidarity and their collaborative decision-making preference. These preferences are explained within the framework of Douglas's group and grid cultural theory (1982, 1986, 1992, 1999; Douglas and Ney, 1998). Changes to Work & Travel mandated by the U.S. State Department for summer 2012 call for closer monitoring of student well-being and require opportunities for cultural enrichment and English language practice during the employment phase of the program. Sponsor companies may contract with third-party providers such as educational, non-profit, or community volunteer organizations to supply this enrichment. The new policy thus creates an opportunity for educators in the U.S. to serve students from Kazakhstan who participate in Work & Travel. Implications of this analysis suggest that educators in the U.S. and the government of Kazakhstan should assess further the reasons why Kazakhstan's students pursue Work & Travel, should consider Work & Travel in strategic planning for international education opportunities, and should seek to create high-quality, flexible, collaborative work-study options that would permit Kazakhstan's non-elite students to offset the costs of their international experience through concurrent employment.

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GLOSSARY

Bolashak Scholarship	Kazakhstan's government-funded, merit-based scholarship for degree-seeking study abroad.
Bologna Process	Agreement initiated in June 1999 to establish equivalence of academic programs throughout Europe.
CETUSA	Council for Educational Travel, U.S.A., a Work & Travel sponsor company in the U.S.
CIEE	Council on International Educational Exchange, a Work & Travel sponsor company in the U.S.
CIP	Center for International Programs, a government agency in Kazakhstan that administers the Bolashak scholarship.
EHEA	European Higher Education Area, the group of countries in Europe that are signatories to the Bologna Declaration.
J-1 visa	Exchange Visitor non-immigrant visa category for non-degree study and internships in the United States.
KCET	Kazakhstan Council for Educational Travel, a leading Work & Travel agency in Kazakhstan.
MyPlanet.kz	MyPlanet, a leading Work & Travel agency in Kazakhstan.
NAFSA	Association of International Educators, professional organization for U.S. international educators.
Summer Work & Travel U.S.A.	Cultural exchange program created by the U.S. State Department to allow students to spend four months in the U.S. during their long academic break.

PREFACE

June 15, 2012, 12:08 P.M.

Sam: hello, Laura

me: Hi Sam!

Sam: How are you, Laura? Wanna tell you that more and more Kazakhs coming to Seattle.

me: Cool! Tell me the story.

Sam: The story is very simple - work & travel.

me: Aha. I knew it!

Sam: One of them is my classmate, we were very good friends in KZ

me: What kinds of jobs are they finding in Seattle?

Sam: Anything. That's why I'm saying if you will hear anyone hiring, plz inform.

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DEDICATION

To my grandparents.

Introduction

Samat¹ grew up in a large city in Kazakhstan, but now lives in the U.S. and studies at Northern Verge Community College (direct interview, April 6, 2012). The possibility of participating in the Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. student exchange program formed a primary motivation for the start of his university career in Kazakhstan. In 2007, Samat first went to work in Alaska fisheries as a Work & Travel student along with a friend from Kazakhstan. The young men managed to arrange job offers at a fish processing plant through a connection to another friend who had previously worked in Alaska. Throughout that summer, Samat stood for sixteen hours a day removing the eggs from fish for minimum wage. While working in the canneries, Samat and his friend lived and worked alongside other Work & Travel students from post-Soviet countries and from Latin America. They met few U.S. citizens during the employment phase of the program other than the managers at the plant. Since most of their co-workers and roommates spoke Russian, they rarely speak English while working in Alaska. Samat valued Work & Travel for the opportunity it provided to earn a large sum of money by working long hours throughout the summer. He now laments the recent changes to policy that will prohibit Work & Travel students from future employment in Alaska fisheries, explaining that “Alaska was one of the few ways to ... make money in the U.S.”

Samat shared his opinions about the Work & Travel program:

¹ Names and certain identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

I don't think Work & Travel should be changed. Work & Travel itself is like an army. It should make a person stronger, or make him or her leave. That's how life works. . . . Alaska made me think like an adult. I was a different person afterward. It made me believe in myself.

(Direct interview, April 6, 2012)

Like Samat, Katya found her Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. experience to be rewarding and transformational in spite of difficulties. Katya currently lives in a mid-sized city in Kazakhstan and studies at Eastern Private University (e-mail, May 5, 2012). After first hearing about the Work & Travel program as an eighth grader, she eagerly anticipated entering the university so that she could participate in the summer exchange. She scoured the Internet for information about “any programs which were connected to foreign countries.” The chance to “see America and its culture” formed a primary motivation for her interest in Work & Travel. Katya first went to the U.S. Midwest in 2011 along with a university classmate to work in fast-food jobs located for them by another friend. For summer living accommodations, the employer placed the girls in an apartment along with two young men from Tajikistan who were their coworkers and their fellow participants in the Work & Travel program. Katya explained that these students from Tajikistan “changed [her] values from being . . . career aimed to value family and relationship.” These friends made her “understand that being a good wife and mother is the most important” for her, a transformation that she describes as “helping [her] find . . . harmony.”

At the same time, Katya enjoyed getting acquainted with Americans, among them another of her roommates: a 30-year-old single father of two children in custody elsewhere. She described this man as “wise and smart,” and said that she enjoyed “a philosophical talk” with him each morning at 4 a.m. while cooking breakfast for him. She believed that this introduction to a variety of people in the U.S. made her a “better person” who is now more tolerant and open to others, stating that “all people are equal” for her after the trip. Katya described her living situation and social interactions from summer 2011 in positive terms, although this assortment of older male roommates and male roommates from more conservative Muslim backgrounds seems to be a surprising housing placement for two young women from Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan’s students tell ambiguous stories about Work & Travel: They describe inconvenience, hardship and discomfort during the summer exchange, and yet they demonstrate a generally positive attitude toward the program. The Work & Travel program offers students a J-1 visa and an opportunity to find a job in the U.S. in return for a substantial fee paid to an intermediary U.S.-based “sponsor company” that may in turn recruit students through a collection of “agencies” operating in countries outside the United States. Many participants report hard labor, frequent unemployment, minimal support from program sponsors, and overall financial loss. News media in Kazakhstan highlight sensational cases wherein students were employed in adult entertainment, incarcerated, or deceased under dubious

circumstances. Nonetheless, some 3,000 students from Kazakhstan flock to the program each summer (“Work & Travel mogut obiazat’,” 2011).

Kazakhstan’s government also takes an ambivalent stance toward Work & Travel. In response to negative press and to the need for consular intervention on behalf of students abroad, Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued several cautionary statements about the need for careful selection of Work & Travel agents, sponsors and employers (“Kazakhstan Foreign Ministry,” 2012). However, the program does not figure in strategy statements regarding international education issued by the Ministry of Education and Science (Zhumagulov, 2012a, 2012b). While increasing academic mobility forms a stated goal (Zhumagulov, 2012a, para. 7; 2012b, para. 8), the Ministry dismisses Work & Travel from consideration as a form of educational exchange (Serdalina, 2011, para. 9). At the same time, Work & Travel participation from Kazakhstan accounts for about ten percent of all student mobility out of the country and far exceeds numeric participation in the elite government-funded Bolashak scholarship and attendance at the Nazarbayev University (Musataeva, 2012, para. 2; “Statistics,” 2010, para. 1; “Quick facts,” 2011).

These patterns raise several questions that guide the research undertaken in this thesis: Given that students from Kazakhstan know about the risks and difficulties inherent to the Work & Travel program, why do they continue to participate? How can an understanding of those decisions and motivations help educators in the U.S.

better serve students from Kazakhstan? What advice can be offered to Kazakhstan's government in its approach to monitoring and regulating Work & Travel?

Against the background of government policy that encapsulates educational internationalization in terms of the Kazakhstan's government-funded Bolashak scholarship,² membership in Europe's Bologna Process,³ and the elite Nazarbayev University,⁴ this thesis examines student agency in the form of choices and actions that create opportunities for international exchange apart from those structures. The Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. exchange offers a prime example of a minimally structured program that provides wide scope for student initiative and problem-solving. Description of participant experience in the Work & Travel program underpins a structural analysis of decision-making and accountability patterns revealed in student accounts. This analysis explains student preferences within the framework of Douglas's group and grid cultural theory (1982, 1986, 1992, 1999; Douglas and Ney, 1998). The group and grid framework implies that Kazakhstan's students accept the risks inherent to Work & Travel because they tend to prefer group rather than individual accountability, and because they typically rely on decision making by means of personal negotiation rather than by external rules. These patterns

² Since 1993, the Bolashak scholarship (the name means "future" in Kazak) has provided full funding to about 7,500 top students to complete degree programs abroad, followed by a five-year public- or private-sector service commitment in Kazakhstan ("Statistics," n.d.).

³ The Bologna Declaration was signed in June 1999 by 29 European nations to establish equivalence of academic programs throughout a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that now includes 47 nations. Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Accords in March 2010.

⁴ The Nazarbayev University opened in Astana in Fall 2010 with the intent to provide high-quality science, technology and humanities instruction in English within the country to undergraduates who otherwise would qualify for the Bolashak program for study abroad.

of student cohort agency should motivate educators and policy makers in the U.S. and in Kazakhstan to create flexible exchange programs that consider small-group ties for the recruitment, participation and re-entry phases of study abroad.

Primary sources for this study include direct observation and interviews with students and faculty conducted in Kazakhstan in October 2011 and in the U.S. through June 2012, along with print and internet publications available both in Kazakhstan and in the United States. A survey of the scholarly literature reveals a lacuna with respect to Work & Travel. Several recent articles regarding labor advocacy and hospitality-industry standards relied on government documents, popular press, and social media as sources for discussion of Work & Travel. Popular media exposed situations that have embroiled Work & Travel students in labor disputes, legal tangles, and organized crime, while the U.S. State Department addressed these concerns through policy revisions designed to improve the program.

This thesis contributes to the slim body of scholarly research devoted to Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. by arguing that the program deserves further attention from social scientists and from educators. This study also contributes to discussion of Douglas's cultural theory through application of the group and grid model to educational program design. This analysis will interest educators in the U.S. who facilitate student and scholar exchange to and from Kazakhstan. Scholars of international education, of post-socialist education reform, or of the Central Asia region also will find this discussion relevant to their work.

1. Summer Work & Travel U.S.A.: Cultural Exchange in Flux

The Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. program created by the U.S. State Department authorizes some 50 private “sponsor companies” to provide J-1 visas to students from around the world to come to the U.S. for four months of the long break during the academic year (see <http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/summer-work-travel/>).⁵ Those sponsor companies in turn may work through “agencies” in foreign countries to recruit and accept students into the program (Figure 1). The U.S.-based sponsor companies must enter participant data into the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database maintained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The terms of the exchange require those students to find employment for three months and allow them one final month for tourist travel. Defining “summer” by the seasonal break in the students’ home countries permits a year-round supply of Work & Travel students for the U.S. temporary labor market.

The U.S. State Department established the program to provide cultural exchange and language immersion to strengthen global ties (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2011e). Thus the program comes packaged as a culturally valuable student exchange, rather than as a career-oriented work opportunity. Work & Travel participants must be enrolled during the regular

⁵ The J (Exchange Visitor) non-immigrant visa category includes some fourteen subcategories for study, training and work experience in the United States. While degree-seeking international students enter the U.S. under the F (Student) visa category, short-term exchange students, interns, and professional trainees receive J-1 visas. The letter designation indicates the visa category, while the number denotes the status of the individual receiving the visa: Spouses and dependents who accompany a J-1 exchange visitor receive J-2 visas, while spouses and dependents of F-1 students enter the U.S. on F-2 visas (see <http://j1visa.state.gov/>).

school year as tertiary students in their home countries, with at least one year of their degree programs remaining for completion after their summer in the United States. On this basis, the program fits criteria for educational exchange despite the fact that participants enter the workplace rather than enrolling in classes.

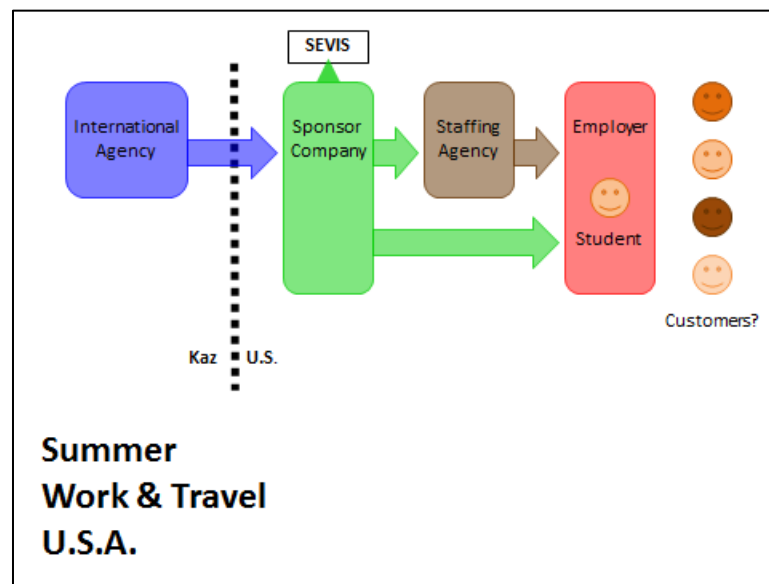


Figure 1: Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. Exchange Program Structure

Details of the Work & Travel program appear on the U.S. State Department website (<http://www.state.gov>), on the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program web page (<http://j1visa.state.gov/programs/summer-work-travel/>), and on the Travel, Study and Work page of USA.gov (<http://www.usa.gov/visitors/visit.shtml>). These sites provide instructions to students and to sponsor companies about the parameters of the program, including country-specific participation dates, constraints on acceptable job placements, and strictures on timely return of students to their home countries.

Prior to changes mandated for summer 2012, the 50 licensed Work & Travel sponsor companies wielded broad discretion to screen applicants remotely through recruiting agencies abroad. Sponsor companies also exercised the option to place Work & Travel students through staffing agencies in the U.S. with employers that lacked any direct contact with the sponsor company. Despite the original intent for cultural exchange and language practice as key elements of the program, regulations permitted students to work in agricultural or manufacturing jobs where they had no opportunity to meet customers from the general public. While the Work & Travel students who found employment at theme parks, fast food restaurants, or retail outlets interacted extensively with U.S. citizens, many students working in Alaska fisheries or on factory packing lines found themselves alongside other internationals with limited English skills (Preston, 2011, 2012b).

Given the latitude of State Department regulations governing Work & Travel, the tone and direction for the program have been shaped by sponsor companies through their interactions with employers in the U.S. and with recruiting agencies abroad. Two of the largest Work & Travel sponsors illustrate the elasticity of program parameters. The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) has treated the program as a context for experiential learning, while the Council for Educational Travel, U.S.A. (CETUSA) promotes Work & Travel as gainful employment.

The CIEE website (<http://www.ciee.org> last accessed August 17, 2012) places the Work & Travel program within its wider historical context of the development of

international student exchange to and from the United States. CIEE has served for the past sixty years as a non-profit, non-governmental sponsor for exchanges including Summer Work & Travel, year-long J-1 internships, International Faculty Development Seminars, Teach Abroad programs for U.S. university graduates, and secondary educational exchange. The “History” section of the website references Mikhailova’s (2003) dissertation on the development of the CIEE consortium within the wider framework of the internationalization of higher education from post-WWII reconstruction, through the Cold War and the post-Soviet transition, into the era of globalization. Since its inception in 1947 as the Council on Student Travel, CIEE has shaped practice and policy for student exchange to and from the United States. While Work & Travel students have formed the majority of CIEE’s clientele, Mikhailova focuses her discussion on educational resources developed by CIEE to raise the quality and to increase the benefits of student travel. CIEE pioneered orientation programs for students on ships crossing the Atlantic en route to summer exchanges in Europe. From these humble but creative beginnings, CIEE has formed industry standards for training students, evaluating programs, structuring academic content, and researching internationalization.

Mikhailova’s (2003) wholly positive stance toward CIEE calls into question the objectivity of the dissertation. Nonetheless, her study shows that the Work & Travel program can offer educational value to students. Standards established by CIEE set benchmarks for assessing the quality of student exchange. Following this

pattern, high-quality programs match costs to student resources, train students for cultural competence, provide logistical support, monitor conditions and content, and assist students with re-entry and evaluation of their international experience.

In contrast to the educational focus displayed by CIEE, another Work & Travel sponsor company—the Council for Educational Travel, USA (CETUSA)—has embraced the employment function of the program. Kammer (2011) describes the rapid expansion of CETUSA into the Alaska fisheries labor market from 1998 to 2010 (p.17). Before the turn of the millennium, CETUSA relied on secondary-school homestay programs for its income. A decade later, the company was placing 2,000 Work & Travel students in 30 seafood processing plants along the Alaska coastline. This market share represented “about 95 percent” of Work & Travel employment in Alaska, and more than tripled the revenue of CETUSA (p. 17). In response to protests that the influx of temporary workers pushes Alaska’s citizens out of the fisheries job market, CETUSA recruiters asserted that students from Eastern Europe will eagerly sign up for jobs that U.S. adolescents will not consider taking (p. 17). Like Samat in the interview cited above, CETUSA sees Alaska as a lucrative and legitimate opportunity for Summer Work & Travel students. Nonetheless, the rapid growth of Work & Travel in supplying labor to Alaska fisheries has catalyzed much of the criticism for the program (p. 17-18).

1.1 Problems with Work & Travel

In recent years, the U.S. State Department has undertaken a complete overhaul of the Summer Work & Travel program to address widely-documented inconsistencies of implementation and quality control. As Work & Travel participation has mushroomed, so have complaints regarding poor service provided by sponsor companies in the U.S. and by recruiting agencies abroad. A 2010 Associated Press (AP) investigation uncovered pervasive abuses leading to inappropriate work and housing placements for participants (Mohr, Weiss, & Baker, 2010). Critics argue that the program has deviated from its original cultural-exchange purpose, now serving instead to provide a ready supply of cheap labor to the U.S. during the summer tourist season and to ensure its timely return to its country of origin when no longer needed (Bosquet, 2011; Preston, 2012a). In response, the State Department decided to cap 2012 program participation at the actual 2011 level of 103,000 total students, and to require sponsor companies to screen participants more effectively for English proficiency (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2011c). These measures form part of an extensive and ongoing State Department review with intent to restructure the program.

A triggering event for these changes took place in August 2011, when several hundred J-1 student workers protested low wages, harsh conditions and rent extortion at the Hershey's chocolate packing plant in Palmyra, PA (Preston, 2011, 2012a, 2012b). Work & Travel students found themselves in a tangled network: in this case,

CETUSA supplied J-1 students to a staffing agency, SHS Staffing Solutions. The staffing agency in turn placed the J-1 students as workers at the plant operated by a contractor, Excel, Inc., on behalf of the Hershey Company (Jamieson, 2011a). Rick Anaya, CEO of CETUSA, blamed the protest on agitation among disgruntled students by the National Guestworker Alliance and by the AFL-CIO (Jamieson, 2011c). Jamieson (2011c) further argued that labor unions note the plight of J-1 students largely because advocates for U.S. workers object to the employment of inexpensive foreign guest workers to undercut the domestic job market (para. 7). Major criticisms of Work & Travel have hinged on the program's impact on American workers, particularly as it limits summer employment opportunities for U.S. students (Kammer, 2011; Preston, 2012a).

1.2 Recent Changes to Work & Travel

The U.S. State Department published an Interim Final Rule on May 11, 2012 mandating changes to the Work & Travel program for summer 2012, with additional revisions effective November 2012 (Figure 2). The new policy restores the language-immersion and cultural-exchange facets of the program to meet its original intended purpose by requiring sponsor companies to provide opportunities for cultural enrichment and language practice during the employment phase of the program (p. 27595). The licensed Work & Travel sponsor companies in the U.S.—their number reduced to 49 after CETUSA lost its Work & Travel mandate on January 30, 2012 (Mohr, 2012)—must screen any recruiting agencies they partner with in countries

abroad. Sponsors now are forbidden to supply students to staffing agencies for placement with third-party employers (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2012, p. 27601). Instead, sponsor companies must oversee job placements and housing arrangements directly by vetting each employer, by screening any subsidiary housing contracts, and by communicating with participants monthly to verify their well-being and satisfaction with the program (p. 27595).

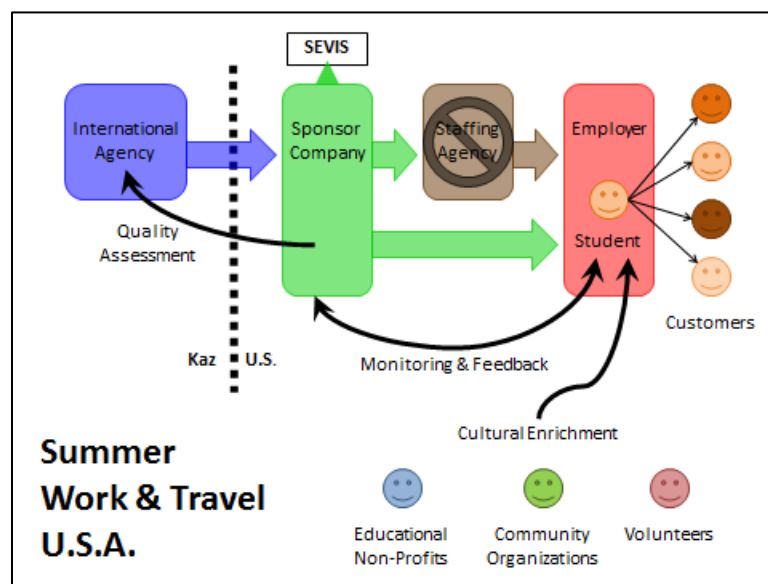


Figure 2: Revised Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. Structure for 2012

Stricter parameters for job placements now require that students have some direct contact with customers, but not too much: the first parameter rules out jobs in manufacturing, fisheries and agriculture, and the second eliminates jobs in massage, tattooing, and manicure (p 27595). This added structure aims to mitigate the pitfalls

that make ordinary citizens hesitate to engage with the Work & Travel program. At the same time, sponsor companies may contract with third parties to provide the required cultural enrichment activities for Work & Travel students (p 27603). These changes create a niche for subcontractors to provide cultural enrichment to Work & Travel students so that sponsor companies can establish compliance with the new policy.

A previous U.S. State Department Guidance Directive issued on December 13, 2011 indicated the direction for the new regulations by admitting that “in recent years, the work component of this exchange program has too often overshadowed the core cultural component that qualifies Summer Work Travel as an Exchange Visitor Program” (para. 2). To rectify this deviation from the original purpose of the program, the Guidance Directive reminded sponsors of their duty to “place serious focus on ... the ‘cultural exchange’ aspect” of the program (para. 1):

Sponsors must accordingly ensure that all placements provide participants with a balanced program, including a meaningful cultural experience, a variety of opportunities to meet Americans, and a chance to learn firsthand about American society, culture and values. (para. 2)

While tightening the parameters for suitable job and housing placements by limiting the third-party contracting options for these components of the program, the regulations simultaneously introduce new uncertainties by opening the cultural component to unspecified third parties with no clarification of assumptions regarding the nature and content of “American society, culture and values.” The State

Department Guidance Directive trusts to the goodwill of “sponsors and other interested parties to share ideas on how to emphasize the cultural component of this program and to better ensure that all participants enjoy safe, balanced and integrated international exchanges” (para. 18).

Despite the ambiguities of these definitions, the new regulations create a promising opportunity to raise the educational and experiential-learning value of the Work & Travel program. The new policy permits educational non-profits, community organizations and volunteers in the U.S. to provide cultural enrichment and cross-cultural skills training to participants, including those from Kazakhstan. The model provided by CIEE sets a precedent: Cultural-adjustment sessions offered to students on ships bound for summers in Europe grew into high-quality university-style seminars on history, politics, culture, and language (Mikhailova, 2003). In the same way, the cultural component of Work & Travel could support cultural adjustment, experiential learning, and awareness of future graduate study options. University-based volunteer networks that serve international students could offer events for Work & Travel students during the slow summer season. Educational non-profits could create weekend enrichment programs for Work & Travel participants as a fee-based service to sponsor companies. Universities could engage the new policy as an opportunity to recruit future graduate students. While some students may enter Work & Travel just for the adventure, others hope to pursue degree-seeking study in the United States (Samat, direct interview, April 6, 2012). These serious students might

appreciate seminars on business, engineering, or information technology as part of their cultural enrichment. A campus visit for Work & Travel participants could draw students back to that welcoming university. The value of third-party cultural enrichment relies heavily on choices made by interested stakeholders. The record of Work & Travel to date underscores the uncertainty of these outcomes.

1.3 Scholarly Analysis of Work & Travel

The literature on Work & Travel fits into broader criticisms of the U.S. State Department visa system and into wider issues of jurisdiction over guestworker programs between the State Department, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Homeland Security. As shown below, critics argue that guestworker programs such as Work & Travel have deviated from the original cultural-exchange intent for the J visa. Furthermore, the chaotic system of temporary foreign worker visas leads to exploitation as employers shuffle the various limitations of the J, L, H1-B, and Q visa categories to their own advantage. An emergent literature on these issues includes several recent professional and scholarly studies based on government documents, popular media, Internet resources, and direct interviews. A handful of law professors, immigration think-tanks, labor advocacy groups, and faculty in the hospitality industry have broken ground on academic scrutiny of Work & Travel. The first three of these voices reference one another and point out a lacuna the literature with respect to Work & Travel, significant gaps in the data on J-1 student workers, and puzzling inconsistencies in U.S. government policy and practice.

Professor Kit Johnson, Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of North Dakota School of Law, published a paper on “The Wonderful World of Disney Visas” in the *Florida Law Review* on April 1, 2011. This paper relied on the legal literature, government publications, and direct interviews with Disney executives and former employees to reveal inconsistencies in the structure and application of the J-1 visa and of the newly-minted “Q” visa that was crafted to meet the staffing needs of the Disney Corporation. Johnson’s work claimed to be “the first historical treatment of the Q visa in the literature” (p. 915), and added further detail to concerns about “Summer Work Travel as neither an educational nor a cultural exchange” (p. 951). Johnson concluded that while “Disney is in full compliance with federal regulations ... the regulations themselves are not in compliance with the underlying statute,” the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 that created the J visa category for Exchange Visitors (p. 937, 950). Analysis of Disney’s Summer Work Experience led Johnson to argue that “given that Summer Work Travel does not provide opportunities that are educational or cultural within the meaning of the Act, the underlying agreements exceed their statutory grounding” (p. 954). Moreover, “the J visa shows the malleability of the law in practice, taking great liberties with ideas of learning and education in a program designed to bring students into the United States from overseas” (p. 957). Johnson’s paper thus emphasized the legal inconsistencies and the distortions of cultural exchange that have occurred in the implementation of Summer Work & Travel.

In contrast, Daniel Costa concentrated his analysis on disruption to the U.S. labor market. Costa, an immigration policy analyst at the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a non-profit think tank located in Washington D.C., has published extensively on the impacts of the various visa categories that admit temporary foreign workers to the United States. Costa's July 14, 2011 EPI Briefing Paper on "Guestworker Diplomacy" cited Kit Johnson, government documents, and popular media to reveal shortcomings in each of the J visa subcategories that permit student employment. The existence of Summer Work & Travel makes the State Department responsible for the largest guestworker program in the U.S., with the Department of Labor and the Department of Homeland Security excluded from the usual roles they take in regulation of other work-visa categories (pp. 30, 35). Government scrutiny of J visa programs since 1990 has documented rampant problems (p. 15), but opaque reporting obscures the participation data needed to assess impacts on U.S. workers (pp. 25, 38). Costa surmised that the State Department "views the Exchange Visitor Program as a tool of diplomacy" and "sees the J-1 visa as a tangible good that it can give to other countries as an expression of goodwill" with hopes of reciprocity (p. 39). Unfortunately, "failure to adequately protect the well-being of foreign visitors ... has diminished the value of State's guestworker diplomacy both at home and abroad" (p. 39). Costa concluded that structural anomalies in the oversight of the Summer Work & Travel program levy a negative impact on the U.S. job market, but missing data make this fallout hard to measure and correct (p. 39).

Costa and Ross Eisenbrey, also of the EPI, published a May 16, 2012 analysis of the State Department's May 11 Interim Final Rule on Summer Work & Travel. Costa and Eisenbrey applauded the State Department for taking action to protect both U.S. workers and Work & Travel participants, but cautioned that the new policy lacks the means to enforce wage protections and puts too much "faith" in sponsor companies to ensure compliance from employers in the U.S. and from recruiting agencies abroad (para. 16). Sponsor companies wield great influence to determine the success of the new policies through their choices to meet or to subvert its demands.

Jerry Kammer, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a non-profit research organization dedicated to immigration impacts on the U.S., published a scathing December 2011 report entitled "Cheap Labor as Cultural Exchange: The \$100 Million Summer Work Travel Industry." This pamphlet cited Daniel Costa, popular press, participant blogs, YouTube videos, and websites of Work & Travel sponsors and employers to expose injustices plaguing the Work & Travel program. Kammer focused on exclusive hiring practices and grueling job conditions in Alaska fisheries that exploit Work & Travel students while damaging prospects for U.S. youth who need summer jobs.

The Global Workers Justice Alliance, a New York-based advocacy group for legal defense of migrant workers, released a report on June 4, 2012 under the primary authorship of Ashwini Sukthankar to provide "the first comparative analysis of the many visas that employers use and misuse to bring foreign workers into the U.S."

(“Global Workers,” 2012, para. 1). This report placed Work & Travel into the wider context of all visa categories that provide access to the U.S. for temporary foreign workers. Citing Kit Johnson, Daniel Costa, government documents, and direct interviews with labor migration advocates and stakeholders in the U.S. and abroad (p. 14), Sukthankar revealed the complexity and vulnerability to exploitation that results from the proliferation of visa categories that explicitly permit or can be distorted to allow foreign nationals to work in the United States. The report concluded that the May 11, 2012 changes to Work & Travel constitute a “regulatory ‘quick fix’” (p. 28) unlikely to deliver on the promise to protect both foreign student workers and U.S. workers. The new policy shifts even more responsibility for oversight and enforcement to sponsor companies, while other vulnerable visa categories remain unchanged and open to exploitation (pp. 28-29). The Global Workers Justice Alliance report summed up a small but weighty corpus of legal and labor advocacy that calls for clear definition, rigorous oversight, and real enforceability to restore cultural exchange value and to limit labor abuses plaguing Summer Work & Travel.

On a more pragmatic note, Marcia Taylor and Dori Finley of the East Carolina University Department of Hospitality Management published a 2010 paper in the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* entitled “Acculturation, assimilation, and retention of international workers in resorts.” This paper stated that “no similar literature” exists on cultural adjustment for H2B and J-1 guest workers at seasonal resorts in the U.S. (p. 689). Six case studies of H2B and J-1

employers revealed that adaptation to the host culture usually takes place informally on the job (p. 681). Employers gathered feedback from H2B workers to encourage their return in subsequent seasons, but “none of the resorts used exit interviews with J-1 students because it was assumed that these students would not be returning” (p. 688). The authors recommended “a comprehensive assimilation, acculturation, and retention program for seasonal workers” (p. 681) to improve job performance, to increase employee satisfaction, and to raise the likelihood of return. This article referenced best practices from the human resources and hospitality management literature, but skirted the issue of labor abuses involving temporary workers.

These discussions in the fields of law, labor advocacy, immigration policy, and hospitality management reveal the need for educators and anthropologists to join the debate. Legal criticisms of Summer Work & Travel rest on failures to provide educational and cultural content for the Exchange Visitor category in keeping with the intent of the Fulbright-Hays Act. The State Department seeks to strengthen the learning value for students by enhancing cultural enrichment. Employers devote attention to cultural adjustment for student workers to improve performance and job satisfaction. These remedies would benefit from clarity regarding the nature and content of culture, from a nuanced view of cultural exchange, and from informed guidance about raising the quality of experiential learning outside the classroom.

2. Work & Travel in Kazakhstan's Press

A survey of Kazakhstan's popular press revealed broad and detailed documentation of problems with the Work & Travel program. This survey gleaned media coverage from November 2011 through August 2012 by means of searches in English, Russian and Kazak in publication archives, periodical databases, Google, and YouTube for "Work & Travel U.S.A." The size and complexity of the resulting corpus suggests that citizens of Kazakhstan have ready access to information about the issues that have plagued the Work & Travel program.

Along with general consensus regarding the prevalence of distress and financial loss to students during the program due to problems with job placements and housing, news media in Kazakhstan highlight a handful of disasters that have befallen students in the U.S. during or after their Work & Travel experience. Lack of supervision and sponsor failures combine with neglect by U.S. employers to create a perfect storm for students. Although these sensational cases represent just a small fraction of Work & Travel participants from Kazakhstan, they appear in the majority of publicized accounts regarding the program and its effects. As observed by Daniel Costa (2011, p. 39), the wide circulation of negative publicity about these incidents continues to undermine the diplomacy value of Work & Travel for building good relations between the U.S. and Kazakhstan.

The bulk of Kazakhstan's press on Work & Travel reveals issues that motivate corrective action. Although sponsors in Kazakhstan present the program as a money-

making venture, two articles estimate that 35 percent of students suffer a net loss (CA-News, 2011. June 7, para. 3; “Rabota dlia studentov na leto,” 2011, para. 6). Unlike academic programs where financial investment yields educational capital in the form of language competence and transfer credit, Work & Travel employment often fails to deliver on corollary promises of cultural exchange, language immersion, and tourist value.

In addition to the many stories that report difficulties with finding jobs and housing in the U.S. for Work & Travel students (Almagambetov, 2011; InfoTses, 2010; Serdalina, 2011) or that describe legal tangles due to irregularities in reporting employment (Starostina, 2011), a series of scandals and tragedies have turned Kazakhstan’s media spotlight on Work & Travel since 2009. These stories share themes: lack of direct supervision, inadequate preparation, and poor judgment led students to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, participating in seemingly innocent activities that yielded dire consequences.

Maksat Aitbaev, who grew up in a children’s home in Aktöbe, went to the U.S. with Summer Work & Travel in 2008, but never returned. A report began circulating a year later that he had committed suicide in the U.S., but the rumor was not confirmed to the satisfaction of his friends or of Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (“Ishchu druga,” 2011).

Ignorance of U.S. currency law led to the July 10, 2009 counterfeiting arrest in Chatham, Massachusetts of two Work & Travel students from Karaganda, 19-year-

old Alibek Tailaqov and 21-year-old Aleksander Kustovkii. (“Zhalghan dollar zhasap,” 2009; “AQSh-ta ustalghan qazaqstandyq,” 2009; “Zhalghan dollar zhasaghan,” 2009; “Zhalghan dollar zhasaushylardyng,” 2009; “Zhalghan dollar zhasady,” 2009). Almagambetov (2011) explained that the students prepared the bills as a birthday gift for a friend, not realizing that false currency printed in jest could land them in trouble.

Lack of training about child protection norms in the U.S. caused trouble for 20-year-old Almaty student Zhandos Baqytbekuly, who was accused of sexual assault for helping two eleven-year-old girls down a slide at the Magic Forest amusement park during his summer 2010 Work & Travel employment. Baqytbekuly’s arrest led to his trial and to acquittal of the charges (Asautai, 2010).

Press coverage of one tragedy revealed that Work & Travel participants never lose that label: Reports about the April 23, 2011 shooting of Kazakhstani citizen Kirill Deniakin prominently referenced his Work & Travel participation of five years previously that provided his initial entry to the United States. Deniakin was shot eleven times by U.S. police who were called to investigate a possible break-in as he knocked on the door of a residence in Portsmouth, Massachusetts. During the year after his demise, news reports progressively tightened the link between his death and his association with Work & Travel, often failing to note that he was no longer part of the program at the time of the shooting (“AQSh-ta Deniakinning,” 2012; “AQSh-ta qaza,” 2012; Asautai, 2011a; “Zastrelennyi politsiei,” 2011; Toguzbaev, 2011).

The latest catastrophe seems to have been purely accidental. Work & Travel student Ainur Akhmetova was found unconscious on August 2, 2011 in the swimming pool of the Yarmouth, Massachusetts motel where she was working. Kazakhstan's consulate assisted the student's family to repatriate her on life support, but she never regained consciousness. (Agimbetov, 2011; "Pavlodarskaia studentka," 2011; Syzdykova, 2011; "U studentki," 2011).

Media coverage of these events called for closer supervision and for enhanced consular support for students from Kazakhstan who participate in the Work & Travel program. Editorials in Kazakhstan's press have synthesized these and other Work & Travel fiascos into cautionary tales warning students either to anticipate difficulties or to stay home, while urging the government to assist its citizens abroad and to monitor the activities of Work & Travel agents operating in Kazakhstan. In her 2011 article entitled "Lethal summer" ("Letal'noe leto"), Shelepova reviewed the disasters that beset a dozen of Kazakhstan's students abroad in the summer of 2011. Shelepova cited Iliyas Omarov, Press-Secretary of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explaining that the best efforts of the Ministry to protect and support its citizens suffer from the tendency of Kazakhstanis to give their consulates no notice of their presence in a foreign country until difficulties arise (para. 18-19). Despite these challenges, Shelepova urged Kazakhstan's government to provide better service for its citizens abroad (para. 24).

In a 2011 essay entitled “Ne khodite, deti, v Ameriku guliat” (“Don’t go, children, to wander in America”),⁶ Serdalina described her pursuit of explanations from staff at the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Labor and Social Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs Committee on Migration Policy, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Each government organ denied direct accountability for the quality of services provided by Work & Travel recruiting agencies operating in Kazakhstan (para. 9-12). One Work & Travel agency representative attributed the lack of jobs to the poor tourist season in Florida following the Gulf oil spill and to the students’ lack of resolve and limited English proficiency (para. 12-13). Serdalina concluded that rather than blaming students for difficulties, Work & Travel recruiters should work harder to protect the reputations of their firms (para. 16). The author did not specify whether recruiters should promise less, deliver more, or both.

Almagambetov (2011) noted that Work & Travel agencies in Kazakhstan spring up and disappear in rapid succession with no supervision from central authority (para. 12). The U.S. government refuses to “interfere in private business,” while Kazakhstan’s authorities classify the fly-by-night firms as international, and thus outside their jurisdiction (para. 12, see also Serdalina, 2011, para. 12; Starostina, 2011, para. 17). Almagambetov concurred with Serdalina that the best solution for this vicious cycle might be for Kazakhstan’s students to stay home (para. 13).

⁶ Serdalina’s title recalls the famous cautionary tale “Barmalei” by Russian children’s author Kornei Chukovskii that warns young people not to go to Africa for fear of dangers that await them there.

Students' own lack of preparation adds to the troubles that derive from the failures of Work & Travel agencies, sponsors and employers. Starostina (2011) cited the statements of staff at a Work & Travel sponsor company in Karaganda who admitted that some of their clients have fallen foul of the law while in the United States due to under-age drinking, shoplifting, or politically incorrect statements or actions (para. 21-25). In such cases, better training about U.S. law and customs before departure could help students stay out of trouble. The challenges of Work & Travel can transform or traumatize students. The author of a Press-Club Kazakhstan piece (InfoTses, 2010) challenged students with a vivid title: "If you're afraid of devils, don't climb into the abyss. And are you ready to take on America?" This article cited the website of the Kazakhstan-based Center for International Exchange, stating that Work & Travel participants must be "independent and able to make decisions" (para. 2). While offering a taste of the "American Dream," the very difficulties of the program train students in "survival skills: independence and responsibility" (para. 3). The author of the Press-Club article claimed that although some students grumble about the difficulties, "thousands" from Kazakhstan have returned satisfied from their Work & Travel experience (para. 3).

In contrast to the volume of negative coverage for Work & Travel in Kazakhstan's press, only two early pieces in the corpus revealed praise for the program. On November 4, 2003, *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* published Bukina's upbeat analysis of the international experience offered to students through Work & Travel.

This piece represented the only article in the *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* archive devoted entirely to a description of the exchange program and its merits. The article differed sharply from more recent educational discourse in *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* by emphasizing individual travel and adventure, rather than future benefit for the nation's economy, as a sound reason for students to leave the country.

Traces of this favorable stance toward Work & Travel persisted in a second *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* article by the same author published on March 23, 2004. Bukina (2004) described a design company established by five students of the Eurasian National University in Astana. Two of the students met as Work & Travel participants in 2002. The article provided no detail regarding Work & Travel, but implied that this experience fostered the students' initiative and creativity. The author asserted that these young entrepreneurs believed "creativity and drive" to be forgotten but essential features of Kazak national identity (para. 6).

One neutral mention of Work & Travel revealed how students tend to perceive the program. Kunbergen's (2011b) blog on *Radio Azattyk* mentioned the Bolashak scholarship and the Work & Travel program as the usual pathways for Kazakhstan's students to reach the West (para. 9). In direct interviews, other students from Kazakhstan similarly cited Work & Travel as a parallel to Bolashak. In contrast, Kazakhstan's official discourse regarding international education usually lists the Bolashak program alongside the Bologna Process and the Nazarbayev University, but rarely mentions the Work & Travel program.

3. Kazakhstan's Official International Education Discourse

This corpus revealed that despite prolific references to official education policy, government-owned newspapers such as *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* make little mention of student involvement in the Summer Work & Travel program. Most coverage of policies for the internationalization of higher education concentrates on President Nazarbayev's (2010) "Strategic Plan for the Development of Kazakhstan in 2011-2020." This strategic plan highlights three initiatives: (a) the government-funded Bolashak Scholarship that supports top students for degree-seeking study abroad, (b) the entry of Kazakhstan into Europe's Bologna Process in March 2010, and (c) the establishment of in-country English-language institutions such as the elite Nazarbayev University that opened in 2010. Together, the Bolashak scholarship, the Bologna Process and the Nazarbayev University form a structured paradigm that directs financial resources toward elite students to increase their future contribution to Kazakhstan's prosperity.

Although Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education and Science talks at length about strategies for international education, this conversation does not overlap with discussion of the Work & Travel program raised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Unlike students, the government of Kazakhstan does not place Work & Travel in the same category as purely academic exchanges such as Bolashak, IREX or Fulbright.

Kazakhstan's government does warn students about the dangers of Work & Travel. On June 17, 2012 *TengriNews* reported that "Kazakhstan Foreign Ministry

called for careful selection of employers under Work and Travel program.” The article by this title cited the Foreign Ministry’s official representative Altai Abibullayev as stating that

we have several times pointed out to the American party and Kazakhstan citizens the necessity of careful selection of the employer, as the reason for deportations and unsuccessful trips of Kazakhstan citizens to the U.S. under this program (Work and Travel) mainly lies in the employers, the inviting party in this case. (para. 2)

Abibullayev also emphasized that the “Foreign Ministry is currently holding meetings in the U.S. Department of State and constantly holds the consultations in the consular departments” (para. 3). These cautions to students were far milder than those issued by the government of Belarus to warn students away from J-1 visa programs:

The issues are serious enough that the former Soviet republic of Belarus told its young people in 2006 to avoid going to the U.S. on a J-1 [visa], warning of a “high level of danger” after one of its citizens in the program was murdered, another died in what investigators in the U.S. said was a suicide, and a third was robbed. (Mohr, Weiss, & Baker, 2010, para. 17)

Despite a similar record of student casualties on Work & Travel, this media corpus yielded no evidence that Kazakhstan’s government has warned students away from the program entirely or has established strict parameters for Work & Travel recruiting agencies operating in Kazakhstan. In contrast, Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged students to be “ready for anything” when they go on the Work & Travel program (“MID Kazakhstana,” 2012, para. 1). As a “remedy” for difficulties with job offers, in-country travel, and housing, as well as for the issue of

students overstaying their Work & Travel visas, Kazakhstan's Department of Consular Services worked with the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan to create an informational brochure for distribution to Work & Travel students (para. 5).

Beyond publishing brochures, Kazakhstan's authorities also have cooperated more substantially in U.S. consular efforts to remedy abuses in the interface between Work & Travel recruiting agencies abroad and the students, sponsor companies, and employers they serve. News coverage of the prominent incidents described above indicates that Kazakhstan's consulates do assist Work & Travel students in moments of crisis (i.e., Syzdykova, 2011). News media paint a grim picture of Work & Travel, but also describe incipient efforts by Kazakhstan's government to work with U.S. consulates to rectify the situation. A Central Asian News Service report from June 22, 2011 alerted Kazakhstan's citizens that "the U.S. will restrict the granting of visas for the 'Work and Travel' program and will 'more aggressively' monitor sponsors who invite students to work in the U.S." ("SShA uzhestochat"). In addition,

the terms for obtaining a visa will also be restricted for those who come. In the visa departments of American consulates, those who do not meet the requirements of the program will be denied visas. (para. 7)

Reciprocal action by Kazakhstan's consulate turned attention to the role of agencies and sponsor companies in preparing students for cultural adjustment and in protecting them while abroad. *TengriNews* reported on August 25, 2011 that "Work and Travel may be obligated to take responsibility for participants in the program" ("Work and Travel mogut"). At that time, the Director of the Consular Service of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Yryskali Daurenbek, planned to meet with his counterparts at the U.S. Consulate to propose that providers of the Work & Travel U.S.A. program should train participants how to conduct themselves abroad (para. 3).

However, these cautionary statements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not address the reasons why Kazakhstan's students continue to pursue Work & Travel or propose better ways of meeting those felt needs. Students' affinity for Work & Travel reveals a demand for flexible work-study options that allow students to offset the costs of international exchange through concurrent employment and that admit average as well as elite students. The fact that Kazakhstan's students continue to pursue Work & Travel in spite of difficulties and in preference to other options indicates that policymakers should consider participation patterns for Work & Travel in its strategic planning for international education.

News reports from summer 2012 revealed that the issues with Work & Travel had not yet been resolved. Four students from Kazakhstan were turned back on arrival in New York because the employer issuing their Work & Travel job offers had come under scrutiny in the U.S., and the students' visas had therefore been revoked (Satayeva, 2012). Another 110 students did not even make it that far: Managers of the Katrin Work & Travel agency in Kazakhstan folded the company and disappeared holding \$2,000 from each student before the participants had even left home ("Fraudsters left," 2012). Work & Travel continues to offer Kazakhstan's students a potent mix of danger and opportunity that merits closer attention from policymakers.

4. Student Agency: Engaging Risk

While Kazakhstan's government funds international education for top students, both elite and average students rely on informal networks to expand their options and to multiply their resources for international exchange. Kazakhstan's students and their families approach Work & Travel as a "risk" in the pure sense that incorporates both danger and opportunity (Douglas, 1992, p. 23). Direct interviews with students corroborate media reports about Work & Travel to reveal how students assess potential benefits and pitfalls of the program. Students work through informal networks of family and friends to minimize risks, to optimize financial considerations, and to maximize opportunities for language learning and personal growth inherent to the program.

4.1 Methodology

While visiting four universities in two cities of Kazakhstan in October 2011, I interviewed a total of 17 people: eight students (seven female, one male), six teachers (five female, one male), two (female) staff members, and one (female) administrator. To supplement these interviews, I observed about 40 first- and second-year students in the classroom. Most of these students had rich international experience in the U.S., in Europe, and in Asia. Conversations with leading figures in Kazakhstan's system of higher education further influenced my interpretations of interview data. In the U.S., I conducted five more direct interviews with students (three male, two female), I interacted informally with visiting faculty from Kazakhstan, and I exchanged e-mail

correspondence with prior interviewees. While such a limited opportunity sample remains too small for statistical generalization, this qualitative data suggested directions for ongoing research and for exploratory program design.⁷

I had intended to conduct all interviews in Russian, but some interview participants preferred to respond in English. In Kazakhstan, speaking English in a public setting such as a café or school cafeteria protected confidentiality for interview participants. Furthermore, returnees from study abroad in the U.S. seemed to prefer speaking English to match the context of their experience. In some cases, those who helped to recruit interview participants also arranged a meeting time. This scheduling sometimes required that I interview several respondents together, but I declined to interview individuals in the presence of anyone of much higher personal or professional status. Although I did not audio-record any interviews conducted in Kazakhstan, I did manage to take adequate notes while interviewing either in Russian or in English. Some interviews conducted in the U.S. were audio-recorded.

4.2 Interview Findings

Students' own stories of their lived experience in higher education complicated the official paradigm that centers on the Bolashak scholarship, the

⁷ This opportunity sample over-represents women. While about 60% of Kazakhstan's tertiary students and faculty are female (UNESCO, 2009, pp. 128-137), seven of the eight students interviewed in Kazakhstan (87.5%) and five of six teachers (83.3%) were women. This skewing may derive in part from disproportionate participation of male students in an independent study option that exempts them from day-to-day attendance at the university, reducing their chances for participation in these interviews. Also, intermediaries may have arranged more interviews with female students, staff, and faculty members because the researcher is female. Interviews conducted in the U.S. with students from Kazakhstan inverted these proportions, with only two female participants among the five interviewees (40% female). It is possible that more male than female students from Kazakhstan come to the U.S. for study or work. Altogether, nine of thirteen total student interviewees (69.2%) were women.

Bologna process, and the Nazarbayev University. Interviews, observations, and corpus data revealed that students do mention the Bolashak scholarship as a primary avenue for educational exchange open to Kazakhstan's high-achievers. However, students framed the Bolashak scholarship alongside Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. for educational mobility, rather than devoting attention to the Bologna Process or the Nazarbayev University.

Four key themes organized students' stories about international exchange: friendship networks, financial considerations, program flexibility, and personal transformation. Students managed their adventures by forging alliances with classmates, relatives, and acquaintances abroad. In the absence of merit scholarships, non-elite students funded study and travel by borrowing from family members, by selling family property, or by securing bank loans at high interest (InfoTses, 2010). Financial constraints shaped their decisions, in some cases prompting students to choose a work-study option such as Work & Travel in favor of a more prestigious fee-based exchange. Although Katya was eligible for a merit-based leadership-development exchange for summer 2012, she chose to repeat the Work & Travel program in hopes of earning enough to cover her expenses and to fund the leadership training program for summer 2013 (direct interview, May 13, 2012).

Samat commented on the dubious financial factors involved in Work & Travel job offers:

Now in Kazakhstan, to make a job offer is like a business, and I can just write my name there and say I have a company and send it to Kazakhstan and I can make, like, 500 bucks, and then when the ambassador calls me, I will tell him, “Yeah, this guy works for me.” So [it would be good to] stop this. (Direct interview, April 6, 2012)

While such speculation with job offers adds to students’ financial burden, Work & Travel participants liked having open-ended options (Sveta and Natasha, direct interview, October 20, 2011), preferred program flexibility, and accepted uncertain outcomes. Students’ stories about Work & Travel indicated that they relied on their own independent networks to resolve unexpected challenges and to create international opportunities outside those framed for them by President Nazarbayev and by Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Education and Science. Collective decision making and collaborative problem solving through informal networks formed major themes of students’ study-abroad accounts. Finally, students valued personal transformation that came through language learning and independence abroad. As described above, Samat gained confidence as an independent adult from the rigors of work in the Alaska fisheries (direct interview, April 6, 2012), and Katya became a more open-minded global citizen through her unlikely combination of acquaintanceships during her Work & Travel summer (direct interview, May 13, 2012).

Students often mentioned Work & Travel first among their options for international exchange, and presented clear ideas about the internal strengths and weaknesses and about the external opportunities and threats (SWOT) inherent to the program (Table 1).

Table 1: SWOT Summary of Student Opinions Regarding Work & Travel

	Positive	Negative
Internal	STRENGTHS: Accessible Flexible	WEAKNESSES: Costly Poorly Administered
External	OPPORTUNITIES: Access to U.S. English practice Work experience	THREATS: Predatory adults No student services Poor economy

Students chose the Work & Travel program for its strengths of accessibility and flexibility: Students at all levels of academic performance could qualify for the program, and participants could plan their own itineraries for the summer. These features compensated for weaknesses of costliness and poor administration inherent to the program: Earnings during the summer might not cover the initial fee of \$1,000 to \$2,000 paid to the Work & Travel agency in Kazakhstan, and those agencies might offer poor service or even might close operations before the end of the summer (“Fraudsters left,” 2012). Students valued Work & Travel because it provided opportunity for access to the U.S., for English language practice, and for paid employment. These potential benefits balanced the reported threats posed by the difficulty of finding jobs in a down economy and by dangers from predatory adults who take advantage of Work & Travel students through fraudulent job placements and through rent extortion (Mohr, Weiss, & Baker, 2010). These risks increase for Work & Travel students because they lack connection to the support systems

available to students who enroll in academic programs at institutions of higher education during their stay in the United States.

Although veterans described difficult experiences and first-time applicants reported hearsay about challenges inherent to the program, students nonetheless viewed Work & Travel as a viable and valuable option for reaching the United States. Students knew that finding job and housing, placements in the U.S. could present significant obstacles. They balanced these difficulties with the fact that a student could register for the program together with a friend and could stay with that friend throughout their time in the United States. Returnees attested to the importance of these peer connections for the journey, for the reentry process and for integration of the study-abroad experience under conditions of scant preparation and limited resources for cultural adjustment (direct interviews, October 17, 18, 20, 2011).

Teachers also affirmed the preference of Kazakhstan's students to function in small, informal cohorts of their peers. Dilbar, a female instructor who teaches at several universities, suggested that faculty from the U.S. who visit Kazakhstan should organize small-group settings for informal interaction with a few students at a time (direct interview, October 13, 2011). Lena, who teaches a Romance language at a private university, said that students in Kazakhstan have "the same collectivistic mentality as people in Russia:" they prefer to work together as a group, rather than working alone (direct interview, October 20, 2011). Although Lena's university offers a "part-time" student status that functions as independent study, even this

structure involves student cohort solidarity. Students reported that many male undergraduates who follow the independent study plan manage their coursework by copying notes from female students who attend class.

Four junior professors emphasized the importance of personal connections that minimize status differences between students and instructors (direct interview, October 20, 2011). These teachers liked the small student cohort group size at their private university because this structure allows them to adapt course content to student needs. They explained that in the Soviet system, the role of the teacher was authoritarian: to rule and instruct. Now, teachers serve as guides for independent learning. Formerly, the high status of teachers made them inaccessible to students, but now teachers form direct, personal connections to students. Rustam, the male IT instructor, said that students seem to think of the teacher as a “second mom” or “nanny” (direct interview, October 20, 2011). In addition to teaching, instructors help students to resolve personal problems. This close relationship with students routinely causes faculty members to work twelve-hour days to meet the many demands of their role. Despite this grueling schedule, these faculty members said they were glad that the students actually become their friends and that alumni and faculty maintain strong, mutually helpful ties. These four teachers believed that this personal connection between students and faculty tends to be stronger at their small school than at larger, more “authoritarian” universities that retain remnants of the centralized Soviet educational culture.

4.3 Work & Travel Students and Informal Networks

Informal peer friendship networks play a key role in the low-structure context of the Work & Travel program. Corroborating media reports, students stated in interviews that Work & Travel sponsor companies operating in the U.S. often neglect to meet new arrivals at the airport and frequently fail to secure job placement for participants. Participants were known to spend weeks hunting for work and seeking affordable housing, often failing to recoup through summer employment the initial fee paid to the sponsor company. However, even program veterans who reported discomfort and inconvenience throughout their time in the U.S. described the program as an excellent opportunity. Consistent themes in students' stories may explain this paradox: in each case, participants signing up for the program knew that they could travel with a friend throughout the summer. While unsure what city they would go to, where they would work, or where they would live, they knew that they would share that experience with a friend. Students used informal networks to create their own safety nets by augmenting these traveling partnerships with a list of phone numbers and e-mail addresses of family and friends living in the U.S. who might be able to help in case of emergency.

Sveta and Natasha, two female students planning their first Work & Travel participation for summer 2012, explained that they chose the program because they did not qualify academically rigorous exchanges offered through their university (direct interview, October 20, 2011). In contrast, they knew that the Work & Travel

program would accept about 90 percent of applicants. Sveta and Natasha realized that while on Work & Travel, they would be responsible for finding their own jobs and housing. While unsure what cities they would visit, the two young women expected to stay together for the duration of their time in the United States. Prior Work & Travel participants had encouraged them to join the program, but did not tell them many stories about their own experiences. Nonetheless, rumors about difficulties with finding jobs and apartments in the U.S. had caused their families some concern. Sveta said that her mother had started taking tranquilizers to cope with the anxiety, while Natasha said that her family was both excited and nervous about the opportunity.

4.4 Bolashak Students and Informal Networks

Like Work & Travel students, recipients of the elite government-funded Bolashak scholarship for study abroad also talk about relying on informal peer friendship networks to negotiate their international experience. Two Bolashak Scholars, Zhel and Aspan, grew up in two different cities of Kazakhstan and met during a year of language study with a group of incoming Bolashak scholars in a large city in the U.S. Midwest (direct interview, November 4, 2011). On the advice of a classmate, they applied and were accepted to two different engineering programs at a major university in another state. They moved there together and settled in as roommates in the new city to complete their degrees with Bolashak scholarship funding to cover tuition and a living expenses. After graduation, they plan to return to Kazakhstan to find good jobs in their respective engineering sectors that will satisfy

their five-year Bolashak alumni work commitment, will allow them to make a living, and will to contribute to Kazakhstan's future growth and development. The views of these two Bolashak students align them closely with the government's prescribed ideology and national identity that it seeks to instill in students (Blum, 2007; Parkhomenko, 2011; Shaukenova, 2009).

Aspan and Zhel said that they received no formal cross-cultural training before coming to the U.S., but they seemed unconcerned about that fact (direct interview, November 4, 2011). They relied instead on other students from Kazakhstan to help them adjust after they arrived in the United States. Their Bolashak application process included an assessment of psychological adaptability and readiness for cultural adjustment, but offered no new skills for cross-cultural living. While Bolashak pays their tuition and living stipend, Aspan and Zhel said that the program does not provide further assistance for negotiating daily life. Bolashak program staff helped them with arranging their initial travel from Kazakhstan to the U.S., their language school enrollment, and their dormitory housing in the Midwest. After that, the young men handled life by relying on one another and by taking advice from other students with prior experience in the United States. For example, their classmates advised them to move out of the dormitory and to rent an apartment together to save money. Country-specific advisors serve students from the Bolashak program office in Astana, but these staff members do not help students with resolving

day-to-day problems in the United States. Instead, the students adapt quickly and function well on their own.

Aspan and Zhel said that all of the students from Kazakhstan tend to learn and to solve problems by doing things together (direct interview, November 4, 2011). Learning from one another's experience helps them to find solutions for the challenges they face. The two young men spent their first year in the U.S. enrolled with several dozen other Bolashak students at an intensive English school in a large Midwestern city. This school offered no cross-cultural training beyond English grammar and conversation practice. Zhel said that this initial year of language study eased their adjustment to the U.S., but perhaps not for the reasons envisioned by the instructors or by the Bolashak administrators. Aspan credited savvy Summer Work & Travel veterans among their classmates with helping the others to adjust. Support from prior Work & Travel participants gave the young men enough confidence to engage in life outside the classroom in order to accelerate their language learning and cultural adjustment. Participation in real life forced the students to improve their language skills so that people would understand them. Rather than perceiving their friendships with other students from Kazakhstan as an insulating factor like the learner-friendly classroom setting, Aspan and Zhel viewed the process of "going outside and doing things" as a group activity supported by their cohort connections. They believed that cohort solidarity helped rather than hindered their contact with native speakers of English.

Aspan and Zhel described the U.S. education system as a “totally new kind of experience” due to differences in cohort group solidarity (direct interview, November 4, 2011). Aspan explained that universities in the U.S. focus on individuals: Students must perform independently on homework and tests. In contrast, students in Kazakhstan consider it their “obligation to help each other” on assignments and exams. Although professors urge students to work independently, the group mentality of the students overrides these efforts. Zhel added that “if you grew up in Kazakhstan and your friend asks for help, you wouldn’t ever say ‘no’” because “it would be embarrassing” to refuse help to a friend on an individual homework assignment or a test. However, the person making the request would not feel embarrassed, because such a plea for assistance with individual work fits the norm. Zhel and Aspan contrasted this group solidarity among students in Kazakhstan to the system in the U.S. where most students move through the academic system independently of a cohort group. They preferred the system in Kazakhstan, where cohorts of fifteen to twenty students stay together throughout their educational program and often remain in voluntary contact throughout their careers and their adult lives. Although Aspan and Zhel expected to finish their degrees in the U.S., they still felt emotional solidarity with their cohort groups from their home universities. They expected that their cohort-group friendships would continue just as before when they return to Kazakhstan, with no difference because they have been away.

While Zhel and Aspan explained that ties with peers mediated their cultural adjustment and academic process, the financial considerations of the Bolashak contract connected to their extended family network (direct interview, November 4, 2011). Before they came to the U.S., their uncles warned them, “Don’t even think of staying there.” This advice was offered partly in jest and partly in earnest, because according to the terms of the scholarship, these family members will forfeit collateral property to the government if the students fail to return. Moreover, a relative must cosign to guarantee repayment of the scholarship value in excess of the collateral property if the student remains permanently in the United States. Kazakhstan’s government relies on the influence of family networks to enforce the mandate for return built into the Bolashak scholarship program.

4.5 Work & Travel Marketing and Student Cohorts

Work & Travel agencies operating in Kazakhstan capitalize on student cohort network solidarity. Recruiters visit educational institutions to conduct information sessions for students and to post advertising placards in hallways. These prominent marketing materials target the cohort solidarity and personal decision-making preferences of students by emphasizing both the collectivity and the autonomy they will experience as participants in the program. Promotional discounts encourage students to sign up in groups of three or four, while highlighting the freedom and flexibility promised by the program. Symbolism used in flyers and on posters appeals to national identity, but sets no expectations for return to Kazakhstan or for future

productivity. One poster promoting the MyPlanet Work & Travel agency clearly illustrates these patterns of collectivity, autonomy and national identity. The imagery in this placard mirrors the unstructured, group-oriented strategies reflected in students' own stories about their educational and international experience (Figure 3).



Figure 3: MyPlanet.kz Work & Travel Promotional Poster

This Work & Travel promotional poster for the MyPlanet agency depicts three young men engaged in a minimally structured type of work: spray-painting graffiti onto a brick wall to spell out the program title. The crooked grin on the face of the youth holding the can of paint makes the viewer wonder whether these characters are working or engaging in hooliganism. National and regional allusions in their clothing label the program as intended for Central Asian students. The young man in the

foreground wears a shirt with the pattern of Kazakhstan's flag; the guy on the ladder wears a traditional felt hat; the lad the right appears to be ethnically Russian, but his headgear recalls the Central Asian skullcap. As for concrete information about the program, the poster reveals only that the opportunity includes both work and travel, with access to the U.S. represented by iconic landmarks from the east and west coasts in the background. The two ethnically Kazak youths spearheading the graffiti wear overtly national symbols. Their Russian friend fills a supporting role as the cooperative ethnic minority, wearing an ambiguous costume that bridges Central Asian and European styles. While the text on the poster appears in both Russian and English, the imagery presented by these young men implies that the program is designed for Central Asians. The collective emphasis emerges here: these young men may be working or causing trouble, but either way, they are doing it together.

Work & Travel promotional discounts appeal directly to the informal friendship network structure. Agencies compensate for negative experiences and hearsay by offering students free admission to the program if they return for a second summer and if they recruit others to come along. For example, small flyers placed on tables in a student cafeteria to advertise the MyPlanet agency featured the cartoon characters from the poster described above, and offered more information about the program (Figure 4). The three young men from the poster appear at the top of the flyer to illustrate the "Three Students—Three Happy Friends" offer: a \$50 discount to each member of a triad who fly to the U.S. together. At the bottom of the flyer, four

short students line up alongside the pointed finger of a tall student in a baseball cap directing them to follow his footsteps from the previous summer. This returnee will receive free access to the program for recruiting four friends as first-time applicants.

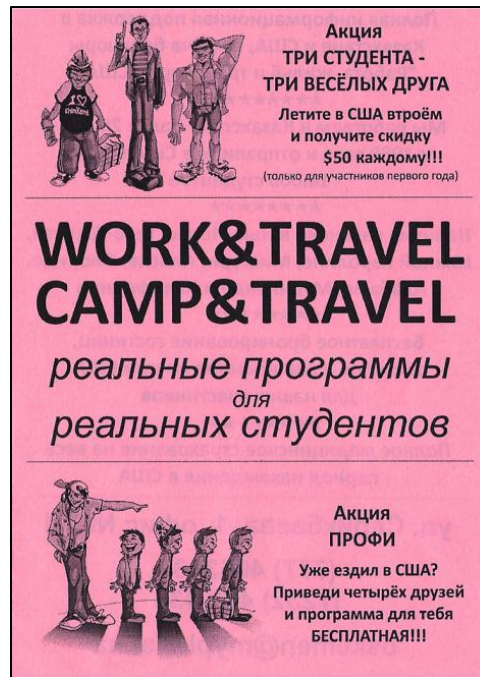


Figure 4: MyPlanet.kz Work & Travel Promotional Flyer

The flyer describes these programs as “real programs for real students,” perhaps in contrast to government-sponsored scholarships that garner substantial press coverage but admit only top students. Text on the back of the flyer offers carefully-hedged promises: “full informational support in Kazakhstan and the U.S.” by means of a brochure, “availability” of job placements in nine states, “free reservations” for in-country travel and housing, and “full health coverage” at an unspecified cost. By way of reassurance, the flyer claims that the company has sent

“more than 14,000 students” to the U.S. since 1989. Lax admission standards and peer recruitment help sponsor companies balance limited customer service with the built-in solidarity of youth cohorts to promote the program and to make it appealing to students. These strategies seem to enjoy some success: Maria, a student employee at a private university, reported that even those Work & Travel participants who suffer a disappointing experience often return to the program for another summer (direct interview, October 18, 2011). This persistence of student participation in Work & Travel offers insights into Kazakhstan’s youth culture that can help educators and policymakers serve students more effectively.

5. Explaining Student Agency: Group & Grid Analysis

The group and grid cultural theory developed by British anthropologist Mary Douglas (1982, 1986, 1992, 1999; Douglas and Ney, 1998) sheds light on the patterns of decision making and problem solving displayed by Kazakhstan's students in the context of Work & Travel. Douglas's schema uses two parameters to describe patterns that vary in terms of group solidarity and social hierarchy (Figure 5).⁸ Although cultural generalizations face inherent problems of reduction and oversimplification, their intuitive appeal reflects the prototype-centered categories (Lakoff, 1987) that people reference in daily life to understand and to adapt to cultural differences. To capture the nuance built into the four-quadrant model, perpendicular color gradients form the background of the diagram. A horizontal blue gradient shows a continuum from individual to group accountability preference (weak to strong group orientation). A vertical red gradient represents a continuum from a personal-negotiation decision making preference to a structure-based decision making preference (weak to strong social system structure).

These two independent parameters create four quadrants (Douglas, 1999, p. 412): *hierarchies* (system decision making with group accountability), *egalitarian*

⁸ Douglas called the model "cultural theory" or "grid and group theory" in keeping with the labels originally applied to the two parameters. My understanding of the theory owes much to the work of Sheryl Takagi Silzer in her 2001 dissertation and in related materials for cross-cultural training. Following her usage in an unpublished training manual, I adopted the terms "structure" and "community" (or "rules" and "group") for presenting the model to students in Kazakhstan. This terminology proved to be simple, concise and clear. Takagi Silzer (2001, p. 252) includes a color gradient designed by Yasuko Nagai to represent the superimposed perpendicular parameters. A color gradient model for cultural comparisons fits well with Lakoff's (1987) correlation of human color-gradient perception to the prototype-centered, fuzzy-bounded categories that drive human cognition. Cultural stereotypes, like color perception, function as prototype-centered fuzzy categories.

enclaves (personal decision making with group accountability), *competitive individualism* (personal decision making with individual accountability), and *isolates* (system decision making with individual accountability). The theory assumes that one of the four types dominates any given social context, contested by the other three types through discourse and debate that lead to change over time. While some individuals in any community prefer each of the four quadrants, wider patterns in society favor one of the options.

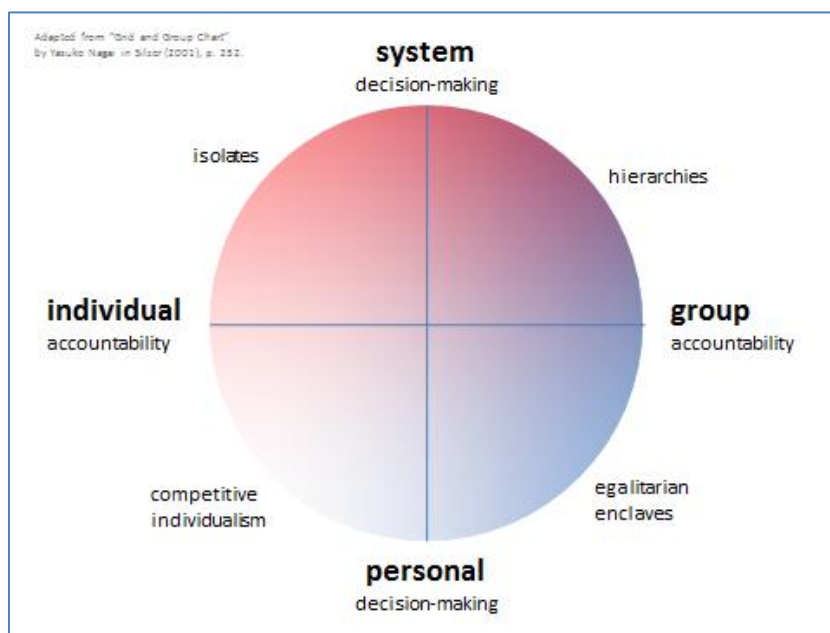


Figure 5: Douglas's Group and Grid Cultural Theory

Adapted from "Grid and Group Chart," by Yasuko Nagai,
in S. Takagi Silzer, 2001, p. 252.

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Douglas and other scholars have used this model to compare generalized national cultures and to describe fine-grained patterns of similarity and difference

among individuals, households, companies, and local communities (Douglas, 1999).⁹ For example, Takagi Silzer (2001, 2008) used Douglas's cultural theory to explain dissonance arising from the differing cultural orientations of an international non-profit organization and its multinational membership. Takagi Silzer's analysis of tensions between the low-group orientation of the organization and the high-group preference of its Asian members motivated recommendations for adjusting the organization's training styles to accommodate the range of cultural preferences represented in the membership. Similarly, Hersman (1995) applied the group and grid model to a detailed study of similarities and differences between six national cultures represented in a single multicultural team to facilitate mutual adaptation for better teamwork.

Examples of generalized national culture placed on the plot illustrate the prototypes associated with each quadrant (Figure 6). For example, U.S. culture has a global reputation for individualistic preference, favoring independent decisions based on personal choice: a society of individuals negotiating their identities and course of action (Takagi Silzer, 2001, p. 252, 258-9). As a diametrically opposed contrast, Confucian cultures like that of Japan favor well-established social structures that define identity and proper course of action for their members. In Japan's workplaces

⁹ Caulkins (1999, p. 115) offers a "small sampling" of the "range of subject matter to which [grid/group analysis] has been applied by an interdisciplinary variety of scholars" that includes the following: "interpretations of environmentalism (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Grendstad & Selle, 1997; Johnson, 1987; Rayner, 1991), perceptions of risk (Dake, 1991), a critique of rational choice theory (Douglas & Ney, 1998), values in European countries (Grendstad, 1990), the activism of American Civil War abolitionists (Ellis & Wildavsky, 1990), technology policy (Schwarz & Thompson, 1990), public administration (Hood, 1996), religious communities (Atkins, 1991), high-technology firms (Caulkins, 1995a, 1995b, 1997), and work cultures (Mars, 1982; Mars & Nicod, 1984)."

and universities, accountability and evaluation typically happen within groups (Takagi Silzer, 2001, p. 252, 258-9). Individuals raised in Japan tend to find their place by understanding how they fit into established group social norms.

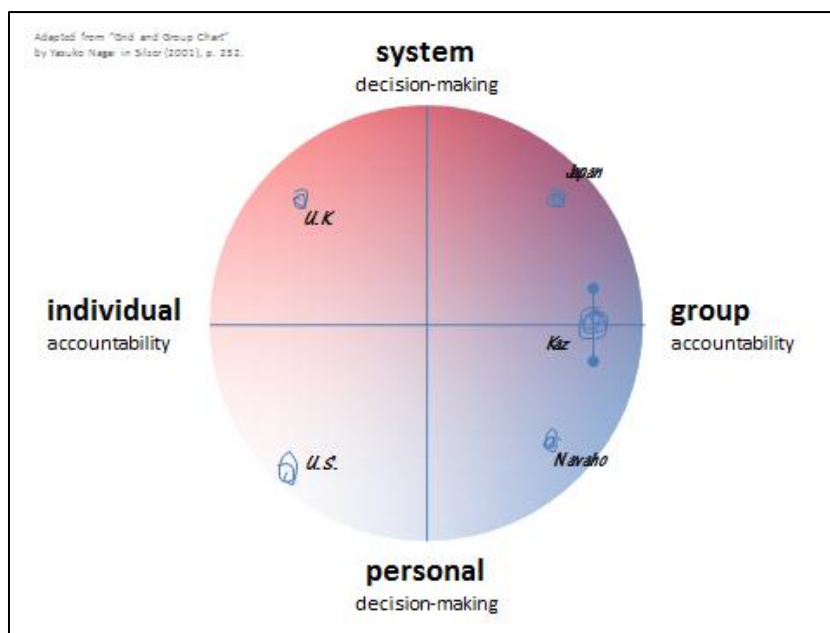


Figure 6: Douglas's Group and Grid Cultural Theory with Examples

Adapted from "Grid and Group Chart," by Yasuko Nagai,
in S. Takagi Silzer, 2001, p. 252.

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5.1 Implications of Findings

Interviews, observations and media corpus data indicate the approaches to educational exchange taken by Kazakhstan's government, Kazakhstan's students, Work & Travel sponsor companies, and U.S. educators in terms of accountability to individuals or groups, and in terms of decision making according to social norms or by personal negotiation. Kazakhstan's government exhibits a hierarchical pattern,

with a mid-high level of structure and a high level of community obligation in its expectations for students. As a result, government policy directs resources and opportunities toward groups of elite students—not just toward top-performing individuals, but toward a select set within the larger group. In contrast, students tend to form egalitarian enclaves that display a mid-low level of structure and a high level of community solidarity, leading to personally-negotiated cohort decision making. Kazakhstan's students prefer to enjoy extensive freedom and flexibility, but also to operate as part of a connected group.¹⁰ Kazakhstan's students accept the risks and inconveniences inherent to the Summer Work & Travel U.S.A. exchange because the program matches this high-group, low-structure egalitarian cohort preference.

The U.S. education system also takes an egalitarian approach to recruiting, selecting and evaluating students, but pushes young people toward autonomy in keeping with a context of competitive individualism. U.S.-based programs may place students in groups during an exchange or a class session, but such programs evaluate students as individuals and expect them to follow a personalized, independent path. The interviews and observations presented above show that students from Kazakhstan demonstrate ample willingness to create their own opportunities, but prefer to take initiative within the context of a cohesive peer group. Students from Kazakhstan report that they experience stress and discomfort when split off and isolated from

¹⁰ Such a vertical spread is perhaps unsurprising: it could be argued that in all societies, governments tend to make rules, while students tend to do as they please. I am indebted to Irina Vodonos for this insight.

their group connections as they participate in the U.S. education system (Zhel & Aspan, direct interview, November 4, 2011).

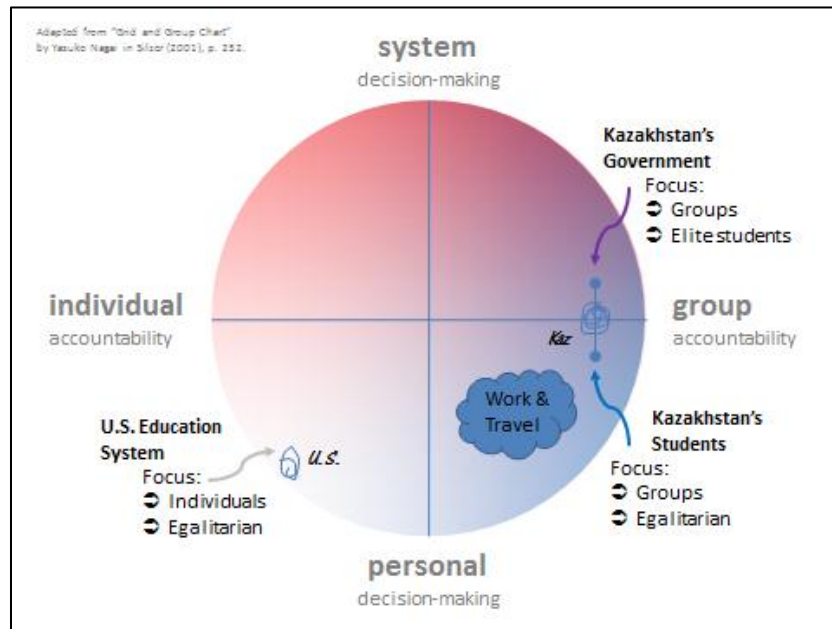


Figure 7: Group and Grid Analysis of Work & Travel Student Agency

Adapted from "Grid and Group Chart," by Yasuko Nagai,
in S. Takagi Silzer, 2001, p. 252.

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The group and grid model predicts the most likely ongoing approaches of various stakeholders to internationalization in higher education (Figure 7).

Kazakhstan's government will continue to direct resources toward groups of elite students as long as it continues to follow high-structure patterns that centralize planning and evaluation of educational programs (Zhumagulov, 2012a). The U.S. education system will persist in its preference for individual decision making and accountability. Kazakhstan's students will continue to function within small,

egalitarian cohorts linked by informal friendship and family networks. The Work & Travel program will continue to appeal to Kazakhstan's students as long as it young people to create their own opportunities in the company of their friends.

The hierarchical orientation of Kazakhstan's education policy and the individualist orientation of the U.S. education system both fail to match the preference of Kazakhstan's students for egalitarian, cohort-based decision making and accountability. Educators and leaders of small non-profits in the U.S. can adjust their programs to fill this resource gap by matching the preferences of average students in Kazakhstan for programs that favor small-group, personal decision making and accountability. Such programs would recruit small groups of friends, not just individuals, for student exchange. Students would stay together as a group during their exchange experience and would collaborate after re-entry to process what they learned and to apply these lessons at home. Programs that leverage existing cohort networks can be expected to attract students from Kazakhstan and to yield more productive outcomes through enhanced contributions from returnees.

5.2 Recommendations for Policy Makers and Educators

Kazakhstan's government would do well to consider the reasons why its student population continues to participate in Work & Travel, and to consider the high-group orientation and collaborative decision-making preference of Kazakhstan's youth culture in shaping international education policy. The evident demand for viable work-study options to offset the cost of international student exchange should

figure into the nation's plans for educational development. Incipient efforts to monitor and regulate the activities of Work & Travel agencies in Kazakhstan should continue in collaboration with U.S. State Department efforts to amend the program.

Educators in the U.S. should respect existing group connections among students coming from Kazakhstan, and should leverage cohorts as a framework for experiential learning. Recruitment, instruction and assessment of individual students should occur within a supportive group context for ongoing effectiveness and for continuity of the learning process after the end of the international experience. Providing high-quality cultural content for low-structure exchanges such as Work & Travel could create viable educational opportunities yielding valuable cultural capital. Flexible programs that develop student initiative and group solidarity can support Kazakhstan's "long-term objective to create sustainable growth and [to] increase the productivity and quality of life of its citizens" (Zhumagulov, 2012a). As small groups of students find creative ways to apply their international experience at home, study abroad truly will promote the future growth and development of Kazakhstan.

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INTERVIEW CORPUS

KAZAKHSTAN

- October 13, 2011: Interview with teacher “Dilbar” (female).
- October 15, 2011: Observations at information technology conference.
- October 17, 2011: Interview with 2 staff, 1 student employee “Maria” (all female).
- October 17, 2011: Observations at study-abroad returnee student presentation.
- October 18, 2011: Observations at International Programs Office.
- October 18, 2011: Interview with university Vice President (female).
- October 18, 2011: Follow-up with 2 staff, 1 student employee “Maria” (all female).
- October 18, 2011: Observations while book shopping.
- October 18, 2011: Observations regarding television programming.
- October 19, 2011: Observations from university building survey.
- October 19, 2011: Miscellaneous observations.
- October 20, 2011: Interview with a Romance language teacher “Lena” (female).
- October 20, 2011: Interview with 3 female teachers and “Rustam,” male IT instructor.
- October 20, 2011: Interview with students “Sveta,” “Natasha,” 2 others (all female).
- October 25, 2011: Observations during university visits.
- October 25, 2011: Interview with 3 M.A. students (2 female, 1 male).

U.S.A.

- November 4, 2011: Interview with 2 Bolashak students “Aspan” and “Zhel.”
- December 14, 2011: Interview with business school student “Angelica” [Transcript].
- April 6, 2012: Interview with community college student “Samat” [Transcript].
- May 5, 2012: Written interview with university student “Katya” [E-mail].
- May 13, 2012: Written follow-up with university student “Katya” [E-mail].

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Information about the ethnographic research project on higher education: Interview

Investigator: Laura Lucht
 M.A. Candidate
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* Please keep in mind that email is not a confidential means for sending information.

Investigator's statement

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this handout is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether or not to be in the study. Please read the handout carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, about what I would ask you to do, about the possible risks and benefits, about your rights as a volunteer, and about anything else regarding the research or this form that is not clear. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent."

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

My goal is better to understand higher education in Kazakhstan, including the ties between higher education and the country's growth and development, the role of language choice in higher education, and people's views on the role of education in their lives and in the development of their country.

PROCEDURES

If you choose to be in this study, I would like to interview you about your views on higher education and on the ties between the internationalization of higher education and the development of Kazakhstan. The interview will last about an hour or less. Some questions I will ask you include the following:

- "How do you think higher education can be helpful for Kazakhstan?"
- "What international education activities have you participated in, and why?"
- "What role, if any, does language play in your educational career?"
- "What are your views on traditional and foreign elements in Kazakhstan's higher education system?"

You have the right not to answer any of my questions.

For anyone under age 18: I will take written notes only and I will not write down your name, so that your answers will be confidential. I will ask only for general characteristics about you, such as age and ethnicity.

For adults age 18 and over: With your permission, I would like to audio-record your interview. You may review the recording, and you may delete any portion. If you consent to me doing so, I will keep the recording indefinitely, I may use it for other studies of higher education in Kazakhstan, and I may play segments of the recording at academic conferences. You may choose to consent to having the interview audio-recorded, but elect to have the recording deleted within two years of its creation. You also may choose to withhold consent for the presentation of segments of the recording at academic conferences. If you prefer not to be audio-recorded, I will take written notes only. Please tell me whether or not you give your permission for me to audio-record your interview, whether or not

you give your permission for me to keep the recording indefinitely to use in other studies of higher education in Kazakhstan, and whether or not you give permission for me to use segments of the recording in academic conferences. In publications, I will present information I collect without identifying your name, unless you have a public role in higher education and you give me permission to use your name. Please tell me whether or not I may use your name in association with the interview information.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that the request to provide information for research is an intrusion into their personal affairs. Some people feel self-conscious when they are audio-recorded. Some people may feel stress when talking about topics relating to higher education.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

You may not directly benefit from taking part in this study. However, I hope the results of the study will deepen our understanding of higher education in Kazakhstan.

OTHER INFORMATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may stop the interview at any time. If you choose not to take part, I will not interview you.

Information that you provide will be published or presented without identifying your name unless you have a public role in higher education and you have given me permission to use your name. If I take only written notes, I will not write your name in the notes unless you give me permission to do so. If I audio-record the interview, you may be identifiable from the recording. You will have the opportunity to review the recording and to delete any part of it.

If you have questions later on about the research, you can contact Laura Lucht at the coordinates listed above. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can call the University of Washington Human Subjects Division in Seattle, USA at 1+ (206) 543-0098.

Please tell the researcher your preferences:

**If you are over 18, do you consent to having your interview audio-recorded?
(Yes / No)**

If you consent to being audio-recorded, do you consent to having the recording kept indefinitely to be used in other studies regarding higher education in Kazakhstan? (Yes / No)

If you consent to being audio-recorded, do you consent to having segments of your recording played at academic conferences? (Yes / No)

If you have a public role in higher education, do you consent to having your name used in association with the information in the interview? (Yes / No)

If you change your mind or want to contact the researcher for any reason regarding this research, please do so using the contact information above.

хотите быть записаны, я буду делать только письменные заметки. Скажите, пожалуйста, даете ли вы мне разрешение записывать интервью на диктофон, даете ли вы мне разрешение хранить запись в течение неопределенного срока, чтобы использовать ее в других исследованиях высшего образования в Республике Казахстан, и даете ли вы мне разрешение использовать сегменты записи на научных конференциях. В своих публикациях я представлю ваши ответы без указания вашего имени. Исключение составляет ситуация, когда вы занимаете видную должность в сфере высшего образования, и даете мне разрешение упоминать ваше имя. Скажите, пожалуйста, могу ли я указывать ваше имя в связи с этим интервью?

РИСК, СТРЕСС И ДИСКОМФОРТ

Некоторые люди считают, что просьба предоставить информацию для исследования—вторжение в их личную жизнь. Некоторые люди стесняются, когда их записывают на диктофон. Некоторые люди могут чувствовать напряжение, когда речь идет о темах, связанных с высшим образованием.

ПОЛЬЗА ОТ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

Вы не получите прямой пользы от участия в данном исследовании. Однако я надеюсь, что результаты исследования углубят наше понимание высшего образования в Республике Казахстан.

ДОПОЛНИТЕЛЬНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ

Участие в этом исследовании является добровольным. Вы можете прекратить интервью в любой момент. Если вы решите не принимать участие, я не буду брать у вас интервью.

Информация, которую вы предоставите, будет опубликована или представлена без указания вашего имени. Исключение составляет ситуация, когда вы занимаете видную должность в сфере высшего образования, и даете мне разрешение упоминать ваше имя. Если я буду делать только письменные заметки, я не буду записывать ваше имя если вы не дадите мне разрешение на это. Если я буду записывать интервью на диктофон, ваш голос, возможно, будет узнаваем из записи. Вы можете прослушать запись и стереть любую часть.

Если в будущем у вас возникнут вопросы об исследовании, вы можете связаться с Лаурой Лукт по координатам, указанным выше. Если у вас есть вопросы о ваших правах как участника исследования, вы можете позвонить в Отдел по правам участников исследований Университета Вашингтона в Сиэтле, США по телефону 1+ (206) 543-0098.

Пожалуйста, сообщите исследователю ваши предпочтения:

**Если вам больше 18 лет, вы согласны на интервью с записью на диктофон?
(Да / Нет)**

Если вы согласны на аудиозапись, согласны ли вы также на то, чтобы запись хранилась в течение неопределенного срока и использовалась в других исследованиях о высшем образовании в Республике Казахстан? (Да / Нет)

Если вы согласны на аудиозапись, согласны ли вы также на то, чтобы сегменты записи проигрывались на научных конференциях? (Да / Нет)

Если вы занимаете видную должность в сфере высшего образования, согласны ли вы, чтобы ваше имя использовалось в связи с информацией в интервью? (Да / Нет)

Если вы передумаете или захотите связаться с исследователем по любому поводу в отношении данного исследования, пожалуйста, сделайте это, используя контактную информацию указанную выше.

APPENDIX B

Sample Interview Questions

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Appendix I1.
Sample Interview Questions for Students
Приложение I1.
Примерные вопросы для интервью со студентами

What kinds of education experiences have you participated in? Why did you choose to participate in those experiences?

В каких видах образования вы принимали участие? Почему вы решили принять участие в этих видах образования?

Do you think that higher education plays a significant role in Kazakhstan today? Why or why not?

Считаете ли вы, что высшее образование играет важную роль в Казахстане на сегодняшний день? Почему или почему нет?

How do you feel about how the media presents higher education in Kazakhstan?

Что вы думаете о том, как средства массовой информации освещают высшее образование в Казахстане?

Have you ever read any newspaper articles about higher education? If so, what do you remember about them?

Вы когда-нибудь читали газетные статьи о высшем образовании? Если да, то что вы помните о них?

How do you view the connection between education and the future growth and development of Kazakhstan?

Как вы оцениваете связь между образованием и будущим ростом и развитием Республики Казахстан?

How do you feel about languages being mixed, with two or three languages being used in a single institution of higher education?

Что вы думаете о смешании языков, когда два или три языка используются в одном учебном заведении?

What is your own ethnic and linguistic background? Does your background relate at all to your educational preferences?

Какова ваша собственная этническая принадлежность и родной язык? Имеет ли ваше происхождение какое-либо отношение к вашим образовательным предпочтениям?

What international education opportunities have you participated in? Why did you choose to participate?

В каких видах международного образования вы принимали участие? Почему вы решили в них участвовать?

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Are there any international education opportunities that were offered to you, but you chose to decline? If so, why?

Были ли у вас возможности получить международное образование, от которых вы отказались? Если да, то почему?

Does language play any role in which educational opportunities you have pursued? If yes, what role does it play?

Играл ли язык какую-либо роль в том, какого рода образования вы решили получить? Если да, то какую?

How do you feel about foreign influences on higher education in Kazakhstan?

Как вы относитесь к иностранному влиянию на высшее образование в Казахстане?

What is the best thing about higher education in Kazakhstan? Is there anything that you would like to see change in Kazakhstan's system of higher education or in other aspects of intellectual life?

Что самое лучшее в высшем образовании в Казахстане? Если бы вы могли что-то изменить в системе высшего образования или в других аспектах интеллектуальной жизни в Казахстане, что бы это было?

What do you think is the purpose of higher education?

Как вы думаете, что является целью высшего образования?

How should Kazakhstan's higher education system help the country?

Как система высшего образования в Казахстане должна помочь стране?

What should Kazakhstan's higher education system do for students?

Что должна система высшего образования в Казахстане сделать для студентов?

What is the primary responsibility of faculty in higher education?

Что является главной обязанностью преподавателя в высшем образовании?

How do you view the connection between education and work?

Как вы оцениваете связь между образованием и работой?

Appendix I2.**Additional Sample Interview Questions for Professionals
(To supplement the sample interview questions in Appendix I1)****Приложение I2.****Дополнительные примерные вопросы для интервью с профессионалами
(В дополнение примерных вопросов для интервью со студентами в приложении I1)**

What is your role in the higher education system in Kazakhstan?

Какова ваша роль в системе высшего образования в Казахстане?

What impact does your professional role have on Kazakhstan's growth and development?

Какое влияние оказывает ваша профессиональная роль на рост и развитие Казахстана?

What experiences have led you to your attitudes / activities relating to education and national development?

Какой опыт привел вас к вашему отношению / деятельности в области образования и национального развития?

Is there something in your area of higher education that you feel has a cultural or economic impact? How so?

Как вы считаете, есть ли что-то в вашей области высшего образования, что имеет культурные или экономические последствия? Если да, то какие именно?

How much do economic issues (such as salary and benefits) affect your choices?

Насколько экономические вопросы (например, зарплата и условия работы) влияют на ваши профессиональные решения в области высшего образования?

How much do institutional regulations (such as decisions from management or government regulations) affect your choices?

Насколько институциональные правила (например, решения начальства или правительственные постановления) влияют на ваши профессиональные решения в области высшего образования?

How much do cultural influences (such as Kazakhstan's traditions, history, customs or language) affect your choices?

Насколько культура (например, традиции Казахстана, история, обычаи и язык) влияют на ваши профессиональные решения в области высшего образования?

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How does your professional role relate to Kazakhstan's traditions and national identity?

Как ваша профессиональная роль связана с традициями национальной идентичностью Казахстана?

How does your professional role relate to world-wide traditions and movements?

Как ваша профессиональная роль связана с мировыми традициями и движениями?