

FROM EXPAT TO EMIGRANT:
FINDING THE AMERICAN DREAM ABROAD

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Dedicated to Petr Muntyan

Whose struggle, courage, and story inspires me. Thank you for expanding my own perspective of my American identity. You are proof that the American Dream still exists.

Abstract

This project demonstrates how Americans migrate overseas, integrate into various cultures, and engage in transnationalism. Through a collection of data and analysis of migratory trends, this thesis provides insights on demographics and common social behaviors of Americans abroad. Moreover, this thesis provides historical background of U.S. migratory trends and a deeper look into a few biographies of famous American expatriates. This research is important because the American migratory group is significantly understudied. Professor Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels has chosen the American migratory group as her focus. This thesis relies heavily on her book *Migrants or Expatriates? Americans in Europe*. Klekowski von Koppenfels uses a variety of sources in her book, including 115 interviews with Americans residing in Berlin, Paris, and London as well as a survey with 884 respondents. In my analysis I conclude that Americans are involved with politics, financially tied to America, and engaged with relationships while living abroad. Americans take part in traditions practiced back home in America and create communities through social and political organizations.

Introduction

America is no doubt the land of opportunity. Its history includes masses of migrants leaving everything they have behind to get to the U.S. It is said that in America you can be whoever you want to be. Why would anyone ever want to leave?

Although immigration to the U.S. is higher than the rate of emigration, Americans have started to migrate to other countries at higher rates. Whether the United States government wants to admit it, Americans are emigrating more than ever. According to Dr. Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, a professor at the University of Kent in Brussels, it is estimated that three percent of the American population lives abroad. Although three percent seems like an insignificant percentage, that's about six to nine million people. That number comes from an estimate from numerous sources including the U.S. Census Bureau. However, this number is an estimate because the United States does not formally keep track of emigrating Americans (Costanzo). The U.S. Census Bureau even reported to Congress in 2011, "No accurate estimate exists of the total number of Americans living abroad or of the other components of this population. At this time, we cannot estimate accurately the size of the universe of the overseas population" (Costanzo). There is minimal research about American migrants, and many of their stories have yet to be told. This thesis aims to illuminate the American experience abroad.

History

American emigration has impacted the human geography of the world. The beginning of American emigration dates back prior to the United States Declaration of Independence. Not every colonist in the thirteen colonies rebelled during the Revolutionary war. The Loyalists, also known as Tories, retained allegiance to Great Britain and strongly opposed the Revolutionary war. This upset American revolutionaries who in turn vandalized homes and threatened the lives of Loyalists (Grant 11). In John Grant's book he included a poster of an American rebel's description of Loyalists that read, "a Tory is a thing whose head is in England, its body in America, and its neck ought to be stretched." (Grant 11). The growing hostility lead 50,000 Loyalists to take refuge in the northern British colonies of Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick (Grant 16). In these provinces the Loyalists established religious and educational centers in order to maintain their core values (Grant 15).

In the early 18th century Americans began leaving the U.S. for commercial reasons, settling in the territories they found to be economic booms. An example of this kind of migration is the history of Hawaii before it was annexed as a state. American traders were first attracted to Hawaii for its plentiful sandalwood ("Americans"). Soon after, the sugar industry found its way to Hawaii and by the early 19th century American travelers had made Hawaii their permanent home and economic headquarters ("Americans"). Eventually Hawaii became a state, but similar instances occurred in the Philippines and the Caribbean.

Perhaps the most romanticized period of Americans overseas is the period between the first and second World Wars. American writers, musicians, and artists flooded Western Europe, specifically Paris, to take part in the jazz clubs and literary salons. Some notable names include Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and Josephine Baker (Costanzo). Americans who lived abroad during this time created a certain stereotype of expat life in Europe.

While many Americans left the U.S. because of the attractive art culture in Paris, African American writers and performers left the United States to escape the racial inequality. One of those people was James Baldwin. At just 24 years old Baldwin left the racism in New York behind and with \$40 to his name he left for Paris (Washington). In an interview with *The Paris Review*, Baldwin said his decision to leave was not about his attraction to France so much as it was about leaving the United States, ““I didn’t know what was going to happen to me in France, but I knew what was going to happen to me in New York”” (qtd. in Elgrably). While in France Baldwin associated with many ex-GIs turned students who stayed in Europe after the war. He wrote about his many encounters with this type of American expat in the essay “A Question of Identity.” Baldwin writes, “The American in Europe is everywhere confronted with the question of his identity.” (Baldwin 98). In the essay Baldwin criticized the purpose of the American students studying in Paris, comparing their place in Paris to tourists. Baldwin separates himself from this group because he was forced to leave the U.S. for a better life whereas this group of Americans overseas would have an easier life at home. I believe for Baldwin he had a problem with this type of American overseas because they lacked purpose.

Many African Americans made an identity for themselves while living in Europe. Josephine Baker started performing in New York City but left for Paris in the mid 1920s for bigger opportunities. Baker's career took off and she secured fame and fortune and eventually became the highest paid performer in Europe, an opportunity she would not have received in the U.S. With her acquired wealth Baker bought a French estate and moved her family from St. Louis, Missouri, to France (Martone). Baker is best known for her exotic and erotic banana dance, but what most do not know about is her role in the French resistance during World War II (Klekowski von Koppenfels 4). She went so far as smuggling secret correspondence in her music sheets (Martone). Along with performing for French troops, Baker also served as a sub-lieutenant in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Baker heavily involved herself with the politics of her host country all the while engaging in political transnationalism. Throughout the 1960s Baker made a span of trips back to the U.S. to take part in the Civil Rights Movement. This involved her speaking alongside Martin Luther King Jr. at the March on Washington (Martone). Josephine Baker's actions speak louder than the words she sang on stage. She was a force of liberation and she showed African American performers there was a way to advance one's career outside of the racially segregated U.S.

Some Americans overseas received negative media attention in the United States. In the midst of the Vietnam War some Americans fled the United States for neutral countries such as Canada and Mexico. This type of American overseas were referred to as a "draft dodger" (Valentine). Many Americans overseas today are stereotyped as unpatriotic or betraying the country because of this history.

Spreading one's religious messages has long been a push factor for those to leave the United States to establish missionaries abroad. This emigration typically involves Americans settling in less developed locations of the world. This type of Christian imperialism has been present throughout the nation's history. In February of 1812 a group of ordained ministers arrived in Bombay, India, to settle the first American missionary abroad (Hall). This first journey overseas created a wave of American missionaries that traveled abroad to spread their faith (Hall). Todd Johnson, the director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, reported that as of 2010 the U.S. leads the world with 127,000 of the 400,000 missionaries who reside outside of their home country (Steffan). A more recent mission was a settlement called Jonestown led by preacher Jim Jones. About 1,000 Americans left California and migrated to the jungles of Guyana to create a religious community (Lawson). Although Jonestown did not end well, it is one example of religious migration.

Not all Americans experience a pull factor bringing them outside of the U.S. for religion or economic gain. Instead some are pushed to leave the U.S. Prior to 2013, U.S. immigration law did not allow U.S. citizens to sponsor their partner for a green card if they were of the same-sex (Costanzo). Costanzo writes, "This has been a push factor for same-sex couples to move abroad to places like Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Brazil, and South Africa that do allow their citizens to sponsor a same-sex partner for a spousal visa". These types of American migrants have been coined the term "love exiles" (Costanzo). This Green Card policy has since changed in America with the case *United States v. Windsor* in which the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the provision

in the Defense of Marriage Act that prevented same-sex foreign spouses of U.S. citizens to be eligible to apply for green cards (“United”).

Historically, politics have not been a driving force for Americans leaving the United States. However, after the election of Donald Trump, there was a rise in the number of Americans applying for foreign visas and it likely stems from the modern political climate. After Trump’s inauguration, the number of Americans who applied for a grant of citizenship to New Zealand rose by 70% compared to the same time the year before (Perry). According to the Associated Press, New Zealand’s Department of Internal Affairs reported that two days after the election, the number of Americans who visited the site in search of citizenship information increased tenfold (Perry). Lizz Quain was unsatisfied with the consumerist culture in America, and the election of Trump was the final straw. She uprooted her twin daughters and left the U.S. to travel the world (Kaysen).

It is estimated that one million Americans reside in Mexico today. A vast amount are American retirees (Taylor). Americans are generally welcomed into Mexican society because of their financial contribution to the economy. It is easy for an American to live there permanently without legal visa documentation (Taylor). A large portion of Americans living in Mexico are there illegally, living without a visa or past their visa expiration date (Taylor). A 2006 Migration Policy Institute report found that economic factors were key in Americans retiring in Mexico or Central America (Costanzo). Retirement income goes much further south of the border than it does in many parts of the United States. Factors pushing retirees south include the low cost of living, the close proximity to home, warm weather, culture, and the high cost of health insurance in the

U.S. (Dixon). There are large retirement communities near Lake Chapala, the largest lake in Mexico (Punish and Paulini). In a radio interview Kevin Paulini, a 17-year resident of Lake Chapala, talked about the benefits of the location. In the interview Paulini said, “Americans can live like kings around here with the average rent around six to seven hundred dollars for a nice rental [home].” (Punish).

Migrant communities have shifted over time and a profile from the past is not that of the current population (Klekowski von Koppenfels 3). Americans overseas today are not all writers, artists, or draft dodgers. These notable historical moments of American migration created an unpopular stigma about Americans who reside overseas. The American population overseas today is a community with similarities, but not one story is exactly like the other. The American migrant is complex and unlike any other migrant today because their identities and instincts are so unique to the rest of the world. The American abroad migrates with their independent attitudes and extroverted nature, but through integration in their host country they become a diverse community of migrants.

Defining the population

Klekowski von Koppenfels writes, “There is perhaps no typical overseas American.” (5) This is an accurate way to describe the three percent of Americans abroad. Today Americans overseas are a diverse community with many different personalities, opinions, and demographics, so much so that identifying Americans overseas as one type of migrant is impossible.

The term expatriate or expat has changed over time. In Nancy Green’s study of the evolution of the word expat she notes, ““two centuries of American comings and goings have shifted the representation of expatriation as welcomed newcomer to traitor to emissary.”” (qtd. in Klekowski von Koppenfels 23). The word expat can carry negative connotations of privilege and un-patriotic behavior, and many of Klekowski von Koppenfels’ interview subjects rejected the word as not accurately describing them (130). In the 1930s African-Americans in Paris considered this term inappropriate, arguing that the U.S. did not accept them, and that one had to consider the U.S. home to be deemed an expat (Klekowski von Koppenfels 23). The term itself is most often used to describe migrants from a developed country or a migrant who plans to eventually return to their home country (Costanzo). To Americans overseas the term carries many different meanings and to the U.S. government expatriation means the loss of U.S. citizenship (Klekowski von Koppenfels 129).

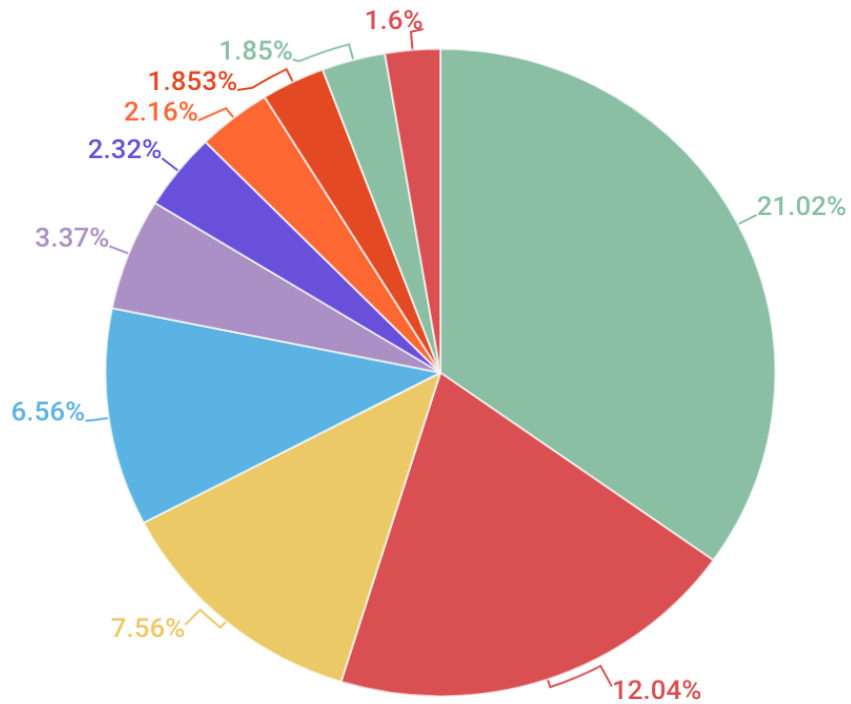
While some Americans overseas dismissed the word expat, others still didn’t feel comfortable calling themselves immigrants or emigrants. Many of Klekowski von Koppenfels’ interviewees believed that the word immigrant meant someone who left their

country for political or economic reasons or was forced to leave (Klekowski von Koppenfels 135). One interviewee noted that rather than being pushed out of the country, Americans leave because they are attracted to a country's culture.

While American migrants are an understudied group, Klekowski von Koppenfels' research based on three cities (Paris, London, Berlin) presents some demographic information. Americans overseas are not the wealthiest of Americans, but they are also not the poorest (Klekowski von Koppenfels 22). After income tax, the majority of Americans overseas earned an income of just under \$50,000 and compared to the American population, they are categorized as lower and upper middle-class (Klekowski von Koppenfels 22). The ethnic majority of Klekowski von Koppenfels respondents were Caucasian and women represented the majority gender (Klekowski von Koppenfels 36). Klekowski notes that the women majority could be due to the role of relationships as migration motivation (Klekowski von Koppenfels 36). American migrants are highly skilled and usually have a college education (Klekowski von Koppenfels 36-37). New York, California, and Massachusetts were the states most represented by Americans living abroad. The distributions vary by country with Texans having the largest representation in the United Kingdom. This is largely due to the big petroleum industry in both locations (Klekowski von Koppenfels 38).

The Uncountable Population

The United States government does not formally track emigration rates and therefore does not have an exact calculation of Americans residing abroad (Costanzo). The challenge of counting overseas Americans is significant for a few reasons. First, there is no required registration of citizens residing inside or outside of the U.S, so there is no baseline number to keep track of Americans who leave the country (Klekowski von Koppenfels 28). Also, overseas Americans reside in a wider range of countries than any other migrant group and other countries' calculations of the American population is unreliable (Klekowski von Koppenfels 28). While Americans overseas are spread out around of the world, 67% of them live in just ten countries (Klekowski von Koppenfels 31). The graph below shows the ten countries with the highest American migrant populations. This data was taken from the World Bank Consensus in 2010 and accounts for 2,423,175 American migrants (Klekowski von Koppenfels 31). The U.S. hosts the largest number of Mexicans outside of Mexico, but Mexico in turn hosts the largest number of U.S. citizens outside of the U.S. as of 2010.



- Mexico
- Canada
- United Kingdom
- Germany
- Australia
- West Bank and Gaza
- Japan
- France
- Phillipines
- Spain

infogram

The pie chart shows the top ten countries for which Americans overseas reside in. The percentages were taken from 2,423,175 people. Information from World Census Bank and Professor Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels.

Socio-Economic Transnationalism vs. Integration

Transnationalism and integration are always at odds, and the intersection is always a balancing act for migrants as many are engaged with both their host and home country (Klekowski von Koppenfels 75-76). The case for Americans overseas is no different. Klekowski writes, “Assimilation was once the expected outcome of the process of immigrant integration” (76). It is naive to believe that becoming a part of the host country’s community means a migrant has to erase their past and instincts along with it. Assimilation is a failed integration process and it is not how Americans overseas integrate typically. Americans remain attached to the United States through a number of factors. Language, finances, relationships, and even food keep Americans overseas connected to their culture.

Finances

Americans are highly skilled migrants and for the most part have incomes that are on par with average European incomes. Americans overseas do not pose a challenge to social equality and they are not perceived as a threat to democracy (Klekowski von Koppenfels 78). It could be because Americans migrate individually, not in swarms of communities like other migrants, and therefore do not make a dramatic change to the economy or political sphere in their host country. However, Americans do not escape the economic instability that every migrant in a new country faces. Americans overseas face challenges integrating into the job market. Close to one-fifth of the 884 Americans surveyed in Klekowski von Koppenfels’ study worked in education and the majority are

freelance English teachers. The second most represented field was IT/Communications (Klekowski von Koppenfels 38). Ironically, only two percent of people living in the U.S. make up these jobs (Klekowski von Koppenfels 38). These jobs are most common because native English skills are required. Most Americans overseas have employment that is linked to their English language skills (Klekowski von Koppenfels 82). Language can provide Americans opportunities, but jobs outside of English teaching are often scarce. Most Americans end up teaching English, but this is neither a well-paying job nor a stable one. The language barrier abroad is just one factor that is challenging for Americans professionally. Another factor is nepotism and favoritism in the work force. Many Americans find it difficult to break into their industry abroad simply because they have no relationships with those in their profession. The job market in France functions on who you know rather than what you know. Americans in France often look to networking organizations made for Americans because as one interviewee stated, nepotism and favoritism is just the way it is (Klekowski von Koppenfels 85). The last factor making it hard for Americans to find employment in their host countries is visas. In every country work visas are saved for the most highly skilled migrants. As we noted before, Americans typically fit into the category as highly skilled; however, these visas are saved for the elite migrants (Klekowski von Koppenfels 85-86). One interviewee noted that unless you are an engineer with some advanced qualification, getting a work visa is nearly impossible in places like Germany (Klekowski von Koppenfels 85-86). These factors hinder American employment abroad and are related to the high percentage of self-employed Americans overseas (Klekowski von Koppenfels 80-83). Americans are

independent by nature, but with the lack of job options many Americans create their own opportunities and become business owners.

Economic transnationalism is the act of having financial and economic ties to one's home country. Many Americans stay financially connected to the U.S. through bank accounts, credit cards, and exchanges of money between family and friends. The lack of financial integration of Americans can be explained through a couple of reasons. Tax evasion has been a controversial topic for Americans overseas. IRS regulations on foreign bank accounts held by Americans increased when in 2009 a whistleblower informed the Department of Justice about Swiss banks that helped Americans hide their money in secret offshore accounts (Chishti). In March 2010, Congress passed the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), an effort to prevent future tax evasion (Chishti). FATCA forced foreign banks to disclose financial information of Americans who held bank accounts with them (Chishti). FATCA has caused problems for American overseas as FATCA goes against guidelines of many foreign banks. Many banks overseas refuse to do business with them and many Americans struggle to find a bank upon arriving in foreign countries. This can be a probable cause as to why many Americans overseas maintain bank accounts and credit cards from the U.S. (Klekowski von Koppenfels 88). Another reason for the lack of financial integration is the U.S. tax system of Americans overseas. The U.S. is one of two countries in the world to tax based on both residence and citizenship while the rest of the world taxes the income of residents residing in their home country (Swanson). For instance, even if a person was born in America, went to school in France, and currently works in France, they must pay income taxes if they wish to maintain U.S. citizenship (Swanson). Americans must also pay U.S. taxes on

investments and businesses, so it is otherwise pointless for them to have overseas investments and pay taxes in two countries (Costanzo).

Language

The key to integration of migrants in their host country is through language acquisition (Klekowski von Koppenfels 92). A wide-spread assumption is that Americans do not have good foreign language skills; however, the majority of Klekowski von Koppenfels' survey and interviewee respondents were fluent and acquired almost a native level of language skills (92). Some interviewees also expressed that their accent was a part of their American identity. One person living in Germany told Klekowski that she speaks "Denglish," a term created out of mixing the German and English language: "Sometimes an American word comes out that better fits the situation." (Klekowski von Koppenfels 92). Others felt that their accent made them feel like outsiders. One interviewee said he used to think of his accent as a scarlet A for American (Klekowski von Koppenfels 92). Another person noted how his accent separated him from those in his host country. One interviewee said, "It is clear that the American migrant is often identified as an American first and an individual second." (Klekowski von Koppenfels 95). Through language a migrant stays connected to their home country, but some also feel excluded from their host country.

Relationships

According to Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, friendships are a vital factor when it comes to successful integration. In her book some Americans discussed the importance of having a fellow American companion to vent to about culture shocks and daily challenges. Some of Klekowski von Koppenfels' interviewees expressed the

importance of celebrating traditional holidays with other Americans. One interviewee noted, ““I don’t like having to explain traditions, either it’s a tradition or it’s not and if you’re a guest, then you’re a guest, you’re not a spectator.”” (Klekowski von Koppenfels 108). Many Americans overseas also maintain strong social links to home, and with innovation in social technology it is easier now than ever before. Flat-rate telephone calls, skype, WhatsApp, email, and Facebook are all sources used to keep in contact with friends and family back home (Klekowski von Koppenfels 114). Interviewees said the internet made them feel like they weren’t that far from home and social media helped them remain connected to their loved ones. As one interviewee described it, ““You’re so connected to your family and friends and events that its changed what it means to be an expat. I mean I’m physically here, but I’m mentally here and there. I’m a quantum experiment. I’m in Europe and the U.S. at the same time.”” (Klekowski von Koppenfels 116). One woman in London even went so far as to say that without skype she doesn’t know if she would still be in London (Klekowski von Koppenfels 116). Social technologies have the power to change the migration trajectory. While technology aids the long-distance relationships of those back in the U.S., distance has its ways of pulling people apart. Many interviewees told Klekowski that going home and visiting family and friends felt different. Many explained that those back home became tired of hearing about their European lifestyle and others explained that their friends in Europe filled the void of not having their American friends in the proximity. Another explanation was that in-person contact was necessary to maintain a strong relationship. It was also noted that not keeping up with American television created a barrier between them and their American friends (Klekowski von Koppenfels 111).

Food

American food plays a role for migrants staying connected to their culture. Through Klekowski von Koppenfels' interviews and surveys she found that over half of Americans cook "American" food at least once a month (116). Some of the American food interviewees made on a regular basis included pancakes, tacos, clam chowder, and hamburgers cooked on the grill (Klekowski von Koppenfels 118). One woman in Berlin even admitted that she had her own tortilla press (Klekowski von Koppenfels 118). Monique Y. Wells missed American food so much she created a cook book for others to use. Its title, *Food for the Soul: A Texas Expatriate Nurtures Her Culinary Roots in Paris*, was intended for African-Americans in Paris. The cookbook is published in both French and English (Klekowski von Koppenfels 121).

Negative Integration Experiences

Americans as compared to other migrants are for the most part not marginalized on education or income, nor do they look different from Europeans at first glance. However, assumptions and stereotypes about the American identity do exist (Klekowski von Koppenfels 77). Two of Klekowski von Koppenfels interviewees were an American couple living in the Netherlands. They noted that although they didn't feel like outcasts, they didn't feel like they completely fit into Dutch society (Klekowski von Koppenfels 78). Phrases like "you smile a lot" or "calm down, don't get so excited" or "that is so American" or having their intelligence questioned just because they were American were frequent reminders that they were migrants (Klekowski von Koppenfels 78). Klekowski writes, "I think what Americans face today is a recentralization of their identity." (151).

The rest of the world is so engulfed with American pop culture and American politics that many people believe to know American culture just by viewing it through a television (Klekowski von Koppenfels 151). Many Americans explained they felt that their host country was judging them after Bush's election and the U.S. invasion of Iraq. One person said that Americans overseas unwillingly became representatives of U.S. foreign policy (Klekowski von Koppenfels 207). In other words, they were subjected to constant criticism and were in defense of themselves and their country. Europeans, especially Germans, had a hard time separating our people from the politics. This criticism led many Americans overseas to get involved with protests against the Gulf war and against Bush. The action of becoming engaged with one's home country after an event is called "reactive transnationalism" (Klekowski von Koppenfels 217).

Political Transnationalism

Americans overseas have made political change from outside of the U.S. border. They won their right to vote in 1976 and automatic citizenship for their children who were not born in America. They participate in domestic politics through protests, fundraising, letter writing campaigns, lobbying, and contacting representatives (Klekowski von Koppenfels 174). Overseas Americans also serve as financial contributors to domestic elections. Political organizations have also been formed to aid political efforts of Americans overseas.

Citizenship

Children born to Americans abroad are eligible for U.S. citizenship. However, this was not always the case. Former regulations stated that it was required for a U.S. born parent of a child born abroad to have lived in the U.S. for at least five years in order for the child to qualify for citizenship (Costanzo). Some women of the Association of American Wives of Europeans (AAWE) realized that under current American law their children would be excluded from consideration of U.S. citizenship (Klekowski von Koppenfels 224). This led the AAWE to lobby for change in 1986 and they won (Klekowski von Koppenfels 238). One of the most notable protests of the AAWE was outside of the American embassy in London where children waved banners that said, "I'm as American as apple pie!" (Klekowski von Koppenfels 239).

Voting

Americans overseas have increased their engagement with domestic elections. The measurement of their impact has made them a constituency that politicians now pay

attention to and wish to gain loyalty from. Domestic voters and representatives questioned the legitimacy of overseas Americans' voices in domestic politics. Questions were raised regarding whether someone who has left the country permanently should be allowed to vote if the laws passed do not affect them. (Klekowski von Koppenfels 176). However, this all changed after the outcome of the 2000 presidential election was determined by 537 overseas absentee votes in the state of Florida (Klekowski von Koppenfels 173). Overseas voters became a constituency that politicians wanted to win over, so many of them began campaigning overseas. Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain have held fundraisers overseas (Klekowski von Koppenfels 202). In 2012 Mitt Romney travelled to London and Jerusalem to host a \$25,000 per plate fundraiser. The campaign was said to have brought in three million dollars (Klekowski von Koppenfels 202).

American Political Organizations Overseas

Many Americans abroad join American organizations to network and have a sense of community. One of Klekowski von Koppenfels' interviewees put it quite simply: “Sometimes you just want to be with people you can discuss the Brady Bunch with” (Klekowski von Koppenfels 98). There are many organizations ranging from social clubs to professional networking to groups aiming to increase activity in voting and political advocacy (Klekowski von Koppenfels 41).

One of these organizations is American Citizens Abroad, otherwise known as ACA. ACA aims to inform the U.S. government about Americans overseas. The organization also provides Americans overseas with political information such as election dates (“ACA Events”).

Perhaps the most well-known political organization is the Association of American Residents Overseas (AARO). AARO was founded in 1973 and is headquartered in Paris (“Update”). The Organization aims to provide a platform for the voices of Americans Overseas. It is similar to ACA in its political representation, but AARO also provides reasonably priced health insurance plans to its members and also takes part in Overseas Americans Week in Washington D.C. every year (“Update”). AARO is known for being politically active, and in 1975 the organization urged its members to channel their revolutionary roots by sending letters to their congressional representatives with a tea bag stapled to the letter. The message was to demonstrate that Americans overseas were also a population being taxed without representation. The campaign was successful (Klekowski von Koppenfels 120).

Some organizations focus on preserving American culture. AAWE provides opportunities for children of American women married to European men to practice their English (Klekowski von Koppenfels 164). Their motto today is “Encouraging children to be bilingual; enjoying Halloween, Thanksgiving, and playing baseball in the park.” (Klekowski von Koppenfels 164). FAWCO also organizes programs designed to familiarize children of an American parent with American history (Klekowski von Koppenfels 164). This maintenance of culture expresses that parents want their children to know their American identity.

Some organizations were created purely to maintain a sense of community. The group Brothers was born out of the Million Man March (Klekowski von Koppenfels 121). The group raised awareness around a number of issues affecting African-American men (Klekowski von Koppenfels 121). One group member noted, ““Especially since we

are living in Paris we are disconnected from the Black American community’”
(Klekowski von Koppenfels 121). In Paris the group hosts dinners where African-American men living in Paris or just passing through can have a place to feel at home (Klekowski von Koppenfels 121).

The Accidental Migrant

Klekowski von Koppenfels explains that migrant motivations change with time and that the American migrant motivation is usually complex and multi-causal. Unlike most migrants who come to the U.S., seeking a higher quality of life cannot be said to be the prime motivation of American migrants (Klekowski von Koppenfels 26). According to Klekowski von Koppenfels, the number one reason U.S. citizens leave is to be with a partner. This is followed by work then study being the prime motivation. A minority of Americans intended to leave the U.S. for good (Klekowski von Koppenfels 43). Many Americans maintain the “myth of return,” stating that even though they have lived abroad for some time, they plan to eventually go back to the U.S. (Klekowski von Koppenfels 60). This is all a part of Klekowski von Koppenfels’ Accidental Migrants theory. The Accidental Migrant theorizes that American migrants leave the U.S. with the intention of a temporary stay; however, they wind up staying in their host country and, therefore, accidentally becoming a permanent migrant (Klekowski von Koppenfels 137-138). Klekowski von Koppenfels’ multi-causal migration theory suggests Americans decide to stay in their host country for different reasons than those that initially brought them there. Those reasons are relationships, quality of life, and the host country becoming home (Klekowski von Koppenfels 58). The quality of life remains a vital factor in American migrants deciding to permanently live abroad. Klekowski von Koppenfels writes, “Many women mentioned the benefit--relative to the US--of lengthier maternity leave, and both men and women mentioned six weeks paid vacation.” (68). This extensive time off allows Americans overseas to visit home. Another person noted the easier access to affordable health insurance being a benefit of staying abroad. Several artists in Berlin

who were interviewed by Klekowski von Koppenfels noted that affordable health insurance while still being able to work on their art was their reason for staying in Germany (Klekowski von Koppenfels 60). Many European nations fund the arts. For instance, an American woman who works for the Leipzig Opera in Germany explained that she received health insurance because she was deemed an employee of the city (Klekowski von Koppenfels 68). Not surprisingly, one third of the Leipzig Opera singers (7 of 22) were Americans (Klekowski von Koppenfels 68).

Renouncing U.S. Citizenship

The year 2013 saw a record number of Americans renouncing their citizenship (Costanzo). Quarterly figures from the IRS indicated the rise of renunciations with 1,780 renunciations in 2011, 1,485 in 2010, and 731 in 2009 (Chishti). Prior to 2009, the numbers ranged from 200 to 400 annually (Chishti). Reasons for renouncing citizenship were largely due to the economic regulation of the U.S. government (Chishti). The government has been suspicious of economically motivated renunciations since some public figures have controversially ended their U.S. citizenship.

One of the most notable instances of renouncing U.S. citizenship is of Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin. Saverin's renunciation was spotlighted negatively by the media because it was speculated that Saverin was trying to minimize his U.S. tax liability in anticipation of Facebook's initial public offering (Chishti). Saverin's financial stake was speculated to be over three billion dollars and it was uncovered that by renouncing his citizenship Saverin would save over 100 million from taxes. Saverin has since taken residency in Singapore where the country does not levy his taxes or capital gains (Chishti). After Saverin's renunciation, the Ex-Patriot Act was established. This act increased the cost of renouncing citizenship to a \$2,350 filing fee, making it the most expensive renunciation fee in the world (Wood). The legislation also increased the possibility of being permanently barred from the United States and listed on a watch list. The act was in regard to many politicians believing those who renounce citizenship are likely tax avoiders. Saverin denies that he was avoiding paying his taxes. He refers to himself as a global citizen and says he just desired to live in Singapore (Chishti).

Conclusion

There is significant evidence that Americans maintain their American identity while living abroad. Americans maintain transnationalism relations with people, news, food, finances, etc. Americans overseas have the amazing opportunity to be foreigners and in doing so I believe Americans overseas get to know their American identity and their culture in a way the rest of the population does not. Americans overseas are forced every day to experience new challenges, whether that is a language barrier or trying to navigate their way through a complicated metro system. I believe its these new experiences that allow Americans overseas to have a better understanding of themselves and the rest of the world. Independence and individualism flows through our veins and that's something Americans abroad pack with them; sometimes along with a tortilla press and a spray cheese bottle.

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