



**ISTITUTO REGIONALE PER LA  
PROGRAMMAZIONE ECONOMICA  
DELLA TOSCANA**

**2013 REPORT**  
**EDUCATING IN PARADISE:**  
**THE VALUE OF NORTH AMERICAN**  
**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS IN ITALY**  
**– CHARACTERISTICS, IMPACT AND**  
**PROSPECTS**

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TEXT IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH



**ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGE  
AND UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS IN ITALY**

### **Acknowledgements**

IRPET is a regional public entity that plays an institutional role in socio-economic research and as technical-scientific support to the Tuscan Region. The realm of study of the institution is vast and extends from the analysis of the regional socio-economic structure to the problems of the territory, from planning in terms of political policies to the evaluation of interventions. Active in terms of scientific relationships and publications about a noteworthy variety of subjects in the field of local development, the institution is also known for its own models based on input-output matrices, models which permit it to estimate macro-economic variables on the local and regional level, besides carrying out evaluations of economic impact.

Local Global sas was born in 2001 as a spin-off of IRPET. Even today in close collaboration with the Institute, Local Global sas carries out applied research in local and socio-economic areas. Among these can be mentioned studies relative to the economic impact of interventions and sectors, analyses of small businesses, of tourism and promotion of the area. Alessandro Borgioli and Andrea Manuelli of Local Global carried out this study.

This final report was translated, from Italian into English, by James Zarr, and the bilingual text was conceived and edited by Portia Prebys.

Association of American College and University Programs in Italy  
AACUPI: [www.aacupi.org](http://www.aacupi.org)

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The charm was, as always in Italy, in the tone and the air and the happy hazard of things, which made any positive pretension or claimed importance a comparatively trifling question. We slid, in the steep little place, more or less down hill; ... we stayed no long time, and "went to see" nothing; yet we communicated to intensity, we lay at our ease in the bosom of the past, we practised intimacy, in short, an intimacy so much greater than the mere accidental and ostensible: the difficulty for the right and grateful expression of which makes the old, the familiar tax on the luxury of loving Italy.

Henry James, Conclusion of *Italian Hours* (1909)

## **Preface**

The Association of American College and University Programs in Italy first came into contact with the *Istituto Regionale per la Programmazione Economica della Toscana*, IRPET, in 1992, when IRPET researched, for the very first time, the flow of international visitors in Tuscany present there for study. On the eve of the twenty-first century, the need to give additional weight, analysis and form to the American and Canadian flow of academic tourism, and to the structures utilized by North American study abroad programs, underlining fully the economic, cultural, and organizational aspects within Tuscany, was met by their precious data taken from a then completely innovative point of view.

I remember all too well the initial attempts during the summer of 1992 in Florence to convince and encourage AACUPI member institutions to provide all of the data necessary to produce a meaningful IRPET study of our presence in Tuscany. After a tumultuous decade of seemingly insurmountable fiscal and legal difficulties and international bureaucratic challenges, most institutions were extremely hesitant to furnish IRPET with details on numbers of students, employees, and faculty. There seemed to be no need to define and quantify our presence so specifically. What was our Association trying to do? Why? Stringent reassurances on AACUPI's part were necessary before institutions would supply budget data, enrollment figures, faculty and staff profiles, descriptions of property owned, or leased, or even sundry information about former students of ours returning to favorite and meaningful old haunts. Times were decidedly different then, for guests and hosts, alike.

Based on only twenty-three American programs, that IRPET research indicated they spent directly between forty and forty-two billion Italian liras, in the single academic year 1991-1992, in Florence. This amount, added to the amounts spent indirectly by students and guest faculty and staff for personal shopping and visits by parents, family members and friends, and their relative expenditures, along with the indirect effects on the regional economy, added up to approximately eighty billion Italian liras. In addition, it was discovered, few students fail to return, time and time again, to their own personal paradise. For AACUPI and local government, this study was decidedly useful, in short, a huge success. We, too, for the very first

time, became a tangible presence with legitimate data available, gathered and analyzed by an Italian entity.

In 2000, IRPET, commissioned by AACUPI with the support of the Carlo Marchi Foundation, brought up to date the 1992 survey, extending it to seventy-six AACUPI programs distributed throughout the entire national territory of Italy, but principally in Rome with twenty-nine entries, and in Florence with twenty-five, including the 10,000 students enrolled, amongst which were 3,780 in Rome and 4,260 in Florence. This precise analysis of the economic magnitude of the flow of tourism for academic purposes from North America in terms of the economic organizational and cultural impact on each of the geographic regions in Italy where AACUPI study programs were located seriously investigated and evaluated the phenomenon in terms of net output, directly and indirectly, generated by expenditures on the part of the programs themselves, their students, and guest faculty and staff from the United States and Canada. This presence on Italian soil then represented an expenditure directly connected to the programs of 334 billion lire; comprehensively 548 billion lire, if we include indirect expenditures.

An AACUPI up-date in 2008, encompassing one hundred thirty-four established programs, in small and large centers, located throughout the Italian peninsula, in thirty-two towns, affirmed that the direct revenue from these programs amounted to 396,832,000.00 euros.

On the thirty-fifth anniversary of its founding, AACUPI again commissioned IRPET for a comprehensive study of the presence of the one hundred fifty North American study abroad programs operating on Italian soil. Robert Shackelford, AACUPI Secretary-Treasurer, joins me in thanking Stefano Casini Benvenuti from IRPET who graciously accepted our challenge, and Alessandro Borgioli and Andrea Manuelli of Local Global who drew up, carried out, and reported on their extensive findings published here in both English and Italian.

Cooperation and collaboration on the part of representatives of AACUPI member institutions that participated in this study engender our sincere gratitude on a collective scale. To all of you who provided both questions and answers, preliminary and final data, physical, spiritual, intellectual and human resources, AACUPI extends special thanks. We really do need one another in order to paint a full and detailed portrait of our presence on Italian soil.

This formidable initiative and result could not have been completed without the care and intelligence of my assistant, James Zarr, whom I thank and gratefully acknowledge.

Cav. Portia Prebys, President  
 Association of American College and  
 University Programs in Italy

Rome, September 16, 2013

## **Comment on the IRPET Study**

### **Educating in Paradise: The Value of North American Study Abroad Programs in Italy – Characteristics, Impact and Prospects**

#### **Studio Borio**

The International Legal and Tax Firm of Borio in Florence has had the privilege of functioning as legal counsel for AACUPI for almost twenty years now, and it is, therefore, with true pleasure that we allow ourselves to offer these few lines of commentary on the commendable work done by IRPET in collaboration with Local Global.

In the first place, a couple of clarifications, technical so-to-speak, are needed for those “not personnel on the job”: in the text of the report, in fact, references are made, first to the “Fornero Law,” and then to the “Barile Law.”

The so-called Fornero Law, or Reform, is Law N. 92 of 28 June 2012, and it takes its journalistic name from the then Minister of Labor in the Monti government, Prof. Elsa Fornero. Among the numerous new provisions introduced by this reform of the Italian labor market, some of them have certainly rendered more complex and delicate the handling of collaborative and labor relations between the North American programs in Italy and their faculty members who reside in our country.

The so-called Barile Law is, in fact, Art. 2 of Law N. 4 of 14 January 1999, named as such because the original text of the provision was substantially thought out and written by the late Prof. Paolo Barile, a prominent faculty member of constitutional law and, among other things, Minister for Relations with Parliament in the Ciampi government of 1993/1994. In short, it contains those legal measures that, even today, regulate and authorize the activities of those Italian branches of not-for-profit foreign academic institutions at the university level, or their equivalent.

Well, as the final pages of the IRPET report note, the present fifteen years of application of the Barile Law confirm that these clear and linear provisions have created a “legal framework,” with basic legal certainties for North American academic institutions, besides being the sole of its kind on the European continent, with undoubted and tangible advantages for the “Italian system” and its image beyond the seas.

AACUPI, however, proposes to improve the situation further, also and above all in the light of new models for the establishment of academic institutions that refer to it (consortia structures, study centers with several locations, post-graduate

programs, etc.), and it has formulated a reform project (more correctly stated, a “restatement,” to keep within the typical terminology of US common law), which aims at making Italy an increasingly competitive and modern destination for North American study abroad, also thanks to indispensable coordination with the legal measures of the aforementioned Fornero Reform. Our hope, and our concerned appeal, go out to the Italian political forces, of any political bent, that they might know how to approve rapidly (and, obviously, work together to improve) this proposal, whose future advantages for our country have already been demonstrated by the very results illustrated in this research done by IRPET.

Still, over time, AACUPI has confronted and contributed to at least simplify the rules and procedures regarding immigration, both as regards student concerns (one thinks that, until just a few years ago, even a student of US or Canadian nationality who stayed in Italy for less than 90 days for reasons, in fact, of study had to get both the “deadly” entrance visa and stay permit!), and for those “visiting” North American faculty members, or else temporarily on mission to the programs in Italy. Much, however, can and must be done to obtain the real “circulation of ideas and brains” which has been so widely discussed, without pulling back on security and control issues, but simplifying even more procedures and bureaucratic norms, with savings in time and money for all. In other words, AACUPI is fighting to pass, at the Italian, North American and even European level, from the concept of “immigration” to that, even more precise, of “mobility” for students, researchers and faculty members.

Finally, some notes on the economic impact of the North American university programs in Italy, adding to what has already been referred to in the IRPET report.

In particular, the “contribution by the taxpaying” AACUPI program to the Italian State, in its varied components: as such, the branch of the North American academic institution is considered as an out-and-out “final consumer” for VAT purposes, and, therefore, is hit with the tax as such (currently at the rate of 21%) on all purchases made in Italy for goods and services subject to that tax.

Then, the North American universities and colleges in Italy are out-and-out labor providers and/or clients regarding employees, collaborators, etc., and they, therefore, pay all the social contributions that are due as required; this is right and just, but sometimes this fact is not taken into account in evaluating the economic and financial impact on our country.

The same can be said regarding the taxes which the programs themselves pay in Italy: IRES and IMU on property which is owned (often property of important historical and artistic value, recovered and brought back to a new life), IRAP always and again on the salaries given to one’s own employees and collaborators, various indirect taxes (registration taxes, stamp taxes, etc.) on the numerous acts and documents that are indispensable in the correct daily management of academic and cultural activities.

Finally, another aspect, little underscored and incomprehensibly limiting the expansion of these programs in Italy - that is to say, the notable fiscal, in fact,



limits - that are placed on financial donations and contributions from sponsors, both private and corporate, which, up to now, can deduct rather little from their tax burden of what they supply in favor of foreign academic entities that routinely operate in Italy.

On all the above, much remains to be done!

STUDIO BORIO  
(Mario Borio) (Gian Franco Borio)

Florence, August 28, 2013



## 1. The Conceptual Framework of Study Abroad

The mobility of students involved in instructional paths and/or formation abroad is an expanding phenomenon which involves both large, advanced economies and countries under development.<sup>1</sup>

Study abroad is promoted and given incentive by both public and private universities in various countries, as well as by national and international public institutions.<sup>2</sup> The instruments by which those promotions come about are, for example, financing by grants, the activation of sister cities and the exchange of students between universities from different nations, and campaigns aimed at sensitizing the international mobility of students.

For university institutes, the development of study abroad programs represents a double advantage. In the first place, it implies an enrichment of the university's own academic value, both through its relations and exchanges with foreign universities, and through the professional growth of its own students and researchers. In the second place, it offers an economic advantage in terms of attracting new students: a training offer that includes study abroad programs and exchanges with centers of excellence in other countries can often represent a decisive point in the choice of the future student.

National and international public institutions promote the mobility of university students in order to train the future managerial class in intercultural values. The goals of study abroad programs as proposed by bodies and commissions of various countries<sup>3</sup> can be summarized in the following points:

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<sup>1</sup> The guide published by UNESCO in 1999 on study abroad programs offers all of 2,659 opportunities for post-secondary study in 129 different countries (UNESCO 1999). In the last decade, the phenomenon has grown, and the number of active programs is continually increasing.

The survey contained in this publication is focused on programs related to university and pre-university instruction; this is only one part of a more extensive phenomenon that includes those programs for students that frequent primary or secondary schools, as well as research programs, doctorates and internships for those with degrees or not.

<sup>2</sup> Some examples of the commitment by national and international institutions are the Erasmus Program, financed by the European Commission within its Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), the Study Abroad Program of the United States, and the scholarship and awards connected to it, as well as the study abroad programs financed by nations like Australia, Canada, India, Japan and China.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the reports of the European Commission regarding the Erasmus Program and the LLP, and the statistical data published by the European Commission - Education & Training (data that refer to the years from 1987 to 2013), the Final Report of the Lincoln

1. promoting cultural integration and respect for diversity;
2. increasing awareness of the international and global situation;
3. improving the adaptive and problem-solving abilities of its students in different cultural settings;
4. promoting cultural exchange between nations on an academic level (students, researchers, and faculty members).

The motivations that urge one to undertake international training and intercultural matters can be traced, first of all, back to those economic and social characteristics that are specific to their historical period and current context.

Beginning in the 1990s, one saw an acceleration of the globalization process and a redefinition of international relations, phenomena which are still in effect and whose economic, social and cultural consequences have yet to be fully understood and assimilated even today.<sup>4</sup>

What is certain is that the world in which the students of today interact is very different from that of twenty years ago, and it is in continual evolution. The flow of capital, merchandise and persons intensifies and becomes more rapid, when the development of new technologies and means of communication creates new opportunities for social interaction.

One of the consequences of globalization is the increased interdependence of territories, together with a growth in the possibility, even during one's daily life, of entering into contact with groups of individuals that follow other cultural models and lifestyles.

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Commission (2005), and the document published by the American Council on Education (2002).

<sup>4</sup> "Globalization is a complex phenomenon which has characterized capitalist society since the very origins of capitalism; as such, it requires the expansion of the market economy and systems of production, government and development organized on an international level" (I. Wallerstein [1978] and L. Gallino [2004]). The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union at the outset of the 1990s marked a moment of noteworthy development in the process of globalization, with the appearance of new countries on the global market. At the same time, the development of new technologies increased the speed of exchanges and radically transformed communication systems.

The effects of globalization can also be felt on the political, cultural and social dimensions of both society and the individual. If, on one hand, there are results that are experienced positively, such as the possibility of coming to know new countries more easily, facility in communication, availability of goods and services at an international level, nevertheless there is no lack of risk for negative results, like a decreased sense of security, both local and global, the loss of local authenticity and cultural identity, the "Westernization" of those countries that enter the global market, and, finally, an increase in the less appreciable aspects of the consumer society. For an in-depth study of the effect of globalization on persons and their attitudes, please see Z. Bauman (2000).

This cultural and ethnic diversity can make a society more dynamic, but it also can give rise to problems and generate conflicts.<sup>5</sup> In the resolution of these difficulties and divergences, it is indispensable to have an ability to manage emotional resources and reciprocal confidence, on which interpersonal relations are founded. For this reason, university students are required, not only to be able to understand, interpret, and manage complex phenomena, but also to master transverse, or soft, skills, which are used to determine the individual's success in the work and relational environment. Study abroad is promoted precisely because, as we will see, it allows the transmission of intercultural communication skills to the students, skills which can be summarized in flexibility and mental openness, cultural empathy, self-awareness and initiative.<sup>6</sup>

Awareness of a labor market that is more and more competitive and global, moreover, motivates families to aim their youth onto paths leading to study abroad, often in an early age and in the first stages of their university education, in order to favor, as much as possible, the future career of that student.

It would be a mistake, however, to consider the social and economic aspects of the current context as the sole motivations for study abroad. Whoever chooses to spend one or more semesters abroad does not do so only because he or she is aware that such an experience will allow the development of those characteristics that are in greatest demand on the globalized labor market. This choice is, also and above all, dictated by intellectual and human curiosity, by the pleasure of traveling and discovering new things, by an attraction toward what is other and different from oneself.

There are also profound psychological and anthropological motivations that lead one to travel and discover traditions and cultures different from one's own. The attraction that travel, as a moment of learning and personal growth, exercises is exclusive neither to modernity nor to Western culture, but it goes back, rather, to an intrinsic propensity of humanity, which has shown itself at the root of the evolution of the human species. The metaphor of travel as a moment of personal growth is a topic that belongs to all cultures and social groups, and it has been handed down since the ancient myths of the Greek world, of African and Asian tribes and of pre-Colombian civilizations. Migration, geographical discovery,

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<sup>5</sup> On an international level, the opening of the Soviet block to Western capitalist economies, the creation of a unified Europe, the emergence of Islamic terrorism and the political and social movements of the Arab Spring and of the *Indignados* are only some of the phenomena that show increased geopolitical complexity. But intercultural conflicts can also be seen on the local scale when the matter concerns recognition of the rights of immigrants, adapting educational programs, providing for the integration of the foreigner in his or her new territory.

For further in-depth treatments of the theme of the interaction between globalization and intercultural conflict, we note B. Easterly and R. Levine (1997), P. Collier and D. Dollar (2002), A. Volpi (2005), A. Portera and P. Dusi (2005).

<sup>6</sup> T. Williams (1999).

cultural exchange, the use of barter first and of mercantile exchanges later, the transmission of techniques and knowledge, the diffusion of writing and of Arabic numerals are just a few of the examples of consequences that the human propensity to move and interact with its own kind have had on the forms of collective life.

As Eric Leed notes in his *The Mind of the Traveler* (1991), it can be said that, in every culture, “travel is the most common source of metaphors used to explicate transformations and transitions of all sorts. We draw upon the experience of human mobility to define the meaning of death (as a ‘passing’) and the structure of life (as a ‘journey’ or pilgrimage); to articulate changes of social and existential conditions in rites of initiation (of ‘passage’)” [original citation in English, translator’s note].

The omnipresence of travel within human cultures and religious traditions can be traced back, according to Leed, to the “normality” of travel for human kind. It must never be forgotten, in fact, that the placement and construction of lodgings and villages are conditions that occurred after millennia of prehistory, in which human populations were nomadic and in continual migration to satisfy the needs of the hunter-gatherers to have a *habitus*. As a consequence, travel allows for a rediscovery of our most ancestral impulses, often assuming the aspect of a “sacred” moment, because of its potential for transformation, rediscovery and motivation in the individual. The rites of passage studied by anthropologists like van Gennep, Turner and Eliade<sup>7</sup> almost always require the presence of a trip, sometimes interior and solely spiritual, but more often an effective physical distancing from the community to which one belongs, in order to then return there once the foreseen change has occurred. Religious pilgrimages represent, in this sense, a development and amplification of these rites of passage, which require the proof of one’s own faith in order to obtain spiritual purification.

If today travel for pleasure, for study or for work has lost many of its sacred or ritual characteristics, related to rites of initiation or of passage,<sup>8</sup> it is not mistaken to maintain that certain psychological and anthropological characteristics remain intrinsic in travelling, as we have seen. The anthropologist Nelson Graburn maintains, for example, that contemporary forms of travel satisfy the same needs that characterized more ancient categories of travel, such as pilgrimages in European and Asian cultures, because they provide occasions for “a break in routine”, which are necessary to lessen difficulties and to redefine the time and space of the ordinary.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The texts of Arnold van Gennep (1972), Victor Turner (1987) and Mircea Eliade (1965) are the reference literature in anthropology for the study of traditions in rites of initiation and of passage among the various human populations. Thanks to their research, many similarities have been established between traditions belonging to cultures distant from each other in time and space.

<sup>8</sup> Mircea Eliade, for example, laments the absence in contemporary times of genuine forms of initiation, maintaining that “modern man has lost all sense of traditional initiation” (M. Eliade 1965) [original citation in English, translator’s note].

<sup>9</sup> N. Graburn (1977).

From a psychological point of view, travel continues to represent a search for “authenticity”, a laceration of one’s own living and affective space, an act of destruction, which will be followed by a reconstruction that requires determination, empathy, and a spirit of adaptation.<sup>10</sup> One is stripped of one’s own heritage and one is open to the unknown, to newness, to the discovery of a new system of symbols and communication. From a pedagogical point of view, the encounter with the other is a school, a way of acquiring knowledge and, at the same time, an awareness of ourselves in the world.

From this viewpoint, study abroad programs can, therefore, represent a valid instrument for responding, not only to the requirements of professional training, but also to those of well-rounded, individual development, educating students in cultural dialogue and in recognizing the needs and meaning structures of the other.

### **1.1 The Status of the Student Abroad**

With respect to the traditional figure of the immigrant, the student visiting for one or more semesters of study enjoys an emotional and motivational status from the start that is generally more favorable. His or her presence in a foreign country is voluntary, linked to a precise program of activities, and the student has been inserted into a community of persons who are in the same situation. That notwithstanding, even students abroad can experience stress, estrangement and fear, common to all those who are called upon to affront a new culture.

Studies of the difficulties met by those who, for more or less lengthy periods of time, must adapt to a new cultural context are not lacking in the literature. One of the most interesting of these is, undoubtedly, that made by Oberg to the development of the theory of “culture shock”.<sup>11</sup> This expression, coined in the 1950s, indicates the emotional states of anxiety, disorientation, confusion, distrust and surprise experienced by those called upon to submerge themselves in new contexts.

Culture shock is, therefore, a phenomenon that, with different intensities and durations, involves all those who, for various reasons, are forced to change country and must remain there for a relatively long time. And, among those who undergo this state of passage, there are, in point of fact, also students abroad.

The passage from one culture to another brings with it the loss of those symbolic and cognitive referents from which the individual draws awareness of oneself and of one’s life: culture, in fact, can be defined as the whole of the norms, values, beliefs and symbols that we encounter in everyday life and that allow us to confer meaning on what happens.<sup>12</sup> It is a matter of what is called COMMON

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<sup>10</sup> Such reflections can also be found in the work of the anthropologist D. MacCannell (1976), as well as in that, of a more psychological nature, of J. Reason (1974).

<sup>11</sup> K. Oberg (1960).

<sup>12</sup> Culture is “the whole of coordinates that provide the individual with a pre-interpreted portion of the world, consenting his or her development of the skills necessary to interact

SENSE:<sup>13</sup> the whole of understood, pre-determined and interiorized meanings, acquired as factual data regarding an objective reality on which the individual constructs his or her own certainties and modulates his or her own actions.

It is in this constant interaction between individual and context that the individual attributes meaning to reality and is affirmed as an actor, able to participate in the COLLECTIVE RITUALS that articulate everyday life.<sup>14</sup> The possibilities of individual action reside in the person's ability to define the arranged situation as interaction and to apply behavior that is in keeping with the expectations of other individuals, according to one's own motivations and the ends pursued.

In the state of culture shock, patterns of belief, behavior and meaning, on the basis of which the individual had been accustomed to orienting efficaciously his or her own actions, prove themselves to be unusable. Consequently, states are manifested that show precariousness, emotional instability and the inability to interact with one's context and communicate with the other, with the risk of developing attitudes marked by closure and refusal of change.

The processes through which the human being develops self-perception as a member of a social group is rooted in the human psyche:<sup>15</sup> the phenomenon has

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efficaciously with one's own life environment" (M. Capovilla, A. Faggi and M. C. Ambrosi Zanoit [2012], p. 22).

The concept of culture (from the Latin *colère*=cultivate) has been amply treated and debated in the social sciences. Among the many works that have dealt with this theme, we note the works of W. Griswold (1997), I. Robertson (1993) and the anthology by P. Rossi (1970).

<sup>13</sup> On the processes of constructing meaning in daily life, we refer the reader to the works of A. Schütz, an Austrian socio-phenomenologist, and G. H. Mead, an American sociologist of the Chicago School, whose contribution has been fundamental for the development of the theory of symbolic interactionism.

<sup>14</sup> Study of the interpretations of "interpersonal rituals" is central to the work of many authors. Among them we would signal E. Goffman: his works, which have now become classic from the symbolic interactionism point of view, describe the social actor as one whose stage is constituted by space of life. In a mutual, reciprocal interaction, the actor assumes different roles, depending on the interpretation of the stimuli that is received from one's surroundings, thereby contributing to constructing its meaning.

<sup>15</sup> The interaction between the individual and social groups is the object of study of social psychology, but there is no lack of contributions from philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, educators, psychologists, and psycho-therapists. The field of study is, therefore, very broad and complex, as are the interpretive models offered. For a collection of the main contributions we refer the reader to the manuals of G. Attili (2002) and G. Mantovani (2007).

What should be underscored here is the existence of a relationship between the individual and the social group, which is inherent in human nature: the individual develops him- or herself as a member of a community, from which cognitive and behavioral schemes, norms, communicative and ritual codes are all interiorized. This status has marked human existence from prehistory to today. What can change are the extent and the structure



been amply surveyed in literature interested in the study of cognitive structures and in the development and safeguarding of the Self. The use of simple categories like “I”, “we” and “you” represents an anchor onto which one can clasp in those situations where habitual referents are diminished. Reinforcement of intra-group relations is, therefore, a tool for defending and safeguarding one’s own psychological well-being, a tool to which the individual can have recourse when conditions are perceived as causes of stress and external threats.

To overcome this attitude of closure, it is necessary to make a notable emotional investment, whose outcome is, however, uncertain and not pre-defined. Whenever this does not happen successfully, the individual risks running into negative states of mind and attitudes, such as:

- a sense of frustration;
- the development of states of anxiety;
- low return in study or in work-related activities;
- voluntary isolation or exclusive ties to individuals of one’s own nationality;
- depression.<sup>16</sup>

## **1.2 Training Processes and Pedagogical Impact**

The intensification of mobility in the student abroad has led the international scientific literature to ever more interest in the psychological and social effects related to transculturality and to their implications in educational and academic environments. In this respect, the processes by which the student interacts with a new reality and the pedagogical impact of those processes are particularly important.

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of the groups, the number of groups to which the individual feels he or she belongs, the criteria for exclusion, and the complexity of the meaning system in which the individual identifies him- or herself.

In the multicultural society of contemporary times, the adult individual perceives him- or herself as part of a world whose spatial and cultural borders are constantly being redefined. The development of full self-awareness makes one able to act more and more independently from one’s own group of origin, whether that be the family or a group of equals. When change is seen as a threat, the individual can accede to mechanisms aimed at safeguarding the Self and its very psychological (and physical) health, and change can lead the individual to take refuge in the known, in closed communities that are regulated by familiar interpretive schemes. For this reason, the individual recoups very simple categorization models, typical of tribal communities where the individual is recognized as such because part of a group closed off to the outside, and reality is interpreted as having recourse to rigid ideal types.

<sup>16</sup> The effect of the lack in adaptation to a new cultural context is the object of study in E. Marx (2001).

Studies conducted most recently maintain that the ability to interpret context, fundamental in order that the individual might establish oneself as a “social actor,” is developed by means of adaptation.<sup>17</sup> this is a process that is neither linear nor immediate, but which can require time and effort of the individual and cause stress and suffering. Adaptation presupposes a transformation of the cognitive schemes of the individual; it can be a destabilizing and difficult experience, but, like each moment of “crisis”, it carries with it a change which can have positive reflections on the personality of the individual,<sup>18</sup> who has an opportunity of broadening his or her own cultural horizons, developing cognitive abilities and acquiring greater self-awareness by means of a daily meeting with diversity.

The study abroad experience is, therefore, a challenge which, if met positively, as happens in the majority of cases, brings one to develop a greater sensitivity to different cultures and traditions, to say nothing of a new interest in travel abroad, above all in the host country, with which, very often, an affective bond has been established.

Adaptation is a complex process and not one of simple reading: the means by which one reacts to conditions of stress vary from individual to individual, and, for this reason, it is not possible to establish uniform behavior and universal attitudes. That being said, in the psychological and sociological fields, some interpretive schemes have been defined which, even though they should not be understood as restrictive and absolute, can help us to understand what the emotional and cognitive states are that mark the experience of the student abroad.

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<sup>17</sup> The term “adaptation,” even when it is used in a socio-scientific framework, remains linked to the meaning attributed to it in the paradigm of evolutionary biology, where it indicates the organism’s ability to modify itself in terms of its environmental conditions, in order to safeguard and reproduce the species. The use of this term in the framework of the social sciences can be ascribed to the group of researchers and scholars who, during the 1920s and 1930s, developed the Urban Ecology approach at the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago.

In Psychology, adaptation of the individual to the environment indicates the “relation that the individual installs with the environment in which he or she acts and operates, in order thus to succeed in obtaining the satisfaction of his or her own physical and social needs” (Encyclopedia Treccani).

Yet more exhaustive is the contribution by M. C. Ambrosi Zanoit, who writes: “The term adaptation indicates the process of modification of aspects in the biological sphere of an organism, put into use in response to a change in one’s environmental conditions. From a cultural point of view, it is possible to refer to the process of acculturation, defined as the process by which an individual acquires a new set of cultural information through contact with other cultures and/or through the influence of external cultures. [...] From a transcultural point of view, adaptation means, therefore, finding the correct balance between traditional elements and the uncertainty of change, between the old, familiar, and the new, which presents elements that carry with them potential for enrichment and growth.” Please see M. Capovilla, A. Faggi and M. C. Ambrosi Zanoit (2012).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Milton Bennett describes the adaptation processes that come into play in the encounter between cultures using a Scale of Intercultural Sensitivity: this is a dynamic model centered on the prospect of change, in which intercultural sensitivity develops in a progression from ethno-centric to ethno-relative stages. In other words, through various stages the individual passes from rejection of the difference to complete integration.<sup>19</sup>

Sociology has, instead, provided the contribution of D. H. Brown, who, in 1986, described adaptation to a new culture using four phases, which do not necessarily appear in a fixed chronological order: “honeymoon”, “alienation or withdrawal”, “regulation” and “mastery”. The following table synthesizes the main aspects of each phase.

Table 1.1

**D. H. BROWN’S THEORY:  
THE FOUR PHASES OF ADAPTATION TO A NEW CULTURE**

Honeymoon	During this period, the differences between the old and new cultures are seen in a romantic light as wonderful and new. It features in the first weeks, when the individual undergoes a fascination for the new and for discovery.
Alienation or withdrawal	After some time, the individual enters into a crisis: difficulties emerge with language, food, lodging, means of communication and interaction with others. Daily situations become a cause of stress, frustration and anger. The individual is exposed to the risk of making “cultural gaffs”, feels homesick and has a sense of disorientation and fear.
Regulation	After some time, the individual starts to get used to the new culture: bio-rhythms and routine have now been assimilated, and the individual begins to develop a positive attitude, demonstrating awareness of the communicative codes and developing the ability to problem-solve within the new context.
Mastery	Also called the bi-cultural phase, this is the phase in which the individual is able to participate tranquilly in the host culture, while maintaining many characteristics of the receding culture. This is not a case of complete assimilation, but rather of dialectic interaction between two cultural codes.

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<sup>19</sup> M. J. Bennett (1986).

The learning methods based on experience and on practice belong, instead, to the educational and pedagogical culture of the Anglo-Saxon world: it makes use of the influence of the pragmatist thought of Dewey, among the first to maintain that a purely theoretical and formal pedagogical approach was insufficient and to propose the active involvement of the student through observation and practical experience.<sup>20</sup>

The theory of experiential learning, advanced by D. Kolb in 1984, takes up and extends this approach, defining the process of learning as a cyclical process in which phases come after each other: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.<sup>21</sup> In experiential learning, the person is involved in its own interest, including, besides cognitive aspects, those emotional, empathetic and relational characteristics that are either isolated or within the social group of reference. This makes it such that the goals, means and results of learning are not standardized and equal for all students, but highly personalized, or closer to the needs of each individual. The use of the processes of self-observation and self-evaluation incentivize a greater self-awareness, both regarding the self and one's own method of learning.

Today, the interaction between the individual and context has taken on greater importance in the realm of academic instruction and training abroad. The very pedagogical approach of study abroad programs is imbued with training that is not exclusively notional, but rather capable of transmitting to its students the cognitive and emotional skills needed to overcome difficulties in adaptation.

Study abroad programs, in fact, adopt a holistic vision, which places traditional classroom learning alongside other, informal ways of learning, such as experiential learning, learning by doing, and full-immersion language training, which in the last decades have been certified as effective methods for transmitting skills, whether specific or transversal.

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<sup>20</sup> J. Dewey (1938). Alongside the work of Dewey, among the precursors of experiential learning should be remembered Kurt Lewin, for the concept of the learning cycle, which begins and ends with the concrete experience, and Jean Piaget, for his studies on the impact of sensorial and motor experience in the first phases of learning.

<sup>21</sup> The activities called for in experiential learning are numerous and can be divided between indoor and outdoor activities. Among the former can be found, for example, role-plays, simulations, group exercises and the use of theater techniques, in order to develop among the students awareness of Self and of the others, to stimulate effective and productive communication, and to activate a propositional attitude, one aimed at problem solving. Outdoor activities, on the other hand, include, for example, adventurous paths, travel, games, sports or cultural activities which are carried out in more-or-less numerous groups of persons. Such experiences foster ties within the group, organizational skills and team work, and they outline inclinations toward leadership and the building of balanced and positive relations, besides promoting and giving value to the interests of the various participants.

According to Hopkins,<sup>22</sup> study abroad programs represent a well-developed and balanced form of experiential learning, because they offer the possibility of experimenting with various activities and training methods in a physical and cultural environment which is different from that of reference, and, thereby, potentially increasing its cognitive and emotional impact on the student.

The large part of programs, in fact, call for both the creation of study and work groups, often linked to internship or traineeship activities within the organizing body or at institutes associated with it, and for participation in guided visits and study trips that foster the cultural interests of the students and their processes of integration and discovery of the host country. At the same time, great importance is given to increasing the value of one's free time by promoting the free initiative of the young people in choosing to immerse themselves in the local context through a series of entertainment activities that offer further occasions for comparison with different people, ideas and traditions. The goal is, in fact, to foster occasions for active participation in the new culture. With the passage of time, the student abroad learns, thereby, to adapt to the rhythms and usages of the place: he or she appreciates its food, traditions, usages, customs and forms of interaction among equals. He or she, moreover, acquires mastery of communicative codes and develops Emotional Intelligence,<sup>23</sup> which allows him or her to be an actor even in multicultural and multiethnic contexts.

The fundamental aspect is that the student is not completely absorbed into the new reality and does not forget the culture to which he or she belongs; rather, the individual develops transcultural competence, or the ability to pass from one cultural code to another, mastering context as a function of one's own well-being and the satisfaction of one's own needs. He or she, therefore, develops transversal skills and competencies (the mastery of a foreign language, the ability to solve problems, etc.) which constitute a heritage that can be spent in any relational, work-related and social framework.

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<sup>22</sup> J. R. Hopkins (1999).

<sup>23</sup> For more in-depth treatments of the theme of Emotional Intelligence and of the Emotional Quotient, we recommend P. Salovey, and J. D. Mayer (1990), and D. Goleman (1998). The methodology for the Emotional Quotient values was, instead, developed by R. Bar-On (1988).

### **Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Quotient and Study Abroad**

During the 1990s, the American psychologists Peter Salovey, John Mayer and Daniel Goleman developed the theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI): the basic assumption of this theory is that humanity has a mental ability which allows emotions to be perceived, understood, and regulated, and to use this emotional information to guide one's thoughts and actions.

According to R. Bar-On (1988), Emotional Intelligence includes those non-cognitive abilities and skills that allow the individual to meet the pressures of his or her surroundings.

One speaks of the Emotional Quotient, which can be given values with respect to five areas of competence/skill:

- intrapersonal skills;
- interpersonal skills;
- skills of adaptation;
- strategies for handling stress;
- motivational factors and general humor.

In conclusion, it is worthwhile to restate that study abroad has important psychological and cognitive repercussions. We have seen, in fact, how the motivations that lead one to undertake a study abroad program are multiple and varied, being of an economic-social, cultural and anthropological nature, at times also associated with adaptation difficulties for the student, difficulties that can be met and overcome by offering the student adequate pedagogical support.

On the other side, the positive impact that study abroad can have on the student, besides being analyzed theoretically in psychological and educational literature, also has been the object of some empirical studies<sup>24</sup> which show that, at the end of one semester of study in a foreign country, the student recognizes that he or she has acquired and/or improved skills in areas such as:

- linguistic abilities in one or more foreign languages;
- knowledge of a new culture;
- specific competencies.

In addition to these improvements, the student shows reaching a greater mastery of the ability to communicate interculturally. In the majority of cases, the returning student, after one or more semesters of study abroad, is a more flexible person,

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<sup>24</sup> T. Williams (1999) and M. H. Salisbury (2001).

more independent, with a more open mentality and able better to deal with emotional stress.<sup>25</sup>

The characteristics of change and its impact on the student are such as to confirm a growing interest in study abroad, in that it allows students to develop abilities that are increasingly important in a rapidly changing world, one characterized by ever more pervasive multiculturalism and globalization.

## **2. North American University Students in the World and in Italy: a Comparison**

### **2.1 North American University Programs in the World: Some Numbers**

For a region like North America, where, for centuries, cultures and traditions very distant from each other have coexisted, such as the pre-existing American Indian civilizations, the colonizing European populations, and the Afro-American ethnic groups, travel and intercultural exchange are aspects which, historically, are of vital importance.

Travel abroad has represented, for North American culture, a time for defining one's own identity, in its relation with the original countries of one's own ethnic groups and with the nations where economic and cultural exchange relations are maintained.<sup>26</sup>

Up to the 19th century, travel abroad, particularly in Europe, meant cultural and personal enrichment for those who left behind the environment of the new continent in order to confront the usages and customs of the rest of the world. Numerous accounts and novels inspired by the experiences of travelers at the time constituted the bases of North American travel literature, thus guiding and inspiring new generations of explorers and tourists.

Influencing the culture and public opinion of North American society were, not only the works of famous authors like Washington Irving, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson and Henry James, but also the less notable publications of Afro-American authors, of journalists, and of feminist writers and chroniclers.<sup>27</sup>

Within this context, some of the North American universities began to insert study abroad programs into their proffered teaching. The first university to offer a possibility to visit abroad was Indiana University, which began, around 1875, to organize summer stays in European locations, among which were Switzerland, France, Great Britain and Germany.

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<sup>25</sup> The measurement of intercultural competencies is done with two indicators: the CCAI (Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory), developed by C. Kelley and J. Meyers (1995) and the ISI (Global Competence and Intercultural Sensitivity Index), developed, instead by C. Olson and K. Kroeger (2001).

<sup>26</sup> W. Stowe (1994).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

These still were not an effective study program, since no credit was issued: that development would occur in the 20th century, by means of important stages, such as the foundation of the Institute of International Education in 1919 and the creation, in 1923, of the first study abroad program recognized on an academic level, by the University of Delaware.

Since then, study abroad has seen a series of important developments and broadenings. Besides those programs aimed at traditional European destinations, over time programs have been added in Asia, South America, Africa, Oceania and the Middle East, arriving today at offering the North American student the possibility of choosing one's program virtually throughout the world.

At the same time, recognition has also grown, along with consideration for the international training of university students. Following the experiences of the two World Wars, greater sensitivity for international relations has become more widespread in North America, as witnessed, for example, by the foundation in the 1940s of the Fulbright Program, aimed at promoting an international climate for communication and trust.<sup>28</sup>

As was anticipated in the first chapter, in latter years, study abroad programs have been further favored by economic and social changes at a global level. Study abroad has been thus transformed from an opportunity reserved to a cultural elite to a phenomenon which, if not for mass consumption, is at least widespread enough, diversifying itself in terms of location, realms of study and length of program.

Even if many of the original motivations remain valid, motivations which lie at the root of the birth of the first North American study abroad programs, it is also true that these, today, answer to requirements that are not strictly academic and intellectual, including aspects related to entertainment, leisure, or even generic curiosity about other places, persons, habits and ways of life, aspects which, to a certain degree, bring closer together the phenomena of study abroad and leisure tourism, where the tourist is, first of all, a "client" and a "consumer," even if his or her interests are often oriented to searching for emotions, stimuli and ideas, with important implications from the psychological point of view and for the cultural and human growth of the individual.

### **2.1.1 A Growing Phenomenon**

The last twenty years have seen a growth in the participation of North American students in study abroad programs. Following the terrorist attacks of 2001 suffered by the United States and the consequent global reorganization, the demand for training of an international and multicultural nature, one aimed at understanding global complexities, has become ever more intense and urgent, to the detriment of those attitudes of mistrust and closure to which such events might have given rise.

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<sup>28</sup> The Fulbright Program was founded in 1946, and it was the result of a bill in November 1945 introduced by Senator J. William Fulbright from the State of Arkansas; it became law when it was signed by the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman.



The actions of institutional bodies like the American Council on Education and the Abraham Lincoln Commission<sup>29</sup> have elicited greater investment of economic and human resources in study abroad programs, leading to a significant increase in new courses and enrolled participants.

The main goals for investment in international training of North American universities can be included in the following:<sup>30</sup>

1. developing a citizenry and a labor force that is globally competent;
2. improving the nation's ability to affront and solve global challenges;
3. training several international experts able to align themselves to strategic needs;
4. increasing participation in study abroad programs of quality;
5. diversifying study abroad destinations, especially in developing countries;
6. internationalizing North American post-secondary education by placing study abroad as the cornerstone of undergraduate training.

The Final Report of the Abraham Lincoln Commission on Study Abroad Programs (2005) indicated as a goal to be achieved by Academic Year 2016-2017 the movement of one million American students each year involved in study abroad, increasing, above all, the number of students enrolled in courses at the undergraduate level.<sup>31</sup> This goal then was seen as highly ambitious, and today as completely unrealistic, but it is representative of the will to support strongly a phenomenon which is considered basic to the education of young Americans, a fact also reflected in policies, like the creation of new scholarships (such as the Lincoln Award) and the inclusion of study abroad programs among the requirements for certain courses of study.

Figure 2.1 shows data for American students abroad relative to the period 1993-2011.<sup>32</sup> As can be noted, the number of students who pass a period of study outside the USA has almost tripled; in the last year, students abroad were 273,996, increasing with respect to the previous year by 1.3%.

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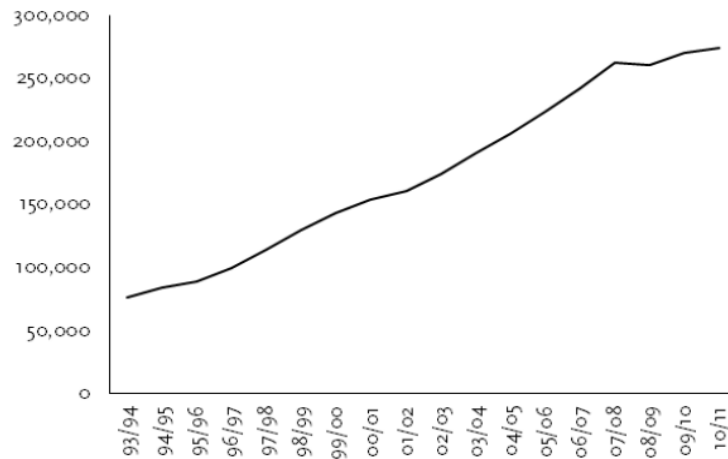
<sup>29</sup> American Council on Education (2003) and Abraham Lincoln Commission (2005).

<sup>30</sup> These goals are indicated, in part, on pp. 9-10 of the document of the American Council on Education (2002) and, in part, on pp. xi-xii of the Final Report of the Abraham Lincoln Commission (2005).

<sup>31</sup> Abraham Lincoln Commission (2005), pp. vii-viii.

<sup>32</sup> Open Doors data on U.S. study abroad furnished by the Institute of International Education (IIE), 2012.

Figure 2.1  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
 TREND



Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

In this figure, one can note two moments when growth slowed, and both of these can be put in correspondence to two important international events.

The first dip occurs in the years 2001-2003, following the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, which happened on 11 September 2001.

The second dip in the straight line corresponds to the period 2007-2009, and it is, presumably, to be accredited to the effects of the economic-financial crisis, which erupted precisely during those years in the United States.

These observations suggest that there is a connection between the flow of students outside the USA and international events: less economic and physical safety as perceived by American families leads to understandable attitudes of closure and saving of resources. Notwithstanding these two instances of slowdown, the trend towards growth in North American study abroad programs has shown substantial continuity. If one compares these data with those related to American tourism in general,<sup>33</sup> one notes that academic tourism shows even greater growth. From 1990 to 2010, the number of American tourists whose destinations were overseas doubled, going from around 16 million to 30 million persons. The number of students in American programs abroad, on the other hand, as shown in the table, has almost tripled in a shorter length of time (1994-2011).

Looking more closely, however, the growth of the phenomenon is, yes, continuous, but it presents a rate of increase among the different years that is not

<sup>33</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (2011).

constant and even tends to decrease, but this probably also is due to the impact of the economic crisis.

Therefore, if a slowing of the phenomenon’s expansion over the last years can be, without a doubt, traced to the influence of the global economic crisis which has developed from 2008 until today, it seems clear that future scenarios, no matter how positive, can be constructed based on the repetition of dynamics that today seem “exceptional” and that characterized the 1990s and part of the decade which has already passed.

Finally, one must consider that the growing number of students involved in study abroad is associated with a reduction in the average length of those programs, because of the redistribution of students into programs that are shorter and require less economic commitment, as will be seen in greater depth in Section 2.1.4. In certain respects (the economic impact, but not only that), the shorter length of the programs compensates for the larger number of departures and/or of students involved.

### 2.1.2 Prevalent Characteristics of the American University Student Abroad

Table 2.1 shows a net prevalence of feminine students in study abroad programs, which is around 65%, while the male student participation stops at about 35%. This relationship is constant over time, not undergoing significant variation, despite a weak closure of the gap between these two percentages over the last years taken into consideration.

Table 2.1  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
GENDER (PERCENTAGE DATA)

Gender	Year		
	2000-2001	2005-2006	2010-2011
Feminine %	65.0	65.5	64.4
Masculine %	35.0	34.5	35.6

Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

The consistent feminine presence, equal to almost 2/3 of American university students abroad, can be partially explained by the greater number of female enrollments in social and humanistic areas,<sup>34</sup> which, as we will see, are those most involved in the phenomenon of study abroad.

<sup>34</sup> Diverse research in the field of studies of gender shows that areas such as the social sciences, psychology and anthropology and humanistic and language studies attract a higher percentage of feminine enrollments. That can be seen, for example, in the results of the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) 2010, performed by the National

Table 2.2  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
 RACE/ETHNIC GROUP (PERCENTAGE DATA)

Race/Ethnic Group	Year		
	2000-2001	2005-2006	2010-2011
White	84.3	83.0	77.8
Asian or native Hawaiian	5.4	6.3	7.9
Hispanic or Latin	5.4	5.4	6.9
Black or Afro-American	3.5	3.5	4.8
Multi-racial	0.9	1.2	2.1
Native American or Alaskan	0.5	0.6	0.5

Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

As far as the ethnic group to which one belongs, Table 2.2 shows that the great majority of American students who go abroad are white. During the time under analysis, nevertheless, a rather significant decline can be noted in that preponderance, from 84.3% in the year 2000-2001 to 77.8% in 2010-2011, fostering a greater share among the various groups.

The second ethnic group is Asiatics, with a percentage that has increased from 5.4% to 7.9%. Third and fourth, respectively, are the Hispanic-Latin group, which rose in 2010-2011 to 6.9% and that of Blacks and Afro-Americans, which reached, instead, 4.8%. In the decade under analysis, the percentage of students of mixed or multi-racial ethnicity doubled, from 0.9% to 2.1%, while the percentage of Native American students has remained fixed at around 0.5%.

Interpretation of this data should be associated with an overall analysis of the United States student world, but the fact certainly cannot be excluded that study abroad still suffers from a “socio-economic bias,” due to having to bear the expense foreseen for programs abroad, which could be a barrier for disadvantaged classes and ethnic groups.

For this reason, implementing what is contained in the second recommendation proposed by the Final Report of the Lincoln Commission,<sup>35</sup> universities and public institutions have committed themselves to fostering greater diversity in the ethnic and social groups to which students abroad belong.

The goal is to make it such that the demographic data of students involved in study abroad programs reflect as faithfully as possible that of the undergraduate student population. This can be pursued, for example, by using scholarships and

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Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) and available at the site, <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/>.

<sup>35</sup> Abraham Lincoln Commission (2005), p. xi.

other forms of economic support dedicated to the more disadvantaged ethnic groups.

The degree of training of the North American students involved in study abroad programs shows a prevalence of lower levels and a decrease in the percentage as the area of study becomes more advanced. This data reflects, moreover, the general data regarding enrollments in North American institutions, which show a progressive narrowing in the number of those enrolled when one goes from courses at a lower level to those at a higher level.

Table 2.3 records data related to the single American student abroad, subdivided into the various years that characterize post-secondary training in the United States.

Table 2.3  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
ACADEMIC LEVEL (PERCENTAGE DATA)

<b>Academic Level</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
Junior	38.9	34.2	35.8
Senior	20.0	19.8	23.4
Sophomore	14.0	12.8	12.6
Bachelor's, Unspecified	13.5	14.9	10.3
Master's Students	4.5	4.8	8.5
Freshman	3.1	3.7	3.3
Graduate, Unspecified	3.1	3.0	2.1
Graduate, Professional	-	1.8	2.3
Doctoral Students	0.7	0.4	0.6
Associate's Students	0.9	2.7	0.2
Other Academic Level	1.1	1.9	0.9

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

In this division into sub-categories, one can note the net prevalence of students who belong to the undergraduate level, both regarding the graduate level of specialist training and, above all, with respect to the research doctorate level. Besides the fact that the undergraduate student population of North American universities is much greater than the others, there are other factors that conspire in defining this situation.

The kind of education corresponding to the undergraduate level seems to be more suitable for inserting one or more periods of study abroad. The degree of academic specialization required is, in fact, less and allows movement for studies of a more general nature.

At the same time, there is more tolerance for any retard in the granting of the degree, allowing students to affront the study abroad experience with more serenity, including the acceptance of leisure time.

Specialized training and research, instead, require higher academic standards; for this reason, even study abroad programs dedicated to them are more specific and demanding, involving, consequently, a more reduced number of students.

Study abroad programs move, with different percentages, students from all the disciplines offered by North American universities. The larger number of enrollments, as can be seen in Table 2.4, are in the areas of social and economic studies, which account for approximately 22% and 20%, respectively. This figure can be explained by the fact that, in these areas, an international level of competence and a mastery of intercultural skills are more desirable, as we said in the first chapter. Often, in fact, study abroad programs are required in the degree programs themselves in order to incentivize the international mobility of those enrolled.

Table 2.4  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
 AREA OF STUDY (PERCENTAGE DATA)

Area of Study	Year		
	2000-2001	2005-2006	2010-2011
Social Sciences	20.3	21.7	22.9
Business & Management	18.1	17.7	20.5
Humanistic Studies	14.5	14.2	11.3
Arts and Crafts	8.5	7.5	8.2
Physical or Biological Sciences	7.1	6.9	7.9
Foreign Languages	8.2	7.8	5.6
Medicine and Health	3.2	3.8	5.3
Education	4.4	4.1	4.2
Engineering	2.7	2.9	3.5
Mathematics and Computer Science	2.0	1.5	1.8
Agriculture	1.6	1.3	1.3
Not Stated	4.5	3.4	2.7
Other	4.9	7.2	4.8

Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

Third place is occupied by studies in the humanistic area, with a percentage of about 12%. In this case, the explanation can be due to the importance of direct knowledge of various cultures and traditions offered by the experience of study abroad.

Those disciplines which follow in the table come from the artistic area and that of the physical or biological sciences, with percentages of around 7-8%. A figure that may be lower than what might be expected regards that of study of foreign languages, which, in 2010-2011, tapped only 5.6% of the students and constitutes the area of study with the worst performance in the last ten years, despite the basic importance of experience abroad for the development of language skills.

Lesser percentages, finally, are achieved by scientific disciplines, such as Engineering (around 3.5%), Mathematics and Computer Science (from 1.5 to

1.8%) and Agriculture (about 1.3%). These data can be attributed both to the smaller number of individuals enrolled in these areas, and to the greater specialization required, which penalizes the possibility of finding a suitable study abroad program.

In summary, the IIE data suggest uniformity in the distribution of students by area of study in the interval of time 2000-2011. One can observe, however, slightly less participation in courses in the humanistic and linguistic disciplines, in favor of programs specialized in economic areas, in medicine and in engineering.

### 2.1.3 Leading Destinations

As far as the destination chosen by the North American student for the stay abroad, the first places in terms of continent go to Europe, Latin America and Asia, followed by Africa, Oceania and the rest of the world.

As indicated in Table 2.5, which only regards American students, Europe is confirmed as the main region by number of students, and it shows an increase of 3.3% over the preceding year, while all the other areas, with the exception of the Middle East (+0.8%), show negative indices.

Table 2.5

DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
LEADING REGIONS

Hosting Region	2009-2010		2010-2011		Percentage Change
	Total	%	Total	%	
Africa	14,738	5.5	14,087	5.1	-4.4
Asia	32,340	12.0	32,081	11.7	-0.8
Europe	144,840	53.5	149,663	54.6	3.3
Latin America	40,649	15.0	39,871	14.6	-1.9
Middle East	4,959	1.8	4,997	1.8	0.8
North America	1,899	0.7	1,555	0.6	-18.1
Oceania	13,566	5.0	13,156	4.8	-3.0
Antarctica	65	0.0	37	0.0	-43.1
Multiple	17,548	6.5	18,549	6.8	5.7
Total	270,604	100	273,996	100	1.3

Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

Returning to a comparison of the data of academic tourism with those of overall American tourism overseas, one can see that Europe has, first of all, a weight that is far greater. Of the about 30 million American tourists directed beyond the American continent in 2009, a little more than one third, or 10,635,000 people, chose European destinations.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Commerce (2011).

As for American students going abroad, instead, the preceding table shows that, in the same period, Europe represented the preferred destination of more than 50% of the young people.

This figure should be linked, in large part, to the strong attraction European capitals have for young North Americans, because of the historical and cultural heritage they represent for Western society. Travel for training on the “old continent,” as was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, has become, in American public opinion, a point of reference for the education of youth and almost a cultural status symbol.

Another determining factor in the choice of destination is the safety that it offers to students visiting it. Those areas are privileged that are seen as more secure and stable, among which, for example, is the European continent, while areas are less attractive that demonstrate conditions leading to political and social instability or that are involved in the threat, real or only perceived, of international terrorism.

If one analyzes the data regarding the distribution of students by individual country, as in Table 2.6, Europe is confirmed in its leading position in the classification of destination countries, with 4 European nations among the first 5 (United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and France) and 14 among the first 25 (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6  
DISTRIBUTION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ABROAD  
THE FIRST 25 LEADING DESTINATIONS

Rank	Country	2009-2010	2010-2011	% of Total	Variation Over a Two-Year Period (%)
1	United Kingdom	32,683	33,782	12.1	1.5
2	Italy	27,940	30,361	11.1	8.7
3	Spain	25,411	25,965	9.5	2.2
4	France	17,161	17,019	6.2	-0.8
5	China	13,910	14,596	5.3	4.9
6	Australia	9,962	9,736	3.6	-2.3
7	Germany	8,551	9,018	3.3	5.5
8	Costa Rica	6,262	7,230	2.6	3.1
9	Ireland	6,798	7,007	2.6	3.1
10	Argentina	4,835	4,589	1.7	-5.1
11	India	3,884	4,345	1.6	11.9
12	South Africa	4,313	4,337	1.6	0.6
13	Mexico	7,157	4,167	1.5	-41.8
14	Japan	6,166	4,134	1.5	-33.0
15	Brazil	3,099	3,485	1.3	12.5
16	Israel	3,146	3,441	1.3	9.4
17	Greece	3,700	3,428	1.3	-7.4
18	Czech Republic	3,409	3,291	1.2	-3.5
19	Chile	3,115	3,280	1.2	5.3
20	Ecuador	2,960	3,107	1.1	5.0
21	New Zealand	3,113	2,900	1.1	-6.8



<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Variation Over a Two-Year Period (%)</b>
22	Austria	2,701	2,736	1.0	1.3
23	South Korea	2,137	2,487	0.9	16.4
24	Denmark	2,228	2,478	0.9	11.2
25	Holland	2,369	2,467	0.9	4.1

Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

First place, held by the United Kingdom, which attracts a percentage of around 12% of the total number of American students abroad, may be due to several factors.

First of all, language affinity plays a key role, facilitating study, participation in classes and exams and favoring relationships with other persons. The importance of linguistic closeness is also demonstrated by the good position of other English-speaking countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa.

Besides sharing the same language, there are a series of historical-cultural affinities in the Anglo-Saxon world which reduce the difficulties in cultural adaptation and the emotional impact of the North American student on study visits.

Among these affinities, one should underscore that there is a structure which is not dissimilar in the academic systems and qualifications, which facilitate the organization of the study abroad programs with respect to the time involved, training requirements and means of evaluation and assignment of credits.

The second position is occupied by Italy, with only one percentage point less with respect to the United Kingdom (11%). This is significant, united to a growth of 8.7% in the last academic year surveyed, which has notably reduced the gap with the first position.

Three aspects especially should be underscored regarding the Italian figures:

1. Italy attracted about 1,300 students more than the United Kingdom did, reducing the gap in enrollments (from -4,743 to -3,421).
2. With the exception of Denmark, whose position in the market of influxes remains, nevertheless, marginal (24th position, 2,478 students), Italy is the European country with the largest rate of growth and considerably outdistances its competitors in the Mediterranean area, such as Spain, France and Greece.
3. Better than Italy, besides the aforementioned Denmark, are only those countries characterized by economic growth, such as South Korea (+16.4%), Costa Rica (+15.5%), Brazil (+12.5%) and India (+11.9%). These, however, are countries that start from a very low level of attendance by American students; narrowing the field to the first seven positions in the classification, no country comes close to the results achieved in Italy.

According to the international classification drawn up by the Country Brand Index 2012-2013, our country holds first place, both in the section relating to tourism, and in that relating to cultural heritage. The areas in which Italy excels are art, culture, history, and wine and food, in which it holds first place, and attractions and shopping, where it is, instead, third.<sup>37</sup>

The great attractiveness of Italian leisure tourism is also reflected in its ability to recall the more niche tourism of study abroad, above all in humanistic and artistic-cultural areas. In this, Italy surpasses its direct European competitors, France and Spain, nations of the Mediterranean region noted for their important historic and cultural patrimony regarding humanistic and artistic disciplines. Then one notes the ability to attract students of the so-called BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which are undergoing strong economic growth and where, with the exclusion of Russia, they occupy 5th place (China), 11th and 12th place (India and South Africa) and 15th place (Brazil).

The other positions in this classification are shared among other countries of the European area (Ireland, Greece, the Czech Republic, Austria, Denmark and Holland), countries in the Anglo-Saxon area (Australia and New Zealand), countries in the South American area (Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Ecuador) and countries in the Asian area (Japan and South Korea), confirming the global perspective of the study abroad phenomenon.

#### **2.1.4 Tendencies by Type and Length of Program**

Then, it is interesting to analyze the participation of North American students in programs abroad on the basis of the kind and the duration of the programs themselves.

The graph in Figure 2.2 shows how, in Academic Year 2010-2011, more than half of the American students abroad - 58.1% precisely - attended short-term programs, while 38% of the students were enrolled in mid-length programs, and only 3.9% chose to attend long-term programs.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> FutureBrand, "2012-13."

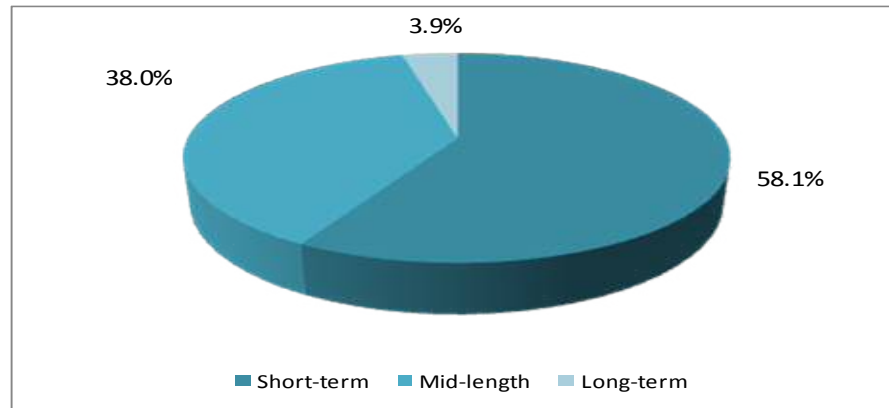
<sup>38</sup> Classification of the programs according to their duration must be interpreted as follows:

Short-term: summer term and programs of 8 weeks or less.

Mid-length: one or two quarters, or one semester.

Long-term: an academic, or solar, year.

Figure 2.2  
ATTENDANCE IN PROGRAMS BY KIND OF DURATION  
YEAR 2010-2011 (PERCENTAGE DATA)



Source: IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

It is important to note that these data are in keeping with the historic series treated in the following table, in which participation in study abroad programs is considered, distinguishing them by duration. What results is a significant increase in short-term programs and a discrete holding of ground for mid-length programs, while programs of study that last a year have almost halved (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7  
ATTENDANCE IN PROGRAMS BY KIND OF DURATION  
TREND 2000-2011 (PERCENTAGE DATA)

Duration of the Program		2000-2001	2002-2003	2004-2005	2006-2007	2008-2009	2010-2011
Short-Term	Summer Term	33.7	32.7	37.2	38.7	35.8	37.7
	8 Weeks or Less	7.4	9.4	8.0	9.8	11.7	13.3
	January Term	7.0	5.6	6.0	6.8	7.0	7.1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>48.1</i>	<i>47.7</i>	<i>51.2</i>	<i>55.3</i>	<i>54.5</i>	<i>58.1</i>
Mid-Length	1 Semester	38.5	40.3	37.5	36.3	37.3	34.5
	1 Quarter	4.1	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.0
	2 Quarters	0.6	0.4	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.5
	<i>Total</i>	<i>43.2</i>	<i>44.5</i>	<i>42.1</i>	<i>40.2</i>	<i>41.1</i>	<i>38</i>

Duration of the Program		2000-2001	2002-2003	2004-2005	2006-2007	2008-2009	2010-2011
Long-Term	1 Academic Year	7.3	6.7	6.0	4.3	4.1	3.7
	1 Calendar Year	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Other	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.1
	<i>Total</i>	8.7	7.8	6.7	4.5	4.4	3.9
Total		154,168	174,629	205,983	241,791	260,327	273,996

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from IIE, Open Doors 2012, Fast Facts.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of study abroad, with its growth and spread (even if with a growth rate that is increasingly slow), has also undergone various transformations of a structural and qualitative nature: a supply that is ever more varied in terms of subject matter and areas of study, the choice of new locations/countries and, above all, the reduction in the average length of stay abroad, always with more weight assumed by short-term programs.

If the economic crisis can explain, in part, this alteration and this preference for short programs through less financial commitment on the part of the families, the changes underway seem due to deeper and more structural factors, which push study abroad in a direction where aspects that are strictly technical and academic reduce in importance. On the increase, instead, are those motivations that grab hold of the emotional and experiential sphere,<sup>39</sup> such as those aspects linked exclusively to leisure, to entertainment and to interaction, since these elements contribute to making study abroad a unique and unrepeatable experience, one which is not necessarily, however, carried out in a single spot over the academic life of an individual. Students can thus take advantage, as well, of opportunities for short programs and summer school to gratify their own interest in multiculturalism and the exotic, bringing together academic training and enjoyment, without too many long-term ties and commitments. The experience of study abroad becomes, therefore, above all a time for breaking with routines of study at the home university, one where one is open to new cultures, to enjoying oneself and to getting to know new people.

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<sup>39</sup> In the approach of experiential tourism, the individual-tourist is not perceived as a simple consumer of goods and services, but as a subject looking for emotional elements that allow living experiences to be recalled and narrated. The touristic visit thus becomes a moment for affirming the individual in his or her own interests and passions, in which the land and the socio-cultural context acquire a very important role in the stimulation of all five senses of the person.

### **3. North American University Programs in Italy: Data from the IRPET-AACUPI Survey**

The present chapter analyzes the data relative to study abroad programs organized by North American universities and colleges that are members of AACUPI (Association of American College and University Programs in Italy).

Information made available by AACUPI has been complemented by two direct surveys (one for the programs and the other for students enrolled), as well as by some telephone interviews with experts and privileged observers.

Paragraph 3.1 provides the framework of the activities of the North American programs in Italy, both in terms of the number of programs and the number of students, as well as for that which concerns some organizational and didactic aspects (for example, operational headquarters, academic level, amount of enrollments, teaching corps, etc.). The data analyzed refer to Calendar Year 2012.<sup>40</sup>

Paragraph 3.2, instead, offers a portrait of the North American student in Italy, as emerged using a sample of 1,279 students. Besides providing indications regarding the gender, age and academic category of the courses taken, analysis of the answers provided by the students has also allowed an investigation of aspects regarding individual motivation, life-style, spending habits, and social interaction, as well as the educational and psychological impact of the experience of study abroad in Italy which North American students have.

#### **3.1 The Program Survey**

##### **3.1.1 Number of Programs and Students**

The first experience of an American institution that provides a course of study in Italy goes back to the 19th century, with the establishment of the American Academy in Rome, an institution which, based on the models of the other English and French academies in Rome, offered training that was highly specialized to a reduced number of already successful scholars.

With the exception of Smith College in Florence, which opened in 1931, the study programs of North American universities and institutes began to spread throughout Italy only from the post-World War II period onwards.

The phenomenon intensified even more in the 1990s. In 1989, the number of institutes associated with AACUPI was 51; but by 2001 this had already reached

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<sup>40</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the reconstructed framework refers to Calendar Year 2012, which goes from January 2012 to December 2012; these data are the basis of the evaluation of the economic impact presented in the following chapter.

76. Today, the colleges and universities that have study programs in Italy and are members of AACUPI are 148.<sup>41</sup>

This increase, while continuous, has not been homogenous, alternating with phases which saw periods of slow-down in the dynamic.<sup>42</sup> In 2012, the growth trend was positive, and there did not seem to be any external conditions which could lead, over the short haul, to a fall in the attraction of Italy for North American academic tourism.<sup>43</sup>

From the analysis performed, one sees that the presence of North American programs in Italy is strongly concentrated in Rome and Florence, cities which, by tradition, history and endowment in terms of works of art and monuments, constitute symbols of the artistic-cultural heritage of Italy (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1  
THE CONCENTRATION OF UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS IN ROME AND FLORENCE  
YEAR 2012 (PERCENTAGE DATA)

	<b>% of Total</b>
Rome	34
Florence	24
Other	42
Total	100

Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

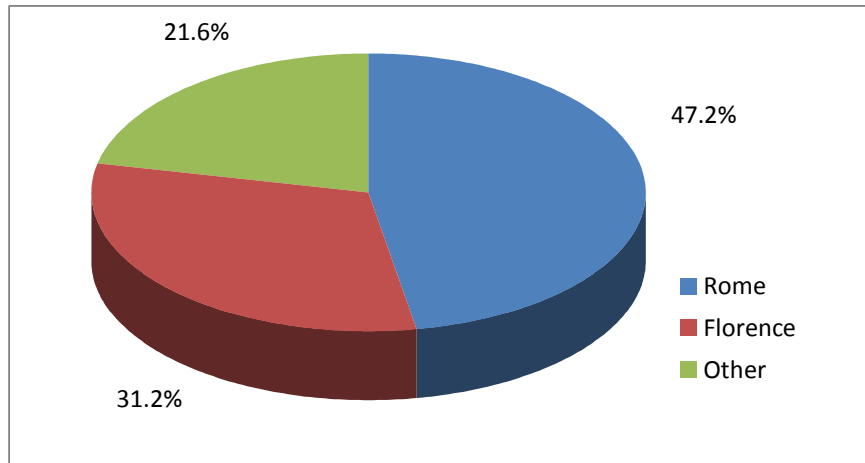
These dynamics of concentration are even more marked if one considers the number of students received by the programs:<sup>44</sup> in 2012, Rome and Florence received almost 80% of the total number of those enrolled (Figure 3.1).

<sup>41</sup> AACUPI groups together programs from universities in America, Canada and Australia: among these, there is also Monash University in Prato, the international study center of the Australian university of the same name. In keeping with the objectives of this research, which is focused on North American students in Italy, data related to Monash University were not considered when processing the data of this survey.

<sup>42</sup> In particular, the world-wide economic crisis of the 1980s and the threat of Islamic terrorism shown openly by the attack of the Twin Towers in New York in September, 2001, provoked a momentary slow-down in the supply of programs and the flow of American students into Italy.

<sup>43</sup> We would recall that, according to the data provided by IIE, in the two-year period from 2009-2011, the presence of American students in Italy grew by 8.7% (Table 2.6).

Figure 3.1  
THE CONCENTRATION OF UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS IN ROME AND  
FLORENCE  
NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY CITY, YEAR 2012



Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

Inevitably, the concentration of programs into two main destinations also influences the regional distribution: Latium and Tuscany, in fact, received more than 80% of the students enrolled in study programs associated with AACUPI in 2012.

The following table presents the distribution by region of the number of students (Table 3.2): the framework thus reconstructed is to be considered as sufficiently exhaustive and it constituted the reference basis for calculating the economic impact that can be ascribed to the students.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> For a small number of students, it was not possible to identify the place in which they stayed during their period in Italy: these are young people enrolled in programs that do not have a single location in Italy or that rely on Italian or North American institutes and universities. Even though the information in our possession did not allow one to evaluate them with certainty, it can be hypothesized that these students are distributed proportionally as indicated for the individual Italian regions.

Table 3.2  
 NUMBER OF NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PROGRAMS  
 IN ITALY  
 DISTRIBUTION BY REGION, YEAR 2012

	<b>Spring Term 2011-2012</b>	<b>Summer Term 2011-2012</b>	<b>Fall Term 2012-2013</b>	<b>Total</b>
Piedmont	133	156	127	416
Tuscany	2,639	1,518	2,262	6,419
Veneto	206	436	153	795
Lombardy	184	25	150	359
Marche	20	37	46	103
Umbria	206	141	111	458
Liguria	20	12	34	66
Latium	3,721	1,852	3,348	8,921
Emilia Romagna	402	37	390	829
Campania	49	5	53	107
In Italy, but not locatable	116	96	106	318
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,696</b>	<b>4,315</b>	<b>6,780</b>	<b>18,791</b>

Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

In Calendar Year 2012, just short of 19,000 American students took part in study abroad programs associated with AACUPI; the larger part of these students (about 77%) participated in semester-length programs (for which an average duration of around 15 weeks has been assumed), while the remaining share took part in short-term programs and summer schools, whose average duration is 30 days. Programs for a semester term obviously had more value in terms of the presence of students in Italy, and this fact, as a result, influences the economic impact that can be ascribed to the phenomenon.

While the excellent placement of Latium in terms of the number of students is almost entirely due to the volume of attendees recorded in Rome, in Tuscany, the good results of places like Siena, Arezzo, Cortona and Lucca are to be added to those, already excellent, of Florence, thus pointing to the attractiveness of the region overall.

The attraction of the cities and of the regions which have notable artistic-cultural heritage is linked to the area of the disciplines offered by the programs founded.

Although the current survey in no way specifically and punctually investigated aspects related to the subjects taught, the interviews conducted among some privileged observers confirmed that Italy exists as a specialization in the humanistic, historic-cultural and artistic disciplines. Having said that, it also discloses the fact that, for Italy, there is a tendency to present one's didactic



offering as more diversified, as one that can present study courses in different disciplines alongside those programs that are more traditional.

As far as the amount spent to enroll in each program, the average cost per student for one semester is around 18,600 US dollars.

The following table, in which only those programs that offer semester courses are considered, indicates that the greater part of the programs, almost 44%, fall within a band of cost that goes from 15,000 to 20,000 US dollars (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3  
COST OF ENROLLMENT (IN US DOLLARS) PER SEMESTER  
PERCENTAGE VALUES

Amount Due	% of Total
Up to US\$10,000	9.4
From US\$10,001 to US\$15,000	18.0
From US\$15,001 to US\$20,000	43.8
From US\$20,001 to US\$25,000	18.0
More than US\$25,000	10.8
Total	100.0

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Institutes.

### 3.1.2 Features of the Programs: Results of the Direct Survey

The data presented here are the result of a direct survey conducted on the North American programs associated with AACUPI.<sup>46</sup> This survey was carried out by means of a questionnaire aimed at study abroad program directors in Italy that are affiliated with AACUPI. The responses received (51) were afterwards complemented thanks to data made available by the AACUPI archives and by means of further research conducted on the Internet sites of the North American universities and in the pages dedicated to study abroad programs.

The study abroad programs in the sample taken under consideration were, prevalently, undergraduate level courses. If one looks at Table 3.4, one sees that they represent all of 75% of the total: this fact confirms that what was said in the previous chapter regarding study abroad programs in general remains true for Italy.

First of all, in fact, undergraduate programs seem to be favored by a combination of organizational and didactic motivations (courses of a more general nature, greater availability of students for spending periods abroad, less specialization needed for faculty, etc.). Secondly, one can hypothesize that they represent a choice which is cheaper for the institutes, given the large number of students enrolled in undergraduate courses, compared to those of a higher academic level. The greater specialization of graduate or PhD programs, in fact, generally attracts a smaller number of participants.

<sup>46</sup> The survey was carried out using a questionnaire sent to all the institutes associated with AACUPI. The answers received were 51, equal to about 1/3 of the members.

Table 3.4  
PROGRAMS BY TEACHING LEVEL

Level	Frequency (in the Sample)	Percentage (Overall)
Undergraduate	39	75.0
Graduate/PhD	3	5.8
Both*	10	19.2
Total	52	100

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Institutes.

\* These are programs which cannot be attributed to a specific level because they offer courses that are both undergraduate and graduate or PhD.

The prevalence of programs at the undergraduate level influences, obviously, the average age of those enrolled in the programs, as confirmed by the survey aimed at the students.

As for the staff employed, on average the realization of a study program in Italy requires 12.9 people in the teaching area and 6.2 people in other areas. Part of the overall staff, both teaching and non-teaching, comes from North America (Table 3.5).

The need for faculty members, whether on the undergraduate level or at the graduate and PhD level, is predominantly filled by individuals hired part-time. Presumably, this fact can be attributed to the organizational needs of the programs: the short duration (programs which last longer reach, on average, 15 weeks) and the multiplicity of the subjects taught, which do not favor, indeed, hiring at full time.

Non-teaching staff, however, probably being less exposed to these factors, shows a larger number of full time hirings.

Table 3.5  
STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMS:  
AVERAGE NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS AND STAFF, BY  
ACADEMIC LEVEL

Academic Level	Number of Faculty			Non-Teaching Staff			Faculty/ Staff from the USA or Canada
	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	
Undergraduate	1.5	10.1	11.6	3.4	1.0	4.4	2.4
Graduate/PhD*	3.6	2.3	5.9	26.3	1.3	27.6	6.6

Academic Level	Number of Faculty			Non-Teaching Staff			Faculty/ Staff from the USA or Canada
	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	
Both	4.7	15.5	20.2	7.2	2.4	9.6	10.1
General Average**	2.3	10.6	12.9	4.9	1.3	6.2	3.7

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Institutes.

\* Data regarding those programs that offer courses at the graduate or PhD level are influenced by the calculations from Johns Hopkins University, which is structured as a true and proper American university in Italy and not as a traditional study abroad program.

\*\* In calculating the general average, the data regarding Johns Hopkins University were not considered.

The direct survey shows that 75% of the institutes state that they provide lodging to the students and/or faculty members who come from the USA or Canada. This is a significant figure, particularly regarding the economic impact that can be attributed to study abroad programs in Italy. This implies, in fact, the need to find housing that is available in the pre-chosen towns, even though part of the institutes, equal to 17.6%, state that they own property that can be used for didactic and administrative purposes or to house students.

### 3.2 The Student Survey

The student survey was carried out by means of a questionnaire given to those enrolled in study abroad programs in Italy from November, 2012, to March, 2013.<sup>47</sup>

This questionnaire, besides collecting general data about the student (home institution, program chosen, academic level and destination), investigates the motivations which led to the choice of study abroad, the quality and lifestyle (including the cost of stay), recreational activities and social interactions during the time spent abroad.

Finally, space was left for evaluation of the experience on the part of the student him- or herself, lingering especially on its educational and psychological impact.

#### 3.2.1 Vital Statistics

The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire administered to the students allows, first of all, a characterization by vital statistics of what kind of student enrolls in programs affiliated with AACUPI.

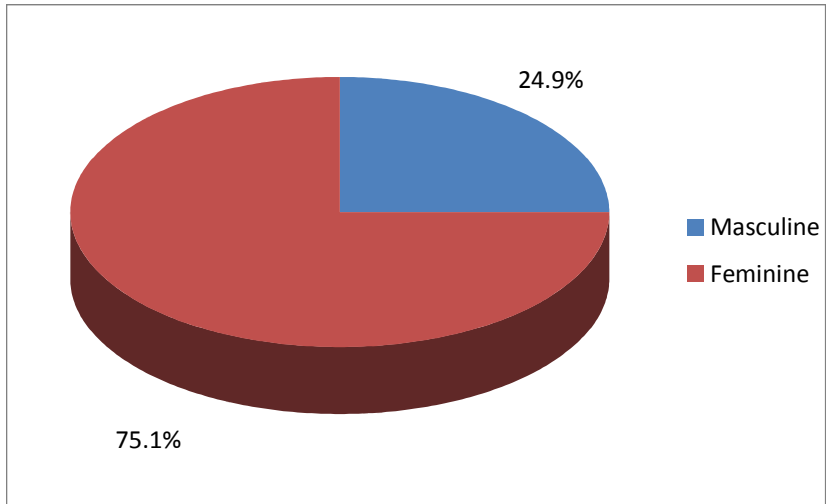
Relative to gender, the percentages reflect, rather faithfully, the data on American students abroad in general, as seen earlier. There is, in fact, a net

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<sup>47</sup> The sample thus obtained consists of 1,279 overall replies. The number of replies that could be used for the purposes of the survey varies in the various sections of the questionnaire, as indicated in the figures and tables contained in this paragraph.

predominance of feminine students (75%), slightly higher than the general figure (65%). It can be hypothesized that this fact can be accounted for, at least in part, by the attraction our country holds for study programs in cultural and artistic areas, in which, as was said, feminine enrollments represent the majority.

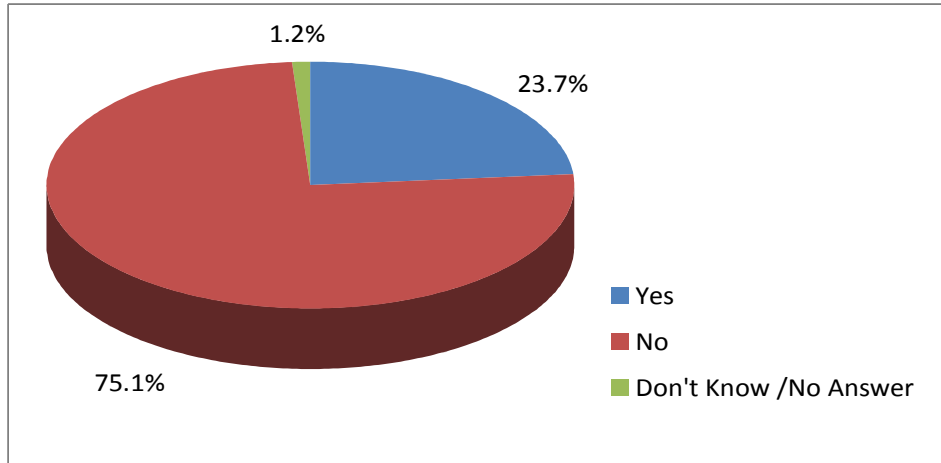
Figure 3.2  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013  
GENDER



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,277.

As one can notice in the graph shown in Figure 3.3, a significant percentage of the students declare that they come from a family of Italian origin. For about 1/4 of the participants in the programs, the experience of studying in Italy also represents, therefore, an occasion for deeper knowledge of one's own origin and the traditions linked to it, and often to maintaining relations with relatives who are Italian nationals.

Figure 3.3  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013  
ITALIAN ORIGIN

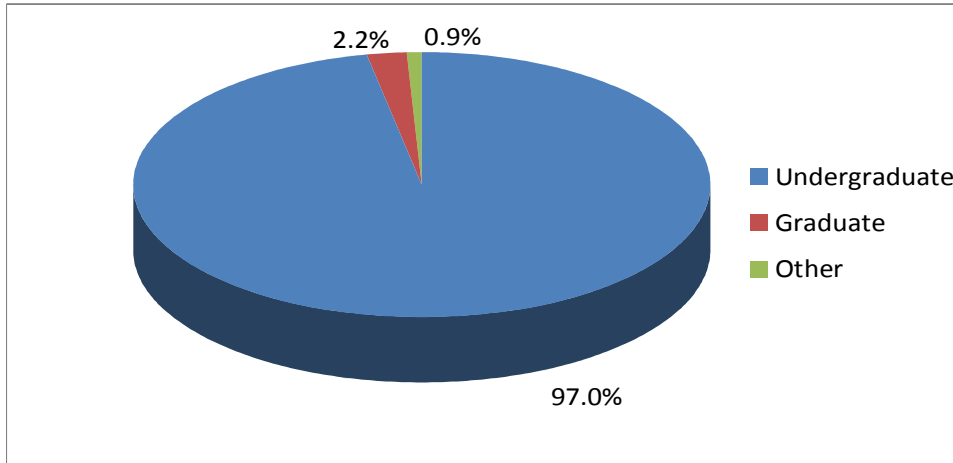


Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,279.

The greater presence of programs aimed at the undergraduate level, observed in the previous paragraph, is translated into a subdivision of the students by academic level that is very unbalanced. In the graph in Figure 3.4, one sees, in fact, that students belonging to the undergraduate level represent 97% of the sample, leaving only 3 percentage points for the other categories of students (graduate, PhD and other).

As was revealed earlier, among those factors contributing to the creation of this situation, there is the greater academic specialization at higher levels, which require a limited number of students; undergraduate programs, instead, are generally more accessible, allowing for much greater numbers of enrollments.

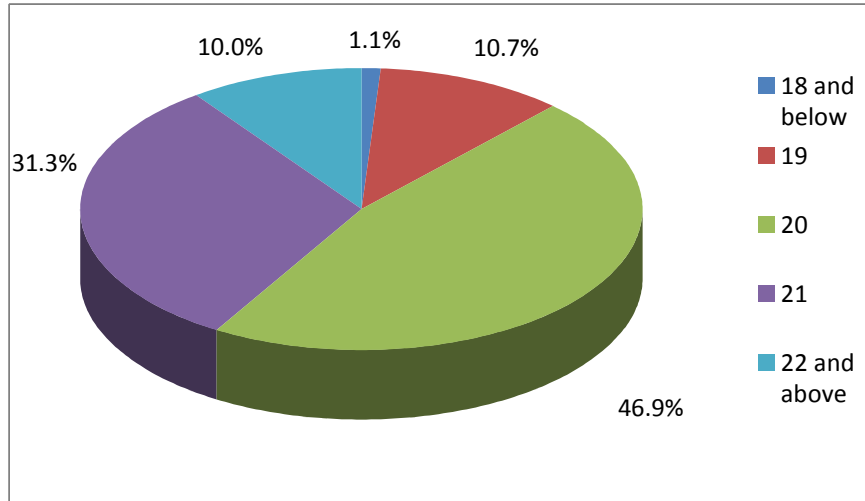
Figure 3.4  
 STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013  
 ACADEMIC LEVEL



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
 Number of Responses: 1,279.

The division of students by academic level naturally corresponds to figures regarding the age of participants in the programs. If one observes Figure 3.5, which shows the division of North American students in Italy by age group, one notes, in fact, that the greater part belong to the group that corresponds to post-secondary education at the undergraduate level, or from 18 to 22 years of age.

Figure 3.5  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013  
AGE



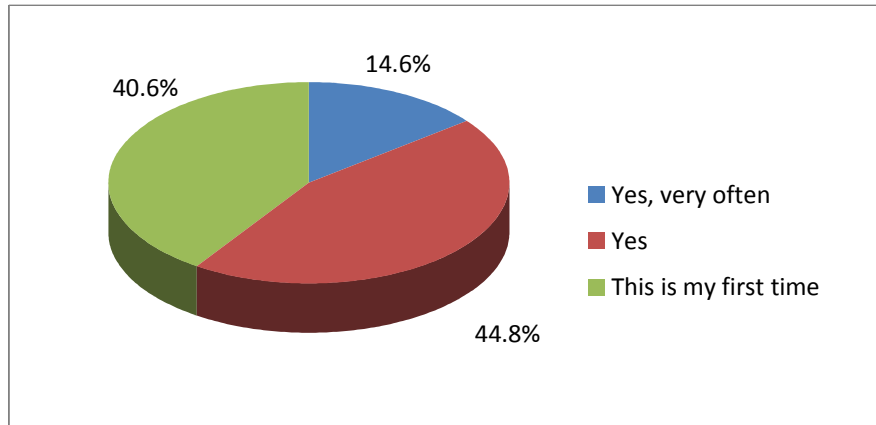
Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,269.

### 3.2.2 Motivations

Among those motivations that drive a student to participate in study abroad programs, generally speaking, it is possible to hypothesize that there is a correlation between enrollment in a program and the person's inclination to travel abroad.

The sample under consideration shows that almost 60% of the respondents already have had some experiences abroad (Figure 3.6). 14.6% state that they have frequently been abroad: this is a significant fact, above all if one considers the youth of the students, who, as we have already seen, prevalently are between 18 and 22 years of age, and it is indicative of the fact that these students probably come from families used to traveling to and visiting foreign countries.

Figure 3.6  
 STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - PREVIOUS  
 EXPERIENCES ABROAD\* (PERCENTAGE DATA)



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
 Number of Responses: 1,270.

\*Before coming to Italy, had you already been abroad?

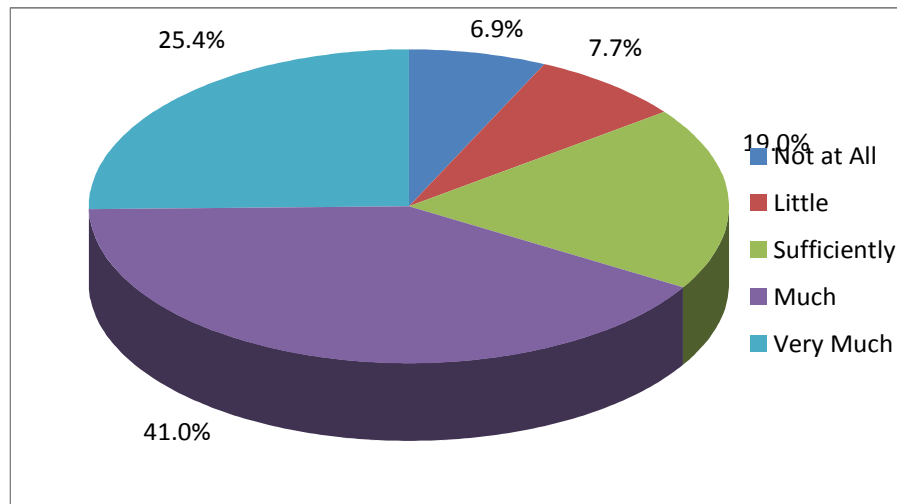
If one goes on to analyze the specific motivations that drive North American university students to spend some study time in our country, one can note that Italy possesses a strong component of attractiveness able to exert an effect on the student's choice.

The greater part of the young people who responded states that the possibility of studying in Italy, as opposed to other countries, influenced them much or very much (Figure 3.7). Only 1/3 of the student sample attributed not very high importance to the destination in making their own choice, distinguishing between those who consider it of sufficient or little influence and those who consider it of no influence at all (only 7% of participants).



Figure 3.7

STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - CHOICE\*



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
 Number of Responses: 1,279.

\*How much were you influenced in your choice of a study abroad program by the possibility of studying in Italy?

The responses provided regarding the specific motivation justifying the choice of a study program in Italy would seem to confirm the attraction exercised by the Italian historic and cultural heritage and by the image our country enjoys in the world. In fact, in the list of factors that influenced the choice of a study abroad program in Italy, as shown in Table 3.6, first as motivation is the desire to travel in Italy and in Europe (indicated by 72.6% of the students), to which one can add the specific interest in the Italian artistic and cultural heritage (40.7%). The choice of a program in Italy was motivated, in part, also by the link with one's own origins, as shown by 18.5% of the participants, a percentage close to the number of students who state they are of Italian origin (see Figure 3.3).

These data, together with a generic curiosity about the experience of study abroad, selected as a motivation by 65% of the sample, can justify what was said in the preceding chapter, or that the study abroad phenomenon is close, in many respects, to a form of EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM.

There remain, nevertheless, also those motivations that are more typically educational, as one might expect in a study program: the importance of study in Italy for one's own education and career is a motivation that has bearing on 41.3% and 26%, respectively, of the sample examined.

A considerable part of the students, moreover, state that they chose to undertake a study abroad program in order to satisfy a desire for change, both with respect to their own social relations (17.7%) and with respect to study and living habits (15.2%).

Table 3.6  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - MOTIVATIONS\*

Answer**	Absolute Frequency	Bearing by % on the Whole Sample***
I want to travel in Europe and in Italy	928	72.6
I was curious about experience abroad	828	64.7
I consider it an important experience for my education	528	41.3
I have particular interest in the artistic and cultural heritage of Italy	520	40.7
I consider it useful for my career	333	26.0
I came because of my Italian origin	236	18.5
I came to meet new people	227	17.7
I sought a change in my academic routine	194	15.2
Because other members of my family had the same experience	115	9.0
I followed the advice of my professors/academic staff	86	6.7
I followed the advice of my family	80	6.3

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.

\* For what reason did you choose a study program that includes a period in Italy?

\*\* Students were given the chance to give more than one response.

\*\*\* The bearing by percentage of each response indicates the number of students who chose that response, considering the entirety of the students in the sample (1,279 students).

### 3.2.3 Spending Model

The analysis of the cost of staying in Italy and the consumer model of the North American student in Italy has allowed us to reconstruct a model of their expenses on a monthly basis, to be used, then, in processing the model on the economic impact described in the next chapter.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Calculation of the overall average spending and the share that can be ascribed to each item of expense was made based on the responses provided in the sample of students interviewed; these responses underwent further statistical refinement, which has allowed us to verify their internal coherency, controlling possible errors due to the difficulty of providing data based on memory and on the re-ordering of some personal information.

One must keep in mind that this proposition is a spending model for the average North American students, but that there are, obviously, differences in the spending behaviors of individual students, due, in part, to individual needs and choices, and, in part, to the scope

From the sample of those interviewed, it emerges that each young person spends, on average, 1,368 euros per month. The greater part of this money is spent on travel (26.4% of overall spending), on meals consumed in restaurants (11.7%) and on the purchase of consumer goods in area markets, food stores, and supermarkets (7.9%). Spending on garments and clothing was also considerable (7.9%).

Students, moreover, each month spend between 50 and 60 euros (about 4% of their overall spending) on evening entertainment, or on the purchase of alcohol consumed in public spaces (for example, in squares or parks) and in private residences. Also important is spending on souvenirs (52 euros, 4% of the total) and for local transportation (about 33 euros). Considerably less are expenses met for participation in events or shows and for mobile Internet and telephone services; those amounts that can be ascribed to the other items considered are residual (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7

**STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY - MONTHLY PER CAPITA SPENDING,  
DISTRIBUTED BY EXPENSE ITEM**

<b>Expense Item</b>	<b>Euros</b>	<b>Share of Overall Spending</b>
Travel	360.70	26.4
Home	328.00	24.0
Restaurants	159.50	11.7
Supermarkets	108.10	7.9
Clothing	65.40	4.8
Evening Entertainment	59.00	4.3
Study Materials	59.00	4.3
Souvenirs	55.20	4.0
Alcohol	49.30	3.6
Local Transportation	32.70	2.4
Events-Shows	23.30	1.7
Telephone/Internet	22.20	1.6
Personal Hygiene	15.80	1.2
Other	11.60	0.8
Health	11.50	0.8
Electronic Products	6.90	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,368.00</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses Considered: 939.

### **3.2.4 Social Interaction and Free Time**

As was seen in the first chapter, interpersonal relations, as well as recreational and entertainment activities, play a role as important for adaptation to the culture of

of the services and features guaranteed by the program and covered by the tuition and fees paid to the institute.

the host country as for the development of those skills of intercultural communication to which study abroad programs are inclined.

The survey shows that the free time of North American students visiting Italy is split between multiple activities (see Table 3.8). Among these, what the students state they carry out most regularly is going out in the company of friends, indicated in almost 92% of the responses. The importance of maintaining friendship relationships with people close or far is also underscored by the frequency of the use of various social networks, which proves to be the second activity preferred.

The greater part of the students states that they regularly use their own free time in activities that help deepen their knowledge of Italy and to improve its inclusion in their culture (Italian language courses and visits to museums and monuments to the Italian cultural heritage), and, more occasionally, through participation in Italian sports and cultural events.

Even activities of a less cultural and more recreational nature, like evening entertainment in pubs or discos and shopping, are carried out with distinct regularity, while the students state that they give themselves more rarely to the practice of sports activities or watching films in Italian.

Table 3.8  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - FREE TIME\*

Answer	Absolute Frequency			Bearing by % on the Whole Sample		
	Regularly	Occasionally	Never	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
I go out with friends	1174	73	32	91.8	5.7	2.5
Social networks	969	213	97	75.8	16.7	7.6
I go for strolls	935	249	95	73.1	19.5	7.4
I attend Italian courses	884	206	189	69.1	16.1	14.8
I visit museums and monuments	795	418	66	62.2	32.7	5.2
I go to pubs, discos, etc.	750	434	95	58.6	33.9	7.4
I go shopping	598	568	113	46.8	44.4	8.8
I read	462	617	200	36.1	48.2	15.6
I take part in cultural events	317	683	279	24.8	53.4	21.8
I do volunteer activities	263	555	461	20.6	43.4	36.0
Church/other religious activities	191	509	579	14.9	39.8	45.3
I do sport/physical activity	161	613	505	12.6	47.9	39.5
I go to see sporting events	101	750	428	7.9	58.6	33.5
I go to see films	73	579	627	5.7	45.3	49.0

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,279.

\*In which activities do you spend your free time? How often?

As can rightly be expected, visits and stays in Italian cities play an important role in the occupation of visiting North American students.<sup>49</sup> Their experience abroad, in fact, is enriched in this way: traveling throughout the country means not only visiting new places and admiring their attractions, but it also means knowing how to adapt oneself to transportation methods, interacting with new people and getting to know different local traditions.

In the sample examined, the survey shows a good inclination to travel and a widespread interest in Italian cities with cultural and artistic attractions. Analyzing those destinations indicated by the students as targets chosen for their study or pleasure trips, it is possible to draw up a ranking of places most visited by the students (Table 3.9). It must be kept in mind that, as seen in Paragraph 3.1, the greater part of the participants in North American study programs reside in the two poles of Rome and Florence: these two cities, therefore, enjoy a more sedentary tourism, to which are added the influx of students who regularly reside in other Italian cities. It is, consequently, possible to presume that almost all the visiting North American students in Italy have been in both of these cities.

After Rome and Florence, the most visited location is Venice, also a city symbolic of the Italian cultural heritage, followed by other places of artistic interest, such as Siena, Milan, and the archeological area of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

North American students demonstrate, however, considerable interest as well in places famous for their natural or landscape beauty, such as the Amalfi Coast and the natural park of the Cinque Terre in Liguria.

Table 3.9  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - RANKING OF MOST VISITED PLACES

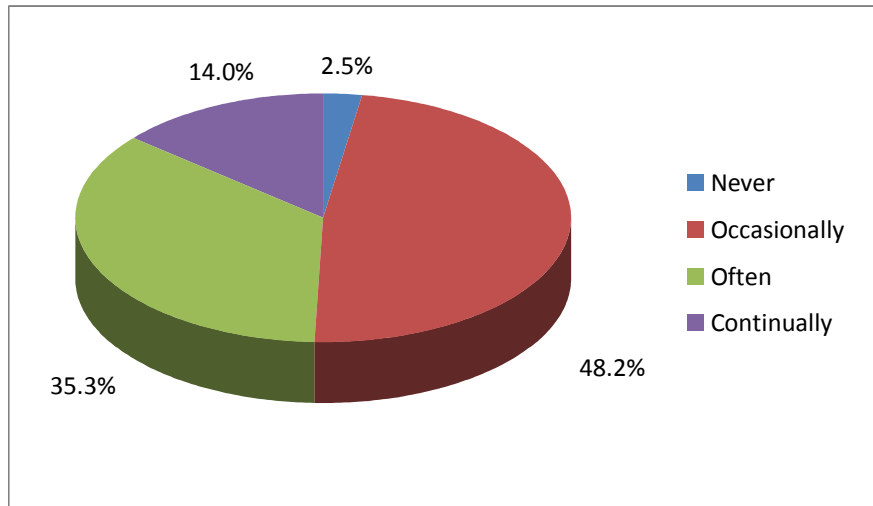
Rank	Place
1	Venice
2	Rome
3	Florence
4	Naples/Amalfi Coast
5	Siena
6	Milan
7	Cinque Terre
8	Pompeii/Herculaneum/Paestum

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,972.

<sup>49</sup> Data in our possession do not allow us to distinguish between visits organized within study programs and travel organized by the students on their own.

As for interaction and interpersonal relations with Italian inhabitants, one can note in the following graph that the students can be subdivided between the 50% who state that they rarely (48.2%) or never (only 2.5%) maintain such relations and the remainder, who report, instead, that their interaction is frequent (35.3%) or daily and continuous (14% of the sample).

Figure 3.8  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - INTERACTIONS WITH ITALIANS\*



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,263.

\*On average, how often do you interact with Italians?

Occasions for interacting with Italians and local residents are manifested either in the free time of the students or in activities linked to the study program (Table 3.10).

According to the answers of the sample, interactions with Italians come about more frequently in places set aside for evening entertainment, like pubs, discos and others (a bearing of 65%), in other public places, such as restaurants, cafes, stores, squares, etc. (46.6%), and during parties or dinners in private houses (10.2%). Even study programs are associated with opportunities for socialization, either through didactic and expected supplementary activities (50.5% bearing), or indirectly through interpersonal relationships that are created among fellow students (22.8%). In particular, volunteer activities, often promoted by the programs themselves, seem to constitute a valid tool for getting to know and interact with Italians.

Students who come from families of Italian origin make use, furthermore, of the possibility of getting to know new people through friendship or kinship, which facilitates their adaptation and insertion into the host culture.

Social networks provide a marginal bearing with respect to the frequency with which they are used, equal to 8.7%, allowing one to presume that their use is aimed more at maintaining far-off contacts and less at getting to know new people of the place.

Table 3.10  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - INTERACTIONS  
WITH ITALIANS\*

<b>Methods of Interaction**</b>	<b>Absolute Frequency</b>	<b>Bearing by % on the Whole Sample</b>
In pubs, discos and other places of entertainment	826	64.6
Through the program	646	50.5
In other public places	596	46.6
Through my study companions in the program	292	22.8
Through friends, relatives, or Italian families	254	19.9
By performing activities with volunteer associations	142	11.1
At home/during private parties	131	10.2
By means of social networks	111	8.7
By doing sports	97	7.6
In church	84	6.6

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,279.

\*By what means do you interact with Italians?

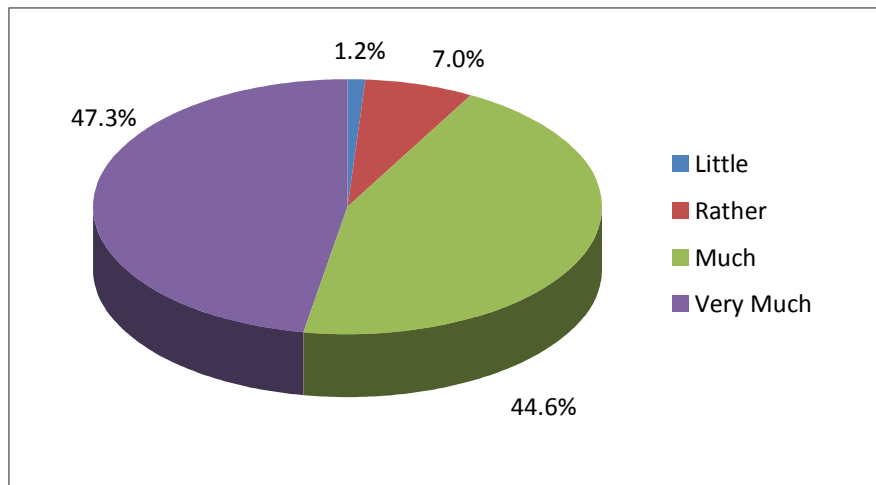
\*\*Students were given the possibility of choosing more than one method.

### 3.2.5 Satisfaction and Self-Evaluation

The last section of the questionnaire administered to the students allows an evaluation of one's own experience of study abroad, both in general terms and relative to the single aspects that have characterized it.

The graph in Figure 3.9 shows data regarding general satisfaction with respect to the experience of study in Italy: as one can see, the majority of the students state that they are very satisfied, and all of more than 47% give the highest grade of satisfaction.

Figure 3.9  
 STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - GENERAL  
 SATISFACTION\* (PERCENTAGE DATA)



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
 Number of Responses: 1,260.

\*In general, do you consider yourself satisfied with the experience you have had up to this point?

In the next table (3.11), the evaluations are contained that came out of the sample regarding the different areas. The aspects that receive a more positive evaluation are those linked to the fascination for Italy and its traditions; that is, the beauty of its artistic-cultural heritage, its wine and food, travel and local culture. A very good opinion also is expressed, overall, regarding the organizational aspects of the program, such as didactic activities, relations maintained with the staff and with fellow students, and academic standards. This is a fact not to be discounted, especially if one keeps in mind the differences in budget and human resources that exist between overseas programs and home campuses.

The students assign a level of satisfaction, on average, between adequate and good with regard to personal well-being, both physical and psychological, and the areas that regard communication and relations with Italians, which obviously are not without their difficulties in linguistic and cultural adaptation.

The aspect that receives the least positive judgment is that linked to the cost of living, probably due to the somewhat elevated costs related to the various activities carried out (transportation, board, recreation, etc.). Given that, in fact, the cost of living in Italian art cities is, on average, high, it is probable that the students have greater awareness of the costs linked to everyday living, because they are directly responsible for handling their own money during their stay in Italy, while they are less aware of the sum of the other costs that they do not directly administer.



The survey has, indeed, shown that the amounts due for tuition and fees constitute the most substantial part of the expense borne by families and students, but, in many cases, the young people have little information regarding the amounts paid to the institutes that organize the program.

Table 3.11  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - EVALUATION OF  
AREAS\*, BY % OF BEARING ON THE SAMPLE

	Very negative	Negative	Adequate	Good	Very Good
Organization and content of the program	0.6	3.1	13.5	45.4	37.4
Academic standards and quality of courses	0.2	2.9	15.8	48.4	32.7
Additional activities (travel, visits, etc.)	0.6	1.1	10.2	34.7	53.3
Relations with staff and professors	0.0	1.1	10.3	34.9	53.7
Relations with fellow classmates	0.2	1.4	10.5	36.9	51.1
Psychological well-being	0.7	3.8	19.0	37.1	39.4
Physical well-being	0.7	3.9	23.1	42.1	30.1
Cost of living	3.6	21.4	47.6	23.0	4.4
Quality of life	0.2	0.6	10.5	50.5	38.3
Beauty of Italy	0.0	0.2	1.4	17.4	81.0
Local culture	0.0	1.0	9.6	43.0	46.5
Communication and language	0.8	4.8	28.8	45.6	20.0
Relations with Italians	1.0	8.0	38.3	36.9	15.7
Travel	0.2	0.5	6.2	36.4	56.7
Wine and Food	0.1	1.0	4.5	23.6	70.9
Lodging	0.9	4.1	18.2	42.4	34.4

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,279.

\*How would you evaluate each of the following aspects of your stay in Italy?

An important aspect of this section, dedicated to the judgment of students on the program, concerns self-evaluation of personal growth at the end of the study abroad experience (Table 3.12). Their responses indicate that the larger part of the young people recognize that they have acquired or improved some skills, in particular those related to intercultural communication. In the following table, one sees, in fact, how the students feel they are more able to adapt themselves to different cultures and to have relations with other people, and they show an increased interest in foreign countries. Their responses also show widespread satisfaction among students regarding the progress made in their own educational path, established through a broadening of the baggage of personal acquaintances.

Table 3.12  
 STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - EVALUATION OF  
 SKILLS ACQUIRED\* (PERCENTAGE DATA)

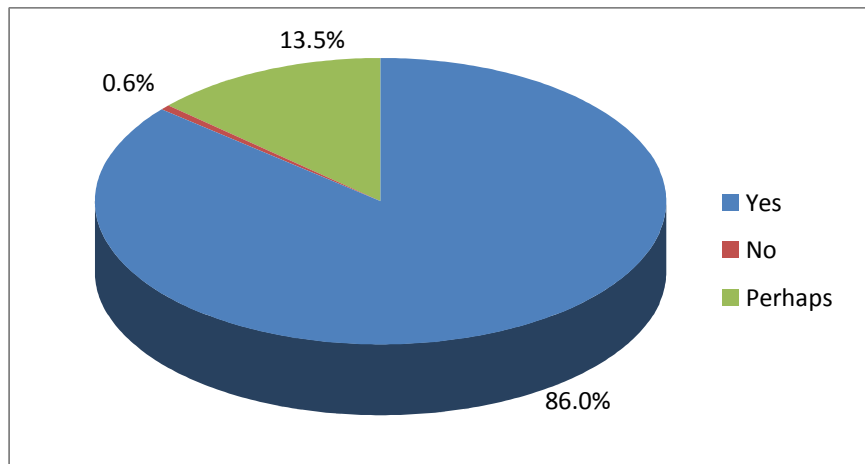
	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Enough</b>	<b>Much</b>	<b>Very Much</b>
I am more mature and/or more aware of myself	1.3	3.2	22.2	38.8	34.5
I have acquired a more open vision of the world and greater interest in the outside world	0.6	2.4	10.9	41.5	44.5
I have improved my ability to interact with people and to socialize	2.4	3.7	20.9	40.3	32.8
I have improved my ability to adapt myself to different cultures	0.8	2.0	12.2	40.7	44.2
I have increased my knowledge and my level of training	1.0	4.5	14.4	40.1	40.0

Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
 Number of Responses: 1,279.

\*Do you agree that studying in Italy caused changes in the following aspects of your personality and ability?

The students were asked, finally, whether they were interested in returning to Italy in the future: their answers, shown in the graph in Figure 3.10, show a net majority that state they are positive in the matter, with a small percentage (13.5%) uncertain, while students who respond negatively represent less than one percentage point. This shows that study abroad programs also are associated with the function of indirectly promoting Italy: anyone who has participated in a program keeps a positive image of the country, communicates it to relatives and acquaintances once back in the homeland, and will return in the future to visit the places linked to this experience, accompanied by one's own friends or family members.

Figure 3.10  
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY, YEAR 2012-2013 - INTENTION OF  
RETURNING TO ITALY\* (PERCENTAGE DATA)



Source: IRPET Processing of Data from the Direct Survey Conducted on the Students.  
Number of Responses: 1,262.

\*Do you think that, in the future, after you have finished the program, you will return to Italy?

### 3.3 Some Final Observations

In synthesis, we can recapitulate in a few points the more important that emerged regarding the activities and organization of the North American programs in Italy and the chief vital, motivational and psychological characteristics of the students that participate in them.

#### *The Programs*

- In Calendar Year 2012, the North American students in Italy were almost 19,000, distributed over about 150 study programs.
- The presence of students was strongly centered on the City of Rome and in Tuscany, in which excellent numbers were recorded, not only by Florence, but by lesser localities, as well.
- The programs offer, for the most part, undergraduate level courses, they have an organizational structure that is rather concise, and they make use of the service of faculty members who are prevalently hired with part-time contracts. On average, a program makes use of 12 professors and 6 individuals employed in other areas.

*The Students*

- The students are mainly feminine in gender (75% of the sample), they are between 19 and 21 years of age, and many of them state that they have already been abroad.
- They are prompted by motivations of a touristic-educational nature: attracted both by the prospect of travel and getting to know a new reality, and by the opportunity of carrying out an educational experience that has an important impact on one's course work. There is, moreover, strong interest in the Italian artistic and cultural heritage, interest that probably is linked to the study of certain disciplines or to the Italian roots of the family of origin.
- Because of their consumption habits, economic means and lifestyle, the students also exhibit the characteristics of leisure tourists, spending not negligible sums on travel, souvenirs, wine and food, and evening entertainment.
- The following free-time habits show behavior that is typical of student status, part of which is independent of staying abroad: among the activities carried out regularly, ample space was given to relationships with friends, to time dedicated to social networks, to going out in public places and to entertainment, to walks in town, and to shopping. 69.1% of those interviewed state that they regularly attend Italian courses, while 95% use their free time to visit museums or monuments (62% of the students do so regularly; 33% occasionally), demonstrating considerable interest in Italian culture.

Even participation in cultural or sporting events, the performance of physical activity and volunteer services are widespread among the students, but their frequency is more sporadic and occasional.

- Interaction with Italians comes about with discrete frequency, above all in clubs (pubs, discos, etc.), in public places, and through occasions for interaction associated with program activities, even if there is a language barrier that sometimes is a limiting factor.
- Overall satisfaction with the experience of study in Italy is very high; the specific areas that meet with greater appreciation are inherent in the academic and organizational quality of the study program, in the personal relations that are put in place with the staff and with fellow participants, in occasions for travel, and in the beauty of Italy and its culture (wine and food, traditions, artistic and landscape heritage, and quality of life).
- The aspects that are less satisfying deal, instead, with the cost of living, perceived as negative or very negative by about 25% of the sample, as well as communications and relations with Italians, made especially difficult by the widespread scarcity of knowledge of the English language in our country.

- Regarding those pedagogical and educational aspects of the experience abroad, students agree in stating that it has had positive impact on one's self-awareness, on one's ability to communicate and relate with others and on one's interest in diversity.

#### **4. The Economic Impact of the Presence of North American University Students in Italy**

##### **4.1. The Model Used**

It is not easy to quantify the economic and occupational impact of the study abroad phenomenon, either generally speaking or specifically, that is, in the case of North American study programs in Italy. On the one hand, there are long-term effects that can only be observed qualitatively and that, therefore, can but with difficulty be translated into economic values and expressed in models that are, by nature, quantitative, whatever the approach undertaken might be. On the other hand, the phenomenon presents (in Italy, but not only there) some informational lacunas which the present research, thanks to the commitment of AACUPI and its associates, has sought to remedy. But, beyond the current research, the problem remains that a statistical, organized framework and a continuous observation of flows and values is lacking.

What follows is a report of some basic aspects of the model used to estimate economic and occupational impact.

The pre-selected model was IRPET's multiregional model, which is based on an Input-Output matrix, formalizing (by means of technical coefficients that take on, in fact, the mathematical form of the matrix) flow relationships between production sectors. In order to evaluate the impact, the model works by launching demand (or expenditure), based on the hypothesis that there is a production capacity that is not fully utilized and that, therefore, the economic system is able to respond to a stimulus in demand by increasing the value due to the quantity of products and not to an increase in price. Numerous are, however, those hypotheses on which the model leans and, for the related technical content, we refer to specialized tests, such as Stefano Casini Benvenuti and Renato Paniccià (2003) and Stefano Casini Benvenuti and Mauro Grassi (1986), since a close examination of the subject here would divert us from the results. Before commenting on the impact, we would only mention that:

- the model, applied to Italy, is multiregional; it, therefore, sees the shared presence and interaction of more than one regional economic system; in applying the model, moreover, the expenditure (on which impact is estimated) must be distributed by region and the results also can be viewed in detail according to individual Italian regions;

- broadly used for a variety of analyses, among which also are estimates of the tourism impact, the model takes into account the following effects: the direct effect, here defined as the effect (in terms of production, added value or occupation) which corresponds to the productive response of enterprises to satisfy the end demand; the indirect effect, or the demand of those same enterprises involved in the supply of services and products, which spill over with their purchases into the supply sectors linked to them upstream; the induced effect, also called Keynesian, or the effect generated by the income created in the process, redistributed and reinserted in the economic system as a further demand for consumption;
- as far as establishing the demand to be inserted in the model, three different categories of expenditure are here identified and quantified: (i) the expenditures of the programs and of the academic institutions; (ii) the consumption of the students (room and board, etc.); and (iii) the tourist expenditures of visitors;
- in terms of results, the impact has been, instead, synthesized by means of two main indicators, namely, added value for the economic part and labor units for the occupational part.

#### **4.2. Expenditure and Economic and Occupational Impact**

At the aggregate level, values associated with the phenomenon of North American study abroad in our country are shown in Graph 4.1: in terms of impact, the estimates show that the sector vouches for 10,454 jobs and 544.4 million euros as added value. These values come from the almost 19,000 students that answer to the North American programs associated with AACUPI and they include the three principle sources for launching demand: the programs' expenditure (or that of the North American academic institutions present in Italy), the consumption of the students, and the tourism expenditures of those (relatives and friends) that have visited the students during their stay in Italy. Keeping in mind all of the effects launched by this expenditure, one observes that, on average, a little less than two students are enough to create, even purely on the level of the national economy, one job (a statistical concept which equals, in terms of quantity of work, a full-time occupational position for one year).

It is, however, interesting that, both in terms of added value and occupation, around 40% of the impact falls in Latium (Added Value €221.8 million; Jobs 4,196) and about 30% in Tuscany (Added Value €156.1 million; Jobs 3,126), showing thus how the distribution of the effects is, in any case, strongly linked to the place in which the expenditure is made and where the programs are located. Taking away the two regions that lead in North American academic tourism, in the remainder of Italy approximately the remaining 30% of wealth and occupation (Added Value €166.5 million; Jobs 3,132) still is created.

As for the parameters at the basis of the quantification of expenditures, one has gone ahead with a search for the values that collect those parameters most precisely; where, instead, the information was weaker, cautious choices were made to avoid getting impact estimates that exceeded the real amount.

The per capita expenditure for the consumption of the students is 1,368 euros per month, including all main expenditures (e.g. lodging, even when it is paid together with tuition, which is corrected as needed). The result derives from an operation of control and selection from the more than 1,200 interviews of the students.<sup>50</sup>

The tourist expenditures of visitors is 90.5 euros per day, which is currently the parameter used by IRPET for its own analysis of the impact of tourism at the national and regional levels. It should be noted that the importance of the tourist expenditures of the visitors is, more than anything else, due to the strong occurrence of the visits (more than 350,000 tourist presences, or over-night stays): each student who spends a semester of study in Italy receives, on average, 2.4 visitors, a figure that was obtained as well by means of the survey of the students.

Regarding program expenditures, it was not possible to derive this figure directly from the institutional budgets or from other accounting information from the North American institutes that are present in Italy. The expenditure launched by the programs was, therefore, calculated beginning upstream from the tuition gathered, from which a margin of 20% was deducted, supposing that it was kept by the home campus in North America before transferring into Italy the funds needed to manage the programs and to cover their costs in Italy.<sup>51</sup> For example, the tuition for a semester-long program is, on average, equal to US\$18,000, which is an important figure by Italian and European standards. Given the values in play, the fact is not surprising that the main source of wealth and creation of occupation is represented by these academic institutions and by the activities of the programs, without putting aside the impact due to the consumption of the students or that of tourism in terms of visitors brought by their stay in Italy.

It is precisely the value brought by the expenditure component due to academic institutions that gives importance to North American academic tourism: 4/5 of the value and occupation it generates come from (either even not merely directly but keeping in mind also indirect and induced effects) the activities of the programs, which include the didactic component, in a strict sense, and also all of the

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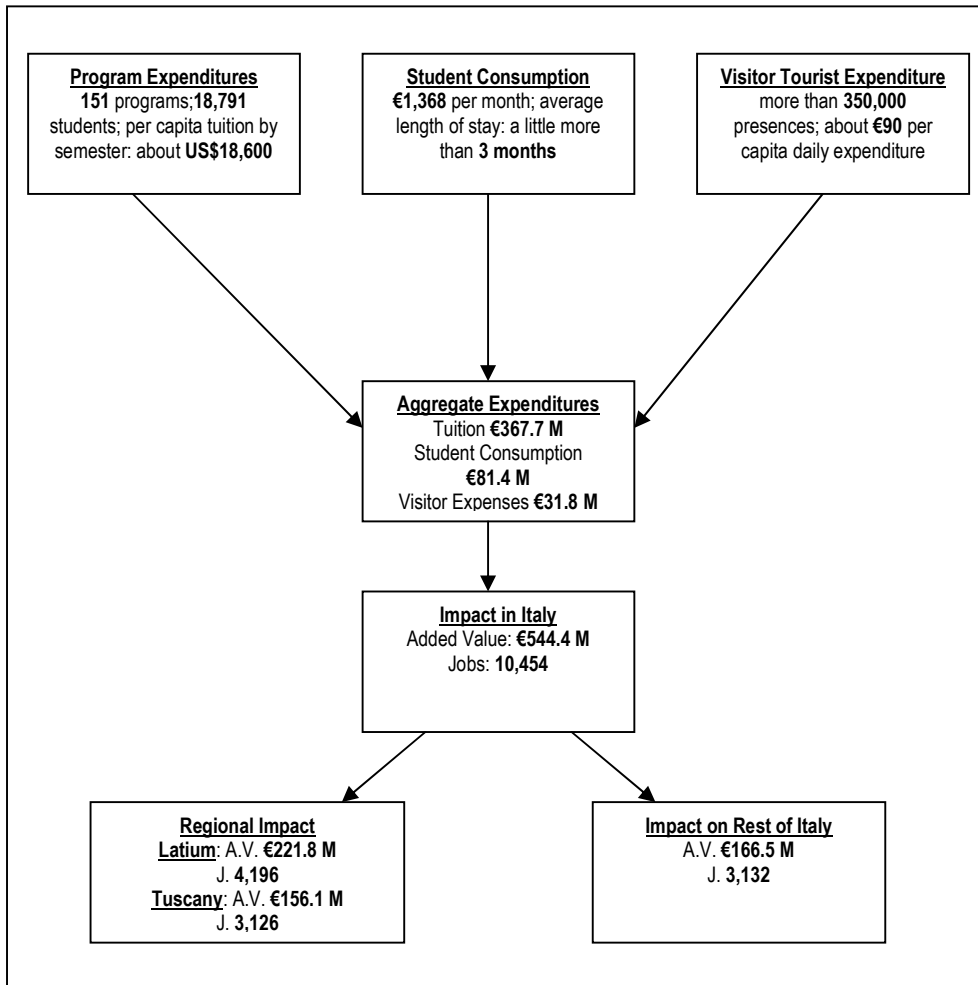
<sup>50</sup> Per capita consumption was estimated by means of the survey and a close reprocessing of the answers in terms of internal coherence (with the sum of the individual expenditure items in the various categories of merchandise which must not be removed from the total monthly expenditure supplied by the students) and the purification of excessively high or low values.

<sup>51</sup> For technical reasons, the tuition total, once reduced by 20%, was again re-adjusted upward by 10%, given that the expenditure did not correspond to the end demand (e.g., consumers) but to an intermediate demand launched by operators and producers of a service (North American academic institutions present in Italy).

administrative, managerial and organizational aspects, which are obviously fundamental for the programs and for their existence. The study, besides being the reason and the characteristic trait of the phenomenon is also its main reason for economic and occupational interest, at least from the economic-occupational point of view.

Graph 4.1

NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMS IN ITALY:  
FROM EXPENDITURE TO ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL  
IMPACT - YEAR 2012 - AACUPI DATA



Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.



Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide, respectively, detail of the impact in terms of added value and jobs due to the three sources of expenditure, confirming what was written beforehand: in just Latium and Tuscany, which benefit - it is true - from the location there of an important share of North American study abroad in Italy, more than 6,000 jobs can be attributed alone to the expenditures of the programs.

Table 4.1

**NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMS IN ITALY:  
ADDED VALUE BY KIND OF EXPENDITURE AND BY REGION -  
YEAR 2012 - AACUPI DATA**

	<b>Latium</b>	<b>Tuscany</b>	<b>Rest of Italy</b>	<b>Italy</b>
Program Expenditures	180,533,397	128,005,644	116,316,114	424,855,155
Student Consumption	31,542,821	21,220,158	37,650,622	90,413,602
Visitor Expenditures	9,696,089	6,834,212	12,552,601	29,082,902
<b>Total</b>	<b>221,772,308</b>	<b>156,060,014</b>	<b>166,519,337</b>	<b>544,351,659</b>

Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

Table 4.2

**NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMS IN ITALY:  
JOBS BY KIND OF EXPENDITURE AND BY REGION - YEAR 2012 -  
AACUPI DATA**

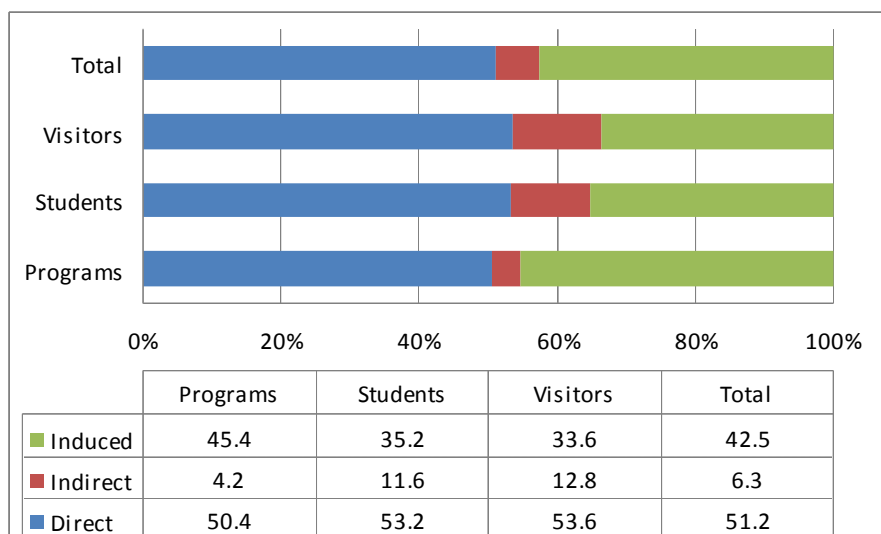
	<b>Latium</b>	<b>Tuscany</b>	<b>Rest of Italy</b>	<b>Italy</b>
Program Expenditures	3,597	2,664	2,254	8,515
Student Consumption	424	324	641	1,389
Visitor Expenditures	175	138	238	551
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,197</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>3,132</b>	<b>10,454</b>

Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

The explanation that an important part of the impact stays in the regions with the greatest concentration of programs resides in the fact that half of the effects are direct, e.g. the faculty members and administrators paid by the programs, and an important part is induced (Graph 4.2). The latter, we would remind you, is the effect of the income obtained through launching a demand which is reinserted in the economic system in the form of further demand for consumption, e.g. the consumption of a faculty member paid by a program.

Graph 4.2

NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMS IN ITALY:  
 ADDED VALUE BY KIND OF EXPENDITURE AND OF EFFECT -  
 YEAR 2012 - AACUPI PERCENTAGE DATA



Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

### 4.3. Characteristics of the Impact by Sector

The sector most greatly affected by the impact in terms of the creation of added value is precisely that of education (46.9% of the total), obviously because of the direct effect due to program expenditures, as can be verified if one looks at the allocation of the impact with respect to the kind of expenditure from which it derives as well (Table 4.3). Always in terms of shares of added value, the areas follow, in order of size: real estate activities (12.2%), business (6.9%), accommodation and the food industry (5.8%), transportation (4.0%), various services and those professional. Among the sectors explicitly listed (in other words, those sectors that show a share of added value greater than 1%), there is also art and entertainment, which are maintained by the consumption of the students and their visitors.

In the writer's opinion, the by-sector profile of the impact provides two interesting considerations. First of all, the concentration of the impact on those sectors linked to the service industry confirms the extent to which the phenomenon of North American study abroad represents an important lever for the development of services, with benefit, above all, for those regions and cities where many programs are located (e.g. Rome and Florence). Secondly, with respect to the

impact of leisure tourism, North American academic tourism provides similarities, but also differences.

The typical impact of leisure tourism is well represented by the sector-related composition of added value, which comes from the expenditures of visitors, with respect to which the impact of student consumption also shows some difference (e.g. greater shares in real estate activities and transportation, compared to lesser shares in accommodation and the food industry). But the impact due to expenditures by the programs, with an added value strongly concentrated in instruction (59.7%), is the characteristic trait of the phenomenon and it is what makes it especially interesting, also in terms of the occupational need of, for example, individuals that are highly qualified and which, for the most part, are found locally.

Table 4.3  
NORTH AMERICAN STUDENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMS IN ITALY:  
ADDED VALUE BY KIND OF EXPENDITURE AND BY  
PRODUCTION SECTOR - YEAR 2012 (PERCENTAGE DATA)

	<b>Program Expenditures</b>	<b>Student Consumption</b>	<b>Visitor Expenditures</b>	<b>Total</b>
Education	59.7	1.0	1.5	46.9
Real Estate Activities	9.2	25.6	13.1	12.2
Business and Repairs	5.3	13.0	12.5	6.9
Accommodation and Food Industry	2.9	12.5	26.0	5.8
Transportation	2.5	10.6	5.3	4.0
Banks and Insurance	2.9	4.2	5.2	3.2
Various Services	2.7	4.6	5.4	3.2
Professional Services	2.0	3.3	3.6	2.3
Construction	2.1	1.2	1.3	1.9
Agriculture	1.0	2.1	3.2	1.3
Food, Beverages and Tobacco	0.9	2.5	2.9	1.3
Utilities	1.2	1.5	1.9	1.3
Art and Entertainment	0.5	3.8	2.4	1.2
Telecommunications	0.8	2.0	1.5	1.1
Other Sectors	6.3	12.2	14.2	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

#### 4.4. Reflections on the Impact

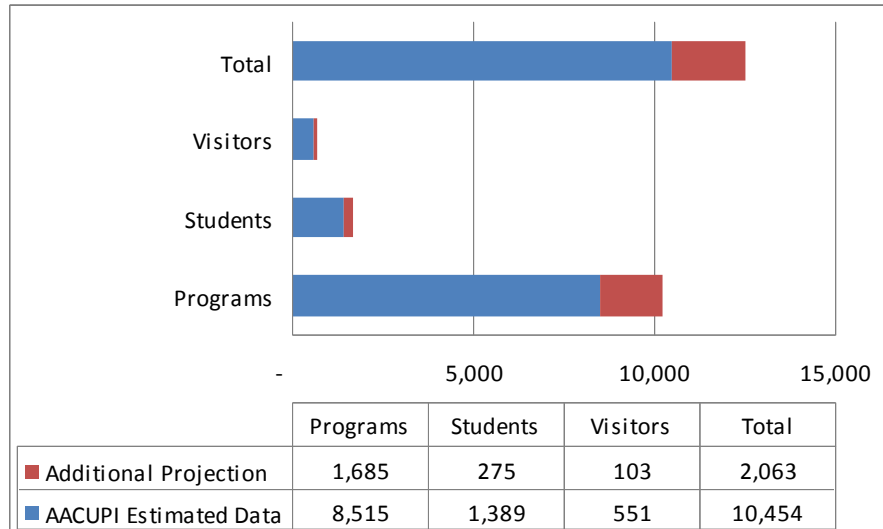
The numbers deriving from an analysis of the impact are of enormous interest. In the Italian context, it is difficult, in fact, to imagine that a little less than 19,000 students, the equivalent of an Italian university of medium-small stature, can have an impact so important, both in terms of added value (544 million euros) and occupation (10,454 jobs). This clearly comes about because of a tuition level that is very bullish and that corresponds to a packet of services that is very rich and not even imaginable for a student in an Italian or European school. The North American model of study abroad, based on the placement abroad of organized structures, or programs, is clearly very costly compared to simple international mobility of students, which then “leans” on foreign schools, as happens, for example, at the European level with the Erasmus Program. By conception and organization, the North American programs provide an attention to the student that goes well beyond aspects that are strictly didactic, because they take care of his or her “all around” well-being, with a sense of responsibility regarding the good outcome of the study stay and the satisfaction of the student. This leads to a rather high per capita cost and, consequently, also an important economic and occupational impact for the country that welcomes these programs.

On the other hand, one must also be aware that the economic and occupational impact of the North American programs in Italy could be even greater. The estimates supplied to now, in fact, were calculated only on those students (almost 19,000) that belong to programs associated with AACUPI, programs that are well identified and about which it was possible to gather the information necessary to arrive at a reliable quantification of their impact.

Open Doors, limited to students from the USA, shows for Italy (the last available year was Academic Year 2010-2011) more than 30,000 students; unfortunately, the same Open Doors was not able to offer any details about the programs attended (e.g. cost, location, length of time). Simply for demonstrative purposes, however, an attempt has been made to incorporate the Open Doors figure, projecting its impact by using our model.

We have, in substance, re-applied parameters to all of the key bulk areas (tuition, visitors, student consumption), hypothesizing an average length of stay considerably less than that of programs associated with AACUPI, about which we have information. We have, then, supposed that, on average, this additional component of students remains only one month, and, in virtue of the fact that AACUPI does not account for programs that are very short or, normally, for those carried out for January Term, for programs which, always according to Open Doors, should have a significant and growing weight in the entirety of the flow of students from the USA abroad. In conclusion, the result of this projection in terms of impact means an increased occupational level of around 20%. In other words, a further number of jobs are created equal to 2,063, arriving at an overall occupational impact of 12,517 jobs (Graph 4.3), which are due, in fact, to North American study abroad in our country.

Graph 4.3  
 NORTH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMS IN ITALY:  
 NUMBER OF JOBS - PROJECTION OF THE ADDITIONAL STUDENT COMPONENT - YEAR 2012



Source: IRPET Processing of AACUPI Data.

## 5. Conclusions

The research has confirmed the quantitative importance of the North American study programs in Italy, and of their economic and occupational impact, within the framework of a phenomenon, study abroad, that, we would recall, also presents the whole of qualitative expectations that are just as important, but difficult to uncover and quantify.

In what follows, we propose a synthesis of the most important elements to emerge from the survey.

### *The Quantitative Dimension of Influx and of Impact*

During the time period considered in the survey of the programs, which goes from January 2012 to December 2012 (including the spring and summer terms of Academic Year 2011-2012 and the fall term of 2012-2013), about 150 programs brought almost 19,000 students to Italy. This influx was reconstructed on the basis of AACUPI data, and it certainly represents the most important, stable and

structured part of this phenomenon in our country. Nevertheless, all of the latest data available from Open Doors (but related to Academic Year 2010-2011), based on findings at the home campus level and relative to study abroad only among US students, fix the influx at a still greater volume, or about 30,000 students. With respect to our program source, the difference is more than 11,000 units for influx from the USA, a good part due, however, probably to short or very short programs that AACUPI does not observe and about which not even Open Doors is able to give any information. However that may be, the phenomenon of study abroad from North America in Italy is of absolute quantitative significance, keeping in mind, among other things, its own dynamics: the presence of North American students in Italy has been, and is even now, in a growing phase, as demonstrated by the fact that programs associated with AACUPI have almost doubled in the last 10 years.

Regarding the programs associated with AACUPI, it has been possible, moreover, to carry out the collection and processing of detailed information, by means of a direct survey, both concerning what is published on the sites of the home campuses and/or by the programs in Italy themselves. The information gathered (for example, the number of students enrolled, the length and cost of the program) have allowed us to arrive at a quantitative evaluation of the impact, carried out using the multi-regional model of IRPET and based on input-output matrices. The application of this model also required a survey of the consumption of the students during their stay in Italy and on the bearing/frequency of any visits (by relatives and friends) in Italy from North America, a survey carried out on a sample of more than 1,000 students, who voluntarily answered a questionnaire administered to them, with the cooperation of the faculty members and personnel of the AACUPI programs.

The economic and occupational impact, for Year 2012, has been quantified at 544.4 million euros as added value, and 10,454 work units, or jobs, with a concentration of its impact in those regions where a considerable part of the programs are located, namely, in Latium and in Tuscany. These are important figures, which should probably be higher still - for example, by at least 20% - if one keeps in mind the difference in influx as found in AACUPI and in Open Doors, influx for which, unfortunately, it is impossible to obtain any information (for example, location, duration, cost, etc.) and, thus, make a reliable estimate of the related impact.

Last, but not least, it is important to clarify the fact that this impact, in which much weight must be given to expenditures put in place for teaching and organization (367.7 million euros), represents an important lever for economic and occupational growth, especially in service activities, many of which are marked by the high level of qualification and instruction of the human resources utilized.

### ***Effects of Promoting the Image***

The estimated economic and occupational impact, however, offers only a partial framework for the effect, ignoring what is, in fact, difficult to discover and, above

all, to quantify in terms of economic value and jobs. Among the intangible effects of study abroad, one must mention the function of implicit promotion (almost at zero cost) of our country's image.

Students stay fascinated by made-in-Italy in its broadest scope, to be understood as the expression of a culture and a lifestyle that is shown in the widespread beauty of its artistic cities, in its attention to food and quality wines, in its fashion and in its prestigious handicraft creations. Almost all state that they wish to return to Italy, and it is likely that, once they have returned to their homeland, they will pass on to relatives, acquaintances and friends a very positive image of the places where they had that experience, inviting them to travel, in turn, to discover such beauty. In this way, they can be so-called "ambassadors" of our country and promote both individual tourist destinations and Italy as a whole.

The presence of stable programs, furthermore, favors the internationalization of the places that host them and of the Italian academic system, fostering exchanges and partnerships, and creating a cultural substratum that is more multicultural and united. These are effects which, though made tangible and quantified with difficulty, can lead to significant economic consequences, attracting new tourists, students or investors, in the long term.

### ***Study Abroad in Italy as a Precious Time of Growth and Assimilation***

In the specialized literature there are many contributions that underscore the positive pedagogical impact of a study abroad experience, during which individuals are incentivized to acquire multicultural competencies and develop a greater awareness of oneself. The study abroad experience can lead to situations of psychological stress which, if adequately met and overcome, lead to student growth, which goes well beyond the learning of new ideas or the consolidation of one's own academic knowledge.

All these considerations have been confirmed in the answers provided by those interviewed using the questionnaire, considerations which bear witness to the existence of qualitative effects that have a bearing on the personality of the young people and on their communicative, analytic and relational skills. During their stay in Italy, students acquire a new vision of the world and greater interest in cultural differences: they learn to respect diversity, to relate in contexts that are not the same as habitual ones, and to utilize new symbolic and communicative codes. It is not by chance that many of them develop a strong emotional link with the people, the city and the places that acted as a frame for their experience, and they see the time spent in study abroad as a moment of great change in their life.

### ***Prospects: Between Attraction and Competitive Threats***

The direct analysis conducted on the students made it possible to scrutinize those aspects linked to the motivational sphere and the emotional, psychological and educational impact which they themselves ascribe to the experience of

studying in Italy. Although it was to be foreseen that what emerged in this regard had a positive pedagogical and experiential impact, less to be taken for granted is the satisfaction that those interviewed showed relative to the academic level of the programs.

The level of what is supplied seems to respond adequately to the expectation of the demand, a fact that can be ascribed, in part, to the preparation of the teaching corps and to the administrative ability of the directors and managers, in part to a cultural context, one of historic and artistic heritage that has no comparison throughout the world and that constitutes an inescapable element, above all for those who intend to attend programs in historic-humanistic or artistic disciplines, such as Architecture, History, Art and Painting, but, also, in more recent disciplines, like Wine and Food or Design.

The hold of the supply system was also confirmed in the telephone interviews carried out with some individuals who, because of their experience in the sector or specific work roles, have broad knowledge of study abroad, especially in Italy.

The people heard agree in indicating the historic-artistic and cultural heritage as the chief element in the attractiveness of Italy among North American university students abroad. Strong in its “income-producing” position, Italy does not seem, up to this point, to have suffered from the existence of other competitors, who offer didactic systems at a higher level or who have more advantageous costs. Precisely this solidity and the force of purely attractive elements have allowed one to absorb and alleviate the consequences of a handicap in the competitiveness of the supply due to legal and institutional elements or economic context.

Perplexity and worry, however, emerge regarding the hold of the system in the long term, above all in light of the worsening of the crisis in overall competitiveness in Italy, whose consequences are inevitably reflected in the activities of North American study programs, as well. The provisions adopted by the governments that have followed each other in later years in order to meet the economic crisis do not guarantee a favorable business climate, and the institutes that organize programs seem to suffer difficulties that cross the whole Italian productive system. The heaviness of the tax burden creates problems in costs and economic sustainability, while the changes introduced by the Fornero Law on the reform of the labor market could create organizational and administrative problems in the handling of faculty members.

The programs, by nature, are flexible and have a limited duration in the course of the year; moreover, the courses can change from semester to semester in virtue of the academic curricula offered to the students and often established by the home institution in the USA or in Canada. The introduction of greater rigidity in terms of contracts is not looked upon well by those who manage the programs in Italy and who need, first of all, to guarantee a teaching standard that is high, administering the cost of the teaching corps without decreasing the safeguard of the worker.

Among the other elements of a general nature that have bearing on the competitiveness of Italy, there is a decrease in the level of security as perceived by



American families and by students, following an increase in episodes of violence and petty crime in the chief Italian cities. As can be seen in the survey, the students are very young and the programs have to guarantee their physical and psychological health: abuse of alcoholic substances, which can be purchased freely and consumed almost everywhere, the relative ease of obtaining drugs or other psychoactive substances, the increase in the risk of being the victim of ever more frequent episodes of petty crime - all these are elements which the directors of programs must duly keep in mind and which could, in the future, disincentivize the demand for study programs in Italy.

If the consequences of the economic crisis and the weakening of conditions for personal safety are factors on which it is very difficult to intervene with exact measures, a different discourse can be made regarding the bureaucratic load that weighs down the activities of those who organize the programs, are responsible for the students' entry into Italy and must carry out the procedures that allow them to have the stay permit where the duration of the program is more than 90 days. These are long, laborious and costly procedures, and it is not by chance that some programs, to avoid having to face the route necessary to obtain the stay permit for their own students, have organized courses that last, at most, 89 days, to the detriment of the didactic and educative value of the study abroad experience.

Because restraints due to general laws, such as immigration laws or the labor reform, for example, cannot be eliminated by *ad hoc* interventions, one might speculate on focused solutions that take greater care of the special nature of the North American study programs in Italy and of the students that take part in them. The introduction of restrictions relative to the subjects that are taught or more restrictive criteria for admitting incoming students, for example, could constitute penalizing conditions.

The Barile Law, which regulates the presence of North American universities and colleges in Italy, put in place at the end of the 1990s, thanks, above all, to AACUPI and to the pressure of associations and representatives of the North American programs in Italy, demonstrates that even simple measures can have a very positive impact and can facilitate keeping and developing study programs. Even if, until now, these attractive elements have assured a growth trend that has been rather constant over time, further worsening of conditions in the social, economic and legal context can push the attention of the demand and of program organizers toward other destinations.

It no longer is possible to trust in the natural growth of the phenomenon, nor only in those elements of attractiveness that are acknowledged for Italy, but intervention is required to remove and/or reduce some of those barriers to program activities, barriers which put our country at a disadvantage with respect to location elsewhere.

The stable presence of North American study programs not only mobilizes economic resources and creates work opportunities, but it also contributes to the internationalization of the Italian university system, increases its prestige and

overall quality and creates conditions for exchange and interaction that are occasions for the growth of students and faculty members. This is a heritage that should be further acknowledged, safeguarded and promoted.

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