EXPLORING THE SOCIALIZATION AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL FIELDS OF INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS: EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL SCIENTISTS

By

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ABSTRACT

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This research study explores the doctoral socialization and transnational experiences of sub-Saharan African doctoral students whose education is sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This study is designed to explore the convergence of the international student experience, doctoral student socialization, and the influences of the USAID scholarship program. Using a qualitative inquiry research design, the study aims to give a voice to the scholarship students, providing a greater descriptive understanding of their experiences participating in the scholarship program, and their academic lives in the United States. The lived experiences of USAID scholarship students while they are obtaining their degrees in the United States is generally unknown and unexplored in the literature. Therefore, this study investigates how the students progressed through their academic programs and met their professional development goals while adhering to the rules and regulations of the USAID scholarship program.

This study is guided by theories of graduate student socialization (Gardner, 2007, 2008b; Weidman et al., 2001) and the framework of the transnational social field (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009). This research advances scholarship on the socialization of doctoral students from sub-Saharan Africa, adding to the understanding of the specific challenges international students face while studying in the United States, in order to better understand what leads to success and satisfaction in a doctoral program (Gardner, 2007). In addition, the research

provides evidence to support changing or improving practices to promote international graduate student success, which is critical for U.S. universities.

The findings of this study illustrate how international doctoral students maneuver the challenges of their doctoral program, maintain multiple identities, and navigate transnational social fields between their host and home countries, as they pursue their degrees in the United States. Family separation and the restrictive program timeline enforced by USAID were the most salient issues affecting the USAID scholarship participants while they were studying in the United States. For some of the students, the rules and regulations of the scholarship program impacted specific socialization milestones such as attending conferences, publishing in journals, and learning advanced research techniques. However, even with the USAID restrictions, the study found the students were thriving in their academic departments and successfully progressing through their doctoral programs. The students also reported developing strong relationships with their advisors and other faculty who supported them personally and academically as they advanced through their programs.

Recommendations are presented to USAID and other international education scholarship programs on altering certain policies allowing for greater program flexibility, leading to improved student satisfaction, well-being, and academic achievements. Considerations for future research are explored and include the development of a longitudinal research study for the scholarship students, the extension of the study to include a comparative analysis of various international scholarship programs, further research on the lived experiences of African students, investigation of the issues of family separation in graduate school, additional research on cost-effective sandwich training programs, and a more nuanced investigation of neo-racism and racial bias occurring on college campuses in the United States.

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CHAPTER 1: FRAMING THE STUDY

This research study explores the doctoral socialization of international students whose education is sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Broadly, the purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how sub-Saharan African doctoral students experienced their socialization processes during their doctoral programs and navigated complex transnational social fields. Additionally, this study is designed to explore the convergence of the international student experience, doctoral student socialization, and the influences of the USAID scholarship program. The lived experiences of USAID scholarship participants while they are obtaining their degrees in the United States is generally unknown and unexplored in the literature. Using a qualitative inquiry research design, the study aims to give a voice to these students, providing a greater descriptive understanding of the experiences of the doctoral students participating in the scholarship program.

International scholarship programs respond to pressing development challenges by building a cadre of experts who advance institutional capacity development, create innovative local solutions in a culturally appropriate manner, and influence policy decisions that improve livelihoods and shape social change (Dassin, Marsh, & Mawer, 2017). The doctoral education of the international students in this study was sponsored through a human and institutional capacity development program funded by USAID and implemented by a U.S. university acting as the management entity. Scholarship recipients participating in this study were junior to mid-level professionals employed at universities, research institutes, and government ministries across sub-Saharan Africa. The students came from diverse specialized backgrounds and academic disciplines and were motivated by the desires to obtain world-class research skills within the agricultural sciences. Obtaining doctorate degrees in the United States would allow the students

to, ultimately, generate and disseminate knowledge that would improve the livelihoods of their home-country citizens. Doing so, however, required that the students navigate a complex U.S. higher education system and the structures of the scholarship program. The junction between the rigor of the students' academic programs, their desire to meet their professional and academic goals while in the United States, and the austere rules and regulations enforced by USAID created significant tensions, which the students had to traverse throughout their doctoral programs.

Higher education institutions in the United States have attracted international students from around the world, enhancing the national knowledge economy and promoting positive cultural exchange (Marginson, 2013). International students enrich campus diversity: their research often adds a globalized dimension to departments and programs and their presence and engagement with peoples and activities on campus spur cross-cultural learning (Kim & Kim, 2010). Students returning home upon degree completion bring back best practices, stimulate knowledge diffusion, and improve economic growth opportunities (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Additionally, increased economic development in emerging economies resulting from an educated society can lead to greater opportunities for investments and trade abroad for the United States (Le & Gardner, 2010). The influence of international students on U.S. campuses can also add valuable policy insights, strengthening foreign relations and diplomacy (Le & Gardner, 2010; Marginson, 2013). Moreover, the tuition revenue generated from international students, especially undergraduate students, provides an important source of income for U.S. public universities, as these students typically pay higher fees than domestic students (Cantwell, 2015).

Embarking on a doctoral education is a life altering decision impacting the personal lives and career trajectories of the students pursuing the advanced degree. For many international

graduate students, the doctoral degree can be a catalyst for migration to a new country or, if the student returns home, the doctoral credential can secure a career at a university or research institution at a home country or regional organization. Learning abroad is also a way for students to engage in a global dialogue around their research interests and is a mechanism for developing robust professional networks in their discipline and beyond. Returning home without the doctorate degree can be devastating to many students, as familial and societal expectations around degree completion are considerable (Alazzi & Al-Jarrah, 2016).

According to the Institute of International Education's (IIE) Open Doors (2017) report for the 2016/17 academic year, the United States experienced a 3.4% increase of international student enrollment with 1,078,822 total students enrolled in higher education institutions, of which 391,124 students were graduate students. The report also notes U.S. institutions of higher education have experienced an 85% increase of international student enrollments from a decade ago (IIE, 2017). Furthermore, the percentage of enrolled international students originating from sub-Saharan Africa in the 2016/17 academic year increased 6.7% from the previous year to 37,735 students (IIE, 2017). Although there are increasing numbers of sub-Saharan African students coming to the United States, limited research is conducted explicitly on the socialization and transnational experiences of African doctoral students while they are studying at U.S. institutions.

As the economies across the African continent grow, degree seeking students continue to utilize the United States as a means for educational attainment. Over the past several decades, there has been a disinvestment in the higher education sector in Africa by government ministries and donor agencies, which has left universities throughout the continent struggling with underqualified faculty, limited infrastructure, modest equipment, and lack of facilities, in

addition to insufficient staff pay and demanding workloads due to increasing enrollments (Collins & Rhoads, 2008; Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). Consequently, universities throughout the African continent have experienced an "institutional massification," meaning a rapid increase of student enrollment without the necessary investments in human, financial, or physical resources to manage the demand, resulting in large classrooms, limited educational resources, and faculty shortages (Mohamedbhai, 2008, p. 4).

As the World Bank notes regarding the higher education sector in Malawi, "the low percentages of staff with Ph.D. qualifications and professors reduce the capacity of these institutions to support postgraduate programs and conduct research, especially in areas associated with economic growth, such as mathematics and engineering" (The World Bank, 2010, p. 170). The current situation in the higher education sector in sub-Saharan Africa stimulates some students to pursue their doctorate degrees outside the continent, and students commonly seek advanced degrees from universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe to gain the necessary skills to advance their research and professional goals. As a result, African students from low-to-middle class backgrounds have an increased reliance on international scholarship programs to fund their graduate education, while those students with an affluent economic status are able to fund their own education or use their networks to secure funding for higher education attainment.

To fill the human resource gap at African universities and public and private sector institutions left in the wake of post-colonialism and neoliberal policy reforms, the United States government invests millions of dollars annually in the education of African researchers and academics who come to the United States to complete graduate degrees. The U.S. Department of State implements the Fulbright Program, the flagship international educational exchange

program supporting graduate degree completion in the United States. However, other government agencies, such as USAID, also support a number of capacity development programs and have done so for over 50 years with success. USAID scholarship programs have historically been an important mechanism for building individual skills while also improving organizational performance within sectors critical for economic growth.

USAID scholarship awardees are considered to be "change agents," individuals who are creating systematic and positive economic and social change that further develops the capacity of universities, government agencies, public and private firms, and research institutions to respond to national needs and global developments (Gilboy, Carr, Kane, & Torene, 2004, p. 20). Research indicates African students who receive their graduate degrees in the United States through USAID-sponsored scholarships have positive financial, personal, and professional outcomes throughout their career as a result of the training programs (Jamora, Bernsten, & Maredia, 2011). Yet despite the recognized potential of the awardees for fostering international relationships with U.S. entities and creating economic growth opportunities in their home countries, there is very little empirical research on how they experience socialization processes at U.S. institutions and their general well-being and happiness within the context of the USAID scholarship program. Ultimately, socialization processes influenced by USAID rules and regulations may impact the quality of the degree the scholarship participants receive and their ability to develop research skills and knowledge to create sustainable change in Africa. Altogether, a knowledge gap exists in the literature, including research on international students, doctoral education, and graduate student socialization.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the benefits, the growth and presence of international students on U.S. campuses have challenged the higher education system in several ways. First, universities have struggled to provide significant multicultural engagement opportunities between international students and their U.S. citizen peers, faculty, and university administrators (Li & Collins, 2014). This lack of connectedness has spurred conflict between international and domestic students, resulting in bigoted acts against foreign-born students in addition to discrimination in classrooms, student housing, and their host-community (Lee & Rice, 2007). Additionally, the absence of strong personal relationships between international students and their American peers can negatively affect international students' sense of belonging within the campus community (Yao, 2014).

Secondly, international students can experience a wide variety of challenges when attending U.S. universities, leading to poor academic performance, probation, and ultimately program attrition. Often international students face issues surrounding problematic cultural adjustment and adaptation, including culture shock, loneliness, English language difficulty, and academic struggles (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Mori, 2000; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Many U.S. universities have been slow to put into place support systems targeting the needs of international students. In fact, the literature on international student experiences often places the burden to adjust and adapt to the values of the host country norms on the international students themselves (Marginson, 2013) without considering how universities might unintentionally marginalize international students (Lee & Rice, 2007). With the numbers of international students coming to the United States still on the rise, universities continue to struggle with these major issues occurring on their campuses.

The higher education literature has deepened our understanding of cultural adjustment difficulties and academic experiences of international students (Beoku-Betts, 2004; Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, & Utsey, 2005; Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Lee & Rice, 2007; Li & Collins, 2014; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Marginson, 2013; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010; Yao, 2015; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Nevertheless, very little is currently known about the academic experiences of doctoral students from Africa and how these students perceive their socialization processes as international students and transnational migrants. As Gargano (2009) explains, "international student voices and the complexity of their experiences are strikingly absent from the discourse" (p. 341). This study contributes to the growing body of work aimed at capturing the lived experiences of international students living and learning in the United States.

Furthermore, the voices of USAID scholarship participants are also lacking in USAID documents promoting policy recommendations, changes, and best practices for future programming. The opinions of stakeholders including USAID personnel, U.S. university faculty, consultants, and advocacy organizations are the primary perspectives presented in most of the recent USAID documentation on participant training and human and institutional capacity development programming (Association of Public and Land-grant Universities [APLU], 2014; Gilboy, Flora, Raphael, & Pathak, 2010; Hervy & Gilboy, 2014; Lechtenberg, Ayeni, Christy, & Kramer-LeBlanc, 2014). The African scholarship student experience in the United States is not acknowledged or understood, resulting in stringent policies which continue to be enforced by USAID, with significant consequences to scholarship participants.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain a better understanding of how sub-Saharan African doctoral students experienced their socialization processes while studying in the United States. Further, I examine how the policies of the students' USAID-funded scholarship program influenced their success during their doctoral program. The findings of this study illustrate how international doctoral students maneuver the challenges of their doctoral program, maintain multiple identities, and navigate transnational social fields between their host and home countries, as they pursue their degrees in the United States.

The research approach for this study is drawn from a naturalistic and social constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study also draws from theories of graduate student socialization (Gardner, 2007, 2008b; Weidman et al., 2001) and the theoretical framework of the transnational social field (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009). The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do the selected participants of the USAID training program experience their socialization processes at a U.S. university?
2. How do policies of the USAID scholarship program contribute to or detract from the students' success in their doctoral programs?

Thusly, this research advances scholarship on the socialization of doctoral students from sub-Saharan Africa, adding to the understanding of the specific challenges international students face while studying in the United States, in order to better understand what leads to success and satisfaction in a doctoral program (Gardner, 2007). In addition, the research provides evidence to support changing or improving practices to promote international graduate student success, which is critical for U.S. universities.

This study also provides insights on how USAID policies influence student success and happiness while participants are studying in the United States. Anecdotal evidence presented by USAID acknowledges the importance of support given to the scholarship students by the various management entities who, on behalf of USAID, guide participants through the entirely of their scholarship programs (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014). However, over the past decade, USAID documents evaluating the effectiveness of their participant training programs have not empirically investigated the implications of USAID rules and regulations on the everyday lives of the students while they are living and learning in the United States. In addition, the voices and perspectives of the USAID scholarship recipients are not incorporated into best practices and policy recommendations presented in USAID documents reviewing the effectiveness of the agency's human and institutional capacity development programming (Gilboy et al., 2010; Hervy & Gilboy, 2014; Lechtenberg et al., 2014). This study presents the lived experiences of USAID scholarship students and provides concrete recommendations based upon evidence collected during this study for USAID to consider, in order to improve their scholarship programs in the future.

Conceptual Framework

Socialization theory is one lens used to understand the experiences of international doctoral students. Socialization is defined in the literature as "the process through which an individual learns to adopt the values, skills, attitudes, norms, and knowledge needed for membership in a given society, group, or organization" (Mendoza & Gardner, 2010, p. 19). In the area of graduate education, socialization can inform the different parts of the graduate student experience, from the initial desire to enroll in graduate education through the completion of the academic program (Gardner, 2007, 2008b). Higher education scholars may utilize this

framework to understand the complex processes and experiences of students during graduate school (Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2007, 2008b; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Golde, 1998; Gopaul, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009; Tierney & Roads, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Weidman et al., 2001).

At the same time, the socialization framework does not adequately capture the experiences and sense-making of international graduate students. To address this knowledge gap, the transnational social fields framework (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009) has also been incorporated into the research study. A transnational social field is defined as "an unbounded terrain of interlocking egocentric networks that extend across the borders of two or more nations-states and that incorporates its participants in the day-to-day activities of social reproduction in these various locations" (Fouron & Schiller, 2001, p. 544).

In addition, the conceptual framework of the transnational social field "locates and describes the identities and connectedness of international students as dynamic and fluid due to their mobility" (Tran & Gomes, 2017, p. 6). The use of the transnational social field framework thus allows for the examination of how the doctoral students experienced the flow of ideas between their U.S. university and their host-country institution and developed social networks based upon their transnational student identity (Tran & Gomes, 2017). Within the parameters of this study, the USAID participants engaged in transnational social fields with both their personal and professional networks during their doctorate programs and sustained these relationships overwhelmingly through digital technologies (Martin & Rizvi, 2014). Furthermore, transnational professional and research networks were maintained through the students' design of their dissertation research, which had to be conducted in their home country with dialogue between mentors back home.

As noted, the lived experiences of USAID scholarship participants while they obtain

doctorate degrees in the United States has been, heretofore, unknown and unexplored in the literature. Subsequently, the combination of socialization theory and the transnational social field framework allows for a more comprehensive exploration of how the participants developed social and cultural connections and expressed emotional and personal investment in their doctoral programs.

Statement of Significance

The topic of international doctoral student socialization is significant for several reasons. First, socialization has an impact on students' ability to learn and process information critical to their development as a scholar and researcher. Understanding the experiences of international students is key to knowing and supporting international student success. Secondly, knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement guide students as they move toward their professional role (Weidman et al., 2001). These components are obtained in a complex cultural and organizational structure, termed socialization, which drives students' understanding of what is expected during their program and what criteria are important to succeed (Gardner, 2005).

Additionally, understanding international doctoral student socialization is important for several key stakeholders including U.S. faculty advisors, U.S. university administrators, and higher education institutions. Research on the socialization experiences of international students from sub-Saharan Africa is limited and this study enhances knowledge of how doctoral students from this region socialize in the United States during their doctoral programs. Understanding the experiences of international doctoral students can lead to the creation of effective policies supporting student retention and improving the quality of the student experience in the United States.

Furthermore, there are very few qualitative studies addressing how USAID rules and

regulations influence the socialization and professional development of scholarship participants. As a government agency accountable to U.S. taxpayers, USAID often prioritizes the measurement and reporting of the economic impacts of programming when students return to the workforce, rather than funding evaluations seeking to understand the student experience while they are in the United States. The consequence of USAID reporting patterns has led to USAID enforcing the same policies and failing to incorporate student feedback into new program cycles. By ignoring the student experience, USAID misses the opportunity to adjust programming to improve the effectiveness of the training received by the participants.

Over the past eight years, USAID has shifted the focus of their human and institution capacity development programs from centering on the number of individuals trained to understanding the "contribution made by trainees to organizational performance improvement" (USAID, 2010, p. 5). The desire by USAID to improve institutional performance gaps in order to increase organizational effectiveness would be better served if the agency understood how their policies are specifically influencing the training received by the students in the United States. An improved feedback loop could help USAID more effectively align the education, training, and professional development experiences gained in the United States to the needs of the employers of the scholarship participants, thus ultimately improving organizational capacity and enhancing the success of technical assistance provided by USAID and the agency's contractors.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation contains six chapters. In the following chapter, I situate and review research within a developing body of literature engaging the intersections of socialization theory, doctoral student socialization, international student socialization, and transnationalism. Chapter 2 also presents the theoretical perspectives guiding this study, including a more detailed discussion

of the specific socialization model selected for the project, as well as the framework of the transnational social field. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach and research design used in this study.

Chapter 4 provides the context of the study, introduces the study's participants, and sets the scene for the analysis of the data and discussion of the findings. In Chapter 5, the findings of the study are explored, which illuminates the experiences of international doctoral students and discusses the study's contributions to higher education policy and practice. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the results of this study and implications for policy, practice, and theory. The final chapter also includes recommendations for international scholarship programs, including USAID, and considerations for future research are presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As outlined, this study investigates the socialization of international doctoral students attending U.S. universities through a scholarship program funded by USAID. The particular focus of this research is two-fold: to identify the ways in which international students experience their doctoral programs while also analyzing the impact of USAID policies on student success. This chapter discusses relevant scholarly literature beginning with a broad overview of socialization literature pertaining to the training and development of doctoral students and including a summary and critique of the most cited conceptual frameworks in the higher education literature. This is followed by an examination of several themes particularly appropriate for understanding international student socialization: cultural adjustment, racial prejudices and microaggressions, English proficiency, and support. Further, literature on transnationalism and transnational social fields is explored. Drawing on these various areas of study, I conclude with a more-detailed discussion of the theoretical perspectives guiding this research.

Socialization Theory

"Socialization theory is an attempt to account for the interaction between the individual and social or organizational factors in the production of both occupational attainment and professional development" (Antony, 2002, p. 361). As such, socialization is widely used to understand doctoral education and the experiences of graduate students in the United States (Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2007; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Golde, 1998; Gopaul, 2011; Sweitzer, 2009; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Weidman et al., 2001). Higher education scholars seek to understand how doctoral students "acquire the values and attitudes, the interests, skills, and knowledge – in short, the culture – current in the groups of which they are, or seek to

become, a member" (Merton, 1957, p. 287). Socialization in graduate school is important for academic and personal achievement and can play a role in program progression and retention (Gardner, 2007; Turner & Thompson, 1993). Examining the aspects of socialization and exploring how experiences shape graduate study assists in the development of a better understanding of doctoral student success, including that of international students.

One widely used and adapted definition of socialization was developed by Merton (Merton, 1957; Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957) and states, "socialization is the processes through which [a person] develops [a sense of] professional self, with its characteristic values, attitudes, knowledge and skills...which govern [their] behaviour in a wide variety of professional situations" (Merton et al., 1957, p. 287). Bragg (1976) goes further, asserting, "the socialization process is a learning process through which the individual acquires the knowledge and skills, the values and attitudes, and the habits and modes of thought of the society to which he/she belongs" (p. 3). Austin and McDaniels (2006) extend this definition by stating socialization is the "process through which newcomers learn to fit an expected role and pattern of behavior" (p. 399). Taken together, socialization has emerged as a process through which identity is shaped and constructed to fit professional and cultural norms as an "individual learns to adopt the values, skills, attitudes, norms, and knowledge needed for membership in a given society, group, or organization" (Mendoza & Gardner, 2010, p. 19). Given the role of socialization in determining performance, success, and satisfaction in doctoral programs (Nettles & Millet, 2006), research over the last two decades has attempted to better understand the multifaceted nature of the graduate student experience (Mendoza & Gardner, 2010).

Organizational and Individual Socialization

Socialization, as a theoretical perspective, is generally understood in the literature through the lens of organizational and individual culture. Doctoral students are often trained to become faculty as the professional output of their studies. The roles and responsibilities of faculty include teaching, research, advising, institutional service, and public outreach (Austin, 2002). As Tierney (1997) notes, "faculty work is the primary arena for organizational socialization to occur in a processual manner" (p. 8). The literature describes two frames in which faculty socialization occurs: anticipatory and organizational (Tierney, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993; Van Maanen, 1978). Anticipatory socialization is the period when "non-members take on the attitudes, actions, and values of the group to which they aspire" (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993, p. 37). This stage often begins in graduate school and extends to job interviews, when the individual is deciding what organization to join (Tierney, 1997). Thus, faculty socialization begins well before the first day of employment with anticipatory socialization helping the individual to understand the professional and disciplinary roles assumed at the institutional level (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993).

Anticipatory becomes organizational socialization as the individual transitions from graduate student to new faculty member (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). During this stage, role continuance occurs, the individual undergoes socialization and ultimately decides whether to remain in the organization and to adopt the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the organizational culture (Gardner, 2005; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). The early years of the professoriate are often described as challenging for the new faculty member but, as time progresses, even senior faculty must navigate cultural shifts and changes occurring at academic institutions. Organizational socialization is, therefore, an ongoing process (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993).

The socialization of the individual encompasses the experiences gained while they are indoctrinated into the traditions, relationships, and rules of the organization. As Van Maanen (1978) claims, this process is structured within the organization's culture. The individual is responsible for learning the culture of the organization and understanding how to operate within the established cultural context yet can choose to conform, reject, or ignore certain aspects of the organization's culture (Tierney, 1997). The culture of the organization and how it functions is determined by the sum of all faculty socialization (Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). Graduate students often assert agency within the organizational context in which they study and work (Weidman et al., 2001). As students socialize, they do not have to adopt or agree to the actions or behaviors they encounter during their graduate programs (Antony, 2002).

My research sought to understand doctoral student experiences under the lens of individual socialization for several reasons. The study's participants were faculty members or research scientists in their home country. The students had already experienced the two facets of organizational socialization at their home institution by the time they arrived in the United States. Additionally, the students had obtained professional role identities and experienced a form of organizational socialization in their chosen field and discipline. In this context, the ways in which agency was asserted under the rules and regulations implemented by USAID and the management entity of the scholarship program were explored in my study.

Processes and Stages of Graduate School Socialization

Early socialization theories position socialization as a rational, unidirectional, and linear process where there is movement through identified activities and the socialization agents present acceptable norms, values, and behaviors to the newcomers (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Merton, 1957). Task completion and staged movement through the program was a common way

to explain graduate socialization for many scholars. These theories are problematic though, as they assume systematic task completion, moving students through predetermined stages, operating in a systematic manner replicable for all graduate students. For many students, especially non-traditional graduate students, the staged approach is not a realistic view of how the graduate program is completed and, as such, these theories make assessing the experiences of a heterogeneous body of students difficult.

Other views promote socialization as a dynamic nonlinear process where both the individual and organization influence each other (Austin, 2002; Weidman et al., 2001). This approach gives agency to novices to assert their own values and beliefs into an organizational structure, while allowing for retained identity (Austin & McDaniels, 2006) and resultant change. While nonlinear processes better capture the experiences of the graduate students and the organizational structure and culture in which the students live, study, and work, it does not yet fully encapsulate the complex socialization processes of international doctoral students.

Interactive models using stages or phases of socialization have sought to better explore the complexity of the individual/organizational relationship. With the stages of socialization, scholars are able to evaluate how identity and role commitment are developed through experiences with the discipline, department, and university (Weidman et al., 2001). Various non-linear or phase models have been developed, offering an understanding of the graduate student experience, and the most relevant are described below.

The Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) interactive and nonlinear framework is widely cited in the higher education literature as a noteworthy model to explore graduate and professional student socialization (Austin, 2002; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Baker, Pifer, & Flemion, 2013; Gardner, 2007, 2008b; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Gopaul, 2011; Quinn & Litzler,

2009). Weidman et al. (2001) offer two assumptions of socialization: (1) socialization is a developmental process and (2) certain core elements of socialization can be linked to the development of role commitment or identity. Building upon the work of Thornton and Nardi (1975), Weidman et al. (2001) elaborate on and analyze the four stages in the graduate socialization process: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal.

Similar to the definition Tierney and Rhoads (1993) present for anticipatory socialization, Weidman et al. (2001) describe the anticipatory stage as occurring when the newcomer becomes "aware of the behavioral, attitudinal, and cognitive expectations held for a role incumbent" (Weidman et al., 2001, p.12). The neophyte becomes aware of the norms and expectations of the new role, in addition to the procedures and agendas, which must be followed. Information is obtained through observation of faculty, advisors, and advanced peers. In the formal stage, the novice observes the roles of advanced students and learns the normative expectations through formal instruction by faculty and interaction with peers. The student's degree of fitness is determined through the practice of role rehearsal and, with improved performance, the student is given greater responsibility.

The informal stage is described as the process in which "the novice learns of the informal role expectations transmitted by interactions with others who are current role incumbents" (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 14). At this stage, graduate students interact with peers, cohort members, and faculty, often coming together as a community in situations that serve to reduce anxiety and fears held by the students. The informal stage also marks the time when students begin to take on a professional identity. In the final stage, the personal stage, students form a professional identity while reconciling any previous incongruence with their previous graduate student identity. Students assess their ability to compete in the professional marketplace and

make adjustments to expand their professional development beyond graduation (Weidman et al., 2001).

Defining stages of socialization allows for the understanding of the development of the graduate student in the university setting (Gardner, 2010). Austin and McDaniels (2006) describe the Weidman et al. (2001) socialization framework as the most "thorough analysis of socialization theory as it relates to graduate and professional students in higher education" (p. 399). However, criticisms of this notable model have surfaced in the literature, asserting the socialization framework assumes graduate education is essentially monolithic, meaning graduate programs are rigid, unchanging, and undifferentiated (Gardner, 2007; Gopaul, 2011).

Gardner (2010) asserts an overarching criticism of the linear and nonlinear theories of socialization stating, "these models tend to treat the graduate experience as monolithic in nature and do not allow for individual differences" (p. 64). Gardner (2010) also notes these models do not entirely explain the intricacy of the graduate student experience and do not incorporate the transformation experienced by graduate students. Rather, the linear and nonlinear frameworks focus on the programmatic components of doctoral completion (Gardner, 2010). Antony (2002) states linear and nonlinear models are skewed toward a "congruence and assimilation orientation" where the neophyte is required to adopt the profession's norms, values, and ethics, while ultimately ignoring the unique and individualistic nature of graduate students (p. 350). Additionally, these traditional approaches assume a single means of shaping the experiences of graduate students while also assuming graduate students should be socialized into similar careers as others professionals working in their chosen discipline. Success is measured according to adoption of the field's norms and standards (Antony, 2002). In response to these traditional approaches, scholars have called for the development of alternative models incorporating the

experiences of a diverse student body, such as underrepresented groups in doctoral education including women, minority students, international students, and non-traditional older students (Antony, 2002; Beoku-Betts, 2004; Constantine et al., 2005; Gardner, 2010; Kim & Kim, 2010; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007).

The analysis reported in the literature around linear and nonlinear theories note "socialization is not always an equitable process for the graduate student" (Gardner, 2005, p. 14). The Weidman et al. (2001) model assumes the students are inherently novices, lacking a sense of established professional identity, which they obtain during their graduate program through increasing identification and role commitment. Like many mid-career professionals seeking an advanced degree, the participants in my research study had previously established professional identities and were seeking an advanced degree to close gaps in their research and technical skills and to further career advancement. Therefore, the stages of Weidman et al.'s (2001) model are not all relevant for the study's participants or research questions nor does the framework inherently allow for the analysis of the experiences of international students.

Antony (2002) offers a modified framework for graduate student socialization where there are multiple ways in which graduate students can socialize. Graduate students can simultaneously learn about the values and norms of the profession but do not have to adjust their own values to be considered successfully socialized (Antony, 2002). Antony's (2002) modified framework of graduate student socialization focuses on the ability of socialization to instill awareness of a field's values and norms without the expectation the norms will be adopted. The framework also asserts socialization does not happen in a singular fashion.

According to Antony (2002), a number of alternate forms of education and varied experiences extending beyond the traditional curriculum can be part of student socialization into

disciplinary fields. Therefore, the department can tailor the graduate program to fit the individual. Finally, the framework asserts "intellectual individuality," not "intellectual conformity," is most valuable to a field and thus graduate students should be socialized to appreciate and exert this individuality (Antony, 2002, p. 375). While the aspect of individuality, a hallmark of Antony's (2002) modified framework, fits within the context of my research study, the suggestion the graduate school experience should be tailored to the student does not necessarily align with the structured timeframe, which the participants of my study were required to follow, under USAID's policies.

I propose drawing on an updated framework of graduate student socialization that more effectively articulates the ways in which students enact individual agency in the presence of departmental, disciplinary, and professional structures in graduate school, in addition to highlighting issues surrounding the rigid structure of the USAID program. To address the gaps in the literature regarding the inclusion of disciplinary, departmental, and institution dynamics, higher education scholars have developed socialization frameworks which include programmatic perspectives but also speak to the development of relationships through a personal identity development lens (Gardner, 2007, 2008b, 2009; Le & Gardner, 2010). Through a three-phase model of socialization, the Gardner (2007, 2008b) graduate socialization framework provides insights on the events and relationships occurring during doctoral attainment in order to help facilitate an understanding of the student's experience during specific points in the student's program chronology.

The Gardner (2007, 2008b) model incorporates the standard programmatic elements of doctoral degree attainment but also evaluates the interpersonal and developmental experiences of the graduate students (Gardner, 2010). The three phases of Gardner's (2007, 2008b) graduate

socialization model are: admission, integration, and candidacy. The first phase of socialization is admission and encompasses the time when a doctoral student applies to graduate school and carries on through the completion of the first year of the program. The integration phase includes the formation of relationships between peers and faculty throughout the completion of coursework and ending with the attainment of candidacy. The third phase of socialization is candidacy, a time when students explore what it means to become a professional in their discipline and focus on researching and writing their dissertations. Each stage is fluid in nature and allows for individual differences to arise during the graduate program.

As the student progresses through the stages, he/she/they becomes more independent, growing as a scholar and professional until the dissertation is complete. The Gardner (2007, 2008b) model is superior to the others described in this section because the framework addresses the issues of interpersonal and developmental experiences of the graduate student, while being open and fluid enough to encapsulate a heterogeneous group of students. This model is discussed further in the theoretical framework section of this chapter.

Through several studies, Gardner (2005, 2008b, 2010) has used the three-phase model of socialization to investigate the socialization processes of doctoral students. One such study examined the lived experiences of 40 doctoral students in the chemistry and history departments at a land grant institution as well as a flagship university (Gardner, 2008b). The theme of independence emerged throughout the three phases of socialization. In the admission phase, the students became increasingly independent, transitioning from a personalized undergraduate experience which many students received at small private liberal arts schools, to the large departments of research universities, where individualized attention was not necessarily given to each student. Students also expressed concerns around the expectation of independent work

(Gardner, 2008b).

During the integration phase, students were afforded even greater independence, balancing work responsibilities and coursework expectations while developing close ties with peers and faculty. The theme of independence in the candidacy phase emerged as a tension with students expressing either too much freedom or not enough structure, especially as it relates to the involvement of the students' advisors (Gardner, 2008b). In this case, as is demonstrated further below, the identification of "themes" through the Gardner model (2007, 2008b) allowed for the capturing of participant experiences while gaining an understanding of the developmental processes occurring during doctoral programs.

An analysis of the experiences of 60 doctoral students at a single research-extensive university resulted in the identification of four themes including: (1) support; (2) self-direction; (3) ambiguity; and (4) transition (Gardner, 2010). The research found emotional and academic support often came from faculty and peers as well as people outside the graduate program, including family members and roommates. International students constituted a segment of the sample with a high concentration of these students enrolled in the mathematics and engineering departments. The international students reported support coming from faculty and also from roommates and family members. Interestingly, the study found international students did not discuss peer groups as a source of significant support during their doctoral programs, which is a common theme in the higher education literature.

The second theme emerging from this study was self-direction, which occurred through all phases of the socialization process. The issue of self-direction emerged with students feeling lost or left alone to figure out certain things independently during the doctoral process. The third theme of ambiguity focused around program requirements, guidelines, and paperwork, in

addition to job market uncertainties and the unknown dissertation research process. Each phase of socialization had a certain amount of ambiguity from the vagueness of the expectations of graduate school in the admission phase, to the ambiguity of the examination experience during integration, and finally to the lack of understanding of the dissertation process in the candidacy phase. The final theme of transition was expressed by all of the students in Gardner's (2010) study. During admission, the students were experiencing a new culture and learning how to navigate the rules and regulations of the department. Students in the integration phase developed new sets of skills specifically concerning scholarly discourse, a topic which can be intimidating for many students. The candidacy phase saw the students transition to independent scholar as they wrote their dissertations.

For international students, the issue of transition was highlighted throughout each phase of socialization (Gardner, 2010). In all phases, the issue centered around cultural context and gaining proficiency in not only the general English language but also the use of English in academic discourse (Gardner, 2010). The study's findings are consistent with research in the higher education literature focusing on international students, specifically the themes of support and cultural adjustment issues, described in more detail in the next section.

Socialization of International Graduate Students

The presence of international students continues to change the cultural fabric of predominately White research campuses nationally. Exploring and understanding the experiences of international students is an important focus for U.S. universities and a growing body of literature in higher education is providing insight on a variety of topics addressing international graduate student socialization. The literature on international students is comprised mostly of studies exploring the challenges and barriers international students face while attending

American universities (Beoku-Betts, 2004; Constantine et al., 2005; Donin,1994; Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Lee & Rice, 2007; Li & Collins, 2014; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Sherry et al., 2010; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Difficulties include language proficiency, social isolation, culture shock and acculturative stress, racial microaggressions, and discrimination, among other issues. Often, literature addressing the experiences of international students focuses on the responsibility of the students to overcome, persist, and integrate into their host societies (Lee & Rice, 2007).

One critique of these studies is that they are often monolithic and do not provide a platform for nuances to emerge between undergraduate and graduate students or between the disciplinary and cultural contexts (Gardner, 2007; Le & Gardner, 2010). In the section below, I explore a growing body of literature that highlights the often overlapping themes of cultural adjustment, racial prejudices and microaggressions, English proficiency, and support.

Cultural Adjustment

Much of the current socialization literature on international students emphasizes their adjustment to U.S. society through the navigation of social and cultural differences between the student and their host-country institutions and communities (Sherry et al., 2010). While numerous international students may complete an advanced degree and enter the workforce either at home or in the United States without considerable difficulty, many others struggle with English language proficiency, homesickness, academic stress, conflicts with peers and faculty, and financial constraints (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Consequences of negative cultural adjustment experiences include depression, loneliness, academic struggles, and program attrition (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Mori, 2000; Sherry et al., 2010; Winkelman, 1994).

When students depart their home country for school in the United States, they leave behind a personal identity and face unfamiliar roles and expectations (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Winkelman, 1994). At most U.S. universities, there is a lack of purposeful engagement between international students and the greater university community (Li & Collins, 2014), even though many U.S. institutions are prioritizing the internationalization of their campuses (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Leask, 2013) and profiting from international undergraduate enrollments (Cantwell, 2015).

Many international students experience culture shock when arriving in the United States as well as acculturative stress. The term culture shock is often used to describe anxiety and confusion, which arise when a person enters a new environment (Kashyap, 2010), often due to a lack of understanding of customary cultural cues (Winkelman, 1994). Acculturative stress is the psychological impact of adaptation to a new culture and can cause distress and concern for international students (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). Culture shock can be reduced through a variety of strategies including preparation before departure, the ability to navigate and understand social and personal relations, and utilizing conflict resolution skills (Winkelman, 1994). The process of acculturation, on the other hand, includes balancing the expectations of the host country culture while navigating the academic culture and learning shock, including understanding different teaching and learning approaches and ways of knowing (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011). The literature indicates that understanding stressors resulting from culture shock and acculturative stress can help international doctoral students persist successfully in their program (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004).

Cultural adjustments also occur in the classroom as many international graduate students often must shift from lectured-centered memorization tactics to a student-centered learning

environment (Ladd & Ruby, 1999). Classroom settings may also be more casual for international students compared to their previous educational setting, especially for students coming from non-Western countries where formal learning is prioritized. The casual setting can include informal dialogue with faculty, eating in classrooms, and debating or questioning the classroom instructor. The academic rigor of U.S. institutions can also present a challenge for international students, as they adjust to homework assignments, quizzes, and preparing presentations, which are common in graduate school in the United States.

Racial Prejudices and Microaggressions

In addition to the challenges inherent in entering a new cultural environment, international students may also experience racial prejudices and microagressions. In a study investigating Kenyan, Nigerian, and Ghanaian international students in the United States, cultural adjustment issues included prejudicial or discriminatory treatment, increasing the students' risk of mental health issues (Constantine et al., 2005). Lee and Rice (2007) similarly note that international students from non-Western countries often face discrimination and cultural intolerance in their host academic community. Often, racial microaggressions are asserted towards international students of Color through subtle verbal, nonverbal, or environmental slights and can be intentional or unintentional actions (Kim & Kim, 2010). An example of a racial microaggression in the U.S. classroom is the assumption that an international student's silence in a classroom group activity is due to the incompetency of the student (Kim & Kim, 2010).

International students are often categorized as non-White and placed in the same category as U.S. minorities at predominantly White U.S. campuses (Suspitsyna, 2013). This racialized categorization can be problematic because when the students first arrive in the United States they

typically do not fully understand the mostly negative implications of being categorized as a racial minority (Lee & Rice, 2007; Suspitsyna, 2013). Research shows African female graduate students in the sciences experienced racial bias when studying in the United States and had a difficult time proving themselves as legitimate scholars and researchers in White, male-dominated academic disciplines (Beoku-Betts, 2004). When compared to other international study participants, students from Africa consistently reported experiencing difficulty regarding discrimination and stereotyping behaviors from the host country (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002).

The issue of Third World marginality is a distinguishing factor faced by students from the Global South, compounding experiences of racism and discriminatory behaviors (Beoku-Betts, 2004). Discourse surrounding disempowerment, passivity, and poor scientific training of Third World women has led to struggles for legitimacy in the scientific community for African women who seek advanced degrees in the United States (Beoku-Betts, 2004). Additionally, underrepresented students such as students of Color, older students, students with children, or part-time students often feel as if they do not "fit the mold" of traditional academic hierarchies, which support normative socialization patterns that typically benefit White, single, and male students (Gardner, 2008a, p. 130). Chinese students in particular are recruited by many universities in the United States but often face an atmosphere where cultural differences are ignored, leading to feelings of vulnerability and loneliness (Li & Collins, 2014).

English Proficiency

The ability to clearly speak and comprehend English in an academic setting is critical for the success of international students both in and out of the classroom. Numerous studies connect English proficiency and academic success (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006; Sherry et al., 2010; Yeh & Inose, 2003). A study conducted by Yeh and Inose (2003) found international students

with high levels of English proficiency experienced lower levels of acculturative stress, leading to greater adjustment in the host society, compared to students with low levels of English proficiency. International students often experience discrimination based upon their English proficiency (Constantine et al., 2005; Lindemann, 2005; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Spencer-Rodgers, 2000).

A study conducted by Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006) found English proficiency contributed to education strain for international students in the United States while, at the same time, academic achievement level was predicted by English proficiency and degree status. A variety of language difficulties can impact international students in the United States, such as unintelligible accents or use of different expressions (Beoku-Betts, 2004; Uba, 1994). Even international students from English-speaking countries can experience difficulties regarding accents, clear speech, and the use of slang or other forms of English (Mori, 2000).

Support

When coming to the United States, international students are often separated from existing social networks and support systems including familial, peer, and financial resources. The availability of support networks can impact persistence in a student's program (Gardner, 2007; Le & Gardner, 2010). "Researchers have found positive relationships between these kinds of support and outcomes such as lesser time to degree, persistence and completion, as well as overall satisfaction with the degree program and the department" (Le & Gardner, 2010, p. 254). International graduate students often claim their university offers limited institutional support, making them feel invisible on campus and in the community (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011), leading to academic isolation (McClure, 2007).

Studies suggest international graduate students have a hard time engaging in deep and

meaningful friendships with U.S. citizen students and rely on academic and emotional support from advisors and other faculty members (Lee & Rice, 2007; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Other important social support networks come from immediate families in the United States and other international students (Gomes, 2017; Kashima & Loh, 2006; Kashima & Pillai, 2011). If these social support sources are inadequate, the adjustment to life in the United States may be difficult for international graduate students (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

Positive relationships with partners during graduate school is a major concern for international students (Yi, Lin, & Kishimoto, 2003) due to the role they play in helping to deal with the stressors of academic life (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Pedersen, 1991). In fact, "married international students reported experiencing a lower level of social adjustment strain than the single ones" (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006, p. 776). Very little literature explores partner support networks when the spouse/partner is not living with the international graduate student. My study fills this gap in the literature by exploring the circumstances of partner support networks when partners were unable to, or chose not to, join the graduate student in the United States.

A strong relationship with the faculty advisor is shown to be an important factor in the socialization process for international students (Le & Gardner, 2010). In lieu of strong peer support groups, international graduate students may seek both academic and personal advice from a faculty supervisor, placing an increased importance on the quality of this relationship (Adrian-Taylor, Noels, & Tischler, 2007). As with American students, conflicts do arise with international graduate students and their advisors and include English proficiency issues, unclear communication, lack of feedback, and different expectations of the student-supervisor role (Adrian-Taylor et al., 2007).

Transnationalism

The concept of transnationalism adds to the understanding of the socialization processes and experiences of international graduate students living and studying in the United States (Gargano, 2009; Guarnizo, 1997; Levitt, 2001; Vertovec, 1997, 2001). With the departure from the students' home country to study in the United States, international doctoral students "mimic transnational migrant behavior as they navigate between home and host country" (Kashyap, 2010, p. 56). Guarnizo (1997) describes transnationalism as the "web of cultural, social, economic, and political relationships, practices, and identities built by migrants across national borders" (p. 287). This definition is aligned with the multiple realities the participants in my study navigated during their doctoral program. With a three-year timeframe in the United States to complete coursework, and the students' inability to bring their families with them while they study, the participants were constantly negotiating between their identity as a student in the United States and as a professional and family member in their home country. The concept of transnationalism was first introduced by anthropologists Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992) and since has been explored within the fields of "sociology, anthropology, humanities, cultural studies, language studies, and communication studies" (Tran & Gomes, 2017, p. 8).

With the rise of globalization discourse over the past two decades, transnationalism and globalization are often situated together in the literature with some theorists arguing that globalization is simply another term for transnationalism and others asserting that "contemporary transnational processes and spaces reflect globalization, but are more limited in scope" (Gargano, 2009, p. 334). In the public discourse, globalization has a complex and contested meaning, subject to debate (Kauppinen & Cantwell, 2014). Offering a broad and holistic definition, Knight

(2010) describes globalization as a process that is "increasing the flow of people, cultures, ideas, values, knowledge, technology and economy across borders, resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world" (p. 45). While the definition of globalization is similar to that of transnationalism, the concept of transnationalism includes engagement between the migrant's new home and place of origin, in addition to recognizing the global forces shaping both localities, often at the same time (Schiller & Levitt, 2006).

As noted, transnationalism specifically focuses on the ways which border crossers maintain ties, develop identities, and sustain connectedness to their home countries (Gargano, 2009). The social worlds of migrants span physical places and communities comprising of people's "cultural repertoires" influencing the construction of identities that the migrants navigate on a daily basis (Vertovec, 2001, p. 578). The international doctoral students in my study navigated identity construction as doctoral students, researchers, and emerging experts in their fields of study. The participants were scientists or faculty members at their home institutions whose status upon entering the United States immediately changed to that of a graduate student and foreigner. This necessitated the construction of a new "American" identity of a graduate student in the United States, while maintaining a professional "home" identity.

Transnational research explores the ways in which immigrants are incorporated into their host country through identity formation and the economic, religious, and cultural practices propelling migrant integration, while simultaneously recognizing migrants' transnational connections (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). In the United States, transnational migration scholarship is shaped by the "critique of the unilinear assimilationist paradigm of classical migration research" (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004, p. 1005). Migrants, just like international doctoral students, are not a homogenous group seamlessly assimilating into the host society. The

concept of transnationalism "generates new approaches for exploring and analyzing the flows of migrating populations, including educational border crossers" (Gargano, 2009, p. 334). The multiple contexts with which transnational migrants engage create a "social field…, a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed" (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004, p. 1009). The social field is used as a tool for conceptualizing the social relationships between migrants and the communities they leave behind (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004).

Transnational Social Field

The framework of the transnational social field is often described as "an abstract space immigrants use as they stay connected to both host and home countries" (Kashyap, 2010, p. 61). Fouron and Schiller (2001) describe social fields as "unbounded terrain[s] of interlocking egocentric networks that extends across the borders of two or more nation-states and that incorporates its participants in the day-to-day activities of social reproduction in these various locations" (p. 544). The framework of the social field is used to comprehend migration patterns and to examine trans-migrant identity negotiations (Gargano, 2009; Kashyap, 2010).

Several notable studies have advanced the conceptual notion of the transnational social fields framework. The studies explore second-generation migrants, countering the assimilation paradigm where transnational migration is considered a first-generation phenomenon and short-lived in the host community. Levitt's (2001) influential ethnographic study on Dominican migrants to the United States highlights the impacts of long-term transnational attachments, including the migrants' continued financial and personal investments in their homeland. The author found that class status prior to departure to the United States influenced economic success in the host country and impacted the quality of life when the migrants returned back to the

Dominican Republic to retire or start a new business. The dual U.S.-Dominican identities developed by the migrants represented a complex negotiation between multiple memberships with influences from political, religious, and social networks (Levitt, 2001).

Additionally, Fouron and Schiller (2001) captured the transnational social field of second-generation Haitian youth living in New York along with youth living in Haiti. The authors found that second-generation Haitian youth have a developed sense of self that incorporates personal, family, and organizational connections to Haiti. The second generation was also found to embrace long distance nationalism, reclaiming ties with their ancestral lands and connecting with their Haitian identity. Youth living in Haiti have different experiences than those living in the United States, but transnational social fields impact their daily lives through remittances and engagement with family living abroad. The lived experiences of transnational migrants as they navigate multiple identities and develop networks that span physical boundaries is understood through the transnational social field.

Higher education scholars studying international students use the transnational social field framework to better understand cross-border education through the lived experiences and identity formation of international students (Gargano, 2009). Gargano (2009) asserts, "employing the concept of transnational social fields challenges the prevailing discourse and recognizes that student experiences are shaped through ongoing interactions grounded in contexts of origin and new spaces" (p. 340). Recent literature, largely from the Australian higher education context, examines how "international student identity is shaped, reshaped and mediated within evolving transnational relationships" (Tran & Gomes, 2017, p. 5). Major themes highlighted in this body of work include: (1) how international students experience connectedness/disconnectedness in their host country; (2) how international students and

returnees experience connectedness/disconnectedness with their home country; (3) international student connectedness/disconnectedness and its relationship with identity development; and (4) how students transitioned to migrant status and the resulting experiences of connectedness/disconnectedness they faced in the host country (Tran & Gomes, 2017). This body of research adds to the literature describing the transnational social field of international students, but there still remains a gap in the literature focusing on international students from Africa who are studying in the United States and their experiences as transnational scholars.

Summary of Literature Review

Existing literature on doctoral student socialization and also international student socialization provides insight into the experiences of international doctoral students studying in the United States. Literature on socialization theory provides views for understanding the challenges and barriers international students face while attending universities abroad. However, several gaps remain. These include a specific understanding of how international doctoral students socialize, as much of the literature on international student socialization is concentrated around undergraduate students.

Similarly, little is known about how doctoral students from sub-Saharan Africa negotiate cross-national boundaries, manage multiple social spaces, and develop and maintain social networks while studying in the United States (Gargano, 2009). Another gap in the literature includes how highly structured and regulated international scholarship programs, such as the USAID-funded scholarship program, impact the socialization of doctoral students. This research study extends current studies by examining how international doctoral students navigate both their academic socialization and the socialization into the USAID scholarship program. Furthermore, this study addresses the gaps in the literature mentioned above by drawing on both

socialization theory and transnationalism (Gargano, 2009; Guarnizo, 1997; Levitt, 2001; Vertovec, 1997, 2001), particularly the framework of the transnational social field (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009). The theoretical frameworks provide a solid base from which I will further explore the socialization of international doctoral students.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study focused on the intersection of the international student experience, doctoral student socialization, and the influences of the USAID scholarship program. Current socialization models are developed under a Western context and primarily focus on domestic students. As a result, the higher education literature lacks a single theory to explore and understand how students from sub-Saharan Africa socialize when attending U.S. universities. In this section, I describe the theoretical perspectives guiding this study, which allow for a deeper exploration of international doctoral students' socialization. I utilize graduate student socialization (Gardner, 2007, 2008b) and the framework of the transnational social field (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009). Employing the theoretical approaches provides a mechanism to more fully understand how international doctoral students socialize while attending U.S. universities.

The Three-phase Model of Gardner

For this project, Gardner's (2007, 2008b) three-phase model of graduate student socialization served as the guiding framework for my study due to the framework's ability to address the phases of the doctoral experience from a programmatic perspective, while also speaking to the development of personal relationships fostered in graduate school (Gardner, 2010). The nature of the Gardner framework assists with understanding the various events and relationships occurring and developing during the doctoral program, providing a platform for

understanding the student experience, along with the student's interpersonal development (Gardner, 2010). In addition, this model attempts to address the inequity in the socialization process for those students who do not fit the White-male majority profile within the academy. The model allows for the exploration of the individual socialization processes, which can be experienced at different phases of the graduate education experience (Gardner, 2007). The three phases of Gardner's (2007, 2008b;) graduate student socialization model, admission, integration, and candidacy, are discussed in greater detail below.

The admission phase encompasses the time when a doctoral student applies to graduate school and carries on through the first year of coursework. During this phase, students are fulfilling the application requirements for entrance into the doctoral programs, completing the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), meeting with faculty and current students, deciding on which program to enter, potentially moving to a new location, attending their departmental orientation, developing peer networks, connecting with advisors and faculty, and finally engaging with their coursework. At the same time, students are beginning to understand and adjust to the role of graduate student and future professional through personal interactions with faculty and staff (Gardner, 2010). For many new graduate students, programmatic demands require increased independence where research, homework, and class assignments are completed individually with little support from faculty. Students are also required to know the course content in a thorough manner when entering a graduate program. As a result, students from small liberal arts schools who often had close guidance from faculty can feel overwhelmed within the structure of the large doctoral-granting, research-focused university (Gardner, 2008b).

The second phase of socialization, integration, spans from programmatic entrance to the attainment of candidacy status. A few key processes categorize this stage of socialization in

Gardner's three-phase model (2007, 2008b). First is the integration into the student's program and the formation of important peer and faculty relationships within their department and workplace. Bonds develop through classroom interactions, social engagements, teaching assistantships, and other departmental appointments (Gardner, 2008b).

Simultaneously, during the integration phase, students build relationships with faculty, their advisor, and committee members. The phase of integration is also defined by the balancing of many different types of responsibilities, such as managing coursework assignments, completing the necessary tasks for their job, preparing for comprehensive examinations, and navigating the cultural norms of the department and university. Students in the integration phase of socialization are concurrently making strong connections with faculty while transitioning to independent researcher which, for some, can occur somewhat abruptly during the candidacy phase.

Candidacy represents the third phase of socialization. Candidacy is a process largely expressed by the greatest level of independence, as students complete coursework requirements and transition to their dissertation research. This phase is attained upon successful completion of comprehensive examinations and/or the approval of a dissertation research proposal or prospectus and culminates with graduation. During the candidacy phase, students also prepare for future job prospects by submitting manuscripts for publication, attending and presenting at conferences in their field, and writing grant proposals. As a result, students may begin to perceive themselves as professionals, rather than students. The lack of structure and need for self-direction are notable issues occurring during phase three of socialization. Furthermore, graduate students often feel a sense of isolation, if they are no longer working in the department or completing their research off-campus (Gardner, 2008b).

The phased approach outlined by Gardner offers a way to capture the unique experiences shared by the participants of this study. The scholarship participants are essentially socialized into two programs: (1) the doctoral program at their U.S. universities and (2) the USAID scholarship program. In the admissions phase, the students applied to the scholarship program and waited to hear from the management entity and USAID missions regarding what U.S. university they were selected to attend. Once an advisor and university were identified, many students began to communicate with their advisors, which initiated the start of this important relationship. Also, during the admissions phase, several students received an orientation from their USAID mission describing life in the United States, but more importantly the orientations outlined the rules and regulations the students had to follow while they were living and studying in the United States. Then, the students were granted a visa and had to depart to the United States within a few weeks or days of obtaining their visas. When the students arrived on campus they typically received an orientation from the graduate school, the office for international students and/or their department. During this time relationships were also beginning to be fostered across campus.

In the integration phase of socialization, the USAID scholarship participants familiarized themselves with coursework, while also learning the implications of the USAID rules and regulations, which were unique to the scholarship recipients. For example, families were not allowed to visit students while they were studying in the United States and the students had to ask permission from USAID to return home for family visitation. As time progressed, the impact of family separation became a significant issue, causing serious emotional distress for the scholarship students.

In the candidacy phase, the students were sent home to conduct their research and write

the dissertation. In Gardner's (2007, 2008b) socialization framework, this stage is often marked by student isolation. In the case of the USAID scholarship participants, isolation is amplified by being thousands of miles away from the students' advisors and peers. During the candidacy phase, students make significant connections and learn what it means to be a member of their discipline and academia (Austin, 2002, 2003). Leaving during this time, as USAID policy dictates, may limit not only these connections and networking opportunities, but also publication outputs that are typically the result of group effort. Professional experiences such as going to conferences, presenting papers, and publishing with peers typically occur once candidacy status is met and, therefore, I argue that returning home results in the loss of important socialization experiences.

Transnational Social Field

The transnational social field allows for the examination of how relationships are developed and fostered through social networks and the transmission and flow of ideas and information between these embedded systems (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009). Furthermore, transnational social fields provide a way to reframe how international students are viewed in a Western context. "Rather than being treated as passive recipients of Western wisdom and knowledge, there is a potential to reshape perspectives about the international student experience to ensure that themes of exchange, reciprocity and interaction with host communities are recognized and developed" (Kell & Vogl, 2012, p. 4). Altogether, the transnational social field framework gives voice to international students and allows for the recognition of cultural flows and processes and individual agency that shapes the connectedness and lived experiences of these students (Dang & Tran, 2017).

For this study, the use of transnational social fields allowed me to explore the ideas of

connectedness and power dynamics, thereby gaining a better understanding of how the students engaged with the transnationalism setting, including relationships with their home, family, employer, and U.S. university (Tran & Pham, 2017). I examined the ways in which students developed and expressed a sense of connectedness through dynamic, fluid, and evolving social interactions and commitments with their advisors, peers, and even the scholarship network during their doctoral programs (Tran & Pham, 2017; Dang & Tran, 2017). At the same time, the students also maintained networks with family and employers in their home country.

Furthermore, the use of the transnational social field framework "recognizes various power dynamics and outcomes that manifest when individuals with a range of cultural identities encounter each other; however, it does not limit or predict how spaces, identities, or networks of association are created or negotiated" (Gargano, 2009, p. 335). In this study, students negotiated power in a variety of way, specifically with the USAID regulations, which influenced their daily lives on campus and impacted the social field in their home country. For example, some students negotiated a longer timeframe to gather data in the field, allowing more time to be spent at home with their families, lessening the impacts of separation.

Additionally, within transnational social fields, "individuals occupy different gender, racial, and class positions within different states at the same time" (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1015). This was evident in the current study through the positions of class, race, and gender. The participants were mostly middle-class professionals but, upon arrival to the United States, their class status changed to graduate student. Many of the participants had to support themselves in the United States while continuing to support their families back home, thereby placing economic constraints on the students. In addition, when arriving to the United States as students of Color, the participants found themselves marked as a racial minority, a position they did not

necessarily hold in their home country. Many of the participants also had to navigate new gender roles and norms of the host country.

Gargano (2009) argues, "transnationalism generates new approaches for exploring and analyzing the flows of migrating populations, including educational border crossers" (p. 334). The identities of international students are complex and evolving with many students "locating themselves in transnational and transcultural fields," living without a "singular national home-based identity," giving them "multiple and changing identities" (Tran & Gomes, 2017, p. 5). These identities can be expressed through the students' ethnicities, race, religion, or their aspirations for global mobility (Tran & Gomes, 2017). The transnational social field offers a way to guide research on the socialization of international students so the students' identities are not only linked to their home country of origin but encompass the formed identities in the United States and future goals of the students. The framework also allows for the exploration of the USAID policies and program, which had significant influence on the lived experiences of the students.

As Gargano (2009) asserts, "transnational migration scholars encourage us to acknowledge that although the world is politically and economically organized and divided into nation-states, aspects of our lives are penetrated by social and cultural processes that extend beyond geographical borders" (p. 334). The idea of transnationalism helps to explain how the students transferred knowledge and ideas during and after their doctoral programs with multiple stakeholders spanning geographical borders. The USAID participants were not only being trained to improve their own economic and academic circumstances, but to also build the capacity of the institutions to which they returned once their dissertation was completed. For instance, the students had to work jointly with their U.S. advisor and with a mentor in their home

country during their doctoral program. The purpose of the engagement with the advisor and mentor was to ensure the students' research was relevant to the specific context of their home country. The advisor/mentor framework also allowed ideas and new technologies to be distributed to the students' mentors, who often worked at the same institution where the students were employed. With increased communication technology and ease of global travel, geographical boarders no longer seem to limit scientific exchange or inhibit the development of partnerships between U.S. higher education institutions and extension agencies, policy influencers, and research institutions in the Global South.

Vertovec (2001) notes, "the global flows and cross-border networks represented by transnational migrant communities critically test prior assumptions that the nation-state functions as a kind of container of social, economic and political processes" (p. 575). The notion of breaking apart the container of a nation-state might also be viewed by the ways in which USAID asserts influence through the agency's development agenda. The aims of USAID's Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) policy and programmatic inputs are to increase the flow of ideas and technologies between U.S. entities and USAID priority countries. One reason for HICD investment is to improve food security, leading to more stable economies and democracies, but another important reason is to ensure the United States retains influence in international engagement through its development assistance programs and partnerships (Lechtenberg et al., 2014). In the context of this study, transnationalism was reflected in the movement of student researchers from their home countries to the United States, but also in the flow of information from U.S. institutions to partner organizations throughout the African continent, in order to strengthen institutional capacity and promote U.S. interests abroad.

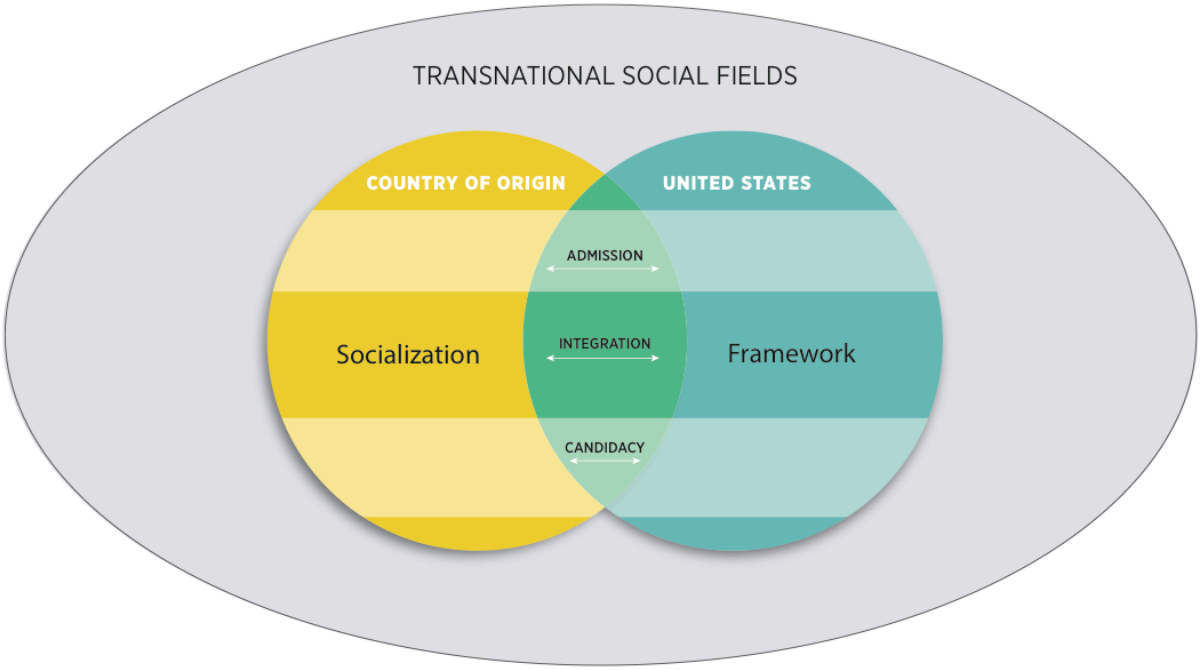
The theoretical framework of the transnational social field complements the three-phase

model of Gardner (2007, 2008b) in several areas. Whereas the Gardner model seeks to provide a framework in which the individual socialization processes experienced at different phases of the graduate education can be explored, the transnational social field provides a mechanism to investigate the "unique student-defined spaces, perceptions, and identity negotiations" of international students (Gargano, 2009, p. 339). As noted by Gargano (2009), "employing the concept of transnational social fields recognizes the fact that international students are straddling worlds while creating and engaging in transnational social fields where the associations, ruptures, and intersections between the social, personal, and academic are forged" (p. 336-337). The participants in this study were continuously managing multiple relationships both in their home country and in the United States while advancing scientific research and becoming the next generation of scientific change-makers in their country.

Linking Socialization Theory and Transnational Social Fields

Figure 1 illustrates how the socialization and transnational social fields frameworks interact with one another representing the lived student experience of the African doctoral students in this study. In the figure, the yellow and blue circles outline Gardner's three phases of socialization: admission, integration, and candidacy. The yellow circle depicts the socialization processes occurring in the student's country of origin while the blue circle represents the corresponding processes in the United States. Furthermore, the transnational social field is represented by an oval circle and depicts the transmission and flow of relationships, ideas, and information between the two embedded systems of each country. The framework is depicted in Chapter 6 reflecting key themes of the study.

Figure 1: The Transnational and Socialization Frameworks



Summary

This chapter discussed appropriate scholarly literature pertaining to the study's research questions and outlined two conceptual frameworks, which offer ways to understand the experiences of the international graduate student. The lived experiences of USAID scholarship participants while they are obtaining their degrees in the United States is unknown and unexplored in the literature and this study aims to provide insights on the lives of these particular students. Simultaneously, this research advances scholarship on the socialization experiences of doctoral students from Africa who attend U.S. universities and plan to return to their home country once their program is completed. Additionally, the transnational behavior and connectivity of international students presented in this study helps to advance transnational scholarship of international students living and learning in the United States. The next chapter

outlines the research design and methodology used to answer the study's research questions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to provide an improved understanding of the scholarship students' socialization as they progressed through their programs and navigated the structured environment of the scholarship program. This chapter explains the research design and methodology used in this study. The chapter is organized in the following manner: (1) description of the role of the researcher; (2) overview of the research paradigm; (3) narrative of the qualitative research methods; (4) detailed account of the data collection process; (5) overview of data analysis procedures such as preparing the data, coding, and reporting the data; (6) description of the implemented strategies used to enhance the trustworthiness of this study; and (7) review of the limitations of the study.

This study explored the socialization processes of international doctoral students attending U.S. universities through a USAID-funded scholarship program. The study helped to give a greater illustrative understanding of how the doctoral students experienced their academic programs, through the lens of socialization and the transnational social field framework. The qualitative research study utilized information from semi-structured interviews with 15 African doctoral students participating in a USAID scholarship program.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the investigator is considered to be the primary research instrument in which information is collected, observed, and interpreted (Merriam, 2002). Providing a self-reflective account and orientating myself to the study was a necessary aspect of the research process, especially since the participants of my study were international students of Color from Africa and I am a White U.S. citizen. The biases I inherently brought to this study were developed through my nationality, ethnicity, gender, culture, socio-economic status, and personal

history (Creswell, 2014). As such, there are various aspects of my professional and personal identity that came into consideration during this study.

My work experience as an international development professional has a significant influence on my academic and scholarly preferences. I have over a decade of experience working on USAID programs, which gives me a detailed knowledge of the culture of the agency and the policies influencing many of the students' experiences while they were studying in the United States. In addition, I have eight years of experience working at a research-extensive university. All of the students in my study attended similar research-extensive universities and my knowledge of these institutional types was helpful in order to understand the context in which my participants were socialized into their doctoral programs.

Understanding my positionality was an important consideration during the study. For example, participant responses drove my understanding of the students' experience, rather than imposing my own pre-existing ideas and assumptions based upon my experience working with USAID programs. During this study, assumptions were held in check through a peer debriefer who reviewed my data and analysis, an inquiry auditor who examined the process and product of my study, and member checks with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), techniques that will be described in further detail below.

I capitalized on my insider knowledge described above and worked to constrain undue influence on my research study. There are several additional issues I had to be aware of during the development of this research project. My personal identity as a White, U.S. citizen influenced my worldview and experiences as a graduate student in the United States. For example, my understanding of how international students experience their socialization was limited and I sought to reduce any preformed assumptions about the students' socialization processes I

brought to the interview and research process through my peer debriefer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With that said, as a doctoral student myself, I related to what the students were going through in terms of learning how to be a graduate student, managing time, and communicating effectively with one's advisor.

Furthermore, I am aware of the epistemological assumptions I brought to my research project. My research approach was guided by a social constructivist worldview. I believe the construction of reality is a complex interaction formed through exchanges with others through social and symbolic relationships within the given boundaries of a cultural context (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 2002). The social constructivist worldview aligns with my study in that my research sought to understand how the participants engaged with multiple stakeholders and developed relationships they negotiated throughout their doctoral programs. This viewpoint helped me to analyze the ways the students made meaning of their world through the cultural lens of their university and community, in addition to understanding how the students attributed meaning to the USAID program.

Additionally, my worldview is guided by the naturalistic paradigm in which the researcher recognizes the existence of multiple constructed realities where "prediction and control are unlikely outcomes" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Although participating in the same scholarship program, each student navigated their program and the USAID rules and regulations in a different manner, depending on the various realities they faced during the three years in the United States. I sought to examine how the meanings and experiences were derived within the various cultural landscapes and how socialization decisions were made during the students' doctoral program.

Research Paradigm

As noted above, this qualitative research project is a naturalistic, social constructivist study aimed to present a greater understanding of the perceptions, meanings, and experiences people attribute to phenomena in a cultural and social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My inquiry is guided by a "naturalistic paradigm," where realities are seen as "multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). The knower and the known are engaged in a highly interactive and inseparable relationship and the independent identities of both mutually influence each other (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Naturalistic inquiry provided a useful platform to investigate the multiple realities that existed within the international doctoral students' lives and allowed exploration into how the students accounted for and made meaning of their experiences and socialization processes while studying in the United States. The experiences of the international doctoral students were constructed and interpreted through constant interaction with multiple influences, some of which included their position within organizations such as the university, academic unit, research laboratory, the management entity of the scholarship program, and USAID. Naturalistic inquiry and qualitative methods allowed multiple realities to be expressed by the participants, leading to a greater understanding of how the students engaged and responded to the complex nature of the scholarship and doctoral programs.

The epistemology of social constructivism also influenced this study. Social constructivists assert individuals construct their own multiple realities, instead of seeking a single truth, based upon social contexts, values, and experiences (Creswell, 2014). In the social constructivist worldview, participants ascribe subjective meaning of their experiences through the social contexts, engagement with individuals and communities, and their own experiences

and background (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the social constructivist epistemology allows researchers to explore and interpret rather than control and explain, which is appropriate and relevant for qualitative research methods. Social constructivism and naturalistic inquiry are aligned because they allow for the individual experience to be understood in multiple contexts, and, as the researcher, I am able to observe and interpret the experiences of this group of international students.

In this study, understanding how international students from different countries across sub-Saharan Africa prescribed meaning during their doctoral program was important, especially as this sense-making related to the distribution of power and authority by the university, the scholarship management entity, and USAID. In this context of multiple realities, students were able to cast stories on their own terms (Charmaz, 2006). So, the voices of the students were acknowledged by their thoughts, opinions, and feelings described through rich description, rather than myself as the researcher explaining their experiences based upon my knowledge of USAID and my understanding of the rules and regulations of the scholarship program.

Often, doctoral students, especially international students, have little agency to express concerns within their academic institution or department, which can influence successful navigation of the socialization process (Gardner, 2005). The participants in my study had to adhere to the rules and regulations of the USAID scholarship program, in addition to institutional and departmental policies. Understanding how students ascribed subjective meaning to the transparency, or lack thereof, of USAID policies and rules and regulations was important, as these procedures had significant impact on the personal, professional, and academic lives of the students. A naturalistic, social constructivist approach was appropriate for this research, in order to present the international graduate student experience through the voices and perspectives of

the students, while the students were contextualizing their choices and socialization activities during their time in the United States.

Qualitative Research Methods

Mason (1996) contends, "Qualitative research aims to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual, and detailed data. There is more emphasis on 'holistic' forms of analysis and explanation in this sense, than on charting surface patterns, trends and correlations" (p. 4). Thus, diving deep into a specific topic is critical to develop the rich and thick descriptions needed for qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert, qualitative researchers "seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (p. 10). Furthermore, qualitative researchers focus on studying a small number of individuals in order to express the unique perspectives and experiences of each person, rather than gathering data from sizable samples and aggregating large data sets (Maxwell, 2009). The exploratory nature of my study is consistent with the axiom of qualitative research, as a greater understanding of the socialization processes of a small body of international doctoral students was pursued.

A qualitative inquiry approach was most appropriate for this study because the methodology allowed for the gathering of contextual data rich in detail (Creswell, 2014). Merriam (2009) notes qualitative research helps examine how "people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). The interpretive nature of qualitative research provided the description and analysis of the students' experiences as they moved through the phases of doctoral student socialization and navigated the rules and regulations of the USAID participant training program.

Pilot Study

An initial pilot of the study was conducted with 14 USAID scholarship participants

studying at two public research institutions located in the Midwest and Southern regions of the United States. The study was conducted under an approved Michigan State University (MSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. The sample consisted of eight women and six men pursuing their doctoral degrees and studying various disciplines within the agricultural sciences. The interviews probed into the students' experiences before they left their country for the United States, inquired about the students' decisions to apply to the scholarship program, asked about orientations that might have been conducted by USAID, and examined the students' previous academic and professional experience. Aspects of the students' arrival on campus and topics such as classroom adjustment, preconceived notions of U.S. culture, and culture shock were discussed. Additionally, relationships with mentors, advisors, other international students, and U.S. students were examined.

The pilot study allowed for the testing and modification of the initial protocol. The initial protocol was developed by John Dirkx, a professor in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education in the College of Education at MSU. By piloting the interview protocol, I was able to ascertain if the questions were suitable and addressed my research questions through the responses given by the students. Also, I was able to modify the question sequence based upon the flow of the interviews and improve the wording of some questions to improve clarity. The pilot interviews also helped to determine the amount of time it took to conduct the entire protocol. Each interview lasted from 30 minutes to two hours and was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Three major themes were identified from the analysis of the socialization processes and experiences of the 14 USAID scholarship participants including: (1) restriction of USAID rules and regulations; (2) challenging academic coursework; and (3) support. The students interviewed for the pilot study were in the admission and integration phases of socialization and briefly, the

findings of the pilot study are discussed below.

The USAID rules and regulations influenced lives and academic endeavors of the participants and emerged as a critical factor in the students' socialization during their doctoral programs at the two institutions. The participants described the impacts of policy restrictions on their socialization in two ways. First, time in the United States played a critical role in the lives of the students and was an incredible point of stress and frustration. With only three years in the United States to complete coursework and develop research skills, students had an intense focus on coursework completion that drove many of their everyday activities. Due to the time restriction, many students described how they chose not to participate in leadership training activities and decided not to interact outside the laboratory or classroom with colleagues, including forming deep connections with peers and faculty. The lack of engagement noted by many of the participants may have impacted the networks the participants formed during the rest of their programs and may limit potential partnerships between U.S. and host country institutions in the future.

The second influence of USAID policy restrictions included dependent restrictions, encompassing both the limitation of families living with the participants while they were studying in the United States and the restriction of families from visiting students, either on a short-term or long-term basis. Family separation placed an incredible strain and stress on students with spouses and children left behind in their home country. For the participants with young children, the strain of separation was almost unbearable, and the participants described feeling they would have been able to accomplish much more while they were studying in the United States if they had partners and children living with them.

The second theme emerging from the pilot data included the challenging academic

coursework the participants faced in the U.S. higher education system. The coursework was incredibly difficult to engage with for the pilot study participants. Even students who held master's degrees from Western institutions struggled with the academic rigor of their U.S. classrooms. Furthermore, the three-year timeframe for coursework completion added strain on the academic lives of the participants. For example, students in the pilot study were not able to take preliminary master's courses if they needed additional support on a particularly demanding subject. So, in many cases, the students often felt shortchanged by the USAID scholarship program since they could not become fully engaged with a certain subject and felt disadvantaged in the advanced doctoral courses. The impact of the rigorous coursework was more prevalent for the students in year one and two of their programs. Most of the participants in the third year of their programs had adapted to the U.S. classroom and accepted the limitations of the scholarship program.

The final theme emerging from the pilot study is support. In the context of this pilot study support refers to the emotional and academic help the participants received from their advisors and the personal friendships developed with faculty and peers in their doctoral programs. In light of the stress and struggles experienced by the students, most of them were succeeding academically and maintained a positive relationship with their advisor and peers. The students' advisors played a very important role in their lives, both academically and personally.

The participants formed close relationships with their roommates who were often from the same country or region. Friendships were developed with a small group of colleagues working in the same laboratories as the participants, many of whom were other international students. With that said, most of the participants noted that they did not engage with these friends outside of the work or classroom environment, due to homework and other course requirements.

Several of the students reported having a few American friends and some students did not have any close bonds with students from the United States. The lack of relationships developed with U.S. students did not appear to bother the participants, as they relied heavily on the support of the diaspora community, other international students, and friendships developed at their religious institutions. But, this finding should be a concern for USAID, as one of the goals of the scholarship program is to build sustainable relationships and networks between participants and their U.S. peers and advisors, fostering successful North-South scientific and higher education collaborations.

Furthermore, even though the U.S. curriculum was challenging for the participants, they were thriving within their U.S. classrooms and the diverse laboratories of their institutions. No participants reported regretting their decision to pursue their advanced degree in the United States and most participants expressed deep appreciation to USAID and the scholarship program for the opportunity. The pilot study helped to inform the current study by generating an initial sense of the lived experiences of the students and introduced the researcher to the different worldviews and identities expressed by the various participants based upon their personal histories, family structure, and previous academic and work experiences.

Data Collection

Three sources of data including interviews, document analysis, and field notes were used in this study, which are commonly utilized in qualitative inquiry research (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The process of data collection began with the submission of an online application to the MSU IRB. The study was approved as exempt on July 18, 2017 (see Appendix A). As part of the IRB application process participant information and consent forms were submitted for the individual interviews. The participant consent form is

located in Appendix B.

Participant Selection

A purposeful sampling strategy was utilized to identify participants from the pool of the scholarship students (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The students selected to participate in the study were in the integration phase of their doctoral program, so they were in the process of completing coursework in the United States. Based upon the results of my pilot study, interviewing students in their second and third year of their program provided more detailed reflections on their experiences and socialization processes, compared to students in their first or second semesters at their U.S. university. So, students who were in their second or third year were identified as potential participants for this study. Additionally, having students from both genders represented as equally as possible was also an important component of the sampling strategy. Access to the study's participants was provided through the management entity implementing the USAID participant training program.

Participant Recruitment

Once the students who fit the selection criteria were identified, an email was sent to 22 students inviting them to participate in the study, with 15 students agreeing to participate. A tentative interview schedule was developed based upon responses from the students. Consent forms were distributed to the students through email confirming the date, time, and location of the interview. The consent forms provided information on the research study and the participants' rights to withdraw or option out of any questions or from being recorded during the interview.

Research Sites

The 15 participants attended six different universities throughout the United States. The

universities are categorized as either R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity or R2: Doctoral Universities – Higher research activity through the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2015 edition (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, n.d.). Additionally, all the universities are land-grant institutions with a long history of supporting the agricultural sciences. Land-grant universities pursue a multi-purpose mission balancing practical education, traditional studies, and service to the community through extension and outreach (Abramson, Damron, Dicks, & Sherwood, 2014; Thelin, 2011).

Participant Interviews

After applying the selection criteria to yield a purposeful sample and recruiting students willing to participate in this study, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Each interview was guided by a semi-structured protocol, which allowed for flexibility in the conversation for follow-up questions and exploration of any additional issues the students wanted to discuss or explore in greater detail (Creswell, 2014; Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). The interview protocol was guided by the study's research questions as well as the theoretical underpinnings of Gardner's (2007, 2008b) three-phase model of graduate student socialization and the framework of the transnational social field (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009).

Moreover, the protocol allowed for flexibility within the discussions regarding the participants' academic, professional and personal experiences, and socialization processes. The interview structure allowed for sufficient opportunity for the participants to elaborate on issues regarding their personal, programmatic, and transnational experiences. The protocol used in the pilot study was updated to include more detailed information on the students' socialization processes as they progressed through their doctoral program. Questions addressing the transnational social field framework were also developed in order to capture the students'

navigation through multiple social fields while studying in the United States. The interview protocol was designed to allow for conversations between 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each student was given a pseudonym and the name was used throughout the duration of the study.

Second round interviews were conducted via Skype adding more illustrative information to my study. When preparing for the second interview, I carefully reviewed the transcripts of the first interview and my field notes, described in greater detail below. Reflecting on the information collected during our first conversation allowed me to gain a better sense of the socialization processes of the doctoral students and incorporate questions into my second-round interview protocol that I may have not addressed during our first conversation. The second-round interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes and provided an opportunity to expand on issues that were discussed at our first meeting. Furthermore, the second-round interviews gave me the opportunity to ask specific follow up questions and clarify any questions I had to previous responses.

Document Review

In addition to conducting interviews, a secondary document analysis of three USAID policies was conducted. The first policy reviewed was the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Policy Paper: A Mandatory Reference for Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 201 (USAID, 2009). As described in further detail in Chapter 4, the goal of the HICD policy is to provide a mechanism to support economic growth initiatives in USAID priority countries through capacity development programming in a variety of sectors (USAID, 2010). The USAID missions and their partner organizations are given guidance and tools for implementing HICD initiatives through the HICD Handbook, which promotes a market-based

development approach. The HICD policy was important to analyze because the scholarship program falls under HICD programming within USAID's Bureau for Food Security, the USAID office that funds this particular program. The policy offers a larger perspective of the goals of USAID's current participant training programs.

The second USAID policy reviewed was the ADS Chapter 201: Program Cycle Operational Policy. The ADS Chapter 201 contains the organization and functions of USAID, along with the policies and procedures guiding the agency's programs and operations. The Program Cycle is USAID's operational model for planning, delivering, assessing, and adapting development programming in a given region or country to advance U.S. foreign policy. This ADS chapter provides the policies, statutory requirements, and procedures for USAID's Program Cycle. The document contains mandatory procedures guiding all USAID programming, including human capacity development programs.

The final policy document is ADS Chapter 253: Participant Training for Capacity Development. This chapter provides the policy directives and mandatory procedures for the design and implementation of participant training programs funded by USAID (USAID, 2014). The document contains the specific rules and regulations impacting the daily lives of the international doctoral students. Examples of these regulations include: dependent travel, timeframe for study in the United States, and the termination of visa within three calendar days of course completion, among others. The Bureau for Food Security, USAID missions in Africa supporting the doctoral students, and the scholarship management entity typically follow the regulations set in place within the HICD Policy Paper, ADS 201, and ADS 253. The students' lives were impacted by all three of these policies while they were studying in the United States.

Field Notes

For this study, field notes were developed consisting of interview notes, analytic memos, and a research journal documenting the entire research process. During the interviews I took handwritten notes on emerging issues, content needing further clarification, and potential follow-up questions. Commonalities that arose in the interview sessions were also captured. After each interview I wrote an analytic memo highlighting my perceptions and reactions to the data collected.

Charmaz (2006) describes memo writing as providing "a space to become actively engaged in your materials, to develop your ideas, and to fine-tune your subsequent data-gathering" (p. 72). The memos also served as a way to connect emerging themes, patterns, and new questions throughout the interview data. Reflecting through analytic memos provided a means of unveiling biases concerning the international students and their experiences studying in the United States. Guiding questions and issues for my analytic memos included identifying major themes, interesting key points, or statements that could be followed up upon, and possible connections between the literature and my theoretical frameworks. Additionally, probing into the meaning of my findings and the importance of the findings to my research goals were also highlighted in the analytic memos.

A research journal allowed for early analytical insights and reflective and descriptive notes that were recorded following each interview session. The journal allowed reflection on subjective reactions during data collection, as well as my positionality as a researcher, doctoral student, and international development professional. The field notes developed for this study were used to guide my analysis, which will be described in greater detail below.

Data Analysis

During the study, data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection, as is commonly employed with qualitative inquiry (Maxwell, 2009; Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). To analyze, organize, and interpret the raw data I followed three procedures: (1) preparing, organizing, and summarizing data through interview notes, a research journal, and analytic memos; (2) reducing and organizing data through the process of coding and the development of meaningful themes and patterns; (3) presenting the data in a narrative form, figures, and tables (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011).

Preparing, Organizing, and Summarizing the Data

My study obtained thick and rich descriptions of the lives of a specific group of international doctoral students. The data analysis provided a means to understand my participants and allowed their voices to be heard and understood in an open manner. Keeping the data organized throughout the collection process was important to maintain the data's integrity. First, I organized and transcribed the interviews after each one was completed, noting important details such as the date and location of the interview, pseudonyms, the student's academic year, and home country origin. I then de-identified the transcripts giving pseudonyms to the participant, advisor, university, and home-country employer. The de-identified transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, a computer assisted software designed to increase the rigor of qualitative analysis.

A number of techniques employed during the data collection and analysis process summarized and synthesized the data, through the collection of field notes. First, during the data collection process, I took detailed interview notes on major issues and emerging commonalities occurring between the individual interviews. Further, the composition of an analytic memo highlighted my perceptions and reactions for each interview conducted. Finally, a research

journal served as a means to capture early analytical insights and reflective and descriptive notes following each interview session. This process of summarizing the data allows the researcher to see patterns throughout the raw data, interpret ideas and emerging themes, and make precise comparisons (Charmaz, 2006).

Coding Data

Qualitative coding is the process organizing and defining a body of data in order to interpret specific trends and patterns emerging in the study (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). Coding involves "naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). A code is a lower level of data analysis and a researcher-generated construct needed to identify labels, categories, patterns, themes, and theory capturing a "datum's primary content and essence" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Coding allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the research and provided an enhanced reflection of the data.

The coding process began as I collected and formatted my data and wrote my field notes. While these initial codes and ideas were not necessarily part of the final analysis, beginning the analytical process while the research is progressing is important for data analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Another initial step to the coding process was reading the interview transcripts several times to ensure comprehension. The transcribed interviews were read both manually and in the MAXQDA software to gain familiarity with the data. Deductive codes were established from themes identified in the literature, my pilot study, my theoretical frameworks, and key terms or phrases derived from the interviewing process. For example, while reading the transcripts I asked myself about the past experiences of the international doctoral students and how their personal history might shape the students' socialization processes while studying in the United States.

Guided by Saldaña's (2016) approach to an organized taxonomy of coding, I employed "first-cycle coding methods," which are the procedures happening during the initial coding process, represented by descriptive codes and categories of coding methods (p. 68). First cycle coding was repeated numerous times before proceeding to the next coding cycle. The subsequent step in my analysis was utilizing "second-cycle coding methods," which allowed me to explore more complex analytical work and develop cohesive and robust categories or themes (Saldaña, 2016, p. 234). This process involved streamlining codes, where data moved from the particular to the general, as themes and concepts began to develop (Saldaña, 2016). The implementation of second cycle coding helped to build categories and themes by integrating first cycle codes together. Attention was given to the commonalities, similarities, and differences in the themes. This process included presenting "negative" or "discrepant information" that contradicts the themes identified in the data (Creswell, 2014, p. 202). Presenting alternative explanations helped to improve the accuracy of my final themes and increased the validity of my study (Creswell, 2014).

Coding is a cyclical act and with each successive coding cycle the data was filtered, ordered, highlighted, and focused in order to grasp the meaning, themes, and concepts of my data (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9). While coding I kept my research questions, theoretical frameworks, and goals of my study nearby to help guide and focus my coding decisions (Saldaña, 2016). This coding strategy allowed me to use coding in an organized and expansive way. I constructed a codebook in MAXQDA for all data analyzed. The codebook assisted with checking the consistency of my codes as I went through the entire coding process. The method of interpreting themes and experiences that arose in my data was an important component of the analytical process, leading to my own explanation and understanding of the lives, experiences, and

socialization processes of the participants.

Reporting Data

Due to the nature of qualitative inquiry, presenting a balance between description and interpretation is vital in the dissertation. Providing thick and rich description gave background and context to my study, helping readers understand the phenomenon occurring in my research (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Patton (2002) asserts, an interesting report "provides sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the basis for an interpretation, and sufficient interpretation to allow the reader to understand the description" (p. 503). As the researcher, I gave a voice to the participants and situated those remarks within a broader context in order to uncover patterns, themes, and categories important to the research study. In the findings section, I presented extended quotes from the participants in order to give the reader a sense of the students' first-hand experiences during their doctoral programs.

My data analysis also included connecting and reporting the two frameworks used in this study. I developed Figure 2 (located on page 151), which connects the socialization and transnational social field frameworks, to show how the students utilized their transnational social fields while experiencing different socialization processes throughout their doctoral programs. I first began this analysis by reviewing the socialization processes occurring during each phase, in conjunction with the social fields the students reported developing and sustaining during their doctoral programs. In the admission phase, while still in their home country, students decided to apply to the scholarship program with the support of their family members. Several female participants with children described how their parents or siblings volunteered to care for their children while they were in the United States and this support aided in their decision to pursue their doctorate degree and accept the USAID scholarship once offered to the students. Family

relationships were important social fields the students relied upon throughout the duration of their programs from departure to the United States until their studies were completed in their home countries. When evaluating the admission phase, while the students were in the United States and integrating into their new communities, the data revealed the students' religious practices were an important component to keeping their African Christian or Muslim identity. The scholarship students' religious practices often linked them with other Africans who shared the same belief systems, but this religious connection also allowed the students to maintain a religious identity while other identities shifted, such as the students' entering into the United States as minority international students.

During the integration phase the students attended classes, began to learn new research skills, and developed ideas for publication in scientific journals. Many students reported how friendship networks spanning their U.S. institution and other universities in the United States assisted with their understanding of the U.S. academic system and helped the students navigate the complexities of their specific academic programs. For some students, the integration phase required the navigation of physical spaces between their home and host countries, as issues such as the death of a family member or child care problems arose during the three years the students were in the United States. For other students, social fields with family and friends were fostered electronically through frequent Skype calls or text messaging. At the same time, students were financially supporting family members back in their home country and engaging their networks in preparation for their data collection and eventual return home.

When thinking about certain issues that may arise when returning home to complete their dissertations, many students noted how they were anxious about being able to communicate frequently with their advisor or other committee members, as electricity and internet access were

often not reliable in their home countries. The isolation students faced when returning home in their fourth year was amplified by reduced communications between student and advisor due to this reduced access to dependable internet and electricity. By organizing and aligning the socialization and social fields data, I was able to explicitly connect the two frameworks utilized in this study, providing a robust description and interpretation of the study's data. Furthermore, the dissertation presents my findings and analysis in a manner that allows readers to understand my decisions and practices concerning my methods enhancing the trustworthiness of my study.

Trustworthiness

Several strategies were implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's analysis and findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research as an alternative to more traditional quantitatively-oriented criteria such as reliability, objectivity, and validity. The four criteria described to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research include: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These four principles were employed during my study in an effort to enhance trustworthiness.

Credibility

The credibility of my study was improved by applying triangulation, peer review, and member checking, enhancing the trustworthiness of my data. In qualitative studies, triangulation consists of the integration of data from a variety of methods and sources of information, reducing biases and improving reliability of data analysis (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2009). Through the collection of interviews, secondary documents, and field notes, the triangulation of data allowed for multiple types of evidence to validate my findings.

Additionally, the peer review process included a peer debriefer with knowledge of the

scholarship program and the study's theoretical perspectives. This individual independently reviewed all interview transcripts and my coded data in order to ensure the codes were applied consistently and captured all relevant information (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2002). At the beginning of the process, I gave the peer debriefer my codebook, which she then studied in order to recognize the codes used in the transcripts. The review of the codebook also helped the peer debriefer identify potential missing or insufficient codes in my data set. Each transcript was then reviewed by the peer debriefer and checked to verify the consistency of the codes. In addition, the peer debriefer raised questions pertaining to specific codes I used in my data analysis and suggested that I expand deeper on a particular code to reflect a more nuanced understanding of the student experience. The expansion of the specific code resonated with me, as I had been contemplating filtering the data further and the peer debriefer's comments validated the need to go deeper during my first-cycle coding process.

The accuracy and credibility of my study was also enhanced by member checking. Participants were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and provide additional comments and clarifications. During the second-round interviews I also presented the initial themes constructed from the first round of data collection and review of secondary documents. The participants were able to provide me with feedback on the initial themes, which helped me assess the credibility of my findings. By utilizing second round interviews I was also able to compare participant responses, checking for any discrepancies that may have arisen in the data between the two separate interviews. The participants were also given the opportunity to review an executive summary of my dissertation, which outlined my research questions, the overview of my findings, summary of research questions, and the recommendations developed targeting USAID and other international education scholarship programs. I received positive

feedback from the participants regarding the information presented in my executive summary, which also helped to check the trustworthiness of my study.

Transferability

Widely used in qualitative research, transferability is the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Marshall and Rossman (1999) note, "Although no qualitative studies are generalizable in the statistical sense, their findings may be transferable" (p. 43). The researcher is responsible for enhancing transferability by providing a detailed overview of the research context and the assumptions driving the research questions and theoretical underpinnings of the study. By using rich, thick description to convey my findings I was able to increase the transferability of this study (Creswell, 2014).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note the role of qualitative researchers is to provide "proper" thick descriptions to enable readers to understand the research context and make transferability judgments possible (p. 316). So, by providing rich detail and description, the readers of my study are able to determine how my findings compare or contrast to their own research or situations (Merriam, 2002). In this study, details about the students' lives, the universities they attended, the scholarship's management entity, and the government agency under investigation provided detailed background information pertinent to the study. Also, thick description is accomplished through extended quotes from my participant interviews, which highlight participants' perspectives, as it relates to the major themes and findings of my study.

Dependability

The common qualitative view of dependability is based on the idea of consistency and integrity and whether the study has been conducted with quality and care (Miles et al., 2014).

The researcher is responsible for accounting for the context within which the research occurs and ensuring the findings show meaningful similarity across the multiple data sources (Miles et al., 2014). An audit trail is a mechanism used to promote the dependability of a study and is a transparent description of the research steps taken from the beginning of a research project to the completed analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the development of a detailed audit trail began with the completion of notes and memos along with the maintenance of a research journal. Additionally, I maintained a coding notebook in MAXQDA capturing my thoughts regarding codes, themes, and patterns as they developed.

Finally, an inquiry auditor was also utilized who was responsible for following the data collection and analysis procedures throughout the study and judging the dependability of the results. The inquiry auditor provided detailed notes on the practices used to enhance the dependability of my study and offered suggestions on how to provide a deeper explanation of my research practices in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of my study.

Confirmability

Attempting to obtain researcher objectivity is a primary component of the concept of confirmability in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). A key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which researchers admit their predispositions and the degree and incidence of inquirer bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative researchers aim to have the findings of their studies shaped primarily by the respondents and not by researcher bias, motivation, or interest (Shenton, 2004). Eliminating all researcher bias is difficult, so strategies promoting confirmability are important for qualitative research. Reflexivity is one tool used to enhance confirmability and is commonly described as the researcher's scrutiny of their research experience, decisions, and interpretations of their research (Charmaz, 2006). In my study, I

acknowledged beliefs that underpinned certain decisions and offered reflective commentary outlining my predispositions, assumptions, and influences. Due to my own status as a doctoral student and White U.S. citizen, biases were recognized and documented during the research project. The audit trail, journaling, and triangulation strategies mentioned above also supported confirmability in my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Limitations

Certain limitations existed for the study which should be acknowledged (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The study investigated the experiences of international doctoral students participating in a specific USAID program. The scholarship program placed restrictions on the African students that most international students do not need to adhere to while in the United States. Some of the experiences and circumstances faced by the study's participants, such as a three-year limited timeframe of study in the United States, were a result of the USAID rules and regulations, which may not be transferable to an international student who is self-funded or has received a scholarship from another U.S. government agency or their home country government to pursue educational opportunities abroad.

Furthermore, this study used self-reported personal experiences of the USAID scholarship students and did not include input from other internal actors (i.e., faculty, advisors, management entity staff, USAID staff) and external stakeholders (i.e., employers, policy makers). Reaching out to other actors may have provided a better understanding of the context of the scholarship program and the experiences of the students from different perspectives. Moreover, the scope of this project did not include following the students as they reached candidacy status and graduated from their programs, limiting the overarching discussion of their entire doctoral process. Further, a single USAID program was analyzed; a comparison of USAID

programs or other U.S. government-funded or private scholarship programs may offer added explanation of the socialization and transnational experiences of international doctoral students.

Finally, interviews were conducted in English, which is not the primary language for many of the participants who often spoke two or three languages. However, if the students did not understand the question asked, I would rephrase the question to improve the clarity of the wording. Students were also given the transcripts for review and feedback if they felt additional explanation was necessary. Within these limitations, this study provides detailed information about the socialization processes and transnational experiences of international doctoral students.

Summary

My research study explored the socialization processes of international doctoral students attending U.S. universities through a USAID-funded scholarship program. To answer the study's research questions, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 international doctoral students who received scholarships through USAID. The methods to collect, produce, analyze, and report the data collected in this study followed conventions of qualitative inquiry research methodology. My data sources were generated through the interviews and analysis of USAID policies pertinent to this study. Additionally, the field notes produced during data collection were also used as data sources. These methods allowed for an exploration of how international doctoral students socialize within their academic programs and the USAID-funded scholarship program.

CHAPTER 4: SETTING THE CONTEXT

This chapter outlines the programmatic and institutional contexts of the study in order to better understand the lived experiences of USAID scholarship students as they navigated their doctoral programs. Background information on USAID is presented, along with a brief history of USAID investment in African higher education institutions. I then outline the structure of the participant training program, which supports the USAID scholarship students. I also discuss the rules and regulations of the scholarship program, which must be followed by the students while they are participating in the USAID program. Furthermore, I present examples of other international education scholarship programs as context to the larger body of funding of scholarships targeting students from the Global South. Finally, I provide brief biographies of the participants of this study, describing the students' research interests and goals for participating in the USAID scholarship program.

Background on the U.S. Agency for International Development

The scholarship participants were embedded in a program developed by a government agency with deep historical roots in Africa and whose current policies for participant training programs in many aspects have seemingly remained unchanged for decades. To understand the institutional context of the scholarship, a closer examination of USAID is thusly warranted. The agency was created in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy as a means to implement foreign assistance around the world (USAID, 2017). Currently, USAID is an independent agency of the United States government working closely with the U.S. Department of State and receiving overall foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. USAID is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid of behalf of the United States government, focusing on the

areas of agriculture and trade, economic growth, democracy, gender empowerment, global health, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance (USAID, 2017).

For decades, U.S. higher education institutions have worked with USAID to provide world-class education to a variety of stakeholders in the Global South (Board for International Food and Agricultural Development [BIFAD], 2003; Hervy & Gilboy, 2014). The term *Global South*, which largely surfaced from transnational and postcolonial studies, describes countries and regions which are economically underdeveloped (Williams, Meth, & Willis, 2009). Nations falling under the term Global South are typically located in Latin America, Africa, and some parts of Asia, where the majority of the world's poor live, leading to significant development challenges. The Global North is often represented by industrialized countries such as the Australia, United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan, all of whom have some type of development assistance programs to countries in the Global South.

Collaboration between U.S. universities and institutions in the Global South advances North-South linkages and supports effective two-way transfer of knowledge through research, partnerships, and exchanges of faculty and students (APLU, 2014). The flow of international students to the United States reflects the sustained importance placed on global knowledge production, transfer, and circulation, in which students seek educational opportunities unavailable to them in their home country (Shields, 2013). Subsequently, engagement, investment, and support of people and institutions within the Global South is a strategy USAID has adopted for the past six decades to promote U.S. foreign policy interests and reduce income inequality and poverty (APLU, 2014; BIFAD, 2003).

USAID has a 40-year history of providing advanced degree training for faculty and research scientists from the Global South, through the funding of human capacity development

programs (Gilboy et al., 2004). Examples of human capacity development programming include participant training projects, which can be short-term, long-term, and/or degree granting projects. Participant training projects are critically important for supporting the growth and strengthening the capacities of universities and research institutions in the Global South (APLU, 2014). They also offer degree-earning academic education for junior to mid-level professionals from academic and research institutions in USAID-priority countries (USAID, 2010). Through current programming and previous investments, USAID has supported the training of thousands of scholars at U.S. universities (Gilboy et al., 2004; USAID, 2010).

History of USAID Investment in African Higher Education Institutions

Since the early 1950s, the U.S. government has supported higher education capacity development efforts around the world, with a majority of funding channeled in Africa through USAID (BIFAD, 2014). Early capacity building programs focused on the human resources issues faced by many governments in post-colonial transitions. USAID anticipated training the "best and the brightest" in various African countries would help build the capacity of individuals and meet workforce needs of newly independent countries (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014, p. 7). Anecdotal evidence suggests that by the early 1970s, USAID realized these "best and the brightest" programs were contributing to the African "brain drain" with large numbers of students trained in the United States choosing not to return to their home country after their degree completion (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014, p. 7). The "brain drain," or the migration of skilled workers from the Global South to the Global North in search of employment opportunities and a higher quality of life, is said to have stalled the institutional capacity development of many sectors within Africa (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014).

To rectify the depletion of highly trained individuals, USAID invested in programs such as the African Graduate Fellowship Project (AFGRAD), which was designed in partnership with the African-American Institute (AAI), American graduate and professional schools, and African governments. The primary goal of the flagship AFGRAD program was to train future African leaders in order to accelerate economic growth and stimulate social change, in line with the goals of the United Nation's Decade of Development program launched in the early 1960s (APLU, 2014; Holland, 2010). The program was designed to enhance the professional, technical, and administrative capacity of host country institutions by providing university and postgraduate training to selected individuals (Management Systems International [MSI], 1995).

AFGRAD I, II, and III operated from 1963–1990 and were followed by the African Training for Leadership and Advanced Skills (ATLAS) project from 1990–2003. During this time, higher education policy recommendations supported by USAID focused on rural development, natural resource management, employment, and income generation (APLU, 2014). Additional policy recommendations of this era were in line with the U.S. university land-grant model and suggested African universities should redesign themselves to make contributions impacting the public, therefore becoming both problem-solving and educational institutions (APLU, 2014). Land-grant universities pursue a multi-purpose mission balancing practical education, traditional studies, and service to the community through extension and outreach (Abramson et al., 2014; Thelin, 2011). As a result, USAID-funded participant training programs became aligned with these recommendations, training individual scientists who would return to their home institution or university to use their "predetermined knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address or solve targeted operational problems" (USAID, 2010, p. 5). A large number of the trainees returned home to flagship research universities across the African continent and some,

later in their careers, entered the private sector or started their own businesses.

The AFGRAD and ATLAS programs ultimately trained 3,219 African professionals from 45 countries; these individuals received Ph.D. and master's degrees at U.S. universities in a variety of fields determined to be critical for economic growth including agriculture, business, engineering, and economics, among others (Cohen, 2010; MSI, 1995). Furthermore, the programs saw a high return rate of participants to their home country after their training was completed (Hervy & Gilboy, 2014). A comprehensive external review of the two programs was commissioned by USAID in 2004 and presented several important findings regarding participant programs in the Global South (Gilboy et al., 2004).

Firstly, human capacity building has the ability to contribute to institutional development so long as the donor and host-country institutions are committed to long-term programming. Said programming should incorporate a strategic framework for institutional change based upon the results of a comprehensive needs assessment. (APLU, 2014; Gilboy et al., 2004). The program evaluation found AFGRAD/ATLAS participants returned from their training in the United States and "applied their knowledge and skills directly in ways that had measurable impact on African institutions" (Gilboy et al., 2004, p. ix). Another important policy finding suggested that, although the cost of training students in the United States was significantly higher than training at a regional African institution, the impact of U.S.-based training was noteworthy for the professional and personal development of the students. Specifically, soft skills developed at U.S. institutions were described by participants as being critical for their professional development and their ability to foster sustainable institutional change in their home-country institutions (APLU, 2014).

Even with the apparent success of these programs, during the 1990s USAID significantly

withdrew its support of long-term training programs for African scholars seeking to gain advanced degrees in the United States. The numbers are quite startling with 9,128 students trained in 1990 reduced down to 1,212 students by 2000 (BIFAD, 2003). In response to the disengagement in long-term participant training, the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) submitted a proposal in 2003 to then USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios proposing "Second Generation" training and capacity-development programs that would build the capacity of the agricultural sector in Africa. BIFAD expressed serious concerns regarding the state of the agriculture and agribusiness sectors and urged USAID to begin training more advanced degree holders in these areas.

BIFAD argued that the training of master's and Ph.D. students would strengthen the capacity of public and private institutions to educate students and carry out research to solve food security issues (BIFAD, 2003). In response to this call to action, USAID funded several cost-effective pilot participant training programs that were operational from 2004-2010 with the goal to re-engage USAID in participant training in agriculture and agribusiness (Gilboy et al., 2010). The scholarship program evaluated for this study was created based upon the results of the initial pilot projects aimed at reengaging long-term participant training programs.

The Participant Training Program

This study focuses on one specific participant training program developed and funded by USAID through the Bureau for Food Security. The Bureau of Food Security (BFS) was instituted within USAID in 2010 to administer the U.S. Government's Feed the Future (FTF) initiative, in addition to other agricultural development programs funded by USAID (USAID, 2017). Within BFS, the Office of Agricultural Research and Policy (BFS/ARP) provides guidance and technical support in the design and implementation of programs in agricultural research, and capacity

development and policy. The Human and Institutional Capacity Development Division in ARP implements human and capacity development programming for the BFS.

The scholarships given to the study's participants were funded under a specific participant training program, which has several objectives important to consider for this study. The participant training program aims to provide the development of research skills to individuals, leading to the strengthening of institutions focused on advancing research and educating the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs, technicians, policymakers, managers, and researchers. The capacity development activity therefore promotes innovation within the agricultural sector and reduces poverty in USAID-priority countries. Additionally, the program builds a strong and empowered cadre of scientists and researchers with professional skills and a growing knowledge of their discipline who were considered vital to achieving robust and sustained growth in agriculture and poverty reduction.

The program is managed by a U.S. university who is responsible for working with USAID Washington and the various USAID mission offices to recruit and place students at U.S. universities. Students are recruited from USAID priority partners, typically comprising of universities, research institutions, and government ministries. Most of the participants are working professionals whose employers agreed to hold their positions while they are pursuing their doctorate degrees. The scholarship process is very competitive and involves taking the GRE and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), filling out different kinds of paperwork, and interviewing with the management entity and USAID missions. Once accepted to the program, the students are required to sign a contract stating they will return home after their coursework is completed and that they will remain in their home country for two years after graduation.

A list of the accepted scholarship participants is distributed by the management entity to universities around the United States with strong agricultural and natural sciences programs. Most of these universities are land-grant and large public universities pursuing a mission of applied education, service, and traditional studies (Thelin, 2011). Faculty at U.S. institutions are able to bid for students who have similar research interests. The USAID mission in conjunction with the management entity then makes the final decision on what university the participant attends based upon faculty and student applications.

The management entity provides a sub-contract to the university receiving the scholarship student, including funding for tuition and fees, money for research expenses, and a stipend for the student's graduate assistantship position. The student receives a new laptop, money for books, funding to cover travel expenses to a conference each year, and a plane ticket to return to their home country at the end of their second year in the program. Each student also receives research funding ranging from 5,000-10,000 dollars, depending on their research project. The funding is distributed to the student once they return home in the fourth year of their programs.

The students are required to choose a research topic relevant in their home country and they return home in their second year to collect initial data for their dissertation. In addition to the graduate assistantship stipend, most students receive some type of study leave stipend from their employer, which provides income to support their family members while they have a leave of absence from their jobs. The student's advisor is also provided funding to travel once to the student's home country, if desired. The advisor typically travels to Africa while the students are collecting their dissertation data.

USAID Rules and Regulations

An added layer of complexity experienced by doctoral students participating in this specific USAID-funded scholarship program includes the rules and regulations they must follow during their doctoral programs. To minimize the possibility of "brain drain," the scholarship program is structured to ensure students return to their home country upon degree completion and USAID enforces several regulations to this effect. As mentioned above, the students are required to sign a contract stating they will return home and commit to staying in their home country for two years after graduation. Furthermore, students are not allowed to bring their families with them while studying in the United States. The likelihood of students choosing to stay in the United States is thought to be reduced by not allowing families to live in the United States while the students complete their coursework. Families are also not allowed to make either short-term or long-term visits during the three years the students are studying in the United States.

The scholarship participants are allowed travel back to their home countries for personal reasons, after receiving USAID approval, but can only be in-country for 15 business days and must fund the travel back home themselves. The students are allowed to travel home to conduct pre-dissertation research, which typically occurred in year two of their program, with the cost of the plane ticket paid for by the scholarship program.

Furthermore, students are required to return home and their visas are immediately cancelled upon completion of their final semester of coursework. Students must complete their coursework in three years and their dissertation in the fourth year of their program. While the management entity may allow some flexibility depending on the needs of the student and their advisors, typically the students are required to adhere to the timeframe regulations. Once the

students complete their dissertation, they are required to defend their dissertation remotely through a video conference call from their home country and are not provided a visa or funding for travel to return to the United States to defend their dissertation or attend the graduation ceremony. Other restrictions include not being able to own and drive a car while residing in the United States. Altogether, the scope of policies specific to the USAID scholarship program necessitate considerable navigation on the part of the scholarship students.

Overview of International Scholarship Programs

Over the past two decades, students have become increasingly mobile, with the numbers of international students doubling between 2000 and 2016 to 4.5 million students (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2016). However, access to international education remains primarily accessible to students of higher economic status, especially since most international students are self-funded (Dassin, 2018) and are often required to pay higher fees than their domestic counterparts (Cantwell, 2015). During the 2014-2015 academic year, only 1% of students from the Global South received scholarships to pursue higher education from governments in the Global North (IIE, 2016).

In response, many privately funded programs have targeted investments to fund access to higher education for economically marginalized communities (Dassin, 2018). Governments in the Global North continue to invest in higher education scholarships in conjunction with broader economic development programming, while private foundations and corporations have increasingly developed scholarship programs with the goal to promote social change in the Global South. In order to provide context to the current international higher education scholarship programming environment, the following sections introduce a select number of

higher education scholarship programs funded by the U.S. government and private entities who have made significant investments in educating students from the Global South.

The Fulbright Foreign Student Program

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with the goal to advance mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the world. The overarching Fulbright Program comprises of several different grant programs sending U.S. citizens abroad while bringing non-U.S. citizens to the United States. The Fulbright Foreign Student Program is a mechanism that brings graduate students, young professionals, and artists from around the world to attend U.S. universities in order to advance their education and conduct research. The Fulbright Foreign Student Program operates in more than 155 countries worldwide with roughly 4,000 foreign students receiving Fulbright scholarships each year. Unlike the scholarship programs supported by USAID, the U.S. Department of State allows Fulbright students to bring their families with them to the United States and the students are also allowed to purchase and drive vehicles while living in their host communities.

Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program

Developed as a social justice program, the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) provided entrance to graduate-level opportunities for marginalized individuals lacking systematic access to higher education in 22 countries across Africa, Middle East, Asia, and Latin America. The program operated from 2001 to 2013 and gave more than 4,300 international scholarships to universities around the world. The Ford Foundation provided an initial grant to fund the program in the amount of 280 million dollars, the largest single grant in the foundation's history. The participants selected for the IFP programs were assessed based

upon their academic and leadership skills and commitment to social justice causes in their home countries. Tracer studies show 82% of participants returned to their home countries with 90% employed or continuing on with education opportunities after program completion (Kottmann & Enders, 2011).

Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program

The Mastercard Foundation launched their $500 million education initiative in 2012 with the aim to address access to education and employment for economically disadvantaged students primarily from the African continent. Similar to the IFP program, students who were committed to giving back to their communities were given priority for selection into the scholarship program. The Scholars Program funds secondary and university education including financial, academic, and social support, as well as transitional assistance into the workforce. Based upon the enrollment numbers from 2016, of the 19,000 Scholars, 10% were enrolled in higher education institutions including 9% in undergraduate programs and 1% enrolled in graduate programs, with the remaining students attending secondary institutions (Burciul & Kerr, 2017). Reflecting a shift in programmatic strategy, more undergraduate students will be trained in Africa in the near future, with a larger proportion of master's students attending universities outside the continent (Burciul & Kerr, 2017). The pivot in the Mastercard Foundation's strategy is based upon evidence suggesting African students who receive their master's degree abroad will return back to the region after their degree completion (Burciul & Kerr, 2017; Marsh, Baxter, Di Genova, Jamison, & Madden, 2016).

Overview of the USAID Scholarship Participants

Brief biographical summaries of each participant are presented in this section and outline the African students' research focus and their goals for participating in the scholarship program.

Alex

Alex's research interests broadly focus on how climate change impacts agricultural systems and food production for smallholder farmers. Alex's goal for participating in the scholarship program was to enhance his research abilities and contribute effectively to his employer. Knowledge gained in the United States will improve Alex's ability to win grant proposals for his institution, develop scholarly research articles submitted for publications with high impact factors, and grow his knowledge in order to influence policies impacting food production in Africa.

Brad

Brad's research focuses on value chain development with the goal of improving farmer's incomes and livelihoods. Brad's participation in the scholarship program was fed by a desire to increase his knowledge and research expertise in his field of interest. Also, he wishes to contribute to the capacity development of his home institution by writing effective proposals for research funding and Brad felt having a doctorate degree would increase his competitiveness for grant funding.

Ian

Ian is an agricultural expert with experience managing capacity development programming focused on improving the management of agricultural resources. Ian's research focuses on improving the cropping systems of farmers in his home country.

George

George was motivated to participate in the scholarship program in order to increase his research skills and translate his new skills into generating and disseminating knowledge.

George's research interests focus on improving food products resulting in the improved health status of the citizens of his country.

Jessica

Jessica's research interests span improving crop production and reducing food insecurity. Her primary goal for participating in the scholarship program was to contribute to the agricultural development in her home country. Jessica has a strong desire to empower youth, especially girls, and women, in addition to inspiring and mentoring junior colleagues in the agriculture sector.

Joe

Joe's research focuses on improving farmer's outputs through the distribution of new technologies. Joe's motivation to participate in the scholarship program was to become a high-performing scientist at his institution and develop research that will impact the livelihoods of his home-country citizens. He seeks to learn research skills in order to publish in research journals and write effective grant proposals, benefiting Joe's employer and advancing his professional development goals.

Justin

Justin pursued his doctorate degree to improve his research skills and build a professional network connecting him to global scientists. Justin also desires to contribute to the training of the next generation of research scientists in his home country. His research interests focus on improving food systems and the quality of food in Africa.

Kate

Kate's research interests focus on the impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector. Kate was eager to get her Ph.D. in the United States so she could learn different academic

systems and ways of knowing and use her newly acquired knowledge back at her home institution. She also wanted to improve her research skills. Kate is a seasoned mentor to female scientists at her home institution and would like to contribute to policy recommendations leading to improved livelihoods.

Kyle

Kyle has experience evaluating the effectiveness of new agricultural technologies before they are introduced to smallholder farmers. Kyle's current doctoral research focuses on smallholder farmers' adoption of agricultural technologies and improving agricultural commercialization to ensure sustainable production in the agricultural sector. The motivation for his participation in the scholarship program stemmed from Kyle's desire to learn cutting edge research and develop sustainable networks in the United States to enhance funding and research opportunities for his institution. With a Ph.D., Kyle can take part in high-level decision making at his institution, leading to professional growth and institutional capacity development.

Megan

Megan's research interests span value chain development, food security, climate change, and agribusiness. Megan desired to improve her quantitative analysis skills and expand her knowledge of research processes at a high-level research university in the United States. She has a strong desire to become a positive role model for her community and empower girls, youth, and other vulnerable groups to pursue their dreams.

Mike

Mike's research focuses on improving the production of a specific crop in his home country, but Mike is also experienced in all aspects of agronomy including crop protection and

breeding. Mike desired to increase his knowledge and research skills in order to improve crop production and increase the incomes of farmers.

Nick

Nick's research interests focus on improving smallholder agricultural technology in order to increase food security in his home country. Nick's goals for participating in the scholarship program include obtaining a Ph.D. at a reputable university and gaining knowledge that he will apply back at his home institution. Nick is driven to understand how resource management can improve agricultural productivity and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Africa.

Rose

Rose's research interests focus on understanding farmers' adaptations of technologies. Rose's main goals for participating in the scholarship program were to improve her research skills and transmit new ideas to key stakeholders. She also desired to improve her quantitative and other analytical research skills.

Samantha

Samantha's research is focused on improving the crop production of smallholder farmers and ultimately improving the livelihoods of farmers and their families. The scholarship program offered Samantha the ability to hone her research skills and become more innovative in her particular field of interest.

Sarah

Sarah's research interests focus on the development of safe food systems. Sarah's participation in the scholarship program stemmed from her desire to improve her research skills. She would like to significantly contribute to developing a high-functioning higher education system in her country.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided programmatic and institutional contexts of the USAID scholarship program, helping to frame the research study. Information on USAID and the specific participant training program was presented in order to frame the rules and regulations the scholarship participants were expected to follow while participating in the program. I also provided examples of other international education scholarship programs, introducing a variety of government and privately funded scholarships targeting students from the Global South. Finally, biographies of the participants of this study were presented, illustrating the various backgrounds and professional goals of the individual students.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This chapter presents key findings from the examination of the experiences of international graduate students obtaining their doctorate degrees in the United States. The findings of this study illustrate how international doctoral students maneuver the challenges of their doctoral programs, maintain multiple identities, and navigate transnational social fields between their host and home countries, as they pursue their degrees in the United States. This chapter offers insights to the socialization of international doctoral students at six research universities through the analysis and synthesis of data. The chapter begins with a general overview of the study's findings and introduces the four themes of the study: (1) construction and maintenance of support systems; (2) development of knowledge, skill sets, and networks; (3) negotiating research, coursework, and timeframes; and (4) programmatic progress amid USAID rules and regulations. Each theme is then explored in greater detail via thick and rich descriptions of the participants' experiences in their doctoral programs.

Overview of Findings

The decision to pursue a doctorate degree launches international students into a journey only a limited number of people attempt and even fewer reach, with doctoral completion rates hovering at a low 56.6% (Sowell, Zhang, Redd, & King, 2008). International graduate students balance the demands of rigorous academic programs while navigating new and complex cultural environments for the purpose of advancing their careers as scientists and researchers. Graduate school requires persistence, dedication, and sacrifice in order to achieve the desired goals of the students. This chapter offers insights to the journey and experiences of the international doctoral students through the dual lens of socialization theory and the transnational social fields framework. The theoretical perspectives used in this study provided a platform for discussion

and analysis of the socialization of international doctoral students who are participating in a USAID-funded scholarship program. Additionally, the study locates these transnational students in various social fields as they progressed through their programs. The ways in which the students experienced their socialization as they advanced through their program was situated within multiple transnational social fields, as relationships and identities were continuously re-framed based upon time and geospatial considerations.

Through the analysis of the study's data, I present four themes which reflect the lived experiences and socialization processes of USAID scholarship participants including: (1) construction and maintenance of support systems; (2) development of knowledge, skill sets, and networks; (3) negotiating research, coursework, and timeframes; and (4) programmatic progress amid USAID rules and regulations. These four themes are closely intertwined and are not without overlap. In such cases, data are presented in the theme deemed most appropriate and representative of the lived experiences of the students.

The first theme contains data organized around the idea of support, as students reported receiving institutional, personal, and academic support from the key relationships developed during their doctoral programs. Academic and personal support systems are often found in the forms of faculty and peer relationships and are cited in the literature as critical for graduate student success and satisfaction with their programs and life in graduate school (Gardner, 2007). The second theme represents experiences of professional and cognitive development, produced through the building of soft skills, exploration of disciplinary networks, and classroom and laboratory learning. These facets of development are important parts of the doctoral student experience, as students can view themselves, their discipline, and future work in a much different light than when they started their doctoral program (Austin, 2002). The third theme denotes the

balance of the multiple dimensions of research and coursework within a structured academic timeframe. This theme reflects the unique nature of the participants' experiences following USAID rules and regulations regarding the strict coursework completion timeframe. The theme of balance also echoes tensions commonly found in graduate school, where students must balance coursework requirements and employment duties, while also navigating their research objectives and goals (Gardner, 2007). The fourth and final theme describes the process in which students progressed through their program within the structured environment of USAID's rules and regulations. The four themes will be explored in more detail below.

Theme One: Construction and Maintenance of Support Systems

This section describes the various support systems developed and fostered during the students' time in the United States. First, I outline how programmatic orientations provided an initial introduction into the scholarship program and the U.S. university system. The orientations played an important role connecting the students to resources and support systems on campus and gave them an initial understanding of the expectations of their academic departments as well as the scholarship program. Second, I present the various peer networks formed by the students and introduce data showing how the scholarship students developed close bonds with other international students, including those from the African continent. Third, I examine the deep bonds formed between the students and their advisors. Finally, the role and maintenance of the family support system is explored, with particular attention given to the students' management of complex relationships through the transnational social field with parents, spouses, children, and extended families.

Programmatic Orientations

The initial transition to the role of doctoral student in the admissions phase was facilitated

by multiple orientation sessions before departure and immediately after the students arrived in the United States. The scholarship students entered their graduate programs having to learn the expectations and requirements of both their academic programs and the USAID scholarship program. The students reported attending several orientation programs hosted by various entities such as, USAID, the office supporting international students, the graduate school, their departments, and their research laboratories. Orientation programs are implemented widely in higher education and are used to define expectations (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006) and can help alleviate initial concerns and worries while specifying departmental policies and structures (Vickio & Tack, 1989).

USAID program orientation.

Preparing for departure to the United States included, for some students, orientations by the USAID mission in their home country and the distribution of information by the management entity. The USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 253 states that a pre-departure orientation must be conducted by "implementer staff, Mission Participant Training staff, and technical office staff" (USAID, 2014, p. 33). The USAID orientation provided an initial understanding of American culture, but primarily was meant to outline the rules and regulations the students were obligated to follow under the scholarship contract. Furthermore, many students described how the management entity provided information on the U.S. academic experience, a brief explanation of U.S. culture and norms, information on what items they should take with them, and the rules and regulations of the scholarship program.

While USAID orientations were given to many students, not all the students reported receiving an orientation directly from the USAID mission in their country. Nine of the students reported having an orientation conducted by either USAID staff or staff from the management

entity who were in-country before they departed for the United States. Yet despite the USAID ADS directive, six students stated they did not receive an orientation from their USAID home-country mission. When conducted, orientations optimally facilitated a smooth transition for the student and helped with the adjustment to life in the United States although, in reality, the outcomes were mixed, as detailed below. Nick described his orientation experience at the USAID mission:

> We had an orientation at the USAID offices in [my home country]. They talked to us about the expectations, the cultural differences, how we are supposed to conduct ourselves when we are in the United States. They talked a lot of things about how we are to assimilate to this culture. And also, the importance of going home after we finish, we make sure we go back home.

Joe reiterated this sentiment when discussing his experience with the USAID mission in his home country by saying, "They tell you what the program is about, what we expect to see in the United States, what they expect of you, what they do not expect of you." Jessica discussed how her orientation with the USAID mission in her home country primarily focused on the rules and regulations of the scholarship program and provided little information about the academic program or life in the United States:

> Well it was more or less like this is what you are supposed to do when you go to the U.S. and what you are not supposed to do. For example, you cannot drive, you cannot get a license, you cannot go with your families. So, we didn't actually learn, like life in the U.S., they didn't give us anything. I didn't know what everything is about coming here.

In Jessica's case, she did not feel that the USAID mission prepared her well for understanding what her academic experience or life in the United States was going to be like when she arrived

at her university. Before applying to the program, many students described how they were well informed about the strict regulations of the USAID scholarship. However, one student discussed how she did not know about the family restriction policy until she received her orientation from the USAID mission, "We didn't know that they wouldn't allow your kids to join you, like we see with other scholarships. Like always when there is a problem we have to be moving backwards and forwards, we have to go home to check." Returning home to care for her family was an unexpected financial burden and placed additional stress on this student, which might have been better mitigated through clear communication of the scholarship rules before she applied to the program.

Another student expressed disappointment that she did not receive an orientation from the USAID mission in her home country, "And the orientation, like telling you how things are done, who you will meet, American culture before coming, yes that one would be great, I wish I could have had an orientation before coming." Providing information on what to expect during a time of adjustment was critical for the students who were seeking advice on how to best transition into their new university environment.

One student described how he did not receive an orientation from the USAID mission in his home country, but he did indicate the management entity provided assistance regarding what he should expect when arriving to his university and provided a list of items he should bring to the United States. The management entity also helped the students prepare for the GRE and the TOEFL exams and provided guidance on how to conduct themselves during the interview for their visa at the U.S. Embassy. When discussing the visa application process, Joe described how the management entity facilitated the entire process for the students:

> It's actually a very cumbersome process, but for our case I think everything was made so easy that we didn't even see all those issues and steps someone is supposed to do. I think [the management entity] did almost everything for us, so it was just a matter of providing the documents and the application was done; we were just appearing maybe signing some documents.

Compared to international students who embark on the process of graduate school alone, the USAID scholarship students received valuable assistance from the management entity who facilitated the process for them. Once the students received their USAID orientations and/or were given information packets by the management entity, they were granted their visas and embarked to their U.S. university. When the students arrived to their university they were offered orientation programs by the international student support office, the graduate school, their departments, and their research laboratories. These programs outlined the various support services available to the students on campus.

Orientations conducted at the university.

Orientation programs provided by the students' U.S. universities helped them transition from working professional to graduate student. Additionally, those students in possession of a fundamental knowledge of U.S. culture and society were able to transition more smoothly into their new communities, classrooms, and workplaces. Sarah discussed the orientations she received from the graduate school and her departmental orientation, "Yes, they were helpful, mainly from my department because it was very specific. The one from my department was specific to my studies, what I have to do, what is required, and so on." Mike described the usefulness of his laboratory orientation:

> When I arrived, there was a lab orientation meeting with my supervisor and all the post-docs and all the other staff in my lab. We had an orientation meeting and my supervisor took me to my department. He introduced me to the head of department and to the rest of the professors. My supervisor then introduced me to the technicians who were there and he brought the lab keys for me.

The orientations provided an initial platform for learning and engaging within their new social field at the U.S. university. The concepts of personal responsibility, friendships, social interactions, and time were presented to the students during these orientations, so they had a better understanding of American culture and expectations of their academic programs. Likewise, dissemination of university resources, such as student support services, was critical.

Peer Development

During the students' doctoral programs, numerous relationships were developed and fostered through transnational social fields located at their U.S. university, home-country employer, in-country research site, and networks of family and friends in Africa. Information and ideas were transmitted between these embedded systems, often resulting in shifting and changing identities for the scholarship participant, including those of researcher, graduate student, parent, spouse, friend, and colleague. Students relied on various support systems as they progressed through their programs with transnational social fields spanning multiple geographical locations.

When first arriving to the United States, students developed close relationships with peers, their advisor, and other faculty in their department. At the same time, students were constantly managing relationships with their parents, spouse, and children back home. Early in their program, students were required by USAID to identify a home-country mentor and, to various degrees, this relationship was nurtured and sustained over the three years while the

students were in the United States. As the students advanced through their program, support systems were utilized in a variety of ways. For example, when returning home for their pre-dissertation research trip in year two, students used their contacts to gain access to vital resources such as laboratory equipment and supplies, in order to move their proposed research project forward. Additionally, since the students were returning to their home-country institution after graduation, continued connections with colleagues and supervisors ensured a smooth transition once the doctoral program was completed.

During the admission phase of socialization, and prior to arrival in the United States, expectations were formed about the types of relationships that would be developed while the students were completing their degrees. Several students anticipated they would not form deep relationships with peers at their U.S. university and thought their integration into their program and American society would be difficult. Rose describes her initial feelings on meeting friends before she arrived to her university, "I thought it would be hard. My original thinking was that it would be hard, like settling in here, getting used to this place, but it was much easier than I thought…Everyone is so friendly like whoa, that wasn't the sort of thing that I expected." This sentiment about connecting with peers in the United States was expressed by many of the participants who were surprised at the way in which they were welcomed at their university and their ability to develop strong peer groups.

In many cases, this initial doubt regarding the students' ability to make friends developed from stereotypes they heard before their departure that portrayed Americans in a certain light, including messaging they received from media and friends. Sarah describes her perception regarding American xenophobia:

> Actually, I was expecting when [the scholarship program] told me you are going to [my university], it's in [State]. So, for me I was like okay in [State] most of people don't like other people, international people. That was my thought, so I was like that will be difficult for me, I will not have friends. But when I got here it was different for me. My integration was quick and easy, and actually for me what I was expecting was the opposite of what happened to me. I was thinking that it was going to be difficult for me and I will experience people rejecting me and stuff, but no, I was integrated and people are more social.

Due to these preconceived notions, Sarah believed she would have difficulty forming friendships during her program, but these stereotypes did not end up being an accurate representation of her lived experiences in her doctoral program. Rose and Sarah described a welcoming atmosphere within their university departments and communities and discussed the relative ease they had meeting new people and making friends who supported them throughout their programs. This sentiment was echoed through similar vignettes by many of the participants of this study.

In fact, none of the students reported having any significant issues with peer interactions when they first arrived in the United States and were often surprised with the close relationships they were able to develop during their doctoral program. Due to the shortened timeframe and the rigor of their coursework, many students were not necessarily motivated to connect deeply with peers in the United States at the beginning of their program. Justin offered insights to his thought process when first arriving to the United States:

> The thing is, I can't speak for the others, but for me, I didn't expect to stay here long enough. So, socially, I wasn't really motivated to, you know? I mean, I have friends, but

> it wasn't something that was ultimately important to me. Because it felt like well, I'll be gone in a few months or years anyways. So, there was no need to make friends.

Justin's expectation about peer development before he began his doctoral program and what actually happened during his tenure at the university is an interesting juxtaposition. Justin stated making friends was not important to him and he did not prioritize connecting with peers when he entered the doctoral program. Yet, further on in the interview, Justin described developing a strong network of friends within his department, including making deep connections with students working in the same laboratory. Additionally, Justin reported developing a family-like structure with other African students and community members with whom he frequently played soccer. Justin described his peer connections further by stating:

> I call them my friends, but they are a family because everyone knows each other and some of them don't go to [my university]. Some of them are people who live here and most of them are Africans and are from different countries. And there's even two professors who also played [soccer] there. So, it's sort of like a small family, big brothers, uncles that's what we call ourselves, I consider them my friends. We meet every day, and once in a while one of them will invite the rest to their house for a barbecue when there is a football match or a final, because we all like football, not your football, soccer.

So, while Justin was not motivated to develop meaningful friendships at the beginning of his program, he reported having close friends with whom he ultimately shared his life with in the United States. Within the six university communities where the participants lived, there are large international student and faculty populations, where relationships with persons from the African continent could be developed, helping with integration and the development of peer networks.

Additionally, as agricultural scientists, a large number of the students worked in ethnically diverse research laboratories, containing students from all over the world.

The students' workspaces and classrooms were the environments in which friendships were developed, primarily because the students did not have time to expand networks outside of their laboratory, department, or classroom. One student mentioned, "In fact, most of my friends were in my department because I didn't go anywhere else." Sarah confirmed how the laboratory fostered these relationships and helped with her initial integration into life as a doctoral student:

> Yes, the good thing in my lab, my advisor has a lot of students, it's a big group and they are good at socializing, so maybe that helped me to integrate myself here. And [my advisor] too, she is someone who likes socializing, so for me it was good.

Sarah entered a space with a large and diverse group of graduate students and had an advisor who facilitated peer connections, thereby easing Sarah's integration into her program and life in the United States. However, this reliance on the laboratories and classrooms for engagement with peers had a limiting effect on the connections made with American students. Most students reported engaging primarily with other international students, especially those from the African continent. Megan described her engagement with students in her department, "Most of the people we interact with are Africans. It is a challenge of the world most of the times. We look at each other. Even among yourselves, you say this is an Asian, this is an African." If American students were in the same department or worked in the same laboratory as the international students, then most of the participants reported developing friendships with them, but if a workspace contained mostly international students, then participants reported limited interactions with American students. Jessica explained the connections she made with Americans in her department:

> My colleagues, they have helped me a lot, especially the Americans. I didn't expect the kind of support I got from them, I wasn't expecting that…[The Americans] would show me lab work and the important places, directing me to places, if I need something they would actually leave their desk and take me around, and they gave me information about courses. I told you the orientation we got wasn't that much, so I got most of my orientation from my peers, what I like is that we all sit in a big room where we talk.

All of the study's participants described how they were able to form meaningful relationships with colleagues in their departments, classrooms, and workspaces. However, several students reported challenges when trying to connect with their communities outside of the university context. Comparisons between African culture and norms and those in the U.S. also emerged as a concern in regards to peer development and the students' interactions with American culture in their communities.

A few of the female students discussed how they felt disengaged from their local communities and described how the lack of interaction with their neighbors in the United States was much different compared to their communities in their home countries. For example, Jessica described how she did not leave her apartment during a long holiday weekend and her neighbors showed no concern about her welfare. Jessica expressed how confused she was that no one checked in on her during the weekend:

> I was telling that to one of my friends, he is my immediate neighbor, so he said Jessica, don't expect anybody to knock on your door. They are not going to knock on your door…So I have learned to live with that.

For Jessica, the lack of connecting with neighbors is a much different experience than community engagement in her home country, where if your neighbors do not see you for one

day, they will come over and make sure you are in good health. Living and working in the United States provided the students with a transnational perspective, a recognition of how culture shapes personal values which, in some cases, allowed the participants to appreciate certain aspects of their home-country culture, compared to their experiences with American culture and values (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015).

Many students found a welcoming environment within their religious congregations, places in which friendships were made and the students felt accepted into their new community. Even in relatively small college town communities, the existence of a large research-extensive university embedded within the ecosystem brings together faculty, staff, and students from different religious backgrounds and provides a solid base for religious engagement. The ability to engage in religious practice in the United States allowed the participants to maintain their transnational religious identity while also building friendships, which, in turn, provided critical support networks. One student described his expectations coming to the United States as a Muslim:

> When I came [to the United States] I was coming knowing I will not get a mosque to pray. I thought I was coming to a very isolated place, no Muslims worshipping… But when we came here we found things are very different, we came to find a very big Muslim community here, I have a place to pray and even before we used to pray very freely then. There were issues during the [U.S. Presidential election], people targeting religious groups and everything… So to me I think some of the expectations, I was not expecting to even get a mosque, but at least I came and yeah I am able to do that. So, I wasn't like so isolated or something of that sort.

When anticipating his life in the United States, this student expected to be isolated in his

religious faith and practices but actually found a large Muslim population within his community. He discussed how police officers in his city came to his mosque every Friday to ensure the congregation could attend services peacefully. The police came voluntarily to offer a sense of security to the Islamic community because of issues occurring in the United States during the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections.

Due to the make-up of the communities in which the students lived, the religious congregations were often comprised of a diverse body of students and faculty integrated with other local community members. Alex discussed the international congregation at his church:

> My church is made up of internationals, it's the church close to the university for the faculty and students. So, when you come to our service it's really diverse. We had an international day and showed the countries that we had around, we were so diverse. More than 50 countries in the room, we were not many, but so diverse. There are Kenyans, Ghanaians, Rwandans, Zimbabweans, we are diverse here.

While Alex's peer network was primarily comprised of other African students, the church he attended played an important role in his social life and the development of his peer network. Religious congregations provided a place of acceptance and engagement for many of the participants in the study. Religious networks complemented the friendships developed in the students' laboratories and classrooms and helped them transition into their lives as doctoral students. The participants could also retain their transnational identities as African Muslims or Christians by openly practicing their religions with other Africans who shared their religious and African identity. The participants of this study reported forming close bonds with students and international community members, which helped ease adaptation issues and acculturative stress arising from their doctoral program. The peer groups formed during the students' doctoral

programs complemented the relationships they developed with their advisors and both types of relationships proved to be an important factor in the students' socialization.

Relationship with Advisor

Having a strong advisor-advisee relationship in a doctoral program has been shown to improve student success and contentment with their program (Le & Gardner, 2010). International students are prone to rely on their advisor for both personal and academic matters, as they typically do not have a strong peer support network compared to their domestic student counterparts (Le & Gardner, 2010; Lee & Rice, 2007; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Additionally, international students are often separated from their family networks, such as parents and siblings, who offer additional financial and emotional support. All of the students in this study reported having a positive relationship with their advisor, although engagement with their advisor varied depending on travel schedules, research and grant workloads, and teaching responsibilities. Nick described how his advisor offered both academic and personal support:

> Interactions with the advisor have been very good personally because he is of a good nature, he is somebody who is so concerned with academic matters and personal life. Often, he invites me and his other students to his place, for example, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The students' advisors facilitated socialization into their discipline by explaining and teaching disciplinary norms of their specific academic fields. But beyond that, as Nick pointed out, the advisor also acted as a mentor, cultural guide, and friend to the participants. Since 13 out of the 15 students left children behind in their home country, having an advisor that was compassionate towards the specific circumstances of the students' lives and family situation was critical during their doctoral programs. One student had to travel back home frequently to address issues arising

in the care of her children. Several students experienced the death of a parent while they were in the United States. Having advisors who supported students' return home to handle family emergencies emerged as an essential aspect of these relationships. Many of the student-advisor relationships developed into close bonds. Kate described how the relationship with her advisor expanded into a father-daughter connection:

> Oh, I have a cool relationship with [my advisor]. He is more like a father. If I have a problem, I go and talk to him, he advises me as a daughter, as a student. When he needs to push me hard he does, when he needs to tell me well done he does. I've had a good relationship with him so far.

The unique nature of the USAID scholarship program required an advisor who was flexible and understanding of the timeframe and pressures placed on the USAID students. The faculty who chose to bid on the scholarship students typically were experienced with advising other international students and most had significant international research experience themselves, thereby providing an atmosphere of understanding of the various issues faced by the African students. Nick described his connection with his advisor, but also highlighted the faculty's interest in working on international research:

> With my advisor I have been able to really do very well in terms of connection because we have to meet on a weekly basis and brainstorm on how things are going and he is so approachable and so friendly. He is also very so much interested in working in developing countries.

The USAID program offered faculty the ability to train scientists who will make critical advances in food security in Africa. In addition, the program connected faculty to a network of research scientists, providing a platform for future research partnerships. The scholarship

program provided incentives for faculty to develop close personal connections with their students in order to foster and sustain partnerships. For example, USAID funded a trip to the students' home country to gain a better sense of the students' working and research environments. Echoing Nick's sentiments, Megan offered a comparable vignette regarding her relationship with her advisor and the role USAID played in selecting her advisor:

> [My relationship with my advisor] is good. I have no issue with him. He is a good advisor in terms of academics and socially too. I think [USAID] did its part, they selected him I think. They did the best they could. Advisors who can understand us, who can understand our background, and who can understand that we are under a lot of stress here.

While certainly all doctoral students face pressures and stress as they move through their programs, the issues faced by the USAID participants are inherently different compared to other scholarship programs as described in Chapter 4. The Fulbright Program, for example, allows families to join students in the United States for the duration of their academic program. Participants mentioned how surprised their advisors were when the students told them their spouse and children were not allowed to accompany them to the United States. Advisors, thusly, provided a critical source of both academic and emotional support for many of the study's participants and were instrumental in the students' successful advancement through their doctoral programs.

In addition, the students often commented on the differences between relationships between faculty and students in the various African academic systems and what they experienced at their U.S. institutions, where faculty and advisors engage closely with students and often treat each other as professional colleagues. In the students' experience, strong support from an advisor

was not expected because close advisor-advisee engagement is not common in Africa. Megan explained this concept further:

> Yes, we feel supported and they are there for you all the time. When you are sick, when you are stressed, when you are going through even comprehensive [exams]. We were not expecting that at all in America. You and your professor are something else. That is the expectation, you are not close to your advisor. But that is not the case for the department that we are in. We don't have that kind of an issue, we are very close with the professors. They take you as friends, all of them. They take you as friends, as colleagues. And mostly things are applied so it makes it interesting. At the same time, most of the professors have moved outside the U.S. except for a few and they tend to understand.

The data in this study showed a trend of faculty promoting and supporting graduate students within the students' departments across all six of the universities and this support was a surprising contrast to the students' previous academic experiences in Africa. Jessica explained how her advisor and faculty members provided academic help and emotional encouragement, "And faculty, everybody is helping, it's quite different from Africa, it's an experience that, for an African, it's very great." Sarah described the differences between the formal academic structure she experienced in Africa and her comfortable interactions with professors in the United States:

> My surprise, but it was a good surprise, is how professors are close to students, you just feel free to ask questions. Because where I come from a professor is a professor, he is there, you are here, you don't joke with him, he doesn't joke with you. He just is teaching and if you have a question it has to be a very well-structured question, it is very formal. But here I was surprised that professor is just a human and you feel free to ask questions, you feel more comfortable. So, for me the first time it was surprising; I was like wow he

is a professor? But then I got used [to him] and I say it was a surprise but a good surprise. A more casual and personable approach to the advisor-advisee relationship worked well for the USAID participants and allowed them to integrate into their departments as scholars and researchers, creating a platform for knowledge exchange between faculty and student. The relationships with the students' advisors provided important academic and emotional support as the students dealt with the consequences of the USAID rules and regulations, such as the long-standing separation from the students' families.

Family Support Systems

International students in the United States face persistent pressures, including separation from family and friends and cultural adjustment problems; however, strong support networks are shown to lessen adjustment difficulties and academic and personal stressors associated with graduate school (Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003). As outlined in Chapter 4, USAID restricts families from joining scholarship participants in the United States while the students are completing their coursework. This restriction directly impacted access to support networks of family members who provide valuable emotional support which, in turn, can contribute to student success. In this study, 13 out of the 15 participants reported leaving children behind and, for those married students, their spouses also remained in their home country. Subsequently, family support emerged from the data as an important factor influencing student socialization throughout the students' doctoral programs.

As transnational migrants, the international students were regularly communicating across the social field to maintain family relationships in Africa. As they navigated the complexity of their doctoral programs, the students played a dual role as providers of emotional support to their children and partners from their home in the United States and as receivers of

support from their families in their home country. The participants reported connecting with their families on a daily basis using phone calls, text messaging, and Skype as primary mechanisms of communication. As described by Ian, children did not always understand the physical separation between themselves and their parent in the United States:

> I think the biggest stressor I have here is family issues. That's the biggest one. You know I talk to my family every day, sometimes I may be talking to them on Skype and then my baby tells me daddy can you carry me, she doesn't know I am very far; I can't even carry her.

The strain of frequent communication necessary for maintaining relationships and providing emotional support to family in Africa was often emotionally draining for students. As a mother and international graduate student, Jessica explained how she negotiated raising her child across her transnational social field, "So, the fact that we cannot bring our family, it is such a burden, you sometimes don't feel like studying. Sometimes you are always on the phone." Like Jessica, several students reported a lack of motivation to study or complete homework assignments because of the guilt, sadness, stress, and homesickness experienced because of their family separation. However, the support the students received from their family in Africa was essential for their progress in their doctoral program. Married participants noted how important the initial support of their spouse to participate in the scholarship program was on their motivation to pursue their doctorate degree and their continued success in the program. Parental support was also critical for the female participants, as the women often left their children in the care of their parents.

The participants in this study constantly engaged their transnational social field as they entered and progressed through their doctoral programs through communication with their

family, the development of personal relationships, engagement with the African diaspora, and interaction with religious communities in their host-communities. These trans-migrants received support from their peers, advisors, and family through each phase of their doctoral program. This support allowed the students to pursue their professional and personal goals and contributed to their success and advancement in their doctoral program.

Theme Two: Development of Knowledge, Skill Sets, and Networks

Professional and cognitive development are essential facets of the doctoral student experience. As Golde (1998) notes: "The socialization of graduate students is an unusual double socialization. New students are simultaneously directly socialized into the role of graduate student and are given preparatory socialization into graduate student life and the future career common to most doctoral students" (p. 56). This dual socialization occurs through coursework, the joining of research apprenticeships, engagement with a variety of faculty, participation in various departmental activities, and observation of departmental and disciplinary norms (Gardner, 2007). Since the participants in my study were junior to mid-career professionals prior to entering their doctoral programs, they often had a very specific sense of the type of professional and cognitive development they needed in order to advance their careers. For example, all of the participants reported wanting to develop advanced research skills, elevating their position within their institutions and providing a platform for publishing in scientific journals with high impact factors, in addition to learning to write competitive grant proposals.

This "grooming," part of the socialization process, "occurs throughout the phases of the degree program and consists of the development of a set of skills and dispositions that the students need to obtain before graduating" (Gardner, 2007, p. 734). The students were exposed to a variety of socialization activities both on and off their campuses, including engagement with

conferences, extension activities, and student associations. The development of so-called soft skills, or interpersonal skills, also contributed to professional growth. Cognitive development often occurred in the classroom, where students were exposed to recent theories, methods, and scientific advancement in their fields of study.

Professional Development

Broadly, students pursue professional development activities to keep up to date on new technologies, skills, and trends influencing their particular field or discipline. Professional development activities can include formal types of certifications programs or more informal workshops or courses aimed to improve a specific skill or learn a new technology. The doctoral students in this study engaged in professional development activities by attending workshops, conferences, seminars, and networking events, which advanced specific skill sets. Some of these activities focused developing soft skills including leadership, time management, communication, self-confidence, and teamwork proficiencies.

Leadership development was a popular and important soft skill the students improved upon by attending various workshops offered by their universities. Several students reported having administrative roles at their home country institutions and access to leadership training opportunities helped develop this soft skill for use when they returned back to their employers. Obtaining effective communication skills was also a priority for many of the students. Kyle described how his communication skills were developed through workshops and classroom activities. Additionally, different activities, such as class presentations, built communication skills and the confidence of the students, as noted by Justin:

> I am more confident now. In the beginning, I thought that maybe it was because of the presentations I had to give in some of the courses. Or maybe my interactions with people

> from different cultures or departments. But I think it is just everything combined. Because Americans are loud. And if you don't speak loudly they can't understand you. And because of presentations and interacting in class, you just get confident with time, even if you don't want to. The difference with back home is back home, you go through the school year and stay hidden in class and nobody is going to force you to get involved. You can go through the whole year without even seeing your advisor and that is okay. But you can't do that here, you are always involved in doing something.

The students' academic programs and the structure of the U.S. classroom allowed the participants to engage in various activities supporting their professional development goals. Sarah also discussed how her doctoral program and the advanced degree would lead to increased confidence as a researcher and scholar:

> I am expecting that at the end of my studies I will be more confident because sometimes I thought, maybe because I don't have a Ph.D. I can't apply to this grant or I can't speak in front of other researchers. So, I am expecting at the end of this study I will be more confident and I will believe in myself saying you can intervene or you can give your idea and maybe participate in decision making back home.

The development of confidence through engagement in the U.S. academic system expressed by Justin and Sarah is a common theme introduced by many of the students. Learning in diverse classrooms and workplaces created an atmosphere where students could develop effective communication skills with a wide range of stakeholders. Adjusting to how American students interacted in the classroom also improved the international students' communication skills and inherently built their confidence and ability to discuss their research in a public forum. Justin noted the differences in his academic life in Africa, compared to the United States, where

students are engaged in activities, presentations, committees, and professional groups. Another area where differences in the academic systems emerged between African and U.S. universities was the development of teaching skills.

Seven of the participants in this study were lecturers at universities in Africa and these students had a strong desire to improve upon their teaching skills while studying in the United States. One student described attending a teaching seminar aimed at improving teaching proficiencies in the classroom and reflected on how she was going to implement the skills and new ideas she had learned in her own classroom and university back home. As the student explained:

> Then I also attended, they call it [name of] program, it's a teaching program. From that seminar what they taught us is how to be an effective teacher, how to deliver your lessons in class, how to effectively use the blackboard. And I really learned a lot from that because I felt like what I was practicing back home, I don't think I was really doing justice to what I was supposed to do. So, I think that is something I could also organize, a seminar like that, and teach what was taught here to people, these are some of the things that we can do to improve our teaching skills, to improve our understanding of students and then helping each other to grow. Then student evaluation too is another, at the end of the semester allow your students to openly evaluate you and based on that you can improve on yourself…So, these are some of the few things that can be instituted back home.

The students who were university lecturers also closely observed teaching styles implemented in their U.S. classrooms and hoped to introduce these new teaching and learning pedagogies themselves. Another aspect of professional development discussed by a majority of the

participants was learning statistical software to improve their analytical and research skills. Students were able to take workshops at the beginning of their doctoral programs for learning Stata, R, SPSS, among other statistical software packages. The introduction of the programs used for statistical computing provided a platform for the students to expand on their quantitative analysis skills, which are important for their professional development in both the university and research institute setting. Mike discussed his quantitative skills development:

> The skills which I have currently are about statistical analysis, the way to approach the data, how to manage it, how to analyze them and how to write an article for publication. That's what I am getting, which was a bit different from what I had in my previous academic experience.

These analytical skills were developed both inside and outside the classroom through specialized training seminars on campus.

The students also described how conference attendance played an important role in their socialization into their discipline and field. For those students who were able to attend and present at conferences, the experience added value to their understanding of how their discipline works, while simultaneously providing a tool for networking in their field. Justin explained his experiences attending conferences in the United States, "For the last two years, I have been to the [name of the conference]. These are like the ultimate conferences in my field. That's where all the [scientists in my field] go." Justin described how conference attendance and exposure provided a different perspective on his career, including understanding different research opportunities outside of academia. In addition, Justin felt the people he connected with at the various conferences he attended would be important resources for his future professional growth.

The acquisition of laboratory skills was also a critical component of the students'

professional development activities. As Justin explained, “My research is kind of different. It is a lot of work in the lab. So, there is a lot of equipment that you must learn to use, what is applicable and what is not.” Learning how to conduct research in a laboratory setting was an essential part of the students’ professional socialization, and the development of this skill raised a point of discussion regarding the structure of the scholarship program. The students in the United States were learning techniques on world-class equipment with access to laboratory supplies, which are not always available to the students back in their home country. The students and their advisors were constantly negotiating this tension between building professional development competencies including learning high-level research skills, but also being required by USAID to conduct research that was “doable” in their home country, where even basic laboratory items such as distilled water were not readily available. George described his desire to learn as many research skills as possible:

> So what I’m doing now is I’m learning the skills you see, I’m learning the skills. I don’t care whether what I’m doing will be part of my project or my final dissertation. But one thing I know, now let’s say I should go back to [a home-country university], as a faculty, I know there is no equipment at [the university]. Now I’m in a better position to say we need this equipment for this kind of job. Because I know how to use it. Now if there is somebody who is also trained in the United States and he goes back to his home country and he has never done an experiment in the United States, how do you think that person will say oh, [the university], you need this, you need this, you need that?

George also noted in some cases access to a specific piece of laboratory equipment is not necessarily a financial constraint for universities in Africa. However, faculty who have not been trained in the United States simply do not know how to use the equipment and so the technology

is not acquired for university laboratories by faculty who have never used the equipment. The training the students received in the laboratories by their advisors and other faculty members proved to be an important component of the participants' professional development and fulfilled a specific goal to advance their research skills.

In addition, motivations for participating in the scholarship program also included learning how to publish in a top-tier academic journal. Several students reported at the beginning of their program they did not yet have the necessary writing skills needed for producing an article for publication in a scientific journal. Joe articulated how he developed his academic writing skills in a class at his university:

> That course was an intensive writing course and during that time I started learning how to summarize research papers and it was more involving and more challenging at that time and I think I developed some skills from there. And last year I also took a course that was so much computer writing intensive. Yes, we had to write papers and do presentations. So, I think overall am getting to learn new skills from those sorts of things.

As scientists, the participants need to effectively communicate through clear and concise writing in order to disseminate their research findings through policy papers, research grants, and journal articles. As Joe mentioned, academic writing skills were honed through classroom assignments, in addition to feedback from faculty and his advisor.

Understanding proper citation protocols was an important component of learning critical academic writing skills for the participants. When entering their doctoral programs, several students reported they did not know about citation standards enforced by U.S. academic institutions. As a result, plagiarism issues arose for a few students while beginning their coursework. Ian described how his writing has improved along with his understanding of

properly citing research in his work:

> My writing has improved not just improved in content, but I think I am more concerned about the issue of looking as if you read something from somewhere, the issues of plagiarism. Those are the issues that in [my home country] particularly we don't put a lot of emphasis on it, you can just pick somebody's information, put it there, you might rephrase it, but you're not even acknowledging where you've gotten this information. And those are the things I think we have learned and appreciate that other people have done a lot in some field and when you are making the reference to the information. I think it is professional for you to acknowledge that and also build on any new concept that you might have learned.

For some of the students, learning citation standards was a critical aspect of developing the skills needed to participate in world-class research endeavors. Furthermore, the concept of advancing a particular topic in a field by acknowledging a researcher's academic contributions was an important component of learning Western academic standards and norms within the students' disciplinary fields.

Cognitive Development

In conjunction with the need to hone professional development skills, students entered their doctorate programs with a strong desire to learn and improve their critical thinking skills. Gaining access to various theoretical perspectives and the latest advances in the students' disciplines and fields of study progressed their knowledge and ability to contribute to scientific innovation. This knowledge positioned the students to pursue socialization targets such as publishing papers in research journals, as one student explained:

> I have really liked the experience especially because it has really opened me up in terms

> of the theoretical part of the field of economics and agriculture. There are a lot of basic theories we need to learn so you can do effective research. Some of these economic theories I had not gotten the exposure back home to the levels I have gotten here. So, I feel like I am well prepared, because when I am writing a paper for class work, when I want to publish, I feel I have confidence because I understand what is happening. If I am writing my paper, I can really understand the issues like how they are happening, why they are happening, and how they are being done. So, the theory has really helped me.

Understanding the historical context of theory development and the current theoretical constructs, concepts, and applications in the students' fields allowed them to confidently place their own research into the body of work within their topic of interest. Coursework generated knowledge critical for the students' understanding of developing a feasible and perhaps novel research project. As George noted:

> So, I take courses that I knew were hard, I said no, these courses are hard. But these courses are very good courses for me to understand and design good experiments and maybe to be innovative in the area. I have to take it. So, I give myself a lot more work than I would have otherwise.

Not only did the students' coursework provide access to new theoretical ideas, the classes also introduced qualitative and quantitative methods and effective research design protocols. While coursework contributed to cognitive advancement, the amount of coursework required by the U.S. universities often came as a surprise to the students. As previously mentioned, the students were seeking to develop advanced research skills and wanted to spend the majority of their time learning with their advisors in a laboratory and/or applied setting. During their programs the

students were continuously mitigating the tension between completing coursework requirements and advancing their research skills.

Theme Three: Negotiating Research, Coursework, and Timeframes

The students expected to have time during their doctoral programs dedicated to learning research skills, which would then position the participants to submit articles in top-tier journals and elevate their standings at their home institutions. Yet during the admission phase of socialization, many of the students discovered they had to complete a large number of coursework credits, as a requirement of their doctoral programs. The number of credits varied based upon the discipline and institution, and the coursework often limited the time devoted to the students' research projects and learning new research skills. Balancing and prioritizing the students' own research, the requirements of coursework, the duties of their research or teaching assistantships, and dealing with their own personal issues and circumstances was a complex and evolving endeavor during the integration phase of socialization. Coupled with the complexities of navigating a doctoral program, the students had to follow USAID's timeframe regulation, in which students were given only three years in the United States to complete their coursework.

Timeframe of the Scholarship Program

The structured timeframe of the program, as outlined in Chapter 4, often influenced the students' ability to participate in certain socialization activities and advance their research skills while they were in the United States. Students were required to complete their coursework and pre-dissertation research trip and develop research skills within three years. Megan discussed how she was restricted in her ability to develop robust research skills, even though her advisor was available to provide the critical mentorship needed to advance her research abilities, "Yes, my advisor is ready, but I have no time. We have the best advisors. They even pity us. But there

are a lot of skills trainings here, but we just don't have time to attend." Although Megan's university offered various types of workshops, such as grant writing training, she was not able to attend these specialized trainings because of the coursework she had to complete. For those students with large coursework loads, the combination of a shorted timeframe and coursework demands led to missing out on certain socialization activities, as one student describes:

> Publishing, that is one thing I missed out on. And a social life. I don't have a social life, I don't know what a social life is because my life is on this computer. So, I lost some publishing… There are some things to publish on but the workload is just too much with the timeline of the program. If we are doing three courses in a semester and then most of these courses have labs. So, you are doing an assignment for class and one for the lab. I am doing a lot of things at the same time.

Another student echoed the same sentiment regarding missing out on certain socialization activities because of the timeframe of the program and their course load requirements:

> [The structure of the program] is a big issue and sometime you have to do the immediate stuff that has direct effect like making sure you pass exams. So, in terms of publishing, I have not published in the three years that I have been here. I've had one semester where I've been able to do quite some significant work in research, which is not very much. From my social life, to other aspects of learning like going conferences and publishing, they have really been affected. I only went to one conference since I came here. So, we had to sacrifice on those aspects just to make sure we pushed the coursework before we go home.

For some of the scholarship students the USAID-imposed timeframe affected certain socialization activities such as publishing in research journals and conference attendance.

Conversely, those students with a smaller coursework load reported satisfaction with how the scholarship program exposed them to improved research skills, opened an avenue for professional networking, and motivated them to publish in top-tier scientific journals. A student with a smaller coursework load described his experiences with professional development and research skills development:

> Coming [to my U.S. university] has really added up in terms of the networking which we all know is very crucial when it comes to professional development. Aside from the networking, I have developed research skills and I was also taking courses that are shaping me [as a researcher]. I've published before, but now I look at the impact factor and I'm aiming not to go below 2.5. I'm trying to hit above 3, so it helps you put things in perspective and reach higher.

Furthermore, the three-year timeframe also impacted the design and outputs of the students' dissertation research project. For the students whose research consisted of running experiments in a laboratory setting, the margin for error was extremely limited because of the restrictive timeframe. One student described how an issue that arose in his research could not be fixed as he progressed to candidacy:

> Then towards my comprehensive exams, we found out something had to be done differently and we didn't have enough time to do it again, so I just had to present it like that and then tell them I would correct the mistakes in the final research. Yeah, so that was the only thing I wish I could have done differently. The funny thing is when that problem came up, one of my advisors said they didn't realize how short the three years was…With the little time we had, we squeezed a lot of work into the short time, the only problem was the thing with lab work is sometimes you get to a point where

> something doesn't make sense or something goes wrong and you have to start all over again, but we didn't have time to repeat a lot of things because I had to get the skills down.

The students' ability to fully capitalize on their time in the United States is seemingly dependent on the coursework requirements of their departments, with students with large coursework loads reporting a reduced ability to publish and attend conferences, even though they have received funds from USAID supporting these activities. The structure and timeframe of the scholarship program often had unintended consequences of limiting the research skills developed by the students. Instead of providing a platform for learning advanced research skills leading to scientific breakthrough in the areas of food security, in some cases, the program often only allowed a basic level of skills to be developed during the three years of the program. This tension was apparent when the students discussed how they had to balance their coursework load and research goals.

Balancing Research and Coursework

Students expected to gain critical research skills needed to achieve their professional goals. However, the U.S. academic system coupled with USAID regulations created a tension between coursework completion and research skills development. Students expressed their desire to have more time to put what they were learning in the classrooms into practical application in the laboratories or greenhouses where they were working on their research projects. Based upon the students' expectations entering their doctoral programs, USAID and the management entity did not provide enough information regarding the U.S. academic system and the coursework requirements for each institution. The students and their home-country employers were under the impression the participants would be primarily focused on learning research skills and applying

those skills in an applied setting. Kate described her hopes for learning research while in the United States and also shared her home-country supervisor's reaction to her doctoral program:

> The expectations I had were quite different when I came here. I was expecting, as a Ph.D. student, much of my work would be research and maybe 30% of coursework, but when I came here you are redoing your master's before starting the Ph.D. program because you are required to do almost all of the coursework again. It's really confusing because any time my former boss asks me why are you doing all of that coursework, we sent you to do research, why are you doing coursework? And I said, that is the system here. So, I was expecting at least we should have about 70% of research when getting a Ph.D. and then 30% coursework but it is 50/50.

Many students expressed disappointment with the structure of the USAID program, especially students who were placed in doctoral programs with a high load of coursework. A student described her thoughts on navigating her large coursework load and balancing learning research skills within the three-year timeframe:

> The challenge is within the three years, it was meant for coursework, even the department said. We were telling him these courses are many and we need to focus on research here and there. And they said, USAID knew these courses require [many] credit hours, you all have to work on it. The expectation that I missed is one: mentorship in research…We run around just to accomplish our coursework. But the Ph.D. is not about coursework. The Ph.D. is about the theory you learn and putting that theory into practice. That is where the big gap is. We would like an environment where we can flip around and do both coursework and [research]. But for now, if we are not done with this coursework here, I can't do it in Africa. I will be home next year and the first priority is to clear the

coursework.

This sentiment about coursework completion was also echoed by students with lower levels of coursework to complete. As he transitioned into the candidacy phase of his doctoral program, Justin was reflective on his time spent at his university:

> There is one little thing that I wish was different. The first part of the program was focused on finishing our courses and so on. With my advisor, I was trying to squeeze in some of the research. But I feel like we didn't give the research as much time as I would have wished. I feel like we didn't waste, but spent a lot of time on the courses and not a lot of time to familiarize myself with the lab or get the lab data…The only thing I wish I had known earlier was how to pace my courses and still have enough time for the research.

In many cases, the students' advisors expected them to do both coursework and research simultaneously, which often caused stress for the students. The ongoing tension between coursework and research and the difficulties of managing the two together was described in further detail by Kate:

> But the three years is actually minimum because doing the coursework and then your advisor is expecting you to do research. So, your mind is so divided. You don't know which one you are concentrating on juggling between courses and research, it hasn't been easy.

Learning new research skills was not the only thing impacted by the amount of coursework the students needed to complete. Working on the dissertation proposal was sometimes delayed in order to meet class assignments. Nick outlined the progress of his research proposal:

> Unfortunately, with my research I have not progressed as I would like. Right now, my

> plan was to have presented my proposal to the committee, but I have not done so and still a time like this [in my third year] that I could be developing my proposal I am still working on assignments. So that one has, in terms of research, I am lagging behind. I am just trying to manage, but still I am not moving at the speed that I want.

Socialization milestones, such as conference presentations and journal publications, proved difficult to achieve due to the time necessary for coursework assignments for some students. While most students expressed frustration over not being able to focus as much on their research, this issue did not resonate with all of the participants in this study. One student who received his master's degree at a university in North America outlined how he was able to balance the coursework and advance his research skills in the laboratory:

> I don't agree with those students who are saying, oh we have a lot of coursework and then we can't focus on research. For me, I had the opportunity to transfer my credits from [my master's program] to here, so I could do less coursework. I didn't want to do that…. One, it could have limited my knowledge in coursework. I wanted to take as much coursework as possible, so I am able to understand the research that I am doing. That's why I didn't really transfer any credits. I did all of coursework required by the department. In fact, I did more, there were three more courses that I took simply because they would help me in understanding my research…I was doing those when I was learning my experiment. And my first set of experiments took me almost one and a half years.

The student provided a scenario in which he was able to balance his research and coursework activities and was even able to take additional classes building his research skills further. He attributed his quick adaptation to the doctoral program to his master's degree obtained at a North

American research institution a few years prior to returning for his doctorate degree. The familiarity of the North American classroom may have given him an advantage compared to the other students who got their master's degree in Africa and may have had a slower transition to the U.S. academic system.

Another student also specified a similar account as the previous one, describing how he was able to balance coursework and research simultaneously. As with the first student, he also studied abroad during his master's degree at a North American university. Previous experience to the North American academic system might have given both students an advantage when adjusting to the rigor of their doctoral coursework. Both students worked closely with their advisors to gain research skills, highlighting the importance of the support of the advisor in the development of basic research skills. Joe also described the role of his advisor in facilitating his research:

> I think I am able to do simple research knowledge. Aside from doing academic work, I am also involved in doing some real work with my advisor, so I tend to get more and I think I am benefiting from both academic and research work.

Different perspectives emerged in the data regarding the students' ability to balance research and coursework in the structured timeframe instituted by USAID. Students with a large coursework load reported struggling with balancing their research goals while completing classroom assignments and described engaging in limited socialization activities as a result of their program structure and timeframe of the USAID program.

Work-life Balance

The limited timeframe in the United States placed increased pressure on the students and impacted their work-life balance. In addition to the number of courses the students were required

to take, the classes themselves also posed a challenge to many of the students, especially those students who had not been exposed to North American or European academic systems. Megan discussed her thoughts on the rigor of the U.S. classroom:

> The coursework is intensive…I knew it is heavy, I understood it is weighty. Like 50%. But this is like 100% heavy. It is a heavy workload on your brain. It is very rigorous. Each and every course is heavy. Some courses are heavier than others…If you don't try your best, you will go back to Africa without a Ph.D…But sometimes it is just like hell on earth.

While Kyle did not anticipate the academic rigor he found at his university, he valued the experience. Kyle described the difference between his master's degree obtained in his home country and his experience at his university in the United States, "It was more intense here. Very, very, very intense. And I'm really glad I've been able to go through the system." Kyle was able to find academic support within a study group comprising of another African who completed his master's in the United States and an American student. Another student also described how the rigorous classroom impacted his work-life balance:

> [In addition to not knowing about the U.S. health care system] the other thing I think also affected me is that dedication culture here, things are always moving. From the time we start the semester to the end of the semester… so during my first year I had not assimilated well to try and balance between my rest and my work like I was working so hard, hoping that I can work and finish everything, but here things are always moving…Sometimes you have so limited time for yourself, but you have to work like a Sunday, like today instead of being at church you have to be in the library because you have to have output by Monday. That is one of the major stress points… So, you need to

> reach a point whereby you see, now I think no matter what I have done, I need to relax. That was the major problem in the first year, and I almost got into anxiety issues and depression until I went to counselling. And when they talked to me I knew now, I think I am overworking too much and am stressing myself and that's when I was able to manage the issue.

The intense nature of the coursework not only influenced the work-life balance of the students, the stress and rigor also impacted their emotional well-being. With the demanding nature of the doctoral program and the forced family separation, mental health issues affected many of the participants. Stress played a large role in many of the students' lives with the demand of responsibilities present throughout their doctoral programs. Jessica explained her time demand constraints:

> So, I said okay, 24 hours is insufficient. I have to teach, I have to conduct research. I have to collect data, analyze it, and I have my coursework, so I don't have time for myself. Sometimes I go to sleep and I am scared like okay, I have something to do I will get up. Now I am used to, I don't sleep before 2 a.m. because I have so much to do and I have to finish, I say let me do this.

The participants in this study entered a rigorous doctoral program much different than their expectations and previous experiences in graduate school in Africa. While most other international students are not held to a specific timeframe the USAID participants had to complete difficult coursework in the hard sciences in three years, while balancing learning new research skills, working in a new laboratory setting, and connecting with peers and faculty. The shortened timeframe emerged in the data as restrictive to the well-being and professional growth of the participants and impacted their socialization as doctoral students.

Theme Four: Programmatic Progress Amid USAID Rules and Regulations

The rules and regulations of the USAID scholarship program were designed in such a manner they impacted the daily lives of the students, permeated through their degree program, and influenced socialization processes. The limited timeframe of the program dictated, to various degrees, the courses in which the students enrolled and their participation in socialization activities such as opportunities to learn research skills, conference presentations, and publication in research journals. Restrictions regarding motor vehicle operation or car ownership had consequences on the students' social life and engagement with American peers. As the students progressed through their programs they not only had to navigate their academic program, but they had to consistently contend with the USAID rules and regulations that shaped their personal, professional, and academic lives over the four years of the scholarship program.

As described in Chapter 4, the rules and regulations were defined for the students before they left for the United States. However, upon arrival, the realities of the confinements of the scholarship program set in for the students and their advisors. Ultimately, the constraints of the USAID program had the greatest influence on the students' socialization during their time at U.S. universities, touching every aspect of the students' academic program and socialization, from their mental health and wellbeing, to engagement in coursework, and the development of research skills. In this theme, I briefly outline two major issues which explore how these regulations impacted the lives of the participants while they were studying in the United States. The first issue is the restriction of dependent travel and the second is returning home before the doctoral program is completed.

The Restriction of Families from Visiting or Living in the United States

As noted above, 13 of the 15 study participants left children behind to attend school in the United States. This issue of family separation was therefore, not surprisingly, prominent in the data. Although the scholarship recipients were informed of the policies restricting family from accompanying the student and limiting short-term visitation, the reality of this separation came to light during the students' time at their universities, impacting the students' mental health and wellbeing, their academic programming, and socialization as described in the themes above. The issue of family separation was the most cited concern when discussing the various USAID rules and regulations and the influences they had on the success of the students' doctoral programs. The participants often reflected on this tension between accepting a valuable scholarship that would advance their careers and leaving their family behind. The students continuously struggled with being put in a position where they had to choose between losing three years with their children and family and accepting an opportunity with lasting personal and professional impacts. Megan described the effect on the family separation on her mental health:

> You are not supposed to bring your family, that was the hardest thing. It is the worst thing ever. That one. That was the hardest thing to do. I will never do it again, never. I don't regret it. But what I don't like is separation. It is so unstable, it is so stressful. That is what I don't like it, but I don't regret coming here.

Although Megan does not regret her decision to come to the United States to obtain her doctorate, the stress of separation was enormous and had consequences on her academic progress and success, especially in the areas of mental health. This finding emerges in the data with all 13 students who left children behind. The female students noted stress caused by the separation from their children had an especially hard impact on them as mothers. One student discussed

conversations she had with her advisor about leaving the university and the consequences family separation had on her academic program:

> There was a time I told my advisor that this is so tough I can't take it. She was like I will find a way we can do this, but it was really tough. It's really tough being away from your family. I understand it's tough bringing families here, some people will want to stay back and so we don't have to bring our families, but fine, find a way for us to see our families every year, we cannot just be separated from them for three years. That's why I rushed, I was taking like 12 credits. Well, I told my advisor when I was going home last December that if I go back it will be very difficult for me to come back to the United States. I had to extend my ticket because I was like okay I don't want to leave my family. So, it was very, very tough. And when I came back I said okay, since I came back no socialization, I said I am going to work hard, take 12 credits, and finish on time so I can go. I should be leaving next year, but then I decided I cannot stay for that long away let me just go now and be done with it. So that's it something they should look into.

The sentiment of progressing through the program as quickly as possible, because of the family restriction, was common among the students. Taking four classes a semester was a solution many students applied in order to complete their coursework in a shortened timeframe, especially students enrolled in programs with large coursework requirements. Ian talked about how he took a large coursework load during the summer in order to finish the program and return to his family:

> Actually, one thing that prompted me to [take three courses in the summer] is that I am a family man. When I came here, I left a very young family, so sometimes, I feel like if

there is a way I can do this program as fast as I can, I think I will be doing a favor to myself and also to my family.

The doctoral degree extends beyond taking coursework and includes learning important research techniques, building soft skills, and expanding networks within the student's discipline. When students prioritized completing their coursework to rejoin their family, certain socialization opportunities were missed from their doctoral experience.

Many of the female students discussed how they left their children in the care of their sister, sister-in-law's, and parents, in order to provide a more nurturing environment for their young children. Megan described how leaving her children with a caregiver led to managing multiple relationships at home:

> Maybe it is better for men than the women because at least they leave their babies with their wives. But for women, you get parting three ways; yourself, and then sometimes the baby elsewhere, and the husband elsewhere. So, you end up managing three sectors.

Leaving children with a female caregiver extended the transnational social fields the female students had to navigate during their doctoral programs. Kate also described how she left her young children in the care of her parents and the emotional trauma occurring before and after her departure:

> It was really, really a very difficult decision to make. And sometimes I come here sometimes I feel like maybe if time had turned back I could have made a different decision all together. It was really, really hard. I couldn't pack my stuff, so I didn't even know what was inside my bag because it was my sister who packed it. I got here so confused. Every day, what are they dealing with back home? It was a hard decision for me to make. But it was the encouragement of my mom and dad, they offered to help with

> the kids, they said they could take care of the kids while I'm away. They know that I wanted to go back to school, so if I really want to go and sacrifice…This end is almost near I go back to be with them. But it hasn't been easy at all for me for these three years, it hasn't been easy, it hasn't been easy. Everything is working out for the good. I know there is a lot of work to be done when I go back home too. I'm trying to think it will be fine.

On top of completing assignments and research activities, the USAID students also had to deal with the guilt and stress of worrying about sick children, making sure their children were succeeding in school, and also providing financial resources in order to support their family back home. Communicating across time zones and their social field was a daily activity for the students. For women, relationships had to be sustained between the caregivers of their children and with their husbands and the separation could cause marital conflict. For example, a female student discussed how the separation was straining on her marriage:

> Even though they don't allow them to come stay with us, they should allow our spouses to come visit us. We are having issues with our spouses, they don't understand at all why we would be telling them not to come visit us and you know this is not easy for people who are married or dating. There is risk of you getting out of the Ph.D. program and then you don't have a husband because they don't understand. My husband does not understand why he is not allowed to come to the U.S. to visit me. For sure, even last time we were fighting over that. I told him you saw the policy you understand the policy what's the big deal. He said he doesn't understand that, unless you have another man there. So that's a big issue. Even though they don't allow them to come stay with us, why don't they allow them to come and visit us. That would help.

When discussing the family restriction policy with the study's participants, there was confusion surrounding why family members were not allowed to visit them in the United States. The unclear nature of the restriction and feelings of guilt and loss of not knowing the everyday activities of their children were commonly expressed by both the women and men in this study. The male students also expressed their guilt about leaving their families and the resulting stress of the separation. Nick underscored the stress of the long separation, "Being away from home. Yeah, because I have a family. So, spending like two years here without going home is kind of stressing." Additionally, another student explained the trauma he faced being separated from his wife and young son:

> Most scholarship programs they allow you to come with your wife. Sometimes there is psychological trauma that you go through, it can really affect your academic work. Fine, I know [USAID] makes it clear before you even apply for the program, so there is no grey area. They make it so clear to us and that is fine. But I think beyond that they should consider not at their expense, but for those of us who want to bring their wife, if the person is willing and the person shows they have the financial capacity to bring their wife they should be allowed. Give the person a period of where the wife can be with him or her and after that then just go. Because sometimes, you are just here, sometimes for those of us who are married you kind of focus on academics, but at the same time you are thinking about the family home and call you, your son is not feeling well, your son misses you so much so those are some of the things.

The participant touches on the complexity of the USAID rules and regulations that restrict students from bringing their families to the United States even when they can financially afford to support them. When contemplating the reasons for the family restriction, students understood

the policy served to ensure the students' eventual return to their home country, to prevent "brain drain" as described in Chapter 4. Alex discussed the J-1 visa process as a mechanism to prevent emigration:

> The family itself doesn't force the person to stay. Right so I think you still have the records of the person, once we come here or me every year when I come here I take a new visa before I come, I am on J-1. It means you have my records, everything, and if I have my family here, there is no way I can dodge the system without noticing. I think the policy should be made flexible where you bring your family but the most important thing is to keep on with the person, monitor the person and make sure the person goes back, and I think that should work because there are a lot of people who come with their families and they also go. I don't think it's every person who brings their family and doesn't go back.

Given the numerous structures within the scholarship program designed to facilitate student return, the students often discussed their confusion regarding the family restriction. In addition to the J-1 visa, the USAID scholarship program required students to commit to their eventual return home during the application process. The students' employers committed to hold their positions and provide a study leave stipend and the students were required to defend their dissertation from their home country.

Yet despite these robust mechanisms, USAID still did not allow families to live in the United States or visit on a short or long-term basis, causing significant stress. The students, when offered the chance to suggest a solution, commonly offered the suggestion that they be allowed an extended trip home every year with USAID paying for the plane ticket home. Rose, who is a

mother, described her frustration of only being allowed to return home during the summer for 15 days:

> The issue of family. It's really hard. To be away from your family and then you maybe think let me concentrate on my work and then maybe during the holidays you can go check on my family. And then they only give you like 15 working days to be out for personal reasons. That is terrible. A whole year without my family and then 15 working days including the travel days, it takes two days to go two days to come back.

The lack of creativity by USAID to come up with a solution to ensure student return, but also allow students to spend quality time with their families, was an issue raised throughout the interviews. Additionally, the inherent assumption by USAID that all students would want to stay in the United States and, as such, must be treated in a manner in order to restrict opportunities to overstay their visa was also a confusing notion for the participants. All of the students interviewed in this study expressed a deep desire to help improve the livelihoods of their fellow citizens. Kyle, for example, expressed his passion for his research portfolio back home and his commitment to return to help improve the livelihoods of farmers in his home country. Furthermore, Kyle had other business investments and was on a positive career track at his home institution. Describing the complex nature of his life at home Kyle asserted:

> For me, well I can't say that for everybody, I have all of my investments back home. I have a job back home. Unlike here where it is uncertain whether I'm going to get a job, even how long is it going to take me, so that is it. And I'm also at a position that allows me to make certain decisions which, even in the U.S., I don't have the opportunity to do that. So, these are some of the things that actually motivate me and when I finish I have

to go back. And I'm one person who has very high passion for rural development, very, very high passion for rural development.

Leaving the life and career that the students have built would not be an easy task for many of the students at this time. Jessica echoed this sentiment:

> Well if I wanted to stay in the U.S. I wouldn't be in this program because I come for vacation and I have Africans saying oh you have to stay. It's not like I don't love coming here but probably prefer Europe more. It's not a place that I don't know, I just love coming here for breaks not to stay.

The way in which the scholarship program was designed assumes the students will want to stay in the United States after graduation, which is not always true for all of the students.

The students in this study expressed deep gratitude for the support of USAID, which allowed them to pursue their academic motivations and advanced their professional goals. However, significant tensions emerged regarding family restriction and this topic brought up issues around third-world marginality and neo-colonial subordination (Beoku-Betts, 2004). In the context of being separated from his family, George touched on how his socio-economic status as a middle-class professional from an African country placed him in a powerless position, having to participate in the USAID scholarship program, in order to obtain his doctorate degree:

> So, [the family restriction] is something that is really bad. Emotionally it's really bad. And this part it is working because you are bringing [students] from developing countries where the choices are really bad. We don't have a choice, right? Because if I had enough money I wouldn't be here while my family is struggling somewhere. But because I don't have [the money], so it's like USAID is trying to help people by punishing them. So

> that's the problem. There are a lot of things that USAID can do to ensure that the people go back, like the [dissertation] defense.

The sentiment expressed by George reflects a broader power dynamic that scholars have argued animates North-South relations, rendering those in the Global South powerless to the priorities and worldviews of those in the Global North. Further, family separation is thought to prevent brain drain, which is inherently viewed by USAID as a negative consequence of international education. However, there has been a paradigm shift from focusing on the negative aspects of brain drain to understanding the complexity of "brain circulation" occurring when skilled labor returns home and the "the unprecedented opportunities advanced by the mobility of high-level expertise" (Teffera, 2005, p. 231). Brain circulation is often thought as repositioning mobility as temporary rather than permanent. So, although many of the students had a strong desire to return to their home countries, since their research focuses on agricultural issues in Africa, an argument could be made that both the United States and the student's home country would still benefit from brain circulation, if a student did not return home immediately.

Returning Home Before the Doctoral Program is Completed

Another method for ensuring student return is USAID's requirement that scholarship participants leave the U.S. immediately upon achieving candidacy status and prior to the completion and defense of their dissertation. The participants brought up several issues and concerns regarding this policy during the interviews. Students expressed anxieties regarding barriers to doing research in their home country, including access to laboratory equipment and supplies, internet access, and the ability to speak with their advisors on a regular basis. The issue of financial stability was also a major concern for the participants. Several students indicated they would be required to immediately go back to work when they returned home, before they

completed their dissertation. For lecturers, the return to work was due to labor shortages at their home university. For others, the return to work was stimulated by the removal of the stipend from their department at the U.S. university, which is funded by the scholarship program. Additionally, since the students would be back in their country, many of the participants reported their employers would terminate their study leave, placing them in a situation where they would have limited income to support their families.

The realities of personal and professional environments to which the students would be returning at the beginning of the candidacy phase of socialization was a major point of discussion between the students and their advisors. The advisors were given the opportunity to travel to the students' home country, in order to gain a better understanding of the context in which the students were conducting their research and to build networks with other African researchers. This one-time trip was supported by the scholarship program. Some faculty chose to travel during the second year, while the students were on their pre-dissertation trip home, and others decided to travel when the students arrived home to conduct their fieldwork in the fourth year, collecting data needed to complete their dissertation. Megan discussed her concern about being separated from her advisor while she was analyzing her data and writing her dissertation in her home country:

> The problem is that when we are analyzing [our data] is when we need the input of [our advisors]…They are coming for the fieldwork when we are in the field. But when we are requiring their inputs is when we are writing. Sometimes [our research findings] don't make sense, it is very stressful. You are there, you are collecting it and once you start analyzing these things, you realize how things are.

Rose also discussed how she wished the structure of the program would be changed so she could complete her dissertation in the United States, in order to be close to her advisor and committee members for guidance during her data analysis and writing. Rose mentioned how conducting her data analysis in the United States would give her access to critical facilities at her U.S. university, such as internet, laboratory equipment and supplies, and library resources:

> I wish, like for my case, if I could get my data from [my home country], I wish I could do all the analysis back here when I was in the U.S., so I could get guidance from my advisor and also from other people. Also, because the facilities are here. It's different back home. You know obtaining the internet is a problem. As much as you have a home country advisor, they are not as approachable as in the United States. Because if you set up an appointment with them it could take you eight months to even meet someone. To have them look at your work.

Furthermore, a student described how she will likely be required to go back to work immediately when she returns home:

> I'm on study leave right now but I'm pretty sure when I go back it won't matter whether I'm on study leave or not, I will have to take on a number of teaching responsibilities. At least I've seen it from my colleagues when they come back home they want me to step on the ground even if it is study leave, work begins the next week...Normally there is a shortage of staff. So as soon as you get back, it's like a relief. So even if you are on study leave they will still expect you at least to teach a number of courses.

Several other students reported the concern they had regarding returning home without the diploma and the pressures associated with completing their dissertation while integrating back into their family structure and managing the financial loss of their U.S. stipend.

While the students were completing their coursework, they received a stipend from the management entity for their work as research assistants or teaching assistants within their department at the U.S. university. Many of the students also received a stipend from their home-country employer while they were on study leave. The study leave stipend was typically half of the students' salary and was used to support their families while they were in the United States. A large number of the students reported their study leave agreements covered them while they were studying in the United States, and this payment would be canceled upon their return home, leaving the students without U.S. or study leave stipends during the fourth year of their program. The elimination of both the U.S. and study leave stipends puts an added financial strain on the students, with the potential consequence of having the participants return to work before completing their dissertation.

The data showed significant confusion with the participants because of unclear information provided by the management entity regarding their U.S. stipend. Some students reported the management entity would give them a stipend during their fourth year, while others stated their U.S. stipend would be terminated upon returning home. One student was told she would not get a U.S. stipend from the scholarship program and she would have to rely on the study leave stipend to support her family. She described the situation of the termination of the U.S. stipend in this way:

> I don't know how to manage yet because the money we are paid by our employers is the money that is taking care of our families and I am getting back and I am telling them that the money is not yours it's mine, I'm back, I'm using it. I think those are the other critical issues because that is a risk. I foresee it coming. Of course, money will never be enough, but now they said when you get back, you will not get paid. And for some of us the

> research takes longer, like we are doing coursework now by the time we get back the whole of that year we will be running up and down with research, and that will be a big task to manage. And [the scholarship program] says don't work just get your employers' pay, but we need the money. We will not be comfortable.

The stress of family separation is coupled with the financial uncertainty faced by the students when they return home to collect data and complete their dissertation. If the students have to return to work while they are collecting and analyzing the data, the added responsibilities of returning to work may impact the quality of their dissertation and might influence program completion. A student expanded on this further by saying:

> For now, I want to apply for an extension for my [study] leave so I won't teach until I defend my dissertation. But the other issue is that [the scholarship program] said they are not going to give a stipend while we are here, so if I want money then we have to go back to work. For them to restore my full pay. And that will mean double the hard work because if I'm going back to work and then I don't think I can finish my thesis because you can't combine teaching, supervising other students, and you're working on your own research, you have family to look after, it's going to be difficult. It's going to be difficult.

The pressures of returning back home to complete the dissertation are coupled with the complexity of re-engaging with the students' families, friends, and employers while maintaining transnational social fields developed in the United States. The contract the students signed when agreeing to participate in the USAID scholarship required the students to commit to completing their doctoral program before returning to work. Kyle explained how this process has influenced his decision to complete his dissertation before returning to work:

> No, so I'll finish my dissertation before [returning to work]. Because [USAID] has made it so clear to our [employer], to all of us who are working, it's even in the contract that we sign, so that we finish with our program before we take on any other responsibilities.

Another critical issue raised when discussing the students' return home in the fourth year of their program focused on the dissertation defense, a significant component of the process of obtaining a doctorate degree. The students are required to defend their dissertation by video link with most of the students planning on defending at the U.S. Embassy in their home country, which typically houses the USAID mission offices. The remote defense regulation brought up two issues, first is the issue surrounding electricity and stable internet connections. Sarah discussed how the stress of the dissertation defense would be magnified by unstable electricity connectivity:

> I don't know how the internet will be, the electricity may cut because we do have those problems where we have a cut of electricity. So, imagine that stress where you are defending and electricity is cut, so you increase your stress.

Dealing with issues surrounding electricity and internet connectivity was an anticipated problem raised by many participants in addition to the stipend concerns and fears about being separated from their advisors and committee members.

Furthermore, the participants also remarked on the personal and cultural implications inherent with a remote dissertation defense in denying students the ability to celebrate this major accomplishment with their advisor, friends, and family. As a mother, Kate has sacrificed a great deal to pursue her doctorate degree and would like to celebrate her success at the graduation ceremony surrounded by her family. Kate stated:

> Then also the defense. We are supposed to defend [the dissertation] by Skype. I don't know how the internet will be back home, but I think I would have preferred a face to face defense in front of your committee. Then if you are successful, you pass, you can take a photograph to serve as a memory in the future to know this day is what happened then you also have the opportunity to participate in graduation. By the way they are doing it now I don't know whether we can come for graduation or not because we are going to defend from our home countries…But we need this memory. You can't come finish a Ph.D., you've not worn the gown that feels, that you appreciate the pains I've gone through that I've been able to work hard to get this. Also, the photographs to keep and remember as I said then you have your family around you to take a picture with them, so one of your [picture] is in school and one is graduating. So, it is like motivation to go with the children and yourselves and it gives the memory.

Through the rite of graduation, Kate had a strong desire to show her children how hard she has worked to improve their future and the future of their country. This sentiment was also echoed by Kyle:

> Then also concerning the graduation. Where you have to graduate from home. A Ph.D. should be one of the joyous moments of your life where you need to really celebrate after doing all of this hard work and you don't come for graduation and you don't have the opportunity to even take a picture of you wearing your cap and gown. It's not so nice because after, I think my certificate will be sent to me in [my home country].

Kyle also expressed how he thought the remote dissertation defense policy was demeaning, especially when the students have worked very hard to accomplish their goals:

> But I think you see as a Ph.D. student defending your thesis in video conference is a bit below the belt. Because this is something that you have done, you should be able to speak to it so you should be able to stand before professionals and explain yourself to them. But the physical presence and know your reaction to people because once you are there they are looking at you, your body language, and everything, whether you are confident about yourself, your eye contact, and all those things. So, I think in the future they could consider such that you can just do your defense here [in the United States] because to me I think it is very important. And for the graduation, they should also think about it if we can maybe come for the graduation and just go back that's fine.

In order to return for graduation, the students must apply to the U.S. Embassy for a tourist visa and then fund the travel back to the United States themselves. While certainly feasible, for many of the students the notion that the graduation ceremony is not built into the structure of the USAID scholarship program is frustrating, as the student have worked hard to accomplish their goals and will be returning home to contribute to improving the lives of their fellow citizens and developing the capacity of their institutions.

Summary

This chapter explored the experiences of international graduate students obtaining their doctorate degrees in the United States. The study was guided by the socialization and transnational social field theoretical perspectives. In this empirical investigation, participants discussed considerations influencing their socialization processes during their doctoral programs. The findings illuminated the ways in which the students developed support networks embedded within transnational social fields, their experiences with professional development and cognitive growth, and how the students created balance between their academic and professional

achievements in a structured timeframe. The participants also discussed the influences of USAID's rules and regulations on their academic and personal lives.

This study contributes to existing literature on doctoral student socialization, international student experiences in the United States, and the transnational behavior and connectivity of international students. This study also contributes to the growing interest of how international scholarship programs can respond to and enhance participants' social impact, leading to more equitable communities (Baxter, 2017; Campbell, 2017; Dassin, 2018; Dassin et al., 2017). Additionally, this research advances scholarship on the socialization of doctoral students from sub-Saharan Africa, adding to the understanding of the specific challenges these students face while studying in the United States. In the next chapter, I address the study's research questions and the implications for policy, practice, and theory. The chapter concludes by introducing considerations for future research.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the socialization of international doctoral students studying at six research universities in the United States. The study also explored the students' experiences participating in a USAID scholarship program, which fully-funded their U.S. doctoral education. To address the aims of this study, I interviewed 15 African doctoral students who were junior to mid-career agricultural scientists working at universities, government ministries, and research institutions across sub-Saharan Africa. Using socialization theory, I analyzed how the doctoral students experienced socialization as international students and scholars embedded for a brief time at a U.S. research-extensive university. I also assessed how the students engaged with their transnational social fields, especially in response to the isolating policies and restrictions imposed by USAID during the scholarship program.

This chapter consists of six sections and is organized to address the components of the study's two research questions. First, I revisit Figure 1, which was described in Chapter 2 and links the socialization and transnational social fields frameworks. An updated figure is presented, outlining key themes of the study's findings based upon the analysis of the research questions. Second, I address the study's research questions and associate the findings to current literature on international student socialization and the transnational social field, while also offering a more nuanced analysis of the participants' experiences in the United States. I then offer implications for policy, practice, and theory. Recommendations targeted to international education scholarship programs are also presented and finally, considerations for future research are explored.

Linking Socialization Theory and Transnational Social Fields

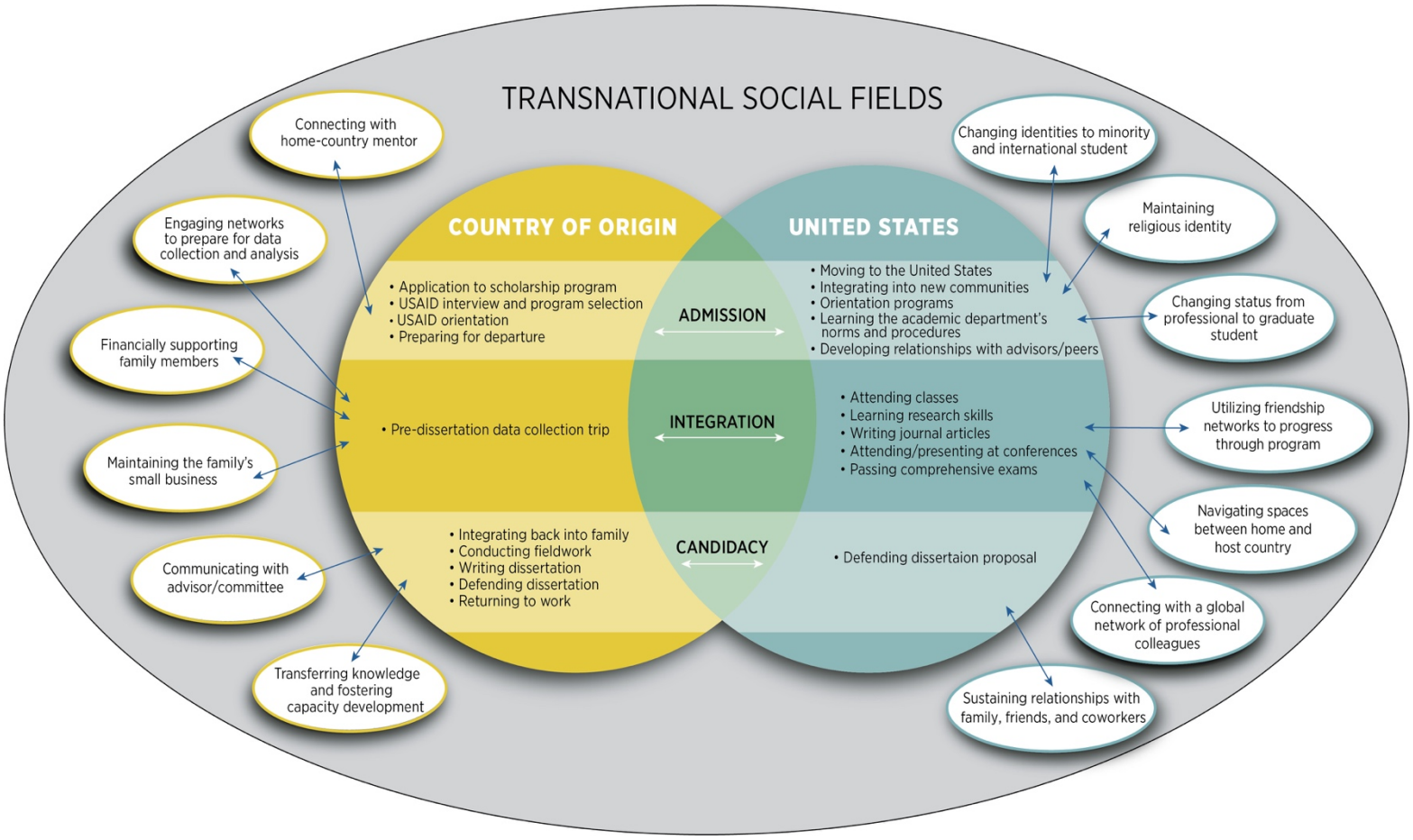
Figure 2 illustrates how the socialization and transnational social fields frameworks interact with one another, representing the lived student experience of the African doctoral students in this study. In the figure, the yellow and blue circles outline Gardner's (2007, 2008b) three phases of socialization including admission, integration, and candidacy. The yellow circle depicts the socialization processes occurring in the student's country of origin while the blue circle represents the corresponding processes in the United States. The admission phase begins when the students decide to apply to the scholarship program and continues on through the first year of coursework.

The integration phase represents the period in which the participants are in their second and third year of the program and while they are completing their coursework, taking comprehensive examinations, and drafting their dissertation proposals. The students defend their dissertation proposal in the United States and then immediately return to their home country to begin data collection for their dissertation project. The dissertation is written and defended in the students' home countries, completing their doctoral programs. The socialization circles show how the students experience the various stages of socialization both in their country of origin and the United States, expressing the interconnectedness of the two countries as the students pursue their doctorate degrees.

The transnational social field is represented by an oval circle and depicts the transmission and flow of relationships, ideas, and information between the two embedded systems of each country. Major themes are described within the small ovals corresponding to how the students occupied different gender, racial, and class positions within each country at the same time. The transnational social field also depicts how the students diffused knowledge and information

during their programs while maintaining important relationships across national boundaries. Figure 2 describes the complexity of the lives of the participants and shows how the students negotiated identity and power while they were straddling both geographical locations and forging connections between their social, personal, and academic lives (Gargano, 2009).

Figure 2: Linking Socialization Theory and Transnational Social Fields



Summary of Key Findings

This section summarizes the key findings of the study, in which a qualitative inquiry approach was used to examine the lived experiences of the participants, allowing for the gathering of contextual data rich in detail (Creswell, 2014). The particular focus of this research

was two-fold: identify the ways in which international students experience their doctoral programs while also analyzing the impact of USAID policies on student success. This section addresses the two research questions used to explore how the students in this study experienced their doctoral programs in the United States.

Research Question 1

To frame the answer of the primary research question, how do the selected participants of the USAID training program experience their socialization processes at a U.S. university, I have organized this section into the two phases of socialization (Gardner, 2007, 2008b) experienced by the doctoral students during the period covered by my research. The admission phase comprises of the time leading up to entry into the program through the first year of coursework, while the integration phase includes the completion of coursework up to the transition to candidacy status. Through the lens of socialization, I am able to explore the lived experiences of the scholarship students, understand how they perceived their realities as international students, and discover how they navigated multiple identities and relationships through transnational social fields.

Phase I: Admission and entry into the doctoral program.

The admission phase of socialization occurred before the students departed to the United States through the first year of coursework completion. The students' journey into their doctoral program began when they applied to the scholarship program, interviewed with USAID, and were accepted into the scholarship program. Once accepted, anticipatory socialization assisted the students as they prepared for their role as doctoral students in the United States. Having strong English language skills helped the students transition during the admission phase, as did the development of a supportive peer network of friends. During the admission phase, the

students were also adjusting to their new life in the United States while maintaining connections to their families and friends in their home country through their social field.

Anticipatory socialization.

The students' understanding of what the experience of a doctoral education means began during their "anticipatory socialization," taking place before the students entered their doctoral programs (Weidman et al., 2001, p. 12). Anticipatory socialization is inherently embedded in the admission phase and can include engaging with various sources of information to gain a better understanding of what to expect in the student's academic program. Sources of information are collected during this time, such as the students' reflection of their own experiences in their master's degree programs, internet research, conversations with peers who have studied in the United States, and initial contact with their advisors (Gardner, 2009).

Participants in this study mentioned how their master's programs helped prepare them for the academic transition into their doctoral programs. Kate described how she entered her program with a general sense of what graduate school was going to be like from her experience with her master's program, but also utilized the academic department's resources, which helped her plan her coursework and map out her program structure. Ian discussed how he conducted internet research to gain a better understanding of what his program would be like, which helped him transition into his doctoral program. Other students spoke with friends and colleagues who had previously studied in the United States in order to get a sense of what the university experience would be like upon arrival.

Several students also discussed having email and Skype conversations with their advisors before they departed to the United States. Alex and his advisor had multiple Skype conversations before he came to the United States and they were able to discuss and work through his proposed

research topic, so by the time he arrived on campus he was able to quickly move forward with solidifying his research ideas. Furthermore, most of the students were experienced researchers, many of whom published frequently and had a good sense of how to conduct empirical research. All of these sources of information and experiences helped to prepare the students as they entered their doctoral programs.

A study conducted by Ohlinger and Machado (2015) found similar results to this study in terms of the tools used during anticipatory socialization by international students before their departure abroad. The authors discovered that before the international students in their study departed to their host country, they used the internet to research information about their selected university and relied on friends who also attended the same university to gather critical information on different aspects of their upcoming university experience (Ohlinger & Machado, 2015).

A majority of the USAID scholarship participants received their master's degrees at large research-focused institutions in Africa and, as a result, had a general sense of what the doctoral process would be like, although through an African context. Understanding the doctoral process through an African context had implications regarding the students' expectations of how much time they were going to be able to spend on building research skills compared to completing coursework credits. Many students were not familiar with the U.S. doctoral process and were surprised when they realized they had to complete a large amount of coursework, comprising of roughly three years of their time in the United States. The students expected to have ample time to focus on their research, but, for many students, they did not have enough time in the United States to prioritize building in-depth research skills.

For many of the study's participants, their transition to graduate student was relatively smooth because of their previous academic and work experiences. This finding differs from Gardner's (2008b) study, which explored the socialization of 40 doctoral students at two research-extensive universities in the United States. Gardner (2008b) found the doctoral students had a difficult time transitioning from their private liberal arts undergraduate programs to a large research-focused institution. The students' undergraduate programs did not effectively prepare them for the independent nature of their doctoral programs and many students reported disappointing experiences as they progressed through their programs. Even though a majority of the USAID scholarship participants came to the United States only attending universities in Africa, the students' anticipatory socialization provided information and experiences which helped to guide them through their initial transition to their U.S. doctoral program.

English language skills.

Strong English language skills also assisted the USAID scholarship participants as they entered their doctoral programs. Many of the students came from former British colonies, so their English skills were advanced/native, although some students reported having difficulties negotiating between different spelling and meanings of British and American English. One student from a non-British colony reported difficulties with her English skills, as English was her third spoken language. The student was having difficulties writing in English and received feedback on her assignments to improve her written English, however her spoken English was clear and articulate. Another student with English as his third spoken language also described having trouble understanding the accent of his professor and, as a result, decided to sit at the front of the classroom so he could understand the lecture. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Tompson and Tompson (1996), where the authors found the comprehension of

lectures was very difficult for non-native English speaking students in U.S. university classrooms. In addition, a study conducted by Lin and Scherz (2014) found non-native English language speakers had a challenging time understanding lectures, especially when slang words or other unfamiliar phrases were used by faculty.

The findings of this study indicate that the students' English language proficiency eased transition into the students' academic programs and host community. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Yeh and Inose (2003), which found international students with high levels of English proficiency experienced lower levels of acculturative stress and were able to adjust more effectively into their communities compared to students with low English proficiency. Other studies focusing on international students also connect English proficiency and academic success (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006; Sherry et al., 2010).

For those students with low-levels of English language proficiency or who are perceived to have strong accents, struggles can exist at their U.S. university. Beoku-Betts (2004) investigated the experiences of 15 women scientists from English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa who received their doctorate degrees in the United States, Canada, and Europe. The participants in the study described how people assumed they could not understand English and often commented on their accents and language skills, even though they had strong English skills, resulting in the African students feeling they were being racially stereotyped (Beoku-Betts, 2004). Although one student in my study mentioned that his professor had difficulty understanding his accent during class, the student did not report feeling he was being racially stereotyped. Over the course of the semester, the communication between the scholarship student and his professor improved, so both professor and student were understood during class discussions.

Additionally, as Chinese students have become a fixture at U.S. universities, recent studies have explored issues around student isolation and English language abilities. A study by Li and Collins (2014) examines the socialization of 26 Chinese doctoral students studying in the United States. The authors found limited English language skills impacted the students' ability to fully engage in the classroom and negatively affected their overall learning experiences (Li & Collins, 2014). Furthermore, a study conducted by Yao (2014) found the limited English language proficiency of Chinese undergraduate students attending a large research-extensive university in the United States affected the students' sense of belonging on campus and their ability to connect deeply with American peers. The USAID scholarship participants did not report many barriers concerning their English language skills in their academic setting, nor did they report negative issues such as racial stereotyping regarding their accents or English language ability.

Development of peer networks.

The development of peer groups helped with the initial transition into the scholarship participants' programs during the admission phase and provided an important academic and personal support network as the students faced emerging challenges during their programs. When first entering the doctoral programs, the USAID scholarship students found it easier than expected to make friends and integrate into their departments. For many, the ease of entering their program assisted with the development of a sense of belonging within their university setting. Many students described their initial surprise at the friendliness of the students and faculty in their departments and their quick integration into their doctoral programs by forming connections with their academic peers. Peers can also become an important component of a

student's cognitive development as students can act as peer mentors guiding each other through complex coursework or research problems (Gardner, 2009).

Kyle described forming a study group with two other students in his department, which helped him initially navigate the rigorous doctoral program. Le and Gardner (2010) found similar results in their study of Asian doctoral students: the students who had formed connections with peers in the participants' departments became sources of significant emotional and academic support to one another. However, findings presented by Li and Collins (2014) regarding academic peer connections differ from this study of USAID scholarship students and the findings of Le and Gardner (2010). Many of the Chinese doctoral students in the study conducted by Li and Collins (2014) had little engagement with their academic peers, or those students in the same office space or laboratory setting, and primarily only connected with other Chinese students, limiting their engagement and networking with American peers.

Kate explained how she relied on an advanced African student in her program who had the same advisor to guide her on what classes to take in order to finish within the three-year timeframe imposed by USAID. Connecting with advanced students is a form of socialization and prepares students to progressively learn new roles, knowledge, and skills during the future phases of their graduate program (Gardner, 2009). In fact, several of the scholarship participants became mentors to other USAID students who entered the program in later cohorts and, in this role, provided support in deciphering both departmental and USAID regulations.

However, as Megan described, many of the scholarship participants engaged mostly with African students and some students formed no meaningful relationships with American students. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Constantine et al. (2005) in which the African students in the authors' study found a supportive network of primarily other African

students and co-nationals on campus, providing a core network of friends supporting each other at their large, predominantly White U.S. university. Furthermore, previous studies investigating the intercultural engagement between international students and their host-country peers find similar results, with international students connecting more closely with a co-national peer support system with limited engagement with domestic students (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2013; Tian & Lowe, 2009; Trice, 2004).

Navigation of social fields.

During the admissions phase of socialization students were also engaging in their transnational social field while they transitioned to their life in the United States. The social field connects the students to their lives in the United States and their home countries where they maintained daily connections with their spouse, children, and their children's caregivers while also maintaining frequent contact with parents and siblings. Many students also reported staying connected with their supervisors and colleagues at their home institutions with the goal of staying up to date with new developments or assisting their co-workers with any issues arising while they were in the United States.

In addition, the students in this study attended Predominantly White Institutions within the U.S. and so their arrival on campus immediately shifted their identity to that of minority and international student. Furthermore, most of the participants were professionals working at universities, government ministries, and research institutions in their home countries yet, upon arrival in the United States, their identity was transformed into that of a novice graduate student. However, students were required to focus their research projects on issues facing the agricultural sector in their home countries, so they were continuously engaged in developing a research project based upon current realities faced by community members at home. In this sense, the

students developed a "habitus of dual orientation" where the students were living both "here and there," never far from their role as a research scientist trying to solve food security issues in Africa (Vertovec, 2009, p. 68). Additionally, several students found themselves having to return home more frequently than expected to care for their children or deal with the death of a parent. The students often negotiated a space of "between-society" where they frequently moved back and forth amid identities and places (Brown, 2009, p. 504).

Although the scholarship participants had shifting identities as they navigated between their home and host countries, they never perceived themselves to be Americans, or reported developing a sense of a global identity as they formed robust international networks within their global university environment. The students were firmly rooted in their home-country nationality stemming from their family commitments and future research endeavors, perhaps as a consequence of USAID policies, or a true desire to return home to continue their work. This finding differs from a study conducted by Phelps (2016) who investigated the lives of 31 international doctoral students at a large, Canadian, research-extensive public university. For many of the international doctoral students in Canada, they found themselves questioning their "national/cultural identity and sense of geographic belonging" (Phelps, 2016, p. 8). Some students did not feel fully part of the Canadian society, and yet also did not feel a sense of belonging in their home countries, expressing "in between affiliations" with their home and host country (Phelps, 2016, p. 9). However, a student with a spouse and children described "home" as a place where she lived with her family (Phelps, 2016). Perhaps if the USAID scholarship students had been allowed to bring their families with them they might have had a similar reaction to the married student in the Phelps study who identifies the concept of home with family. The USAID participants had a deep commitment to helping advance the agricultural

sector in their home countries but were required to return home by USAID and so they were never in a position where they could envision themselves as migrants to the United States or develop a nomadic sense of self and belonging.

Phase II: Integration and progression.

The integration phase is a time when doctoral students continue to explore their professional and cognitive development through their coursework, soft skills training, and research mentorship with their advisors (Gardner, 2007). Integration includes coursework completion and preparing for and executing the comprehensive examinations, which advances students to the candidacy phase of their doctoral programs (Gardner, 2009). In the integration phase, the USAID scholarship students transitioned into their new environments and navigated the cultural norms and expectations of their academic departments and host society. The students also formed deep relationships with their advisors who provided guidance, mentorship, and personal support. Professional and cognitive development also occurs during the integration phase with the students immersed in their coursework and generating a reasonable understanding of what is expected of them in their classroom and workplace settings.

Integration into their academic departments and communities.

Several studies note international students experience challenges and barriers while attending U.S. universities and adjusting to the cultural norms of the society (Constantine et al., 2005; Donin,1994; Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Lee & Rice, 2007; Li & Collins, 2014; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Yeh & Inose, 2003). However, the scholarship participants in this study expressed relative ease when adjusting to their new surroundings whether in their departments, laboratories, classrooms, or living environments. Jessica described a welcoming atmosphere within her academic department where she connected

with American and international colleagues.

Additionally, Justin described creating a family structure within his neighborhood where bonds with other Africans were made on the soccer field. This ease of transition is similar to finding by Sherry et al. (2010) who discovered a majority of their study's participants described very few problems when adjusting to cultural norms at their U.S. university. Some USAID scholarship students in this study attributed the fluid transition to their lives in United States to experiences with American culture in their home country or their previous travels to the United States for study, vacation, or conferences. Similarly, respondents in the Sherry et al. (2010) study described how traveling to the United States and other Western countries also provided a general sense of what to expect within their U.S. university setting.

Engaging in religious communities provided a sense of integration into the USAID scholarship students' host community. Students discussed the role of their religious communities on their integration into the larger campus international community and the friendships they developed within these congregations proved to be an important component of their academic and personal success and socialization. Many of the USAID scholarship participants were practicing Muslims and desired to maintain their religious identity while in the United States. Although one student thought he would be isolated in his Muslim faith, he actually found a group of students, faculty, and community members making up his diverse congregation.

Surprisingly, there are very few studies in the higher education literature focusing on the religious identity and experiences of international students who seek to practice their religion in the United States. However, Sherry et al. (2010) found Muslim students at the University of Toledo expressed concern regarding the university's understanding of specific issues regarding their faith, for example the students' desire to eat Halal food, which was not provided on

campus, or offering safe and appropriate spaces to pray. This finding differs from the results of my study in which the USAID scholarship students of religious faith reported feeling welcomed and accepted on campus. Offices providing support to international students should be cognizant of issues expanding beyond academic and health concerns and work to provide an environment where religious practices can be observed in a culturally appropriate manner.

Advisor-advisee relationships.

As previously discussed, many students began communicating with their advisors before they arrived in the United States and these initial connections helped with building the advisor-advisee relationship during the admission phase of socialization. Several students discussed how surprised they were at the close relationship they developed with their advisor because in Africa personal relationships developed between faculty and students are not very common. As often expressed in the literature, international students tend to rely on their advisor for personal and academic support more frequently than their American peers (Le & Gardner, 2010; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

The USAID scholarship participants reported in this study having close relationships with their advisors who championed their best interests to the management entity, provided research mentorship, academic guidance, and emotional support. Preparing students to take comprehensive exams was also a major role of the advisors, and for many students preparing for the exams was an intensive endeavor. Megan discussed the continuous contact she had with her advisor and the mentorship she received from him throughout her program. The constant communication and contact between the USAID scholarship participant and their advisor is similar to the findings of Le and Gardner (2010). The authors reported the Asian doctoral students in their study relied significantly on the support of their advisors who acted as teachers

and mentors to the students (Le & Gardner, 2010). Furthermore, in a study investigating sources of conflict between international students and their advisors, Adrian-Taylor et al. (2007) found 76% of the international students in the study reported they had no conflict with their current advisors, supporting the findings from my study.

Professional and cognitive development.

This study found professional growth and cognitive development occurred concurrently while interpersonal skills development took place through socialization activities, such as attendance at workshops and seminars, as well as through classroom engagement and assignments. The parallel nature of professional growth and cognitive development is similar to Gardner's (2007) research, in which the author found both professional and cognitive development occurred simultaneously as the doctoral students moved through the phases of socialization.

The professional development activities pursued by the participants in their integration phase were often driven by their personal goals and the capacity development needs of their home institutions. Whether the students were able to engage in professional development activities largely depended on the amount of coursework the students needed to complete and the rigor of their academic program. Professional development activities often included learning grant writing skills and new quantitative software programs.

Professional development learning also occurred in the classroom setting. Several students explained how their coursework improved their writing skills, such as Joe, who described how an intensive writing course helped him learn how to summarize research papers effectively. Mentorship with the students' advisors also advanced writing skills and gave the students a better understanding of how to write winning grant proposals. Brad discussed how

working with his advisor illuminated the need for advanced preparation and timing when submitting a grant proposal. Alex, a seasoned researcher who had a record of publishing before he entered his doctoral program, explained how his writing skills were sharpened through coursework and guidance by his advisor, thereby improving his proposal writing and publication writing skills. Several students also reported how university support services like writing centers provided assistance with their writing development. This finding is similar to a study by Sherry et al. (2010) who found the Writing Center at the University of Toledo provided important services to international students seeking help with their writing skills.

For those students who worked in a laboratory setting, learning how to use various types of equipment and protocols was an important advancement during program integration. Justin, George, and Samantha all described how their knowledge of laboratory techniques improved under the guidance of their advisor and colleagues working in their various laboratories. The students explained how their laboratory learning directly impacted their own research and advanced their professional skills as researchers.

The students' coursework challenged their critical thinking skills and expanded their knowledge of prominent theoretical frameworks in their discipline. Students recounted how their exposure to the U.S. academic system provided a more in-depth understanding of specific theories in their discipline, which they did not receive their master's program in Africa. George also described how his coursework allowed him to challenge his current understanding of research design and become more innovative in his field. This knowledge generation connected with George's overarching goal of participating in the scholarship program in order to improve his research skills and disseminate knowledge learned in the United States.

The USAID scholarship students had strong motivations to succeed academically and were driven by the support of their family and their desire to improve the livelihoods of the citizens of their home country. The students interviewed for this study all reported progressing academically in their programs and engaging in professional and cognitive development learning throughout their time in the United States. The results of my study are similar to a study conducted by George Mwangi, Peralta, Fries-Britt, and Daoud (2016) who investigated the academic experiences of international students of Color from sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs in the United States. In the study, George Mwangi et al. (2016) found the STEM students of Color all had a strong desire to give back to their families and communities in their home countries, as did the USAID scholarship participants, and saw the completion of a STEM degree as an opportunity for upward mobility in their home countries. Additionally, the participants in the George Mwangi et al. (2016) study reported their academic motivations were driven by goal attainment, rather than solely based upon academic interests. The USAID scholarship students also reported multidimensional motivations for pursuing their doctoral degrees in the United States, including learning new research techniques to advance their careers and developing new innovations that would improve the productivity of farmers in their home countries. This study on USAID scholarship participants adds to the body of literature on international doctoral students and describes the success many of these students had during their doctoral programs as they developed critical cognitive skills and advanced their professional development goals.

Research Question 2

The second research question, how do policies of the USAID scholarship program contribute to or detract from the students' success in their doctoral programs, offers USAID and

other scholarship programs new insights on how these doctoral scholarships influence academic success and personal well-being for program participants. While impact evaluations and tracer studies have been conducted with alumni of prominent public and privately-funded scholarship programs, such as USAID's AFGRAD and ATLAS programs (Creative Associates, 1994; MSI, 1995; Gilboy et al., 2004) and the Ford Foundation's International Fellowships Program (Brown Murga & Martel, 2017) there remains a lack of empirical research about the lived experiences of doctoral scholarship students while they are completing their degrees in the United States. Without in-depth knowledge about how certain policies are impacting students while they are pursuing their degrees, effective pivoting to address specific issues is limited. In this section, I will outline how the scholarship policies contributed to student success and areas where program policies had negative consequences on the academic and personal lives of the students.

Policies contributing to student success.

The USAID scholarship program had several policies in place supporting student socialization and professional growth, thereby contributing to the participants' overall success in their doctoral programs. Key areas contributing to student success include the placement of students with supportive faculty and the funding of activities supporting student socialization, such as conference attendance, journal publication fees, departmental assistantships, and research funding. Both these areas are described in greater detail in this section.

Connecting students with supportive faculty.

The advising relationship between the faculty member and graduate student is viewed as one of the most critical relationships formed during graduate school. This relationship often influences student success, retention, and future career trajectories (Baird, 1995; Barnes & Austin, 2009; Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001; Nettles & Millett, 2006). In this study, all of the

participants noted a supportive and productive relationship with their advisors. The USAID scholarship program connected the study's participants to their advisors, many of whom had a deep understanding of the students' research area and the country or regional context in which the students lived, worked, and conducted their research. Nick described how his advisor was interested in working in the developing world and connected with his students by inviting them to his house for American holiday celebrations, such as Thanksgiving dinner.

The faculty who chose to participate in the scholarship program had to apply through a competitive bidding process issued by the management entity, and put time and effort into this process, which stimulated the initial relationship with the students. The USAID missions, in collaboration with the management entity, ultimately decided where to place the participants based upon the applications of the faculty members and students.

The scholarship program required a level of flexibility by the students' advisors throughout the duration of their program. All of the students reported at some level their advisors provided time, effort, and support to their academic, personal, and professional growth, which contributed significantly to student success. Based upon the results of this study, as well as my pilot study, the mechanism in which USAID missions place students with U.S. faculty members seems to be an effective means to connect African researchers to faculty who have the ability and desire to mentor and guide these agricultural scientists.

The findings of this study indicating the majority of USAID scholarship participants had a supportive advisor with experience traveling, living, or working abroad is similar to findings from Nguyen (2013) who investigated the role of faculty advisors and international students at a large university in the Southern United States. In the study, Nguyen (2013) found all of the faculty who advised international students had significant international travel experience, which

enhanced the advisors' cultural awareness and deepened relationships developed with their advisees. Furthermore, the advisors were committed to forming personal relationships by inviting students to their homes for dinner or connecting with students through end of semester lunches (Nguyen, 2013). The actions of the advisors highlighted by Nguyen (2013) mirrored how the advisors of the USAID scholarship students welcomed and supported the participants of my study.

Access to funding.

Another aspect of the scholarship program that contributed to student success involved specific funding sources given to the scholarship participants. The students were able to travel to one conference per year, which was funded by USAID, in addition to receiving funds to cover the publishing fees common with scientific journal publications. The students also received stipends to work as research assistants or teaching assistants in their departments, which were funded by the scholarship program. Furthermore, when the students transitioned to candidacy status and returned home, they were given a lump sum of funding to support in-country research projects.

A study conducted by Nettles and Millett (2006) showed doctoral students with funded assistantships had increased scholarly productivity. Furthermore, the authors found funded assistantships in the sciences had a positive effect on the degree completion of the doctoral students (Nettles & Millett, 2006). The findings from my study show, although the students had fully-funded assistantships, students with high coursework loads reported they were not able to publish because of the combination of a shorted timeframe in the United States coupled with a large amount of credits to complete while in the United States. However, the findings of increased scholarship productivity in the Nettles and Millett (2006) study are similar for the

USAID scholarship students who had a lower-level of coursework to complete and were able to have significant publishing outputs while in the United States.

Policies detracting from student success.

The international students participating in the USAID scholarship program had to follow various rules and regulations instituted by USAID and enforced by the management entity, as described in greater detail in Chapter 4. While in some manner the multiple rules the students had to follow influenced their everyday lives, the study's data analysis identified two prominent policies with negative consequences to the participants' academic and personal lives. The USAID policies, which detracted from student success, include family restriction and the timeframe of the scholarship program.

Family restriction.

This study found the repercussions of family restriction greatly influenced student happiness and influenced many students to rapidly complete their coursework. Each USAID mission has a policy allowing dependents to travel with the students yet USAID policy documents state the agency strongly discourages dependent travel to the United States (USAID, 2014). No participant in the study received permission by their USAID mission or USAID Washington to bring their families to the United States on either a long-term or short-term basis. Several of the study's participants indicated they met the financial requirements stated in the Conditions of Sponsorship for J-1 Visa Holders (USAID Form 1381-6) but still were not allowed to pursue temporary relocation of their family members to the United States.

The Conditions of Sponsorship for J-1 Visa Holders indicates students are responsible for showing bank account statements demonstrating their ability to support family members for the duration of their time in the United States. If family members were allowed to travel with the

students, they would be required to travel on a J-2 visa, which is a non-immigrant visa for spouses and dependents of J-1 exchange visitors. The J-1 and J-2 visa status restricts the time in the United States for both visa holders, requiring the student and spouse to return home within five to seven days of coursework completion (USAID, 2013). So, although there were financial systems and visa requirements in place for students to bring their families to the United States, while also ensuring student return to their home country, USAID Washington and the USAID missions did not allow family travel to the United States. This policy differs from other scholarship programs such as the Fulbright Program, described in Chapter 4.

Restricting families from accompanying scholarship participants had consequences on the students as they experienced continued emotional distress throughout their time in the United States. Many students described the psychological trauma they experienced, which impacted their academic work. Several female students reported leaving their months-old babies behind to study in the United States and experienced anxiety, depression, and emotional distress as a result. The study's findings concerning the restriction of families to travel with the students raise important questions regarding USAID's policies and consequences of this restriction on the students. The motivations for the family restriction are not clearly outlined in the documents reviewed for this study but they are assumed to include the reduction of students overstaying their visas and the prevention of "brain drain". If family members are not allowed to come to the United States, the students will be motivated to return to their home country after completing their coursework requirements.

However, the USAID scholarship program was designed to support student return by ensuring most of the students were employed before leaving for the United States and had a job to return back to once their doctoral program was completed. The J-1 visa is also a common

mechanism used by various educational programs to promote student return to their home country. The J-1 visa holders would only be allowed to stay legally in the United States if a waiver is granted, otherwise students would not be able to pursue career opportunities without the ability to legally work in the United States.

The issue of dependent travel for participants of USAID programs is not a new issue of concern for African students pursuing degrees in the United States with funding from the agency. A program evaluation of the ATLAS program in 1994 echoed the same concerns found in this study regarding the restriction of family travel to the United States. As described in Chapter 4, the ATLAS program was one of several large participant training programs responsible for training over 3,200 African professionals from 45 countries during a 40-year time-span from the 1960s to the early 2000s (Cohen, 2010; MSI, 1995). The ATLAS program evaluation published in 1994 by Creative Associates International stated:

> In our view, ATLAS students should not be discouraged, indeed, they might even be encouraged to bring families after six months so long as they meet the financial and other requirements. This plea was echoed so frequently and fervently by the respondents that it should be given fresh consideration by USAID/Washington. The bad feelings generated when families are separated, especially in the family-centered African context, are a serious detriment to the relationships USAID strives to build through projects like ATLAS (p. 126).

The appeal for family unity expressed in the ATLAS evaluation based upon participant interviews is strikingly similar to the findings of this study, albeit 25 years after the recommendation was initially made to USAID. Despite previous recommendations, USAID still

prevents families from joining the students of their scholarship programs, ignoring cultural contexts which place a strong emphasis on the African family structure.

The issue of family restriction was by far the greatest topic of discussion regarding the various USAID policies, most likely because of the number of participants in the study who left children and spouses behind. The participants of this study described how this restriction brought on significant emotional distress and, in many ways, compromised their academic success. Some students rushed through their coursework in order to be reunited with their families, while others prioritized returning home during the summers, reducing research mentorship opportunities with their advisors or other faculty members at their university. This study found the requirement to leave families in Africa while scholarship students attend U.S. universities has been a common practice of USAID despite previous calls to reform the policy, resulting in continued emotional hardships and academic detriment.

Although literature on the topic of family separation for international students is limited, the findings of this study were consistent with research conducted by Harvey, Robinson, and Welch (2017) who studied the experiences of international students who left their family at home to study abroad. Harvey et al. (2017) found the emotional turmoil experienced by the students involved the tension between choosing to study abroad and the consequences of having to leave their families behind. This tension was apparent with the USAID scholarship students interviewed for this study as well. Several students mentioned how they did not regret their decision to come to the United States but might have made a different choice had they known the hardships they had to endure during their doctoral programs. In the wake of the emotional hardship of leaving family behind, students had a sharpened focus to succeed and used the opportunity in the United States to better the lives of their families.

Timeframe of program.

The purpose of a doctoral program is to prepare "a student to become a scholar: that is, to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as to communicate and disseminate it (Council of Graduate Schools, 1990, p. 10). Depending on institutional and disciplinary differences, and the research focus of the student, time to degree can vary between doctoral programs (Gardner, 2009). The length of a doctoral program is often tailored around the individual needs of the student in conjunction with the department requirements and input from advisors and committee members. However, the students in this study, and their advisors, had limited input on the timeframe of the scholarship program, which required the students to return back to their home country after completing their coursework and reaching candidacy status, typically within a three-year timeframe.

Some students were able to return to their home country for a semester to begin their initial data collection, afterwards returning the United States to complete their coursework and defend their dissertation proposal. However, most students spent the majority of the three years in the United States completing coursework before returning to their home country to complete their dissertation. As a result, in three years, the USAID scholarship students had to complete their coursework, pass comprehensive exams, advance their professional development goals, develop their research topic, defend their proposal, and identify supplemental funding to support their research when they returned home. The students accomplished these tasks in English, which was not the native language for many of the participants, in fact, English was often the third language spoken by the students. Furthermore, the work of the students' doctoral programs was completed all while being separated from family members and maintaining complex transnational social fields. For many of the study's participants, the limited timeframe detracted

significantly from their academic achievements including socialization milestones, such as publication in journals and the mastery of research skills through mentorship with their advisors.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the structure of returning home in the fourth year of a doctoral program creates potential barriers for the students, such as access to their advisors, laboratory equipment and supplies, and other academic resources. Furthermore, during the fourth and fifth year of a doctoral program traditional graduate students have completed their coursework requirements and often use this time to go to conferences, write journal publications, and learn advanced research techniques (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). Due to the fact the students were forced to return home after completing their coursework there were significant socialization limitations including conference attendance, network expansion, the writing of grant proposals, and the advancement of research skills with their advisors.

Several students in this study were completing degrees in agricultural economics, typically an academically rigorous program requiring at least a five-year timeframe for program completion. However, USAID allowed the students to be accepted into agricultural economics programs without altering their timeframe policy for these students, creating stress and frustration for the students. One student discussed how her department indicated her program should take five years to complete because they prioritize publication outputs for their students, yet USAID insisted the students should manage the program completion within four years as long as they meet the minimum requirements of the program (i.e. completing the coursework requirements, passing comprehensive exams, and successfully defending their dissertation).

The USAID scholarship student's view regarding the standard timeframe of economics programs in the United States is consistent with time completion studies conducted by Stock, Siegfried, and Finegan (2011). In their study, the authors tracked the graduation timeframe of

586 individuals enrolled in 27 different economics programs in the United States. Findings of the Stock et al. (2011) study showed 88% of individuals who earned an economics Ph.D. completed their program within eight years. Of those students who completed their degree within eight years, the medium time-to-degree completion was 5.2 years (Stock et al., 2011).

Additionally, the University of California, Davis, a research-extensive university with one of the world's top ranked agricultural economics programs, reports in their Graduate School Handbook that most doctoral students complete their economics degrees in the fifth year or even early in their sixth year of their program. So, for USAID students in agricultural economics, having to complete coursework and develop research skills in a three-year timeframe, with a fourth year at home completing the dissertation, is a very shortened timeframe for degree completion.

Reflecting on the purpose of the scholarship program is useful when understanding the impacts of the instituted policies. USAID asserts the purpose of this particular scholarship program is to build a highly educated group of change agents working to foster sustainable change in their countries. Furthermore, USAID describes how a strong and empowered cadre of scientists with extensive high-level knowledge is needed to support institutional advancement and build resilient systems. The scholarship program was developed based upon this perspective, yet the timeframe instituted by USAID does not lead to supporting the development of scientists with the extensive high-level knowledge required to solve significant food security issues in Africa. An abbreviated timeframe does not position the students to become highly-qualified researchers, rather, the timeframe seems to enforce and prioritize student return and budgetary concerns over the development of future change agents and thought leaders. This study found, in some circumstances, USAID's rules and regulations had negative consequences on the students'

desires to engage in all of the opportunities afforded to them during their doctoral program, leading to missed opportunities that would have increased their knowledge, facilitated network connections, and built research partnerships between the students' institutions and U.S. universities.

Summary of Research Questions

The first research question explored the socialization of the doctoral students as they pursued their advanced degrees. Although most of the participants experienced incredible stress when leaving their families behind in Africa, their transition to the academic programs and life in the United States was relatively smooth. Their academic coursework was rigorous, but having advanced English skills helped the students integrate into their programs both academically and socially. The ethnic and religious diversity of their academic departments, laboratories, and host communities allowed the students to develop close friendships with a small group of friends who provided emotional and academic support and guidance. The students also reported developing strong relationships with their advisors and other faculty who supported them personally and academically as the students advanced through their programs. The students were constantly navigating their social field as they received emotional support from their family in Africa, but also provided financial and emotional support to their family members they left behind. Some students traveled frequently between their host and home countries navigating responsibilities of a parent, student, and professional. For those students with lower coursework loads important socialization milestones were met including the acquisition of advanced research techniques, publication in peer-reviewed journals, and opportunities to attend and present at major conferences in their field. A higher coursework load meant students did not have time to hit the

milestones mentioned above, or pursue professional development activities, such as learning grant writing skills.

The second question addressed the positive and negative implications of USAID policies and the consequences these policies had on the lived experiences of the scholarship students. The manner in which USAID connected the scholarship students to their advisors was viewed as a positive mechanism to identify supportive and caring faculty who expressed flexibility and compassion during the students' programs. The funding of socialization activities was also a valuable tool used by the students to advance their academic and professional goals while they were in the United States. The policy restricting families from accompanying the students to the United States was the most prominent policy issue discussed by participants with significant emotional and academic consequences. Students described depression and sadness, in addition to increasing their coursework loads to reduce their time in the United States in order to return to their families. The limited timeframe in the United States also influenced student socialization and success, especially for those students in rigorous academic programs.

In the next three sections of this chapter I will discuss the specific implications of this study on policy, practice, and theory. I will also offer recommendations to USAID and other international education scholarship programs on altering certain policies allowing for greater flexibility, leading to improved student satisfaction, well-being, and academic achievements. Additionally, considerations for future research are explored.

Implications for Policy

A thriving and diverse student body enhances student learning, facilitates global connections, and improves the ability of students to navigate complex globalized working environments. Over the past three decades, higher education institutions have experienced

increasing pressures to adapt to rapidly changing technologies, societal norms, and fluid economic and political forces, which has led to a globally connected and diverse world (Bartell, 2003). In response, universities have set agendas and targets to internationalize their campuses, meaning to integrate an "international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). Universities have instituted policies to support campus internationalization, with the recruitment of international students a common component of strategic internationalization. Additionally, universities aim to provide a comprehensive package to students, supporting study abroad experiences, cultural exchanges, access to foreign languages, and curriculum integrating the international/intercultural dimension of the teaching and learning process (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Policy recommendations in this section are intended to build upon and support the internationalization agendas developed and implemented by many research-extensive universities in the United States, including those universities hosting the scholarship participants.

This section identifies three recommendations aimed at improving institutional and departmental structures at the policy level, in order to promote socialization and facilitate positive experiences for a wide-body of international students. Additionally, the section discusses several ways in which universities can better understand the transnational networks of their student bodies, how connecting international and domestic students can lead to a better campus environment, and how university policies can guide more effective cross-campus coordination.

Understanding and Engaging Transnational Networks

As this study found, international students connect on-campus with their home country peers and a wide-range of international students at their university, in addition to international

students at other universities in the United States within their transnational networks. The networks utilized by the scholarship recipients spanned continents and academic disciplines, allowing the students to engage in emotional and academic support systems vital to their success. However, not all international students easily engage or are immersed in these types of support networks; research has outlined how undergraduate students from East Asia often experience marginalization and discrimination and struggle to develop a sense of belonging on their campuses (Sato & Hodge, 2016; Yao, 2016). To foster an inclusive atmosphere prioritizing the health and well-being of all students, universities need to understand and support the transnational networks developed by international students, both on campus and around the world, in order to develop successful policies and procedures that improve international student retention, sense of belonging, and well-being (Glass, Wongtrirat, & Buus, 2015).

Universities are uniquely able to nurture transnational networks by instituting policies promoting supportive communities of practice, where international students can share their own experiences and cultural backgrounds, leading to improved academic success and personal contentment for the students (Glass et al., 2015). Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) use the term "communities of practice," which they define as, "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in the area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). Because they are engaging with multiple identities as they pursue their degrees in the United States, international students often feel they do not fully belong in their campus community because of their outsider label. But being invited to participate in communities of practice can connect international students across campus and make them more comfortable within their campus environment.

In addition, international student groups, which are common on most large campuses, are typically formulated around a country or region of origin and can be isolated from one another. Universities can facilitate international communities of practice by linking international students from different countries and ethnic groups around a specific topic of interest for the students, such as leadership development, or around a global problem like access to clean water. Universities often host social activities for international students without a clear purpose or agenda, making sustainable networking difficult. However, universities can be more deliberate in connecting international students around specific communities of practice, which can act as a learning platform, as well as a means to share learning experiences and problems facing the students at their university. These communities of practice can provide feedback to the university on policies or practices impacting students' academic and personal lives, if they are included in campus dialogue.

The USAID scholarship program inherently acted as an international community of practice with students connecting with each other from around the United States when meeting at agricultural-related conferences or conferences hosted by USAID. Brad described his desire to expand on the networks developed in the United States, including building relationships with other USAID scholars studying at different universities. Similar to the way in which the USAID scholarship program connected students around the specific topic of food security in Africa, universities also have the ability to foster communities of practice between international students on campus who may not naturally interact with one another.

Connecting International and Domestic Students

There is a depth of research regarding how universities struggle to connect international students and domestic students in the United States (Hanassab, 2006; Lee, 2010; Lee & Rice,

2007; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Most international students fail to develop lasting friendships and connections with American students. However, thoughtful communities of practice groups can connect domestic and international students with one another, forming a deeper sense of belonging and acceptance on campus, while acknowledging the value and importance of international students' backgrounds, cultures, and transnational networks.

For example, universities can develop policies supporting the creation of programming that brings together international students and domestic students to discuss specific issues emerging on campus, in the community, and society at large. Connecting student movements such as Black Lives Matter and the #MeToo movement and various international and domestic student clubs can facilitate constructive dialogue while uniting these vast networks across campus. Additionally, academic departments can facilitate linkages between their domestic and international students. Programs can be developed within a department to foster engagement and interaction between international and domestic students. Programs that are supported by the departments can build networks and connect new and advanced students, resulting in closer ties between the students and facilitating study groups and research networks.

These enabled connections can promote international students as problem solvers and allies, thereby allowing students to engage their significant transnational networks in order to improve the campus climate, while strengthening bonds between domestic and international students. Understanding the complex nature of the transnational networks of international students and the influences they currently have on U.S. campuses will help universities better serve their international student population and take advantage of the ability of these transnational networks to foster student success, friendships, and a sense of belonging on their campus (Glass et al., 2015).

Building Cross-campus Coordination for Support

Many large universities lack effective coordination between international support offices and other departments and units on their campuses, leading to siloed structures that do not successfully serve international students (Glass et al., 2015). Policies which increase communications and networking across campus provide a more integrated approach to international graduate student services and more effectively incorporate the needs of international students into the larger campus domain. For example, understanding health services, especially where and how to access mental health support, is important for the health and wellbeing of international students. A study conducted at Yale University found 45% of Chinese international students reported symptoms of depression. Furthermore, 27% of the students in the study were unaware of the availability of mental health and counseling services on Yale's campus (Han, Han, Luo, Jacobs, & Jean-Baptiste, 2012).

With such a large percentage of students reporting emotional distress, universities need to prioritize the dissemination of information to international students about the mental health resources available to them. This includes providing information during international student orientation programs on mental health services, conducting follow up surveys targeted to international students to see if mental health resources have been utilized, and working with colleges and departments to promote counseling services, especially during key points in the semester such as mid-term examinations and final examinations.

The scholarship participants in this study also reported significant emotional distress from separation of family and the unexpected deaths of their parents, however, only a few students reported seeking support through their university's mental health services. There may be

stigma attached to seeking mental health counseling so universities need to ensure these services are presented in a culturally appropriate manner where confidentiality is guaranteed.

Furthermore, this study found academic support services, such as writing centers, were often utilized by the participants. However, in this study, issues such as plagiarism became a serious concern for several students who did not receive enough support or training on academic expectations surrounding proper citation protocols. For many of the students in this study, using published information without providing citations is common practice, as plagiarism is a notion which is culturally determined depending on the students' country of origin (Leask, 2004; McLean & Ransom, 2005; Montgomery, 2010). Policies that support the programmatic development of training seminars created and disseminated by writing center staff, international student support offices, academic departments, student advisors, and faculty will alert incoming international students to the academic standards they will be held accountable to during their programs. Funding allocated to promote academic standards benefits both international students and domestic students, as there is limited evidence showing international students plagiarize more frequently than domestic students (Montgomery, 2010).

Implications for Practice

In this section, I present three implications for practice based upon the findings of this study and the internationalization agendas of U.S. research-extensive universities. These include support for international students' professional development activities, the implementation of a feedback loop for orientation programs, and the development of more deliberate thinking regarding graduate student housing to encourage engagement with U.S. students.

Support for Professional Development Activities

The first implication for practice includes providing support to international graduate students in order to enhance their socialization and promote professional development engagement. Doctoral programs are designed to produce independent researchers, and, as such, consist of activities devoted to the knowledge creation of best practices, standards, methods, and tools to conduct research in the student's chosen field of study (Mendoza, 2010). In order to gain the skills needed to conduct high-level research, graduate students require engagement and connections beyond content presented in their coursework, such as applied research with faculty or mentors and engagement in professional activities through workshop and conference attendance (Weidman, 2010).

There are various ways in which universities, colleges, and departments can promote and facilitate international student engagement with professional development activities. First, departments and faculty can support access to information on various professional development opportunities and provide professional association linkages. International students may not be embedded in information sharing networks within their departments. Faculty and staff can ensure these students are connected and receiving news and information on grants, fellowships, and conferences, so students are informed about potential opportunities. For international students who wish to apply to specific opportunities, support should be offered by the department staff or faculty, as application processes can be difficult for non-native English speakers to navigate successfully.

Second, colleges and departments can support conference attendance and regional and national-level association engagement. An important component of professional development and successful career development for graduate students includes attendance at academic

conferences and engagement in activities promoted by various professional associations (Gardner & Barnes, 2007). My study found participants valued the role conferences and professional associations played in their own professional development, as these events and networks provided a better understanding of their field of research and connected students to prominent global researchers. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Gardner and Barnes (2007) in which the authors found graduate student involvement at both national and local level associations and conferences benefited the students' socialization experiences and enhanced their professional development.

For international students, many of whom might have limited time in the United States, having the opportunity to network at conferences exposes them to new professional connections (Austin & McDaniels, 2006), as Justin found when he attended a major conference in his field. Many international students might not have the financial resources to return to the United States after their degree completion to attend future conferences, so it is imperative they have access to these opportunities as graduate students. The students in this study received funding from USAID to attend one conference per year in the United States. However, international students not supported by scholarship programs may not have access to extra resources to support conference attendance. Megan discussed how she was limited to the conference support from the scholarship program and the allocation of conference funds through her advisor, depending on his budget each year. If Megan's advisor did not have funds to support travel to conferences, then she was only able to use the funds provided by the scholarship program. Many departments fully or partially fund student travel to conferences; however, faculty should be cognizant of which students are receiving the funds and promote equal distribution among non-traditional students.

Supporting other activities such as grant writing and teacher training seminars is also critical for student growth and development. Several participants in this study noted they did not participate in professional development opportunities since they were not allowed to be absent from their classes or because they prioritized completing coursework assignments. Megan described the tension between wanting to attend a professional development course and complying with the attendance policy for her class. Departments and faculty can support students by allowing absences from classes for conference attendance or to attend other professional development activities. Furthermore, departments or colleges can plan seminars in the evening or weekends, so students do not have to choose between attending classes or participating in professional development activities. Finally, in order to verify students are participating in activities supporting their growth as researchers, graduate programs should monitor and modify programming in order to best meet the needs of the students throughout the duration of their programs (Weidman, et al., 2001).

Implementation of a Feedback Loop for Orientation Programs

Participants in this study noted the importance of international student orientation programs, as well as their departmental orientations, in preparing them to live and learn in the United States. Typically, orientation programs occur during the first few days of the arrival of international students, which can be an overwhelming time for the students (Shapiro, Farrelly, & Tomaš, 2014). International student support offices, in partnership with colleges, should institute follow-up information sessions or surveys to ensure students are utilizing the resources offered by the university. Surveys can be sent to international students to better understand what resources were utilized during the semester and can serve as a reminder to students regarding the availability of campus resources. Undergraduate international students living on campus might

have better knowledge and access to campus resources, but international graduate students who often live off-campus might not be aware of all the available tools and resources provided by the university. Reminding students of services such as mental health resources and academic support services is critical for international students, especially students of Color, who may feel marginalized and isolated at their university.

Encouraging Engagement with U.S. Students

This study found engagement with U.S. citizens was often limited to classroom interactions, however when friendships were formed with American students, these relationships helped with understanding American culture and the academic system. As described above, various studies have also found limited engagement between international students and their American counterparts, which narrows the full range of benefits an internationalized campus offers to the whole campus population (Shapiro et al., 2014). Universities have historically struggled to provide opportunities for engagement and interaction between international students and American students (Li, Chen & Duanmu, 2010; Yao, 2014), however, there are a few examples which could be replicated to promote engagement with American peers and communities (Glass et al., 2015).

One example of a unique housing structure is the International House at Northern Arizona University, which is a place where domestic and international students chose to live, study, and connect with one another in a meaningful and deliberate manner, building cross-cultural awareness and developing language skills. The International House is a living learning community connecting domestic and international students, where cross-cultural engagement and communication benefits all residents, leading to increased understanding of language, culture, and global trends impacting the world (Glass et al., 2015). In this setting, “the deep and essential

relationships formed among conational and international students stand in stark contrast to the activity-filled, short-term, and shallow relationships that most of the international students interviewed indicated having with American peers" (Glass et al., 2015, p. 60). Living learning communities connecting domestic and international students have the ability to strengthen ties between students and expand transnational networks for all residents, leading improved cultural awareness and cross-cultural learning (Glass et al., 2015).

Implications for Theory

This study focused on the intersection of the international student experience, doctoral student socialization, and the influences of the USAID scholarship program. The two conceptual frameworks of graduate student socialization and transnational social fields were used in this study to explore the experiences of African students obtaining their doctorate degrees in the United States. The finding from this study suggest both theories provide limited perspectives on the various experiences of international graduate students and should be developed further to offer a more nuanced understanding of doctoral education and the international graduate student experience in which financial, cultural, professional, and familial structures can influence student socialization. In this section, I present the implications for the socialization and transnationalism theories used in this study.

Socialization Theory

Building upon the prevailing frameworks of undergraduate and graduate student socialization (Golde, 1998; Lovitts, 2001; Weidman et al., 2001), Gardner's (2007, 2008b) three-phase model of graduate student socialization provided the means to address the phases of the doctoral experience from a programmatic perspective, while also speaking to the development of personal relationships fostered in graduate school (Gardner, 2010). However, these socialization

models are developed under a Western context and inherently treat international students as a homogenous group without considering differences in country of origin, ethnicity, and economic backgrounds.

Additionally, research on the socialization of doctoral students postulates students are novices and will enter the U.S. academic system as junior faculty members pursuing a career in the academy. As such, socialization theories prioritize activities during graduate school that meet milestones important for obtaining a faculty position in the United States, such as presenting at notable conferences, publishing in top-tier journals, learning research skills, and gaining teaching experience (Austin, 2002, 2003; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Gardner, 2008b). In this study, the students were junior to mid-career professionals returning to jobs in their home country as faculty or research scientists, and desired to develop skills such as leadership development, grant writing, and mastery of new quantitative software programs, in addition to developing high-level research skills. These soft skills directly contributed to specific professional needs of the individual and their home-country institutions. For example, many students were employed at research institutions where generating external funding was a major component of their job responsibilities, so learning grant writing skills would have an immediate impact on their job performance and ability to secure grant funding.

However, while students reported missing classes to attend conferences, they did not feel missing class to attend a grant writing training was appropriate during their studies. Activities such as attending conferences were promoted by the students' advisors because they represent a standard of excellence in the U.S. academic system. But many students were not able to or did not choose to prioritize attending soft skills workshops, which often directly related to their professional goals, because, for many of the students, the workshops were not embedded in the

traditional academic structure of their discipline. Socialization theory does not currently consider how international doctoral students' professional pathways differ from the dominant culture's ideals of entering the U.S. academy and, therefore, should be expanded in response to the changing environment in higher education where entrance into the academy is often an unattainable goal for many doctoral students because of the current job market climate and other economic factors. Additionally, many students' professional trajectories focus on other sectors outside of academia, such as industry or government employment.

Furthermore, much of the socialization literature on international students describes how cultural adjustment is a primary challenge, but a necessary step in order to successfully integrate the foreign students into the host community while they are studying abroad (Andrade, 2006; Gebhard, 2012). Within the higher education literature, there is an assumption that international students desire to be fully immersed in American society and this assimilation directly leads to student success, a general sense of belonging, and wellbeing. This study of African doctoral student experiences found, however, the students did not necessarily desire to be integrated into American society because of their shorted timeframe in the United States. In addition, a majority of the participants did not report any significant adjustment issues when entering their academic programs, and many were surprised at the ease of transition into their new peer networks, which included mostly international students.

The development of communities of practice by the scholarship participants provided the necessary support, encouragement, and academic engagement needed to navigate the complexities of the students' doctoral programs and life in the United States. The students in this study discussed how interactions with other USAID scholarship participants, African and international students, co-workers, advisors, and classmates provided opportunities to acquire

solutions to arising problems. These networks offered recommendations on what classes to take, how to navigate comprehensive exams, and gave consistent personal support during the students' program. The multidimensional support did not necessarily come from American peers, or because the students were integrated into American society, but included a network of engaged people providing the necessary knowledge and support to the study's participants.

Socialization theory does not acknowledge the complexity of the international student experience and assumes cultural assimilation is a requirement for student success. The present study demonstrates the need for consideration of the thoughts and preferences of international students who are planning on returning to their home country and do not place significant value on integrating into American society while they are in the United States. The consequences of these preferences have important implications for U.S. universities, which need to be considered when implementing international student support services.

Transnationalism and Transnational Social Fields

The framework of transnationalism and the transnational social field (Fouron & Schiller, 2001; Gargano, 2009) provided a means to explore the wide network of actors extending across national borders influencing and engaging the participants in this study while they lived in the United States. The students in this study were embedded in social fields, or transnational social groups, spanning multiple places and comprising of spouses, children, parents, siblings, colleagues, mentors, and friends. International doctoral students mimic transnational migrant behavior as they navigate relationships, cultures and traditions, moving between home and host country and managing multiple new identities, such as graduate student, minority, scholar, and foreigner.

However, studies of transnationalism primarily focus on low-skilled or highly skilled

migrant groups and rarely focus on international students as temporary mobile scholars and learners (Collins, 2009; Waters & Brooks, 2012). Growing scholarship now includes "middling trans-migrants" and describes the complexities of the ordinary lives of middle-class transnational migrants, including students with temporary mobility in their host-country (Waters & Brooks, 2012, p. 22). However, even with this emerging body of literature on "middling trans-migrants," the larger body of work on transnationalism has largely ignored the presence and experiences of international students (Gargano, 2009; Waters & Brooks, 2012). Scholars promoting the adoption of a transnational perspective for international student migration argue a shift must occur from focusing on the experiences of international students who are "living abroad" to acknowledging the complexities of the cultural flows and processes and identity development occurring between the transnational spaces occupied by mobile students (Gargano, 2009; Waters & Brooks, 2012).

The participants of this study described the complexities of their transnational spaces as they navigated their doctoral programs. Daily communication with their family and friends sustained social fields in their home countries, while expanding networks in the United States connected the students with other international colleagues, broadening the students' worldviews. Many students traveled frequently between the United States and their home countries to be reunited with their families in order to address urgent family matters or to advance their research projects forward. The students had to navigate these multiple transitions, entering one space for a short time period and then returning back to another all while managing the moving parts of their doctoral programs and research projects. Most of the study's participants were never solely embedded in the United States for an extended period of time, challenging the notion of what "living abroad" means to these mobile trans-migrant students.

Identify shifts with the study's participants were also common. The participants left their home country as researchers and lecturers and entered their academic programs as novice graduate students while taking on new job responsibilities as teaching or research assistants. Participants also had various ways they identified themselves while in the United States, such as describing themselves as an exchange visitor or scholar. However, a majority of the participants self-identified as students, often qualifying the temporary nature of their scholarship program and time in the United States. The description of the participants' identities differs from what is typically represented in the transnational literature, which often focuses on migrants looking to embed themselves long-term in their host country for primarily economic reasons.

Furthermore, a significant amount of research on international student mobility in the policy context concerns national data, such as the inward and outward movement of students between two countries and how these mobile students contribute to the economic growth of their host country (Waters & Brooks, 2012). This popular "methodological nationalism" framework, prioritizing the nation-state as a facilitator of migration, should be refined through a transnational perspective, where the complexities of student transnational social fields are included as a means to understand the experiences of international students, as they inhabit transnational spaces and develop multiple layers of identities (Waters & Brooks, 2012, p. 32). The participants in this study were managing multifaceted social fields, creating and sustaining identities, and frequently moving between nation states with both countries benefiting from the knowledge creation and scientific advancements pursued by each student. A refined view and understanding of the "middling trans-migrants" would strengthen the transnational framework by acknowledging the complexities of international students and their movements between their home and host countries.

By using two different conceptual frameworks to understand the experiences of international doctoral students, I am able to contribute to the theoretical frames by recommending the expansion of certain components within each framework, in order to strengthen the theory development. The country of origin, ethnicity, and economic backgrounds of international students are important to consider when investigating the socialization processes of these student groups. For example, a majority of the African students in this study had a general understanding of the U.S. academic structure and were able to integrate rather easily into their academic programs. Furthermore, if students began to struggle academically, they were able to quickly pivot in order to meet the required academic standards. However, many international students from East Asia seem to struggle with integration and connection within their classrooms and departments. A more nuanced understanding of country of origin of international students within the socialization framework could help better prepare students from specific regions to succeed in the U.S. academic system.

Additionally, understanding the migration patterns of international students would strengthen the transnational social field framework. Many international students use education abroad opportunities as a way to emigrate to a new country. However, the USAID scholarship program reinforced a permanent relationship with the participants' home countries, creating multifaceted social fields where the students were constantly managing networks and relationships spanning national boundaries and frequently traveled between these spaces. The transnational framework can be expanded to understand the complex cultural flows of international students in an ever changing and globalized world.

Recommendations for USAID and Other International Education Scholarship Programs

This section includes three broad recommendations for USAID and other international education scholarship programs. While this study is not intended to be an evaluation of the USAID scholarship program, targeted recommendations are necessary to present in this chapter because of the significant impact USAID's rules and regulations had on the doctoral students while they were studying in the United States. The specific recommendations include: conducting a pilot study which allows families to join students in the United States while tracking the rates of return back to their home countries, restructuring the timeframe of the program allowing for more flexibility in program structure, and allowing students to participate in the graduation ceremony. While these recommendations are framed under the current of USAID programming, they are open for consideration to other international education scholarship programs.

Family Restriction

Several recommendations emerge from this study regarding the restriction of family travel to the United States. First, the obvious recommendation is to allow students to bring their families with them to the United States, if desired. To test the efficacy of the current structure of the scholarship programs, USAID could launch a pilot study allowing students to bring their families in order to determine the level of student return.

Since other U.S. federal government programs, such as the Fulbright Program, already allow family travel, USAID could evaluate the structure of these programs as they design their pilot study. If student return becomes an issue based upon the results of the pilot study, then the programs can be adjusted accordingly. Due to the emotional distress caused by the family

restriction policy, USAID should gather evidence determining whether family accompaniment actually results in failure to return to the home countries and adjust their policies accordingly.

Interestingly, previous USAID scholarship programs have noted high rates of return of participants trained in the United States. A study conducted by Jamora, Bernsten, and Maredia (2011) found 86% of students participating in the USAID-funded Dry Grain Pulses Collaborative Research Support Program returned home after their graduate training was complete, with four out of the 42 students staying in the United States permanently because of job opportunities. Furthermore, an impact study of the ATLAS/AFGRAD programs found no significant evidence the scholarships programs contributed to brain drain (Gilboy, et al., 2004). Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 4, the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has shifted their scholarship training program strategy from focusing on international undergraduate education to graduate education, based upon evidence suggesting African students who receive their master's degree abroad will return back to the region after their degree completion (Burciul & Kerr, 2017; Marsh, Baxter, Di Genova, Jamison, & Madden, 2016).

Secondly, USAID could allow families to visit for a short period of time, for example, during the summer when the students' workloads are often reduced. Allowing families to visit would provide a mechanism in which spouses and children can experience life in the United States and gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of the USAID scholarship participant. Family travel to the United States offers an increased level of awareness and support for the students while they continue with their doctoral program. Finally, USAID could fund a yearly plane ticket home for the students and allow the students to stay in-country for an extended visit; longer than the current 15-day personal leave policy. If the students are able to return home for the summer, they could continue working on their academic goals while being

able to spend time with their family every year. Typically, in the summer, students had flexibility regarding work in their laboratories or greenhouses, as their advisors also used the time in the summer to travel and conduct research, so a more flexible summer schedule would be appropriate for many students.

Timeframe of Program

The findings of this study suggest USAID should reformat the timeframe of the program allowing for more flexibility and tailoring the doctoral program based upon the needs of each student, instead of enforcing an overarching structured format. For example, USAID could allow students to return home the third year of their program to collect data and then return to the United States in the fourth year to complete any needed coursework, write, and then defend their dissertation under the close guidance of their advisor and committee. Additionally, extending the scholarship program to a fifth year would provide greater impact on student success and development, especially for students in agricultural economics programs. Developing a framework in which a flexible approach to program completion is implemented would lead to greater student success and happiness with the scholarship program.

A flexible timeframe would also offer the students a doctoral experience comprised of more comprehensive aspects of graduate student socialization, such as being afforded the time required to write, think, research, and teach like the dominant culture of the United States (i.e. White males). The current approach of the scholarship program seems to indicate African students are not valued enough to provide them with the full spectrum of training offered to those students who have the economic and social capital to pursue an advanced degree and the luxury to take the time to immerse themselves into the doctoral experience that meets their academic and professional goals.

Graduation Ceremony

The final recommendation is to allow the students to participate in their graduation ceremony. Participation in the graduation ceremony in the United States would provide an opportunity for students to commemorate their accomplishments with their families. Closure is granted through celebration with families, friends, advisors, and other faculty, acknowledging the hard work and sacrifice put into the students' program. As Kyle and Kate noted, the graduation ceremony is a joyous occasion recognizing the hard work and sacrifices made by the students. But, because of the students' status as African USAID scholarship students, participating in the graduation ceremony is not allowed for this population of students, again questioning the value USAID places on these students. The three recommendations proposed should be considered by USAID when developing scholarship programs in the future.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this research study can benefit from further exploration of the socialization of international students and those students participating in various scholarship programs. In this section, I outline six future research directions, including: (1) the development of a longitudinal research study for scholarship students; (2) extension of the study to include a comparative analysis of various international scholarship programs; (3) further research on the lived experiences of African students; (4) investigation of the issues of family separation in graduate school; (5) additional research on cost-effective sandwich programs; and (6) a more nuanced investigation of neo-racism and racial bias occurring on college campuses in the United States.

First, the study engaged with participants during a limited time period of their scholarship program, while they were in their second or third years of graduate school. Future research could

extend this investigation into a longitudinal research of the scholarship students, as they progress from the beginning of their program to the dissertation defense. Examining the experiences of the African doctoral students as they complete their coursework in the United States and return home to complete and defend their dissertations would offer greater insights to the socialization processes as the students move through the three phases of their doctoral socialization.

Second, researchers may wish to extend this study by comparing different scholarship programs to analyze the socialization of students participating in different government funded programs, both in the United States and abroad, and scholarship programs supported by private entities. International scholarship programs are a growing body of research in the higher education field (Baxter, 2017; Campbell, 2017; Dassin, 2018; Dassin et al., 2017) and a comparative analysis could provide greater insights on the similarities and differences of these programs, leading to recommendations and best practices for future international scholarship programs.

Third, there is very limited literature on the experiences of African doctoral students pursuing their advanced degrees in the United States. A large body of research on international students focuses on undergraduate students, particularly those students from East Asia, with limited insights of the lived experiences of international doctoral students, especially from sub-Saharan Africa. As institutional massification of the African higher education sector continues throughout the continent, students will most likely seek opportunities abroad at institutions offering world-class resources. Further research is needed to fully understand the experiences of African students in the United States, in order to better support the academic goals and future career trajectories of these students.

Fourth, research on international students in the higher education literature typically

assumes students are able to bring their families with them to their host-community while they are studying in the United States. There is a limited amount of research conducted on the consequences of leaving family members, especially spouses and children, behind while students pursue their education in another country. This study adds to the growing body of literature on the topic of international student family separation, however, future research could investigate this phenomenon more closely in order to understand the repercussions on student success and well-being.

Fifth, with the rising costs of college education in the United States and in other Global North countries, international education scholarship programs are increasingly expensive endeavors with donors now more than ever looking for cost-effective means to advance scientific knowledge creation in the Global South. Sandwich programs, or those programs where students spend a limited amount of time in the United States and then complete their degrees at a home-country institution, are commonly supported by donor agencies. Many master's degree sandwich programs offer students the ability to supplement their degree with knowledge and training in management, entrepreneurship, communications, and other professional skills needed to advance their professional goals by taking courses in U.S. universities for one academic year. For Ph.D. students, some sandwich scholarship programs give doctoral candidates pursuing degrees in their home country the opportunity to conduct dissertation research at a U.S. university for 12 months. Further study is needed comparing the scientific output of doctoral students participating in sandwich programs and those who are able to spend four or more years in the United States. While cost effectiveness is critical, donor agencies should be aware of and understand the consequences of sandwich programs versus traditional academic programs on developing the scientific knowledge, soft skills, and global networks of researchers participating in these various

programs.

Finally, research in the higher education literature on international students in the United States tends to show international students face issues of racial bias and discrimination and are often treated as outsiders at their U.S. universities. A widely cited research study conducted by Lee and Rice (2007) found international students experienced neo-racism, or discrimination based on culture and national order, at one research-extensive university in the Southwest United States. In the study, the authors described how the students experienced acts of discrimination, including cultural intolerance by the students' advisors, employment discrimination, and even physical violence.

However, the findings by Lee and Rice (2007) and other researchers studying campus climate issues at U.S. universities (Beoku-Betts, 2004; Hanassab, 2006; Lee, 2010) differ greatly from the findings of this study. Only one USAID scholarship participant described feeling discriminated against in their community, which was a surprising result of this study, especially since the students were in the United States during the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections, in which the cultural climate was filled with racial tensions. Further research should be conducted with a larger and institutionally diverse sample of international students examining racial bias and discrimination at U.S. universities, so institutions can respond effectively to discriminatory practices and acts and institute policies and practices to address neo-racism on campus.

Summary

In this chapter, I first revisited Figure 1, presenting an updated figure outlining key themes of the study's findings based upon the analysis of the research questions. Second, I addressed the study's research questions and associated the findings to current literature on international student socialization and the transnational social field. I then offered implications

for policy, practice, and theory. Recommendations targeted to international education scholarship programs were also presented and, finally, considerations for future research were explored.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand how participants of the USAID scholarship program experienced their socialization processes at six U.S. research institutions. These academics and research scientists are viewed by USAID as change agents who will improve and develop the capacity of their home institutions, national higher education systems, and agricultural research organizations. The transition to life in the United States is complex for these students as they are not only socializing into the doctoral system but are also adjusting to the rules and regulations enacted by USAID under the scholarship program. The study showed, despite challenges and hardships faced by the students, a large majority of the students were satisfied with their program and the academic and professional support they received from their university and academic department. For most of the students, their doctoral programs successfully closed research and knowledge gaps and positioned them to integrate back into their workplace and initiate sustainable capacity development within their various institutions. The students noted critical transformative changes occurring within months of beginning their programs and showed perseverance and internal strength to accomplish their goals.

However, these students were also confronted with unique circumstances affecting their socialization, which often centered around the policies of the scholarship program. In the face of isolating USAID rules and regulations, this study found the students experienced significant emotional turmoil when leaving spouses and children behind while they pursued their advanced degrees. The students noted the complex consequences of separation on their academic progress

with some students reporting that separation provided motivation for completing their doctorate degree and others stating that being away from their family led to emotional distress, impacting their academic work. While the students knew about the family restriction before agreeing to participate in the program, the realities of leaving children with family members or other caregivers generally took a great emotional toll on the participants.

The reasoning behind the family restriction is typically described as preventing "brain drain," meaning if students bring their families to the United States, the student, spouse, and dependents will choose not to return home once the degree program is over. Yet, a number of other features of the scholarship program were developed specifically to support student return. The students were professionals recruited directly from their current institutions. These employers, in turn, agreed to hold their job and often provided a stipend while the students were studying in the United States. Additionally, the students committed to return to their home country after the completion of their degree through the scholarship contract, although, confusingly for many participants, USAID policies did not acknowledge or consider this commitment.

Other rules and regulations, such as restrictions against owning or driving a car while living in the United States, limited engagement and interactions with other students, including American peers. The lack of engagement noted by many of the participants may ultimately have inhibited the formation of scientific networks. The restricted timeframe in the United States also influenced course completion and limited professional development activities for some students. These types of participant training programs are critical for the capacity development of agricultural institutions in the Global South, however, USAID should revise certain policies to acknowledge the commitment of the students to return to their home country.

The findings of this study show USAID scholarship students received academic and professional development guidance and encouragement from their advisors, supporting the students' emotional needs and academic goals. Whereas American students often find support from peers during their doctoral programs, this study showed reliance on the students' advisors for both personal and professional support, similar to other studies on international doctoral students (Le & Gardner, 2010). Peer networks, especially from the diaspora community, also played a critical role in the students' lives in the United States. The study also showed a lack of connection with American students, which may have limited professional network building and North-South linkages. Universities, especially large research-extensive institutions, should prioritize integration between international students and American students on their campuses, using such tools such as targeted social activities to encourage interactions between these groups of students. Targeted activities and connections would allow for greater social exchange and enhanced cross-cultural knowledge sharing benefiting the university as a whole.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Institutional Review Board Michigan State University

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Initial IRB Application Determination *Exempt*

July 18, 2017

To: Matthew Wawrzynski
426 Erickson Hall

Re: **IRB# x17-957e** Category: Exempt 1
Approval Date: July 18, 2017

Title: Understanding the Socialization of International Doctoral Students Participating in a USAID-funded Scholarship Program

The Institutional Review Board has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your project has been deemed as exempt** in accordance with federal regulations.

The IRB has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for the protection of human subjects in exempt research. **Under our exempt policy the Principal Investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects** in this project as outlined in the assurance letter and exempt educational material. The IRB office has received your signed assurance for exempt research. A copy of this signed agreement is appended for your information and records.

Renewals: Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. If the project is completed, please submit an ***Application for Permanent Closure***.

Revisions: Exempt protocols do not require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a new initial application will be required. If the project is modified to add additional sites for the research, please note that you may not begin your research at those sites until you receive the appropriate approvals/permissions from the sites.

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify the IRB office promptly. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the IRB.

Follow-up: If your exempt project is not completed and closed after three years, the IRB office will contact you regarding the status of the project and to verify that no changes have occurred that may affect exempt status.

Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB office.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at IRB@msu.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

c: Jennifer Marcy

Office of Regulatory Affairs
Human Research Protection Programs

Biomedical & Health Institutional Review Board (BIRB)

Community Research Institutional Review Board (CRIRB)

Social Science Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB)

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APPENDIX B:

Research Participant Information and Consent Form

1. Explanation of the research and what you will do:
You are being asked to participate in an interview-based research study to understand how USAID scholarship students experience their socialization processes while completing their degree program in the US. If you agree to participate, I will conduct two interviews with you. The interviews will include questions about your career, decision to apply to the scholarship program, pre-departure orientations, and your academic and professional experience. Additionally, the interviews will include questions regarding your relationships with mentors, advisors, other international students, and US students. The interviews will be recorded and later transcribed. You will be assigned a pseudonym of your choice, and all details will be masked. Following the completion of the interview, you will receive a copy of your transcript and you will be invited to make corrections or clarifications to the transcript, if you so please.

2. Your rights to participate, say no, or withdraw:
Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your participation with the USAID program. The interviews will be digitally voice recorded. You have the right not to be recorded.

3. Costs and compensation for being in the study:
There are no costs involved in participating in this study. Participants will not receive credit or other compensation for participating in this study.

4. Contact Information for Questions and Concerns:
If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher:

Jennifer Marcy
marcyjen@msu.edu

5. Documentation of Informed consent:
You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by beginning this interview.

APPENDIX C:

Participant Solicitation Letter

Dear [insert name],

Hello, I am a Ph.D. student in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University. I am currently working on research that focuses on the socialization processes of [USAID] scholarship students completing their degree program in the United States. I am writing to invite you to participate in this research study.

The purpose of this study is to explore how [USAID] scholarship doctoral students are socialized during their doctoral programs. You have been identified as a potential participant in this study because of your status as [USAID] scholarship recipient.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or not answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time without consequence. Additionally, you will be protected by a pseudonym and the university will be masked.

The extent of your participation would include two interviews. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Interviews will last between 45 and 60 minutes. Your contribution and participation will help further research about the socialization of international students and USAID capacity development programs. A copy of the consent form is attached.

I hope you will consider being a part of this study, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact me at marcyjen@msu.edu.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

All the Best,

Jennifer Marcy

APPENDIX D:

Interview Questions

First Interview

Background

- What motivated you to participate in the scholarship program?
    - How did you learn about it?
    - What were your initial goals for participating in the program?
- Tell me a little about yourself and your past experiences?
    - Where did you get your undergraduate and master's degree?
    - Have you studied abroad before?
- Tell me a little about your professional experiences?
    - Where do you currently work? What do you do in your position?
    - Do any of your work experiences involve working with others from another country?
    - Do you travel internationally as part of this position or your responsibilities at work?

Experience related to arrival

- Describe your experiences on arriving in the U.S. and at (name of university the student is attending)
    - Were you given an orientation by USAID or members of the management entity?
    - Did you receive a departmental or international students' orientation?
    - What activities did you participate in when you arrived on campus?
    - Is there something you know now that you wish you knew prior to arrival (about academic or social life here)?

Academic experience

- Prior to your arrival, what were your expectations of your academic program?
    - What academic goals did you hope to achieve?
- What new skills have you developed during your program?
- What new skills have you developed that will contribute to your role at your home institution?
- What in-class or out-of-class activities have led to the development of these skills that you just mentioned?
- How can you help colleagues back home learn some skills that you have acquired here?
- What kinds of groups or organizations or individuals other than professors have you interacted with during your stay so far?
- What is your biggest stress point right now? Either personal or academic.
- What are your thoughts about your coursework and research at this point?

Relationships with advisor/mentors

- What are your interactions with faculty and your peers like?
- Who do you go to for academic help?

- Talk to me about your advisor and your relationship with him/her.
- Have you identified your in-country mentor? If yes, how often to you speak to your mentor? How do you get feedback from your mentor regarding your research goals?

Social and cultural awareness

- To what extent do you interact with people from different countries including the United States?
- Describe your interactions with peers and co-workers.
- Have you experienced any type of racial micro-aggressions or any type of discrimination in the classroom, on campus, or in your community?

Connecting with family and friends back home

- How often do you communicate with your family back home?
- Are you married? Do you have children?
- Does your partner work outside of the home?
- How are your partner/children handling the separation?
- Who is caring for your children?
- When was the last time you were home?
- When are you planning on going home again?

Socialization activities

- Have you attended a conference since you have arrived?
- Did you present at the conference?
- Have you published any papers since you have arrived?
- Do you think that you will work with people in your lab or department on future research for publication?
- Have you had enough time to engage or learn from faculty other than your advisor?
- How would you change the scholarship program to better fit your goals, if at all?

General follow up

- Is there anything you would like to add to the interview?
- Is there anything that you would like to clarify?

Second Interview

Follow up

- Reflecting on our last conversation, are there any issues or ideas that came up that you would like to expand on or clarify with me?

Reflections

- What have you learned about yourself through your experiences so far?
- What about your experience with the scholarship program or the university degree program would you recommend changing? Can you list some things that would have improved this experience for you?
- Are you satisfied with the networks that you were able to develop in the United States?

- Do you think you will continue to sustain relationships with the people that you met at your university?
- Have you found it to be difficult to sustain your professional networks at home while you have been in the United States?
- How can the scholarship experience be improved for future students?
- How have you changed since you have been in the United States, if at all?
- How do you describe yourself to others here, as a visitor, student or international scholar?
- Are you satisfied with your academic program? Is the program meeting your professional and personal goals?
- What comes next for you? How do you feel about those next steps?

General follow up

- Is there anything you would like to add to the interview?
- Is there anything that you would like to clarify?

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