

Negotiating National Identity: American Tourist Adaptations in Bolivia

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Abstract

People of certain nationalities may feel the need to alter or hide their identities while traveling in countries where the political system is diametrically opposed to that of their homeland. In some cases, their citizenship may make them targets of various sorts of harassment and persecution. This paper identifies situations in which some American tourists in Bolivia feel the need to avoid discussing their national identities, given the strained relations between their own country and the host state. It also examines how these same people respond to, or cope with, these situations, including denying or hiding their citizenship, avoiding certain destinations, feeling culpable and apologizing for their country's challenging foreign policies, and becoming defensive.

Keywords: Nationality, Citizenship, Identity, Bolivia, United States, Geopolitics and Tourism, International Relations.

Introduction

One of the most fundamental needs of tourists is a sense of security. Visiting countries where socio-political systems differ significantly from those at home may evoke perceived safety concerns. Visiting these sorts of destinations may create unnerving situations in which travelers must choose between maintaining and asserting their national identity or adopting other ways of easing confrontational situations. The benefits or disadvantages associated with certain citizenships and the ways in which these affect the tourist-resident encounter are fundamentally important and key to understanding the social experiences of tourists.

To avoid contention or better ensure their safety, some travelers might sidestep discussions about their nationality or country of residence altogether, or misrepresent their citizenship in favor of a fictional one while traveling abroad. This identity negotiation for political, social or security reasons may help people blend in better to the local population or at least into a better-tolerated market cohort. This paper examines some of the ways in which US citizens adapt their national identity while traveling in Bolivia and the sorts of experiences that cause them to do so.

The Need to Adapt

Conditions on the ground and media and government coverage of political insecurity often dissuade people from traveling to a specific destination or traveling at all (Hall et al. 2003). Concerns may range from extremes such as wars, kidnappings and murders to unhygienic health conditions, unpleasant confrontations with other travelers, or harassment by

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destination residents.

Certain nationalities appear to be subject to more persecution, ridicule or other disdainful actions on the part of destination residents or other travelers. Studies have shown that tourists are displeased by harassment of all kinds (de Albuquerque and McElroy 2001; Kozak 2007; Nicely et al. 2015), including verbal abuse or ridicule. Research shows that tourists of different nationalities are exposed to different types and degrees of provocation (de Albuquerque and McElroy 2001). For instance, Michalkó (2003) found that Germans and other Western Europeans experience a higher likelihood of abuse against them in Hungary than do tourists from Eastern Europe. Nyaupane et al. (2008) found that American student travelers were surprised at the negative ways Australians viewed and treated them, even though the students perceived themselves to be similar to Australians. While the academic literature lacks empirical examples of tourist treatment based on their nationalities, the popular media is full of anecdotal accounts.

On the life-threatening end of the spectrum, in 2008, in Mumbai, India, eyewitnesses reported the selective killings of American and British passport holders (BBC 2008). In 2006, Toronto's *Globe and Mail* (MacKinnon 2006) reported the release of a Canadian after the kidnappers "rifled through his pockets and found his passport" and were disappointed to learn they had not captured an American. On the less serious, but still disconcerting end of the scale, certain nationalities may experience varying degrees of prejudice, poor service, staring and maltreatment by residents and even other tourists based on where they come from (Greenberg 2009; Stevenson 2010).

It is important to understand how travelers cope with the potential for mistreatment, prejudice and harassment through their various avoidance behaviors. There may be many different responses to uncertainty or security concerns, including avoiding certain destinations, canceling a journey altogether, or altering one's behavior or identity (Goodrich 2002; Stevenson 2010). Hofstede (1993) and Seabra et al. (2013) noted significant differences in uncertainty avoidance between cultures and nationalities. Several studies have examined the influences of tourists' nationality and their intentions to travel, with travel risk and safety perceptions being a significant concern (Canally and Timothy 2007; Fuchs and Reichel 2004; Lepp and Gibson 2003; Reisinger and Mavondo 2006). Research by Litvin et al. (2004), found that Germans demonstrate a low level of uncertainty avoidance, while the Japanese demonstrate higher levels, with cultural differences between the two nationalities being a reason for these distinctions.

Similar to the efforts of some tourists to dissociate themselves from other tourists because they are 'travelers' and not 'tourists' (Gillespie 2007), one such mechanism is to hide one's nationality or misrepresent one's country of origin as a protective measure against uncomfortable social or political situations, or to receive better service and blend in better with local society (Muzaini 2005; Stevenson 2010). In 2006, the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, reported that requests by British and Americans for Irish citizenship and passports had recently skyrocketed owing to that country's more liberal intergenerational granting of citizenship. *The Guardian* also noted that US citizens were being encouraged online to acquire second citizenships where possible, as a safety measure while traveling in areas that are hostile toward Americans.

These examples from the popular media and academic research suggest that people who adapt to their surroundings, including faking their national identity, may have a safer and more enjoyable trip abroad. The scale of adaptation varies from formally acquiring a second citizenship to altering one's appearance or avoiding speaking about their origins. This is despite that fact that home and nationality differences are the third most discussed topic among networks of independent travelers (Murphy 2000).

When groups of individuals come into contact with one another, value systems, social structures and political processes can create stress at individual or group levels. According to Bochner (1982), individual responses to bicultural contact may be passing,

exaggerated chauvinism, marginality and mediation. Passing is a way of playing with one's identity by rejecting one's culture of origin and embracing the other culture in a second-culture context (Bochner 1982; Riley 1988). The chauvinistic response rejects the other culture and exaggerates the primary culture. Marginality responses entail vacillating between two disparate cultures, while mediation means to blend cultures that are seen as more compatible. Likewise, Ward et al. (2001) argue that in times of cultural immersion, including in stressful situations, travelers will find ways to cope by acquiring social knowledge, skills and adaptation mechanisms through affective, behavioral and cognitive coping responses. This study examines the passing, affective, behavioral and coping mechanisms of tourists when confronted with socially stressful conditions that involve the tourist's political ideology or that of their country of origin.

Research Methods and Context

This study focuses on the experiences of US citizen tourists. Bolivia was selected for data collection owing to its contentious political climate in relation to US policies and its political and economic system that is directly opposed to that of the United States. At the time of research and writing, Bolivia was viewed by the United States as a severely leftist state, in company with Venezuela and Cuba, where human freedoms have been curtailed and the country run by an autocratic dictator (Cleary 2006). This system was in direct opposition to the USA's history of democratic governance, free elections and capitalist economy. As a result, the relationship between Bolivia and the United States had been quite tenuous in recent years, such as Bolivia expelling the US ambassador in 2008 and again in 2014, and the expulsion of USAID and the Peace Corps. Based on the images of these sorts of countries in the media and their treatment in US foreign policy, it can be assumed that most aware Americans view their own political system quite differently to that of Bolivia and may find reasons to adapt their national identities and political views while visiting the country. Bolivia's close cooperation with Iran, China, Cuba and Russia has also soured relations with the US (Emerson 2010; Choo 2009; Collins 2005; Lehman 1999).

American tourists' coping behaviors and their identification of situations that may cause them to adapt their national identity were examined through in-depth, face-to-face '...interviews in Bolivia', so that it reads: "...interviews in Bolivia in 2010.". The interviews were largely unstructured, which allowed deeper probing into participants' travel experiences. The interviews were conducted in public areas, including cafes, restaurants, hotel lobbies and at tourist attractions. Interviewees were solicited in two tourism-oriented cities: La Paz, Sucre and Uyuni. Overall, indicative of inimical bilateral relations, Americans were difficult to locate, but these cities provided the best opportunities. Snowball sampling helped locate American visitors for participation. While 26 interviews were undertaken, only 13 were with US citizens. It is important to note that the research was undertaken during the Obama administration, but people reflected on their general travel experiences during the Bush administration as well. Likewise, the majority of respondents tended to have left-leaning views, even though their political affiliations were not asked.

'Initially, the coders' assessed a set of three interviews. A codebook was subsequently created as themes began to emerge. The interviews were further analyzed by comparing two sets of the same interviews coded by separate coders. The data showed similarities and parallel concepts, but the excerpts remained unchanged during the two coding exercises and were used to determine the findings.

Results

Participants identified a number of situations wherein American tourists had considerable difficulties during their travels in Bolivia and faced varying levels of harassment or other sources of consternation. As a result of this, some of them re-negotiated their identities, which became more fluid based on different uncomfortable situations during their journeys.

Negotiating National Identity: American Tourist Adaptations in Bolivia...Cassandra Castellanos Dallen J. Timothy or adopted other ways of coping.

Reasons to Negotiate One's National Identity

“When I was traveling” and maybe add a little space between the paragraphs and the quotes. This is an editorial/formatting decision, but this looks too crammed together in my opinion. The two main contexts or reasons Americans felt the need to negotiate their identities or otherwise adapt in some way to contentious situations was during discussions with Bolivians and other travelers about the George W. Bush administration and its foreign policies, and also while crossing the border into Bolivia.

Reactions to the Bush administration

Traveling during and after the George W. Bush administration resulted in unique situations. The Bush administration's unpopular foreign policies led to much anti-Americanism throughout the world (Nye, 2004; Emerson, 2010; Leogrande, 2007), effectively marginalizing the United States and its citizens abroad (Peake, 2007; Fox, 2009; Dumbrell, 2002).

When asked if they perceived a difference between traveling during the Obama administration and during the Bush administration, most respondents said there was a significant difference. Several expressed being far more comfortable traveling during the Obama administration with significantly less need to apologize. A 23-year old respondent expressed challenges he faced while traveling under the Bush administration. The notion that travelers are representatives of their country but not necessarily their politicians came through in his statement:

When I was traveling or living and studying abroad under the Bush administration, I felt much more responsible. I felt like I had to answer for...things my country was doing to the world that weren't just and the people that I was talking with were suffering under. Yeah, so I felt like American politics were so present and inescapable in every conversation. I don't think that people blamed me for anything, but I felt answerable like it was mine. If we were talking about that, I couldn't evade the fact that it was my country and I had to express my opinion...I am much happier to be traveling now than I was 4 or 5 years ago.

For some people, traveling under the Obama administration was less stressful than travel during the Bush years. Some travelers noted receiving cues from residents of the countries they were visiting or from other travelers. According to one American traveler,

I've actually had more people seem more receptive and are interested in what's going on with the new administration. They seem to be more open-minded towards it then they, you know, they were very much negatively impacted by the previous administration and now they're 'Uh, maybe things have changed.' It seems like they are more receptive, open-minded about it.

Crossing Bolivia's borders

Another important context for nationality negotiation is at Bolivia's international borders. The country's borders and immigration offices were considered places of tension where national identity might be an issue—a common concern when crossing many of the world's boundaries (Timothy 2001). Most American interviewees perceived the country's borders as troublesome, including harassing officials, unregulated fees, and the requisite paperwork. While trying to renew a visa, one respondent experienced one official ostensibly using his authority to make the visa acquisition more difficult. In his words,

At this point the consulate [immigration official] came out and looked at me and he looked at the secretary and said 'What's he doing here?' She was, like, 'He wants a visa'. Like it was

some absurd request. So he takes me to the wall where there are these simple requirements for a visa and he [says] 'Get this shit and then you can talk to me'. I was like, 'I have it in this folder'. He was like, 'Are you talking down to me? Do you think you're special because you're an American? Do you think you have special rights because you're an American? Do you think you get to skip this shit because you're an American?' And I was like 'I don't understand where this is coming from. I just said that I have this folder that has all these documents.' He was like, 'I don't like the way you're talking to me.' There was zero tone in my voice, I swear to God. And so he was like, 'I don't like the way you're talking to me. I don't like your attitude. You think you can just come in and get this visa from us because we're third world or something? Who do you think you are?' And then he went back to his office...so the office was closing at 5 and at 5 I was still sitting there with no one having looked at me for two hours, at least, and the consul yells from his office 'Is he still out there?'

After being invited into the immigration official's office, the story continued:

I went into his office and he's like, 'Show me your documents. Show me your documents.' I show him the documents. He was like, 'You're missing the work ministry stamp'. I was like, 'Sir, I swear to God, I asked everyone and with all due respect these are all the documents that I was told to have'. Then he freaked out again and said, 'They don't make the decision. I am the consulate. I decide who gets to enter'...The entire time he was like, "They don't make the decision in La Paz. I make the decision. This is my stamp. You're not getting anywhere without my stamp'.

Following another day of contentious negotiations and what the tourist felt were anti-American, random requirements, the respondent continued:

So I just sat down and the consul came out and he signs it [visa form] and he hands it to me but he doesn't release it and says 'This is really hard, wasn't it?' And I was like, 'Yeah, it was really hard'. And he was like, 'Life's hard' and then he went back into his office...He loved it. Like, I know he is still getting off to it. But, if I were the [official] in some provincial backwater bullshit and had nothing to live for maybe I would do the same thing...I couldn't talk back because he would interpret it as an American characteristic or even as sassily explaining my situation. I couldn't do that because he wouldn't interpret it as me as an individual but he'd be like 'God damn you, Americans. You come down here and act like you own the world'.

Bribery and being ripped off at Bolivia's borders was another complaint of some American tourists. Most of the time the situation arises when travelers receive incorrect change from border officials or they do not receive any change when change is due when paying for visas.

I had the most trouble getting across the border and I definitely was asked to give a bribe and I had money taken from me...the visa for Americans is \$130...I had a hundred, a twenty and a ten. It was money from the States it wasn't money I changed in Peru or anything...and they said 'Oh, this a fake, fake hundred. No, no, no. You have to go change your money out in the street. Come back with twenties'. So I do, of course. They want five twenties. 'Oh, these twenties are fake, too'. In the process of him taking the money, looking at it, taking the money and looking at it, he took extra money. But, it was ten dollars and at that point...I just said 'Fine, take my damn extra ten dollars. My visa is \$140, and I got on my bus and went on my merry little way.

Another respondent described his feeling of being "singled out" as an American and swindled at the Bolivian border when he paid for his visa.

I was treated perfectly fine except for when the guy didn't give me my change back and I asked him for it and he said 'I already gave it to you'. It was only five bucks but it was hysterical. He was like 'No, I gave it to you'. I'm like 'Look, I only had that money'. So I said... 'I had \$140 dollars with me...It's not as if I don't have money. I don't need to steal five dollars from you'. You know. But I asked him in a very nice way. I said 'No, I am absolutely positive. It's in none of my pockets and naturally that's where I would've put it. I wouldn't have thrown it on the

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ground and I wouldn't have come to you if I felt like I took it back'. I said, 'I honestly did not get it from you because you said you would and you threw me in another line and a lot of things became confused and then I walked out the door'. And all of them were like, 'No, no, no. He gave it to you'. I'm like, 'All right, I get it. This is Bolivia'. (laughter)

During the process of obtaining a visa, one respondent experienced being swindled of his cash by a taxi driver and an official at a Bolivian border crossing:

Anyway, so I leave the consul to cross the border and get this stamp and I'd asked the consul 'How should I get there? Can I walk across?' He said, 'No, you need a taxi. I'll call you a taxi'. And so there was this taxi waiting outside, 'Cuanto para cruzar la frontera?' [How much to cross the border?] And he told me 'Thirty dollars'. I said 'No, that's too expensive'. And he said, 'No, the consul said that's the price you agreed on'. And I was like 'Of course, he did...'

One family was swindled by Peruvian officials at a Peru/Bolivia crossing. The American family of five was traveling by bus, and in the process of crossing the border from Peru to Bolivia, Peruvian officials were able to extract \$100 from them. The father felt like a "target at the border" as the bus of travelers were held up for 1.5 hours while the debacle was being sorted out. To facilitate the border crossing, a Dutch traveler offered the family \$100 for their losses. The mother of the family "felt bad being an American" during the incident and essentially delaying the other passengers on the bus. In this family's case, the Bolivian officials retrieved the money from the Peruvian officials and returned it to the family.

Some respondents commented on the time it took to cross the border. For some, the time constraints were mentioned as a minor annoyance, while for others it was a more salient experience. Many people viewed the costly visa fees, being ripped off and the extra time at the border for US citizens as reciprocal retaliation for the United States' requirements for Bolivians entering that country. It should be noted, however, that not all Americans crossing Bolivia's borders were cognizant of the exact border requirements, which could have extended the waiting time at the crossing. One non-American informant noted about a US citizen group member:

They scrutinized every single detail about his US passport and kept him there. They moved him to the front of the line but then he stayed there at the end when everybody else had gone. Our bus was waiting for, like, 20 minutes for him...they were trying to make his life a little bit more impossible than everybody else's just by virtue of being an American. And that is also added to the fact that he had to pay \$135 to get in whereas I paid zero dollars.

Others mention the seemingly random requirements needed at the border:

It's an inconvenience for sure but it makes sense. I was traveling with a French girl at the time. She got through and had to wait for me for about 25 minutes while I was in line to do all the paperwork and stuff...I made sure I had enough money, you know? Correct change I was told to bring. Sometimes, I heard, they don't have correct change. I had the money and I got in line and he handed me a thing and I filled it out. I didn't have a copy of my passport or my immunization card. Obviously, somebody is really intelligent because the little old lady next door in the first building has a copy machine. So I went over there and got my copies, came back, got in line, filled it out or finished that up, then you go and get back in the other line with everybody else for your actual entry stamp...it was little bit more of a hassle to do.

Two respondents who were born in South America but were now citizens of the United States felt their documents were scrutinized far less. One respondent was an American born in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, living in Chicago; she was not charged the visa fee commonly levied on American travelers due to her birthplace. She explained:

My birth certificate says that I was born out here. I was thinking of looking into it because having an American passport. In Argentina, I had to pay \$140. I didn't have to pay anything in Bolivia because it says I was born in Bolivia...I've only been stopped once and asked for

my passport, just randomly...going into Copacabana...he asked me and when I gave him my passport he said 'American.' I was like, 'No, I was born in Bolivia'. So he's like, 'Oh.' He didn't even really check it after I told him I was born in Bolivia.

While much of the so-called “hassle” encountered at borderpoints can be chocked up to ignorance or lack of preparation on the part of travelers regarding border-crossing requirements, it nevertheless provided a significant concern for many interviewees and their acquaintances. Some felt singled out because of their US nationality, while others saw themselves as pawns in the political power struggle between Bolivia and the United States.

Identity Modification and Coping Mechanisms

Because of the situations identified above and probably others, American tourists have several ways in which they cope with stressful surroundings and social situations in Bolivia. These include adapting their identities, avoiding certain places, becoming 'apologists' and pacifists, and becoming defensive.

Adapting national identity

Travelers' adaptations ranged in severity and included distancing themselves from their homeland, identifying themselves with a region or city rather than the entire United States, using ethnic origins or an additional citizenship to identify themselves, and relying on a second language proficiency (or a faked one) to feign their national identity.

While the majority of respondents claimed not to deny their citizenship or their national identity, some did at certain times. In everyday conversations, some people expressed the need to hide their Americanness. One participant claimed that during the Bush administration, she “felt the need much more to hide the fact that we were Americans because...we were embarrassed by our president and we thought that the world looked down at the United States for having chosen that president”. She continued:

I was traveling during the Bush administration when I graduated from college. I went on this several week trip with my singing group from college and I remember our business manager, who was a peer, our age, sat us down and gave us a talk about how we need to be aware of the fact that Bush is hated in many parts of the world and some places that we were going to so not to advertise that we were Americans.

One participant carries a Chilean passport, a United Nations passport and a US 'Green Card' but was born in La Paz, Bolivia. Essentially, he juggles four identities, and depending on where he is and with whom he is speaking, this will determine which identity he adopts. His multiple identities for coping with differing situations include Chilean-American, a Chilean, an American and a Bolivian. His choice of nationality while in Bolivia depends on whether he is speaking with a Bolivian colleague, a tourist or a local. He notes the complexity of the situation because Bolivia harbors far more resentment towards Chile stemming from the late nineteenth-century War of the Pacific than it does toward the United States. For him, being a Chilean is far more tenuous among Bolivians, than being an American; being Chilean can create more difficulties for him in Bolivia than if he dons his American identity. As a Chilean, people make rude or derogatory comments about him. Owing to Bolivia's negative history with Chile, he prefers his American identity over his Chilean identity in Bolivia. In his words, “It's a sensitive topic [the war and Bolivia's loss of Pacific Ocean access] for them, and I'm trying to be respectful because it's a very big issue for them here”. The same Chilean-American usually identifies himself as Chilean to European travelers when he is in Bolivia. To Americans in Bolivia, he says he lives in the United States and is Chilean. When he works in Bolivia and interacts with locals he will identify himself, if asked, as born in La Paz, Bolivia.

Two South America-born US citizens employed different tactics when crossing into

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Bolivia. An Argentinian-American separated herself from her American traveling companion and presented an outdated Argentine identity card. A Bolivia-born American possessed only her US passport but was not charged the same fees because she was born in Bolivia. These two travelers were successful in negotiating their national identities at the border, but most tourists cannot because their passports defy their pretenses. One Jewish interviewee noted that being from New York is a “cooler way of saying 'I am an American’”. He often claims to be from New York, rather than the United States, because being a New Yorker “elicits a great response. Everyone loves New York”. Admittedly, he is a bit more cautious in how he uses the terms Jew and Jewish in social situations, largely because he does not identify with the religion or Israeli politics. If asked, he would identify himself as a Jew but not as Jewish. He makes a distinction between the two terms as Jew being nationality driven, while Jewish has a more religious connotation. Despite his personal distinctions, he states that he does not lie or hide his Jewishness or Americanness.

A different Jewish-American claimed that “It's [being Jewish] also [in addition to being an American] something I wouldn't always want to bring up everywhere”. This interviewee's travel partner noted the aforementioned fact, but mentioned that he is more concerned with hostility from other travelers than he is from Bolivians. Anyone who is pro-Israel “is going to encounter all sorts of hostility anywhere they go from all sorts of people”. This traveler mentioned the need to blend in and would rather integrate with other travelers as an American more so than as a Jew.

Some travelers who had foreign language proficiencies sought to minimize scrutiny, visa costs and contentious situations by claiming to be from a third country. In using another language, they also tried to dispel the notion that all American tourists are ignorant, arrogant, egocentric and wealthy.

Avoiding certain countries or regions

Another important way in which people said they have adapted and would adapt to potentially contentious situations that result from their US origins is to avoid certain countries or destinations. Many mentioned avoiding Israel and other countries in the Middle East. Even though he was currently traveling in Bolivia, one 65 year old American with Cuban roots mentioned Venezuela, Russia and Cuba as countries to avoid owing to the animosity those countries' leaders expressed toward the USA:

Would I go to Venezuela with the political situation? Would I go back there now? No, and it's not on my bucket list due to the fact that Chavez is so strident against America and, whatever, would probably color my feelings a little bit. I wouldn't go back there just to even support him and bring money into him. Why would I?...I've had mixed feelings about going back [to Cuba] until Castro is gone... The strong feelings towards Cuba are highly personal.

The notion of passports and the direct information they carry, was also noted by a few participants as a future or past detriment and/or consideration to their travels. Two Jewish American respondents noted the importance of having an Israeli stamp in their passports, which had influenced their decision not to visit non-Israel friendly countries. In addition to the Israeli passport stamp, one Jewish respondent noted that he does not go to countries “where they would really scrutinize your passport”.

Culpability and apologetic Americans

As noted by Richter and Waugh (1983), travelers from specific countries can be viewed as symbolic representations of unsympathetic governments and opposing ideologies, which has clear implications for Americans traveling in Bolivia. Feelings of culpability derived largely from the United States' foreign policies. This was mentioned several times in conjunction with some tourists' apologetic feelings, embarrassment and blameworthiness. Many apologists agreed with the provoker, acknowledging their culpability, apologizing for

their country and taking mental notes of the points of contention. A 32-year old American male explained:

I can easily say the eight years of the Bush administration foreign policy was so unilateral and so disrespectful to the rest of the world that I was embarrassed to...be (an American)—I guess, I apologized. I would go around and feel like apologizing. You know? Kind of the same way you would for a drunk friend...a drunk friend at the bar, who is like totally making a fool of himself.

He goes on to say that:

I think more than anything, what it has made me realize is that I've spent a great deal of my adult life being kind of ashamed of the United States' imperialism, foreign policy and capitalism, in general. I think that coming here has made me realize how much I really do appreciate the infrastructure and the reliability of the system we've developed and even though it's exploiting the poor of the whole world, the poor countries, the developing countries or the poor workforce within the States...there is a certain amount of shame about what my government is doing to their government and ultimately what that effect is having on their lives.

While other respondents reported not feeling apologetic or ashamed, they did feel “answerable” as a US representative. Some respondents also shifted culpability away from themselves through various measures. One chocked the situation up to the very “nature of capitalism.” Another respondent, suggested that he did not feel apologetic: “I don't think I felt that because it wasn't my responsibility. I came from this [American] culture, and maybe I could've protested more, something like that, but I wasn't old enough to vote for Bush and I felt answerable to it but not apologetic. This is a reality and we can criticize it but it's not my fault”. Another person retorted :

...there is nothing to be ashamed of or anything like that. I guess there's probably some people that do feel that way. The things that most people are against, possibly, I didn't like the fact either, or the fact is I didn't have much to say in what happened in that point, anyways. It's not like I was personally responsible.

Defensiveness

A final way of reacting to difficult situations, especially in the context of everyday discussions with residents and other tourists, was to become defensive, in direct opposition to those who chose pacifism or apologetics. One participant had a well-rehearsed and well-thought out response to Bolivian inquiries about his origins, taking into consideration the political strife between the two countries. Several people described getting tired of apologizing for their country's foreign policies. Some expressed an initial feeling of blameworthiness as a representative of the United States, but given the right circumstances, an apologetic American can easily become defensive and unapologetic as the social situation escalates. One 24-year old American woman described her initial emotions and the subsequent weariness that entails being an “apologist”:

I'm tired of having to be an apologist and that's what I feel like I am. Generally, what they're [non-American tourists] saying is true but sometimes they're just nuts and you're like 'No, we are not actually the Satan of Everything.' But a lot of what they're saying is true usually and I'm not going to deny it and we've done some terrible things abroad; certainly, School of Americas. I mean, Jesus, here in Latin America [The School of Americas] has done some terrible things. It does get really tiring to hafta always be like 'Yes, I know, my country has done bad things. Yep, you're right. You know? Because what else can you say? It's not your fault. You can't change anything. You know?'

One interviewee explained that when he is confronted by others he does not feel responsible but rather poses the question, “How can you support some of the things your government does?” He continues by posing the question to the provoker as, “Do you internalize your

Negotiating National Identity: American Tourist Adaptations in Bolivia...Cassandra Castellanos Dallen J. Timothy country's history and politics? No, you criticize them.” The redirection mechanism that this particular respondent employs allows him and the provoker to discuss, in a rational manner, and allow for mutual understanding.

Conclusion

While more studies are needed to understand coping mechanisms against harassment and various types of negative interactions with destination residents and other tourists among a wide range of nationalities, this descriptive case study focused on US citizens traveling in Bolivia. There are in fact several variables that influence US citizens abroad in unique ways that may not be the case with other nationalities. The goal of the study was to determine whether or not American travelers negotiate, adapt or repudiate their nationality while visiting a country with opposing ideologies and if so, how and why. It also looked at other ways in which Americans adapt to difficult situations in a country whose political and economic system is in many ways diametrically opposed to their own home country.

The US government's unpopular foreign policies are a significant source of consternation for American tourists traveling overseas, particularly in their discussions with destination residents and other travelers, as well as when crossing the borders of Bolivia. American tourists have adopted a variety of mechanisms for coping with their own government's unpopular foreign policies and their ostensibly unpopular nationality, which is directly at odds with administrators and rulers in the Bolivian state, most notably at the country's frontiers.

American tourists' behaviors of avoiding certain destinations, becoming apologetic and passive, or defensive illustrate many affective, behavioral and cognitive processes of evading confrontation in avoiding certain destinations, defending their country of origin or becoming apologists for their nation's wrongdoings (Ward et al. 2001). Some tourists' denying their nationality, relying on a second citizenship, feigning foreignness with language proficiencies and other such contrived tactics all illustrate varying forms of Bochner's (1982) passing, marginality and mediation reactions to stressful situations, and it is likely that they undertake other means of assimilating or de-emphasizing their nationality while traveling.

This exploratory and descriptive study only begins to scratch the surface of the manifold possibilities of understanding underlying tensions and socio-political relations between nation-states as played out by their citizens' travel experiences abroad. American travelers to Bolivia have expressed overall positive experiences, with only minor problems, as outlined earlier at the border and in conversations with some provocateurs, despite the opposing political ideologies between the United States and Bolivia. The findings can in no way be generalized to other nationalities or other geographic contexts, but examinations of other travelers' experiences in similar or divergent situations begs further inquiry, including how Americans experience their national identities in other 'opposition states' such as North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, and Iran. This study was limited to a handful of American travelers in Bolivia, but their experiences reveal much about how contested international relations may in fact play out in real-life travel situations.

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