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My Label is Erasmus, But Am I European or A Citizen of Globe?

Impact of Student Mobility within and outside of Europe on European and Global Identity

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Abstract

This study contrasts two supranational identities (European and global identity) and compares impact of student mobility depending on host country's continental location (within Europe vs. outside of Europe) based on social communication theories' assumption of potentially transformative significance of social interactions on development of identities. Results of multivariate regression analysis of online survey in Switzerland with former, current, potential, future and non-mobile students (n=1'139) reveal that student mobility has rather a likelihood to increase attachment to Europe during student mobility within Europe, and a likelihood to increase attachment to the world during student mobility outside of Europe. Besides, former mobiles within Europe more frequently reported new attitudes towards Europe the longer their mobility phase had lasted, but former mobiles, who had sojourn experience outside of Europe and were fluent in more than three foreign languages, had more chances that their attachment to the world was increased. While the financing of the European and international mobility programmes nowadays is under a threat, this study underlines the strategic importance of mobility for promoting supranational identities.

Keywords: European identity, global identity, student mobility.

Introduction

Previous studies within Europe on student mobility show that European identity does not increase among former Erasmus mobiles (Sigalas 2009, Wilson 2011, Mitchell 2012, van Mol 2014). Kuhn (2012) justifies it with ceiling effect – the supranational identity has reached its highest level and cannot increase anymore. Contrary, theories from social psychology emphasise the potentially transformative significance of social interactions, i.e., social communication theory (Deutsch, 1953), contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) and common in-group identity theory (Gaertner, 1993) argue that intensive social communication can lead to a supranational identity. But what kind of supranational identity is developed during student mobility: a European or global one? Schlickum (2005) has revealed a high positive relationship between identification as European and as a citizen of the world, but do these supranational identities can mutually reinforce each other during exchange abroad? Is European identity as a supranational identity reinforcing the global identity (embedded) or whether there is a trade-off – either students develop a European identity or a global one – thus whether the overcoming of national identities means just a substitution by continental identity or whether it means substitution by a global one?

Moreover, there exists a gap in empirical data on how supranational identities are impacted through student mobility depending on host country's continental location (within Europe vs. outside of Europe): do they complementary increase both supranational identities or whether European and global identity are conflicting with each other and only one of supranational identities is impacted? If European identity has reached its highest level, it could be argued that global identity could be rather promoted because students during their *sojourn* within Europe are experiencing intensive communication with international students, developing friendship ties with them and experiencing the '*Other*' that is an essential to develop cosmopolitan feeling. Therefore the first proposed research question is:

RQ1: *Does student mobility within Europe lead to global identity?*

Second, Hauvette (2010) argues that there is a possible correlation between distance and feelings of belonging to continent, i.e., the further away young people have been the more continental identification they gain. Therefore, at least theoretically, the European identity reaches its highest level during student mobility within Europe but it could be even increased during student mobility outside of Europe and seeing it from the '*Other*'

perspective. While studying on exchange on other continents, students can see Europe from the distance (a way of embracing the 'Other' (Beck&Grande, 2007). Thus, the second raised research question is:

RQ2: Does student mobility outside of Europe lead to European identity?

Therefore, approach used in this paper differs from previous studies in following ways. First, I apply insights from social psychology to specify the exact conditions under which social interactions lead to supranational identity. Second, I explore how student mobility impacts the development of supranational identity depending on host country's geographical location. Further, there is proposed a model of impact of student mobility on supranational identity depending on multicultural, social and socio-demographic variables.

The paper is structured as follows. The first part discusses social communication theories and their impact of social interactions on construction of identity. Next, there is presented evidence suggesting that student mobility contribute to a development of supranational identity. Further, it is explored theoretically whether there are differences between host country's geographical location on supranational identities during student mobility. Following part describes the research design. By using primary online survey data on Swiss students' interactions with other international students while participating in student mobility in Europe and outside of Europe, there are analysed the underlying causal processes of development of European and global identity. Last part discusses the findings with following part of discussion and conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

Identities are fluid and constantly redefined (Delanty, 2005): individuals construct identities in terms of different contexts and situations, in other words - individuals have multiple identities that diverge and converge (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Straubhaar, 2008). From the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987) identity formation depends on psychological processes, social dynamics and cultural contexts, individuals may also develop supranational identity by establishing transnational social relationships by crossing borders (Rother&Nebe 2009). Such cross border activities include transnational social communication such as friendship or family networks, student and work mobility, travelling (Mau 2007, 2010; Mau&Verwiebe 2010, Rechi&Favell 2009). But what are the

underlying mechanisms that construct supranational identity through transnational social interactions during student mobility?

Deutsch (1953, 1957, 1967) emphasised the importance of 'social communication' as a mean of supranational identity-formation. Communication with "the Other" allows to recognise cultural diversity and enables to develop a new vision of identity which is no longer centred on own culture of origin (Papatsiba, 2003). Through increased social interaction a sense of shared community is constructed and this new identity emerges as a consequence of contact between members of culturally diverse groups. By 'social communication' or 'transactions', Deutsch referred to the development of face-to-face interactions across different groups.

According to contact hypothesis (Hewstone & Brown 1986), face-to-face interactions between members of socially distinct groups may reduce prejudices and forge a sense of community. The contact hypothesis suggests that, under certain conditions, direct personal contact between 'in-group' and 'out-group' members can have a transformative effect on the attitudes of group members toward members of the other group (Allport, 1954, 1979; Sherif 1966, Amir 1969; Stephen 1985, Pettigrew 1998). This contact has to be rather positive rather than negative experience (Pettigrew&Trop, 2006). The creation of permanent networks that bring ordinary people together in a multitude of ways is important for the emergence of a shared identity (Pettigrew et al. 2011). Especially friendship ties help to build common identity: intergroup friends significantly more often report having felt sympathy and admiration for the out-group (Ibid).

According to the common in group identity theory (Gartner et al., 1993), intergroup contact that proceeds positively can trigger a process of re-categorization for both groups involved (Gaertner et al. 2012: 3). One possible result of this is formation of a common identity for the formerly divided groups (Gaertner&Fovidio, 2002). Therefore communication and interaction between people of different national backgrounds is an essential for an additional, complementary or a new identity development. Intensive social contacts between different cultural groups resulting in friendship contribute to an increased need to develop a new identity. Identity is both shaped and reshaped by cultural expressions. But when does intensive social interaction (contacts, communication) occur? Mobility as such could serve as a laboratory for intensive social interactions and, thus, development of supranational identity.

Already in 1970-80s scholars argued that mobility causes development of new identity (Garza-Guerro, 1974) because “*cultural relocation tags at the very roots of identity*” (Levy-Warren, 1987: 301). Identity is not inscribed by locality and rootedness but is actually constructed through movement (Sarup, 1994). Also Cresswell (2006) has stated that mobility is essential in the construction of identities. One of such mobilities could be travelling. Glick-Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc (1995) argue that mobiles reinvent and reconstruct their identity as they move from the culture of their homeland to new cultures. Desforges (2000) concludes that the practice of travelling or ‘*tourism consumption*’ has a profound effect on the way self-identity is constructed. Molz (2005) indicates that travel and moving through various cultures could be seen as a significant mode of appreciating different cultures and therefore leading to a supranational identity construction.

Schattle (2007) suggested that international study is appropriate experience for development of a supranational identity. This paper is focused on student mobility for a term/year and, according to the literature, for a true immersion to take place, such long-term residence must be experienced because this gives the students ample time to become acclimated to the culture and to begin to view their experiences as members of new community (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). Also Marcu (2014) argue that the longer the student mobility takes place, the greater the feeling of supranational identity is gained. Besides, some scholars have argued recently that student mobility is a particular type of migration and migration has more effect on identity construction than travelling (King & Ruiz-Gelices 2003).

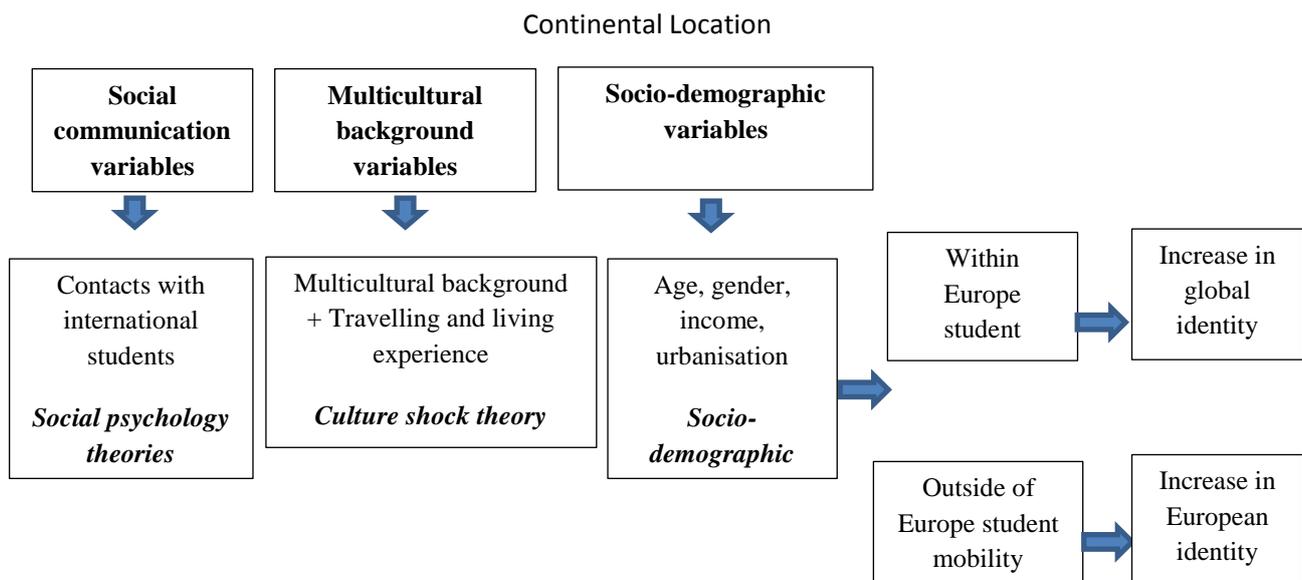
Student mobility can have impact on young people’s identities because for students it is easier to experience and be open to change while engaged in a study abroad program because they are away from their normal peer group including their family and friends (Kaufmann, et al., 1992; Meara, 1994 Sussman 2002, Berry et al., 2006; Oppendal, 2006, Schattle 2007). Students do not have the pressure of being held to their normal daily life and they can feel free to experiment with new belief systems and to experience new ideas and cultures (Kaufmann, et al., 1992). Also Madison (2006) argues that students explore foreign cultures in order to assess their own identity. Similarly, Onwumechili et al. (2003) see that *sojourners* often develop entirely new identities different from their home and host cultures.

Previous studies on student mobility (Sigalas 2009, Wilson 2011, Mitchell 2012, van Mol 2014) have showed that many factors may affect the outcome of a participant’s study

abroad experience. This includes also the level of openness to new cultures (Martin & Rohrllich, 1991; Thomlison, 1991; Kaufmann, et al., 1992). During student mobility *sojourners* go through different processes including overcoming cultural shock (Oberg 1960). The previous multicultural background (multilingualism, multinational family, multinational friends, previous experience of travelling) helps to overcome a cultural shock.

Besides, students in their everyday life deal with ‘*Other*’ which is central element in the identity construction (Schlenker-Fischer, 2011). Encountering the difference (the ‘*Other*’) is important to understand one-self. Massey (2005) argues that identities are constructed by seeing similarities and differences: individuals get aware of who they are when they meet someone who is not supposed to be like them. Furnham&Bochner (1986) have argued that, in analysis of student mobility’s impact on supranational identity construction, it is important to analyse geographical distance between home country and host country, implying various cultural differences. Thus, supranational identity is constructed during mobility through long-term and intensive social interactions with fellow European and international students due to ability of overcoming cultural shock because of previous multicultural background, intensive social communication with international students and forming friendship relationships and encountering ‘*Other*’ through distance between home country and host country (see Graph 1).

Graph 1 Student Mobility’s Impact on Supranational Identity Depending on Host Country



Further, there is provided an argumentation on what kind of supranational identity is promoted depending on host country’s continental location and as a result two hypotheses

are proposed. Different culture of host country discourages closer integration in the host society and could cause impact on supranational identity (Lee & Rice, 2007; Marginson, et al., 2010). Also Bennett (2008) and Killick (2012) argue that international student mobility develop the capacity to engage in transformative experiences with cultural 'Other' and causes shift in identities. Similarly, Bagnoli (2007, 2009) adopts a 'self+Other' model of identity: she asserts that students, while being abroad, experience the 'Other' and it is important for identity construction. While studying on exchange on other continents, students can see Europe from the distance as a way of embracing the 'Other' (Beck&Grande, 2007) and their European identity nevertheless increases. Kuhl (2013) in her recent research concludes that the level of European identity increases more among those German students who participate in exchange in US comparing with those who participate in student mobility within Europe. Also many former Erasmus students argue that their level of European identity depends on distance:

"...when you are outside of Europe... when you lost something, you start to cherish it, at the moment I am not thinking about that, but if I would be in US, I would start to think about. I think those who go far away, for example in US, gain European identity." (Oborune, 2015)

Therefore, I speculate that:

Hypothesis 1: *Outside of Europe mobility has impact on European identity.*

Previous studies on the impact of the student mobility (Wilson, 2011; Kuhn, 2012; Mitchell, 2012, Van Mol, 2013) have shown that level of European identity does not increase after exchange because of so called ceiling effect (Kuhn, 2012): European identity has reached its highest level. This could mean that for them not only national identity but also European identity is too limiting, and the global identity emerges (or strengthens) as a concluding effect of student mobility period.

Studying abroad might be a transformative experience that has the power to challenge thinking about the world and can enhance a cosmopolitan feeling (Jamieson, 2002). Whether student is going abroad for the first time or not, each experience living within a new culture has the potential to evolve in global identity (Fry, 2014). Banks (2008) concludes that students develop 'thoughtful and clarified identifications with the global community' (2008, p. 296). Farr (2009), based on research of 21'307 respondents in 21

country on worldwide arena, draws a conclusion that respondents, who travel outside their country, are more likely to view themselves as global citizens.

Kohli (2000: 123) states that *“Europe as a focus of attachment is increasingly pressured by what lies behind it: a global identity”*. Higher education could be a locus for the production of global identity of students (Mažeikiene&Loher, 2008). The previous studies in US, Australia, Canada showed that during international exchange students increase their global awareness and develop a global identity (Zamastil-Vondrova 2005, Simms 2009, Hovey and Weinberg 2009). Also Rundstrom (2005) concludes that US students, who had an opportunity to experience exchange abroad, became more globally minded. McLaughlin et al. (2008) conclude that student mobility puts students *“on the fast track to becoming thoughtful global citizens”* (2008; 66). Pessoa (2010) found that Portuguese students residing in Macau (Asia) have experienced *“a socio-spatial identity reconfiguration process in which the cosmopolitan disposition manifests itself in changes”* (Pessoa, 2010: 25-26).

Also Douglas&Jones-Ridders (2001) have hypothesized that the larger the difference between the host and home cultures, the greater the change may potentially occur within student’s global-mindedness and therefore the level of global identity may increase. Also according to Kwok-Bun (2002: 191), cosmopolitanism arises through processes of cultural contact. Students form their selves and trajectories between home country identity and a larger set of cosmopolitan options and the global identity goes through crucial transformative process during student mobility Marginson (2014).

On the other hand, Rizvi (2005), who has explored the shifts in identity of Chinese and Indian students in Australia, reiterates the notion that students already arrive in Australia with a developed global identity acquired through previous mobility experience. Nevertheless, he stresses that *“students invest in their higher education with a strategic cosmopolitan imaginary already in mind but their education abroad perpetuates this instrumentalist view of the world”* (Rizvi, 2005: 91). At this point it is claimed that outside of Europe mobility does not increase global identity because students already feel global.

Contrary, mobility within Europe *“perhaps is not fostering the European identity but global identity”* (Lešer&Širca, 2013) and therefore the question, that has to be explored by scholars, is not whether Erasmus mobility programme fosters European identity but whether global identity is promoted. Streitwieser&Light (2011) were first who began to uncover that the Erasmus students experience lets one go beyond being a European citizen. They realized

that those students who feel already European before exchange may foster global identity due to global citizen profile from parents and having a previous opportunity to travel around the world (Streitwieser & Light, 2011).

Also survey results by ESN Network since 2005 show constantly that students first describe themselves as global citizens and afterwards as European and citizens of their country (see ESN 2005-2013). On the other hand, Van Mol (2014) has argued that mobility within Europe does not have impact on global identity (however lacking justified empirical results). Nevertheless, the most recent qualitative studies show that students see themselves first as global citizens, and then as Europeans (Vecvagare, 2014; Oborune, 2015).

At this point it is speculated that Europe has become too small for exchange students and they may feel belonging to a much wider world – global society, not just city, country, or continent. As the recent research showed, ex-Erasmus students define themselves in the framework of cosmopolitanism - they return with a greater global-mindedness: it is possible for them to live anywhere regardless of cultures, they could easily adapt and feel at home wherever they happen to be in the world (Oborune, 2015). Thus, scholars have neglected that the correct question is not anymore whether student mobility is creating or fostering the European identity, but if it creates or fosters so called global identity, therefore it is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: *Mobility within Europe has impact on global identity.*

The further chapter explains the research methodology and, in particular sampling and questionnaire design. The questionnaire design includes both control questions, questions on national identity and supranational identities, socio-demographic profile and multi-cultural background.

Research Design

As a research method survey is commonly used in order to assess the level of supranational identity (Bruter 2005, Green 2007, Moes 2008, Hjust 2008, Sigalas 2009). Besides cost and time efficiency for the researcher (Dzcyk, 2001), for this study it was most important to ensure the convenience for the participants. Switzerland was selected as a case study because Swiss students participate on high level at exchanges within and outside of Europe (UIS, 2014). In Switzerland, there is a vast amount of students who do their studies on other continents: especially North America, Australia and Asia (UIS, 2014). Besides,

Switzerland is not a member of the EU and therefore Swiss students may have a distinct understanding of European identity from their peers in other EU member states, as well as Swiss students did not grow up within an expanding European political community.

The primary data collection was online using Question Pro survey portal (survey link: <http://myidentity.questionpro.com/>). The results presented in this paper are based on an online survey of students at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Switzerland. The survey was offered in English. With administrative assistance of 22 HEIs, the survey was administered in February and March of 2015. Each HEIs' department of mobility (or in some cases department of international relations) was asked to distribute an invitation to the survey to all returned, current, applied and next term outgoing students. In order to reach non-mobile students, the HEIs' personnel, faculty coordinators and student organizations were contacted.

As the literature suggests, students are more motivated to participate when a survey invitation originates within their institution (Durrant&Dorius, 2007). Two reminders were sent as this shows improvement in the response rate (Fan and Yan, 2010). While all efforts were made to avoid bias, applied methods cannot guarantee a representative sample. Furthermore, no details are recorded about the total number of students that were invited to participate in the research, therefore it is not possible to estimate the response rate. The sample size was 2'067 students, after filtering out fully filled in questionnaires, the sample size decreased to 1'440 and, after filtering out students with Swiss citizenship, the resulting sampling consisted of 1'139 Swiss students.

The database was divided into five groups. The group of *non-mobile students* consists of those who indicated that they have never studied abroad. The group of *future mobile students* were those who indicated that they will participate in the next term. The group of *applied mobile students* were those who indicated that they have applied for exchange. The group of *potential mobile* were considering applying for student mobility. The last group of *mobile students* was formed by those who have participated in the student exchange either once, twice, three, four, five or more times.

Quantitative Data

Students were asked to rate on 10-point Likert scale how much they see themselves as a world citizen and as European. The comparison between (non)mobile groups on *mean*

scores on students' supranational identifications shows that students who would like to participate in exchange already have higher European and global identity (see Table 1). This finding indicates that there already exists certain identification with Europe for the group of potential, applied and future mobile students.

Table 1 Mean scores on students' supranational identifications per mobility (non)experience
 (n=1'139)

	Mobile n=591	Future Mobile n=71	Applied Mobile n=26	Potential Mobile n=88	Non-mobile n=363
I see myself as a world citizen	8.14	7.99	8.62	7.92	7.91
I see myself as a European	7.46	8.11	7.27	8.53	7.71

Source: Sciex project. Author's own calculations.

The further comparison of *mean scores* between mobility within (E) and outside of Europe (NE) shows that those students who participate in exchange outside Europe feel more global than those who participated in exchange in Europe. Similarly, those students who participated in exchange within Europe feel more European than those who participated in exchange outside Europe (see Table 2).

Table 2 Mean scores on students' supranational identifications per mobility continental location
 (n=490*)

	E n=333	NE n=156
I see myself as a world citizen	7.97	8.31
I see myself as a European	7.64	7.28

*There were included only those who participated in exchange once due to small amount of those who participated twice (n=84), three times (n=14), and four times (n=3). Source: Sciex project. Author's own calculations.

The independent samples t-tests results showed that there is significant difference between mobile, non-mobile and future/potential mobile students in their multicultural friends, foreign language proficiency and the length of living abroad experience, in frequency of travelling, in visited number of countries in Europe and outside of Europe (see Table 3).

Table 3 Independent samples t-tests: mobile, non-mobile and future/potential mobile students
 (n=1'139)

Questions	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Do you have friends from a different nationality than yours? (cut point = Yes, some)	5.516	.000
In how many other languages can you have a conversation? (cut point = 3)	-1.988	.047
Have you ever lived abroad? (cut point = Yes, for 2-6 months)	-17.322	.000
How often did you travel to another country within 12 months? (cut point = 7-9 times)	-2.850	.004
How many European countries have you visited? (cut point = 10-19)	-5.136	.000
How many outside of Europe countries have you visited? (cut point = 10-19)	-5.362	.000

Source: Sciex project. Author's own calculations.

Further, students were asked to rate on 10-point Likert scale how much do they feel more attached to Europe and more attached to the world after their exchange. An application of *Mann-Whitney U* test revealed significant differences between two groups of those who had mobility experience in Europe and those who and experience outside of Europe ($p=.002$). In order to understand what the differences between groups are, the mean scores were compared. Self-evaluation of impact of mobility on changes in supra-national identities showed that mobility within Europe had more impact on feeling European than outside of Europe mobility. Similarly, outside of Europe mobility had more impact on feeling global than mobility within Europe (see Table 4).

Table 4 Mean scores on impact of mobility on change of supranational identifications per frequency of mobility (n=574*)

	Once (n=490)		Twice* (n=84)	
	E	NE	E	NE
More attached to Europe	6.92	6.24	7.47	6.65
More attached to world	8.32	8.66	8.08	8.74

*Only first experiences were compared by assumption that first experience has more impact on identity change. Source: Sciex project. Author's own calculations.

Further, there was held analysis whether there is difference between group of mobile students who participated in exchange in Europe and those who participated in exchange

outside of Europe by comparing multicultural variables (multicultural background, traveling and living abroad experience), social variables (communication with exchange students from Europe vs. from outside of Europe) and socio-demographic variables as controls (age, gender, income, urbanisation).

The results of *multivariate linear regression* analysis within sample of mobile students showed social contacts with students outside of Europe decrease the likelihood to be more attached to Europe and increase the likelihood to be more attached to the world (reversed H2). The further results within sample of mobile students showed social contacts with students outside of Europe decrease the likelihood to be more attached to Europe and increase the likelihood to be more attached to the world (reversed H1) (see Table 5).

Table 5 Multivariate linear regression analysis of impact of student mobility on supranational identity depending on host country continental location (n=490)

Variables		More attached to Europe		More attached to the world	
Mobility <i>within vs. outside of Europe</i>		.603*	(.291)	-.504*	(.236)
Social communication	Exchange students from Europe	.170***	(.046)	-.025	(.037)
	Exchange students from outside of Europe	-.020	(.044)	.183***	(.036)
Multicultural background	Multicultural family (Dummy- none of parents Swiss)	.532	(.520)	-.305	(.415)
	Friends from other culture	.166	(.285)	.110	(.232)
	Foreign languages	.036	(.133)	.276*	(.107)
	Living abroad experience	-.031	(.115)	-.176	(.094)
	Length of mobility	.688*	(.239)	.180	(.206)
	Frequent traveller (past 12 months)	-.008	(.163)	.051	(.131)
Socio-demographic	Male	-.375	(.281)	.166	(.227)
	Age	.091	(.208)	-.177	(.169)
	Income	-.246	(.235)	-.014	(.190)
	Urban	-.074	(.185)	-.055	(.150)
Constant		4.181***	(1.130)	7.646***	(.913)
Adj. R2		.048		0.086	

Method: Linear regression analysis (backward removal). Reported values are unstandardized coefficients with standard errors between parentheses. *** < .001; ** < .01; * < .05. Sample size: 490 (first mobile experiencers). Source: Sciex project. Author's own calculations.

Further analysis of interaction effects revealed that there is a significant interaction between tested variables (see Table 6). If the overall model is statistically significant, but where the individual coefficients for the independent variables are not, may be a sign for multicollinearity. In order to detect multicollinearity between variables more precisely, we generated the correlation coefficients between the most significant pairwise combinations of independent variables. There was not detected presence of multicollinearity (coefficients of Pearson Correlations were less than 0.3).

Table 6 Interaction effects between tested most significant variables (n=490)

	More attached to Europe	
Mobility within vs. outside of Europe*Social communication with exchange students from Europe	.122***	(.029)
Length of Mobility	.690**	(.210)
	More attached to the world	
Mobility within vs. outside of Europe * Social communication with exchange students from outside of Europe	.078*	(.029)
Foreign language proficiency	.212*	(.103)

Method: Linear regression analysis. Notes: Reported values are unstandardized coefficients with standard errors between parentheses. *** < .001; ** < .01; * < .05. Sample size: 490 – first mobile experiencers. Source: Sciex project. Author's own calculations.

Furthermore, the analysis of crosstabs showed a conditional relationship between tested variables. Mobility and social communication with students from Europe had a significant impact on feeling more attached to Europe only on those students whose length of mobility was 1-6 months (Gamma (approx.sig.)=.000), but did not had impact on those students whose length of mobility was more than 7 months, therefore, one can conclude that the first experience has the largest effect on mobile students in terms of promoting European identity (see Table 7).

Table 7 Impact of mobility and social communication with exchange students from Europe on more attachment to Europe depending on length of mobility (n=490)

Length of mobility	Gamma (approx. sig.)
1-6 months	.000
7-12	.113

13-24	.956
25-36	-
More than 36	-
Total	.000

Tested variables: How often did you discuss personal problems with students from Europe; More attached to Europe. Method: Crosstabs. Notes: Sample size: 490 – first mobile experiencers. Source: Sciex project. Author’s own calculations.

Also mobility and social communication with students from outside of Europe had a significant impact on feeling more attached to Europe only on those students who were fluent in two or three foreign languages (Gamma =.000) but did not have an effect on those student who were fluent only in one or more than three foreign languages (see Table 8).

Table 8 Impact of mobility and social communication with exchange students from outside of European more attachment to the world depending on foreign language proficiency (n=490)

In how many other languages can you have a conversation?	Gamma (approx. sig.)
1	.643
2	.000
3	.000
4	.874
5	.122
More than 5	.074
Total	.000

Tested variables: How often did you discuss personal problems with students from outside of Europe; More attached to the world. Tested variables: How often did you discuss personal problems with students from Europe; More attached to Europe. Method: Crosstabs. Notes: Sample size: 490 – first mobile experiencers. Source: Sciex project. Author’s own calculations.

Qualitative Data

The results of Corpus linguistics analysis showed that Swiss citizens identify with Europe more in cultural terms (41%) than in political terms (25%) (see Table 9 Frequency of type of European identity).

Table 9 Frequency of type of European identity

Type of European identity/ Frequency	
Political European identity	25%
Cultural European identity	41%
Other	7%
Mixed European identity	1%

Don't know/No answer	14%
Do not feel European	12%

There was a high number of respondents who were unable to define feeling European among Swiss citizens (14 per cent) or expressed lack of European identity (12 per cent):

I don't feel European because what is Europe? I can't really say. I have the feeling that it is more a political and economic construction.

I don't really feel European: I don't think that 'Europe' in itself, as a block exists. There are too many different countries in it. I don't feel European also maybe because Switzerland is not a member of the EU. Therefore I can't really tell what it means for me to feel European.

Words *culture/cultures/cultural/culturally* were mentioned most often (see Table 10 Frequency of word/phrase):

To be influenced by the culture of Europe e.g. Christianity, history, arts such as literature etc.

To belong to a community of countries with similar culture.

Being part of a very diverse community which has a lot in common and transcends national identities and boundaries, sharing common values and philosophies such as liberalism and secularism, sharing a common history.

Table 10 Frequency of word/phrase

Word or phrase/Frequency	
EU/European Union	6%
Political/Politics/Politically	3%
Culture/Cultures/Cultural/Culturally	28%
Continent	10%
History	9%
Travel	3%
Community	6%

Also word *continent* and *history* was used frequently used by Swiss people (10 per cent and 9 per cent accordingly):

I feel like I am in Europe geographically, not politically...

Being part of the 'old continent' with all the culture and history.

Be part of a European history and of a humanistic tradition.

Political/politics was used quite rare (3 per cent):

I identify myself with what the historian Heinrich August Winkler calls 'the normative project of the West'. Europe is that part of 'the West', whose political history I have to face. Europe (and not just the EU) is very much a political ideal for me.

To certain extent Swiss respondents identified themselves as European but perceived their non-EU-membership as a deviation from normality of defining European identity:

I feel European because I live in Europe, but in other European countries I often feel left out because Europeans don't consider Swiss people as part of Europe.

I live in Europe, but as most of Europe today is part of the European Union, which we are distinctively not a part of, I don't feel as connected to it.

This was the main reason of not feeling European among Swiss respondents due to struggle to achieve cognitive consistency between their diverging self-perception as Europeans and non-members of the EU:

Switzerland is like an island in the EU I do not identify myself very much with Europe.

Switzerland is so removed from European politic/economic system.

I don't feel European because even if I'm living in this continent, I'm Swiss so a non-European Citizen.

Discussion

"Give Erasmus generation 25 years and Europe will be run completely different from today"

(Steffan Wolf)

This paper contradicts results of previous empirical studies which showed that European identity does not increase among Erasmus mobiles. First, this could be explained by fact that scholars have put emphasis on European identity without exploring it in comparison with global identity. Second, the authors only explored Erasmus exchange

programme, but this study is supplemented with research on students engaged in non-Erasmus European and outside of Europe mobilities. Third, there should be taken into account that this is a case-study of Switzerland where students may have a distinct understanding of European identity. Last but not least, all above mentioned studies (except Mitchell, 2012) focused on UK which is one of the most Eurosceptic countries. Last but not least, the results confirm another case-study of non-EU member state: similarly, van Mol (2014), by studying Norway, showed that Norwegian students change their European identification patterns abroad as a result of socialisation processes.

Concerning impact of outside of Europe mobility on global identity, the results supported the conclusions of previous studies in US, Australia and Canada, which showed that during international exchange students increase their global awareness and develop a global identity (Rundstrom, 2005; Hovey&Weinberg, 2009). Also Pessoa found that Portuguese students residing in Macau (Asia) have experienced '*a socio-spatial identity reconfiguration process in which the cosmopolitan disposition manifest itself in changes*' (2010: 25-26). Interestingly, but the results of this study are also in line with a recent study by Maiworm&Over (2014) who conclude that the length of period of time spent abroad and foreign language proficiency has influence on supranational identity. Similarly, in this study respondents more frequently reported new attitudes towards Europe the longer their mobility phase had lasted, and the more foreign languages respondents were fluent to speak, the more likely chance that they would become more attached to the world. Also Mitchell (2015) concludes that longer *sojourns* are associated with a greater increase in European identity.

Conclusion

In detail, the study showed that the changes in supranational identities during student exchange can be explained by mobility experience and intensive contact with fellow students from other European countries or outside of Europe countries. Students rebuild their social circles abroad, from perceived similarities and differences, which goes hand in hand with the (re)definition of group boundaries. Therefore, this study shows that through positioning in a new social network, supranational identity may be fostered. Contact with international students from countries outside of Europe has a likelihood to become more attached to the world during mobility outside of Europe. Contact with international students

from countries in Europe has a likelihood to become more attached to Europe during mobility within Europe.

Besides theoretical implications, this study draws a significant conclusion that EU should further finance the most well-known European programme. While the financing of the *Erasmus+* programme appears under threat, this study underlines the strategic importance of mobility for promoting Europeaness among young generation. Moreover, this study validates a significant '*alarm signal*' for Switzerland. After infamous referendum initiative *Against Mass Immigration* in 2014, which was in a direct violation of free movement of people, Switzerland was '*kicked out*' of the *Erasmus+* and the European Commission has stated very clearly that Switzerland will be '*taken back*' only if the matter of free movement of people will be settled. Ultimately, convincing Swiss citizens that their homeland is losing out by being excluded from European mobility is not an easy task since the country was only a full partner for three years and the '*come back*' also deals with a more broader political question: is there a necessity for European identity among Swiss? This is still an open question.

The further research could overcome several milestones such as surveying students in their native language, supplementing research with a qualitative study (in-depth or focus group interviews) and a longitudinal or panel study which would allow the effects to be more precisely determined. Besides, there could exist differences also in student mobility within Europe. For example, the most recent study by Maiworm&Over (2014) shows that host country has a crucial impact: Erasmus alumni, who spent time in Central and Eastern Europe and in Southern Europe, more frequently reported changes in attitude than their fellow students who stayed in other host regions in Europe. Similarly, differences could occur between different continents.

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