

LEARNING MOBILITY: A CONTACT ZONE FOR COSMOPOLITANISM OR THE REPRODUCTION OF LOCALISM?*

Abstract. *The idea of student mobility assumes that the ability to study abroad will encourage young Europeans in the direction of greater geographical mobility, multi-cultural fluidity and cultural tolerance, re-enforcing the idea of European integration (Ackers, 2005). Following the concept of everyday cosmopolitanism and viewing education as a social contact zone, the article explores who are the young people who decide to study abroad. Dividing a sample of 208 students into three categories of cosmopolitan, potentially cosmopolitan and local youth, the article analyses: 1) how each group's type determines their belonging to Europe, attitudes to and visions of Europe and the prevailing citizenship practices; and 2) the extent to which the categories are specific in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, personal career plans, and future ambitions. This study shows, among others, that the practices and experiences with learning mobility among the student population are far from homogeneous, even within such a uniform sample of students.*

Keywords: *learning mobility, everyday cosmopolitanism, citizenship, Europe, youth, quantitative research*

Introduction

An inevitable consequence of globalisation (Collins et al., 2011) is ever more intense global migration. Yet, since the financial crisis the “age of migration” (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2014) has been changing. Collins notes that as migration flows increase so too does their diversity, ranging from elite groups traveling for prestige to temporary migrations as part of moving around for work. The former are “millionaire business migrants or health and financial professionals who fly first or business class to reach

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their destination city (...). Other immigrants come with skills and qualifications that are in short supply in their host country” (Collins, 2011: i). Temporary immigrants are diverse, yet more vulnerable. Some have

short stay visas designed to allow migrant labour to fill labour shortages that might soon disappear. (...) Some are unwanted, undocumented immigrants who risk their lives, and that of their families, to escape conflict, persecution, poverty, tyranny, flood or famine to seek a new life as a refugee or part of the shadow-life of the underground economy. (Collins, 2011: i).

A common, yet specific form of crossing national borders, either temporarily or as a matter of prestige, is largely promoted by study programmes of secondary and higher education. The European Commission’s vision of the Youth on the Move Flagship Initiative (2010), also contained in the 2020 strategy, emphasises the need to extend and broaden learning opportunities for young people, including supporting their acquisition of skills through non-formal educational activities (Lejeune, 2013: 29). This vision stresses the importance of promoting learning mobility as a way for young people to strengthen their future employability and acquire new professional competencies, while enhancing their development as active citizens.

However, the share of young people deciding to study abroad is in the minority and even shrinking (Van de Wende, 2001; Maiworm, 2002), while decisions to go abroad are both structurally but also very much individually driven. In this respect, Cairns (2010) claims we need to distinguish formal from informal youth mobility: “Learning mobility can be hence viewed as an informal process that may entail an inculcation of values emphasizing the importance of moving abroad to success in education and the labour market” (Cairns, 2013: 90). Young people are thus no longer considered as objects of educational actions, but as autonomous social actors constructing their learning and their active citizenship (see Berg et al., 2013: 16).

Following such a contextual view on educational mobility, the question remains to what extent and in which circumstances can such choices be understood as a potential source of “everyday cosmopolitanism” (Onyx et al., 2011). In line with the concept of everyday cosmopolitanism and viewing education as social contact zones in which formal and informal, casual and non-casual interactions among people emerge, the article explores who are the young people that decide to study abroad, and in which ways are they different from their peers who complete their studies only in their home country. Since everyday cosmopolitanism might construct more global relationships and openness, the main research question is, *how experiences with studying abroad affect youth attachments to their local, national and*

European identity, their citizenship practices and their future career visions.

In a narrower sense, the article critically assesses the idea of student learning mobility and empirically evaluates its realisation in practice based on a quantitative research study conducted in 2018/2019 on a sample of 208 Slovenian students at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Dividing the sample into three categories of youth – cosmopolitan, potentially cosmopolitan and local – the article analyses how membership in each group is determined by structural and individual factors that (de)stimulate students with respect to education mobility. In particular, we are interested in how membership within a specific group is determined by students' visions of and attitudes to Europe, their study ambitions and personal plans for the future, the dominant practices of citizenship and their socio-demographic features. Hence, the aim is to describe the overall character of each group, especially the main differences between the young cosmopolitans and local youth.

Learning mobility, contact zones and everyday cosmopolitanism

Within the European Union's borders and within Europe generally, many educational institutions are systematically joining the international network Erasmus and Erasmus + to encourage the transition of schoolchildren and teaching staff between Member States and their faculties or universities.¹ Learning mobility, as transnational mobility for the purpose of acquiring new skills, is a fundamental way through which individuals, especially young people, can strengthen both their future employability and personal development (European Commission 2009, in Lejeune, 2013: 27). Opportunities for study mobility provide young people with several benefits not previously available.

In this regard, Lejeune includes foreign-language skills within both institutional and non-formal learning settings as being able to strongly contribute to their development: "the full immersion in another language context, even for short periods of time, allows for daily exposure to the target language and practice of communication in real situations" (Lejeune, 2013: 27). Expectations of educational mobility are even higher: it can also help foster a deeper sense of European identity and citizenship among young people. Or, as Lejeune continues, transnational friendships and freedom of movement across the Continent are building a more positive attitude among young people to the EU and its institutions (Lejeune, 2013: 27).

Regardless of the type of evidence showing that certain young people

¹ *Some of the main characteristics and development of the Erasmus programme within the EU are also discussed in the article by Tamara Dagen in this special issue.*

find it harder to decide to go abroad than others, “educational mobility” is typically seen as a positive opportunity for young people. Educational mobility is supposed to help to stimulate young Europeans in the direction of greater geographical mobility, multicultural fluidity, cultural tolerance, thereby re-enforcing the idea of European integration and European citizenship (Ackers, 2005).

In this way, universities, faculties and other educational institutions act as additional social spaces that encourage or at least allow intercultural interaction. Pratt (1992) names such spaces “contact zones, or spaces where peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations” (1992: 7). Amin (2002) adds that this includes schools and educational organisations, thus also placing jobs, sports clubs, schools and other situations among the “micro-publics of everyday social contacts and meetings”. What all of such diverse spaces have in common is that individuals are “thrown together and required to engage with each other and work together in a common activity, in the process enabling ‘unnoticeable cultural questioning or transgression’” (Amin, 2002: 969, in Onyx, 2011: 51).

Similarly, certain other more sociologically oriented studies also point to the role of space (and time) in the study of mobility. Berg et al. (2013) warn that research should also include the use of space in the lives of children and young people such as shifts from outdoor to indoor activities, contemporary streetscapes and streets as homes (e.g. Berg et al., 2013: 17):

Linking learning and mobility means crossing boundaries, such as those between school and out-of-school spaces, and those between curricular objectives and extracurricular individualised and localised aims. Education is no longer reduced to instruction but mainly means creating opportunities to learn.

Learning is seen as an interactive and social process as opposed to a psychological process within the individual. This means the concept of learning mobility should also be understood in a broader sense. Or, as Berg et al. state, “the learning space can no longer be conceived as a confined container; it becomes a set of opportunities, corresponding to an open geography including varied spaces of learning and the paths in between” (2013: 17).

Along these lines, Cairns points to the importance of opportunities and differences in external circumstances (Cairns, 2013). With respect to enabling/disabling access to the “mobility field”, Cairns adopts the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). In his theory, “mobility field” refers to the capacity to follow educational and work opportunities outside of one’s present country of residence:

This means that rather than viewing transnational movement for work or study as the (passive) outcome of the existence of an international structure of opportunities within Europe, emphasis is placed upon the (active if latent) socially mediated means through which mobility plans are made. (Cairns, 2013: 90)

This means that realisation of the field of mobility is not primarily structurally given, but also individually practised. However, such opportunities are not equally available to all, making their realisation a matter of intertwined social interactions, habits and everyday routines. Some scholars have turned their attention to the grassroots, ordinary interactions occurring between people in their daily lives, focusing on social sites like neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and so on. These interactions represent “a lived cosmopolitanism, which sees individuals of different cultures routinely negotiating across difference in order to coexist within a shared social space” (Onyx et al., 2011: 50). Everyday cosmopolitanism (e.g. Wise and Velayutham, 2009; Noble, 2009; Butcher and Harris, 2010; Onyx et al., 2011) is hence focused on everyday interactions and the importance of heterogeneous practices that allow for encounters with diversity. Alternatively, as Onyx argues, everyday cosmopolitanism refers to

the normal, everyday, banal interaction of citizens across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Such interactions involve the everyday negotiation between individuals as they go about their business within shopping malls, public transport, schools and leisure centers. They are seen as unremarkable by those engaging in them, and they do not necessarily lead to the formation of ongoing or formalized networks. (Onyx et al., 2011)

Empirical research

One survey (Eurostudent VI) shows that studying abroad is not a very common choice made by Slovenian students.² In the survey, less than one-tenth students from Slovenia had already studied abroad (8%), one-third had plans to study abroad (32%) and 16% had already agreed to study abroad. Yet, the same study shows (Gril, Bijuklič and Autor, 2018: 68) that altogether 30% of students from Slovenia had experience with some type of international mobility. This may entail internship or work placements

² The national project Eurostudent VI was based on a quantitative online survey conducted in 2016 that included 4,968 students. A detailed report is also accessible at https://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EVROSTUDENT_VI_Porocilo_SLO.pdf 4. 11. 2020.

(5%), enrolment at a foreign higher education institution combined with an internship or work (1%) and other types of study activities abroad, research work, field-work, study practice, a summer/winter school, or a language course (17%). This was confirmed among the four countries with the highest number of mobile students (including Norway, Denmark and France). In more than half of the countries, however, at least 20% of students had a study experience abroad. Nevertheless, the vast majority of respondents had not yet thought about going abroad (61%). The main obstacle to planning international study mobility was the financial burden associated with study activities (for 62% of students), followed by the separation from one's family (partner and children) and friends (47%). The third obstacle was the loss of paid work (35%).

The data used in this article come from a study conducted in 2018/2019 among students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.³ The survey included Slovenian and foreign students of the first and second cycle of Bologna study. The survey was conducted on-line, with the questionnaire for students available in both the Slovenian and English languages.

We conducted analysis for three groups of students: students who had already spent some time studying abroad, which we conceptually describe as "cosmopolitan youth", students who were planning to study abroad, who we labelled "potentially cosmopolitans" and students who had not and had no plans to study abroad, who we denote as "local youth". These three groups of students were compared to see which factors determine their decision (or opportunity) to study abroad. Like other studies have confirmed, students with fewer (financial) possibilities do not decide to study abroad as often as students from economically better situated families. Another determining factor is perception of social class. Here, the assumption is that students from a lower social class can hardly imagine moving abroad since their aspirations may vary from those who belong to upper social class categories. For the purpose of this article, we only analysed the answers of Slovenian students since we were interested in all three groups (all foreign students belong to the group of cosmopolitan youth), in particular the behaviours of Slovenian students.

Another aim was to identify the biggest differences among the given youth categories in relation to their closeness with Europe as a political imaginary. Since everyday cosmopolitanism might construct more global relationships and openness, we checked how experiences with studying abroad affect youth attachments to their local, national and European identity. In addition, we measured differences among the young people in relation to

³ The online questionnaire was constructed within the Political Research research programme.

their citizenship practices and, finally, in which way the three groups differ in their future career visions. Based on discussions about the positive effects of learning mobility, it is generally assumed that the cosmopolitan group is compared to the other groups the most European, most engaged and sees its future career outside of the nation's borders.

Results

The statistical analyses conducted are exploratory in nature with a view to summarising the main characteristics of the three student groups. Statistically significant differences between the groups are presented. Only students who answered the key question about their study plans were included in the analyses (see Table 1).

Locals vs. cosmopolitans: elements for/against learning mobility

The cosmopolitan group accounts for 39% of all respondents, the second groups of potentially cosmopolitan youth for 35%, while locals represent 26% of the sample. The majority, two-thirds of the sample, represent young people who had already experienced at least some part of their study outside of their home country or were planning to use this opportunity in the near future. However, quite a stable one-quarter of respondents are firmly immobile and will (probably) never move abroad in order to study somewhere else.

Table 1: THE THREE GROUPS OF STUDENTS (N = 192)

group		n	%
Cosmopolitan youth	Yes (studied abroad)	75	39.1
Potentially cosmopolitan youth	Not yet, but I plan to (study abroad)	67	34.9
Local youth	No, and I don't plan to (study abroad)	50	26.0

Question: Have you planned or are you planning to do part of your study abroad?

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

In order to provide a social stratification of the three generated groups of students, we first analysed the students' social background (see Table 2). We calculated Spearman's rank correlation which shows a minimal negative correlation ($r = -0,157$; $\text{sig} = 0,04$) between the three categories and "family social class".⁴ The students' perception of social class obviously has

⁴ The question with given answers in the survey was: Do you see yourself and your household belonging to...? 1. The working class, 2. The lower middle class, 3. The middle class, 4. The upper middle class, 5. The upper class, 6. Other. No student perceives themselves as "upper class", and the majority see themselves as middle class.

the anticipated effect: students from the higher-class categories had a better opportunity to study abroad than students from the lower-class categories. Nevertheless, among the locals 38.1% perceive themselves as coming from working-class society or lower middle-class society, while in the group of cosmopolitan youth there are 26.5% of such students. In the group of “local youth”, 9.5% come from the upper middle class of society while in the cosmopolitan groups this share is 20.6% (already studied abroad) and 26.8% (planning to study abroad).

Table 2: PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL STATUS (N=132)

	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Working class	4	11.8%	7	12.5%	9	21.4%
Lower middle class	5	14.7%	10	17.9%	7	16.7%
Middle class	18	52.9%	24	42.9%	22	52.4%
Upper middle class	7	20.6%	15	26.8%	4	9.5%
Upper class	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

The difference among three groups becomes even more evident when we consider how many of them were working for money while studying (see Table 3). Among local youth, 78% were working during their studies, while among the cosmopolitans the share is much smaller – still, the majority of cosmopolitans (56.2%) was working and also 65.6% of those planning to study abroad ($\chi^2=6,246$; $df=2$; $sig=0,04$; $\phi_c=0,183$, $sig=0,04$).

Table 3: PART-TIME JOB (N=187)

	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Working	41	56.2%	42	65.6%	39	78.0%
Not working	32	43.8%	22	34.4%	11	22.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

One also finds some differences regarding the type of settlement they come from: among the cosmopolitans, there are more of those from bigger settlements compared to the other two groups.⁵

⁵ As the sample is small and the differences between the groups are not statistically significant, we should take this result as informative without drawing any firm conclusions. Besides, we must also take into account the specific situation in Slovenian home settings, which also applies when categorised as urban and bigger towns are still comparatively small in both a geographical and population sense.

Table 4: TYPE OF LIVING SETTLEMENT (N = 135)

	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Fewer than 2,000 people (town)	1	2.8%	3	5.3%	3	7.1%
Fewer than 2,000 people (village)	9	25.0%	19	33.3%	16	38.1%
2,000–10,000 people	3	8.3%	8	14.0%	6	14.3%
More than 10,000 people	9	25.0%	9	15.8%	5	11.9%
Ljubljana, Maribor	14	38.9%	18	31.6%	12	28.6%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

To sum up: The main differences seem to be between students with a learning mobility experience and those who will not travel for study purposes at all. The local youth mainly come from smaller settlements and the big majority of them hold a part-time job while studying. One-fifth of them belong to the working class, while half to the middle class. We can probably assume that the locals are more financially limited and that this could help explain why they do not plan to study abroad. On the other hand, the cosmopolitans generally come from bigger settlements, and one-fifth claim they belong to the upper middle class. Their social situation therefore appears to be much more encouraging than the opportunities available to the local youth.

In addition, the cosmopolitans were asked about the main reasons affecting their decision to study abroad (see Table 5). The reason most often stated was the possibility to *learn about other cultures* (100%), establishing *personal networks* and *international connections* (94.7%) and experiencing other teaching methods (94.6%). The reason least often given was to improve employment opportunities at home (76.3%) and abroad (76.3%). For the potentially cosmopolitans, reason the most often stated would be to improve foreign language knowledge (100%), better study and research conditions (96.9%) and the possibility to learn about other cultures (95.3%). The smallest impact on the decision was to experience independent living (85.9%).

On the other hand, for the locals the factor most often stated as to why they decide to stay at home was finances, namely an inadequate mobility grant (59.1%) followed by insufficient knowledge of foreign languages (50%). It seems that an economically less pleasant situation is the most important obstacle, followed by a lack of knowledge or some kind of reduced confidence due to insufficient language skills (see Table 6).

Table 5: REASONS IMPACTING THE DECISION TO STUDY ABROAD AMONG THE COSMOPOLITANS (N = 38) AND POTENTIALLY COSMOPOLITANS (N = 64)

	Cosmopolitans				Potentially cosmopolitans			
	no impact		impact		no impact		impact	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Learning about other cultures	0	0.0%	38	100.0%	3	4.7%	61	95.3%
Establishing personal networks and international connections	2	5.3%	36	94.7%	4	6.3%	60	93.8%
Experiencing other teaching methods	2	5.4%	35	94.6%	3	4.7%	61	95.3%
Improving foreign language knowledge	3	7.9%	35	92.1%	0	0.0%	64	100.0%
Experiencing independent living	3	7.9%	35	92.1%	9	14.1%	55	85.9%
Better study and research conditions	8	21.1%	30	78.9%	2	3.1%	62	96.9%
Improving employment opportunities at home	9	23.7%	29	76.3%	4	6.3%	59	93.7%
Improving employment opportunities abroad	9	23.7%	29	76.3%	5	7.9%	58	92.1%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Table 6: REASONS IMPACTING THE DECISION NOT TO STUDY ABROAD AMONG THE LOCALS (N = 46)

	no impact		impact	
	n	%	n	%
Insufficient mobility grant	18	40.9%	26	59.1%
Insufficient knowledge of foreign languages	23	50.0%	23	50.0%
Part-time employment	28	62.2%	17	37.8%
Family obligations	32	71.1%	13	28.9%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Similar attitudes but different visions of Europe?

The students were also asked how attached are they to their city, country, the EU and Europe. In their relation to the EU, we can see that the cosmopolitan youth feel much more attached than the local youth (see Table 7). While the majority of cosmopolitans is attached to the EU (62.7%), students who had not studied yet show less attachment (45.5%) while among the locals only 30% say they are attached to the EU ($\chi^2 = 13,119$; $df = 2$; $sig = 0,00$; $\phi_c = 0,222$, $sig = 0,01$).

Table 7: NATIONAL, SUBNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN ATTACHMENT (N = 192)

		Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Your city, town, village	not attached	21	28.0%	18	26.9%	11	22.0%
	attached	54	72.0%	49	73.1%	39	78.0%
Your country	not attached	25	33.3%	19	28.8%	8	16.0%
	attached	50	66.7%	47	71.2%	42	84.0%
The European Union	not attached	28	37.3%	36	54.5%	35	70.0%
	attached	47	62.7%	30	45.5%	15	30.0%
Europe	not attached	24	32.0%	23	34.3%	18	36.0%
	attached	51	68.0%	44	65.7%	32	64.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Comparing the three groups, we can see the local youth are slightly more attached to their home cities. An even bigger difference exists on the level of “national attachment”: among the “locals” there are more of those who are fairly or very attached to their country (84%) than in the group of “cosmopolitan youth” (66%). The biggest difference between the groups is in attachment to the EU: among the cosmopolitan youth a majority (63%) are fairly or very attached, while among the “local youth” only one-third (30%) feel this way. The smallest differences between the groups are seen in attachment to Europe.

In order to obtain a more coherent perspective of how an individual group perceives Europe and its attitudes to it, we further analyse the data. The students were asked what the EU means to them. Generally, the “cosmopolitan youth” have a much more positive attitude to the EU, but only a few items show statistically significant differences between the groups. Table 8 shows students who indicated that the listed factors mean the EU for them. The students differ in their opinion on three items. All of them positively assess the opportunity of freedom to travel ($\chi^2=7,009$; $df=2$; $sig=0,03$), especially those who had already studied abroad. On the other hand, the idea that European means a waste of money ($\chi^2=15,350$; $df=2$; $sig=0,00$) and not enough control at external borders ($\chi^2=9,477$; $df=2$; $sig=0,01$) is much more present among those students who had not studied abroad. In fact, for all (100%) of cosmopolitan youth the EU means more freedom to travel, study and work, while among the “locals” 90% believe this. In addition, the majority (53.1%) of locals thinks that the EU represents a waste of money, while among the “cosmopolitans” only 21% agree. There are more than two times as many “locals” who think the EU means not enough control at the border (48%) than “cosmopolitan students” (22%).

Table 8: WHAT THE EU MEANS TO THE THREE GROUPS (N = 192)

	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Peace	57	76.0%	54	81.8%	34	68.0%
Economic prosperity	66	89.2%	55	83.3%	40	80.0%
Democracy	55	74.3%	54	80.6%	36	72.0%
Social protection	56	75.7%	51	76.1%	35	70.0%
An example to the whole world	42	56.8%	37	56.1%	20	40.8%
Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU	74	100.0%	63	94.0%	45	90.0%
Cultural diversity	65	89.0%	54	80.6%	41	82.0%
Stronger say in the world	45	62.5%	43	64.2%	25	50.0%
Euro	67	90.5%	55	82.1%	45	90.0%
Unemployment	17	23.0%	23	34.3%	20	40.0%
Bureaucracy	54	74.0%	49	74.2%	37	74.0%
Waste of money	15	20.5%	18	26.9%	26	53.1%
Loss of our cultural identity	15	20.3%	8	12.1%	13	26.0%
More crime	5	6.8%	6	9.0%	9	18.0%
Not enough control at external borders	16	21.6%	22	32.8%	24	48.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Europe as a collective imaginary

Although the opinions and attitudes are not dramatically different, they might be related with the general interest in European conditions and general importance of Europe as a political and not just a cultural entity. Perhaps the results can somehow be related to the next variable, as the “locals” are not as interested in European affairs as the “cosmopolitan youth” (see Table 9): Among “cosmopolitan youth”, 75% are fairly or very interested in European affairs, while among “locals” the figure is only 56%. In addition, about half the students from the cosmopolitan group think they are informed well enough and one-tenth is very well informed, while among students who are more locally oriented 44% are informed well enough, but no one is very well informed. In fact, the majority of the locals (50%) admitted to not being well informed about Europe (see Table 10). Nevertheless, students who were planning to study abroad were the most interested in European affairs (82.1% fairly or very interested) ($\chi^2=16,629$; $df=6$; $sig=0,01$). While no firm conclusions can be drawn here, the students who had studied abroad or who were planning to seem more interested and more informed about European affairs.

Table 9: INTEREST IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS (N = 176)

	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not at all interested	1	1.3%	2	3.0%	3	6.0%
Not very interested	18	24.0%	10	14.9%	19	38.0%
Fairly interested	35	46.7%	38	56.7%	25	50.0%
Very interested	21	28.0%	17	25.4%	3	6.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Table 10: INFORMED ABOUT EUROPE (N = 192)

	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not informed at all	0	0.0%	2	3.0%	3	6.0%
Not informed too well	29	38.7%	22	32.8%	25	50.0%
Well enough informed	38	50.7%	35	52.2%	22	44.0%
Very well informed	8	10.7%	8	11.9%	0	0.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

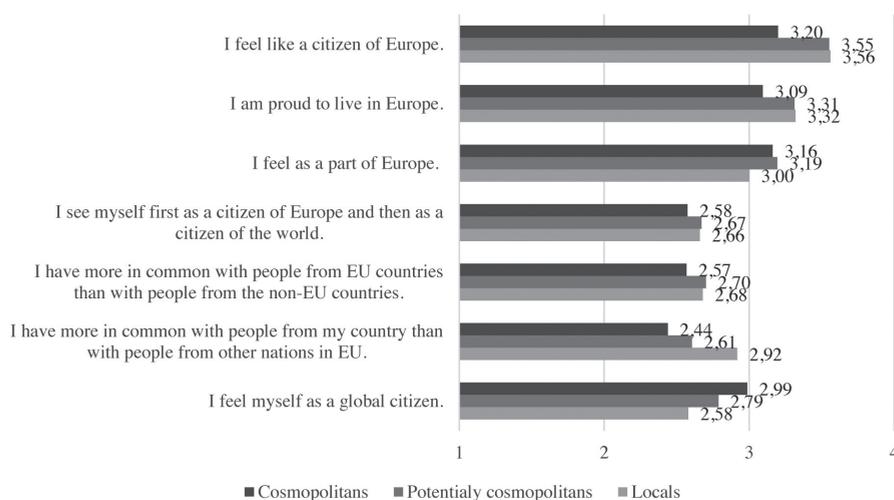
If there are different interests and also different types of knowledge about European issues among these three student groups, the logical next step is to check how the respondents feel and act as citizens. First, we were interested in the students' general perception of closeness with their potential identities as citizens: students were asked how much they agree with statements describing them as Europeans and their views on Europe.⁶ As seen in Graph 1, there are no big differences among the three groups; the students hold quite similar attitudes to Europe. Statistically significant differences in agreement are only noticed for three statements: *"I have more in common with people from my country than with people from other nations in Europe."* (sig. = 0,017), *"I feel myself as a global citizen."* (sig. = 0,024) and *"I feel like a citizen of Europe"*.

Additional analysis shows that the "locals" are open to Europe, but when Europe is placed in relation to their home country, they favour the homeland. Students who had already studied abroad mainly disagree that they have more in common with people from their country than with people from other nations in Europe (54.8%), while students who had not and were not planning to study abroad generally agree with that statement (65.3%), while students who were planning to study abroad agreed more (54.5%)

⁶ The scale was a four-point descriptive scale (strongly disagree, fairly disagree, fairly agree, and completely agree).

with the statement than disagreed. In all three groups, the majority agree that they feel like a citizen of Europe, and the share is higher in groups of students who had not studied (or had no plans to) than among students who are more globally oriented. On the other hand, the share of students who felt like a global citizen is highest among the globally oriented (77%) and fairly small among the locally-oriented students (52%) and the students who were still planning to study abroad (66.7%).

Graph 1: VIEWS ON CITIZENSHIP AND BELONGING AMONG THE THREE GROUPS



Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Political engagement and practices of citizenship

The students were also asked about their level of interest in politics (See Table 11). The results show that the cosmopolitan group more often discusses politics with their families than the “local students”. The same group of students that is more interested in the politics also talks more often about it within the family. Among the cosmopolitans, 61.4% talk about politics at home often or very often, while among the students who are more locally oriented only 30% talk about politics at home often or very often and 32% talk about it rarely or never. The results for some other questions reveal that the cosmopolitans reveal a much more active role regarding political issues.

Table 11: INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS (N = 151)

How often do you talk about politics at home or within your family?	Cosmopolitans		Potentially cosmopolitans		Locals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	1	1.3%	1	1.5%	1	2.0%
Rarely	11	14.7%	9	13.4%	15	30.0%
Occasionally	17	22.7%	27	40.3%	19	38.0%
Often	23	30.7%	19	28.4%	11	22.0%
Very often	23	30.7%	11	16.4%	4	8.0%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Namely, students who had studied or were planning to study abroad are more politically active online than the local students (see Table 12). The biggest (statistically significant difference) between the local students and the students who had already studied abroad or were planning to study abroad is seen in following a political party (via social networks).

Table 12: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Are you active on social networks in any of the following ways?	Cosmopolitan		Potentially cosmopolitan		Local	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Following a political party	23	59.00%	33	50.80%	11	23.40%
Following a politician	24	61.50%	44	67.70%	18	39.10%
Discussing political issues with others	27	69.20%	47	72.30%	32	69.60%
Posting your views on political issues	8	20.50%	13	20.00%	5	11.10%
Participating in a local campaign group	7	17.90%	10	15.40%	2	4.40%
Participating in a European campaign group	4	10.30%	6	9.20%	2	4.40%
Participating in a global campaign group	6	15.80%	9	14.10%	3	6.70%

Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

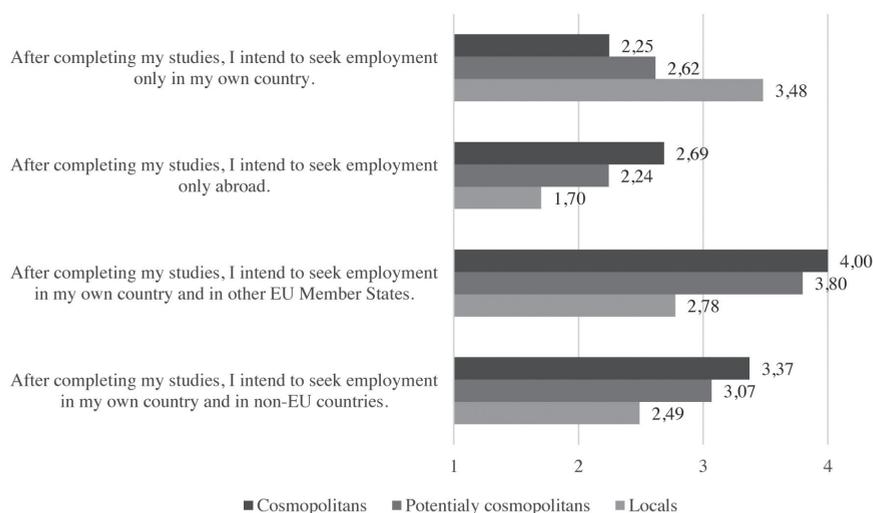
Among the “cosmopolitans”, 59% were following a political party and among the potentially cosmopolitans 51% were, while among the local students the figure is just 23% ($\chi^2 = 12,818$, $df = 2$; $sig = 0,00$). There are 62% of students abroad and 39% of students at home who were following a politician ($\chi^2 = 9,364$, $df = 2$; $sig = 0,01$). The majority of students did not post their views on political issues, nevertheless 20% of the “cosmopolitans” and 11% of the “local students” did. Even more of them were following a politician: 61.5% of the cosmopolitans, 67.7% of the potentially cosmopolitans and 39.1% of the locals ($\chi^2 = 9,364$, $df = 2$; $sig = 0,01$). All groups of students are

less active in participating in campaign groups (on the local, European or global level). In the majority of activities, the group of local students is the least active, but we can find a similarity with the other two groups in discussing political issues with others, where all three groups are alike.

Different aspirations and opportunities for the future

This is also in accordance with their plans. Among the locals, we find 46% who agreed or completely agreed they would seek employment only in Slovenia, while among the cosmopolitans there are 13% of such students: 16.6% of the students who were planning to study abroad would only seek employment in Slovenia ($\chi^2=45,714$; $df=8$; $sig=0,00$). More globally-oriented students were planning to seek employment outside of their country. The cosmopolitans agreed the most with the statement “*After completing my studies, I intend to seek employment in my own country and in another EU Member State*” (83.1%). While among students who were planning to study abroad there are 69.5% and among locally oriented students only 34.6% of those who would seek employment in Slovenia and another EU member state ($\chi^2=45,281$; $df=8$; $sig=0,00$). All groups of students are less interested in seeking employment in non-EU countries, but the cosmopolitans still have the greatest interest (51.4%).

Graph 2: EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS AMONG THE THREE GROUPS (N = 141)



Source: Fink-Hafner et al. (2019).

Discussion and conclusion

There are different types of young people and inequalities exist among them in relation to educational mobility. Some are excluded for financial and social reasons, some feel less confident due to their limited language skills, while others are more attached to their local settings and connections. The results here generally confirm the thesis that learning mobility is socially differentiated (see Berg and Milmeister, 2009). Nevertheless, the results do not convincingly show any kind of linear division between the “locals” and the “cosmopolitans”: the local youth is still very much attached to Europe, while the cosmopolitan group is also attached to its local settings. In a conceptual sense, such differences allow the modest conclusion that the local youth are more sceptical of Europe, the European Union and its politics than the students who possess learning mobility experiences. What remains unanswered is what accounts for such distinctions between them and how to explain these different attitudes to Europe.

Some other paradoxes exist between the actual practices and perceptions among the identified groups of students. There is no doubt that cosmopolitans are well informed and very interested in European affairs; actually, this is the group most involved in European issues and highly politically engaged. However, when asked how they feel as citizens, it was the locals, who mostly agreed with the statement “*I feel like a citizen of Europe*”. Europe as a collective imaginary is not something the locally-oriented students would disagree on, although they express a kind of reservation towards Europe as a political entity or union. Yet, there might be also some inconsistency at work here since, on the other hand, the locals mostly agree that they have much more in common with their nationality than with other nations in Europe – which can be understood also as an unreflected manifestation of nationalistic tendencies with which cosmopolitans strongly disagree.

This study shows, among others, that the practices and experiences with learning mobility among the student population are far from homogeneous, even within such a uniform sample of students. Still, this does not mean that those from less well-off families cannot be mobile, only that it might be harder for them to recognise a need to move or indeed to work out how to incorporate transnational movement into their educational and occupational trajectories (Cairns, 2013: 94). In order to explain these kinds of distinctions in a more in-depth way, further more detailed and complex statistical analyses, including multivariate analysis, as well as a set of more in-depth qualitative studies, are needed. Since the discussion here is limited to a small scale and the locally-focused type of students, a more extensive comparison within the Slovenian context would also be relevant. Another more ambitious plan would be to provide cross-country comparative studies, if the empirical evidence allows it.

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