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**Erasmus Mobility Students and Conceptions
of National, Regional and Global Citizenship
Identity**

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Erasmus Mobility Students and Conceptions of National, Regional and Global Citizenship Identity

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Abstract

This article presents preliminary, selected findings from a larger study of students' experiences in international education. The paper focus on those findings that are related to student understanding of citizenship identity during the mobility experience. Specifically, it draws on interviews and surveys collected in Germany from 387 students participating in the European Union's Erasmus Mobility Programme. The data highlight notable differences in students' citizenship identification along four general lines—national, European, global and 'other'—and their explanations for choosing these affiliations. These early findings raise questions that are currently being explored in the ongoing activities of this longer-term research project.

Introduction

It is by now well documented that during university study, students experience significant intellectual and personal development (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). For those who also engage in international education during this period, even more significant developmental outcomes have been reported (Deardorf, 2006; Hammer, Bennett et al., 2003; Teichler, 1996). In the literature detailing these various benefits, however, much less has so far documented ways that students develop their sense of personal and professional identity during study abroad (Dolby, 2004; Knight, in press; Osler, 1998). While the literature on national identity (Nussbaum, 1996; Anderson, 1983), European citizenship (Bellamy, 2000; Carter, 2001; Eder and Giesen, 2001; Habermas 1993) and global citizenship (Brodin, 2010; Davies, 2006; Schattle, 2008; Tarrant, 2010) is expansive, much less remains known about how students who may be *expected* to feel a certain way about their identity because of having a study abroad experience *in fact feel* about it when they are asked.

In this paper I first present a short overview of the study and its rationale, then present and discuss some of the preliminary quantitative and qualitative survey and interview findings that detail students' conceptions of citizenship identification, and finally conclude with brief reflections on possible implications of these data, questions they raise for further study, and my plans for the next phases of the research.

Definitions

¹ I wish to acknowledge the support of a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship in 2010-2011 and the generosity of Professor Juergen Schriewer and his colleagues at the Centre for Comparative Education and the Abteilung Internationales (ORBIS) at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. My gratitude also goes to Tobias Ward for his help with data analysis.

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However, before launching into a discussion of notions as historically complex and contested in the literature as identity, identification, citizen and conception, I will clarify how I interpret each of these terms in my study. In both the interviews and the survey, the terms citizen and identity were used, and in my analysis the terms ‘identification’ and ‘conceptions’ are used. My interpretation of identity and identification comes from the work of Duchesne and Frogner (2008) who interpret identity as “the complex pattern of meanings and values related to the group whose borders are defined by the state’s capacity to intervene” (p. 144). They describe identification as “the link between an individual and the other members of one of his/her many potential groups of reference...[being] in-depth attitudes as opposed to mere opinions” (pp. 144, 146). My use of the term ‘citizen’ is best articulated by Willem Maass, whose study (2007) of the development of European citizenship succinctly describes citizenship as “a homogeneous political status within the context of the state...to be a citizen is to be a member of a legally uniform (usually national) group of people, with attendant rights and duties (p. 2).”

Thus, in my study I interpret a citizen to be a legal member of a politically defined state, identity to be the way citizens interpret their values within the citizen group to which they legally belong, and identification to be how the individual citizen links him/herself to other people with whom they have contact in their own nation or outside it. Finally, I use the word ‘conception’ to mean ‘understanding’ or as D.D. Pratt defines it, “Specific meanings attached to phenomena which then mediate our response to situations involving those phenomena. We...use those abstract representations to delimit something from, and relate it to, other aspects of our world (p. 205).” That is, students interpret and make sense of their experience of studying abroad in a particular way, and their resulting idiosyncratic interpretations also influence how they understand other things related to the international experience, including how they feel about citizenship identity.

This article presents data and the initial findings of a study still in progress that is part of a larger research project investigating how university students understand international educational experience and the role it may play in their development of citizen identity. While there is much in the scholarly literature discussing complex notions of citizenship, identity of different kinds and international study, the research reported in this paper investigated how one sample of students participating in the Erasmus Mobility Programme² in Germany reflected on their feelings of belonging to nation, being part of Europe, having a sense of global responsibility, or even thinking about citizenship in an entirely new way.

The study was conducted in three phases: In the first phase, Erasmus student’s survey responses to four close-ended choices about types of citizenship were analyzed (National, European, Global and ‘Other’). In the second stage, students’ written, open-ended explanations of their citizenship choices on the survey and in the interviews were analyzed. Students’ general reasons for their choice of citizenship type were presented in the form of a list to make sure all possible conceptions were captured. And, in the third stage, a loose typology of general conceptions of citizenship was developed out of the

² European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

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analysis of the closed- and open-ended survey items and the interview data. Rather than seeking to present how identity develops during the Erasmus program or how program developers or students understand their identity after participation, this study sought to show how a specific group of Erasmus participants understands citizenship identity at one point in time during an international education experience.

Citizenship Identity to Attract Students to Study Abroad?

Two particular types of citizenship that have frequently been articulated by program developers and policy makers during the last decade of dramatic increase in study abroad participation in the U.S. and in Europe raise important questions. These are ‘global citizenship’ and ‘European citizenship.’ In the U.S., a common statement by institutions and third party providers is that study abroad will develop students into global citizens (Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich, 2002; Streitwieser & Light, 2010; Woolfe, 2009; Zemach-Bersin, 2009). In Europe, the idea that Erasmus should, among a host of other benefits, develop in participants a sense of European citizenship identity has also been important for Bologna program policy makers (European Commission, 2008; Sigalas, 2010; Teichler and Maiworm, 1997).

In his 2009 discussion of “Global Citizenship and Study Abroad: A European Comparative Perspective” (2009), Hans de Wit argued, “Europeans have felt themselves to be global citizens to a greater degree than their American equivalents. Only in recent years has there been a drive to create a European citizenship (291).” Given that both terms—global citizenship and European identity—are used to attract students to study abroad even while they remain contested constructs, it is imperative to first simply understand how students themselves as the consumers of education abroad think about these concepts. That is, while it may not directly be a misconception that study abroad fosters global citizenship or that mobility within Europe creates a feeling of European citizenship identity, both assumptions should at the very least be empirically challenged. Further, their use should be based on an articulated understanding of their meaning and then discussed with students if, in fact, they are felt to be important experiential outcomes. The problem is these notions are currently being used as promises to attract students to study abroad when more deliberately invoking them might lead to more responsible advertising, development and evaluation of programs and their intended outcomes.

In Europe, few studies have so far been able to demonstrate empirically whether European citizenship identity develops during Erasmus as its planners had hoped it would when the program began in 1987 (Council of Ministers, 1987; Green paper, 2009; Sigalas, 2009; 2010). However, as Everson and Preuss (1995) argue, it is the responsibility of research to “seek honestly to identify” these varying conceptions of citizenship if it is to accurately assess how they impact the development of allegiance to Union citizenship (Ibid, p. 48).

The Study

This paper shares data on the issue of citizenship identity drawn from a larger funded study at Northwestern University, the *Student Conceptions of International Experience*

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Study (SCIE),³ which for the past three years, the SCIE study has been engaged in addressing and empirically documenting students' involvement in various types of study abroad programs at Northwestern and in other institutions throughout the United States. In 2010 the author secured a Fulbright grant to replicate the interview and survey study on a sample of European students also engaging in study abroad. In Europe, 45 semester and yearlong Erasmus students were interviewed⁴ and 342 students completed the survey.⁵ The sample was made up of Europeans from 29 countries and 141 different higher education institutions⁶ who were studying at the Humboldt Universitaet or the Freie Universitaet in Berlin for a semester or a full year, and Germans from those same two institutions who had just finished studying in one of 18 different European countries for the same period of time.

German students were interviewed and surveyed online (using SurveyMonkey) shortly after their return from abroad. Non-German students were interviewed and surveyed during their Erasmus experience. All discussions were digitally audio-recorded and lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. At the end of the lengthy interview and 28 question survey, students were presented with the four broad categories of citizen identification—National, European, Global or 'Other—and asked which one they identified with first, and to explain why.

The research method used in the study was influenced by the Theory of Variation (Marton & Booth, 1997) and Phenomenography, which is "the empirical study of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which we experience, conceptualize, understand, perceive, [or] apprehend various phenomena (Marton 1994, p. 4424)." This theory holds that people understand and approach learning differently, that these different understandings or "conceptions" can be empirically documented, sometimes along a hierarchy of complexity of understanding among different learners, and that understanding this variation gives us the knowledge and tools to help learners over time move from less to more complex conceptions (Marton & Booth, 1997; Micari, Light, Calkins and Streitwieser, 2007). The data was analyzed by two researchers, both working independently with the raw survey and interview data and then member checking one

³ The author also acknowledges the generous funding from Northwestern University's Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies and Northwestern's Searle Center for Teaching Excellence.

⁴ Interviewed students came from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.

⁵ Surveyed students came from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, *Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, *Kazakhstan, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, *Russia, *Scotland, *Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey. Note that countries marked with an asterix do not have Erasmus 'National Agencies.'

⁶ Please contact the author for a list of the individual institutions since they are too many to include here.

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another's analysis for discussion and agreement at successive stages (Patton, 2002). The development of the identity categories resulted from multiple readings of the data, crafting and refining draft categories supported with selected student statements, and finally constructing a table of general conceptual variation on the four notions of citizenship (Akerlind 2005).

The Erasmus Programme and Citizenship Identity in Europe

The Erasmus program was established in 1987 and is part of the wider Bologna initiative to establish a higher education area within Europe. Erasmus allows Europeans to spend 3-12 months studying or engaging in an internship elsewhere throughout European. Currently, there are 31 participating countries, over two thousand higher education institutions, and over 1.5 million students who by now who have been engaged in Erasmus exchange opportunities (Kritz, 2006). Different observers have described the program as “the single most successful component of EU policy” (Altbach and Teichler, 2001, p. 10; Teichler, 2010), “a social and cultural phenomenon” in its own right (British Council, 2009), and a Litmus test for Bologna's ultimate success (Wuttig, 2009).

One of Erasmus' primary goals from the beginning has been for participants to develop competencies and tangible links that not only strengthen the Union and make it a more attractive place to study and work but also make them feel like they are an integral part of shaping Europe in the future (deWit, 2009; Everson and Preuss, 1995; Green Paper, 2009; Kritz, 2006; Wuttig, 2009). As Sigalas (2010) has noted, “it is clear that international student mobility and direct contact were meant to create a European identity” (p. 242).

Findings⁷

Erasmus Citizenship Identification: Along National, Regional, Global, and 'Other' Lines

Of the 343 survey respondents, Figure 1 below indicates that Erasmus students were nearly equally split between choosing their national citizenship identification first and choosing a European citizenship identity first, 34% for the former and 39% for the latter, respectively. Another 15% selected global citizenship as their first identification, while the remaining 12% preferred the 'Other' option.

⁷ These findings are preliminary and meant to suggest potentially interesting trends and questions that can be further explored in subsequent stages of this research undertaking. The graphs represent simple frequency counts that were converted into percentages rather than sophisticated statistical calculations, which will be made with subsequent data.

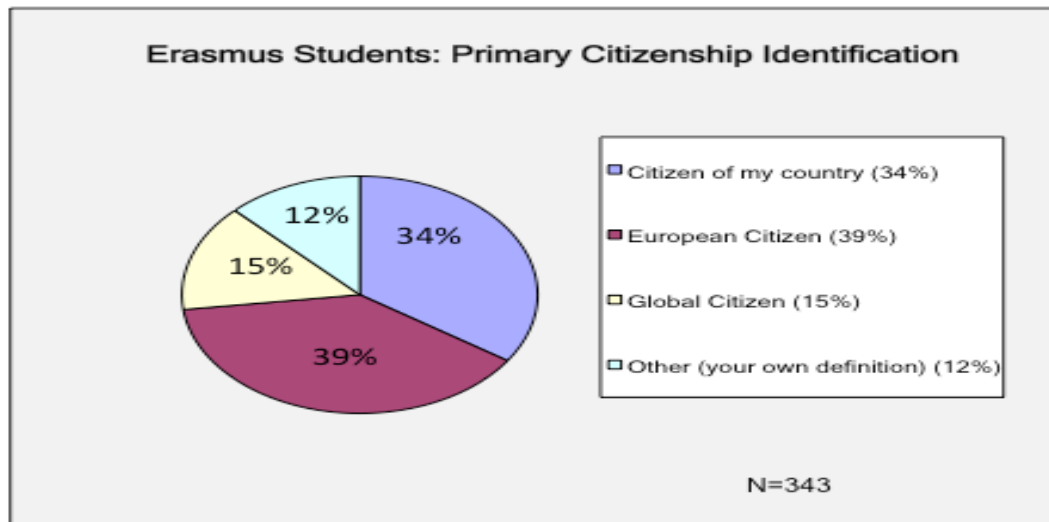


Figure 1. Erasmus Students: Primary Citizenship Identification

When looking at this same breakdown with students from countries where there were enough respondents to justify a frequency tabulation, the differences become more interesting. Figure 2, below, indicates the per-country breakdown.

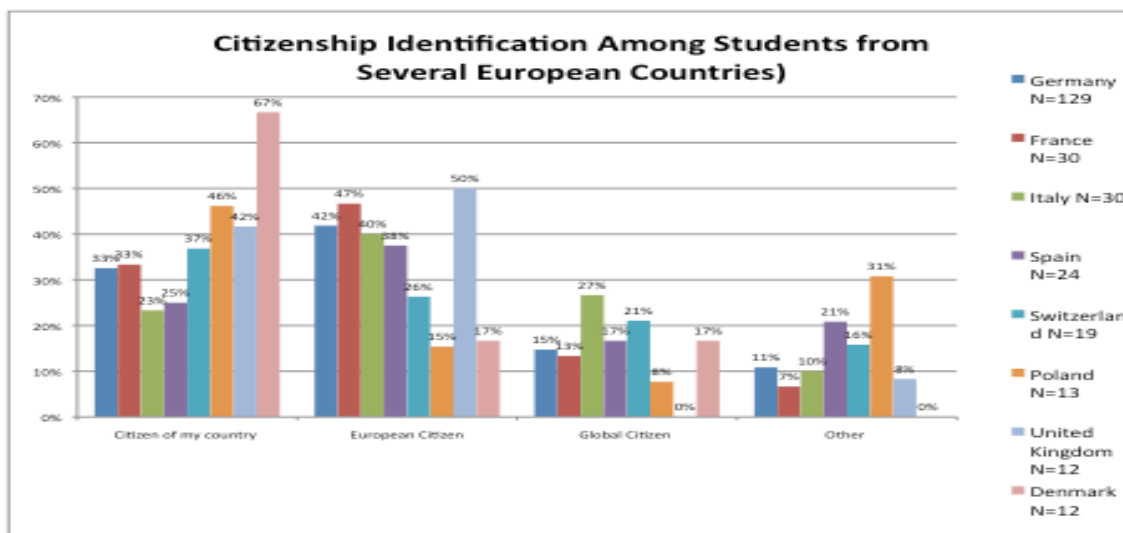


Figure 2. Students from Several European Countries: Primary Citizenship Identification

Danish students rate national citizenship as their primary identity much more readily than do students from the other countries, particularly against, for example, Italian students. However, Italian students rate global citizenship identification higher than any of the other countries, while students from the United Kingdom appear to ignore it altogether. But, English students rate European citizenship identification highest, while Polish students rate it the lowest, followed by Danish students.

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Based on a very general reading of current political trends, the high rating by Danish students on national citizenship identification may be a reflection of recent politics in that country or simply an expression of proud citizens of a small country promoting their country first—even though Swiss students do not provide the same numbers and also come from a small country. On the other hand, the high European identification by students from the UK speaks against the belief that the English are, according to some studies, hesitant to identify as Europeans (Sigalas, 2010). One explanation might be that European citizenship identification is high because they feel they are already comfortable enough with their nation's status to be confident supporting Europe first.

Discussion

These basic quantitative indications of the Erasmus student sample's first citizenship identifications are interesting but more instructive is how these students actually articulated and explained their citizenship identification choices when they were able to provide written detail in the survey items and express themselves in interviews. Table 1, below, provides a general overview of descriptive terms that capture the variety of explanations students gave for their citizenship identification. These are then followed by a discussion of each type and, finally, a brief analysis of the differences discovered among students from countries with different historical-political, economic and geographic profiles.

Citizenship Identification	Reason for the choice of citizenship identification
National	1. Default Identification 2. Pride Identification 3. Protection Identification
European	1. Shared Identification 2. Belonging Identification 3. Dissociative Identification
Global	1. Borderless Identification 2. Mindset Identification 3. Predetermined Identification 4. Wide Open Identification
'Other'	1. Regional or City Identification

Table 1. Citizenship Identification and Reasons

National Citizenship Identification

Students who articulated a national citizenship identification first did so along three general lines, which can be described as 1) Default identification, 2) Pride identification, and 3) Protection identification.

Students with a *Protection Identification* thought about their identity in a logical way: family ties, cultural and geographic familiarity, and language made allegiance to their own country first their only logical reaction to being asked about their citizenship identification. Students in this category also defaulted to nation because they expressed feeling uncomfortable when confronted with issues of integration or the expectation that

they be more accommodating to outsiders unfamiliar with their culture, language and setting. Finally, students in this group defaulted to national citizenship out of a desire to conform to the expectations and beliefs they felt others had of them because of where they came from or what accent they had. Students who held a *Pride Identification* were attracted to national identification first because they felt time abroad had made them better, more informed citizens of their own country. These students expressed an eagerness to return home and work to further improve their country. They also felt particular comfort and kinship with their fellow nationals when they were abroad, which led them to the conclusion that where they really belong is to their country. Finally, students holding a *Protection Identification* argued that preserving their national identity was important but being jeopardized by globalization and an EU bureaucracy they felt was too abstract and out of touch with local issues and concerns. As one German student⁸ explained, “There is no real European identity since Europe only exists at Brussels and Strasbourg. It is far away and I perceive it as a bureaucratic monster.” Some students also expressed the need to champion their national identity so they could effectively save their country from internal political rifts tearing it apart. A student from Belgium lamented the tensions in her country between two historically antagonistic groups: “The Belgian politics make a Belgian identity almost problematic. In this way I tend to stress my 'belgianness' in order to break with the dualistic thinking (Vlaams- Waals) that rules nowadays in my country.”

European Citizenship Identification

Students who expressed a European citizenship identification first also fell into three broad categories, which I have described as 1) Shared Identification, 2) Belonging Identification, and 3) Dissociative Identification.

Students who held a *Shared Identification* are likely those Erasmus policy makers most hope to graduate from their program: students who feel a bond with their fellow Europeans, seek common ground on issues and value diversity. Many respondents in this category spoke with pride about being part of the so-called ‘Erasmus Generation’ representing a new and youthful spirit engaged in making Europe the best place to live and work. Students in the next category who held a *Belonging Identification* were similar to the first group in many ways, except that they went beyond merely sharing an interest in Europe to striving to actively make the EU succeed. These students were not only grateful for the administrative benefits they feel European citizenship bestows upon them, but proud of Europe as the place where they see a bright future for themselves to follow their dreams and play a leading role. As one enthusiastic young Frenchman exclaimed,

“We, young people, students, open minded people, are able to go on with Europa. We can follow the dream that we can believe in Europa. Now I'm European citizen, I'm speaking three languages and most of my friends are European...I'm proud of Europa. We have to go on with it.”

⁸ All statements are original and have only been slightly corrected for grammar or spelling where necessary.

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Finally, many of these students also felt that national identification was too constricting for them, that all their travels around Europe already made returning home too late, and that a wider European identity simply offered them more. Students who fell into the third category, *Dissociative Identification*, rejected their national identification out of shame for being associated with its history and stereotypes. For these students, discomfort with their own country, either for historical reasons as was the case with some German respondents or for political or economic reasons as with some Eastern and Southern European respondents, left them preferring the anonymity of a European identity to one that associates them with an identity they would rather avoid. Everson and Preuss (1995) explain this citizenship type as one where “citizenship is devaluated in that it serves as the negative basis of comparison for some other valued social role (p. 54).” A German student respondent explained this feeling accurately:

“I have still come across lots of stereotypes regarding German people, that - in my opinion - can still be traced back to Nazi Germany. Therefore I sometimes hesitated to tell people where I am from and almost wished to be able to tell them something different. This is why, I would rather like to call myself a ‘European Citizen.’”

Global Citizenship Identification

Students who indicated that global citizenship was their primary identity can be grouped into the following four general descriptive categories: 1) Borderless Identification, 2) Mindset Identification, 3) Predetermined Identification, and 4) Wide Open Identification

Students with a *Borderless Identification* rejected notions of nationality and territorial borders altogether, arguing that they are arbitrary, politically imposed strictures that represent labels people can choose to live above. Some of these students, however, also admitted with barely concealed contempt that living globally and traveling freely without regard to political borders is only possible for a privileged and educated minority of the world’s population. Students with a *Mindset Identification* felt that their view of all humans as equal with shared rights and obligations—the very definition of cosmopolitanism—defined their sense of identity and made it possible for them to live anywhere in the world, regardless of culture or geography. Some of these students also explained that their mixed family backgrounds made them a hybrid of many cultures and gave them a liberating sense of rootlessness. Many students in this category cited the adage, “home is where the heart is” to explain their philosophy. Above all, these students expressed a desire to experiment with life elsewhere, far beyond only the Western culture they felt they already knew.

Students, on the other hand, with a *Predetermined Identification* were somewhat similar to students who chose national identification first for default reasons, but argued that they inherited a predetermined global identification from their culturally mixed parents and extensive childhood experience abroad. While these students did not necessarily fully embrace the status of global citizen, they felt it best captured who they were in terms of their personal backgrounds. Students in the fourth category, *Wide open Identification*, felt not only that national citizenship was too limiting for them but also that Europe itself was too small for their more broadly focused horizons. These students also felt uncomfortable

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with a perceived nationalism in some of their country's politics or an exclusionary attitude against non-Europeans trying to integrate into Europe. Finally, students in this category argued that that amount of traveling they had done and the wide breadth of friendships they had with others around the world led them to transcend national and European identity and adopt a way of living and seeing the world that they could only describe as global. As one Danish student explained it,

“When I think about my future and where I should make my master, I don't think that it should necessarily be in Europe, and I am considering both India, Tanzania, Brazil and Argentina. I think that the constructions of nations is very limiting and I would like to see a world where people can migrate freely. That is why I think of myself mostly as a Global Citizen.”

‘Other’ Conceptions of Citizenship

Based on an examination of the written comments provided by students who selected the ‘Other’ option for citizenship identification, it becomes clear that rather than expressing a completely new notion of citizenship identity they were merely unhappy with the broad options offered. Some students argued that their identity was not at the level of nation, continent or globe, but rather began lower down at the level of city or region. These I have termed *Regional or City Identification*. Other students who rejected the citizenship labels clearly felt more comfortable articulating a conception in their own words but then ended up a fitting into one of the choices already offered anyway. Many of the students who chose ‘Other’ also did so because they felt they represented several types and therefore preferred not to be labeled as only one kind. As one student from Germany explained,

“I have never consciously felt a sort of national identity and it is a charming idea calling oneself a global citizen, but on the other hand I think calling oneself a global citizen neglects the differences that do exist between the people in the world in terms of privileges....I cannot relate to any of the categories named above.”

Finally, some of these students also said that their identity depended on where they were at any given time, so their identification label was fluid and changeable. One Dutch student interviewed explained how that worked:

“I am From Amsterdam. I'm always confronted by being Dutch first. But I'm also European, especially Western European, so that's second....Many Erasmus students feel like the EU is their 'second country'. So, maybe I'm Dutch first, an EU citizen second, and a global citizen third. People drift more nowadays.”

Erasmus Citizenship Identification Along Historical, Economic and Geographic Lines

The next step in the analysis of the quantitative data was to look at the close-ended primary citizenship response choices in terms of what differences there might be among the respondents from the 29 different countries along very general historical-political, economic, and geographic-regional lines. Although aware of the pitfalls of trying to draw meaningful analysis along these lines without being able to account for the many complex variables that could skew the data, I nevertheless wanted to see if any interesting differences emerged that might suggest further study.

To approach the data from a historical-political standpoint, the sample was first divided into two groups, former Soviet satellite states⁹ and Western European states,¹⁰ as Figure 3, below, indicates.

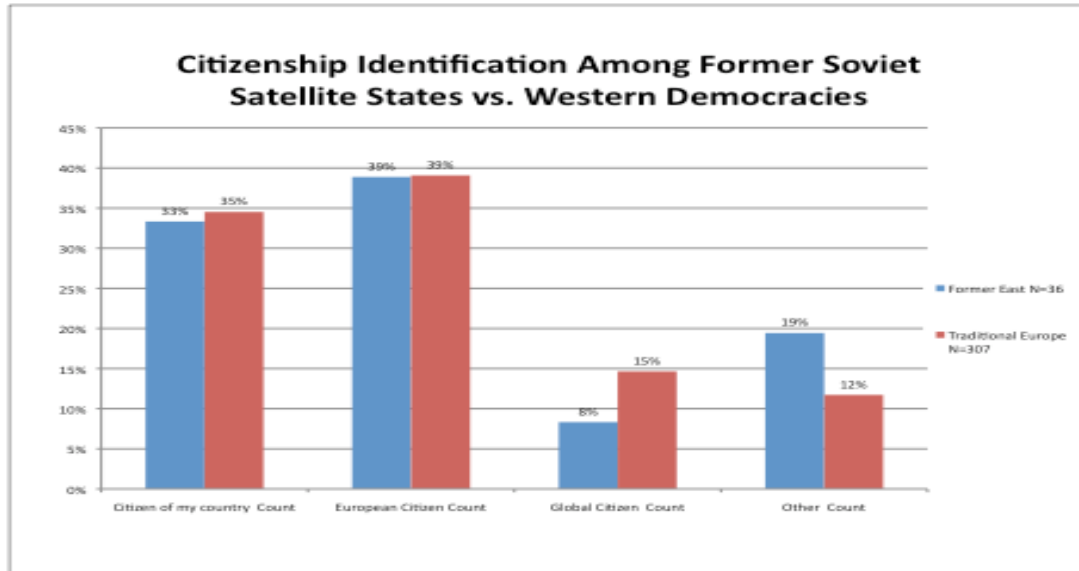


Figure 3. Former Soviet Satellite States vs. Western Democracies: Primary Citizenship Identification

While no major differences on economic lines were found between students in the former Soviet satellite states and the Western democracies in terms of the four citizenship types, a closer examination shows some interesting comparisons. For example, students from the traditional European countries appear to more readily accept a global citizenship identity than the former East/newer member state students do, 15% vs. 8%, respectively. Perhaps this is because their comfort with Europe is stronger and thus they are more ready to embrace a wider conception of citizenship allegiance beyond their own continent, while students from the former East are still adjusting to being part of Western Europe and working to become fully accepted. In the choice of 'Other' there is an equal spread but in the opposite direction, with the Former East students more than the Western students rejecting the given citizenship choices and choosing to articulate their own understandings in the open-ended box that followed.

⁹ The former Soviet satellite states in this analysis included Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia

¹⁰ The Western European states in this analysis included Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom

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To approach the data from an economic standpoint, the sample of respondents was divided into economically ‘shaken’ states¹¹ and ‘solid’ states.¹² The breakdown is indicated in Figure 4, below.

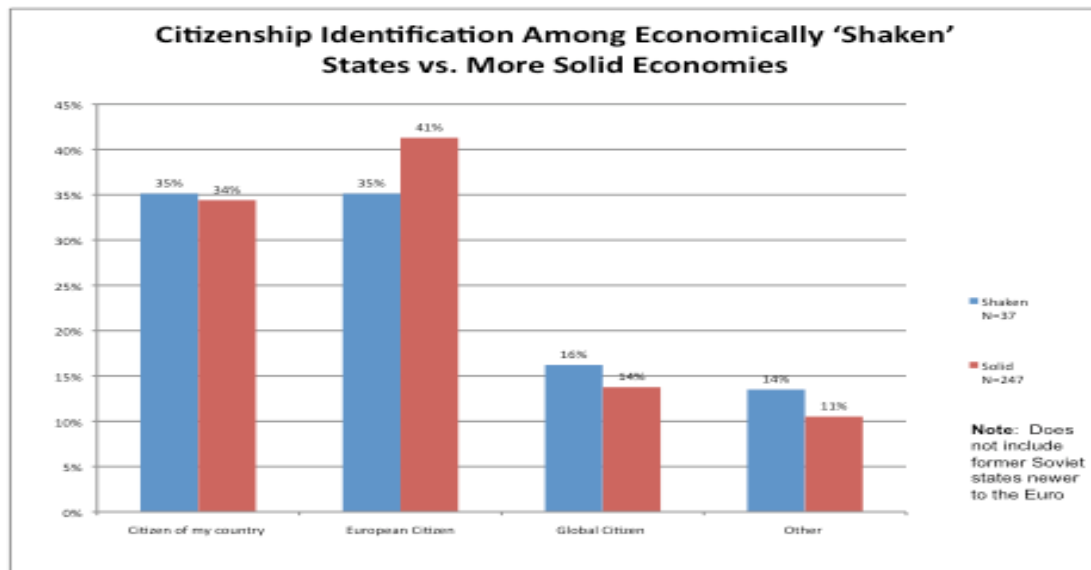


Figure 4: Economically ‘Shaken’ vs. ‘Solid’ Economies: Primary Citizenship Identification.

Note: Former Soviet satellites newer to the Euro were excluded from the analysis.

Again, while there were no major differences on any of the citizenship types between either economic group, the data indicate a 6% higher European citizenship identification by students from the ‘solid’ states over the ‘shaken’ ones. It also shows students from the ‘shaken’ states appearing slightly more open to global citizenship than those from the more ‘solid’ states. To speculate briefly, it could be that students from the more secure European economies can ‘afford’ to be open to a wider citizenship identity while students from the ‘shaken’ states are currently less sure about how much they are still accepted and seen as belonging in a struggling Europe. But, one could also argue that it would seem likely that the more ‘solid’ countries might particularly now reject the idea of ‘brotherhood’ with weaker economies, given that their financial problems are hurting the overall financial stability in Europe. Finally, students in the ‘shaken’ states appear slightly more open to global citizenship than do those in the ‘solid’ states, which, viewed cynically could signal that students from ‘shaken’ states are now seeking identification and shelter anywhere but with their own country.

Finally, an analysis by region, defined as The British Isles¹³, Central Europe (including Germany, with 129 students a much larger representation than any of the other

¹¹ The economically ‘shaken’ states included Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain

¹² The currently more economically ‘solid’ states included Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom

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countries),¹⁴ Eastern Europe,¹⁵ Scandinavia,¹⁶ and Southern Europe,¹⁷ showed perhaps the most interesting differences, as illustrated in Figure 5, below.¹⁸

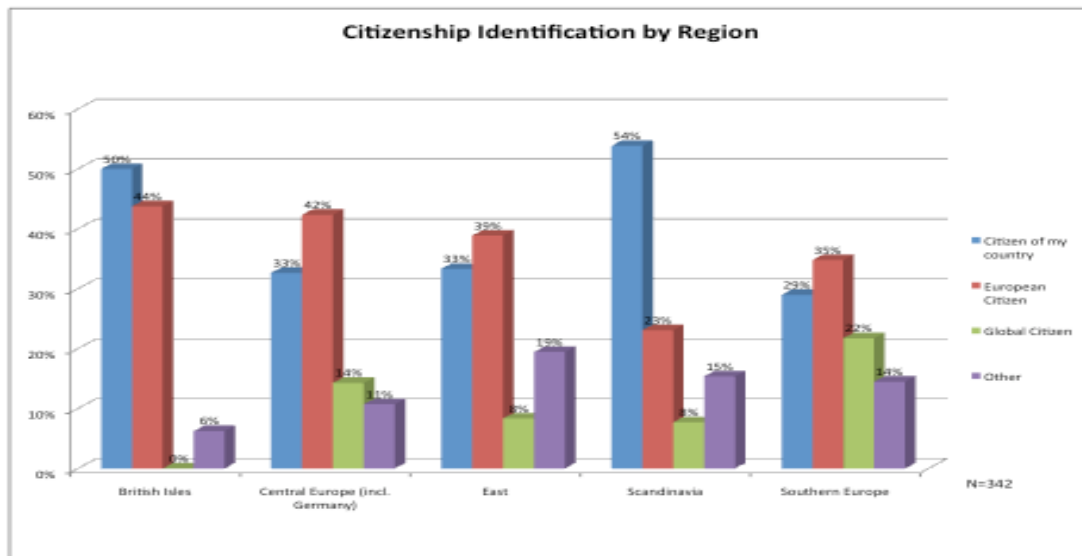


Figure 5. Regional Differences: Primary Citizenship Identification

Students from the British Isles and Scandinavia exhibit the highest national citizenship identification (50% and 54%, respectively) but the lowest global citizenship identification (0% and 8%, respectively), while students from the British Isles share a European citizenship identification that is equally high with Central Europe (44% and 42%, respectively) but for Scandinavian students it is much lower (23%). Scandinavian students as a group share the highest national identification and the lowest European identification. For Southern European students the reverse appears, although not as dramatically. The strong global citizenship identification among the Southern European countries is noteworthy, particularly when compared to the moderately low feeling of global citizenship among the countries from the former East and Scandinavia, which is also an interesting contrast.

Conclusion

¹³ England, Scotland Wales: N=16

¹⁴ Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland: N=36

¹⁵ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia: N=67.

Please note that 'East' in this analysis indicates former Communist Block countries more than strictly geographic placement within Europe

¹⁶ Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden: N=26

¹⁷ Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey: N=169

¹⁸ Please note: There were insufficient responses to create a 'Baltics' category or any further regional differentiations beyond those represented here

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As one would expect from a study into the complex issue of how citizenship identification is conceived of by university students during international educational experience, these data raise far more questions than they answer. While citizenship identities are neither mutually exclusive nor inflexible, the data and analysis above make three things clear: a) Students conceive of citizenship identity differently, b) they diverge in how they identify with various notions of citizenship, and c) they differ in their citizenship identification in terms of their country's historical-political profile, economic situation, and geographic position in Europe.

The survey data also show that over half the students in the sample (54%) have transcended their national identification and chosen to identify first as European Citizens or as Global Citizens. These observations are supported by a number of previous studies that had larger samples and used different methodologies, including the biannual Eurobarometer studies and the annual Erasmus Student Network surveys, among others. In the 2005 Eurobarometer study *Youth Takes the Floor*, 64% of citizens aged 20-24 agreed that they “feel attached to Europe,” while 59% agreed that they “feel (to some extent) European” (p. 8). The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) survey of 2008 reported that 62% of their students agreed or strongly agreed that the host country “felt like their second home at the end of their stay abroad.” (p. 35). And, according to the most recent 2011 Eurobarometer poll, more Europeans continue to trust in the EU than in their own national governments. Clearly, young Europeans are not retreating to the safety of their national identification, despite the current economic uncertainty.

Based on the vast literature on citizenship, identity and the impact of international education, we know that a myriad of factors determine how students engage in study abroad experiences and how they think about their own identity. As Jane Knight reminds us, “the waters are murky when one discusses the role of student mobility in helping to develop national identity, regional identity, national citizenship and global citizenship (in press).” It is my hope that the data presented in this paper will animate additional thought on these issues and entice others to engage in rigorous study and analysis that can lead to even more reliable and conclusive findings.

Limitations

Some of the challenges this study met were the following. Students were surveyed and interviewed only in English or German, not their native language, which made comprehending and discussing some of the complex issues in the research difficult. The fact that the interviewer was an American academic raises the problem of ‘social desirability’—an interviewee’s eagerness to impress the interviewer and say what they think sounds good rather than what they actually believe. The amount of time students in this study spent abroad varied between a semester and a year, a fact that undoubtedly impacts the depth of impressions, competencies and identities one can develop. And, the lack of a statistical control group makes it impossible to document whether the citizenship identification of the Erasmus students was any different than it would have been for students who did not study abroad. Subsequent research will include a control group.

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