

Impact of International Student Mobility on European and Global Identity: A Case Study of Switzerland

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Abstract : International student mobility involves a unique spatio-temporal context and exploring the various aspects of mobile students' experience can lead to new findings within identity studies. The previous studies have mainly focused on student mobility within Europe and its impact on European identity arguing that students who participate in intra-European mobility already feel European before exchange. Contrary to previous studies, in this paper student mobility is analyzed from different point of view. In order to see whether a true Europeanization of identities is taking place, it is necessary to contrast European identity with alternative supranational identity which could similarly result from student mobility and in particular a global identity. Besides, in the paper there is explored whether geographical constellation (host country continental location during mobility- Europe vs. outside of Europe) plays a role. Based on newly developed model of multicultural, social and socio-demographic variables there is argued that after intra-European mobility only global identity of students could be increased (H1), but the mobility to countries outside of Europe causes changes in European identity (H2). The quantitative study (survey, n=1440, 22 higher education institutions, experimental group of former and future/potential mobile students and control group of non-mobile students) was held in Switzerland where is equally high number of students who participate in intra-European and outside of Europe mobility. The results of multivariate linear regression showed that students who participate in exchange in Europe increase their European identity due to having close friends from Europe, as well as due to length of the mobility experience had impact, but students who participate in exchange outside of Europe increase their global identity due to having close friends from outside of Europe and proficiency in foreign languages.

Keywords : student mobility, European identity, global identity, global identity

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