

**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP THROUGH MOBILITY?**  
**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY, RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION IN**  
**THE EU**

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**Abstract**

Globalisation has begun to transform the processes through which citizens are differentiated and non-citizens are excluded. This article provides an in-depth qualitative interrogation of these processes of differentiation and exclusion, and argues that the transformation in these processes compels us to reconsider the conceptual dichotomy of passive/active citizens along the stayers/mobiles distinction. This transformation is most apparent in Europe, with the introduction of European Union (EU) citizenship. The article builds on Bourdieu's cultural capital in the cosmopolitan context, existing qualitative studies on citizens' sense of EU identity and citizenship, and illustrative focus group evidence of visiting EU and home students' perceptions of EU citizenship across three dimensions – identity, rights and participation. The evidence indicates that we can distinguish between four categories of citizens in the EU: passive EU citizens, including two groups of stayers; the potential EU (i) and member state-oriented (ii) citizens, and active EU citizens, including EU-15 (iii) and CEE (iv) mobile citizens. These categories reveal that important distinctions are emerging between the perceptions and behaviour of stayers and mobiles as passive/active citizens.

**Keywords:** active/passive citizens, EU citizenship, mobility, cultural capital, identity, differentiation/ exclusion

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## Introduction

Citizenship studies have recognised the transformations in the relationship between nation states, citizens and non-citizens (Isin and Turner 2002). Some of these transformations have been accounted for by globalisation<sup>i</sup> and traced in new processes of differentiation and exclusion linked to citizens' mobility status and economic and cultural capital (Skey 2011a, 122). These transformations are expected to be particularly evident in the European context (Beck 2006), in which the intensified level of regional integration has led to the introduction of European Union (EU) citizenship – the first direct link between a transnational political community (the EU) and the individuals (member state citizens). Although the political substance of EU citizenship remains questionable (Maas 2007), its impact on processes of exclusion and differentiation is undeniable (Hansen and Hager 2010). EU citizenship unites *some* citizens from the European continent, while excluding *others*. The differentiation between *and* among EU citizens – on the basis of their mobility status and country of origin – has also been particularly apparent, especially in the context of the recent crisis (Shaw 2012).

Against this backdrop, the article provides an in-depth qualitative interrogation of processes of differentiation and exclusion in the EU. Due to the role of mobility in activating EU citizenship however, it proposes that we reconsider the dichotomy of passive/active citizens – traditionally observed through citizens' political engagement – along the stayers/mobiles distinction. Empirical studies provide some indication of the anticipated differences between the attitudes and behaviour of stayers and mobiles (see for example Favell 2008, 2010; Rother and Nebe 2009; Muxel 2009). However, they also draw attention to some inconsistencies, depending on country contexts and citizens' political ideology, for example. This article will illustrate some of the inconsistencies involved with the proposition

of observing stayers/mobiles as active/passive (EU) citizens. It builds on the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) in the cosmopolitan context and existing qualitative studies on (young) citizens' sense of EU citizenship and identity (Bruter 2005; Skey 2011a; Ross 2014). It seeks to develop and complement these studies through the analysis of original focus group evidence of visiting EU and home students' perceptions of EU citizenship across three dimensions – identity, rights and participation.<sup>ii</sup>

The evidence was collected as part of a larger research project that probes the scope for the realisation of EU citizenship as envisaged by the European Commission and the processes by which young member state citizens actually realise their EU citizenship. Since the institutional framework of EU citizenship is built on citizens' free movement rights, and these rights are contingent on their socio-economic background, including sufficient economic resources and educational attainment, it was assumed that these candidates would be the most likely to realise EU citizenship. Focus group research was conducted in Sweden, which is identified as an ideal setting for EU citizenship to materialise. Sweden has been the only member state to apply EU rules to all mobile EU citizens, including citizens from the 2004 and 2007 Central and Eastern European (CEE) member states, and citizens from Croatia (joined in 2013). Hence it is the only country that can really illustrate the similarities and differences between different groups of mobiles, including CEE and Western European (EU-15) citizens. Overall, the focus group evidence suggests that there are significant differences between the perceptions of passive (in this case 'stayers') and active EU citizens (in this case 'mobiles').

The article is structured as follows: the first section defines (EU) citizenship and sheds light on recent transformations in processes of differentiation and exclusion as a result of globalisation. The second section illustrates the conceptual dichotomy of passive/active citizens along the stayers/mobiles distinction. The third section considers the research methods (focus group) and case study (Sweden) adopted. The fourth section explores visiting EU and home students' perceptions of EU citizenship, and the final section draws conclusions with regard to contemporary processes of differentiation and exclusion among stayers and mobiles.

### **Defining (EU) citizenship**

Citizenship is understood in this article as a dynamic link between a sovereign political community and the individuals (Isin and Turner 2002). It is a process of exclusion, dividing citizens from non-citizens and a process of differentiation, distinguishing between citizens from a political engagement perspective along the passive/active dichotomy (Turner 1997, 15). Citizenship is expected to have a multidimensional character, involving three interrelated and collective dimensions – identity, rights and participation. A closer inspection of these dimensions can elucidate the 'lived' experiences related to a particular citizenship model (Heater 2004, 166). They will thus be considered in the analysis of focus group evidence in order to illustrate *actual* processes of differentiation and exclusion related to EU citizenship.

The dimensions of citizenship are anticipated to manifest through different components. First, the identity of citizens entails a sense of belonging to the political community (Bellamy 2008) and a shared identity among citizens (Smith 1992, 58). For the

latter aspect to be consequential however, citizens must also be able to distinguish between their fellows and the “other”, non-citizens (Karolewski 2010, 26). Second, the rights of citizens define the formal rules of access to the political community and guarantee equal access among citizens to the community’s civil, social and political rights (Vink and Bauböck 2013). Third, the participation of citizens elucidate who (socio-economic background), why (models of participation) and how (forms of engagement) takes part in political-decision making (Smets and van Ham 2013). Through these elements, the dimensions of citizenship can reveal the relationship between the political community and the citizens, the distribution of power among citizens and the distinction between citizens and non-citizens (Balibar 1988). They can thus be indicative of how different categories of citizens, in particular ‘passive’ and ‘active’ citizens (are anticipated to) emerge and who the “other” is.

In the national context, these categories have derived from an alleged balance between citizens’ rights and duties (Bellamy 2005, 157). More specifically, the focus has been on citizens’ access to political rights and political participation – usually in traditional forms of engagement (casting a vote or standing for elections). However, due to globalisation, we are now entering “a new era... in which national borders and differences are dissolving and must be renegotiated” (Beck 2006, 2). Globalisation is transforming processes of differentiation and exclusion as well (Skey 2013). For example, citizens have an increasingly unequal access to influencing political-decision making (Sloam 2013, 10-11). They have thus begun to participate in alternative forms of engagement (volunteering and protesting) to make an impact. Similarly, more and more states are introducing citizenship tests in order to keep the (unwanted) “other” out, and these developments effect the (strength) of citizens’ national *and* cosmopolitan identity (Bruter 2005).

The transformation in these processes is perhaps most apparent in Europe, where a transnational status – EU citizenship – has been ‘added’ to citizens’ existing national statuses. The novelty of EU citizenship does not only stem from its transnational scope however. The requirement for citizens to move (within) the EU in order to activate their EU-level rights is also important. In particular, this dependence on mobility indicates that EU citizenship has an economic and market-oriented character (Maas 2007). Indeed, official documents only detail the rights of mobile EU citizens (see for example European Commission 2013) and, despite their small number – 13.7 million in January 2013, totalling to just over three per cent of the population (Eurostat 2014) – citizens’ mobility is anticipated to benefit “the EU as a whole” (European Commission 2010, 2). Accordingly, mobility “fosters a sense of European identity [among citizens and] contributes to the internal market, as Europeans who are mobile as young learners are more likely to be mobile as workers later in life” (European Commission 2010, 2). The recent reshuffling of the relevant commissioner’s portfolio that brought migration and citizenship together is an indication that the emphasis on the mobility of EU citizens is here to stay. Against this backdrop, the propensity of EU citizens to realise a political citizenship at the EU-level seems to have a marginal importance, making the dichotomy of passive/active citizens from the traditional political engagement perspective irrelevant. This article proposes that the focus should instead be on the differences between the perceptions and behaviour of stayers as passive and mobiles as active citizens.

There is already some evidence to indicate that there are important disparities between EU citizens on the basis of their mobility status (European Commission 2013, 4) and between EU citizens and the “other”, the non-EU citizens, especially considering the rights of citizens compared to that of long-term, third-country residents in the EU (Hansen and Hager 2010, 197-206). Empirical studies suggest that intra-EU mobility enhances the EU identity of

individuals, including non-citizens (Roeder 2011), and assist in managing the multiple layers (related to intersecting social factors, i.e. gender and age) and levels (related to the local, national, EU and cosmopolitan levels) of their identity (Rother and Nebe 2009, 153). Mobiles are more likely to be interested in EU politics than stayers (Muxel 2009, 159) and usually support the EU's integration efforts through their participation in alternative forms of engagement (as conscious consumers or as advocates of a cosmopolitan culture) (Favell 2010, 210). These findings thus support the proposition to reconsider the dichotomy of passive/ active citizens along the stayers/mobiles distinction in the EU.

Nonetheless, the same studies also reveal that there are inconsistencies in the perceptions and behaviour of stayers and mobiles. The actual (EU) identity of mobiles tends to vary substantially, according to country contexts (Favell 2008, 95), socio-economic factors (Fligstein 2008, 125) and educational attainment (Kuhn 2012, 999). There is also discrepancy in the political behaviour of mobiles, depending on country context, level of engagement and political ideologies (Muxel 2009, 160-170). Moreover, there is some indication of similarities between the attitudes of movers, including citizens *and* non-citizens towards the EU. However, the attitudes of stayers and mobiles vary considerably (even though these stayers are, formally at least, EU citizens) (Roeder 2011). These inconsistencies warrant for an in-depth qualitative study on processes of differentiation and exclusion among stayers and mobiles in the EU context – a contribution this article seeks to make to the literature. Therefore, the next section of this article will attempt to ‘unpack’ the proposed stayers/mobiles distinction. To do so, the section will build on Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of cultural capital and existing qualitative research on (young) citizens’ sense of EU identity and citizenship (Bruter 2005; Skey 2011a; Ross 2014).

## **Active citizenship through mobility**

The concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) can be useful as an empirical indicator of and basis for processes of differentiation and exclusion. It is understood in this article as “institutionalized, i.e. widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion” (Lamont and Lareau 1988, 156). Accordingly, cultural capital is used by “the best” (the dominant group) to indicate cultural distinction and proximity from “the masses” (dominated groups) (Bourdieu 1984, 31). This is done through monopolising privileges and excluding, differentiating and enlisting members (Lamont and Lareau 1988, 158). Cultural capital can manifest in three interrelated forms (Bourdieu 1984, 479-81). The embodied form (individual dispositions and competences) provides privileged access to the objectified form (goods such as books or paintings). The objectified form is then institutionalised according to specific cultural appraisals (most importantly, educational qualifications). The institutionalised form in turn privileges its holders over others. Due to the variety in its forms, cultural capital leads to diverse processes of differentiation and exclusion, such as self-elimination or relegation (Lamont and Lareau 1988, 158-9).

Consequently, the concept of cultural capital has been adopted to illustrate and explain various processes of differentiation and exclusion. In the national context, cultural capital has been used to explore debates about how, whether and why certain people are noticed as and ‘made to feel’ ‘more or less national’ (Hage 1998). For example, a recent empirical investigation found that notwithstanding the effects of globalisation, the national framework shapes the identity of those citizens who make up the dominant group within a nation state (Skey 2011a, 148). The evidence indicates that the national framework is often “taken-for-granted” by this group (Skey 2011b, 245) and leads to the favouring of certain



“physical features, characteristics, abilities and forms of knowledge” (Skey 2011a, 155). This approach in turn secures the privileged position of the group. Cultural capital has also been considered in the cosmopolitan context, where it is linked to the struggle “for privileged positions that require competencies to effectively interact with people of multiple nationalities” (Weenink 2008, 1092). The emphasis is on the (perceived) importance of increased geographical mobility, consumption of foreign cultural products and expression of a cosmopolitan outlook. The latter is expected to be apparent in peoples’ dispositions towards, competencies for and actual engagement with ‘the Other’ (Igarashi and Saito 2014, 4).<sup>iii</sup>

However, the extent to which people can *actually* adopt a cosmopolitan outlook depends on the frequency and type of their mobility, and the different contextual pressures they are exposed to during their mobility, including country of origin and socio-economic factors. Accordingly, people from the Western and Northern parts of the world are encouraged to move frequently and adopt “a sense of natural cosmopolitanism”, while those from the East and South are reminded of their nationality and ethnic background, and their international movement is curbed substantially (Calhoun 2003, 543). Further distinctions may also be drawn between the attitudes of ‘cosmopolitan travellers’ and ‘parochial tourists’. A genuine cosmopolitan outlook is anticipated to manifest among ‘cosmopolitan travellers’ to whom “the stereotype of the parochial tourist serves as a proscriptive image of how not to experience different cultures when travelling” (Thompson and Tambyah 1999, 216). Globalisation has also affected stayers, who are expected to develop a cosmopolitan outlook through different forms of ‘internationalisation at home’. Most stayers are exposed to ‘global images’ presented in the mass media (Urry 2002, 6) and an increasing number interact with mobiles or exercise temporary cross-border mobility (Skey 2011b). However, their

cosmopolitan outlook remains to be “fragile” and likely to underscore the on-going significance of national frameworks (Skey 2013, 238-40).

The effects of globalisation are the most apparent in Europe and, in particular, in the EU (Beck 2006). Notwithstanding the important distinctions *between* mobiles (Shaw 2012), recent empirical studies (Bruter 2005; Skey 2011; Ross 2014) have already underscored that mobiles are the EU’s ‘Eurostars’ (Favell 2008). They possess an increased sense of (civic) EU identity and are more open towards the “other” from EU states. Although most of these studies rely on qualitative evidence with stayers (the exception is Favell 2008, 2010), they have already begun to ‘unpack’ the distinctions between stayers and mobiles. They can thus offer more conceptual insight into *how* (EU) citizens’ perceptions and behaviour are likely to transform as a result of their mobility and/or greater exposure to mobility.

Michael Bruter (2005, 6 emphasis in original) explored citizens’ perceptions of EU/European identity in three countries (France, the UK, and the Netherlands) in order “to understand how EU citizens *feel*”. His evidence indicates that “a mass European identity has progressively emerged ... and continues to grow, and has already achieved high enough levels not to be ignored by academic commentators” (Bruter 2005, 166). It also supports the proposition that political institutions and the media have played an important role in developing citizens’ EU identity (Bruter 2005, 123-133). Most importantly perhaps, Bruter’s (2004, 26) analysis distinguishes between two aspects of citizens’ political identity. First, a cultural component refers to citizens’ sense of belonging to the European continent, shaped by cultural, social and ethnic similarities. Second, a civic component manifests through citizens’ identification with the EU’s political structures, including its institutions, rights and

rules. The evidence indicates that the civic component of citizens' identity – their recognition of the EU as a source of their mobility rights and cosmopolitan identity – can really explain how EU citizens *feel* (Bruter 2004, 34-35). In this context, the changing borders of the EU (both internally and externally) impacts the strength of citizens' emerging EU identity significantly (Bruter 2005, 159). Overall, Bruter's (2004, 36) findings underscore the "predominantly positive" character of citizens' EU/European identity.

Alistair Ross (2014) investigated how young people (aged 11 to 19) construct their identity in 'New Europe' – in countries, which have recently joined or are about to join the EU. His evidence reveals that young peoples' identity is kaleidoscopic and context-contingent. It "change[s] as one looks through a lens, possibly through a filter" because young people use "a palette of materials" (Ross 2014, 183) to construct their identity, including socio-economic factors, age, nationality and ethnicity. Ross's (2012a, 96, 2012b, 41) findings suggest that there is a basic distinction between young peoples' cultural (national) and civic (EU) identities, though their approaches to these identities may vary. For example, young people were critical about the civic component of their national identity at the outset of the discussions. However, the significance of this component was enhanced when they spoke of countries with (allegedly) lesser democratic structures (e.g. Russia) (Ross 2014, 163-173). Similarly, the cultural component of their EU identity was accentuated when young people compared their EU and national identities with that of their parents (Ross 2014, 188). By distinguishing themselves from older generations, their discussions highlighted the existence of 'internal others' within the EU (Ross 2014, 119). These findings thus underscore the "momentary, situational [and] observer-dependent" character of young peoples' identity (Ross 2014, 184).

Michael Skey (2011a) provides some innovative insight into how members of the ethnic majority and dominant group in England interact with ‘the Other’. His evidence suggests that these citizens recognise the cosmopolitan outlook as desirable (Skey 2012, 482) and, as a result, often “present a rational and enlightened self-image” (Skey 2011a, 131). However, there is likely to be inconsistency in citizens’ *actual* engagement with ‘the Other’. While the majority of his participants seemed eager to travel abroad and become acquainted with different cultures, they only engaged with ‘the Other’ in those circumstances that did not have a personal relevance or did not challenge their national identity (Skey 2012, 483). In the latter circumstances citizens safeguarded their status as “Western citizens, able to wield a privileged passport and to expect the support of powerful institutional authorities” (Skey 2011b, 248). Their approach accentuated the significance of the national framework, the values they carried as a privileged group and the “temporal, conditional and often fragile” character of their actual cosmopolitan outlook (Skey 2011a, 8).

In order to shed light on the likely dichotomy of passive/active citizens along the proposed stayers/mobiles distinction, *Table 1* summarises the issues raised in this section of the article. It suggests observing passive citizens as stayers – their dispositions towards, competencies for and actual engagement with ‘the Other’ is likely to be limited in the everyday context. In comparison, it proposes recognising active citizens as mobiles – they have the opportunity to *actually* engage with ‘the Other’ on a daily basis. However, their engagement with ‘the Other’ is likely to accentuate the presumed differences between various peoples and cultures, and their national identity is expected to have a central stage in making sense of these differences. Furthermore, because these differences are mostly noticeable through mobility, mobility may be used as a point of reference that distinguishes mobiles from stayers and *vice versa*. Therefore, a real cosmopolitan outlook (through the cultural

component of mobiles' EU identity for example) is not expected to develop among either group.

<< Table 1 about here >>

*Table 1: Categories of citizens along the stayers/mobiles distinction*

## **Research Methods**

To illustrate processes of differentiation and exclusion, this article includes an analysis of original focus group evidence. There are two main reasons for selecting focus groups as the research method for this article. First, focus groups are particularly suitable for carrying out exploratory research in a sensitive field of study (Morgan 1998, 11). Considering that citizenship and identity are issues that students are unlikely to discuss on an everyday basis, making sense of their perceptions would have been difficult using survey or interview data. Focus groups are thus observed as a more appropriate research method. They allow for the expression of diverse views and facilitate interaction and collective sense making among participants (Bryman 2012, 503-504). Second, the interaction, reasoning and forms of reflection present in the focus groups are expected to provide a more in-depth data. Students can go beyond a set of interview questions and probe one another for holding certain perspectives. The resulting interaction among them is expected to highlight the issue *they* consider important and produce insights that would be harder to access using a different research method (Morgan 1998, 12).

The focus groups referred to in this article were collected as part of a larger research project, which investigates the opportunities of and actual ways in which citizens

realise EU citizenship. In particular, this article includes a study of a sub-group of young, highly educated and mobile EU citizens in Sweden. While the exploratory evidence is not representative of the general population, it is expected to shed light on the likely impact mobility has on those citizens who are susceptible to changes in their perceptions of citizenship. Five semi-structured focus groups with visiting EU and home students were collected by the author between April and May 2012.<sup>iv</sup> Four focus groups were carried out with 22 visiting EU students, including exchange, Erasmus and full time students. The seven home students who participated in the fifth group were in full-time education. This group is used as a control in the analysis to which visiting EU students' responses are compared. All students were recruited through snowballing technique and visiting EU students were required to have come to Sweden as a result of their EU citizenship. They came from a variety of EU member states, including Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom. At the time of the interviews students were aged between 18 to 30 years (their average age was 23.5 years) and visiting EU students had previously stayed in Sweden between 2 weeks and 3.5 years (their average length of stay was 14 months).

The reasons for selecting Sweden as the case study for this exploratory research are two-fold. On the one hand, the Swedish context is expected to be ideal for novel citizenships – like EU citizenship – to thrive. This is partly the result of the lack of a clear legal definition of Swedish citizenship, which has confused Swedes about what citizenship signifies. For instance, they often believe that citizens should be able to enjoy the benefits of the Swedish welfare state whilst residing abroad (Bernitz 2012, 17). Instead of Swedish citizenship per se, the emphasis has been on promoting social principles of 'neutrality' and communitarianism (Agius 2006, 588) – apparent in Sweden's open-door migration policy

(discussed below). The Swedish educational system is expected to promote these principles further and has already been found to have led to particularly high levels of cognitive mobilisation – a process through which the political resources and skills of individuals are enhanced – among Swedes (Welzel and Inglehart 2010, 55).

On the other hand, Sweden has been the only EU-15 state to open its borders, labour market and social welfare provisions to citizens from CEE and EU-15 states. As a result, it registered around 282,000 mobile EU citizens in 2013 (Eurostat 2014) and a growing number of mobile EU citizens in the recent years, from about 16,500 in 2004 to 25,300 in 2012 (Eurostat 2014). Interestingly, almost half of all mobile EU citizens who arrived to Sweden in 2012 (10,500 citizens) were visiting students (SHEA 2013). Hence Sweden seemingly imitates, to some extent at least, a fully integrated Union. It can thus demonstrate the likely effects citizens' country of origin (EU-15 or CEE) has on EU citizenship. Nevertheless, it must be noted that compared to other EU countries, Sweden has had one of the lowest shares of mobile EU citizens and visiting EU students. This is due to its stiff labour market conditions and language requirements (Wadensjö 2007). Therefore, integrating into the Swedish educational market and society can pose practical challenges to visiting EU students, which might influence their perceptions of EU citizenship.

### **Empirical observations from visiting EU and home students**

In order to provide an in-depth qualitative interrogation of processes of differentiation and exclusion, this section includes an analysis of original focus group evidence, exploring students' perceptions of EU citizenship and investigating the differences

and similarities in their EU identity, assessment of EU rights and actual political participation.

### ***EU citizenship***

Visiting EU and home students were enthusiastic about the opportunity to discuss EU citizenship, but adopted quite different approaches to making sense of it. Nearly all visiting EU students used personal examples: “[I]f you speak about European citizenship, I never felt so European than this year as an Erasmus student” (French Male, EU Group 3). They were also more inclined to expand on the potentials and limits of (civic) EU citizenship and what it meant for them personally.

*Italian Male, EU Group 1:* It means an extra feature of citizenship... It's much more convenient to be a European citizen just because [of the] passport of the European Union.

*French, Male:* It's still only a limited citizenship. Okay, we're granted rights and we're travelling, most of us [are] and only [have] one electoral right every five years to vote for the Parliament. But in that election we don't really participate to the combination or appointment of our executive. ... We still have no real control over them! So it's still really a limited citizenship. Yeah. I think it's under-construction.

The majority of home students gave more objective descriptions and observed EU citizenship as an important *extension* of their national (cultural) status. As a result, they did not spend much time on discussing the personal significance of EU citizenship. “We have extended our rights outside the national borders and it means that it should be easy to live in another European country the same way that you live in your own country. ... And therefore we are now European citizens” (Swedish Female (2), Control Group). Home students also



had a tendency to focus on the significance of post-national values, duties, rights and welfare benefits in the EU (echoing their approach to Swedish citizenship). Furthermore, two home students openly admitted that they had never heard of EU citizenship before taking part in the research or prior to their university studies.

*Swedish Female (1), Control Group:* I heard it for the first time in our political theory course when we were talking about citizenship. I've never come [into] contact with the concept [of] 'European citizen' [before] and I find it surprising because I consider myself being, well, at least not ignorant.

Therefore, the initial discussions highlighted the usefulness of analysing EU and national citizenships along the civic/cultural divide (Bruter 2005; Ross 2014), and mirrored the expected distinctions between visiting EU and home students.

### ***EU identity***

In order to explore what students actually meant by “being EU citizens”, they were directly probed about the three dimensions of EU citizenship. While every group had identified two dimensions of EU citizenship (EU identity and rights) during the initial discussions, only two students in EU Group 1 made a few sceptical comments about the significance of citizens’ EU-level participation (cited earlier).

In the ensuing debates students considered the different contexts and “many levels in which you can consider yourself a European” at length. They also mentioned that heightened exposure to different EU symbols, including the Euro, and, particularly, the European Health Care Card, and previous experiences of movement strengthened “*feeling*

European” (a reference to Bruter’s (2005) indicator). The different elements of identity shed further light on students’ *actual* EU identity and the shape contemporary processes of differentiation and exclusion have taken in the EU. The majority of visiting EU and home students had similar approaches to understanding their sense of belonging to the EU and excluding the “other”. For instance, they all agreed that their “special [legal] status” and previous experiences of external migration were helpful in distinguishing between EU citizens and the “other”. It also seemed to have made “being European” more pronounced.

*Portuguese Male, EU Group 2:* I think it would stand out more if we travel[led] together with our friends to Africa or to Asia. And they will say ‘You know, those are the Europeans. Just talk to them!’ Because when you are outside your area where you live, you *are* [different].

While nearly every student appeared to be open to identifying as Europeans or as EU citizens, none of them considered actually *introducing* themselves in these terms. “I would like to call it [EU citizenship] but I think it's too early to do so. I think people are not ready for that” (Lithuanian Male, EU Group 3). Nonetheless, all groups adopted a “predominantly positive” (Bruter 2004, 36) and expectant attitude towards EU citizenship and anticipated that it will mean “something in the near future”.

As the discussions progressed however, important differences between visiting EU and home students’ approaches to a shared EU identity emerged. Specifically, intra-EU mobility and engagement with fellow EU mobiles led to differentiation between EU mobiles and stayers. Visiting EU students felt that their familiarity with EU citizenship was the most important aspect of their shared EU identity, probing the *real* depth of stayers’ EU identity. “[S]ince we can move it starts to be relevant to be European. But that's the problem I think, not for us, but for people that don't move. *Why* should they feel European?” (French Male,

EU Group 1). The resulting divide between stayers and mobiles seemed to further boost the shared EU identity *among* visiting EU students.

*British-Hungarian Male, EU Group 2:* [I]t's like when you are here, when you are out with your friends and you feel like it's an international community of Europeans. ... We are Europeans but noone kind of says it. It's just in the air. You feel it. ...

*German, Female:* Yeah... it's really difficult to integrate yourself into the Swedish community and you sort of stay out. ... And maybe that actually goes in the other direction; that we feel more European because we are in this international community.

Stayers were then referred to as “they” and were categorised as ‘internal (EU) others’.

In comparison, most home students considered shared EU identity “as part of Swedish identity” and expected it to manifest in relation to certain values, including “peace” and “democracy”. Nonetheless, the majority of home students did not identify collectively as EU citizens and stated that they had “never come across [anyone saying] that we were Europeans instead of Swedish”. Even in the very few occasions when home students made individual references to a sense of EU identity, they excluded visiting EU students from this group, who were seen as “different from Swedes”. Home students’ approaches thus highlight the limited impact increased mobility and EU integration (possible forms of ‘internationalisation at home’) had on their engagement with the “other”, the non-Swedish citizens.

Therefore, the kaleidoscopic character (Ross 2014) of students’ identity seemed to have been reconfigured by their exposure to EU symbols and actual experiences of different forms of movement, including mobility *and* migration. These reconfigurations led to

a positive sense of belonging to the EU, a shared EU identity (among stayers and mobiles respectively) and the recognition of the “other” and ‘internal others’.

### ***EU rights***

Intra-EU mobility as a form of cultural capital was perhaps most apparent throughout students’ debates about their EU rights. Indeed, most asserted that EU citizenship was only relevant to a minority of the EU’s population – those who moved (within or outside the EU): “I think we just experience the fact of European citizenship when we go abroad, as we are now. But in our country, I think, we never think ‘Okay I have European rights’, *only* our national rights” (French Male, EU Group 4). Thus EU citizenship was not perceived as a political construct but as something more liberal, “a kind of citizenship that belongs to rights”.

Due to the economic and educational prerequisites of mobility however, students observed EU citizenship as an “elitist community” that is not relevant to the ‘regular’ member state citizens. Quite a few students also emphasised that these prerequisites differentiated not only between mobile EU citizens and stayers but also *among* stayers. Potential EU citizens with the economic and educational means to move at some point in their lives were separated from member state-oriented citizens, who cannot afford to move. The latter group was believed to be the largest segment of the EU’s population.

*French Male, EU Group 1:* [EU citizenship] is like an extra-upper institution that they [stayers] don't really understand and I think it will create very soon a gap between like cosmopolitan citizens ... and national citizens [who] can't be anything but national

citizens... [They] won't be able to travel or to meet the other people of the world or Europe ... [and they] will close [up between] themselves.

Furthermore, most visiting CEE and some EU-15 students indicated that the rights of mobile CEE citizens were significantly restricted by member states policies and national stereotypes.

*Bulgarian Female (1), EU Group 4:* To some extent I feel that I am discriminated even if I go as a European citizen... because, [coming from] the new EU countries, people all expect that we are beggars and everything bad and negative... [W]e are not even given the chance to show who we are!

Students then distinguished between two categories of mobile EU citizens: EU-15 and CEE citizens. Unlike the distinction between mobiles and stayers however, students anticipated the differences among mobiles to phase out. The Swedish context with its emphasis on communitarian principles and persistent open-door immigration policies may explain their expectant tone.

Therefore, students identified different categories of stayers and mobiles according to factors that were expected to significantly affect citizens' ability to move *freely* within the EU. These factors include country of origin, economic resources and educational backgrounds.

### ***EU participation***

Although a number of opportunities were given to students to discuss their participation in traditional and alternative forms of engagement in EU, national and local

politics – not to mention that most of them were studying politics at a university at the time of the research – they did not speak about this issue until the moderator probed them directly. In response, most students clarified that their participation was issue-specific and had a personal connotation. Their responses thus collaborate existing research about the changes in citizens' actual political participation (Favell 2010; Sloam 2013).

Moreover, differences between visiting EU and home students' approaches to political participation also emerged. Visiting EU students discussed different forms of engagement, whilst home students evaluated different levels of politics. Most visiting EU students questioned the impact citizens could have on political decision-making and, consequently, they preferred participating in alternative forms of engagement, especially in volunteering and protesting. They felt that in this way “you make a little bit of impact”. In comparison, a good number of home students recognised local- rather than EU- or national-level of politics as the key to “making a difference”. Hence nearly all had voted in Swedish local elections.

There was some similarity in the general approaches of visiting EU and home students to EU politics. Even though almost every student agreed that the EU was “extremely important”, they did not believe citizens had “any real influence” over EU politics. They also described the EU as “too abstract” and “complicated to really understand”. Thus only two visiting EU students had ever voted in the EP elections, and a couple had volunteered at the EU-level through, for instance, the European Voluntary Service. In comparison, none of the Swedish students had participated in the EP elections and only one had worked as an intern at the EP. Interestingly, home students seemed more critical about their abstention from EU

politics and actively encouraged each other to participate in future EP elections. Nevertheless, their approaches accentuated the second-order character of EU citizenship.

*Swedish Female (4), Control Group:* [You] don't have to know so much to vote in the European Union, because you can choose to vote [for] the socialists, the conservatives or if you choose the extreme, vote for the Greens. You can choose your political ideology and vote for that, then hopefully things will turn out fine. ...I do not think we should take it as seriously as some do because it's hard to get to know information about the European Union.

Visiting EU and home students also reached different conclusions about the consequences of their abstention from EU politics. For visiting EU students it strengthened two links: one between mobility and EU citizenship, and another between political participation and national citizenship.

*French Male, EU Group 4:* This is kind of complicated to really understand what is our European right and what are our national rights ... [and] that we should be very involved in the European political life, for example the European election. I think in every country this is less important than the national election... I think we just experience the fact of European citizenship when we go abroad, as we are now.

In addition to these links, home students believed that their abstention from EU politics might explain their lack of EU identity. "I might not feel much like a European citizen because it doesn't feel like anything I will do will make a difference on [the] European-level" (Swedish Female (1) Control Group). This conclusion contradicts the originally value-based approach of home students to (EU) citizenship.

There was also some disagreement among visiting EU students about *where* (in which country) they should participate, depending on the length of time they had spent in Sweden. Students with temporary residence claimed it was not “their place” to participate in Sweden and only ever participated in their country of origin. In comparison, students with semi-permanent Swedish residency had a tendency to participate there and actively supported the granting of national electoral rights to mobiles.

*German Female, EU Focus Group 2* [Full time student, lived in Sweden for 3,5 years]:  
[E]ven though we live outside of our home countries and some longer than others, we still vote in our national elections... But we don't actually live in that country! ... [W]e don't participate in the policies that are taking place where we live that could actually benefit us.

Therefore, the fleeting debate about political participation among students and, subsequently, the growing difference between visiting EU and home students' approaches to this dimension suggest that the dichotomy of passive/active (EU) citizens is likely to be determined by mobility. This finding is substantiated further by the indication that the length of time spent abroad transformed students' approaches to political participation.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

Globalisation is transforming the relationship between nation states and citizens, revising processes of differentiation and exclusion and these transformations are most evident in Europe (Beck 2006). Against this backdrop, the article provided an in-depth qualitative interrogation of processes of differentiation and exclusion, using original focus group evidence. The empirical findings indicated that all three dimensions of EU citizenship tend to



be more relevant to the lives of visiting EU than home students, confirming the expected differences between mobiles and stayers. For instance, the evidence suggests that visiting EU students were more likely to realise a direct, civic form of EU citizenship, while home students observed it as a secondary link – an extension of their (cultural) national citizenship. These findings highlight the usefulness of analysing citizens' identity along the civic/cultural divide (Bruter 2005).

A closer inspection of the dimensions of EU citizenship made a compelling case for approaching the dichotomy of passive/active citizens along the stayers/mobiles distinction. First, students exhibited kaleidoscopic and context-contingent identities (Ross 2014), and their identity was reconfigured by experiences of migration *and* mobility. The majority of students found migration fruitful to developing a sense of belonging to the EU and excluding the "other". However on the basis of their mobility status, visiting EU and home students classified each other as 'internal (EU) others'. Second, most students recognised that mobility was the key right of EU citizenship. They then described the way in which increased mobility within the EU has led to further differentiation between *and* among stayers and mobiles. Third, the marginal significance of political participation to students' experiences of EU citizenship was underscored by their short-lived debate about this issue. The subsequent distinction between visiting EU and home students' approaches to participation highlighted that, in their eyes, national citizenship and participation, and EU citizenship and mobility are concurrent. These findings indicate that applying the traditional dichotomy of passive/active citizens from a political engagement perspective is not likely to help us make sense of the different categories of EU citizens. Instead, we should begin to explore this dichotomy along the stayers/mobiles distinction.

The overall findings of this article also emphasise that applying the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) in the cosmopolitan context may be particularly useful to exploring emerging processes of differentiation and exclusion in the EU. The evidence suggests that, for *passive citizens* (in this case ‘stayers’) EU citizenship has a second-order status and flows from their existing national citizenships. For *active citizens* (in this case ‘mobiles’) EU citizenship is chiefly connected to their mobility experiences. Further sub-categories within both active and passive EU citizens have also emerged, supplementing the debate about different types of (cosmopolitan) movers and stayers (Skey 2011a, 2013). On the one hand, passive EU citizens’ perceptions and behaviour are likely to be mediated by their socio-economic background. This means that, as expected, poor member state nationals cannot be EU citizens in practice. Hence there are two sub-categories of passive EU citizens: *potential EU citizens*, with the necessary resources to move within the EU at some point, and *member state-oriented citizens*, who cannot turn their EU status into reality. On the other hand, active EU citizens’ perceptions and behaviour are likely to be mediated by their country of origin. The relevance of the EU is the most evident for EU-15 mobile citizens – the EU’s *Eurostars* (Favell 2008). They have a sense of shared EU identity and enjoy their EU rights to the fullest. In comparison, CEE mobile citizens are *second-class Eurostars*. Whereas they enjoy some EU citizenship rights owing to their mobility status, their economic rights and EU identity are restricted by member state policies and national prejudices. This was evident especially in CEE students’ approaches to the EU and their EU-15 counterparts, which accentuated the idiosyncratic character of EU citizenship. *Table 2* illustrates the different categories of EU citizens.

<< Table 2 about here >>

Table 2: *Categories of EU citizens*

The focus group evidence reported in this article provides original insights into and enhances our understanding of current processes of differentiation and exclusion. The findings underscore the emerging distinctions between the perceptions and behaviour of stayers and mobiles as passive/active (EU) citizens. These processes and the new dichotomy of passive/active citizens require more investigation, in particular against the backdrop of intensified global mobility flows and the presumed cosmopolitan outlook of (Western) travellers. The four categories of EU citizens identified in *Table 2* are indicative of the way in which citizens are differentiated within the EU at present. Research into whether these or similar categories of citizens can be generalised across the EU's member states and, if so, how these differences could be minimalised by policy-makers are potential area for future research.

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<sup>i</sup> Globalisation is understood as a qualitative process, composed of a number of elements, including polarisation of wealth, subordination of politics to economics, related decline of the state and emergence of a new global division of labour (Talani 2010).

<sup>ii</sup> For the purpose of clarity, this article refers to visiting EU students as the intra-EU mobile/active citizens and home or Swedish students as the stayers/ passive citizens

<sup>iii</sup> In the cosmopolitanism literature 'the Other' is understood as those cultures and peoples that are different from the local or national contexts. Thus it is not the same as the "other" in the citizenship studies literature, which refers to non-citizens and (often) their cultures.

<sup>iv</sup> All interviews were conducted in English. Hence students' language skills had an impact on the flow and depth of discussions.