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European Studies**

MASTER THESIS

**European Identity, an unfinished Project-
Is Mobility Enough?**

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To my mother Pauline

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1. Introduction

The long awaited, yet largely postponed, dream for a united Europe has never been more at stake than in the past seven years. From the deep recession of 2009 to the mid 2015 refugee crisis and the fast approaching exodus of the United Kingdom from the European Union, all have taken their toll on the Union itself. In the midst of all those historic events for the future of the continent, European Identity has become either an obscure thematic or is being held as increasingly irrelevant as the European Integration is at a halt. Europe stands at an impasse in its 70 year- old existence. The dream of a united continent is thought to be in danger.

An aspect of European Union's collective, but recently fractured, political will to advance towards a more cohesive and coherent supranational society and polity, has been Student Mobility, an undertaking currently being carried out primarily by the Erasmus student exchange Programme. Its existence and operation rests firmly on the Schengen Treaty's¹ spirit and legislative freedoms. The Programme has come a long way since its launch in 1987, having already sent abroad more than 3 million students and its great success, as well as its implications on the individual's political sense of one's national and supranational political surroundings, especially in such uncertain times for the Union, are in dire need of careful investigation as they may indicate where the European Union is headed as a Political Community in the near future.

Consequently, the time is more than ripe to ask the following questions: Does the Erasmus experience create or influence the political views, stances and agencies of European youths on the crucial issue of their European Identity in a positive and lasting manner? In other words, does the ERASMUS Experience politicize the students' European Identities and to what degree? This is the question this Master Thesis aims to answer.

My over- encompassing argument is that it matters little, if at all, whether the Erasmus Generation achieves a sense of European Identity through the Erasmus Experience if the students themselves, as citizens of the Union, do not see it as a community that binds them in all and are not willing to defend it through their respective political agencies. Collective Identities are not one- dimensional, empty of meaning, statements of belonging that can simply be announced by either the political actors that relate to them (for example the European Union publics) or the concerned parties (the elites of the Union and of the

¹ The Schengen Agreement of 1985 ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:42000A0922\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:42000A0922(01)) accessed in 18/8/17)

Member States) and automatically exist. In actuality they are **intimate, extremely complex dynamic realities** that develop and exist -internalized- in their holders as well as in their social interactions occurring between them, as members of their common group. They define and contain everything the individual will ever be aware of and act upon as a member of one's group. They, in extremes, demand protection and survival from their holders, even at the cost of those individuals' lives.

This nature of Collective Identity, I argue, makes it a de facto dependent variable of politics- the aspect of social life where all cultural and social coordinates of a given community are debated in order to adapt to an ever- changing social reality. In Peter Katzenstein's words, "Identities refer to shared representations of a collective self as reflected in public debate, political symbols, collective memories and elite competition for power. They consist also of collective beliefs about the definition of the group and its membership that are share by most group members." (Peter J. Katzenstein, 2009 p.4)

Therefore it is unscientific to study collective Identities (such as the European Identity) separate from the political structures they exist in and how these political structures, like the European Union, create, sustain and use them in the political arenas. As a political scientist, when it comes to evaluating the level of affection towards the E.U, what I believe should matter is **not what happens during the Mobility but what remains in the individual's agency after that**. When it comes to matters of Identity and Citizenship², merely detecting the existence of a sense of a European Identity in students during or shortly after Mobility hardly "cuts it". What is truly important is if those same students, even decades after their Erasmus sojourn, still bear that same affection, still feel European and are willing to protect and preserve that connection through political interest and agency.

² The Maastricht Treaty (1992) introduces and puts the first legislative foundations of the European Citizenship: "One of the major innovations established by the Treaty is the creation of European citizenship over and above national citizenship. Every citizen who is a national of a Member State is also a citizen of the Union. This citizenship vests new rights in Europeans, 1) the right to circulate and reside freely in the Community 2) the right to vote and to stand as a candidate for European and municipal elections in the State in which he or she resides 3) the right to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of a Member State other than the citizen's Member State of origin on the territory of a third country in which the state of origin is not represented 4) the right to petition the European Parliament and to submit a complaint to the Ombudsman." (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:xy0026> accessed in 17/09/2017) However it is noteworthy to point out that European Citizenship **does not exist independently**, but is actually supplementary to National Citizenship: Article 20 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union[23] is very clear: "Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union shall be additional to and **not replace** national citizenship." (data drawn from (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html> accessed in 17/09/2017) Therefore, the term "Citizenship" or "European Citizenship" as well as the terms "European Citizen(s)" or "Citizen(s) of the Union", are discussed in this Master Thesis accordingly to all the above elements.

The theory I use in this Master Thesis is the one Peter J. Katzenstein and Jeffrey T. Checkel proposed back in 2009 in their collective volume titled "European Identity- Contemporary European Politics". My argument in this Thesis is that, under this theory's lenses, Erasmus can be viewed as a **European Identity Project** (Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein; 2009) that is designed to politicize the participant students' European Identities. I use the research already done in the field to prove that indeed the Programme does exhibit all the characteristics of such a Project. Then I move on to the theory's other half, the **European Identity Process** (Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein; 2009) which describes how this Identities' Politicization can still occur after the students' return to their respective Member-States of origin. My argument there is that when their Erasmus Experience is over, the students are expected to be more politically interested and active towards the European Union because of their Erasmus Experience.

The Erasmus Programme is a gigantic endeavor that connects many different states, levels of the Union's policy, as well as independent entities, such as the Universities at an inconceivable amount, intensity and frequency. Consequently, it lies within 3 different fields of academic interest: i) The National and The European Dimension of Higher Education Policy ii) The European Identity as an Integration issue of the and lastly iii) The Politicization and Depoliticization forces of European Integration as powerful independent variables on the concept of Mobility (a major European Identity factor in its own right). Erasmus, simply, cannot be understood as a political phenomenon without all those 3 components being addressed, at least briefly.

The case study I chose for my thesis is Greece, mainly the Greek students who have returned from their Erasmus sojourn. Greece is particularly interesting as a country as it is currently under the pressure of 3 separate, yet interrelated crises, the economic recession, the refugee and immigrant influx as well as the overall Eurozone crisis. These are expected to put a special kind of bias on the Greek Erasmus students' answers.

I believe the results will be of great interest due to the fact that, unlike previous studies that only focus on plainly researching the relationship between Erasmus and European Identity without placing ERASMUS in the context it belongs (the International System of States), my study takes a step forward as the students are not only asked to evaluate how European they feel, but rather are asked if their status as Citizens of the Union and the Union itself as a Polity are worth preserving through **political interest and action**. Has their Erasmus experience had any profound effect on that regard?

Erasmus is surely a transformative³ experience that the student will never forget- I can vouch for that as someone who has a first-hand taste. Surely a sense of Europe comes with this majestic sojourn. But how far and deep does it manage to touch the young Greeks? Do they transform into true Europeans in the civic and political essence of the term and if they believe so, what does it truly mean for them? What does it mean for the future of the European Union and its quest to find its Identity? Is Mobility enough?

1.1 The Thesis' Topic

Does the Erasmus Experience have a positive and lasting effect on the returned Greek students' political views, stances and agencies on the issue of their European Identities and the European Polity?

1.2 The Thesis' Objectives

The objectives of this thesis are to test the dependent variable of European Identity against the independent variable of the Erasmus Experience. Furthermore and most importantly, to test the independent variable of the Erasmus experience against the dependent variable, the politicization degree of the students' European Identities. Finally what is also tested, are the effects of the independent variable of the time passed after the Erasmus Experience against the dependent variable, the politicization degree of the students' European Identities.

³ For more on Erasmus as a transformative experience, see Mitchell K. 2012. Mitchell's work on the Erasmus Programme and its effects on European Identity are also explored in later Chapters.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H1 Greek Students **appear to feel more European** because of their Erasmus Experience.

H0 Greek Students **do not appear to feel more European** because of their Erasmus Experience.

H2 Greek Students appear to be **more interested** in the politics of the European Union and are **more politically active** after their Erasmus Experience.

H0 Greek Students **do not appear to be more interested** in the politics of the European Union and **are not more politically active** after their Erasmus Experience.

H3 Greek Students appear to have more **positive** and **lasting** views of the European Union after their Erasmus Experience.

H0 Greek Students **do not appear to have more positive** and **lasting** views of the European Union after their Erasmus Experience.

1.4 Importance and Originality of the Topic

Unlike previous studies my research differs in regards to two elements as it puts the “Erasmus Effect” as a European Identity inciter under new standards: (1) Whether it politicizes the European Identities it creates or empowers. (2) Whether these politicized European Identities last in a way that they sustain the positive views, stances and agencies of the individual towards Europe even years after the Erasmus Experience or not.

1.3 Research Methodology and the Research’s Limits

For the purposes of this Master Thesis I applied the non-experimental, quantitative method of the questionnaire. The design of said questionnaire focused on two key areas, both aimed at discovering the degree of the independent variable (Erasmus Experience) to the dependent variables (European Identity creation/empowerment, political interest and activity towards the European Union). The absence of a control group, in this case non-Erasmus Greek students, was a design choice of mine as I came to the decision **that a primal and statistically significant connection to the idea of Europe and its values that endures**

through time was absolutely necessary in order for the political interest/activity variables to have any ontological significance. Therefore, instead of having non-Erasmus students answer the same questionnaire, I elected to split the Erasmus students' group into two. The differential quality of the 2 groups is the years that have passed after the students' return to their home state. In that way, a research window opens to determine if the Erasmus Experience's effects of the students' European Political Identities fade over time. Bruter (2008) mentions that a "spontaneous" identification with Europe's civic (the E.U) and cultural (Europe) elements is crucial to our understanding of how Europeans identify with one another. While I do use that distinction (Europe- European Union), what I primarily apply in the questionnaire is Hartmut Kaelble's (2009) strands of identification with Europe; a far more descriptive and holistic way of approaching and applying taxonomy to self-categorization of that scale. From those 5 points I begin to distinguish between the "feeling European" spontaneous response and the "trust and alignment to European Union's official elements". Furthermore, and quite a gap in the research, was the fact that someone can feel European and oppose the European Union in its current form, a fact that acts as a considerable bias in the questionnaire method. The questionnaire's design, through Kaelble's strands of identification, provides a more clear picture as to how the student describes his/her feeling of being European and his/her alignment to the current Union.

Moreover, in order to attempt to overcome the current research's other issue, the "ceiling effect" or as otherwise known "preaching to the converted", the questions' design provides an option to the student to express the fact that he/she already felt European or politically active towards the Union before his/her Erasmus sojourn. That way, the results on the actual degree the Erasmus Experience benefits the students in regards to his/her European Political Identity become far clearer. To examine the Project part of the Theory the first part of the questionnaire, as well as the demographic part, provides clear answers as to how the returned students behave as an Elite group that finds Erasmus appealing. For the Process part of the European Identity, the degree of political activity/interest is examined as well as the degree at which students promote the Union and inform their fellow citizens on their rights after their Erasmus sojourn. Finally, to determine the degree at which the students perceive the European Union as a Polity worth preserving and protecting, I created 3 scenarios as questions at which the Union is posed with a collectively threatening situation to its existence. Combined with Kaelble's identification strands, these scenarios are also an

attempt to offer an insight as to whether the Erasmus Greek students develop what I call **Hard** or **Soft** European political Identities.

Previous studies on ERASMUS have made clear that there are many issues with the Programme's hypothesized ability to create and/or foster European Identities. The two main handicaps are the "preaching to the converted" phenomenon and the "ceiling effect" (see Chapter 3.3). Briefly addressed, the first describes the phenomenon which students who decided to participate to the Programme already feel European and the second depicts the diminished effect the actual Erasmus Experience appears to have on the aforementioned students' European Identities as they, in turn, are at their highest point already, before the Experience starts. Other issues lie with to what components the self-categorized as Europeans' identities consist of. Many of the test subjects are not completely clear as to what a European Identity actually entails and what it actually is comprised of. Finally, the research's furthest possible range is its design which is aimed towards the examination of if and how the ERASMUS participants' European Identities are politicized, meaning if and how they manifest as political interest and agency towards the Union, something that has not been, to my knowledge, attempted before. What I am looking for is not students who feel European but students who feel that they are active European Citizens.

The limits of the research are first and foremost its small n' size, (103 students), and the lack of a control group. The second issue was an inevitable eventuality as having an actual control group (students who haven't experienced Mobility) would defeat the research's true purpose which is not only to detect European Identities in ERASMUS students but most importantly which of that total number of participants who show an attachment to Europe have their European Identities politicized, with that politicization lasting even years after their ERASMUS Experience.

2. The existing study on European Identity- Finding the Identity Standard

In European Identity's existing literature, an initially subtle, but increasingly obvious gap emerges: The scientific community still does not possess, and may still have to wait for what I call the "European Identity Standard". We simply cannot pin-point what exactly makes us Europeans and how that element should be detected. Since the Union's formation, there has

been a plethora of studies revolving around a subject that still may not exist in the forms the same disciplines are “used” to detect. Because of the European Union’s complex, non-linear, fragmented and at many times failed progress towards more social cohesion, the social sciences are tasked with the equivalent of hitting a moving target. In this chapter, I briefly review the existing study on European Identity and point out that, if a true scientific standard that would allow for the epistemological certainty of knowing what it means to be European and proceed with that as a valid detection method, that standard would be within the theoretical bounds of the civic-political aspect of European Identity and not in its essentialist, functionalist, cultural or psychological counterparts.

The official starting point for the political quest to achieve the goal of a European Identity begins in Copenhagen 1973 according to Van Mol: “Originally, the idea of such an identity was launched in Copenhagen, at the European Community summit in 1973, where a ‘Declaration concerning European Identity’ was adopted (Kraus, 2008; Strath; 2006 as cited in Van Mol; 2010). Since then, the concept has attracted the attention of scholars of various disciplines, among which are social scientists. Nevertheless, social scientists seem divided over the significance of European identity in everyday lives. Consequently, research on European identity can take different directions.” (Van Mol; 2010)

It can be argued that the point at which the scientific community first tries to investigate the notion of an identity that the inhabitants of the European Continent share, begins with Karl Deutch (1953; 1957; 1967; 1968). His social communication theory still defines many studies (including this one) on the subject of, which are the standards, by which we should judge those who consider themselves to be “European”. Deutch, by focusing on social interaction as the standard we can use to detect the true ‘Europeans’, insisted that the flow of capital, goods and services would increase the frequency of those social interactions between the citizens of the Member States and finally create a true European community.

The civic/political aspect came a bit later into the fold with Ernst W, Haas’ neo-functional theory (1958, 1961). Contrary to Deutch, Haas “focused on the elite and group-centered politics of a newly emerging European polity, specifically the various functional imperatives that were propelling the European integration process forward. (...) Haas deliberately inquired into the political pressures acting on politicians. Political elites in various nation-states, he hypothesized, would learn new interests and adopt new policies as they were

pushed by the functional dynamics of integration. The political costs of staying outside or behind in the process of European integration were extraordinarily high. Like bicycle-riders, elites were condemned to pedal lest they fall off the bike altogether. Identity played a minor role in Haas's theory." (Chekel and Katzenstein; 2009 pp. 5) However, what became clear in the end was that "even at the level of elites which, then as now, tend to be more internationalist than publics, a major empirical study at the end of the 1960s found the emergence of no more than a pragmatic transnationally oriented consensus that tolerated the persistence of national diversity (Chekel and Katzenstein; 2009 quoting Lerner and Gordon 1969, pp. 241–61)."

Despite the fact that Deutch and Haas had their theories, neither of them was able to place the **politicization of identities** at the heart of the issue. This gap persisted as the theoretical frameworks that followed found themselves following the trends of the times, mainly the kick-start of the enlargement process. As the European Union became more and more complex in order to compensate for the extra voices on the table, so did the scientific community's focus shift towards what it called "multilevel governance"⁴.

"Work on multilevel governance explores the complex institutional structure of the evolving European polity (Chekel and Katzenstein 2009 quoting Marks, Hooghe, and Blank 1996; Kohler-Koch 2003). It has helped us to conceptualize and document empirically how policymaking has spread across supranational, intergovernmental, transnational, and regional levels in post-Maastricht Europe (Chekel and Katzenstein 2009 quoting Leibfried and Pierson 1995). However, because of its rationalist foundations – stressing transaction costs, informational asymmetries, and principal–agent relations – this scholarship can tell us little about how European dynamics may be changing identities on the continent." (Chekel and Katzenstein 2009). Other constructivists like Ted Hopf (2002) and Iver Neumann (1996, 1999) elected to focus on how European Identities form not because of the processes that take place within the continent but also the forces that act on it. They theorized that in

⁴ "Multi-level governance initially described a 'system of continuous negotiation among governments at several territorial tiers-supranational, national, regional and local' that was distinctive of EU structural policy (Marks 1993, Hooghe 1996) but the term is now applied to the EU more generally (Hooghe and Marks 2001, Bache and Flinders 2004). The multi-level governance perspective is a recent addition to the theoretical attempts to understand the EU, although its roots are found in earlier neofunctionalist theories in the works of Ernst De Haas (1958) and Leon Linbreg (1963) (Hooghe 1995, Marks et al. 1996). Multi-level governance suggests that a new form of policy-making is developing in the EU. According to this perspective, central governments remain vitally important to this policy-making, but they do not have a monopoly of decision-making power. Instead, policy-making responsibility is now shared among a variety of actors at European, national and subnational levels. 'The emerging picture is that of a polity with multiple, interlocked arenas for political contest.' (Hooghe 1995)." All as cited in Marko Trnski 2005

order for identities to be formed, they have to exclude portions of other populations, create an “Other” and use that Other as their basis to master their cognitive sphere of who “Us” is.

Another, now almost infamous, theoretical framework that allows for the possibility of a European Identity is Europeanization theory. It “provides the state of the art on how Europe might be reshaping deeply held senses of community – national, local, regional, and otherwise. The concept describes a set of interrelated processes that go well beyond the traditional focus of scholars interested in how state bargaining and elite identification affect the evolution of the EU (Chekel and Ktazenstein 2009 quoting Olsen 2002, 2007; Graziano and Vink 2006). It shifts our attention to an examination of the effects Europe has on the contemporary state – its policies, institutions, links to society, and patterns of individual–collective identification (Chekel and Ktazenstein 2009 quoting Caporaso, Cowles, and Risse 2001; Knill 2001; Börzel 2002; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). (...) The EU does not dominate over its members by steadily wearing down the barriers of the nation-state. And nation-states do not succeed in fending off attacks on their untrammelled sovereignty. Rather, both the EU and the nation-state play crucial roles.” (Chekel and Ktazenstein 2009p.9) It can be argued that the strong focus of Europeanization of identities on the EU institutions and its technocratic elites (Hoonge, 2005) makes it disregard the dynamic character of politics which is highly conflictual and competitive.

Researchers like Bruter (2005, 2008) further demonstrate how problematic it is to find the European Identity Standard. He argues that, instead of one common European Identity, we detect many different Collective Identities within the individual. Such advancements in the theoretical front lead to the argument that the European Union lacks democratic legitimacy exactly because of the absence of a common European Identity as an element that could facilitate the emergence of a European Community (Etzioni, 2007). The same absence of a European Identity writ-large, with the standards of a national identity –but at an EU scale–indeed faces many ontological problems such as “the lack of a historic homeland of a mass public culture and of a European myth that does not clash with the national ones” (Smith 1995as cited in Sigalas 2009). Additionally, “if we view European Identity as something completely new and unlike the existing national identities (Kantner 2006 cited in Sigalas 2009), placing the emphasis on diversity rather than unity, we run the risk to come up with an understanding of collective identity that may be too thick to legitimate the EU (Mather 2006 as cited in Sigalas 2009)”.

More modern theorists detect even more issues when addressing the concept of European Identity as a Political Identity. Habermas (2006) for one takes a critical view on the issue, wondering if a European Identity is necessary or possible without the existence of a political community that goes beyond a common market and a single currency as its major achievements. According to him, "a normative conception of constitutional politics needs a constitutional moment, something that breaks the routine of normal politics and introduces an important aspect of symbolism in constitutional politics (Castiglione et al. 2007, ch. 2). 'As a political collectivity' – Habermas writes – 'Europe cannot take hold in the consciousness of its citizens simply in the shape of a common currency. The intergovernmental arrangement at Maastricht lacks that power of symbolic crystallization which only a political act of foundation can give' (Habermas 2001, p. 6 as cited in Castiglione 2000). Habermas maintains that, a European Political Identity is not as feasible because historically, such collective identities appear as "solidarity amongst strangers" (Habermas 2006 pp.76-7). Secondly, political identities, especially national ones, are most commonly the products of "revolutionary struggle and through processes of democratization that confer on it an important element of pathos, this is not so in the case of European Political Identity which needs to emerge more mundanely from the everyday dealings of the European Citizens, in conditions that are already governed by democratic principles and practices. (...) In sum, Habermas believes that European Political Identity is feasible insofar as it is an extension of national forms of consciousness" (Castiglione 2009 p.41,2)

Furthermore, there are other serious factors to take into account when it comes to a common and similarly perceived by all European Identity or even the notion of a plurality of such collective identities. The European Union has faced criticism that it acts by and appeals mainly to the elites of its Member –States, suffers from a democratic deficit as most of the high policy decisions are made "behind closed doors" and with minimal, if at all, political support and dialogue by and with the Member States' populations, (Moravcsik; 1998, 2006, 2007) and ultimately does not seem to fall under the classical weberian category of a political community. All the aforementioned dimensions pose problems for the researcher. If taken all into account, they amount up to the fact that the European Identity 1) is not shared by all the European Citizens, 2) it is but one of their many identities, including their national ones, 3) it can exist in many forms and perceptions of what it means for the individual and to what or whom it binds that same individual to, and finally 4) when detected, any result must

be taken with a scientific “grain of salt” as it applies for a specific point in time, for a supranational body of 27 states, all with different political, social, cultural backgrounds, each one with its own esoteric differences, aspirations and political agendas which in turn act and are affected by a plethora of ever-changing political arenas at the European level of policy.

Cementing a European Identity Standard seems improbable at this point in time. The European Union is far too complex to begin with, not adding the multiple crises it has recently faced, such as the withdrawal of the United Kingdom and the Syrian Refugee and other immigrant flows from the Middle East and North Africa. New norms are emerging within the populations of the Union itself because of these crises as populism and political extremism are on the rise, pressing the Member States’ populations’ attachment towards the Union downwards. In all this detecting who is “truly European” with a “European Identity Standard” may be an exercise in futility.

There is still however solid theoretical ground for research on European Identity in its writ-large political/civic concept. Of all the theoretical frameworks that attempt to detect European Identity/ies, **Constructivism** (Mosse, 1975; Weber, 1976; Colley, 1994; Deutsch, 1953; Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1992; Hobsawm and Ranger, 1992 as cited in Mitchell 2012) is by far the richest and the one that provides terms that can be used to better understand how and why European Identities become politicized. The constructivist approaches which I use to develop my argument in this thesis suggest that European Identity can exist as either **a Project or a Process** (Checkel and Katzenstein, Dario Castiglione, Neil Flinngstein, Hartmut Kaelble and Juan Diez Medrano 2009). In this Theoretical Framework, European Identity and even more specifically European Political Identity, can be thought of as an Elite Project (top- down) or as a bottom-up Process with no Elite intervention. Both eventualities politicize the European Identity of the individual in different manners which I explore in Chapter 4.

This is where the civic/political aspect of European Identity becomes crucial as a theoretical framework. My argument is that an attachment to the European Union cannot simply be the entirety of the European Identity Standard. Because of the complexity and vastness of the Political Community such an Identity binds the individual to, its standard must first and foremost, **include the individual’s politicization of his/her identity**. Therefore, merely self-categorizing oneself as European is not an acceptable sign of actually being European,

especially in today's European Union which is challenged in almost every level and aspect of its existence. A modern European Citizen is expected to be actively aware of the potential risks and dangers his/her European Polity faces and be as active as possible towards either actively protecting and defend the latter or yes, even desire the opposite. That is, in my view, the European Identity Standard's expression that the research should focus on. This differentiation of aspects (from the cultural, social, essentialist, functionalistic, psychological to political) of what it means to be European is crucial as it helps the research point its lenses towards the "location" where European Political/Civic Identities are most likely to form.

3. Erasmus and European Identity

In this Chapter the ontology of the thematic is addressed by clarifying the relationship of the two variables this Master Thesis tests are analyzed. The Erasmus Programme's origins, history, purpose(s) and current form, as well as existing research on its capabilities to form or foster European Identities are discussed.

3.1 Purpose and History of the Programme

ERASMUS, or as it is now referred as ERASMUS+ (Erasmus Plus), serves as the acronym for "European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students". ERASMUS Plus, as defined by the European Commission, "is the EU's new umbrella Programme for education, training, youth and sport (...) It brings together seven EU Programmes and offers (...) a wide range of opportunities for students and staff to study and train abroad. The Programme funds intra-EU and international credit mobility for students to study in a receiving institution for a period of 3-12 months and obtain credits which are then recognized by the sending institution."⁵ The rationale behind this Chapter is to adequately give the reader a trans-historical view of how vast in scope the Programme has become as part of the larger European Mobility social phenomenon. Without this view, we cannot hope to comprehend

⁵Erasmus+ for Higher Education Students and Staff document by the EU Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/opportunities/higher-education/doc/students-questions-answers_en.pdf- accessed in 25/10/16)

how ERASMUS functions and is expected to behave in regards to its participants, the students.

The year 2017 marks the 30th Anniversary of ERASMUS, a lifespan in which, as we will see below, many changes and improvements occurred. As for the origins of the Programme, they are of historic importance; and it all starts with its name. Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (1466- 1536), was a “Dutch priest and humanist (who is) considered the greatest European scholar of the 16th century. (...) The book that first made him famous was the *Adagia* (1500, 1508), an annotated collection of Greek and Latin proverbs. He became noted for his editions of Classical authors, Church Fathers, and the New Testament as well as for his own works, including *Handbook of a Christian Knight* (1503) and *Praise of Folly* (1509). Using the philological methods pioneered by Italian humanists, **he helped lay the groundwork for the historical-critical study of the past.** By criticizing ecclesiastical abuses, he encouraged the growing urge for reform, which found expression both in the Protestant reformation and in the Catholic counter-reformation. Though he saw much to admire in Martin Luther he came under pressure to attack him; he took an independent stance, rejecting both Luther’s doctrine of predestination and the powers claimed for the papacy.” (Britannica Encyclopedia 2007 Edition, pp. 629). “Most noted for his revolutionary editions of the New Testament in Greek and Latin, he is coined as the individual who “unified the Greek and the Latin traditions of the New Testament by producing an updated version for either simultaneously”. He remained for the entirety of his life an independent scholar and “lived against the backdrop of the growing European religious Reformation, but while he was critical of the abuses within the Catholic Church and called for reform, (...) continued to recognize the authority of the pope, emphasizing a middle way with a deep respect for traditional faith, piety and grace, rejecting Luther's emphasis on faith alone”⁶

But why was Desiderius Erasmus’ figure chosen to represent the Programme, and how does his name connect to the concept of European Mobility? As mentioned in “The Experience of Citizenship” conference⁷ held by CICE (Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe) in 2004, Desiderius Erasmus “... moved around in various parts of Western Europe in his lifetime, which is perhaps why he was chosen to eponymize the European Union’s student exchange Programme: more importantly, **he revolutionized European conceptualization of the**

⁶<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erasmus> (accessed in 25/10/16)

⁷ “The experience of citizenship- Proceedings of the sixth Conference of the Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Work” London CICE 2004, edited by Alistair Ross <http://archive.londonmet.ac.uk/cice-docs/docs/2004-3.pdf> (accessed in 16/09/2017)

individual and society, of learning and citizenship. More than through his travels, he corresponded with an enormous number of people all over Europe, and establishing a virtual community: he has been described recently as ‘the patron saint of networkers’ (Mac Culloch, 2003, p. 98 as cited in CiCe 2004)”

Almost 450 years later, the political action that gives birth to ERASMUS takes place, when, during its prime era: “On January 1986 the Delors Commission (1985-1994), submitted to the Council the proposal for the Erasmus Programme (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) as well as a series of Programmes concerning education such as Commett, Lingua, Petra etc. Without a doubt, the Erasmus Programme signaled the development of cooperations on the venue of Higher Education and the establishing of student mobility, mobility of professors and staff. The Programme was approved, after many months of hard negotiations, thanks to the Commission’s persistence and especially the persistence of Delors⁸ who referred to the London European Council (5-6th of December of 1986) in order to succumb the reactions of both the Ministers’ and the Commission’s for Education. It was there that, with the help of Francois Mitterrand⁹, when he managed to extract a positive answer by certain countries (CEC 2006: 117 as cited in Asderaki 2008, p.207)

Consequently to this, the first legal document describing the nature and purpose of ERASMUS the Council Decision of 1987¹⁰ is signed. It is in that piece of legislation where the objectives of the Programme are clearly stated.

⁸Delors, Jacques (Lucien Jean) (b. July 20, 1925, Paris, Fr.) was a French statesman. In 1962 he left his position in banking for a series of government positions, including minister of economics and finance. As president of the European Commission (EC) from 1985 to 1995, he pushed through reforms and persuaded the member states to agree to the creation of a single market in 1993, the first step toward full economic and political integration in the EUROPEAN UNION. When his term expired, he was considered a leading contender for the French presidency, but he declined to run. (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2007 Edition, p.531)

⁹Mitterrand, Francois (-Maurice-Marie) (b. Oct. 26, 1916, Jarnac, France—d. Jan. 8, 1996, Paris) President of France (1981–95). After serving in World War II, he was elected to the National Assembly (1946) and held cabinet posts in 11 Fourth Republic governments (1947–58). Moving to the political left, he opposed CHARLES DEGAULLE’s government and ran unsuccessfully against him in 1965 but won 32% of the vote. In 1971 he became secretary of the FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY and made it the majority party of the left, which led to his election as president in 1981. With a leftist majority in the National Assembly, he introduced radical economic reforms, which were modified when a right-wing majority regained power in 1986. Reelected president in 1988, he strongly promoted European integration. His domestic policy was less successful, and France experienced high unemployment. In 1991 he appointed Edith Cresson (b. 1934) prime minister, the first French woman to hold that office (1991–92). A defeat for the Socialists in the legislative elections of 1993 further moderated Mitterrand’s policies. (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2007 Edition, p.1271)

¹⁰ Council Decision 87/327/EEC

The objectives of the Erasmus shall be as follows: (i) to achieve a significant increase in the number of students... spending an integrated period of study in another Member State, in order that the Community may draw upon an adequate pool of manpower with first-hand experience of economic and social aspects of other Member States...; **(iv) to strengthen the interaction between citizens in different Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of a People's Europe;** (v) to ensure the development of a pool of graduates with direct experience of intra-Community cooperation, thereby creating the basis upon which intensified cooperation in the economic and social sectors can develop at the community level.¹¹

By looking at goal No.4 we can already detect an intent to promote European Citizenship to the participants. It is also noteworthy here to mention again- and it will be explored in later Chapters- that ERASMUS' goals have multiplied over the years to a point that makes it hard for the scientific community to test its results according to which aspiration its creators hope it will achieve. The above definition of goals however is what interests me in this Master Thesis and what I consider to be ERASMUS' main purpose for existing in the first place. In the Chapters to come I thoroughly explain the scientific validity of considering the aforementioned bundle of goals as the basis for the standards the Erasmus Programme should be tested for.

“The Programme included four actions: i) The creation of a universities network which had signed the agreements in the Erasmus framework and organize student and teaching staff exchange Programmes. ii) A system of scholarships for the students in mobility iii) Measures for the promotion of mobility though the academic recognition of the degrees and the periods of studies. As a tool for the recognition of the periods of studies the European of Credit TransferSystem was introduced on an experimental and voluntary basis. iv) Supplementary measures that include initiatives for the promotion of inter-university cooperation as well as the Erasmus Awards that are bestowed to students, members of the teaching staff, universities or Programmes that have contributed in a remarkable way to the development of the inter-university cooperation of the Community.” (Asderaki 2008, p.208)

On the 17th of June 1987 the Programme was officially initiated and it only grew exponentially from then on. While originally a stand- alone project for 11 Member states (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain

¹¹ As cited in Sigalas 2009, 8

and the United Kingdom) and achieving an exchange of 3.244 students, it furthermore managed to attract seven more countries until 1992 (Luxembourg in 1988 and the six European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries- Austria¹², Finland¹³, Iceland¹⁴, Norway¹⁵, Sweden¹⁶ and Switzerland¹⁷ in 1992). From 1993 to 2014, ERASMUS only continued to flourish. In 1996, the Erasmus Intensive Language Courses (EILC) are introduced and following that, teacher exchanges are also integrated into the Programme in 1997. In 1998 a second vast enlargement of the participating countries takes place, with Cyprus, Czech Republic¹⁸, Hungary¹⁹, Poland²⁰, Romania²¹ and Slovakia²² joining, an action that quickly prompted a third expansion in 1999 when six more Central and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria²³, Estonia²⁴, Latvia²⁵, Lithuania²⁶ and Slovenia) also come into the fold. The year 2000 is considered a pivotal moment for the ERASMUS Programme as it officially enters in the phase of the “umbrella” Programmes, the first being SOCRATES²⁷, a process that took 2

¹²Agreement OJ L 332 between EEC and Republic of Austria

¹³Council Decision 91/612/EEC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

¹⁴ Council Decision 91/613/EEC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

¹⁵Council Decision 91/614/EEC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

¹⁶Council Decision 91/615/EEC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

¹⁷Council Decision 91/616/EEC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

¹⁸ Council Decision 97/655/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

¹⁹ Council Decision 97/626/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²⁰ Council Decision 98/199/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²¹ Council Decision 97/554/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²² Council Decision 98/233/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²³ Council Decision 1999/256/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²⁴Council Decision 98/643/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²⁵Council Decision 98/654/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²⁶Council Decision 98/642/EC (as retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> in 20/10/2016)

²⁷“The SOCRATES Programme, above all, aimed to create links between various areas of support in education. As a large umbrella Programme, it (...) symbolize(d) the extension of responsibility of the European Union to all education areas since the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht. (...) SOCRATES (was to) stimulate cooperation in European matters of education across different educational sectors. SOCRATES therefore integrated more than a dozen educational Programmes which had been established in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They were revised or supplemented to form two new large European Programmes, namely SOCRATES for the different sectors of general education and LEONARDO DA VINCI for vocational education. SOCRATES absorbed ERASMUS and LINGUA, which became two of a total of five sub-Programmes. The ADULT EDUCATION sub-Programme was the result of the restructuring of a Programme that already existed. The amount of funds available for adult education was substantially increased. COMENIUS was introduced as a sub-Programme for the school sector, and OPEN and DISTANCE LEARNING was the most noteworthy addition to already existing Programmes.” (ERASMUS in the SOCRATES Programme – Findings of an Evaluation Study/ed. Ulrich Teichler – Bonn: Lemmens Verlags- &

years to complete as the participation of Turkey²⁸ was a pending matter. From 2000 to 2007 Malta²⁹ (2000) as well as Turkey³⁰ (2004) join. In that same period, ERASMUS reaches one million student exchanges (2002) and the Erasmus University Charter³¹ is introduced. In 2007, ERASMUS arrives at a milestone moment as it becomes part of the Lifelong Learning Programme^{32,33}, a process that resulted into the introduction of student traineeships and staff training. In 2009 ERASMUS had officially sent two million students abroad and Croatia³⁴ also joins. Since 2010 three thousand higher education institutions³⁵ have sent

Mediengesellschaft, 2002 -ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education) "The SOCRATES Programme was developed in two phases. The first lasted from 1990 to 1999 and included the actions of the Programmes ERASMUS and LINGUA. The second lasted from 2000 to 2006 during which the Programme was simplified and its goals became more compact (DECISION No 253/2000/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 24 January 2000 establishing the second phase of the Community action Programme in the field of education 'Socrates'.)" (as cited in Asderaki 2008)

²⁸Opinion of the Committee of Regions 1999/C 293/06 and Amendment 13, A5-0023/1999 of the Common Position of the Council (accessed in 16/09/2017)

²⁹Council and Parliament Decision 53/2000/EC, Article 12 (accessed in 16/09/2017)

³⁰Council Decision Council and Parliament Decision 53/2000/EC, Article 12 and Council and Parliament Decision 2317/2003/EC <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> (accessed in 16/09/2017)

³¹The Erasmus University Charter (EUC) provides the general framework for the European co-operation activities a higher education institution (HEI) may carry out within the Erasmus Programme. It is a prerequisite for HEI to organize student mobility and teaching and other staff mobility, to carry out Erasmus intensive language courses and intensive Programmes, and to apply for multilateral projects, networks, accompanying measures and to organize preparatory visits. (As found at the official webpage- http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/erasmus/erasmus_university_charter_en.php accessed in 25/10/16)

³²Council and Parliament Decision 2009/C 295 E/28

³³"**The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) is the successor to the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and ICT / Open & Distance Learning (2000-2006). It supports learning opportunities from childhood to old age in every single life situation.**" (Official webpage of the European Commission http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php) "As the flagship European Funding Programme in the field of education and training, the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe. It is an umbrella Programme integrating various educational and training initiatives. LLP is divided in four sectorial sub Programmes and four so called 'transversal' Programmes. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the management of certain parts of the Lifelong learning Programme under supervision from its parent Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC). The sectorial sub Programmes focus on different stages of education and training and continuing previous Programmes: i) Comenius for schools ii) Erasmus for higher education iii) Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training iv) Grundtvig for adult education. The transversal Programmes aim to complement the sectorial sub Programmes and to ensure that they achieve the best results possible. They aim to promote European cooperation in fields covering two or more of the sub-Programmes. In addition they seek to promote quality and transparency of Member States' education and training systems. Four key activities focus on: i) Policy cooperation and innovation ii) Languages iii) Information and communication technologies - ICT iv) Dissemination and exploitation of results. The Jean Monnet Programme also falls under the LLP umbrella, in addition to the sectorial and transversal Programmes. The Jean Monnet Programme stimulates teaching, reflection and debate on the European integration process at higher education institutions. Eurydice is an institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating reliable and readily comparable information on education systems and policies throughout Europe. Although it forms part of the LLP transversal Programmes, Eurydice does not provide financial support or fund projects. Eurydice is a Network consisting of a European Unit and National Units. The European Units are funded by the European Commission, while the National Units are funded by the governments that establish them. They may also receive financial support from the European Commission."

(Official webpage of the European Commission

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about_llp/about_llp_en.php(retrieved in 25/10/16)

³⁴Framework Agreement L 192/16 22/7/05

³⁵ List of Institutions holding an Erasmus University Charter as of 2014

(http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/LLp/erasmus/documents/euc/euc_for_the_academic_year_2013_2014.pdf accessed in 25/10/16))

students and staff abroad. In 2011 a total number of 33 countries participate in the Programme and by 2013 a massive number of 3 million students³⁶ have experienced mobility as a result of ERASMUS.

3.2 The Programme Today: ERASMUS+

Erasmus, in its current form, ERASMUS+, replaces the LLP and has as its legislative basis the i) Article 6 TFEU which provides that the EU has competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States in certain specified areas, one of which concerns education, vocational training, youth and sport³⁷ ii) The Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020; A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth³⁸ and iii) the Regulation 1288/2013³⁹ which comprehensively describes the Programme's purpose, objectives, structure and function. Again, the reason for this separate Chapter is to further understand how and why the Programme functions in this and not some other form.

In particular, "The Erasmus+ Programme builds on the achievements of more than 25 years of European Programmes in the fields of education, training and youth, covering both an intra-European as well as an international cooperation dimension. Erasmus+ is the result of the integration of the following European Programmes implemented by the Commission during the period 2007-2013: i) The Lifelong Learning Programme ii) The Youth in Action Programme⁴⁰ iii) The Erasmus Mundus Programme iv) Tempus⁴¹ v) Alfa⁴² vi) Edulink⁴³ vii) Programmes of cooperation with industrialized countries in the field of higher education"

³⁶ Press release by the European Commission 8/8/2013 (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-657_en.htm accessed in 25/10/16)

³⁷ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>)

³⁸ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF> accessed in 25/10/16)

³⁹ Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC, OJ L 347/50 of 20.12.2013

⁴⁰ **Youth in Action is the Programme the European Union has set up for young people. It aims to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future.** The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the management of certain parts of the Youth in Action Programme under supervision from its parent Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC of the European Commission). (as found in the official webpage- http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php accessed in 25/10/16)

⁴¹ **Tempus is the European Union's Programme which supports the modernization of higher education in the Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region, mainly through university cooperation projects.** (as found in the official webpage-<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/>)

The Programme's objectives are " i) the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the headline education target⁴⁴ ii) the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), including the corresponding benchmarks; iii) the sustainable development of Partner Countries in the field of higher education; iv) the overall objectives of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)⁴⁵; v) the objective of developing the European dimension in sport, in particular grassroots sport, in line with the EU work plan for sport; vi) **the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union**⁴⁶."

It is extremely important here to point out that, the Programme's 4th objective in regards to its endeavor to be a relevant and active factor to the development of a European Identity has changed. In the 1987 document, it was clearly stated that the Programme's goal was "to strengthen the interaction between citizens indifferent Member States with a view to consolidating the concept of a People's Europe;" while the 2014 version of ERASMUS+ takes a far more conservative stance by diminishing the targeted desirable effect of the Programme to merely the "the promotion of European values in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union." While the objectives themselves are largely unchanged, the core principle of the development of a People's Europe is missing. Chapter No.4 discusses this very crucial change and its extensions in depth.

As far as ERASMUS+ handling is concerned, the Programme is implemented by the European Commission⁴⁷ indirectly by delegating authorities to the participating States' National

⁴²Alpha, now known as Alpha III is a grants Programme that supports cooperation between Higher Education Institutions of the European Union and Latin America (as found in the official webpage- http://www.welcomeurope.com/european-funds/alfa-iii-104+4.html#tab=onglet_details)

⁴³EduLink is a grants Programme that supports joint projects between universities in ACP and European Countries. ACP stands for "African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. It is "an organization created by Georgetown Agreement in 1975. It is composed of 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific states with all of them, save Cuba, signatories to the Cotonou Agreement, also known as the "ACP-EC Partnership Agreement" which binds them to the European Union." (as found in the official webpage- <http://www.acp.int/content/secretariat-acp> accessed in 25/10/16)

⁴⁴The headline education target is to reduce early school leaving to less than 10% and increase attainment in tertiary education to at least 40% by 2020.(as cited in the European Commission's Erasmus+ Guide p.9)

⁴⁵ Council Resolution 2009/C 311/01 "on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)" ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01)&from=EN) accessed in 25/10/16)

⁴⁶The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.(as cited in the European Commission's Erasmus+ Guide p.9)

⁴⁷The implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme is largely implemented as indirect management. The European Commission delegates implementation tasks to National Agencies established in each Programme

Agencies which are also responsible for its supervision and monitoring; a fact that the European Commission is constantly self-aware of and reflects upon⁴⁸. Turning to the structure of the Programme, it is divided into “3 Key Actions” which are:

“KEY ACTION 1 – MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUALS

This Key Action supports:

- 1) **Mobility of learners and staff:** opportunities for students, trainees, young people and volunteers, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, staff of education institutions and civil society organizations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country;
- 2) **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees:** high-level integrated international study programmes delivered by consortia of higher education institutions that award full degree scholarships to the best master students worldwide;
- 3) **Erasmus+ Master Loans:** higher education students from Programme Countries can apply for a loan backed up by the Programme to go abroad for a full Master Degree. Students should address themselves to national banks or student loan agencies participating in the scheme.

KEY ACTION 2 – COOPERATION FOR INNOVATION AND THE EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES

This Key Action supports:

- 1) Transnational **Strategic Partnerships** aimed to develop initiatives addressing one or more fields of education training and youth and promote innovation, exchange of experience and know-how between different types of organizations involved in education, training and youth or in other relevant fields. Certain mobility activities are supported in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the project;

Country, as provided for by Article 58.1(c) of the Financial Regulation. The national authorities monitor and supervise the management of the Programme at national level.

⁴⁸ The Commission releases at regular intervals the “Guide for Experts on quality assessment” which “is a tool for experts when assessing applications submitted under the Erasmus+ Programme. It provides instructions and guidance in order to ensure a standardized and high quality assessment of applications for the Programme actions managed by the National Agencies. The Guide for Experts provides information on: i) the role and appointment of experts; ii) the principles of the assessment; iii) the assessment process in practice; iv) information on how to assess the award criteria for each action and field. (link for the guide <http://sepie.es/doc/eyc/2016guia.pdf>- accessed in 25/10/16))

- 2) **Knowledge Alliances** between higher education institutions and enterprises which aim to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, employability, knowledge exchange and/or multidisciplinary teaching and learning;
- 3) **Sector Skills Alliances** supporting the design and delivery of joint vocational training curricula, programmes and teaching and training methodologies, drawing on evidence of trends in a specific economic sector and skills needed in order to perform in one or more professional fields;
- 4) **Capacity-building** projects supporting cooperation with Partner Countries in the fields of higher education and youth. Capacity-building projects aim to support organizations/institutions and systems in their modernization and internationalization process. Certain types of capacity-building projects support mobility activities in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the project;
- 5) IT support platforms, such as **eTwinning**⁴⁹, the **School Education Gateway**⁵⁰, the **European Platform for Adult Learning (EPALE)**⁵¹ and the **European Youth Portal**⁵², offering

⁴⁹eTwinning promotes school collaboration and school networking in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). It provides advice, ideas and tools to make it easy for schools to set up partnerships and start collaborative projects in any subject area. In connection with a mobility project, eTwinning allows to: 1) find potential partners/receiving organizations abroad and work together with them before applying for funding, in order to improve the quality and impact of the planned projects; 2) use the available project tools to implement more strategic projects and better exploit the inputs from partners; 3) prepare the outgoing staff, for instance through communication with the receiving organization (learning more about the receiving country and receiving organization, discussing and agreeing on activities to carry out), participate in online learning events related to their mobility; 4) cooperate intensively among all schools involved during and after the staff mobility project.

⁵⁰The School Education Gateway is Europe's online platform for school education, currently available in 23 EU languages, intended to provide everything that teachers need in terms of information, learning and professional development, peer support and networking, collaborative project and mobility opportunities, policy insights etc. Apart from the teacher community, the target user base of the SEG includes all parties participating in activities under the Erasmus+ Programme such as: schools and other educational actors and organizations; policy makers and national authorities; NGOs; enterprises; etc. As it is a public website, it can be accessed by anyone on Internet (i.e. also from countries outside the EU). (...)The SEG offers a wide range of content, such as good practices from European projects; monthly blog contributions and video interviews of European school education experts; online courses for teachers to help tackle topical classroom challenges; resources such as teaching materials, tutorials and the European Toolkit for Schools; information on school education policies; topical news and events; etc. It offers special tools to support teachers and school staff in finding training and mobility opportunities for professional development (on-site courses, job shadowing, teaching assignments etc)

⁵¹EPALE is a multilingual open membership community for teachers, trainers, researchers, academics, policy makers and anyone else with a professional role in adult learning across Europe. (...)It is set up around the sharing of content related to adult learning, including news, blog posts, resources, and events and courses. EPALE is funded by the European Commission, as the latest development in an ongoing commitment to improving the quality of adult learning provision in Europe. Members of the community can engage with adult learning colleagues across Europe through the site's features, including the forums and by commenting under blogs. You can also interact with your peers across Europe through the thematic areas which provide structured content according to topic. You can find projects and make professional connections using the partner search repository.(as found in the official webpage - <http://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/about>- accessed in 25/10/16)

⁵²The European Youth Portal is part of the Eurodesk Network. "The Eurodesk network offers information services to young people and those who work with them on European opportunities in the education, training and youth fields, and the involvement of young people in European activities. Present in all Programme Countries, and coordinated at European level by the Eurodesk Brussels-link Office, the Eurodesk network offers enquiry answering services, funding information, events and publications. It also contributes to the animation of the

virtual collaboration spaces, databases of opportunities, communities of practice and other online services for teachers, trainers and practitioners in the field of school and adult education as well as for young people, volunteers and youth workers across Europe and beyond.

KEY ACTION 3 – SUPPORT FOR POLICY REFORM

This Key Action supports:

- 1) **Knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth** for evidence-based policy making and monitoring, in particular: i) country-specific and thematic analysis, including through cooperation with academic networks; ii) peer learning and peer reviews through the Open Methods of Coordination in education, training and youth.
- 2) **Initiatives for policy innovation** to stimulate innovative policy development among stakeholders and to enable public authorities to test the effectiveness of innovative policies through field trials based on sound evaluation methodologies;
- 3) **Support to European policy tools** to facilitate transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, as well as the transfer of credits, to foster quality assurance, support validation of non-formal and informal learning, skills management and guidance. This Action also includes the support to networks that facilitate cross-European exchanges, the learning and working mobility of citizens as well as the development of flexible learning pathways between different fields of education, training and youth;
- 4) **Cooperation with international organizations** with highly recognized expertise and analytical capacity (such as the OECD and the Council of Europe), to strengthen the impact and added value of policies in the fields of education, training and youth;
- 5) **Stakeholder dialogue, policy and Programme promotion** involving public authorities, providers and stakeholders in the fields of education, training and youth for raising awareness about the European policy agendas, in particular Europe 2020, Education and Training 2020, the European Youth Strategy, as well as the external dimension of European education, training and youth policies. These activities are essential to develop the capacity of stakeholders to actively support the implementation of policies by stimulating the exploitation of the Programme results and generating tangible impact.” (as found in the European Commission’s Erasmus+ Guide)

European Youth Portal. The European Youth Portal offers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in Europe. It gives information around eight main themes, covers 33 countries and is available in 27 languages.” (as found in the European Commission’s Erasmus+ Guide)

Separate from the 3 Key Actions, two more branches of activities are included in the Programme:

JEAN MONNET ACTIVITIES

The Jean Monnet Activities will support:

1) **Academic Modules, Chairs, Centres of Excellence** in order to deepen teaching in European integration studies embodied in an official curriculum of a higher education institution, as well as to conduct, monitor and supervise research on EU content, also for other educational levels such as teacher training and compulsory education.

These Actions are also intended to provide in-depth teaching on European integration matters for future professionals in fields which are in increasing demand on the labour market, and at the same time aim at encouraging, advising and mentoring the young generation of teachers and researchers in European integration subject areas;

2) **Policy debate with academic world**, supported through: a) **Networks** to enhance cooperation between different universities throughout Europe and around the world, foster cooperation and create a high knowledge exchange platform with public actors and the Commission services on highly relevant EU subjects; b) **Projects** for innovation and cross-fertilization and spread of EU content aimed to promote discussion, reflection on EU issues and to enhance knowledge about the EU and its processes;

3) **Support to associations**, to organize and carry out statutory activities of associations dealing with EU studies and EU issues, and to publicize EU facts among a wider public enhancing active European citizenship.

The Jean Monnet Activities also provide operating grants to **designated institutions** which pursue an aim of European interest and organizes **Studies and conferences** with the purpose of providing policy-makers with new insights and concrete suggestions.

SPORT

Actions in the field of sport will support:

1) **Collaborative Partnerships**, aimed at promoting the integrity of Sport (anti-doping, fight against match fixing, protection of minors), supporting innovative approaches to implement EU principles on good governance in sport, EU strategies in the area of social inclusion and

equal opportunities, encouraging participation in sport and physical activity (supporting the implementation of EU Physical Activity Guidelines, volunteering, employment in sport as well as education and training in sport), and supporting the implementation of the EU guidelines on dual careers of athletes. These partnerships include also Small Collaborative Partnerships, aimed at encouraging social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport, promoting European traditional sports and games, supporting the mobility of volunteers, coaches, managers and staff of non-profit sport organizations and protecting athletes, especially the youngest, from health and safety hazards by improving training and competition conditions.

2) **Not-for-profit European sport events**, granting individual organizations in charge of the preparation, organization and follow-up to a given event. The activities involved will include the organization of training activities for athletes and volunteers in the run-up to the event, opening and closing ceremonies, competitions, side-activities to the sporting event (conferences, seminars), as well as the implementation of legacy activities, such as evaluations or follow-up activities;

3) **Strengthening of the evidence base for policy making** through studies; data gathering, surveys; networks; conferences and seminars which spread good practices from Programme Countries and sport organizations and reinforce networks at EU level so that national members of those networks benefit from synergies and exchanges with their partners;

4) **Dialogue with relevant European stakeholders**, being mainly the annual EU Sport Forum and support to Sport Presidency events organized by the EU Member States holding the Presidency of the EU. Other ad hoc meetings and seminars relevant to ensure optimal dialogue with the sport stakeholders may also be organized as appropriate.” as found in the European Commission’s Erasmus+ Guide)

As far as the future of the Programme is concerned, a virtual component⁵³ will become available and its budget is set to either remain as is⁵⁴ or in some cases increased.

⁵³In addition, following the results of a feasibility study to be carried out in 2016, the Programme will launch the implementation of Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges. This action – which is part of a series of new measures aimed at addressing the root causes of violent extremism through an effective follow-up at European level of the Paris Declaration - intends to increase cultural awareness, understanding and cooperation between young people inside and outside the EU, with the aim of reaching 200,000 participants by 2019. These virtual exchanges will connect young people from Europe, the Southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Africa, and provide a structured platform for the sharing of views and ideas, and collaboration on joint projects, all facilitated by trained moderators. (2017 annual work Programme for the implementation of 'Erasmus+': the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport C(2016)5571 of 5 September 2016)

⁵⁴In 2017, the Erasmus+ Programme will be essentially maintained at a stable level of investment, allowing potential stakeholders to become further acquainted with the young architecture of the Programme, enabling them to fully exploit the opportunities offered by Erasmus+. (2017 annual work Programme for the

Last but not least, the Programme comes with a series of evaluation practices which have as a common goal to investigate the degree in which ERASMUS achieves its primary objectives, as those have been defined by the Commission. Those are the regular Lifelong Learning Programme interim evaluations⁵⁵ which ended in 2013 and were replaced by the Erasmus+ Annual Reports⁵⁶

Apart from its official form, Erasmus has a very active volunteer community, mainly comprised of returning and returned students who have experienced Mobility, called ESN⁵⁷ (Erasmus Student Network). Another notable organization that also affiliates itself with ERASMUS+ is AEGEE⁵⁸, an NGO and NPO with an immense network of students. "AEGEE's main achievement is that it persuaded French president François Mitterrand to support funding for the Erasmus Programme" (Asderaki, F. and Maragos D. 2014)

The argument that can be extracted from this presentation of the ERASMUS Programme's evolution through time is that it's a European Union policy in the making and therefore subject to the ever changing interests of the involved parties. My argument is that as a policy it must be examined in relation to its desired purpose and effect and whether these

implementation of 'Erasmus+': the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport C(2016)5571 of 5 September 2016) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/awp/docs/c-2016-5571_en.pdf (accessed in 01/02/2017)

⁵⁵The interim evaluation of the LLP was launched by the European Commission following the requirements of the LLP Decision. This evaluation covers the entire content of the LLP, with all its sub-Programmes and actions, over the implementation period of 2007-2009. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a retrospective and prospective analysis of the LLP. The Report was prepared under Service Contract No. 2009-5173-PPMI "Interim evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2009". The evaluation is being carried out by the Public Policy and Management Institute (Lithuania) and steered by the Steering Group involving the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. The Steering Group met five times to discuss evaluation reports submitted by the contractor. (Interim Evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013)- webpage http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/evaluations/docs/education/llp2011_en.pdf (accessed in 25/10/16)

⁵⁶For example the 2014 Erasmus annual Report is available at (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-annual-report_en.pdf accessed in 25/10/16)

⁵⁷ "Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the biggest student association in Europe. It was born on the 16th October 1989 and legally registered in 1990 for supporting and developing student exchange." ESN is "present in more than 800 Higher Education Institutions from 39 countries. (...) It has "around 15,000 active members that are in many sections supported by so called buddies mainly taking care of international students. Thus, ESN involves around 34,000 young people offering its services to around 200,000 international students every year."

⁵⁸AEGEE (Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de l'Europe) is one of Europe's biggest interdisciplinary student organizations. As a non-governmental, politically independent, and non-profit organization AEGEE is open to students and young people from all faculties and disciplines. Founded in 1985 in Paris, today AEGEE has grown to a Network of 13000 friends, present in 200 cities in 40 countries all over Europe. Operating without a national level, AEGEE brings 13000 students from 40 different countries directly in touch with each other. (as found on the official webpage - <https://www.aegee.org/about-aegee/> -accessed in 25/10/16)

two have changed over the past 30 years. Is Erasmus, as a part of the now ever larger ERASMUS+, still focused on the end result - the returned student to feel and act as a European Citizen because of his/her experience of the three freedoms the Union provides?

3.3 Existing Study on ERASMUS as a European Identity Causal Factor

The Erasmus Programme has been a thematic for a variety of researchers, both qualitative and quantitative and all with mixed results. As the research progressed the results varied so greatly that it soon became clear that the relationship between the variables ERASMUS and European Identity was nothing short of problematic to begin with.

Sigalas for example found out, by placing special focus on the host country as the student's choice, that Erasmus and positive attitude towards the Union were two variables that simply did not relate to one another. "Whether ERASMUS is really a success story or not depends, ultimately, on one's standpoint and expectations. Leaving other pedagogical dimensions aside, the study abroad experience helped ERASMUS students to familiarize themselves with another European country and culture. Equally, it enabled them to practice their foreign language skills and, in particular, to improve their competence in the host country language. Both these developments are good reasons for the European Commission and the national authorities to praise the value of the ERASMUS Programme. If, however, ERASMUS is seen as the secret weapon that will convert young Brits, French, Greeks, and so on, to archetypal European citizens with a strong sense of European identity, one is bound to be disappointed." (Sigalas, 2009)

Wilson (2011) detected a "preaching to the converted" effect, or otherwise mentioned as "the ceiling effect" meaning that the pro-European students were already in favor of the Union, even before their ERASMUS sojourn. Theresa Khun's (2012) work focused on that last issue, discovering herself that indeed younger and more educated people were more pro-European regardless of them going through the Erasmus Experience. Moreover she brought forth the inconvenient fact that ERASMUS has many other goals other than the creation of a European Identity, a reality that may put a strain on what the scientific community aims to detect. In particular: "Again, Erasmus does not exclusively aim at strengthening European identity. Rather, it is embedded in the EU's quest to strengthen economic growth and

competitiveness by investing in HE. While the Programme might very well serve its overall aim, this article suggests that educational exchange Programmes are not as effective in promoting European identity as they could be: They mainly target the highly educated which already are more likely to interact transnationally and who are per se likely to develop a European identity.” (Khun, 2012).

“Russell King and Enric Ruiz-Gelices (2003) surveyed 475 students from British universities and found that students who spent a year studying in continental Europe were more pro-European and held a more European identity than students who did not study abroad. (...) Christof Van Mol (2011) surveyed 1054 mobile students, 798 “future mobile students” (who definitely want to study abroad), 786 “potential mobile students” (who may want to study abroad), and 248 non-mobile students from across Europe. He found that mobile students were most attached to Europe, followed by future mobile students, then potential mobile students, and lastly by non-mobile students, who were least attached of all. When asked if they considered themselves citizens of Europe or considered themselves European, the same pattern emerged across the various groups. Both the King and Ruiz-Gelices and Van Mol studies therefore concluded that a foreign study sojourn was positively correlated with civic outcomes such as identifying with Europe, European attachment, or an increased sense of ‘belonging to a European cultural space’ (Mitchell K. 2012 quoting King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003).” (Mitchell 2012 pp. 495)

It was also in 2012, when Mitchell K. initiated a, vast in scope, research of her own, including 2011 students from 25 nationalities, focusing on the Erasmus Experience itself and whether during it the student engaged in what she called “meaningful contact” that resulted into a “civic experience” of Europe; instead of trying to examine the Programme’s effect as a possible European Identity factor. However in a later article she admitted to have overestimated the member-state of origin factor, mainly the case of the United Kingdom⁵⁹ as well as the negative results of previous and modern research.

She furthermore listed the following issues of conceptualizing ERASMUS as a European Identity factor: “These findings have some practical implications for our assessment of the Erasmus Programme. For one thing, they resuscitate the notion that the Programme has what some have called a ‘civic’ effect (Papatsiba, 2006): it fosters European identity in

⁵⁹K. Mitchell, JCMS 2015 Volume 53. Number 2. pp. 330–348 Rethinking the ‘Erasmus Effect’ on European Identity

addition to promoting employability and developing human capital. The findings also highlight some policy prescriptions related to the design of Erasmus exchanges that should be taken into consideration if the civic objective of the Programme is to be maximized. The first is that identity appears to emerge from multiple types of transnational contact. Existing evidence suggests that Erasmus students are more likely to socialize with other Erasmus students than with students from the host country (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Mitchell, 2012). Whatever the detriments may be of such a dynamic, from an identity-change perspective it is not necessarily problematic. The highly significant relationship between socializing with 'other Europeans' (neither host country nationals nor Rethinking the 'Erasmus effect' on European identity co-nationals) and change in both dimensions of identity suggests that integration of Erasmus students into the host society is not necessary for enhancing European identity. However, socializing with co-nationals during the exchange has a negative impact on identification with Europe, so discouraging cultural isolationism is important from an identity change perspective. Furthermore, the extent to which exchange participants learn more about Europe during their sojourn is also critical for European identity change, while learning about the host country apparently is not. To the extent that this European (rather than bilateral) dimension of the exchange is highlighted, there is likely to be a greater impact for European identity. Additionally, longer and more satisfying sojourns are associated with a greater increase in European identity, meaning that adequate institutional support for such exchanges should be considered." (Mitchell, 2014)

Aggeliki Psychogiou (2015) in her own research on Greek students, focusing on the destination-Member-State as a potential factor to European Identity pointed out that the Programme's goals have multiplied over the decades, a fact that results into a methodological handicap as to according to which goal should it be evaluated by the scientific community. "It has served over the years many different purposes. In the beginning of its creation European policy-makers recognized the potential of education as a means of fostering the ties between the institutions and the population (Psychogiou quoting Keating 2009, 135) through the formation of a common European identity among European citizens, as a means of supporting the legitimacy of the European Union. But after the 1990 it has been claimed that the globalization of education changed the main purpose of the Erasmus Programme making it seem mainly as an economic commodity (Psychogiou quoting Walkenhorst 2008)." While Psychogiou's results did not show a relation between destination and change in attitude towards the Union, she did conclude that, as far as the Greek

Erasmus students are concerned, the Programme was beneficial to them as in it indeed appear to promote positive views towards the European Union.

On the issue of European Political Identities however, only Bruter (2005) made it a case to distinguish between a Cultural and Political European Identity, finding out that the latter aspect was more dominant in the students. After his work there have been no other, to my knowledge, works on the Erasmus Programme that focused on the civic/political aspect of the identities of the students. This is a gap in research and theory that my research on ERASMUS aims to fill, even if at a preliminary state.

4. Theoretical Framework

The framework must cover and explain the sociopolitical environment in which ERASMUS operates in. ERASMUS is not and never was the sole creation space of European Identities. Therefore it must be placed into the larger context that affects it. That environment is of course the European Union which components that directly affect the way ERASMUS operates are the following: **i) National and European Identity as understood in the context of European Integration, ii) The National and European Dimension of Higher Education Policy and iii) The concept of Mobility in the context of the Politicization and Depoliticization forces of the European Union.** Only then, under this triangulation, can ERASMUS be sincerely be further theorized as being a European Identity Project that creates through the participants, the students, European Identity Processes.

In this thesis I begin by accepting the Erasmus as sojourn/ transformative experience (Mitchell, K. 2012 and Mitchell, K. 2014) and I do not go into extreme depth about the relationship of the two variables (Erasmus as an “affection towards Europe” creation/promotion factor). This is because my goal is not to primarily prove whether ERASMUS is successful or not at creating or promoting a European Identity for its students, but first and foremost to examine whether it politicizes those European Identities via making the students more politically interested and active. Most importantly, if all the above endure as social phenomena even years after the Erasmus Experience. Hence the subtitle, “is Mobility enough?”

Instead of solely focusing on the Erasmus Experience itself as a European Identity causal or supporting factor, I choose to use the International Relations theory of Constructivism (Castiglione, Chekel and Katzenstein, Hartmut Kaelble, Neil Fligstein, Juan Diez Medrano 2009) which suggests that the Erasmus Programme can be viewed as **a European Identity Project of the Union designed by the supranational and Member-States' elites, in order to incite European Identity Processes for its participants, the students, when they return from their Erasmus sojourn.** The theory also gives different predictions on the expected political views, stances and agencies of the returned Greek youths on the issue of their European Identities after their Erasmus transformative experience. Those views, stances and agencies, I argue, are the dependent variables of a European Identity Project that results into the Politicization or Depoliticization of the European Identities that are constructed by it.

In my view ERASMUS is best seen as a European Identity Project that politicizes the views, stances and agencies of its participants, essentially their European Political Identities, and promoting them as more active European citizens. The other possibility is ERASMUS being a depoliticization Project of European Identity that does not factor into the promoting of active European Citizenship, the result being more nationalist and populist views. Of course such views are political themselves and are deeply associated with political activity. However the Union historically emphasizes greatly in promoting as "positive" the political views that consist of cosmopolitan, liberal and post-national elements. In both cases the returned students take part, consciously or not to European Identity Processes which, Checkel and Katzenstein (2009) argue, do not necessarily stem from or operate under elite guidance or supervision.

I use Checkel and Katzenstein's (2009) argument on European Identity and Castiglione's (2009) analysis of the same, in its political dimension. I borrow the terms 'Political Identity', 'Project', 'Process' and 'Politicization/ Depoliticization of Identities' and expand them on the case study of the Erasmus Programme. To analyze the students' answers to the questionnaire I use Hartmut Kaelble's (2009) types of identification with Europe. Then I proceed by arguing that ERASMUS is a European Identity Project created by the Union's elites meant to incite, as a transformative experience (Mitchell 2012), several Identity Processes for the students so they can develop their own European Identities. I however

theorize that a second eventuality may also be possible: ERASMUS may have developed as a European Identity Project/Process that has lost its focus on political citizenship.

My second argument is that it truly doesn't matter if ERASMUS succeeds in creating a European Identity for its students if they themselves, after their Erasmus transformative experience, **are not able or willing to claim and protect that same Collective Identity through political interest and agency**. In short, if the students' European Identities are not politicized by their Erasmus Experience, then the Programme simply misses its mark (creating a common and collective European Identity). **I do not only test the Programme against its official goals alone. Instead I attempt to determine whether it exceeds them or not. This exceeding is none other than my hypothesized ability of the Programme to politicize the European Identities it creates/ fosters.**

Chapter 4.1 is dedicated to the definition of the terms I use in this Thesis in order to place Erasmus within the Constructivist Theoretical Framework of European Identities as Projects and Processes. I specially focus on clarifying the dynamic between National and European Identities as well as how some of their most extreme components like patriotism that may even lead to death for one's identity and extreme technocracy as a depoliticization bias on population caring about politics at all are discussed. One last differentiation I go into this part is the terms European Union and Europe as it has been shown in the past that not only are not one and the same but also directly affect the way the participants of n'sample studies answer the questionnaires. It is for that reason that I use the term **"Europe"** to detect European Identities; but in order to examine if those European Identities are politicized, I revert to the term **"European Union"** which describes the official European Polity.

Chapter 4.2 discusses the relationship between ERASMUS -as an Education Policy of the Union and the Member-States by further defining the terminology used. I examine as to whether the development of the ERASMUS Programme has the characteristics of a European Identity Project as they are presented by Checkel and Katzenstein's argument, mainly if 1) the Erasmus Programme is designed by elite politics, 2) appeals to the young and educated elites of the Member States and 3) focuses on politicizing the individuals. I start by demonstrating the degree at which the fissure between Elites and Public within the Union affects the environment within which ERASMUS exists and operates. I then closely follow

Foteini Asderaki's work on the way which the European Union's policies on the front of Education policy in the context of the E.U progressed over the decades as a domain of almost exclusively elite politics in order to provide answers to the above three characteristics.

The rationale behind Chapter 4.3 is the discussion that is needed to be had about the concept of Mobility as a European Identity causal factor within the context of a pedagogical student exchange program like ERASMUS. More importantly, how does Karl Deutch's concept of Mobility still fares under the pressure of the Politicization and Depoliticization forces of the European Union which have been already documented to result into many different strands of identification with it, from Euro-skeptics to Pro-Europeans. I mainly follow Neil Fligstein's point that if a common and collective European Identity is ever going to present itself, it will be in Deutch's scientific expectations about Mobility and its potential to unify the continent through the continuous free flow of goods, capital, persons and services. I follow this by addressing Kathrine Mitchell's argument that Mobility acts as a transformative experience to better place the Erasmus Student Exchange Program into the Theoretical Framework of European Identity Projects and Processes.

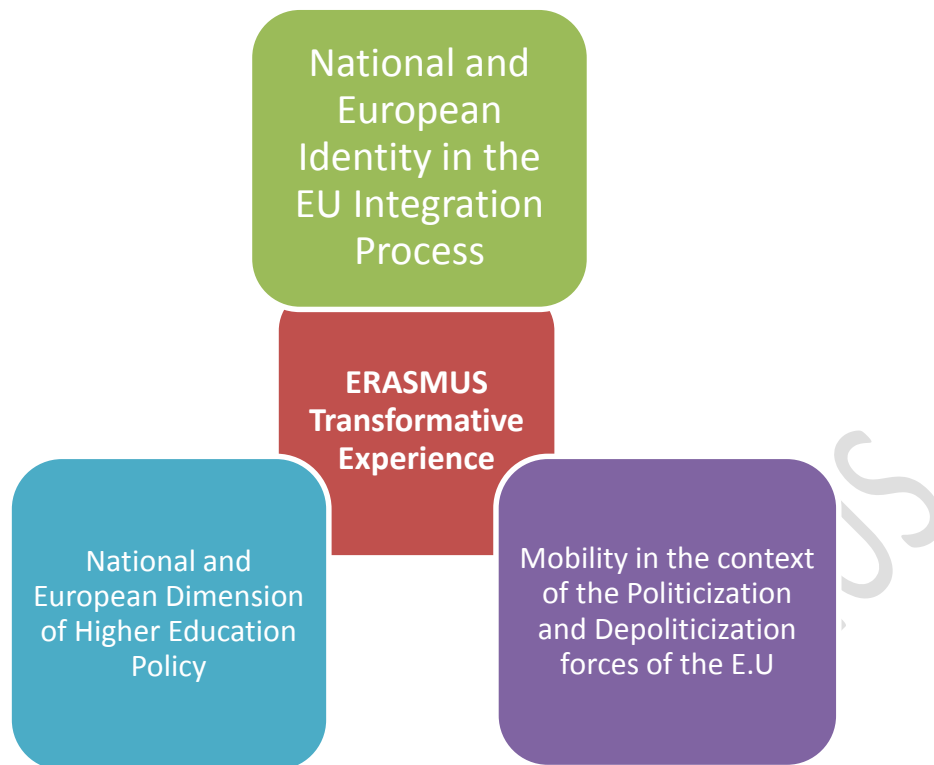
In chapter 4.4 I present the complete argument of Erasmus as a European Identity Project and Process inciter and its predicted characteristics which in term will determine if it is successful at **A) creating any form of identification with Europe as they are supported by Checkel and Katzenstein's theoretical framework and B) if those same form of identification occur along with some form of politicization of the individual towards the E.U.** The five aforementioned identifications are presented by Hartmut Kaelble and are: "1) Identification with a Europe superior to all other civilizations is perhaps the oldest of these. 2) Second, identification with Europe's internal heterogeneity as a sign of vitality and strength may well be the harbinger of a new form of Euro-centrism. 3) Third, identification with a distinctive European lifestyle and European values is at times so much taken for granted that Europeans are not even aware of it. 4) A fourth characteristic is the caution and restraint of identification with Europe: Europe has no resemblance to a traditional nation-state (where the formation of a national consciousness precedes the process of state formation) and only a faint resemblance to a state-nation (where the temporal sequence processes of state and nation creation are reversed). 5) Finally, identification with Europe is

no longer grounded either in violence and death or in strong political hierarchies.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.24 citing Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.201,2)

Furthermore, I add my own **identity politicization factors** of the aforementioned strands of identification. These are 1) Education Level 2) Age 3) Knowledge of foreign languages 4) Promotion of the Union to others after the Mobility 5) Participation in conferences, political organizations, and parties. 6) Knowledge of the Union and its inner workings 7) The feeling of being bound both to the Union’s values and principles as well as to other Member States’ individuals 8) Long-term attachment to the Union and long-term positive political activity towards the Union.

Finally, Chapter 4.5 is a brief yet very informative section that describes the interfering variables and the biases that the case study of returned ERASMUS Greek students present. All those interfering variables and biases are taken into account in the Research Methodology. The main argument presented in the Chapter is that Greek youths, as part of the country’s population, have as many reasons to feel disheartened and pessimist as any and that fact alone is sure to have statistically significant effects on the n research of this Thesis. This fact is strikingly portrayed by recent Eurobarometer⁶⁰ results. Whether ERASMUS has become a European Identity Project/Process phenomenon of depoliticization or politicization, it is neither the institutions involved, nor the participating states, but the Programme’s “product”- the returned ERASMUS sojourners-that are bound to give us a hint as representatives of the younger generation of Europeans. In the end, it is the students who will tell us if 70 years of the greatest peace experiment of all time is heading to failure or not.

⁶⁰A majority of respondents are optimistic for the future of the European Union in 24 Member States (up from 21 in autumn 2016), with the highest scores in Ireland (77%), Luxembourg (73%) and Malta (71%). Conversely, pessimism is the majority view in **Greece (69%)**, Cyprus (52%), the Czech Republic (51%) and the United Kingdom (49% vs. 39% total ‘optimistic’). (...) In 21 Member States, majorities of respondents believe that “the impact of the crisis on jobs has already reached its peak” (up from 16 in autumn 2016). This opinion is shared by more than three-quarters of respondents in Denmark (80%), the Netherlands (77%) and Ireland (77%). Conversely, majorities say that “the worse is still to come” in **Greece (70%)**, Latvia (56%), Lithuania (56%), Belgium (51%), the United Kingdom (50%), France (50%) and Estonia (42% vs. 38% “has already reached its peak”).



4.1 Defining the Terms- The National and European Identity in the E.U integration process

As I have stated, I consider Collective Identities a dependent variable of domestic and international politics. Following this particular view, I consider Collective Identity as a sociopolitical reality, without any psychological or essentialist notions of formation. I use the axioms of the Constructivism School of International Relations to research European Identity within the context of the Erasmus Programme: “Underlying any civic claims about Erasmus’s role in European identity-formation is the constructivist view that collective identities in general, and political identities in particular, are not fixed but malleable. This view is rooted in scholarship on national identity formation that depicts these identities as modern creations (Mosse, 1975; Weber, 1976; Colley, 1994; Deutsch, 1953; Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1991; Hobsbawm, 1992; Hobsawm and Ranger, 1992, as cited in Mitchell 2012). In contrast to essentialist notions of national identity (Smith, 2000 as cited in Mitchell 2012), in the constructivist logic of identity formation there is nothing particularly sacrosanct or exclusive about national identities. Instead, they are seen as the historical by-product of structural changes in modern societies (Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1991 as cited in Mitchell 2012) or

even conscious manipulation of political symbols by elites (Hobsbawm, 1992; Hobsawm and Ranger, 1992 as cited in Mitchell 2012). Under analogous circumstances, there is nothing to prevent the emergence of a European identity.” (Mitchell 2012, p.494)

However this Thesis emphasizes on the **Political Identities** of the students: More precisely, as Checkel and Katzenstein put it, I am “interested in political and social rather than psychological notions of self-understanding. Identities refer to shared representations of a collective self as reflected in public debate, political symbols, collective memories, and elite competition for power. They consist also of collective beliefs about the definition of the group and its membership that are shared by most group members. We understand identities to be revealed by social practices as well as by political attitudes, shaped by social and geographical structures and national contexts.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009, p.4)

Erasmus has been under the research microscope as a European Identity creation factor for some time now. To begin with, the term ‘transformative experience’ I use to describe the Erasmus Programme stems from K. Mitchell’s work: “It is clear from Commission documents and speeches that Erasmus has long been viewed as a civic experience (EU, 1987a, 1987b, 1997, 1998; Prodi, 2002; Figel, 2006, 2007 as cited in Mitchell 2012) and not just as pre-professional training, even though the economic rationale for Erasmus has been advanced most prominently. This civic rationale for student mobility rests on a belief that, by bringing together students of different nationalities, the Erasmus program would promote a sense of European identity and create a constituency for European integration among future elite. According to a 1996 Commission green paper, student mobility would bring with it ‘a growing European consciousness instilled through greater awareness of others as a result of exposure to new cultures and societies” (cited in Papatsiba, 2006: 101 as cited in Mitchel 2012). More recently, Ján Figel, then-Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Youth, praised Erasmus for its role in creating ‘truly European citizens’ who act as ‘ambassadors of European values’ (Figel, 2007 as cited in Mitchell 2012). Indeed, the program’s civic objective was encapsulated in the very motto used to promote it: ‘bringing students to Europe, bringing Europe to all students.’ By the logic of this civic rationale, Erasmus is intended (and expected) to be a transformative experience for its participants. Indeed, the civic success of the Programme could be said to rest on the extent to which Erasmus alumni were characterized by certain attributes: an awareness of and interest in other European countries and people (and perhaps in the EU itself); an affective attachment

to some notion of “Europe”; and a tendency to identify as a European.” (Mitchell 2012, p.493). All these elements are characteristics of a European Identity Project as defined by Checkel and Katzenstein’s Theoretical Framework.

Back to the first issue, where does the National Identity of the students who participate in the Erasmus Transformative Experience come in? In this Master Thesis National Identity, is understood as being subject to European and Member State policies, especially those of Integration, Enlargement and Education. Furthermore, as the depoliticization of the Union continues and nationalist and Eurosceptic tendencies get stronger after the global recession of 2009, with the approaching exodus of the United Kingdom from the Union as its possible climax of all those phenomena, it appears to put the concept of not National Identity and its elements opposite to those of European Identity.

This however is not the case. “Differentiating between these two senses of political identity has some relevance when we come to the European case. European political identification is in itself unproblematic. It has rightly been argued that it does not need to be in direct opposition to either national or regional identities, since they can all easily cohabit in a nested structure causing neither psychological nor cognitive dissonance” (Risse 2004, pp.248-9 as cited in Castiglione 2009 p.31). Therefore, while forces like Nationalism and Populism are sure to have statistical importance in the data, at the same time they bear no theoretical or practical problems to the research of European Identity. Under these conditions the Erasmus Transformative Experience does not place National Identity against the formation of a European Identity.

The most important term which will be used in this Thesis is the ‘Politicization of Identities’. I elect to view it as “(...) a process that makes issues part of politics (de Wilde 2007 as cited in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.11). Apart from working its effects through national and EU institutions, it may be found in dynamics of exclusion and boundary drawing; in structural effects of **mobility and migration**; or in reactions to various lived experiences and daily practices.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.11) Politicization of Identities therefore makes European Identity a dependent variable of international political competition, a fact that supports the case for investigating the Collective Identities of the Erasmus returned student from the perspective of the political.

Next, there is the equally crucial term of Depoliticization: “(...) since the early 1990s, European politics has been marked by a growing political disjuncture. Elite politics has centered on a strategy of depoliticizing Europe, most clearly through the creation of the euro zone and a European Central Bank. At the same time, mass publics have experienced the effects of an EU that was beginning to regulate in policy domains – border controls, currency, citizenship, fundamental rights – that hit home in new and personal ways. This disjuncture has been heightened by the growing sense of a shift of power away from national parliaments to an unaccountable bureaucracy in Brussels.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.16) The Depoliticization forces’ results have since 2009 become an issue of political competition between the nationalist/populist and Eurosceptic political movements and the liberal elite establishments of the Union (more on that on Chapter 4.3).

Consequently, when it comes to European Identity, things become more complicated as ontology issues develop. I use Castiglione’s observations on those issues. **The ontological issues** that a European Identity brings forth, according to Castiglione are:

1) Since the European Union is still in its Integration phase, the question of whether European Identity development follows it or vice versa arises: “(...) it is unclear what comes first, a European political identity or the consolidation of the European Union as a political community – the well-known discussion about the European demos” (Weiler 1999 as cited in Castiglione 2009, p. 33). On top of this “The history of nation-states or state-nations does not provide useful material for analyzing the emergence of a collective European identity. European identity politics are not like those in a cultural nation, where processes of cultural assimilation precede political unification” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.215)

2) As hinted above, when we touch the subject of Collective Identity, it is implied that a European Identity exists within and serves the interests of a European Political Community. This possible competition for securing the allegiance of the citizen leads to 2 possible conceptions of European Identity, one national-based and one post-national: “The emergence of a distinctive European political identity thus necessarily enters into some kind of collision with the more historically and politically sedimented allegiances toward the nation-state. Such a conflict and its resolution can be conceptualized in two ways. The first, and most obvious one, is a conflict of content, so to speak. From this perspective, European citizens are asked to change the priority of their political allegiances by identifying with a

different territory and expressing loyalty toward different sovereign institutions. Hence, the EU and its institutions come to take the place of the nation and the nation-state. The second is a more radical conceptualization in which the EU, as a transnational entity, does not simply take the place of the nation-state, but effectively undermines the very principles of territoriality and sovereignty. This changes both the form and the function of political identity, as the latter would seem to play a different role within the political system. From a more theoretical and normative perspective, the current debate about European political identity oscillates between these two positions: a more traditional statist and nation-like conception of identity, which sees the European Union as a nation writ large; and a post-national conception that sees the EU as a new form of state.” (Castiglione 2009 p.32).

This duality in the conception of European Identity seems to favor the **post-national** case more as “In contrast to the nation, dying for Europe is not a political litmus test; not killing Europeans is. One of the most surprising developments in Europe has been the rapid growth of a European security community (Deutsch 1957; Adler and Barnett 1998 as cited in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009), based on a relatively thin conception of collective identity that is lacking in emotional strength.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.11,12)

This ‘thin conception’ of European Identity relates to my argument as it brings a distinction between what I call a European **“Hard” and “Soft” components of Identity**. Hard Collective Identities refer to the will to protect them at all costs, even at the risk of losing one’s life. However a post- national conception of European Identity doesn’t have to include that radical element when it comes to connecting the individual to his European Community: “As Hegel, for one, perceptively noted, it is mistaken to think of patriotism mainly as a “readiness for exceptional sacrifices and actions” (1952, p. 164 as cited in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009). Hegel describes patriotism as a more ordinary and banal sentiment about how our own life depends on the operations of the political community. It is a form of trust, or, as he put it, ‘the consciousness that my interest, both substantive and particular, is contained and preserved in another’s (i.e. in the state) interest and end.’ It is from the daily exertion (and self-conscious realization) of this form of trust that “arises the readiness for extraordinary exertions.’ The point here is not about the nature of patriotism but about the way in which the individual may relate to the community – for if a sense of obligation can be cultivated through more ordinary acts and exertions, we may have no need to find deep ‘emotional’ roots, but merely a mixture of rational self-interest, habituation, and cultivation

of a sense of the collective interest. This point is closely linked with another made by Hegel in his comment to the same passage on patriotism, in which he remarks that ‘commonplace thinking often has the impression that force holds the state together, but in fact its only bond is the fundamental sense of order which everybody possesses’ (1952, p. 282). If this interpretation is convincing, the European Union must cultivate its political identity neither in the heroic form of the ‘ultimate sacrifice,’ nor in high-principled forms of constitutional patriotism, but in the more banal sense of citizens’ growing perception that the Union contributes to a fundamental (though multilayered) institutional and legal order within which they can exercise their liberty.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p. 49,50). Additionally, “(...), during the second half of the twentieth century, identification with Europe has included a very special relationship to violence and war. Learning from the two world wars, identification with Europe usually meant avoiding conflict and violence against ethnic or religious groups in Europe, rather than glorifying a war of independence as in many European nations and former colonies. European identity, today, is not grounded in violence, war, and death.” (Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.208)

Therefore in this Master Thesis the expected result is to detect mainly post-national, Soft versions of European Identity. Hard European Identity with nation-based ontology is not predicted to be detectable or if it is, it will be at statistically insignificant numbers. However, Soft European Identities of post-national categorization are expected to be detected in large numbers. This expected tendency is a fact attached to the legitimacy issues of the European Union, its democratic deficit and its lack of a Political Community.

3) There seem to be two opposing social phenomena occurring within the Union, one that politicizes identities and another that moves them towards their de-politicization. These two opposing forces, I argue, are crucial to understanding how European Identity forms and develops. The Erasmus Programme has been criticized for its actual capacity to promote favorable political views, stances and agencies towards the EU. However, this approach is quite one-dimensional due to the fact that European Identities are shaped by forces exoteric to and far greater in magnitude than the Erasmus Experience. These forces are known as Politicization and Depoliticization forces that act on European Identities: “At the same time, the search for a European identity is intended to be a way of establishing a common ground for overcoming political differences. Thus, European identity becomes politicized at the very same time as it is invoked as the de-politicized ground on which Europeans should recognize

each other” (Castiglione 2009 p.34). These social phenomena are largely a part and product of the Euro federalist and Eurosceptic political traditions: “In terms of the conception of political identity, Euro-skeptics and enthusiastic Euro-federalists share a similar belief in the dominance of traditional conceptions of (national) statehood and sovereignty, according to which politics (and democratic politics at that) needs a “thick” conception of political identity, necessary to guarantee both political allegiance and social solidarity. This belief can either take a more culturalist (even ethnic, and narrowly nationalistic) turn, or be articulated in a more liberal or civic-democratic language” (Thibaud 1992; Tamir 1993; Millar 1995, 2000 as cited in Castiglione 2009).

4) All these ontology remarks lead to the most important one: that in actuality, **European Identity is found in many forms and definitions of itself in Europe, a social reality that directly affects the way we research it:**“European identities are shaped by factors that are too inchoate to replicate processes of nation-state identity formation. Instead of one strong European identity, we encounter a multiplicity of European identities.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.26). Consequently, “European identities readily combine identification with country, region, or locale with identification with Europe (Bruter 2005; Duchesne and Frogner 1995; Herrmann et al. 2004; Kohli 2000; Malmberg and Stråth 2002; Risse 2004 as cited in HartmutKaelble 2009). Identification with Europe’s internal diversity is implicitly based on the reasonable assumption that Europeans normally prefer multiple identities.” (HartmutKaelble 2009, p.201,202.)

In other words, the complexity of Europe as a political entity inhabited by and composed of 27 other national political entities, each with its own internal differentiations, results into complex and plural European Political identities. To put that into perspective, European Political Identity 1) Is in harmony, with National Identity 2) Has no finite definition and is found in many forms that vary from individual to individual since it relates the latter to an equally complex and plural European Political Community and 3) is a product of Political Projects and Social Processes that either politicize or depoliticize the individual. Finally 4) it should include a self- categorization of the individual as a European, a categorization that includes all 3 previous elements. Finally it suggests 5) that said self- categorization should result into more active citizenship and political action towards Europe from the individual’s

part. All the above has as their legal basis the Article 8 of the Maastricht Treaty⁶¹ in which European Citizenship is defined.

With regards to all the above elements, European Political Identity as a Project is defined by Checkel and Katzenstein as follows: “(...) European identity is a political construction project undertaken by various national or supranational elites.” (Katzenstein and Checkel 2009 p.3) Additionally, Castiglione is pretty clear when he states that “(...) the construction of European political identity does not necessarily rest on a definite conception of what it is to be European. This is so for two reasons – one related to the transformation of the very conception of political identification with one’s own community in modern societies, and the other to the mixed nature of the European Union as a multilevel polity comprising both intergovernmental and supranational levels of governance. Any normative discourse about political identity in Europe must accommodate these two realities.” (Castiglione 2009).

Checkel and Katzenstein see 2 distinct kinds of it in the Union, Cosmopolitan and Populist ones. The first, “Cosmopolitan European identities are shaped in part by the liberalization of national markets in the wake of the Single European Act (1987) and the process of market opening in an era of globalization.” while the other “Populist conceptions of European identities have cultural and ethnic rather than political content. (...) With holes in the welfare net growing at the same time that the size of socially marginalized and politically vulnerable populations increases, the appeal of “integralism” (Holmes 2000 as cited in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p. 12) is now firmly embedded in European politics. The political and social integration of ethnic and cultural minorities is a task that populist conceptions of European identities regard as a threat. “Europe for Europeans” rallies the supporters of an illiberal political project.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.12) Whether ERASMUS displays the characteristics of a European Identity Project (Focus on Political Citizenship and appeal to and motivated by elite level politics) or not is discussed in Chapter 4.2. However it must be noted, here and now that Erasmus is a 30-year-old European Identity Project, one with great success in numbers but perhaps less in actual content, since the Union has changed considerably since the Programme’s initial inception.

However, as I have argued above, what also interests me is European Political Identity as a Social Process. If ERASMUS is proved to be a Project due to it being an elite construction that

⁶¹ TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION (92/C 191/01) accessed in 18-12-16 from https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/legal/pdf/maastricht_en.pdf

mainly attracts other elites and is designed to reinforce political citizenship (see Chapter 4.2) then there is a strong possibility that it may also act as a European Identity Process inciter with the same goals. The premise I theorize that occurs is that as the returned Erasmus students resume their lives back at their nation-state of origin or somewhere else abroad, they also continue to be agents with their own and perhaps altered (positively/negatively) views, stances and agencies on the issue of their European Political Identities. They are essentially more politicized when it comes to the European Union. If they achieve such a state of mind it will mostly be without any Elites present to supervise such a Process. How do they refer to and act towards the European Union and European Identities after their Erasmus Experience?

European Identity as a Social Process is defined by Checkel and Katzenstein as: “At other times, though, we are dealing with processes along different scales of social mediation and exchange, including **deliberation and communication, social networks**, commodity circulation, and political bargaining. These may occur along European, national, subnational–regional, as well as transnational–global lines. From this vantage point, the evolution of European identities is the result of open-ended processes that give space to actors pursuing their specific political projects, without assuming either that they will come to full fruition, or that they will end in total failure.”(Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.2,3). This directly relates to the returned Erasmus students as actors who after their Erasmus Experience a) deliberate, b) communicate and 3) engage in networking as active European Citizens. Did their Erasmus Experience play a role in this?

ERASMUS, I argue, is such a European Identity Project that bears all the above characteristics; a European Political Identity Project that was created in order to incite Social Processes of political self-identification by politicizing the students who stay politicized even years after their initial Erasmus Experience. The detection of a **convergence upon which a European Identity Political Project results into European Identity Social Processes, I argue, is the most crucial element this Master Thesis tries to detect and, in my opinion, the true standard by which ERASMUS should be tested as a European Identity creation Experience.**

The predicted Social Processes should surface in the form of a tendency, from the part of the student to participate, or at least express a stronger will to take part in, the political arenas of the European Union, simply put, become a more active European citizen. The Erasmus

Programme itself, thusly, is regarded as a **nexus** where a European Identity Political Project is intentionally translated into European Identity Social Processes. I theorize that the Erasmus Students experience what is regarded as the image of the full potential of a truly united Europe and afterwards are expected to behave favorably towards European Integration in its liberal and cosmopolitan values and are encouraged therefore to being active sociopolitical actors, active European citizens, even years after their Erasmus experience. I further theorize that the desired result is for the student, to have his/her European Identity politicized in a **cosmopolitan** and **liberal** manner within the Erasmus European Identity Project and being encouraged to be a politically active individual that will act favorably towards the European Union, promoting it and its values within his/her member-state of origin. The theorized desired effect is for the student to return home and promote the Union, creating Social Processes of his/her own that in turn kick start other European Identity Projects.

With all this in mind, “Kaelble (in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p. 24) unravels **five different strands of identification with Europe** which I use in order to determine which of them all is the most dominant amongst the students: 1) Identification with a Europe superior to all other civilizations is perhaps the oldest of these. 2) Second, identification with Europe’s internal heterogeneity as a sign of vitality and strength may well be the harbinger of a new form of Euro-centrism. 3) Third, identification with a distinctive European lifestyle and European values is at times so much taken for granted that Europeans are not even aware of it. 4) A fourth characteristic is the caution and restraint of identification with Europe: Europe has no resemblance to a traditional nation-state (where the formation of a national consciousness precedes the process of state formation) and only a faint resemblance to a state-nation (where the temporal sequence processes of state and nation creation are reversed). 5) Finally, identification with Europe is no longer grounded either in violence and death or in strong political hierarchies.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 p.24) European Identity as a Process bears those 5 characteristics. All 5 identification forms are expected to be detected in the returned Erasmus students (more on the five strands of identification in Chapter 4.3). However only the first 3 and No. 5 are predicted to be present in statistically significant numbers.

In sum, ERASMUS, as a European Identity Project is dually defined as following:

A) European Identity Project must be 1) **Created by and appealing to** the national and supranational **Elites of the Union** and 2) Focus on **Political Citizenship**. Chapter 4.2 attempts to detect those 2 defining characteristics in the Erasmus Programme's legislative evolution over the past 30 years as well as in its performances as they are documented by previous research and the official administrations. More importantly, the students must also have detectable tendencies to be or want to become more politically or civically active after their Erasmus Experience. They must also belong to the elites of their country in their majority. The questionnaire should provide answers as to those elements.

B) As a European Identity Process Inciter ERASMUS must push its participants (the students) to view the Union, the European Identity and the European Political Community (even after extended periods of time) in one or more of the first 3 of the 5 types of identification with Europe presented by Hartmut Kaelble (2009). These types of identification should be detectable in the questionnaire I present the students with. Whichever type appears to be the most dominant is expected to also give hints as to what type of European Political Identities emerge mostly from the Erasmus Experience (national-based, post-national, cosmopolitan, populist/nationalist) and even what Integration forces (Politicization and Depoliticization) affect those European Identities. Additionally, with Checkel and Katzenstein's definition of what a European Identity Process should amount up to, for ERASMUS to act as an inciter of such Processes, the students who return home should be more politically active. In particular they should express the following tendencies **without any sort of Elite supervision**: 1) High Education Level 2) Young Age 3) Knowledge of foreign languages 4) Long-term experience of other Member-States 5) Promotion of the Union to others after the Mobility 5) Living in other Member-State after the Mobility 6) Participation in conferences, political organizations, and parties. 6) Knowledge of the Union and its inner workings 7) the feeling of being bound both to the Union's values and principles as well as to other Member States' individuals 8) Long-term attachment to the Union and long-term positive political activity towards the Union.

4.2 Defining the Terms- The National and European Dimension of Higher Education Policy

In Chapter 3.1 I made a primary argument for Erasmus falling into the category of European Identity Projects. According to Checkel and Katzenstein's distinction, the characteristics of such a Project are: 1) designed by elite politics, 2) appeal to the elites and 3) focus on politicizing the individuals. In Chapter 3.1, while describing the importance of the Programme's initial goals it became apparent that the conceptualization of the Programme was a top-down process, so much that even the Member States themselves had reservations-a fact that led the supranational institutions to take the initiative for its creation: "It should be stressed that European activities in fact lacked a legal basis for action. Education was considered to be a national issue. Nevertheless, states that "ironically, the lack of a legal basis for action (...) gave the European Commission a great deal of freedom for creative programmatic action in the field of education during the period after 1982, a freedom and creativity that would have been less within a more formal legal structure"." (De Wit 2002, p. 52 as cited in the "External evaluation of Erasmus institutional and national impact" Reinout van Brakel, Jeroen Huisman, Anneke Luijten-Lub, Mattijs Maussen, Marijk van der Wende 2004)

While the fact alone that it was the European Commission that kick-started ERASMUS could very well place it as a European Identity Project, I decided that a separate chapter should be present in this Thesis that would, in detail, explain my rationale for electing to view ERASMUS as an Identity Project, something that, to my knowledge, has never been attempted before. There are two steps in detecting the three characteristics that define ERASMUS as a European Identity Project: First of all, the Programme's 30-year legal and actual existence as part of the E.A.C.E.A (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency) and secondly the answers the students have provided through the questionnaire regarding the same issues.

Firstly, it is noteworthy to start by stating that ERASMUS is not alone in this reality. Over the decades the Union has been receiving a lot of criticism on the fact that most of the policies are being decided on the supranational level of governance, via intergovernmental means and "behind closed doors". To provide some scientific background on this, I use Juan Diez Medrano's work which focuses on European Political Identity as a Project "from a public

discourse perspective.” (Medrano 2009 p.82) He argues that “in the past decade or so, political elites in Europe have emphasized a republican rather than a cultural political identity for Europe, and they have remained relatively silent about the EU’s social dimension. They have thus triggered resistance to European integration efforts among alienated segments of the population that are fearful of growing cultural diversity in Europe and sensitive to the negative impact that globalization may have on their wages, job prospects, and working conditions. (...) while political elites agree on the desirability of strengthening the EU’s political dimension and on a multilevel distribution of competences, they disagree on the further transfer of sovereignty to the EU (especially in the areas falling under the second pillar) and on the division of power among the various EU institutions. (...) Political elites like to invoke citizens when justifying their positions on European integration, and they tend to blame them when explaining crises in the integration process.”

“Citizens are rarely invited to participate in the integration process; and when they are, political elites tend to interpret what they say with a great deal of discretion”. (Medrano 2009 pp. 106,7) Medrano also detects “a mismatch between elite consensus and citizen divisions on its cultural and social agenda, as well as on divisions between national political elites regarding the transfer of sovereignty to the EU. This is probably what one should expect as the EU transforms itself from a market into a multilevel system of governance.” (Medrano 2009 pp. 106,7)

Medrano goes on to describe how this affects serious issues that the Union is still facing, even 8 years after his work was published: “(...) Across Europe, however, the citizens are split regarding its cultural identity and social model. The rise of the far right and the anti-globalization movements testify to this split. This means that in the short run, a European political leadership that clearly sides with one of the poles of the citizens’ preferences must pay a price, and the price is the potential loss of legitimacy and the prospect that some of its proposals will be defeated in referenda. In this context, the EU leaders’ temptation to depoliticize the EU again is likely to be strong (...). The prospect of a depoliticized EU should not lead to the expectation that further reforms will proceed smoothly. Whereas the mismatch between the elites’ high degree of consensus on cultural and social issues and the growing cleavages on these issues among the population risks derailing some of the EU’s projects, dissent among national political elites on the desirability of further transfers of sovereignty to the EU slow down the resolution of crises and the design of the EU’s

architecture." (Medrano 2009 pp. 107,8) It becomes clear that the E.U currently suffers from a still persistent divide⁶² between key parts of its population, an extremely problematic situation that is still not anywhere close to being resolved. But how does all this affect the Education Policies of the Union?

As far for the particular case of the National and European Dimension of Higher Education, and my argument that it is a mainly Elite-driven political arena is concerned, Fotini Asderaki's work on the development of E.A.C.E. indirectly points out that the role the various Elites of the Union played in its conception and development was and still is nothing short of nearly absolute. Firstly, Asderaki achieves her primary goal which was to prove that E.A.C.E.A has been brought forth by a type of International Regime⁶³ as it has coordinated many different states into accepting a single set of goals and principles in the policy area of Higher Education. Asderaki begins by showing that the epistemic communities, as Elites, had a hand in this: "Adler and Haas (1992:373 as cited in Asderaki 2008) highlight that the epistemic communities influence the creation and the conservation of international regimes by playing a deciding role in four phases of the political process: 1) Policy innovation 2) Policy Diffusion 3) Policy Selection and 4) Policy Persistence." (Asderaki 2008; pp.114)

It is beyond this Thesis' limits to go into depth about the aforementioned phases. However it is important to point out that "The epistemic communities, by deciding the framework of the discussion about an issue that occupies the governments, they essentially clarify the framework of the issue or problem that demands to be dealt cooperatively. By positing themselves the discussion's framework, they essentially create the suitable climate to empower their position through the diffusion of their ideas, exerting by those means even more influence on the governments which executives usually don't have great knowledge over the specialized subject." (Asderaki 2008 pp.115).

Asderaki goes on to describe how the European Education Policy emerged and proceeded. In her work it becomes obvious that the particular field of policy was no more or less than a

⁶²More than four in ten Europeans agree that their "voice counts in the EU" (42%), after a second consecutive increase (+2 percentage points since autumn 2016, +4 since spring 2016). This is the highest score achieved by this indicator since autumn 2004, and has been reached for the third time, after spring 2014 and spring 2015. Conversely, more than half of Europeans continue to disagree that their voice counts in the EU (52%, -2), while 6% (unchanged) answer that they 'don't know'. (Standard Eurobarometer 87, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2142> (accessed in 18/8/17)

⁶³ For more information on Regime Theory see: Krasner, Stephen D. (ed). 1983. *International Regimes*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

combination of competition between and fragmented cooperation of the Union's various elites. For example: "During the postwar era, the European universities are given the chance to operate outside of the narrow and at times suffocating contexts and act on the international and peripheral level. Simultaneously they are given the unique opportunity to function on the one hand as caterers to the national elites as well as the elites of new international organizations and on the other as spiritual and even political actors to the restructuring of the postwar order." (Asderaki 2008 pp. 160) She further points out that other Elite groups like NATO and WEU (Western- European Union, 1948) contributed to the formation of university cooperation (Asderaki 2008 pp.161). The chief Elite group that in Asderaki's view "played a decisive role in the cooperation on matters of Education at the European level, until the establishing of the meetings of the Ministers of Education in the supranational level (...)" was none other than the Council of Europe (1949).

It appears that even intensive elite competition like Charles De Gaulle's⁶⁴ infamous "Empty Chair Politics"⁶⁵ did not take away matters of Education Policy out of the hands of the Union's Elites at any point. "Despite the stance of the French, the cooperation on matters of education is not absent from the –of French design- Fouchet plans for the formation of a Union of States." (Asderaki 2008; pp.168). It appears that indeed, ERASMUS, as an Education Policy itself, was always an issue handled solely by the Union's Elites. What is even more telling on ERASMUS' emergence as an elite competition-cooperation result is Franck Biancheri's⁶⁶ (2007) first-hand-experience and David Carayol's subsequent chronological recording of the issue. While Carayol emphasizes a bottom-up inspiration by the student

⁶⁴ "Charles de Gaulle, in full Charles André Joseph Marie de Gaulle (born November 22, 1890, Lille, France—died November 9, 1970, Colombey-les-deux-Églises), French soldier, writer, statesman, and architect of France's Fifth Republic. (...) From 1962 until his reelection as president in 1965, de Gaulle used the European Economic Community (EEC; now part of the European Union) to serve French interests, especially agricultural interests. France's participation in the supranational North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was progressively withdrawn, because de Gaulle's policy for France was one of "national independence" and of international cooperation based only on agreements between nation-states." Britannica Encyclopedia, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-de-Gaulle-president-of-France> (accessed in 17/09/2017)

⁶⁵ "As from July 1965, in opposition to a slew of Commission proposals addressing, among other things, the financing of the Common Agricultural Policy, France boycotted the meetings of the Council and insisted on a political agreement concerning the role of the Commission and majority voting if it were to participate again. This episode in European history is known as the 'empty chair crisis'. This crisis was resolved thanks to the Luxembourg compromise (January 1966), which states that 'when vital interests of one or more countries are at stake members of the Council will endeavour to reach solutions that can be adopted by all while respecting their mutual interests.' " (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:xy0025> accessed in 17/08/2017)

⁶⁶ Franck Biancheri (11 March 1961 – 30 October 2012) was the founder of the New Europeans European political party and the leader from June 2006.^[1] The party planned to run for campaigns in the European Parliament election, 2009 in all EU member states simultaneously. Biancheri had previously founded the European Students' Forum (AEGEE) in 1985 and the thinktank LEAP/Europe2020 in 1998.

community⁶⁷ as a pressure factor on the elite political arena, it was ultimately elite-level politics⁶⁸ that played the deciding role. If anything, what is telling is that it was a small group of the young educated elite of the times and not mass public politics that pressed for the birth of the Programme. In that regard, along with its goals which I discussed in Chapter 3.1, ERASMUS can be defined with even more certainty as a European Identity Project.

Finally, on element No.3, whether the Programme aims at the politicization of the participants, in Chapter 3, pp.19, I portrayed Erasmus' goals as they were set by the European Institutions which have, over the past decade, not only praised but even pushed the attention to the Programme's success: "The Commission takes pride in ERASMUS because it 'stands out as one of the most concrete and popular examples of the progress achieved during fifty years of European integration' (Europa Press Releases, 2006).⁸ As the Commission president José Manuel Barroso said, 'ERASMUS has developed beyond just

⁶⁷ "According to the European Council of Education ministers, the main problem was the budget! While the brand new 'objective 92 of the common market had just been decided on, international student exchanges were at that time mainly with the United States, and everyone was certain this was going to remain the same ... In fact, the real issue was not so much budgetary but rather political, not amongst the top level political leaders ... but at senior officials level. The administrations of the three key countries, Germany, France and United Kingdom were not at all happy to see this 'occupied field' – of education – be placed outside of their national grip. That was the first lesson for the AEGEE founders concerning the 'hidden' power and influence exercised by the public administrations on public policies... and this is true for the European level as well! As for the national Student Unions, at the best they were indifferent, but they were mainly merely against Erasmus. At the beginning of 1987, the AEGEE Europe team - after meeting Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, Belgian Prime Minister, Wilfried Martens and Helmut Kohl counselors – conscious of the rising risk of ERASMUS flopping, organized a meeting with President Mitterand via a well introduced contact at Elysée Palace. The team was indeed informed thanks to its contacts at European Commission level that the key countries for the adoption of the Programme were France; Germany and UK and that they would unblock their budgets only if France would make the first move! All the mobilized team had only one goal at that time: to convince French President of the necessity to push for the creation of the ERASMUS Programme. And Franck Biancheri narrated the anecdotes of the President, visibly badly informed – in fact not informed at all – about the risk of the failure of ERASMUS, like a school teacher talking to his pupils, telling them about the story of the European construction. And the courage he needed to dare say in the middle of the meal, that obviously the President had not understood why they had come! And how within an atmosphere which you could have cut, and already thinking they would be escorted back to the forecourt of the Elysée by the Republican Guards, the team was pleasantly surprised to see the President totally change his attitude, attentive, and announcing the following day to the media that he would support the Programme "and that he found it unacceptable that a few million ECUs were not available for the Programme when billions were spent on agriculture..." Carayol David, 2007 as found in <http://www.bitsofnews.com/content/view/4606/> (accessed in 16/08/2017)

⁶⁸ It is without a doubt that the Erasmus Programme signaled the development of cooperations in the field of Higher Education and the establishing of the mobility of students and professors. The Programme was approved after many months of hard negotiations, thanks to the Commission's insistence, especially Delors' who appealed to the European Council of London (5-6th of December 1986) to bend the Ministers' and the Education Commission's reactions. (...) The Programme Erasmus I (1987-1990) was adopted unanimously by the Council on June 15th of 1987 after 15 months of negotiations since the expansion of the supranational activity, mainly the Commission's extended role, was met yet another time by the reactions of the Member-States, primarily of the German Lander ones. The Commission's proposal was based on Article 128, but the Council added the Article 235. That gave the Commission the excuse to appeal to the European Court of Justice against the Council. The U.K, Germany and France were present and favored the Council. The Court's decision places irrefutably Higher Education under the Article 128 of the Treaty, with the exception of research. (...) Although the U.K and Ireland were against the Programme's adoption, they accepted the largest number of students in contrast to Greece and Germany (...)" (Asderaki 2008 pp. 202)

being an educational Programme. It gives many European university students the chance for living for the first time in a foreign country, and it has reached the status of a social and cultural phenomenon' (Europa Press Releases, 2006). The truth is that ERASMUS was never 'just an educational Programme'. From its inception it was expected to play a key role in the promotion of a European identity among the younger generations of Europeans. This is clearly reflected in the official objectives of the Programme, as stated in the original Council Decision of 1987" (Sigalas 2009, p.8)

Looking at objective No. 4 (see pp.19), the Commission established ERASMUS with the development of a European Identity in mind, taking as given that the participants (the students) would, as citizens of the Union, interact and finally realize a "People's Europe"; become Europeans. This component is crucial for the current Thesis as it proves the will of the major political units of measure, the European Institutions of the time and the Member States, to work towards a top – down European Identity Project- ERASMUS. In that regard, Erasmus was created in order to positively politicize, among other things, the European youths.

There are however issues -in the context of the European Dimension of Higher Education- with the Programme's actual capability to mass-produce European citizens who are politically engaged in the Union as a Political Community. These are mainly issue of the Programmes structure and function: The Member States of the Union have already set a goal for the Programme: ERASMUS is supposed to have served as a student exchange vista for 20%⁶⁹ of the total EU student population. This is certainly not feasible in the near future with the Programme's current budget which has been nearly doubled⁷⁰already (by 40%). Furthermore, a part of the Programme's success also appears to be its Achilles' heel simultaneously: With the European Commission only having a budgetary and evaluative/supervising role⁷¹ in its function- not an executive one- it is only the Member

⁶⁹ Council conclusions on the modernisation of higher education 3128th EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE and SPORT Council meeting Brussels, 28 and 29 November 2011 (accessed in 16/09/2017)
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/126375.pdf

⁷⁰ Erasmus Facts, Figures & Trends The European Union support for student and staff exchanges and university cooperation in 2013-2014
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-facts-figures_en.pdf (accessed in 16/09/2017)

⁷¹The implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme is largely done through indirect management. The European Commission delegates implementation tasks to National Agencies established in each Programme Country, as provided for by Article 58.1(c) of the Financial Regulation⁴. National authorities monitor and supervise the management of the Programme at national level. (COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

States' political will and confidence in the Programme that can lead to further and wider implementation. Such a heavily intergovernmental policy design faces the inherent flaw of not being actually massive (something that a supranational executive function could easily circumvent) but in truth highly fragmented and disproportionate in all but name. Imbalances as such are abundant; there are countries that send out more students in comparison to others as a means to boost their economies (Latvia, Lithuania and Spain) or simply because of cultural proximity to the practice (Luxembourg, Liechtenstein). Other countries receive the most students due to their social and political capital (Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy)⁷², a trend also obvious in this research (see Table No.3). Greece in particular is not only in the midst of all those issues but also a victim of its own slow bureaucratic structure⁷³ and problematic⁷⁴ reception of the Programme's legislative frame. Even today, there are still no fully-in-English⁷⁵ educational Programmes in the participant universities, something completely baffling to both students and academics on all sides of the debate. In all those aspects and especially in the case of Greece, the European Identity Project of ERASMUS, as the title suggests, truly remains **unfinished**.

4.3 Defining the Terms- Mobility in the context of the Politicization and Depoliticization forces of the E.U

We have established so far that ERASMUS bears almost all the characteristics of a European Identity Project. The final characteristic, it highly appealing to the elites of the Union, can only and will only be answered by the students themselves. But **why choose Students** to detect European Identity in the first place? It is at this point that I follow Neil Fligstein's

of 17.8.2017 on the adoption of the 2018 annual work Programme for the implementation of "Erasmus+": the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport as found in https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/c-2017-5652_en.pdf (accessed on 17/09/2017)

⁷² Erasmus Facts, Figures & Trends The European Union support for student and staff exchanges and university cooperation in 2013-2014

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-facts-figures_en.pdf (accessed in 16/09/2017)

⁷³ "The implementation of all the above mentioned Programmes, face a major problem in Greece due to the fragmentation of responsibilities to several Ministries and decentralized National Agencies, or Organizations." Asderaki, F. and D. Maragos 2014

⁷⁴ "The problem with the case of Greece is that the European intervention, even with a mobility Programme such as Erasmus, was perceived as a thread by the local pressure groups (student organizations, ΠΟΣΔΕΠ). Additionally, while Greece was an active member in the Bologna process, in actuality it shows many malfunctions in its implementation, mainly because the process was demonized in the national level (Asderaki 2011 as cited in Maragos 2014).

⁷⁵ 'Kathimerini' newspaper (in Greek) "Greece's strong fingerprint on Erasmus" 20-6-2017 <http://www.kathimerini.gr/914718/article/epikairothta/ellada/isxyro-ellhniko-apotypwma-sto-erasmus> (accessed in 16/09/2017)

(2009) argument on who are expected to mostly likely be “the Europeans”: Fligstein’s reading of Karl Deutch’s theory, while targets one common and collective European Identity, -something that I have already explained to be extremely difficult if at all possible to actually detect, especially in small n studies like mine- it does however provide helpful insight as to where such an Identity is most probable to occur. According to Fligstein, “If there is going to be a European national identity, it will arise from people who **associate with each other across national boundaries and experience that association in a positive way.** As European economic, social, and political fields have developed, they imply the routine interaction of people from different societies. It is the people involved in these routine interactions who are most likely to come to see themselves as Europeans and involved in a European national project. They will come to see that their counterparts in other countries are more like them than unlike them, and to relate to their counterparts as part of an overarching group in Europe, “Europeans.”

Fligstein proceeds then to define the groups of people who are more likely to feel European. Among these are: “**Young people who travel across borders for schooling, tourism, and jobs (often for a few years after college) are also likely to be more European.** Educated people who share common interests with educated people around Europe – such as similar professions, interests in charitable organizations, or social and cultural activities like opera or art – will be interested in travel and social interaction with people in other societies. People with higher incomes will travel more and participate in the diverse cultural life across Europe. They will have the money to spend time enjoying the good life in other places.” (Fligstein 2009, pp. 137)

The underlying argument Fligstein tries to bring forth is that Karl Deutch’s term of Mobility is still very much relevant for the European Identity, despite the ever-growing as of late Politicization and Depoliticization forces that challenge the Union. I devoted Chapter 4.1 to the definition of the two terms. What are their effects when it comes to the Mobility of students?

First of all, the Politicization of European Identities can take any form in the political spectrum, from cosmopolitan to populist. In particular, “these cosmopolitan and populist conceptions of identity differ in both the form and the content of politicization. Cosmopolitan conceptions appeal to and are motivated by **elite-level politics.** Populist

conceptions reflect and respond to **mass politics**. Cosmopolitan conceptions focus on political citizenship and rights. Populist conceptions center on issues of social citizenship and cultural authenticity. Cosmopolitan European identities are shaped in part by the liberalization of national markets in the wake of the Single European Act (1987) and the process of market opening in an era of globalization. Identity change in response to market developments reflects shifting economic self-interests. (...)” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 pp. 11,2) So where do young people, like students come into this equation?

“Many of Europe’s young, in particular, are exploring alternative lifestyles that take an apolitical or anti-political form today, but that conceal a reservoir of oppositional politics ready to be tapped by political leaders. With holes in the welfare net growing at the same time that the size of socially marginalized and politically vulnerable populations increases, the appeal of “integralism” (Holmes 2000 as cited in Checkel and Katzenstein 2009) is now firmly embedded in European politics. The political and social integration of ethnic and cultural minorities is a task that populist conceptions of European identities regard as a threat. “Europe for Europeans” rallies the supporters of an illiberal political project.” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 pp. 12)

Jeffrey Checkel and Peter Katzenstein wrote their collective volume back in 2009. The Union has faced many more troubles (Sebastian Rosato, 2011) since then. However, even at that time the Union had already begun to face the rise of more and more populist versions of European Identities: “Cosmopolitan and populist forms of European identity politics have varied in their salience. In the 1980s and 1990s, cosmopolitanism appeared to be winning out over populism. During the last decade, however, debates concerning a possible European constitution and controversies surrounding the process of enlargement have created a deeply politicized environment where the future of European identity looks anything but settled. Today, neither identity project can avoid the inescapable social fact of a growing number of migrants who are attracted by the vision of a social, prosperous, and peaceful Europe. These contrasting identities draw on different layers of memories and political practices, which are activated politically in the context of a relevant, or threatening, ‘other.’” (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009 pp. 13)

If the forces of Politicization result into European Identities with more populist than cosmopolitan components can this also affect a European Identity Project like ERASMUS and

the participant students? In chapter 4.2 I showed that ERASMUS is deeply imbedded, as a European Education Policy that focuses on Citizenship (Mitchell 2012), in the European Elites' field of supervision and intervention. In Checkel and Katzenstein's theoretical lenses, this places ERASMUS, as a liberal and cosmopolitan Project, mainly **under the Depoliticization force's range**.

Mobility therefore, as a deutch European Citizenship factor, suffers as well. The Depoliticization force has surely affected the Erasmus Programme regarding its goals: "To be sure, Erasmus serves several aims, such as strengthening participants' human capital and integrating the European labour market (Khun quoting Papatsiba 2009). Moreover, the promotion of a European identity is not as important a policy goal of Erasmus as it used to be. This development needs to be seen in the broader context of changing priorities of European education policy. Very early on, European policy makers recognized the potential of education as a means of fostering the ties between the nascent European polity and the population (Khun quoting Keating 2009). However, this changed in the 1990ies. Amid rapid sectoral changes and precipitating globalization of education, European policy makers increasingly understood education as an economic commodity to be used to foster Europeans' employability and to advance the EU as a knowledge-based society (Khun quoting Walkenhorst 2008: 576; see also Pépin 2007)." (Khun 2012 pp.7)

In sum, no elite-guided or bottom-up sociopolitical phenomenon can escape the Politicization and Depoliticization forces that act in and on the European Union. Mobility is no exception to this rule, much less the Erasmus Programme. European Identities form too randomly and erratically outside of what a single Educational Programme can control. Young people like students are as much, if not even more, susceptible to populist or cosmopolitan notions that, in turn, can be driven either from the Elites level or from mass politics. All that, while they are participating to a Programme that itself is affected by the same factors. Either way, some form of effect will be there. That is why, what matters, in my view, is if those European Identities, no matter their context, result into more active European Citizenship.

4.4 ERASMUS and European Identity: The five possible strands of identification with Europe and their meaning

In this Chapter I take the 5 predicted possible identifications with Europe the returned Erasmus students can possess and define their characteristics which should be detectable by the method of questionnaire. Again, in sum, the 5 strands of identification with Europe according to Hartmut Kaelble are: “1) Identification with a Europe superior to all other civilizations is perhaps the oldest of these. 2) Second, identification with Europe’s internal heterogeneity as a sign of vitality and strength may well be the harbinger of a new form of Euro-centrism. 3) Third, identification with a distinctive European lifestyle and European values is at times so much taken for granted that Europeans are not even aware of it. 4) A fourth characteristic is the caution and restraint of identification with Europe: Europe has no resemblance to a traditional nation-state (where the formation of a national consciousness precedes the process of state formation) and only a faint resemblance to a state-nation (where the temporal sequence processes of state and nation creation are reversed). 5) Finally, identification with Europe is no longer grounded either in violence and death or in strong political hierarchies.”

Secondly, I place my own 10 factors that affect the existence and promotion of more active citizenship and political agency. These are: 1) High Education Level 2) Young Age 3) Knowledge of foreign languages 4) Long-term experience of other Member-States 5) Promotion of the Union to others after the Mobility 6) Living in other Member-State after the Mobility 7) Participation in conferences, political organizations, and parties. 8) Knowledge of the Union and its inner workings 9) the feeling of being bound both to the Union’s values and principles as well as to other Member States’ individuals 10) Long-term attachment to the Union and long-term positive political activity towards the Union.

4.4.1 The Five Strands of Identification with Europe

1) Identification with Europe as superior to all other civilizations

“First, identification with a superior Europe, more advanced than all other societies of the world and in all fields of human endeavor: economy, political institutions, warfare, technology, science, urban planning, education as well as the arts, lifestyle, and social

organization. Europe was seen as the harbinger of progress for the world, sometimes linked to concepts of culture, at other times to concepts of race. This was the predominant identification of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some European critics, to be sure, regarded Europe's superiority as a disadvantage, a burden, even a menace for the non-European world. Tending to idealize the non-commercialized China, India, or Africa, they were in a clear minority. In recent decades the view of European superiority is the rarely articulated in public and exists for the most part only as a concealed or suppressed worldview. A second identification is with European inferiority – cultural, economic, political, or moral – in the face of a threat posed by the outside world. It expresses the fear of decline and of Europe's colonization by others.(...) A third identification focuses on Europe as part of the modernized world and as an actor in a mission of global modernization. Although non-European societies such as the US have played the leading role, Europe is an important, indeed indispensable, part of modernity. This identification was particularly common between the 1950s and 1970s and has become less compelling since the 1980s. A fourth identification with Europe sees it as one civilization among several others, endowed with both positive and negative traits, engaged in friendly competition with other non-European societies and civilizations, learning from others and exporting its own ideas and practices to other parts of the world, appreciative of immigration from other parts of the world as an enriching experience.”(Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.198,9,200)

Therefore, students who appear to 1) Show affection towards Europe by considering Europe to be superior to other societies like China, India or Africa 2) Are concerned about the decline of the EU because of its prolonged and continuous contact with other societies due to globalization and 3) Perceive Europe as having the burden to modernize other societies, can be considered to fall under the first type of identification with Europe. Such Greek students' answers are expected to show up in significant statistical results.

2) Identification with Europe's Internal Diversity

Because of the EU becoming a “readily identifiable center of power” that “began to be viewed as a threat to European diversity of culture”, the “conservation of Europe's diversity in the arts, sciences, intellectual and political culture became an alternative source of identification with Europe. For this conception of identity, Europe's unity in diversity offers an attractive paradox. Here, identification is constituted at its core by the appreciation of

differences among countries, regions, political orientations and individuals. The interest in and tolerance of the different “other” and a culture of individualism of persons and collectivities, is seen as a humanitarian achievement and also as a major stimulant for economic and cultural innovation, as well as for effective democratic institutions. This celebration of Europe’s strength and its harbinger of modernity tends toward Euro-centrism. It typically presumes, quite erroneously, that in its internal differentiation, Europe is unrivaled among the world’s major civilizations. (...) Identification with Europe’s internal diversity is implicitly based on the reasonable assumption that Europeans normally prefer multiple identities.” (Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.200,1,2,3,)

Subsequently, students who 1) Show affection towards Europe but at the same time feel highly connected to their country, region, cities and villages and 2) Especially and very strongly favor the EU’s policies of preserving and protecting cultural and political diversity fall under the second type of identification with Europe. It is expected from the tested students that they converge in high statistical numbers to that option.

3) Identification with European Values and Lifestyles

“During the period of politicization of the EU, identification with European lifestyles and values increased, a lived and often un-reflected identification with a way of life rather than a self-consciously adopted political program. This identification is rooted in consumption and consumer tastes, work and leisure, family life, and cities and landscapes but also in values such as a well-developed social security systems, secularization, human rights and tolerance, a strong role for intellectuals, civility, strict limitation on private and public violence (and hence opposition to the death penalty) equality between men and women, and universal education (Joas and Wiegandt 2005; Kaelble 2007b as cited in Kaelble 2009 p.204)

Taking the above into account, students who seem to favor the EU by focusing on how the latter has benefited and ameliorated their lifestyles are expected to be placed under the third type of identification with Europe. However, it should be noted here that Greek students in particular are not expected to show significant numbers of identification in this category as a result of their experiences with the economic recession that still affects the country. More on this can be found in Chapter 4.4.

4) Cautious and restrained Identification with Europe

This type of identification with Europe adopts a more realistic view that is highly relevant to the phenomena observed in Europe of 2017: “Many scholars and public intellectuals argue that, compared to national identities, the identification with Europe is weak in its statistical political and symbolic impact.” (Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.204,5) This thesis, appears however not to be backed by more modern updates⁷⁶ which show that European Citizenship is on the rise for the past 4 years (2013-2016), from a 62% in 2010 to a 66% in 2016. There have been early reports that international phenomena like the withdrawal⁷⁷ of the United Kingdom (popularly known as Brexit) from the European Union and the election⁷⁸ of Donald J. Trump as the President of the United States have rallied European Citizens. Furthermore, as Hartmut Kaelble puts it “the era of politicization of the EU also witnessed numerous inventions of European symbols, often created by the EU: A European anthem, a Europe day, a European Flag, two European charters of rights , the Erasmus program, the buildings of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and Brussels, and finally the euro currency Hedetoft 1998, Jones 2007; Kaelble 2003; Passerini 2003 as cited in .Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.204,5). But only the European flag (blue with twelve golden stars). The Erasmus program, and the EU currency (the euro) have fully succeeded. Relative to national symbols, most other

⁷⁶ As revealed by a recent Eurobarometer (Standard Eurobarometer no.85 Spring, <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/75905> as retrieved in 23/1/17) 28% of the EU citizens feel strongly that they are European Citizens. A 38% feel the same to some extent while a 22% doesn't feel so, accompanied by an 11% that strongly believes they are not feeling European at all. A total of 66% feel a sense of European citizenship, more than half of the population of the EU. Moreover, as far as National Identity is concerned, more than half of the responders appear to have a combined sense of European Citizenship (59% say they feel “nationality and European”, “European and nationality” or “European only”), representing an increase of two percentage points since autumn 2015. Conversely, less than four in ten Europeans define themselves solely by their nationality, a 39%)

⁷⁷ The United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union is widely known as Brexit, a portmanteau of "British" and "exit".[1] Following a referendum held on 23 June 2016, in which 52% of votes cast were in favour of leaving the EU, the UK government intends to invoke Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (the formal procedure for withdrawing) by the end of March 2017. This, within the treaty terms, would put the UK on a course to leave the EU by March 2019. Prime Minister Theresa May, elected by the ruling Conservative Party in the wake of the referendum, has promised a bill to repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and to incorporate existing EU laws into UK domestic law.[2] In January 2017, May announced a 12-point plan of negotiating objectives and confirmed that the UK government would not seek continued membership of the single market.[3] The terms of withdrawal have not yet been negotiated and in the meantime, the UK remains a full member of the European Union. (as retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brexit> on 23/1/2017)

⁷⁸ In June 2015, (Donald Trump) announced his candidacy for the 2016 election, and quickly emerged as the front-runner among 17 contenders in the Republican primaries. His final opponents suspended their campaigns in May 2016, and in July he was formally nominated at the Republican Convention along with Mike Pence as his running mate. His campaign received unprecedented media coverage and international attention. Many of his statements in interviews, on social media, and at campaign rallies were controversial or false. Trump won the general election on November 8, 2016, against Democratic rival Hillary Clinton, and assumed office on January 20, 2017. At age 70, he is the oldest and wealthiest person to assume the presidency, the first without prior military or governmental service, and the fifth elected with less than a plurality of the national popular vote. (as retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Trump on 23/1/17)

European ones have remained weak or ambiguous.” Kaelble points out that the EU has no apparent “Others”, especially after the fall of the Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Adding to that is the “complex relationship” Europe seems to have with national identity. “A final explanation for weak identification with Europe is a relatively weakly developed European public sphere in which a European Identity could be created, renegotiated and reaffirmed.” Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.206,7,8).

What we can extract from all this is that students who do not strongly or at all identify with the EU because they believe that it 1) Has weak hierarchical structure unlike their nation-states of origin, 2) Has no Others to draw collective definitions of itself and 3) Is intertwined with their National identity in a complicated manner, are expected to fall under the 4th category of identification with Europe. It is expected that returned Greek students who are the focus group of this Thesis will have significant statistic results in that category. More on this can be found in Chapter 4.4.

5) Distinctive Identification with Europe

Hartmut Kaelble’s last type depicts identification with Europe as a completely distinctive means of connecting oneself to a community, a means unlike anything before in human history. The main characteristic of this type of identification is that it is definitely unlike the way human beings traditionally connect themselves to their nation-states. This fact alone bestows more characteristics to this final type: “First, identification with Europe does not aim at being a primordial identification, as national identity does in purposefully seeking to displace regional and local identities. It is instead part of an ensemble of multiple identities. (...) Learning from the two world wars, identification with Europe usually meant avoiding conflict and violence against ethnic or religious groups in Europe, rather than glorifying a war of independence as in many European nations and former colonies. European identity today is not grounded in violence, war, and death”. (Hartmut Kaelble 2009 p.208).

Kaelble also points out that the European Institutions also enjoy a different, more distinctive means of appealing to the Europeans who evaluate their policies in their areas of interest. However Kaelble’s data can now be considered as somewhat outdated. As more recent studies show the European Institutions have steadily been getting less and less support from the Union’s citizens, with the decline being sharper and more intense in the years of the

global recession (2009-2016). Today, “Around a third of Europeans trust the European Union (33%). (...) Meanwhile, trust in the national political institutions has remained stable, but at a lower level than trust in the EU: 28% of Europeans tend to trust their national parliament (unchanged) and 27% their national government (unchanged).”(Standard Spring Eurobarometer 85; 2016). While the European Union enjoyed a maximum of 57% in 2007, today only a 33% claims to trust the same set of institutions a figure close to the all-time low of 31% last recorded in early 2014.

QA8a I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

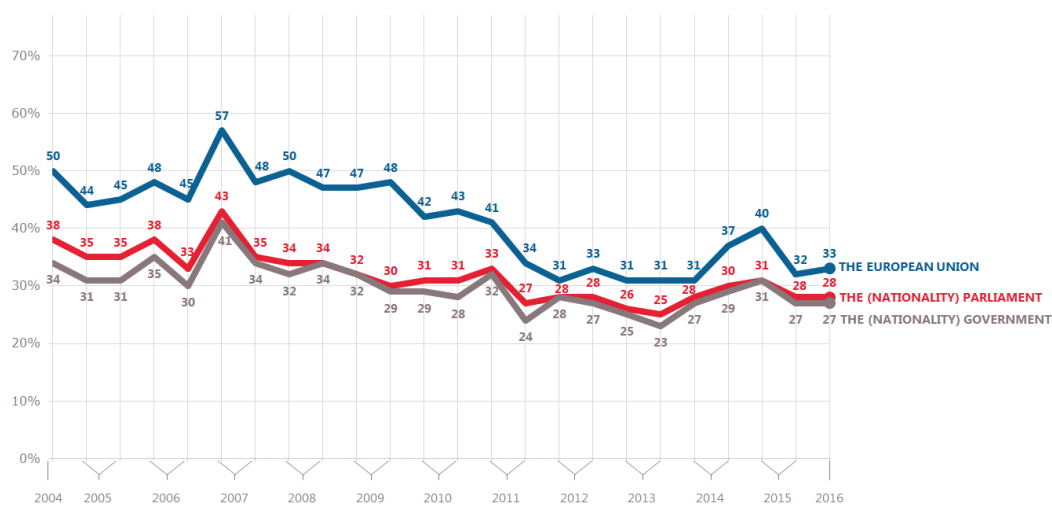


Table retrieved from Standard Spring Eurobarometer 85⁷⁹

Therefore, students who 1) Claim that they do not connect with Europe in the primordial sense (violence, war and death in order to preserve and protect one's collective identity) and show more trust in the European Institutions and their policies belong to the last type of identification with Europe, a type of connecting with a community that sets completely different standards as of what it expects of its citizens. The questionnaire given to the tested students does provide a section that specifically deals with how they regard their European Identities; either Hard or Soft- what they are willing to sacrifice in order to ensure their survival and continuity. It is expected from Greek students to show a perception of a Soft European Identity.

⁷⁹ As retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/75977> on 23/1/17

4.4.2 The Eight European Identity Politicization Factors

1) High Education Level, 2) Young age, 3) Knowledge of foreign languages 4) Knowledge of the Union and its inner workings

As I have shown in Chapter 4.3, it is the youth of the Union that is more likely to be politicized in a way that their European Identities are also Political. It hardly matters whether those politicized identities take the form from cosmopolitan or populist components, result into liberal or illiberal views and stances. What does matter is that they are telling of an active political agency towards the Union. It is therefore expected that the research results will show high statistical relationship between those variables and an attachment towards the E.U.

5) Promotion of the Union to others after the Mobility 6) Participation in conferences, political organizations, and parties.

Again here, Neil Fligstein considers that spending time abroad is a factor that aids the individual to self-categorize as European. A connection between this variable and the Erasmus Experience is vital in order for the Thesis' second Hypothesis to be verified.

7) The feeling of being bound both to the Union's values and principles as well as to other Member States' individuals and 8) Long-term attachment to the Union and long-term positive political activity towards the Union.

So far all the mentioned factors of identity politicization are expected to be telling of a Soft European Political Identity, one in the post-national conception that does not require sacrifice of life, extreme patriotism that is. However, to be sure, I add two more factors that are telling of such a Hard Political Identity. The first describes the Hard Identity Components which are not only a vague attachment to the idea/ ideal of a United Europe and its values and principles, but also a connection to the rest of the actual inhabitants of the European Union. The second and final politicization factor depicts the zero-sum, fully positive attitude towards the European Union as a Political Community, what Habermas' standard of "Constitutional Patriotism." It is not expected of the Greek students to show statistically

significant results when it comes to the above 2 factors' relationship with the independent variable of the Erasmus Experience. The reasons for this are briefly explored in Chapter 4.5.

Having gone through all 5 types of identification with Europe, as well as my own 8 factors of European Identity politicization, it is now pivotal to place them all in the context of Greece, along with the rest of the theoretical framework. Greece, as I will attempt to briefly show in the final sub-chapter, has gone through a catalyst composed of 3 interrelated crises that have altered its State, its social, cultural and even political practices, tendencies and aspirations. Returned Greek ERASMUS students are doubly special in that regard and therefore the next Chapter is devoted to explaining the environment that shapes them.

4.5 Interfering Variables and biases- Greeks, the original Europeans in the midst of multiple crises

The Greeks are under the effects of 3 crises, the Economic Recession of 2008/9 that still ravages the country's economic and social model, the Refugee and Immigrant Crisis of 2015 and the overall Eurozone Crisis which has entered a new stage with the U.K.'s exodus from the Union. These 3 phenomena must be addressed as they are expected to affect the research's results at some level.

4.5.1 Economic Crisis

It is common knowledge at this point that, from the developed countries' group, the one that was hit the hardest by the global recession was Greece. To adequately describe the extent and depth of devastation which the entirety of the country has been subjected to is beyond this Thesis purposes and length. It is however necessary to briefly go over some key numbers that depict the dire situation at which the country's youth, education and research have found themselves in.

The numbers⁸⁰ are very telling. The country's G.D.P had dropped by at least 11% by 2011 and another 10% by 2015. It was only after 2016 that the G.D.P drop began to actually slow

⁸⁰ Data drawn from Pantelis Sklias Nikolaos Tzifakis (ed.) "Greece's Horizons- Reflecting on the country's assets and capabilities" The Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy Series on European and International Affairs Centre for European Studies Publications

down. In rough numbers, the Greeks have lost $\frac{1}{4}$ of their total income. In 2010, the country's unemployment rate was at 12,6% to reach an unprecedented 27,3% by 2013. A very disheartening percentage of the country's total population that risked poverty reached 35,7% at that same year.

That extreme poverty rate, when focused on the **youth population** (18-29 yrs) reaches a 24,4%. The same youth population (18-25 yrs) faces a devastating 44,2% unemployment rate by the end of 2016. This last figure has had a profound impact on the country's workforce. A vast number of 427.000 people (nearly 5% of the population total) have left Greece within a period of 6 years, a phenomenon known as "brain drain"⁸¹. A 50% of that total is young people (25- 39 yrs).

How does all the above relate to the manner with which the Programme is regarded by Greek youths? Oddly enough, the crisis has driven the Greek youth to seek out more options abroad, eventually discovering ERASMUS: "The data for the Greek participation in the Erasmus Programme show that there is a huge increase of almost forty five per cent (45%) during the years of the crisis (2008/9-2013/4) in the numbers of outgoing students for studies and placement. In addition the average of 38, 17% increase per year for Erasmus placement is one of the highest in all Erasmus countries. This is mainly due to the great interest of Greek students to explore the possibilities to live and work abroad because of the effects of the crisis and the high rates of unemployment in Greece. Most of the students prefer to spend their Erasmus study period in France, Spain, Germany and Italy while

⁸¹Brain drain is a current issue within the European continent, and while its negative effects might not be very visible yet in those societies most likely to be affected, in a few decades (20 or 30 years) those countries will pay a heavy price if they fail to tackle this phenomenon. The "brain drain" or "human capital flight" represents the migration of well-educated or talented people. The term "brain drain" was coined by the British Royal Society in the early '60s, in order to describe the migration of skilled workforce - more precisely the departure of British scientists and technicians to the U.S. and Canada. The phenomenon is most often associated with economic loss for those countries losing their highly skilled workforce. In Economics, this phenomenon is known as "*human capital flight*", referring to the movement of the capital which is not invested in the country where it was created. Brain drain is usually also associated with social loss, since it refers to the exodus of highly specialized professionals, scientists, researchers, academics and students. If we take into account that the human resource is currently the most important resource owned by a society/company, it can be concluded that the risk of the brain drain persistence can have devastating future consequences for those countries losing their best trained individuals. The home countries often invest public money to educate young people in professions requested by the companies, but some of them leave the country in order to exercise their professions in others countries. In this case, the countries of origin not only lose specialists needed by their economies, but also lose a lot of money spent with the specialists' training. As the vast majority of those who move abroad are young, brain drain accentuates those issues associated with an aging of population in the countries of origin. Moreover, when a highly educated young person moves to another country, the country of origin loses both the money spent on his education, but also the future income that he could have generated if he had remained in his country. (<http://one-europe.net/brain-drain-eu> accessed in 18/08/17)

Germany is first ranked destination for placements followed by Spain, UK, Cyprus, France, Italy and the Netherlands. Female students are by far more eager to take advantage from a mobility period.” (Asderaki, F. and D. Maragos 2014).

4.5.2 Refugee and Immigrant Crisis

Nationalist and populist tendencies in Greek youths can potentially be bolstered by many factors, one of which is the recent extreme rise in refugees and immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa. In particular: “The highest number of first time asylum applicants in the first quarter of 2017 was registered in Germany (with over 49 000 first time applicants, or 30 % of all applicants in the EU Member States), followed by Italy (36 900, or 22%), France (22 000, or 13%), Greece (16 500, or 10%), and the United Kingdom (8 400, or 5%). These 5 Member States together account for 80 % of all first time applicants in the EU-28 (...)Greece has recorded the fourth largest relative increase of first time asylum seekers, nearly 2 times more (or 11 400 applicants more) in the first quarter of 2017 compared with the same quarter of 2016. Latvia, despite the small number of first time applicants (180), has recorded the largest relative increase of 4 times more (or 125 more) in the first quarter of 2017 compared with the same quarter of 2016. Compared with the population of each Member State, the highest rate of registered first time applicants during the first quarter 2017 was recorded in Greece (1 534 first time applicants per million inhabitants), followed by Cyprus (1 308), Luxembourg (1 175) and Malta (884). In contrast, the lowest rates were observed in Slovakia (11 applicants per million inhabitants), Portugal (24), Poland (25) and the Czech Republic (28). In the first quarter 2017, there were in total 322 first time asylum applicants per million inhabitants in the EU as a whole.”⁸²

Thusly, populist and ultranationalist parties like Golden Dawn⁸³ have taken root in the Greek political scene and public opinion due to the refugee and immigration issue. “Greece has one

⁸²(http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_quarterly_report accessed in 18/8/17)

⁸³The Popular Association – Golden Dawn, usually known simply as Golden Dawn, is an ultranationalist, far-right^[16] political party in Greece. It is led by Nikolaos Michaloliakos. Scholars and media have described it as neo-Nazi and fascist, though the group rejects these labels. Members have expressed admiration of the former Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas of the 4th of August Regime (1936–1941). They have also made use of alleged Nazi symbolism, and have praised figures of Nazi Germany in the past. According to academic sources, the group is racist and xenophobic, while the party's leader has openly identified it as nationalist and racist. Many groups and political parties advocate for the Greek government to dissolve Golden Dawn. Michaloliakos began the foundations of what would become Golden Dawn in 1980, when he published the first issue of the right-wing, pro-military junta journal with that name. In this context, Golden Dawn had its origins in the movement that worked towards a return to right-wing military dictatorship in Greece. Following an investigation into the murder

of the highest immigrant populations in Europe per capita (Kasamis 2012). 'Widely seen as the easiest entry point to the west, Greece has had a surge of new arrivals, with government figures showing more than 100 migrants daily crossing the country's porous border with Turkey. The majority go to Athens, a magnet for migrants desperate to find work before moving on to other parts of Europe. An estimated million immigrants are believed to live in Greece where the population is barely 11 million' (Smith 2012). Facing public pressure, the new government attempted to distract the people from the austerity measures by drawing their focus to the immigration levels. In an interview with the New York Times in September 2012, Prime Minister Samaras said "that 'waves of illegal immigrants' were sweeping through Greece, a 'major problem' that would worsen if Syria imploded and more refugees entered Turkey and then Greece. 'Illegal immigrants have taken over Athens,' he said, causing a 'public health problem and a rise in crime' (Donadio and Alderman 2012 as cited in Calum S. 2013). The interview came shortly after a crackdown on illegal immigrants began in Athens throughout August, where police detained over 7,000 immigrants and arrested 2,000, most of whom were of African or Asian descent (Smith 2012, 2012 as cited in Calum S. 2013). Amid these crackdowns, Golden Dawn has been widely considered as a proactive arbiter in tackling the issue. There have been documented cases of varying degrees of support for Golden Dawn, from neutrality to outright support, and many now consider anti-immigration activities as beneficial to Greece. This has given Golden Dawn a solid footing in the Greek socio-political sphere (Mason 2012; Smith 2012; Philips 2012)."⁸⁴It is finally noteworthy to mention that Greece is in favor of a European-Level solution⁸⁵ to the refugee and immigration issue.

4.5.3 Eurozone and "Brexit" Crisis

Public opinion on the European Union has been on the decline during the global recession. Students, particularly Greek students, are included in this new and still developing social reality for the continent and are by no means immune to it. The bigger picture sets a more

of anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013 by an alleged supporter of the party, Michaloliakos, and several other Golden Dawn MPs and members, were arrested and held in pre-trial detention on suspicion of forming a criminal organization. The trial began on 20 April 2015 and is ongoing as of 2017. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Dawn_\(political_party\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Dawn_(political_party)) accessed in 18/8/17)

⁸⁴(as found and all cited in <https://calstuart.wordpress.com/2013/02/22/the-rise-of-golden-dawn-the-development-of-ultra-nationalism-in-greece/> accessed in 18/8/17)

⁸⁵ Standard Eurobarometer 87 pp.35 as found in <http://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2142> accessed in 18/8/17)

positive climate as in a mid- 2017 Eurobarometer, the negative views dropped from a 27% (2016) to a more encouraging 21% (2017) while the positive views for the same period increased from 34% to 40%. Greece however as a case study for the same Eurobarometer presents an entirely different picture: “In 15 Member States, a majority of respondents trust the EU (up from 11 in autumn 2016), led by Lithuania (65%), Luxembourg (61%) and Finland (59%). Conversely, majority of respondents tend not to trust the EU in 12 countries, most strikingly in **Greece (76%)**, the Czech Republic (63%) and Cyprus (57%).” (Standard Eurobarometer 87)⁸⁶. It is expected for the Greek students to have some biases due to this overall climate.

QA8a.9 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

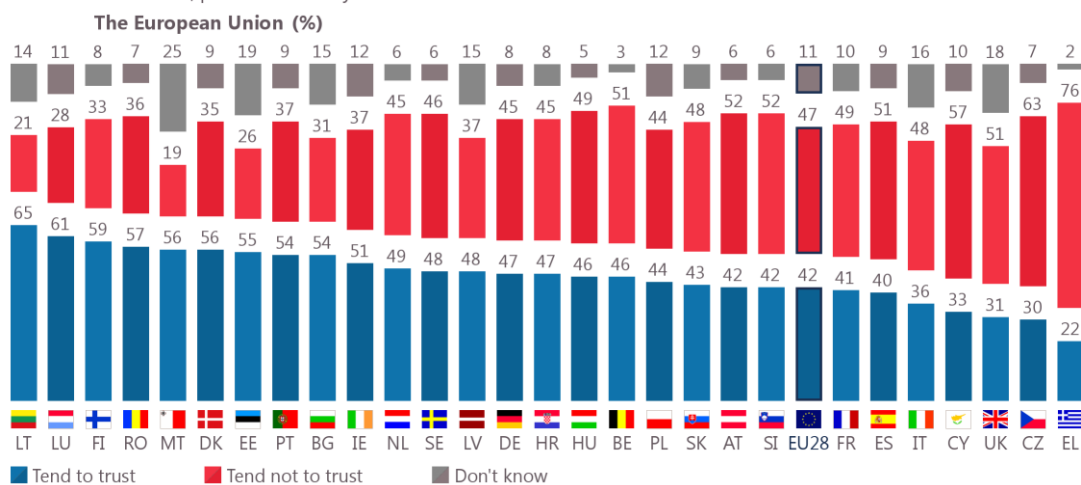


Table taken from Standard Eurobarometer 87

5. Research Results

This Chapter presents the results as drawn from the returned Greek Erasmus students' answers to the provided questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed via the “Google Forms” internet application to a total of a 103 Erasmus students from 30/01/2017 to 15/08/2017.

5.5.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

A total of 103 Erasmus students who completed their Mobility during the 2008-2016 period took part in the questionnaire research. A 65,0% of that total were women and a 35,0%

⁸⁶<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2142> (accessed in 18/8/17)

minority was comprised of men (Table 1). The student majority (54,4%) were between 22 to 24 years of age. Another 32,0% were 25 to 30 years old. A small minority of 9,7% were only between 18 to 21 years of age. Lastly only a 3,8% of the total were older than 31. As far as the students' economic situation goes, a 53,4% indicated that they had a "medium financial situation" while a 26,2% described their finances as "good". Another 20,4% of the students' total answered that their financial situation was "not satisfactory". A 6,8% of the total described their financial situation as "not at all satisfactory". The crushing majority of 91,3% designated Greece as their permanent location of stay while a small minority of 8,7% answered as permanent residents of another Member-State of the Union.

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Men	36	35,0
	Women	67	65,0
Age	18-21	10	9,7
	22-24	56	54,4
	25-27	16	15,5
	28-30	17	16,5
	31-35	2	1,9
	35-40	2	1,9
Financial Situation	Not at all satisfactory	7	6,8
	Not satisfactory	14	13,6
	Medium	55	53,4
	Good	27	26,2
Permanent Residence Location	Greece	94	91,3
	Abroad (European Union)	9	8,7

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

5.5.2 Characteristics of the Students' Studies

Looking at Table 2 we observe that large majority of 78,6% of the students studies, or has studied Social, Humanistic and Economic Studies. A 12,6% studies or has studied Physics,

Engineering and Agriculture Studies, a 5,8% Life Sciences (Medicine and Health Studies) and only 2,9% of the total studies or has studied Computer Science. A large majority of 70,9% of the students completed their Erasmus Mobility during their undergraduate studies, a 27,2% during their Master (post-graduate studies) and only a 1,9% experienced Mobility through the Programme while in their PhD (doctorate) studies. A 29,1% studies or has studied Political Sciences while a majority of 66,0% has not studied under the same field. A small majority of 4,9% indicated that they want to study, at some point in the future, Political Sciences. When it comes to knowledge of multiple languages, a relative majority of 42,7% answered that they know 2 foreign languages (apart from their birth language), while a 27,2% stated that they know 3 foreign languages. A 12,6% indicated that they know only one foreign language and a small but still remarkable minority of 10,7% stated that they are knowledgeable of 4 foreign languages. A final 6,8% indicated that they know more than 4 foreign languages.

		Frequency	Percentage
Field of Studies	Life Sciences (Medicine and Health Studies)	6	5,8
	Social, Humanistic and Economic Sciences	81	78,6
	Computer Science	3	2,9
	Physics, Engineer Studies and Agriculture Studies	13	12,6
Education Level	Undergraduate	73	70,9
	Postgraduate (Master)	28	27,2
	Postgraduate (PhD)	2	1,9
Do you study/Have you studied Political Science?	Yes	30	29,1
	No	68	66,0
	No, but I want to study Political Science in the future.	5	4,9
How many languages do you know? (not including your birth language)	1	13	12,6
	2	44	42,7
	3	28	27,2
	4	11	10,7
	More than 4	7	6,8

Table 2: Studies' Characteristics

5.5.3 Characteristics of the Erasmus Mobility

Most of the students, meaning a 57,3% stated that they did their Erasmus Mobility during the 2016-2017 period (Table 3). A 31,0% indicated the 2010-2016 period as the point in time they embarked on their Erasmus sojourn. The rest of the total, a 11,7% stated that they completed their Erasmus Experience before 2010. As for the countries the students' Mobility took place, the 5 most popular destination were Spain (18,4%), Germany (16,5%), Czech Republic (10,7%), France (9,7%) and Sweden (6,8%).

		Frequency	Percentage
When did you do your Erasmus?	2008-2009 Period	7	6,8
	2009-2010 Period	5	4,9
	2010-2011 Period	2	1,9
	2011-2012 Period	4	3,9
	2012-2013 Period	9	8,7
	2013-2014 Period	10	9,7
	2015-2016 Period	7	6,8
	2016-2017 Period	59	57,3
On which Member-State of the European Union did your Erasmus take place?	Spain	19	18,4
	Germany	17	16,5
	Czech Republic	11	10,7
	France	10	9,7
	Sweden	7	6,8
	Italy	6	5,8
	Belgium	5	4,9
	United Kingdom	5	4,9
	Portugal	5	4,9
	Poland	3	2,9
Austria	2	1,9	

Malta	2	1,9
Hungary	2	1,9
Bulgaria	1	1,0
Denmark	1	1,0
Croatia	1	1,0
Cyprus	1	1,0
Lithuania	1	1,0
Netherlands	1	1,0
Romania	1	1,0
Slovenia	1	1,0
Finland	1	1,0

Table 3: Characteristics of the Erasmus Mobility

Table 4 presents the reasons the students had for picking their destination country. The most basic reason appears to be the fact that the host country was an “attractive for activities beyond Erasmus, such as tourism” (59,2%). “A particular University” is the second most popular reason with a 41,7% followed by a “particular scientific field” (29,1%) and economic reasons (24,3%). Another 22,3% depicts the “more opportunities for employment” as the fifth most popular reason for picking that particular country as a destination.

	Frequency	Percentage
Attractive country for activities beyond Erasmus, like tourism	61	59,2
Particular University	43	41,7
Particular Scientific Field	30	29,1
Economic Reasons	25	24,3
More opportunities for employment	23	22,3
Proximity to Greece	6	5,8
Particular Language	3	2,9

Table 4: Why did you choose that particular country?

Section 1 – “Your Erasmus Experience”

Table 5 depicts the Erasmus returned students’ level of “feeling European” after their Erasmus Experience. A relative majority of the total (32,0%) stated that they “feel a lot more

European” thanks to their Erasmus Experience. Another 32,0% however indicated that they “felt European before” their Erasmus Experience. A 24,3% of the total indicated that it felt “more European” and only a 7,8% answered that they felt “a little more European” because of their Erasmus Experience. A very small minority of 3,9% of the Greek returned students state that they “do not feel more European” because of their Erasmus Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage
I do not feel more European despite my Erasmus Experience	4	3,9
I feel a little more European because of my Erasmus Experience	8	7,8
I feel more European because of my Erasmus Experience	25	24,3
I feel a lot more European because of my Erasmus Experience	33	32,0
I felt more European before my Erasmus Experience	33	32,0

Table 5: How European do you feel after your Erasmus Experience?

It is from Table 6, which represents how the Erasmus Students feel as citizens of their state and as European Citizens, after their Erasmus Experience that we see that a 54,4% of the total states that they “feel both as a citizen of my state as well as a European citizen”. A 19,4% answered that they “mainly feel as European citizen and less as a citizen of my state” while a minority of 10,7% indicated that they feel less as European citizens and more as citizens of their own state. Only a single student stated that he/she felt only as a citizen of his/her state and another sole student proclaimed that he/she felt only as a European citizen. Finally, a 13,6% of the student total stated that they felt that they were European citizens before their Erasmus Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage
I only feel as a citizen of my state	1	1,0
I mainly feel as a citizen of my state and less as a European citizen	11	10,7
I mainly feel as a European citizen and less as	20	19,4

a citizen of my state		
I feel both as a citizen of my state and as a European citizen	56	54,4
I only feel as a European citizen		
I felt as a European citizen before my Erasmus Experience	1	1,0
I felt as a European citizen before my Erasmus Experience	14	13,6

Table 6: After your Erasmus Experience, how do you feel as a citizen of your state and as a European citizen?

Table 7 shows that a 50,5% of the student total states that, after their Erasmus experience, what expresses them most, when they think of their European Identity, is the sentence "The variety of the European cultures is the element that gives the Union vitality and empowers it." A 21,4% stated that "The European way of life and the European values are the elements that make Europe stand out" while a 15,5% stated that they are best expressed by the sentence "The European Union has a unique way, completely different from a state's way to make you its citizen" A minority of 11,7% of the students states that the sentence "The European Union does not resemble a state and that is why I avoid to consider that I am a European citizen the way I consider a citizen of my own state" best expressed them. Only one student indicated that he/she was best expressed by the sentence "Europe is a separate and superior culture than all the other ones like India, China, Africa, the United States, Russia..."

	Συχνότητα	Ποσοστό
The European Union does not resemble a state and that is why I avoid to consider that I am a European in the same way I consider myself to be a citizen of my own state	12	11,7
The European Union has a way of its own to make you European, completely different from the way a state makes you its citizen	16	15,5
Europe is a separate and superior culture to all others like India, China, Africa, U.S.A, Russia...	1	1,0
It is the element of the variety of the European cultures that	52	50,5

gives it vitality and empowers it.		
The European way of life and the European values are the elements that make Europe stand out.	22	21,4

Table 7: After your Erasmus experience, which of the following sentences expresses you most when you think about your European Identity?

On table 8 can see the results to the question “After your Erasmus Experience, what does the European Union mean to you?” A 51,5% of the students total stated that “European Union means a political union of states with a common vision and future”. A 29,1% of the student designated the European Union as “It is only’ a field for employment opportunities and for claiming a better life and nothing more” while a 15,5% state that what the European Union means to them is “a political union of states without a common vision and future”. Sole students stated that the European Union is a field of employment opportunities and claiming a better life, new experiences and knowledge and different cultures that change you towards being a more open person, an economic union with military cooperation aimed at the amelioration of the member-states’ living standards; lastly, an economic union of states without a common vision and future.

	Συχνότητα	Πο
Simply a field of employment opportunities and claiming a better life and nothing more	30	
Simply a field of employment opportunities and claiming a better life	1	
New experiences and knowledge and different cultures that change you to being a more open person	1	
An economic Union with actual military cooperation and aimed at the amelioration of the member-states’ quality of life	1	
Economic Union of states with very few signs of political union, without a common vision and future	1	
Political Union of states with a common vision and future	53	
Political Union of states without a common vision and future	16	

Table 8: After your Erasmus Experience, what does the European Union mean to you?

Table 9 shows that a 68,0% of the students believes that their European Identity connects them with all their fellow European citizens as well as the Union’s values. A minority of 7,8% of the total indicated that their European Identity is theirs alone, connects them to the values of

the Union and with nothing/nobody else. One out of four students believe that none of the given options represents what his/her European Identity means to him/her.

	Frequency	Percentage
Is yours alone and connects you to the Union's values and with nothing/nobody else	8	7,8
Connects you to all your fellow European citizens as well as to the Union's values	70	68,0
None of the above	25	24,3

Table 9: Your European Identity...

Table 10 depicts the level of the students' self-consciousness in regard to their nationality during their Mobility. A 38,8% of the total stated that during their Mobility were not at all self-conscious in regards to their own and the others' nationalities. A 35,0% stated that they were constantly self-conscious on the same issue while only a 26,2% indicated that they initially were self-conscious in regards to their own and the others' nationalities but not later on.

	Frequency	Percentage
You were not at all self-conscious in regard to your own and the others' nationalities	40	38,8
You initially were self-conscious in regard to your own and the others' nationalities but not later on	27	26,2
You were constantly self-conscious in regard to your own and the others' nationalities	36	35,0

Table 10: During your Erasmus Experience...

Table 11 shows that 51,5% of the students stated that they felt as representative of their state during their Erasmus Experience but did not act based on that thought. A 34,0% claimed that they felt as representative of their state during their Erasmus Experience and

acted based on that thought. A minority of 14,6% indicated that during their Erasmus Experience did not feel as being representatives of their state.

	Frequency	Percentage
Did not feel as a representative of your state	15	14,6
You felt as a representative of your state but did not act based on that thought	53	51,5
You felt as a representative of your state and acted based on that thought	35	34,0

Table 11: During your Erasmus Experience ...

Section 2

Table 12 shows that 57,3% of the student total believe that during their Erasmus Experience, the European Union was "enough" close to him/her while a 28,2% stated "a little". Only a 12,6% indicated that the European Union was close to him/her at their destination Member-State. Lastly a 1,9% believes that the European Union had no presence whatsoever at his/her destination Member-State.

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	2	1,9
A little	29	28,2
Enough	59	57,3
A lot	13	12,6

Table 12: Do you believe that the European Union was close to you at some degree at your destination Member-State during your Erasmus Experience?

Table 13 indicates the degree at which the students believe they are knowledgeable of the European Union (Aim, Institutions, Parties, Function, proposals for the Union's future and current developments) after their Erasmus Experience. We can see that 29,1% of the student total states that it knows the Union a little better while 24,3% claimed that it know it more. A 10,7% stated that their Erasmus Experience did not factor into their knowledge of the Union at all while a minority of 9,7% claimed that thanks to their Erasmus Experience they came to know the Union a lot

more. A considerable 26,2% claimed that it know the European Union very well before their Erasmus Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	11	10,7
A little	30	29,1
More	25	24,3
A lot	10	9,7
I knew the European Union very well before my Erasmus Experience	27	26,2

Table 13: How well do you believe you know the European Union (Aim, Institutions, Parties, Function, proposals for the Union's future and current developments) after your Erasmus Experience?

Table 14's goal is to show the degree at which the students want to better know the European Union (Aim, Institutions, Parties, Function, proposals for the Union's future and current developments) after their Erasmus Experience. A 40,8% of the total claimed that it wants to get to better know the European Union a little more while another 32,0% stated that they want to better know it more. A 23,3% stated that they wanted to get to better know the Union a lot while only a minority of 3,9% indicated that they had no desire to get to know the European Union.

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	4	3,9
A little	42	40,8
More	33	32,0
A lot	24	23,3

Table 14: How much do you want to get to better know the European Union after your Erasmus Experience?

In Table 15 we observe that 25,2% of the students' total states that they refer to and support the European Union to their social circle (friends, relatives and acquaintances) a little more after their Erasmus Experience while a 23,3% claimed that it neither refers to, nor it supports the Union to their social circle. A 17,5% of the total claimed

that it supports and refers to the Union “more” after their Erasmus Experience while a minority claimed “a lot” on the same issue. A noticeable 24,3% of the total claimed that they referred to and supported the European Union to their social circle before their Erasmus Experience.

	Frequency	Ποσοστό
I neither support nor refer to the Union to my social circle	24	23,3
I refer to and support the European Union a little more	26	25,2
I refer to and support the European Union a more	18	17,5
I refer to and support the European Union a lot more	10	9,7
I referred to and supported the European Union to my social circle before my Erasmus Experience	25	24,3

Table 15: How much do you refer to and support the European Union to your social circle (friends, relatives, acquaintances) after your Erasmus Experience?

In Table 15, 16% of the students stated that after their Erasmus Experience they do not try at all to inform their fellow citizens regarding their rights as European Citizens. A 33,0% claimed that it does so “a little” and a 20,4% indicated that it does so “somewhat”. Only a small minority of 2,9% of the students total claimed that they try a lot to inform their fellow citizens regarding their rights as European Citizens.

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	45	43,7
A little more	34	33,0
Somewhat more	21	20,4
A lot more	3	2,9

Table 16:

Do you try to inform more your fellow citizens regarding their rights as European Citizens after your Erasmus Experience?

FromTable

17

wecanseethedegreeatwhichtheErasmusStudentsclaimErasmushaschangedthemasactivecitizensoftheEuropeanUnion (participation to European Parties, volunteer organizations, political organizations, conferences, activities related to the Union). A 24,3% of the total claimed that Erasmus has changed them a little in that regard, a 20,4% claimed that their Erasmus Experiencehad no such effect a 19,4% claimed that their Erasmus Experience has changed them a lot towards being more politically active European Citizens. A small minority of 8,7% stated that they were active European citizens before their Erasmus Experience. The relative majority of 27,2% of the student total claimed that their Erasmus Experience as somewhat factored into them being more active European Citizens.

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	21	20,4
A little	25	24,3
Somewhat	28	27,2
A lot	20	19,4
I was an active European Citizen before my Erasmus Experience	9	8,7

Table 17: Has your Erasmus Experience changed you into being an active European Citizen? (Participation to European Parties, volunteer organizations, political organizations, conferences, activities related to the Union).

FromTable 18 wecanseethata large minority of 39,8% of the students' total claimed that they don't neither the European Institutions (Parliament, Commission, European Central Bank etc.) nor their states' institutions (Parliament, Courthouse etc.) A 28,2% of the students stated that they trust the European Institutions more and less their states' institutions while another 22,3% indicated that they equally trusted both kinds of institutions. A small minority of 4,9% indicated that they trust only the European Institutions while another 4,9% claimed that they trusts more their states' institutions and less the European ones.

Frequency	Percentage
-----------	------------

I trust neither the European Institutions nor my state's institutions	41	39,8
I only trust the European Institutions	5	4,9
I trust the European Institutions more and my state's institutions less	29	28,2
I trust more my state's institutions and less the European Institutions	5	4,9
I trust both kinds of Institutions equally	23	22,3

Table 18: How much do you trust the European (Parliament, Commission, European Central Bank etc.) and your state's Institutions (Parliament, Courthouse etc.) after your Erasmus Experience?

Table 19 shows that a strong minority of 43,7% stated that it would react in order for a dissolving of the European Union to be avoided. A smaller minority of 34,0% of the student total claimed that it would not react as they doubt they would be able to change anything. A 13,6% claimed they would react by doing anything necessary to avoid the dissolving of the European Union and only an 8,7% indicated that they would not react as they would prefer for that eventuality to occur.

	Frequency	Percentage
I react in order for such an eventuality to be avoided	45	43,7
I react, doing anything necessary in order for such an eventuality to be avoided	14	13,6
I do not react as I doubt I would be able to change anything	35	34,0
I do not react, I prefer for that eventuality to occur	9	8,7

Table 19: The European Union is suddenly under the threat of being dissolved. You, after your Erasmus Experience....

In Table 20 we can see that a 53,4% of the students' total would, after their Erasmus Experience, defend the European Union by taking up the arms regardless from whether his/her Member State was also threatened. The minority, a 46,6% would defend the European Union by taking up the arms only in the case their own Member-State was also in danger.

	Frequency	Percentage
I defend the European Union by taking up the arms but only if my country is also in danger	48	46,6
I defend the European Union by taking up the arms regardless of whether my country is also in danger	55	53,4

Table 20: The European Union is under attack by a foreign force. You, after your Erasmus Experience...

Table 21 shows the students' reaction to a possible new Treaty of the Union. A 68,0% claimed that in case the European Union decided to take the next step in its history by adopting a new Treaty with which however he/she was completely against, they would demonstrate in some way by informing the E.U as well as their state-level politicians through the responsible authorities. A 21,4% would leave the same matter in the hands of their state-level politicians and the politicians who act at the supranational level of the Union. Only a small minority of 10,7% claimed they would demonstrate in any means necessary, even if they needed to resort to extremities.

	Frequency	Percentage
Leave it in the hands of my state-level politicians and to the politicians of the Union's supranational level	22	21,4
Demonstrate in some way by informing the Union and my state-level politician through the responsible authorities	70	68,0
Demonstrate in anyway, even if I need to resort to extremities	11	10,7

**Table 21:
The European Union decides to take its next step in its history by adopting a Treaty to which however you are completely against. You prefer to...**

Table 22 shows that the majority of the students' total of (58,3%), when asked about the Union's future according to their Erasmus Experience and regarding the three facts of the Economic, Refugee and Brexit crises, they stated that the European Union will not dissolve in the future but it will be weakened. A 26,2% indicated that the Union will be empowered but in the far future. A 9,7% claimed that the Union will be dissolved and lastly a small minority

of 4,9% claimed that the European Union will stay at the same level of power it holds now. Only one student claimed that the Union will be quickly empowered.

	Frequency	Percentage
It will be dissolved	10	9,7
It will not be dissolved but it will be weakened	60	58,3
I will remain at the same level of power it holds now	5	4,9
It will be empowered but in the far future	27	26,2
It will be quickly empowered	1	1,0

Table 22: EconomicCrisis, RefugeeCrisis, Brexit. According to your Erasmus Experience, which do you believe is the European Union's future?

From Table 03 we can observe that a 40,8% of the students' total claimed that facts like the economic crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit have affected a little negatively their view on the European Union and European Identity. A 26,2% claimed that their views have been affected somewhat while an 18,4% stated that the same facts have affected their views a lot. Only a 14,6% claimed that their views are unaffected by the aforementioned facts.

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	15	14,6
A little	42	40,8
Somewhat	27	26,2
A lot	19	18,4

Table 23: EconomicCrisis, RefugeeCrisis, Brexit. Have these facts affected in a negative way your view on the European Union and European Identity?

6. Discussion on the Results

The sample's demographic characteristics are telling of the first element: In fact a 79,6% of the returned Erasmus students were between the ages of 28-27. Furthermore, another

79,6% claimed that their finances are medium to satisfactory. While only a 26,2% of that 79,6% claimed their finances were good, the economic crisis toll on Greece must be taken into account for the rest of the 53,4% who claimed they have “medium” financial situations. As far as how well educated those same students are, it is very telling that a striking 87,4% of that total claimed to be knowledgeable of 2 or more languages, with a 44,7% of that 87,4% claiming that they knew 3 or more.

As for the second element, Erasmus, as an Identity Project must focus on the produced identities’ politicization and on citizenship, the results also favor my initial hypothesis that **the Programme does indeed exhibit all the characteristics a European Identity Project is predicted to do so.** That much is clear as we see below:

The H1Hypothesis: “Greek Students appear to feel more European because of their Erasmus Experience.” / H0 Greek Students do not appear to feel more European because of their Erasmus Experience.

The first Thesis Hypothesis is verified by the research’s results (see Table 5). When the students were asked a solid 64,1%, ranging from feeling “a little more European” to “a lot more European” believes that their Erasmus Experience was a factor to them feeling more European. Even if we were to take out the percentage of the students who claimed that their Erasmus Experience factored in “a little”, again the remaining 56,3% still represents a clear majority of students who believe that their Erasmus Experience played a role in their feeling more European. There is however a considerable “ceiling- preaching to the converted” effect at work. The same data indicates that a 32,0% of the asked students claimed that they felt European before their Erasmus Experience. These students however are a clear minority, something that is very noteworthy for the case study of Greece compared to other case studies. As for the manner with which they feel themselves to be European, when presented with Hartmut Kaelble’s 5 strands of identification (see Table 7), a little more than half of the students (50,5%) clearly identify with Europe’s internal diversity as the key element to its power at a global scale. This type of identification indicates that half of the research sample displays, as predicted, the already theoretical assumptions of the field that the Europeans “normally prefer multiple identities” (Hartmut Kaelble 2009). Furthermore, a 21,4% claimed to identify with the European way of life and values. Added together (71,9%) those two groups do indicate a **post-national, liberal- cosmopolitan** conception of what it means to be European. Finally, while addressing the components of

the students' European Identities, (See Table 9) we get back some remarkable results. A stunning 68,0% majority of the students' total feels connected to their fellow European citizens as well as the values of the European Union, an answer that clearly resembles Neil Fligstein's view that it is the young and educated elites who are most likely to form what could be called a writ-large national European Identity. Conclusively, the negative H0 hypothesis is **unverifiable** in this case as returned Greek Erasmus students do not appear to display signs that they do not feel European when asked.

The H2 Hypothesis: "Greek Students appear to be more interested in the politics of the European Union and are more politically active after their Erasmus Experience." / H0 Greek Students do not appear to be more interested in the politics of the European Union and are not more politically active after their Erasmus Experience.

Again this Thesis' H2 Hypothesis is verified by the research results. This particular Hypothesis however needed a far more extensive inquiry. To answer this one, I moved from the term "Europe" to the term "European Union" in order to make sure that the students comprehended that they were being asked about the political entity and not the geographical/cultural elements of the continent.

First of all, a connection of the students' identities towards the European political entity, the European Union, as a result of their Erasmus Experience, had to be established. The students were asked about the degree at which they felt as European Citizens and Citizens of their own Member-State. An astonishing 85,5% feels more, at some degree, that they are European citizens because of their Erasmus sojourn. If we were to add the "ceiling effect" (a remarkable minority of 13,6%) to that number, a crushing majority of 99,1% of the students feel that they are European Citizens.

The students were then asked about what the European Union means to them (see Table 8). The results here were significantly lower. However a clear majority of 51,5% claimed that they considered the E.U as a Political Union of States with a common vision and future. The rest of that student total focused on the Union's economic and quality of life dimensions, options that de facto excluded the political dimension. Here the answers seem to be directly affected by the larger Eurobarometer trends (see Chapter 4.5.3). However Neil Fligstein's argument still holds true, the European youths are far more likely to trust the European Polity in its official form. On that same issue, Table 10 clearly shows that National and

European Identity are not in competition as a total of 65,0% of the students claimed that by the end of their Mobility they were not self-conscious about their own and the other students' nationalities while another 66,1% did not feel during their Mobility as representatives of their own states (14,6%) and even if they did (51,5%) they did not let that factor into their actions. Here again we see that indeed Europeans behave as holders of multiple identities that present neither an esoteric or exoteric competition. These are again signs of post-national, cosmopolitan and liberal expressions of European Identity.

Going deeper into the politicization factors of the students' European Identities, namely their first element which is **political interest**, we can see (Table 13) that, of the sample total, a 63,1% majority, ranging from "a little" to "a lot" claim that their Erasmus Experience made them more knowledgeable of the EU. It is also noteworthy to point out that if we were to include the "preaching to the converted effect" percentage of the sample (26,2%) that claimed they knew the E.U before their Mobility, a grand total of 89,3% supports Neil Fligstein's youth elite argument. On the same issue, it appears that the Erasmus Experience certainly not only affects the students' knowledge of the Union but also their desire to get to know it better. A remarkable total of 96,1% claimed that their Erasmus Experience resulted into them wanting to get to know the European Union more.

The other element of identity politicization, **political activity**, was measured firstly as a Social Process component, meaning if the students referred to or supported the European Union to their social circles after their Erasmus Experience at an escalated rate (see Table 15). Not including the 24,3% "ceiling effect" percentage of the sample, a narrow majority of 52,4% claimed that thanks to their Mobility, they refer to and support the Union at some degree. Adding the "ceiling effect" percentage (76,7%) we can again say that Neil Fligstein's elite youth argument is reinforced yet again. When asked about their Erasmus Experience as a factor to them informing their fellow citizens on their rights as citizens of the Union, a clear majority of 56,3% claimed that their Erasmus Experience has resulted into them doing so at some degree (ranging from "a little" to "a lot"). Lastly, when directly asked whether their Erasmus Experience has made them more active Citizens of the Union, the results were striking (see Table 17). A large majority of 70,9% (ranging from "a little" to "a lot") claimed that their Erasmus Experience did factor into that issue at some degree. There was only an 8,7% "ceiling effect" percentage which yet again reinforces my argument that the Greek case study differs in that regard from other ones. In the same spirit, the results of Table 18 are also indicative of the students' perception of the Union as their Polity. In particular, a

clear majority of 60,3% indicated that they place varying degrees of trust to the Union's Institutions in relevance to their country's Institutions. A large minority of 39,8% however claimed that they trust neither, a figure which again follows Greece's overall trend of mistrust towards the European and state-level institutions. The same however is not true for the Erasmus Students beliefs on whether the Union will be strengthened or weakened to the point of dissolving in the future. In a profoundly opposite pattern to what the Eurobarometers depict on the same issue, but for the entirety of Greece's population, the Erasmus Students of Greece (90,4% of the total) remain largely hopeful and/or reserved to state that a dissolving of the Union is approaching.

Regarding the second element of Identity politicization yet again, I chose to present the students with a few scenarios of great importance to the Union as a Polity and measure their reactions. The results still verify the Thesis second hypothesis. In particular, a majority of 57,3% would react in case the Union was in danger of being dissolved (see Table 19). An even larger majority of 78,7% claimed that it would demonstrate in various ways in case a new Treaty for the Union was to be adopted but they did not support it at all. Finally, and perhaps most intriguingly of all, when presented with a question in the form of a dilemma, a narrow, yet still significant majority of 53,4% of the students' total would defend the European Union by taking up the arms regardless of their own Member-State being also threatened.

In sum, and considering the results from the political interest, political activity and presented scenarios, it is clear that **the Erasmus Experience plays a profound role in the Greek students' politicization of their European Identities as it helps them become more active European Citizens.** It is also important to point out that the H0 negative Hypothesis is also proven **unverifiable**, as students clearly view themselves as being more politically active because of their Erasmus Experience and beyond that, they show more political interest in the European Union because of that said experience.

The H3Hypothesis: "Greek Students appear to have more positive and lasting views of the European Union after their Erasmus Experience." / H0 Greek Students do not appear to have more positive and lasting views of the European Union after their Erasmus Experience.

The Thesis' final hypothesis can only be verified if we compare the same research results but from the point of view of the students who completed their Mobility until 2015 (group A). Do their answers differ from those of their fellow students' total? In sum the H₃ Hypothesis is also verified. The Table below depicts how Group A (students who completed their Mobility before 2015) answer the same questions compared to Group B (Student total). With the exception of the answers given to questions No.4 and No.9 (which again do not drop less than 50,0% which still places them in the majority) no statistically significant changes occur. If anything (judging by the answers given to the questions No. 4, 6,7,11 and 12) Group A appears to have more pro-European tendencies compared to the students' total. What is definitely clear is that time passed after the Mobility, at least in the span of 5 years, does not affect the effect the Erasmus Experience has on the politicization of the students' European Identities.

It is also worth mentioning that returned Erasmus Greek students display, primarily a Soft Political Identity when it comes to identifying with the official political body of Europe, the European Union, while an astonishing majority appears to display a Hard Political Identity when it comes to identifying with Europe as a set of values and principles that bind a Political Community of Strangers (Castiglione 2009). It appears that the European Youth, at least from the perspective of Greece, is actively aware of the distinction it makes between the People's Europe it wants and believes in and the European Union of today that apparently does not meet their political standards.

Conclusively I wish to highlight that the negative H₀ Hypothesis is also proven as unverifiable. Clearly the "time after the Erasmus Experience" variable does not play a statistically important role in the answers given by both groups of the tested sample. European Political Identities appear, in the context of this research's limits, stable through time in its expressions.

Question

How European do you feel after your Erasmus Experience?

After your Erasmus Experience, how do you feel as a citizen of your state and as a European citizen?

To what does your European Identity connect you to? (given answer: to all EU citizens and EU values)

After your Erasmus Experience, how much better do you believe you know the E.U?

How much do you want to get to better know the European Union after your Erasmus Experience?

How much do you refer to and support the European Union to your social circle (friends, relatives, acquaintances) after your Erasmus Experience?

Do you try to inform more of your fellow citizens regarding their rights as European Citizens after your Erasmus Experience?

Has your Erasmus Experience changed you into being an active European Citizen?

How much do you trust the European
and your state's institutions
after your Erasmus Experience? (given answer- trust to E.U Institutions at varying degrees)

The European Union is suddenly under the threat of being dissolved. You, after your Erasmus Experience (given answer- demonstrate)

The European Union decides to take its next step in its history by adopting a Treaty to which however you are completely
You prefer to (given answer- to demonstrate)

The European Union is under attack by a foreign force. You, after your Erasmus Experience... (given answer- to take
arms regardless of my own state also being in danger)

7. Conclusion

I began this Master Thesis by stating that my goal was to prove that the Erasmus Programme is a European Identity Project, designed by the Union's elites in order for the returned students to not only feel more European, but to also engage in European Identity Processes by becoming more active European Citizens. I believe I succeeded in both accounts as the Programme's history as an Education Policy of the Union initially indicated that it was indeed

the idea of a specific epistemic elite which pushed for a greater competition between the Union's political elites so that the Programme could be "birthed". Combined with its original but still active- as proven by the study- goals, the creation of a "Peoples' Europe", makes it a de facto European Identity Project, at least in its intentions. Stronger evidence of this is the fact that the political elites of the Member States never hesitate to praise ERASMUS as part of their national successes, while it is their bureaucratic and administrative elites of the governments and universities that handle the Programme's function. Erasmus is still here with us today simply because the Member-State elites find it worthy of attention. What then remained for me was to examine its Erasmus' actual success compared to its goals.

The research results were we extremely telling. All 3 of the Thesis Hypotheses are verified and their negatives were disproven. The returned Greek Erasmus students not only feel more European because of their Erasmus sojourn **but admit that their Erasmus Experience changed them into being more active European Citizens, regardless of how long ago they embarked on their Erasmus sojourn.** They exhibit clear tendencies of being part of European Identity Processes as they not only do they want to know the Union even better after their Erasmus sojourn, but also promote the Union and the Rights of European Citizenship to their social circles, as well as they would display political agency in case their European Polity was in any kind of danger. If we are to take all this data into account we can not assume that **Erasmus is, at least for the case study of Greece, a crucial factor of European Identity and European Political Identity but we can certainly be sure that it is hinted as such to us.**

The most fascinating, to me, part of the research is that Greek Erasmus sojourners' identity politicization mainly occurs in **liberal, cosmopolitan expressions** that place special gravity on the **cultural variety** of Europe while at the same time they point to a **European patriotism**, not to European Union we experience today but more **towards the andersonian-imagined**⁸⁷, Europe. This was a completely unexpected result that not only requires, but essentially demands further investigation because, in that way, the European Political Community appears to display, at least in the students' minds, one of the characteristics that define a

⁸⁷ "Viewing the modern nation primarily as an anthropological rather than political category, one that has less inherently to do with ideologies than with kinship, gender, and religion, Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* for the irreducibility of material-cultural practices (what he memorably termed "print-capitalism") in creating and sustaining the "imagined community" of a nation whose citizens maintain "deep attachments" to each other in the absence of face-to-face contact: 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'" (Anderson B. 1983 as cited in Parker A. 1999)

nation state's constitutive elements, the **ethnic narrative**. That suggested narrative, points towards -according to the students' answers- a continent of peace, prosperity and to what **they seem to desire as a sociopolitical cohesion** that will respect the Union's esoteric cultural differences while at the same time being able to defend itself against the adversities that come as pressure factors from the International System of States.

Another unexpected result was the majority of the students not feeling either as representatives of their respective Member States during their Mobility, nor them being self-conscious in regards to their fellow students different sociocultural backgrounds. It appears that as far as Greek students are concerned, the Erasmus Experience manages to 'mix and meld' them into a multicultural environment where 1) there is no inter-national competition between the students and 2) the Member State of origin does not seem to play a significant role in the manner the student's European Identity/ies gets politicized. This raises the question of what kind of process does replace the traditional nation-state ability to bind its nationals under one ethnic narrative.

Here, I would like to take a step back and note that, as the research's results show, Peter Katzenstein and Jeffrey Checkel's Theory of European Identities as Projects and Processes **does provide a solid theoretical framework** to work with, once it was modeled. As I pointed out, the Theory in question has never been used before, at least to my knowledge, in the field of European Identity and Education Policy. I firmly believe that not only it is a valuable set of terms but also an incredibly accurate tool for understanding who we are as Europeans and what forces act on our view, affection, vision and will to act for the continent. On a smaller note, Kathrine Mitchell's initial argument for the Erasmus Experience being transformative for the participant students **is also verified** by this Thesis' results while the "preaching to the converted and ceiling effects" predicted by Khun and Wilson's research are but clear minorities in the sample, **a very encouraging result for the Programme's value to Greece** as a Member-State of the Union.

Still, this is a case study, meaning that, by definition, the sample is national and not European-wide. Furthermore the said sample is very small (103 from the 170.000 total of Greek Erasmus students since 1987) in number and its control group only applies to its 3rd and final Hypothesis. Small case studies like this require immediate follow-up researches that touch the interdisciplinary and the "greater in quantity and quality" aspects that

characterize safer epistemic assumptions. However what is worth to mention is that studies that go into that depth of European students' Political Identity definition and content are relatively rare to find in the current literature.

So, is Mobility enough? Is Mobility the European Union's future towards more political coherence and cohesion? The short answer? Yes, but not in its current form, range and political backing. All those 3 aspects need extensive work and political courage to sincerely achieve their initial goals at the scale we are talking about.

What work remains to be pursued? Larger n' sample studies that focus on European Political Identity are at the center of this argument. The larger the sample, the lesser the scientific error margin. Qualitative work is also required in this field as it is sorely lacking in the case of Greece at least. Personal interviews are a good starting point to clearly define the content of politicized European Identities. Further questions rise from the results of this particular case study, the first one being "Why Greek Erasmus students display such high numbers when it comes to their affection to Europe and their political allegiance to the E.U, even after the multiplicity of crises and their subsequently marked anti-European sentiments that have been defining social life in their country?", secondly, **"why do Greek students who have completed their Erasmus sojourn view the E.U as an andersonian imagined community writ-large and above the respective member-states instead of just a Single Market?"** Furthermore, "why do the ceiling and preaching to the converted effects are in the narrow majorities when other studies on the same subject struggle to overcome them?" Another serious implication rises by the performed study: Greek Erasmus students' affection towards Europe and political allegiance towards the E.U appears almost completely unfazed by the passage of time. "Is the fact that politicized European Identities remain unaffected by the passage of time after the Mobility, combined with the transformative Erasmus Experience itself, indicative of a separate Erasmus Political Community that has its own unspoken ethics and narratives? In other words, is the -hinted as such- politicization of European Identities, through the Erasmus Experience creating a new, and as of yet understudied, **European Ethnic narrative** that can only be detected in the Erasmus Generation test subjects?" What does this mean for the European Education as a potentially more vibrant policy field and the current literature?

There is also work to be done at the official level as well. First and foremost, it has become clear that a special Eurobarometer only for Erasmus students, an “Erasmusmeter” if you will, must be implemented. With the Erasmus Generation now having more than 3.000.000 members, it is simply impossible for the epistemic communities of the Member States to catch up in real-time and much less to interdisciplinary coordinate their efforts in a way that all these potential test subjects can be successfully reached. The European Commission must therefore take action and summarize results on Erasmus students’ perception of their European Polity, a move that can immensely facilitate the scientific progress on the field. The literature so far indicates that students who have gone through the Erasmus Experience have more to say about the future of E.U than the average citizen or even their non-Erasmus counterparts. The same literature, this case study included, tell us that their opinions are expected to have high value for the non-intergovernmental European Institutions, value that can be capitalized to further the Union’s **democratic sociopolitical cohesion projects** that have been effectively rendered nearly irrelevant this past decade. **Larger budgets** and **tougher evaluative processes** that could involve the supranational institutions of the Union in more **executive** roles on the policy field of European Higher Education can also be bolstered by such findings. All the above are key requirements if the Union’s goals for the Programme are ever to be realized.

However it is Programmes like Erasmus that point to Mobility certainly being the right direction to move towards. The tested sample displayed some extremely positive views and tendencies of Greek youths. Populist, nationalistic and illiberal views were but a miniscule minority throughout the questionnaire’s progress. The possibility of ERASMUS being a depoliticization Project of European Identity that does not factor into the promoting of active European Citizenship was one of the European Identity Project Theory’s negative predicted outcomes. Greek youths appear to disprove the validity of such a prediction, reinforcing the Theory’s main assumptions and predictions. The Erasmus Programme, as far as Greece is concerned, is a viable, vibrant and so far irreplaceable tool of politicizing the nation’s youths **positively** and **lastingly** towards Europe and the European Union.

European Youths, Greek European Youths in this case, are by all means ready to see a united Europe in means far more sincere, democratic, practical and most importantly cohesive than the foundation currently provided by the Lisbon Treaty. One thing is for sure: Students

prove, each day, that the dream of a true European Identity is here to stay. Through Mobility, the European youth is already staging a massive silent revolution. We should all catch up.

8. Bibliography and Links

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Με ατομική μου ευθύνη και γνωρίζοντας τις κυρώσεις ⁽³⁾, που προβλέπονται από τις διατάξεις της παρ. 6 του άρθρου 22 του Ν. 1599/1986, δηλώνω ότι:

το έργο που εκπονήθηκε και παρουσιάζεται στην υποβαλλόμενη διπλωματική εργασία είναι

αποκλειστικά ατομικό δικό μου. Όποιες πληροφορίες και υλικό που περιέχονται έχουν αντληθεί από

άλλες πηγές, έχουν καταλλήλως αναφερθεί στην παρούσα διπλωματική εργασία. Επιπλέον τελώ εν

γνώσει ότι σε περίπτωση διαπίστωσης ότι δεν συντρέχουν όσα βεβαιώνονται από μέρους μου, μου

αφαιρείται ανά πάσα στιγμή αμέσως ο τίτλος.

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