

# Locating Cosmopolitanism within Academic Mobility

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## Abstract

Intensified academic mobility is an enticing platform for examining the emerging manifestations of cosmopolitanism in expanding intercultural encounters. Cosmopolitanism calls for a dialogue between cultures and for reciprocal appropriation and internalisation of cultures within one's own culture. This paper endeavours to locate empirical evidence on evolving cosmopolitanism in everyday intercultural interactions and academic experiences. It is guided by the methodological applications of cosmopolitanism and the way cosmopolitanism is redefining the sociological frame of reference. This paper presents discussion and empirical testing of three defining features of cosmopolitanism according to Beck (2002): globality, plurality and civility. Mirroring these guiding principles, this research attempted to identify and analyse cosmopolitan values and dispositions in everyday intercultural encounters, discourses, situations and experiences. This paper presented an argument that cosmopolitan values and dispositions tend to create mutually beneficial conditions for intercultural inclusion and academic mobility provides a fertile ground for their current and future exploration.

## Introduction

This article focuses on the opportunities and preconditions for knowledge sharing which exist within the processes of ever-expanding transnational *academic mobility*, defined as international mobilities of tertiary students and staff for educational purposes. It is set to explore global intercultural encounters and intensified everyday interactions of diverse ethnic identities, cultural patterns and knowledge traditions, all in the context of increasing transnational knowledge mobility. This research anticipates an innovative look at academic migrants and mobile scholars as important agents of knowledge translation. It endeavours to uncover effective ways for understanding knowledge flows, exchange and translation in the new flexible, liquid and mobile intercultural academic environment.

Previous research has suggested that intercultural scholarly encounters can bring about misunderstandings and refusing the other (Marginson & Sawir 2011; Matthews & Sidhu 2005), but they also have enormous potential for knowledge cross-fertilisation and enrichment. It has been observed that intercultural exchanges of dissimilar cultural patterns

have a propensity to generate shared beliefs and cosmopolitan attitudes (Wise 2009). Contemporary intercultural encounters are widely assumed as sites for emanating cosmopolitan perceptions of cultural inclusion (Rovisco & Nowicka 2011). Cosmopolitan values tend to provide feelings of unity and community cohesion and are conducive to intercultural affinities (or commonalities) in understanding social inclusion (Vasta 2012). Positive dynamics of intercultural encounters have been described as leading to a formation of a shared cosmopolitan understanding of cultural inclusion (Noble 2009). This paper is an initial attempt to test these positive assumptions in relation to intercultural encounters among mobile scholars.

### **Academic Mobility**

In recent decades, the scholarly community witnessed the increased mobility of university students and scholars thanks to a number of academic mobility programs. The futures of increasingly international academic communities contemplate growing opportunities for intermixing of diverse ethno-cultural identities, cultural patterns and scholarly traditions. Academic mobilities of tertiary students and staff for scholarly career purposes are on the increase worldwide. In this research, academic mobility is seen as a part of the continuing changes in the teaching and learning processes that academic institutions are undergoing globally. These changes are often termed 'internationalisation of education' and they are expressed in the transformations in both the curricula and the recruitment practices for students and staff (Agoston & Dima 2012). Internationalisation of education responds to the needs of preparing graduates for a globalised society and it inevitably alters the ways knowledge is transferred, exchanged and created in academia and beyond. Academic mobility is a growing phenomenon worldwide and Australia is one of the leading countries in promoting *edubusiness* (Ball 2012), where the education sector is seen as having a business rationale of generating economic revenues. Australia has been receiving substantial economic, cultural and intellectual benefits from the inflows of people, skills, knowledges and ideas (Hawthorne 2005; Arunachalam & Healy 2009).

Academic mobilities have often been accompanied by a growing migration of knowledge workers. International flows of highly skilled migrants including international students and scholars has been steadily high in the last decades, and research on the positive outcomes of academic mobility is gaining its recognition and urgency worldwide (Kenway & Fahey 2006;

2009). Most significantly, there is a growing body of research on the educational prerequisites for success in internationalised academia (Abdallah-Preteuille 2003; 2007) and on the best practices of intercultural dialogue in academia worldwide (Boesmans 2007). Knowledge mobility is investigated alongside contiguous concepts, such as knowledge sharing, transfer, exchange, translation, mobilisation and creation (e.g., Graham et al. 2006; Williams 2006). How knowledge is shared and what preconditions are necessary for successful knowledge transfer is an interesting topic in itself, but it becomes even more compelling when knowledge is being shared across diverse cultures and continents (Asad 1986). Academic migrants and mobile scholars have been perceived as important agents of intercultural knowledge flows (Kim 2010) and this project is set to explore this topic by looking at the agency of scholarly migrants and their capacities to attain cosmopolitan attributes. Mobile scholars are perceived as being more prone to developing cosmopolitan outlooks and dispositions, as Marotta (2010, p.105) observes, ‘cosmopolitan strangers develop a more perceptive, broader and keener insight than those confined to either a particular or universal perspective’. The purpose of my research is to explore empirical evidence on the academic interactions of diverse cultures in order to advance our understanding of the processes of knowledge exchange, transfer, and ultimately knowledge creation.

Internationalised education signifies inclusion of multiple cultures where teaching and learning become not only multicultural by promoting inclusion, but also intercultural by sustaining interactive learning practices. Intercultural education opens the doors to intermixing, combining and interchanging multiple cultures. Intercultural encounters inevitably involve knowledge translation which means much more than a one-way linear diffusion of knowledge. Successful knowledge translation includes interactive practices, such as collaboration, linkages, sharing and exchanges of cultural perspectives. This project benefits from utilising insider research methods, as the researcher has been actively engaged in these interactive practices, and she has been a part of transnational academic mobility as a participant and a researcher for a number of years. These transnational academic mobility experiences have helped the researcher to develop an insider’s viewpoints on the intricacies of intercultural dialogue in the milieu of internationalised education and transnational knowledge mobility.

The global scholarly community has become increasingly aware of academic mobilities after many programs for academic mobility exchanges were introduced within the evolving and expanding European Union. They include *Erasmus*, *Socrates*, *Marie Curie*, *Tempus* and others. The most prominent and widespread of them remains *Erasmus*, which stands for *EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*. The *Erasmus* Program started in the European Union in 1987 as a program for student exchange, and with its newer addition of *Erasmus Mundus*, it now extends beyond Europe and truly involves the global community. Academic mobility is an ever-growing phenomenon and mobile scholars or academic migrants have been portrayed as a very enticing research target group because of their unique cosmopolitan propensities and outlooks. According to Bryan Turner (2013), the academic professional elites are a very promising and fruitful subject of study, and much can be learnt from their trajectories of success. Yet, they rarely become a focus of exploration for the social scientists and my research aims at addressing this knowledge gap. Mobile scholars and academic migrants can be perceived as unique in displaying a new cosmopolitan spirit of constantly looking outwards and embracing our increasingly liquid modernity and cosmopolitan outlooks. As examples of the ‘real cosmopolitan communities’, Jeremy Waldron (1992, p. 777) cites the ‘international community of scholars (defined in terms of some shared specialisation), [and] the scientific community... [who] effortlessly transcend national and ethnic boundaries ... to pursue common and important projects under conditions of goodwill, cooperation, and exchange throughout the world’. My research seeks to test and provide empirical evidence for this thesis.

### **Mobile Scholars and Academic Migrants**

This study focuses on the experiences of the skilled, highly mobile and often migrating groups: mobile scholars and academic immigrants. Interviewees for this paper include international postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers and mobile academic staff. Academic migrants are a promising subject for study since they possess unique characteristics which are rarely found in other professional immigrant groups. Academic migrants have higher levels of education (postgraduate degrees) and more diversified international professional experience compared to other skilled migrant groups. In turn, immigrant-receiving countries provide ample incentives for targeting mostly educated, experienced and affluent groups of migrants. Consequently, academic migrants have a greater propensity for global mobility, and more diversified options for temporary or permanent

migration. Academic migrants are more likely to be engaged in the newer types of migration patterns, such as: hyper-mobility, circular migration, return migration and shuttle migration.

Traditionally, migration has been viewed as a one-time mobility with a view of a permanent settlement; migrants were less likely to move again once settled. Nowadays this traditional way of migration is becoming less appealing, as we witness increased complexities of migration patterns. Hugo (1999) termed this shift 'a new paradigm in international migration' and noted that new fluid mobility patterns are becoming more complex and diversified (Hugo 2006a; 2008). As Ho & Bedford (2008, p. 53) observe: 'The distinctions between temporary and permanent migration are becoming blurred'. Khoo, Hugo & McDonald (2008, p. 195) agree, adding that 'Nevertheless, there has been a tendency to dichotomize permanent settlement and temporary migration as though they are two quite separate and unrelated processes'. This complexity of mobility patterns pertains not only to nuclear families, but also to the mobility between family members. For example, new patterns of migration and corresponding interesting terminology have been proposed recently. In New Zealand, Ho (2002) and Ho & Bedford (2008) conducted research among bi-local Asian families who were termed 'astronaut' families, in which one or both parents decided to return to their countries of origin to work, leaving their children to be educated in the new country. Children who are left to study in the new country are termed 'parachute kids' (Ho & Bedford 2008). Couples without children are termed 'cosmonauts' and they are even more likely to stay outside of their new country for prolonged periods (NZIS 2000).

Academic migrants display newer tendencies for liquid mobility, similarly to some other professional and entrepreneur groups. They are more likely to adopt a new cosmopolitan spirit of being open to malleability, constantly looking outwards, challenging old rigid social migration constructs and embracing our increasingly liquid modernity of global mobility (Kirpitchenko 2011). Academic migration allows us to look at migration in a new way: not as a clearly defined pattern of people's moving to a settler location, but as a more fluid pattern of malleable international mobility.

Thus professional migrants are a very suitable subject of research on mobility in the age of post-modernity. Additionally, academic migrants form an enticing research group because it can be argued that they tend to be better equipped for smooth international integration: they tend to have broad liberal education, knowledge of the host language, prolonged international

exposure, greater openness to diversity of ideas, and general cosmopolitan outlooks. It can be assumed that this group will be easily integrated in any international environment because academic migrants may not face any solid barriers to integration, such as a necessity to learn the language or to learn a new skill or profession. Their barriers to integration tend to take a more subtle, liquid and culturally defined form.

Scholars tend to agree that research on academic mobility is in its nascent state worldwide (Kehm & Teichler 2007; Kenway & Fahey 2006; 2009). This emerging field of research witnessed its Inaugural Conference in Finland in 2006. Conference participants were mainly engaged in drawing conclusions from the highly successful *Erasmus* program on student mobility within the European Union. It was noted that academic staff mobility is growing alongside student mobility, yet academic professional mobility remains under-studied and under-researched internationally. Many countries of the expanding European Union present opportunities for academic mobility. At the same time, the leading immigrant-receiving countries – Australia, Canada and New Zealand – have enhanced their immigrant recruitment techniques to attract highly educated and experienced people, reflecting a political shift in immigration policies, from family reunification to skilled selection (Hugo 2006a; 2006b; Arunachalam & Healy 2009). It was observed at the conference that despite all the opportunities that the expanding European Union is offering, Eastern European scholars seem increasingly to be migrating outside the European continent, mostly to North America and Australia. Nonetheless, only a modest body of research exists on academic mobility outside Europe.

The First Academic Mobility Conference provided a glimpse into the amount and quality of research on academic mobility that has been done in Europe (Dervin & Suomela-Salmi 2006). Existing research is mainly concentrated on the differences in academic expectations among non-native students and staff in the modes of academic writing (Durkin 2004; 2007), critical reading (Angelova & Riazantseva 1999), and academic interpersonal relations (Kirpitchenko 2007; Zharkova-Fattore 2007). Research is growing on the educational prerequisites for success in academic intercultural dialogue (Abdallah-Preteille 2003; 2007) and on the best practices of intercultural dialogue in academia internationally (Boesmans 2007). The main conclusion from the conference was summarised by Abdallah-Preteille (2007): ‘Mobility without education is nothing but ruin to the soul’ which parodies the famous formula of Rabelais, ‘Science without conscience is nothing but ruin to the soul’. Mobility presupposes

education and this study endeavours to shed light on some educational prerequisites for migration which can be termed cosmopolitan dispositions.

The Second Academic Mobility Conference was meant to build on this emerging theme and it was held in Estonia in 2009. It was the Third International Conference on Academic Mobility and Migration held in 2012 that marked a shift in how academic mobility is approached. The conference themes suggested two important changes to the scholarly perceptions of academic mobility. Firstly, by adding Academic Migration to its title it admitted that Mobility and Migration often accompany one another. Secondly, by holding the conference at the Kuala Lumpur International University, the conference extended its reach to Asia-Pacific academic mobility in recognition of this geographical region that has an increasingly active participation in global scholarly mobilities. Within the Asia-Pacific region, Australia is one of the preferred destinations for academic mobilities and the country strives to compete globally to remain one of the largest net beneficiaries of 'brain gain' (Beine, Defoort & Docquier 2007). This expanded vision of fluid academic mobility presents a chance to study global intercultural encounters and test emerging cosmopolitan values and dispositions.

### **Cosmopolitanism Re-Envisioned**

The concept of *cosmopolitanism* has recently re-emerged in scholarly writings and has received keen attention among social scientists globally (e.g., Kendall, Woodward & Skrbis 2009; Van Hooft 2009). Reborn interest in cosmopolitanism has been sustained by our heightened perceptions of increased mobility, globalisation, transnationalism, individualisation and associated cosmopolitanisation. The modern understanding of cosmopolitanism is generally attributed to Immanuel Kant's universalistic theory of Ethics (Toumlin 1990). In Vertovec and Cohen's (2002) summarising definition, cosmopolitanism has five main facets: sociocultural condition, a philosophy, a multifaceted political project, attitudes and, finally, competences. *Cosmopolitanisation thesis* is a part of the overall new framework for analysing social dynamics 'which helps to overcome methodological nationalism' (Beck 2002, p.18). Following Beck's (2002, 2006) lead, studies on cosmopolitanism are multiplying, as they are diversifying. This attention to cosmopolitanism can be explained in part by the exacerbated global social changes that marked the new stage in the postmodern period.

The central defining characteristic of a cosmopolitan perspective is *dialogic imagination* which means an imaginary practice of entering into conversation with the other and creating a dialogue with diverse cultures. Ultimately, ‘dialogic imagination’ refers to appropriation and internalisation of cultures and rationalities within one’s own life, and creation of the ‘internalised other’ (Beck 2002). The dialogic imagination corresponds to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience, which makes it a matter of importance to express quintessential openness (Hannerz 1996) to reflect, understand, combine and embrace contradictory certainties. The national perspective is a monologic imagination, which excludes the otherness of the other, as Beck (2002) has been very vocal in arguing. The cosmopolitan perspective is an alternative imagination, an imagination of alternative ways of life, cultures and rationalities, which necessarily include the otherness of the other. It highlights the importance in observing the processes of interpenetrations between various cultures of the world, the processes that are often described as interculturalisation. Ideas of every culture exist ‘side by side, in combination, comparison, contradiction and competition in every aspect of human experience’ (Beck 2002, p. 18). These processes of interculturalisation are continuing as they are imminent and inevitable.

This research is guided by the methodological applications of cosmopolitanism and the way cosmopolitanism is redefining the sociological frame of reference. Three central ways of redefinition, according to Beck (2002, pp. 35-36), are: *globality*, *plurality* and *civility*. *Globality* describes openness to the world, awareness of a globally defined sphere of responsibility, and globally shared collective futures. *Plurality* is an acknowledgement of the otherness of others and commitment to ‘stimulate the self-reflexivity of divergent entangled cosmopolitan modernities’. *Civility* defines commitment to dialogue, soft power and non-violence (Beck 2002, pp. 35-36). These three features of the cosmopolitan society will be discussed in relation to my empirical data collected among academic migrants. An objective of this discussion is to examine empirical evidence of growing cosmopolitan values and dispositions in everyday social interactions.

Guided by these three fundamental features – globality, plurality and civility – this study approaches cosmopolitanism as an open-ended and welcoming disposition. Hannerz (1996, p. 104) proposed a classical definition of cosmopolitanism that effectively captures all these features – he wrote that cosmopolitanism can be viewed as an ‘orientation, a willingness to

engage with the other ... intellectual and aesthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity'. Similarly, Calcutt, Woodward & Skrbis (2009, p. 172) stress universal features and maintain that 'cosmopolitanism includes Kantian universalism, cross-cultural competence, and either a willingness to tolerate or engage with otherness'. The idea that 'willingness to engage with the other' leads to better societal-wide outcomes is central in a very influential work conducted by Florida (2002; 2005) on global competition for talent. Skrbis & Woodward (2007, p. 730) isolate openness as a key feature of cosmopolitanism and add that 'cosmopolitans espouse a broadly defined disposition of "openness" toward others, people, things and experiences whose origin is non-local'.

Being open and being attuned to different cultures on many levels has been considered a necessary cultural attribute in the age of modernity. Cultural openness is considered to be a crucial prerequisite for a globalised world by Urry (2000a; 2000b) who is a leading theoretician of globalisation. Cultural openness means 'the search for, and delight in, the contrasts between societies rather than a longing for superiority or for uniformity' (Urry 2000b, p. 7). Cultural openness is seen as the main component of a cosmopolitan standpoint, a stance that may be conducive to generating new forms of critical knowledge (Hannerz 1996, pp. 103-109). Another component of a cosmopolitan standpoint is described in ethical, humanitarian and outward looking terms. Cosmopolitanism has to entail universal ethical commitments and 'a distinct ethical orientation towards selflessness, worldliness, and communitarianism' (Kendall et al. 2009, p. 22). These commitments promote public service and emphasise public good.

While theoretical conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism has advanced in recent years, the empirical dimensions of cosmopolitanism still remain to be explored in depth (Kendall et al. 2009; Van Hooft 2009; Pichler 2009; Van Hooft & Vandekerckhove 2010). I intend to undertake this challenge of exploring cosmopolitanism in everyday intercultural interactions. The focus in my research is on the *everyday cosmopolitanism* which combines cosmopolitan values, attitudes and competences that are manifested in everyday interpersonal relations.

## **Limitations of Cosmopolitanism**

Reborn interest in cosmopolitanism has been sustained by our heightened perceptions of increased mobility, globalisation, internationalisation, transnationalism, individualisation and associated cosmopolitanisation. At the same time, studies questioning, querying and problematising cosmopolitanism have also multiplied (e.g., Calhoun 2002; Van Hooft & Vandekerckhove 2010). Some authors believe that cosmopolitanism has limitations which can be seen in the abstract and idealistic nature of the concept along with its apparent philosophical detachment from everyday concerns. While cosmopolitanism is an appealing concept for the theoretical level of discussion, difficulties remain in applying this concept empirically. One of the challenging issues is finding empirical dimensions for measuring cosmopolitanism and demonstrating that this concept is suitable for empirical studies.

One of the most effective critical outlooks on cosmopolitanism has been provided by Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward (2004, p. 116) who describe cosmopolitanism ‘as a progressive humanistic ideal’ focusing mostly on its envisioning as a form of global openness. Yet, Skrbis et al. (2004, p. 115) are adamant that such understanding of cosmopolitanism remains at the level of abstraction and ‘it does not necessarily make a good analytical tool’. They argue that what is needed is to establish linkages with observable everyday practices and interpersonal attitudes. Yet there is a growing agreement that cosmopolitanism is a valuable notion and that it is worthwhile exploring and testing in empirical studies. Skrbis et al. (2004, p. 131) conclude that cosmopolitanism is characterised in recent discourses as ‘an idealist sentiment that indulges in excessive self-reflexivity and consequently has left unspecified the empirical sociological dimensions of the concept’. The authors state that ‘most emphatically, cosmopolitanism needs to be pinned down empirically’ (Skrbis et al. 2004, p. 132). An essential part of the pinning down process is accounting for what Malcomson (1998, p. 238) calls ‘the actually existing cosmopolitanisms’. This research seeks to undertake this challenge and endeavours to assess the idealistic, theoretical, detached and abstract limitations of cosmopolitanism by locating empirical cosmopolitan values and dispositions in everyday discourses, situations and experiences of interpersonal interactions among academic migrants.

Cosmopolitan cultural dispositions, which are durable cultural propensities and inclinations that individuals display in relations with others (Bourdieu 1977, p. 72), are to be explored as the crucial components of successful intercultural dialogue. Cosmopolitan dispositions have a potential to challenge the essentialist binaries of local and global, particular and universal, or

national and international. They can be viewed as the gains of successful cultural knowledge interchange leading to mutually beneficial social inclusion. I will analyse cosmopolitan attributes which tend to be developed in the processes of successful knowledge translation. They include: mutual willingness to engage; cultural acceptance; openness to diversity; and mutual accommodation in the processes of intercultural communication. By examining intercultural encounters of mobile scholars, my central aim is to test empirically an often made theoretical assumption that cross-cultural interactions generate cosmopolitan values, beliefs and attitudes that can be described as cosmopolitan dispositions. By testing the connections between academic mobility and cosmopolitan dispositions stemming from intercultural communication, this research provides an innovative perspective on intercultural encounters as venues for knowledge translation.

### **Ethnographic Research**

The research question is concerned with examining synergies of cultural interactions among mobile scholars and underlining conditions for new knowledge breakthrough and creation. This research made a first attempt at exploring successful strategies of knowledge integration and probing cosmopolitan values and dispositions arising from intercultural encounters. Ethnographic research among mobile scholars was undertaken to test some of the assumptions in the theoretical literature on the emerging cosmopolitan values and dispositions. Participant observation and in-depth interviews were conducted among academic migrants and mobile scholars of Eastern European background. Participants were mainly in their late 20s and 30s and included postgraduate, postdoctoral researchers and academic staff from several university sites in Australia and overseas. Interviews and participant observation activities were conducted on the premises of several universities in Melbourne and two universities in Italy - the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence and LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome.

All universities were selected based on their international outlooks and predominant cosmopolitan milieu and turned out to be the perfect sites for examining the experiences of mobile scholars of contemporary times. Australian universities in Melbourne, where research was conducted, are all eager participants of the growing *edubusiness* (Ball 2012) and succeed in attracting large numbers of international exchange students and visiting scholars. The EUI is an international educational institution overseen by the European Union. LUISS Guido

Carli stands for Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali, which is translated as Free International University for Social Studies. Both the EUI and LUISS make their priority the creation of a diverse intermix of international students and staff. Both Universities are synonymous with academic mobility internationally and represent a vivid example of liquid academic mobility. Their scholarly environments provide an excellent opportunity to explore how social and intercultural interactions develop among hyper-mobile academic professionals.

As a part of my ethnographic research, I conducted participatory observations by taking part in all types of educational activities, lectures, classes, seminars, conferences and recreational social events of the host universities. Lengthy stays at the EUI and LUISS provided me with ample opportunities for ethnographic work and I was offered unique advantages in experiencing academic research environments enriched from cross-fertilisation of research traditions and scholarly approaches which are unique. The EUI and LUISS are leading research and teaching institutions devoted exclusively to social sciences. They especially emphasise comparative studies and international links which are of particular interest for academic migrants and mobile scholars. Both are renowned academic institutions which promote academic mobility by recruiting their full-time teaching staff, fellows and research students from all countries of the European Union and many other parts of the globe. Participants were selected based on their extended and diverse experiences of academic mobility. Open-ended questionnaire included questions to explore the challenges and successes of interactive processes between people from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds.

The distinguished international institutions offered perfect sites for examining modern intercultural encounters in a cosmopolitan scholarly milieu. Two European Universities represent a very important case study for this research as they are synonymous with academic mobility in Europe and present a vivid example of liquid academic mobility unbounded by a 'permanent' place of destination. These European institutions provided an opportunity to explore how social interaction develops among scholars who are unconstrained by dominating cultural patterns or cultural pressures of the 'permanent or settler' host society. It could be observed that in the pan-European environment devoid of overbearing cultural patterns, migrants tend to feel more liberated in intercultural social interaction and the creation of new knowledge. Therefore intercultural dialogue may be less inhibited by the old culturally constructed moulds and be conducive to new fluid and enriching patterns of social

interaction between cultures. European-based research is a chance to look ahead and preview intricacies of migration and mobility in the age of post-modernity which presents less permanent, fluid and more flexible opportunities for settlement, work and education.

### **Everyday Cosmopolitanism**

Mobile scholars tend to display multiple cosmopolitan dispositions that aid them in being successful in intercultural interactions and professional communication. Cultural dispositions describing ‘long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243) that individuals display in relations with others, were found to be the crucial components of successful intercultural dialogue. This discussion contributes to building an argument that cosmopolitan dispositions facilitate and promote intercultural dialogue, knowledge transfer and creation of shared cultural meanings.

This study analyses the role of culture in the intercultural communication processes appropriating advances in contemporary debates on cosmopolitanism. These current approaches share a central feature – a clear emphasis on diversity and plurality of viewpoints. Giddens (1990, p. 2) states that ‘The post-modern outlook sees a plurality of heterogeneous claims to knowledge ...’. Individual projects are no longer bound by the traditional social anxieties in constructing and maintaining their self-identities. Individual projects are seen as more open and flexible undertakings (Giddens 1991). Writing about a postmodern cosmopolitan society, Beck (2006, p. 89) suggests the idea of ‘*internalization of difference*, the co-presence and coexistence of rival lifestyles, contradictory certainties in the experiential space of individuals and societies’. By this is meant a world ‘in which it became necessary to understand, reflect and criticize difference, and in this way to assert and recognize oneself and others as different and hence of equal value’. In this way, cosmopolitan theory has opened the way to considerations of mutual recognition, understanding and respect of cultural otherness.

### **Globality**

Among participants, there was a deep sense of global openness to the world, awareness of a global opportunities and responsibilities, along with globally shared collective futures. Very high hopes and aspirations of the possibilities open up in the new countries. Stepan could not hide that he ‘was very fascinated about going to study at the western institution’. Timofey

was equally enthusiastic: 'My expectations were terrific and just unbelievable. I was going there with a lot of enthusiasm and great hopes'. When Dina went abroad for the first time she described her prospects even in more brilliant terms: 'My expectations were amazing. I thought that it was very important and it can even change my life, something along these lines'.

Many respondents thought that their stay abroad would provide additional chances for their career advancement. Nikolay explained that his reasons for going abroad were 'mostly altruistic. ... [but] I was very interested in the literature for my dissertation which was not available in Hungary'. Many others have felt deprived of international contacts during the times of the Iron Curtain. Therefore, new possibilities to cross the borders were met with lots of excitement and enthusiasm despite the looming difficulties. Eugenia also had an upbeat attitude to the challenges her trip abroad would entail: 'I wanted to try how it is to live and study in a different country. ... I thought let's see whether I can really live and survive in another academic system'.

Larisa was also driven by the new challenges and wanted to 'try other instructional and methodological approaches different from ours'. Olga admitted that she was driven by her curiosity to learn about the educational systems abroad: 'I wanted to learn something that I have not encountered before. It was always my main motivation. And I always wanted to compare both systems'. Larisa also voiced her curiosity about the world: 'I wanted to see the world and I expected to meet people from other countries'. Larisa was also thinking about her professional career opportunities: 'I expected and hoped that there would be more opportunities opening to me in terms of finding an employment afterwards'. Some participants had overly exaggerated expectations of the possibilities abroad. Boris had 'unrealistic' expectations, in his own words. When he went to Milan for his studies he hoped to find employment afterwards, but unfortunately, as Boris admits with a grain of self-irony:

I speak Italian fluently and this is my working language. ... Therefore, I considered the Italian labour market as my first target for finding employment. ... Right now my Italian ambition is considerably much smaller. ... My hopes to find employment have not decreased; but my understanding of its impossibility have greatly increased.

Equally, Sofia had many expectations: 'I [expected] the usual stuff – better life, better education, a new world, and new friends'. Dorota also had a number of professional and

personal hopes: ‘So that I will be able to develop myself not only in the academic sense, but also in the cultural sense’. Dorota’s summarising thoughts showed that people develop a variety of hopes and expectations in their multiple sites of everyday experiences, and that for them academic mobility provides unsurpassed exciting opportunities for realising their hopes for better lives.

### ***Plurality***

Plurality is an acknowledgement of the otherness of others and commitment to be self-reflexive of diverse cultures, no matter how entangled they may be in a cosmopolitan milieu. Many participants found it very satisfying to learn about many cultural differences. Thus, Larisa described enjoyment in interacting with people from different cultures: ‘Their worldviews are different and you have to adjust to different viewpoints and it takes time to figure out that people are different. But it is also interesting to see how different viewpoints can be’. Eugenia also recounted that ‘it was genuinely interesting... to hear someone speaking who experienced [diverse] societies and realities’.

Similarly, Nikolay enjoyed the new culture very much: ‘everyone is very open and there are much more social and agitated people who care more about everything that is public. ... I can talk a lot about public and private things that I terribly enjoy [sic]’. Timofey also noted that preserving one’s own cultural distinctiveness could be of great advantage. Alexey agreed that ‘being different is not necessarily your drawback’. It was only a lack of adaptation that mattered: ‘But when you adapt, those differences can play on your behalf’ and he continued:

I cherish these differences. ... I am actually curious about cultural differences and it is a good challenge: How does this work in your country, in your culture? Can you give me a hint on how I should behave in this situation when I am in your country? It is like languages - whenever you learn another language, it enriches you.

Olga noted that among cultural differences, what mattered was which of them had any significance. For example, in Germany, ‘lots of communication was done in a written form and unless you had written a letter they would not hold an agreement or respond’.

Recognition and acceptance of these cultural differences through the process of self-reflection led to the creation of a shared understanding of interpersonal communication.

## *Civility*

Civility is understood as an ethical commitment to dialogue, use of persuasion, soft power, instead of violence. Research participants reflected on what civility meant for them and many discussed communication strategies, personal cultural dispositions and societal conditions that would be helpful for civil intercultural dialogue. Ruslan suggested that people who applied extra efforts, such as learning foreign languages, were more effective in mixing and interacting with diverse cultures. Olga was certain that cultures that were more communicative, open and sociable would be more likely to succeed. In her view, while some cultures were happy with initial conversation and superficial socialising, other cultures needed deeper levels of involvement and interaction.

Civility was described as learning and teaching style in academia. Olga noted that the American system was based on the so called Socratic method, the method of open discussion on a topic. Olga believed that Russian students expected to be passive while they were taught and American students expected to be active in self-education. In Stepan's experience, in the West there was more tolerance in relation to different views and less explicitly defined 'compulsory' knowledge that one had to acquire. He thought that this 'discussion type' learning created a more stimulating learning environment and civil communication culture. This highly interactive teaching approach meant that more student contribution was required. Susanna noted that students were not expected to listen only to the lectures, but to participate in 'lively' discussions and presentations: 'In Estonia we were not used to discuss very much in classes. Usually we listened to the lectures and then we had to record and reproduce the information we heard'. Susanna was happy to admit that this system helped her to develop academic communication skills.

Many praised the fact that the academic culture of communication presented more opportunities for engagement and interaction, all nurturing civility in communication. There were more seminars, discussions of students' work, presentations and more cooperation in research that cultivated interpersonal civility. Larisa also appreciated that everyone was strongly encouraged to go to conferences, present their work, and receive feedback: 'You feel that people are interested in your success and it creates a good environment'. Alexey agreed that the everyday communication culture in academia abroad was pleasant: 'Academic world is very friendly and open minded and you would hardly feel excluded'. Many concluded that

this environment of mutual support and encouragement was very productive and upheld civility as a cosmopolitan trait.

## **Conclusion**

This paper draws attention to emerging cosmopolitanism by testing the assumptions that intensified encounters of diverse ethno-cultural identities, cultural patterns and historic traditions create conditions for arising cosmopolitan values and dispositions. This research has been guided by ‘dialogic imagination’ which is a defining characteristic of the cosmopolitan perspective. Dialogic imagination helped in examining a dialogue between diverse cultures as an ongoing process of reciprocal appropriation and internalisation of other cultures within one’s own culture. While employing theoretical premises of the cosmopolitan perspective, this paper made an initial attempt at testing their empirical applicability for analysing modern intercultural encounters among academic migrants within the internationalised academia. My discussion is linked to the ideas of cultural inclusion, and it adopts a cosmopolitan logic of living in terms of inclusive oppositions and rejecting the logic of exclusive oppositions.

This initial examination of empirical findings is structured along Beck’s three important characteristics of cosmopolitanism: globality, plurality and civility. Following these three guiding principles, this research attempted to identify and analyse cosmopolitan values and dispositions in everyday intercultural encounters, discourses, situations and experiences. It analysed cosmopolitan dispositions which mirror Beck’s key characteristics and which further can be described as mutual willingness to engage, cultural acceptance and reciprocal accommodation. This paper argues that it is cosmopolitan values and dispositions that tend to create mutually beneficial conditions for intercultural inclusion in everyday encounters and transnational academic mobility provides a fertile ground for their current as well as future exploration.

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