3

The Erasmus Impetus

In previous publications, we have defined international conviviality as a driver of participation among students, with the communal nature of the Erasmus being one of the reasons for the programme's longevity (Feyen and Krzaklewska 2013; Cairns et al. 2017). In this part of our discussion, we develop this theme further and explore motives for participation from the standpoint of young people wishing to engage with the programme. Even acknowledging the fact that Erasmus is a product of European Union policymaking, a topic of discussion throughout this book, the programme itself would not have continued to function if there had been an insufficient level of interest from students. Their views are therefore placed at the centre of our discussion for the duration of the chapter.

Motivations for undergraduates to enrol in exchanges can of course be linked to class background, mobility being seen as a particularly valid practice by the privileged (Andreotti et al. 2013), more specifically as a kind of institutionally organised gap year for youth (Vogt 2018). Students may also feel the pressure to follow an internationalization logic that prevails within universities (see also Brooks and Waters 2011). But the idea of moving while studying is also very much present in personal imaginings of the future: for example, a recent research project using Italian data

D. Cairns et al., *Mobility, Education and Employability in the European Union*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76926-4_3

investigated forms of mobility that have become 'anticipated', including the wish to move abroad though Erasmus (Cuzzocrea and Mandich 2016). The findings of this study suggest that mobility is at times seen as an entry ticket to bypassing uncertainty and difficulties at home, providing what are in effect alternative life chances. Even more generally, a willingness to be mobile is portrayed as an important trait of cosmopolitan, postmodern youth.

The reasons for moving abroad thus become related to the desire to have a different kind of life: doing something on the outside that leads to biographical change on the inside. If we take this proposition seriously, it becomes easy to see the appeal of the Erasmus programme, something that has led us in the past to focus on the study of how 'mobility intentions' emerge, with young people asked to identify how to leave and where they think they will move (e.g. Cairns and Smyth 2011). The possibility of Erasmus, as opposed to individuals, fulfilling this transformative function leads us to rethink some of the basic assumptions prevalent in youth mobility literature, including the idea of the decision to move abroad being a product of weighing up push and pull factors. Traditionally, the former relate to prevailing conditions in the sending society, typically adverse social and/or economic conditions that act as constraints on personal and professional development. In contrast, pull factors refer to the attractiveness of the other place, again, with specific emphasis on social and economic factors. Within the youth phase, the mobility decision-making process is less explicitly oriented around issues such as salary levels or welfare conditions, but rather more lifestyle focused, albeit with recognition of the importance of enhancing employability (see Chap. 2). We can therefore deduce that deciding to participate in Erasmus might be the product of feeling constrained at home in terms of possibilities within a current educational habitus and the prospect of finding space in which to reflect and re-orientate oneself towards different goals in another country.

Putting this into simpler terms, what we will explore in this chapter is the impetus to participate in Erasmus, revisiting some established ideas from relevant literature, refreshed through the use of material from two different empirical sources. Firstly, we make use of written motivation statements produced by candidates for the programme in an Italian university. This material is used as naturally occurring data to investigate

what sort of justifications students believe evaluators expect them to make, thus making themselves into a mirror for established institutional discourses. Secondly, we have conducted interviews with young people who have recently completed Erasmus exchanges, with our analysis focused on how their motivations changed as a result of the experience. Using this material, we are able to illustrate the Erasmus impetus as it exists among prospective Erasmus students and what happens to this desire during a stay abroad, providing what we hope will be an original perspective on this issue.

Push and Pull Factors in Written Motivations

Our empirical material enables us to compare and contrast how the logic of employability within Erasmus is framed among different people and at different times. As a first step, we will analyse ideas from the written motivation statements. This material was gathered at a university in Sardinia, Italy, in a university that has long-standing participation in Erasmus. In regard to 'motivations', we are basically referring to the statements provided by Erasmus applicants to the sending institution. The nature of this material, as written discourse, is different to that of interview transcripts, in that candidates have an opportunity to organize and edit their justifications, a process that involves pragmatic considerations being incorporated so that a place may be more readily obtained. There is hence a kind of 'natural artificiality' inherent in this material that tells us as much about what applicants perceive the programme is looking for as it does about their personal motivations.[1]

That this material is drawn from the application process means that this is a form of naturally occurring data, albeit non-representative in the sense that we are focusing on one case study institution and can only use what the university has permitted us to analyse. What we do have are 300 motivation statements as inserted into the Erasmus application form by students between 2015 and 2017. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students were included from a variety of degree programmes at the university. These 300 statements were randomly selected out of a larger sample of approximately 500 cases. Permission to consult and use the

material for this book was obtained from the university, although the statements did not contain names or biographical details of the student applicants.

What this material constitutes is a means to obtain an original perspective on motivation to participate in the programme, with analysis aimed at identifying key ideas mobilised in the application procedure. This allows us to examine students' initial perceptions of Erasmus and how a dialogue is initiated between potential participants and an institution. Additionally, we can view the procedure as an introduction to the world of applying to European institutions for money, a procedure that may be repeated many times subsequently depending upon later education and career path choices. We therefore have the chance to look at first formal experiences of accessing European grant funding, a procedure which is in itself part of the socialisation into competitive education systems and international labour markets.

Push Factors

As a means of introduction, we can illustrate some of the main themes emerging from the students' statements. Firstly, in looking at 'push factors', we have a very strong endorsement of cultural factors, specifically the idea that other places have something different to offer compared to the home region; for example:

> I'd like, in the first place, to learn to relate to other cultures given the difficulty that one has here in Sardinia. Living in a relatively small island, there is not enough exchange of new ideas.

We can see here a direct reference to the 'small' nature of Sardinia. This theme is expounded upon in another statement which makes specific reference to the lack of 'space' for young people:

> I live in a country which leaves increasingly less space for young people, which makes it hard to see a worthwhile perspective of what our future will be. I do not want to be content with Italy, despite how beautiful it is. The

> world is certainly too big to be able to know it all, but step-by-step, one can broaden and improve his or her views, and one can only do this by travelling, exploring and being thirsty for knowledge.

It is important to note that this is not a negative typification of the departure point. On the contrary, Sardinia is regarded as 'beautiful'. What is sought is something different, or something extra, rather than an escape being narrated in terms of negative experience. Motivations can also be multiple, as demonstrated in the following account:

> The motivations which push me to participate in the Erasmus experience are several and all tied to the end of making myself a person who is increasingly aware and equipped with a mental mind-set broader than what an island can give. I am a very curious girl, I love my land, Sardinia, but I am also convinced that in order to be able to appreciate that, and judge, I must be able to confront it with different cultures that allows me to develop a major critical spirit.

This final statement underlines the need for contrast in these young people's lives. We might therefore argue that what can be gained is a better appreciation of one's home rather than, or as well as, an understanding of other places, enabled by a shift in geographical location.

Pull Factors

In looking at the factors that attract these young people abroad, professional concerns are very prominent. For example:

> I'd like to enrich my CV with an experience before being inserted into the world of work. I believe Erasmus changes a bit your life and opens your mind to new countries. I want to be given this possibility because 2017–2018 will be my last academic year before graduation.

This account is consistent with some of the employability themes we looked at in the previous chapter, and foreshadows a theme to be explored in Chap. 5 of this book, namely the idea that Erasmus offers soon-to-be-

employed young people a kind of moratorium experience. It is therefore interesting to observe that while a desire to leave Sardinia can be expressed in terms of cultural limitations, moving abroad is associated with enhancing work readiness. Several references were also made to the importance of the English language in this process:

> I would like to participate to this experience in order to improve my English language fluency, to have the possibility to confront myself with a culture different from my own, to understand, being on the spot, see how various juridical systems work differently when applied in our country.

Finally, we also need to bear in mind that there are certain academic pathways that more or less require mobility episodes to take place, or where a major benefit can be made from a stay abroad:

> I have decided to participate in this experience because I would like to continue my studies in a foreign country, considering that the course in Biomedical Engineering in [city] does not offer a postgraduate degree. Studying abroad is a great opportunity which must be taken seriously and that allows personal and professional growth. This is accompanied with a direct confrontation with a new culture and a new language.

This situation relates specifically to graduates seeking postgraduate opportunities not present in home universities. We can therefore see that the mobility impetus changes as an educational trajectory progresses, with additional and perhaps more complex considerations emerging at later stages.

Motivations: Recurring Themes

What we are basically highlighting here is that there are different motivations. Many of these we already know about through reading Erasmus literature. While there are different themes in this research field, one recurring idea is concerned with the idea that Erasmus students possess the ability to help engineer a new European ethos, one that is grounded in civic consciousness (e.g. Papatsiba 2006). The experience of mobility

is viewed as a specific aspect of youth citizenship, including the fact that they do not locate themselves on either side of a geographical boundary, constituting a kind of 'unicum' (Ieracitano 2015, p. 110).

This conceptualization is similar to the idea that what we are witnessing is the construction of 'the new mobile European' (Recchi 2013). A question raised by this literature concerns the necessity of mobility in order to become a European citizen, in a context were mobile Europeans are assumed to be the 'champions' of citizenship (Recchi 2013, p. 12). This can lead researchers to ask just how pro-European can Erasmus students become, or if they were already staunchly pro-European before participating in the programme, if they are able to 'lubricate' the European labour market through obviating European borders, being ready and available for whatever opportunities may arise (Wilson 2011). This ideal is placed into a framework emphasising attention on civic duties (Mitchell 2012), with the assumption that there should be a closer correlation between 'European' and 'the EU' (Wilson 2011, p. 1117).

In explaining why these academic tropes have emerged, it may be that educated young people, being in a state of status flux, are seen a potential ambassadors for an ideal type of European identity by certain theorists. As such, the European institutions might also think that they can take advantage of the fact that students are in a 'natural' state of identity reformulation. We cannot however assume that learners are necessarily interested in this role, particularly should they be shown to be more concerned with the process of discovering themselves rather than their continent. Events of recent years, especially the spectre of Brexit, have also somewhat dented prospects for European unity, implying that dis-unity and separation may be the future rather than more integration between EU member states.

Rather than concern with European identities, what we have actually found emerging in the motivation statements is a recapitulation of what are now classic themes in student mobility literature: personal development, academic progress, linguistic development and cultural exploration (see Maiworm and Teichler 1997; Murphy-Lejeune 2002; Krzaklewska 2008). Looking at one of these issues, improving foreign language fluency, we find copious numbers of students seeking to use Erasmus mobility for this end.

> I would like to participate because I believe it is a big occasion to get to know new places, new people, new cultures, and a new language above all else. I think it is a great starting point for personal growth far away from home. I believe that all this could help me to be not only a better graduate and [better] professional, but also a better person.

It is interesting that the development of this faculty is linked to personal development and all-round self-fulfilment, as well as professional concerns. We would therefore argue against a separation of these two faculties. This is also expressed in terms of independence and becoming more mature:

> My fundamental aim is to improve the language, certainly thanks to an immersion in the host country I have the possibility to learn it more quickly. No doubt Erasmus will help me to win the friendship of people from all over the world and develop new and diverse cultural skills. Thanks to this experience I will have the opportunity to put myself at stake, and really understand how much I am worth. This surely will make me more mature and more independent. This is because of having to go alone to a foreign country: far away from parents and usual friends one is compelled to learn and overcome obstacles on one's own.

In summarizing this debate, we would argue for a need to ground our understanding of Erasmus in fundamentally human terms, as opposed to mirroring EU policy discourse or popular academic research tropes. Ideas of independence, autonomy and maturity are at the core of these justifications for seeking Erasmus mobility, with a development of one's own capabilities associated with the construction of an ability to explore the wider world rather than making a tangible contribution to strengthening EU institutions or bringing to life a shared European identity.

Employability and the Erasmus Impetus

In looking at employability as a normative category, Garsten and Jacobsson (2004, pp. 276–277) have discussed what is required for such a category to function after being 'established, normalised and internalised'. This involves both education and training, and for the unemployed, labour

market activation. And as we also noted in the previous chapter, policy agendas need to focus on enhancing existing capacities, since practically all people possess a work aptitudes of some sort, also taking into account subjective factors such as having the right attitude and how people present themselves to employers. It is also clear that across Europe, national education systems wish to encourage the right attitude towards work, with mobility programmes forming one means of doing this.[2]

'Employability' itself has become something of an educationalists mantra, although not necessarily accompanied by a grounding in the complexities of the process, and we can detect some signs of this discourse having been taken on board by Erasmus applicants. But what is also clear is that these young people have little or no coherent idea about what an employability enhancement process entails. Take the following example:

> What pushes me to be wanting to do this experience is fundamentally the will to demonstrate to myself and to others that I can handle life all by myself, even in a place far away from home, outside of my comfort zone. I am sure that this adventure will enrich me in everything, in the human experiences as well as in the study ones. Surely it is an important decision which, useless to deny, scares me a bit. Despite this, I know that applying is the right choice for what concerns my education as a Law student, as a European citizen, and, undoubtedly, as a person.

While there is nothing particular alarming about this statement, it is characterized by vagueness, lacking grounding in specific decisions or measures to be taken. What we have instead are familiar ideas such as 'comfort zone' and 'human experiences'. In other words, this is a very formulaic stating of an objective that actually requires innovative planning and reflection to be achieved. What is more candid is the acceptance of insecurities and weakness. Such a position is however inconsistent with how employability ought to be represented, since young people are meant to demonstrate confidence and assurance to employers.

Reflecting on this approach, it becomes apparant that projecting a degree of honesty may be seen as important, in defining the starting position for improvements in personal and professional circumstances to take place, although this may not necessarily be useful in the process of

enhancing employability. We can also observe this approach in the motivation statements of those who have already participated in Erasmus learning processes:

> Having already had a period of Erasmus mobility, I can say I have made the best choice of my life. It is an experience that makes you grow a lot, both from the academic standpoint, because it puts you in contact with different methodologies, and from the human point of view given that one finds oneself having to deal on his or her own for everything. Even now, one month after my first experience, I am continuing to learn, and this makes me even more conscious of the fact that there is always something new awaiting us. And this motivates me to want more, because knowledge is an advantage, and I want to be advantaged.

The Erasmus student is therefore a work-in-progress. Those who have had prior Erasmus experience find themselves seeking more as the task of self-actualization is incomplete. While this might be viewed as a justification for the current Erasmus+ approach of having mobility opportunities at different stages of education and training trajectories, there is also a risk that the programme creates incomplete subjects: people who have taken on board some aspects of employability, or interculturality for that matter, but not enough to completely re-orient their careers in a more spatially diverse direction.

Motivations Revisited: A Retrospective Viewpoint

The material on written motivation is an interesting source for what students will write in order to meet official approval. Yet, that these motivations are produced within an institutional setting means that they may not be revealing the 'real' reasons for wanting to participate in the programme; this might also explain the vague or even elusive quality of some of the ideas we have brought to light. To explore this matter further, the second part of this chapter will analyse interview material that also focused on motivations, conducted with students who have already com-

pleted their exchanges and are now at a point where they are deciding what to do next with their completed, or very soon to be complete, degree. In doing so, we can take a retrospective view of motivations and consider the extent to which it was possible to realize aspirations within a framework of institutional exchange, including the efficacy of formal and informal learning processes.

The interviews were conducted during summer 2017 in a regional university in Germany, partly in person and partly via skype. These students, found at an Erasmus student day, were both former Erasmus students and prospective candidates. Personal contact was followed by an invitation to be interviewed via email, sent via the international office of the university. Seven students were interviewed via this process. This method does not enable the construction of a representative sample, meaning that we have to take into account potential 'biases', such as the fact that attending a student day could in itself be viewed as a sign of pre-existing interest in the programme. We also need to consider that these students are based in a country that is geographically central in Europe, which provides a 'natural' advantage for mobility exercises, something that contemporaries in outlying regions do not enjoy. That German students have a strong adherence to Erasmus mobility is also clear from looking at published statistics (see Chap. 1), although the university itself hosts many students from rural areas, where the potential for intercultural encounters may be limited.

Changing Motivations?

Our initial impression of the motivations of the interviewed students is that a much greater degree of strategic planning is observable compared to the positions revealed in the motivation statements. While this may be due to a shift in spatial location, from Italy to Germany, it might also be that the popularity of student mobility in the latter country has led to its practice becoming somewhat taken for granted. Erasmus has, for want of a better word, become mundane. One reason for this relates to prior experience of mobility especially for those who have lived within a border community, where living across borders is a familiar practice. This is

demonstrated in the case of Hans, a German Erasmus student with plans to study in Hungary:

> I was born in Aachen, close to the border between The Netherlands and Belgium, so maybe this is also one reason why I was abroad, I was just growing up next to the border, so going abroad, and it's just something absolutely typical to me. I'm very familiar with going abroad because many friends of mine lived next to the border and I grew up in a little town […] directly beside the border with The Netherlands, with one very famous street where the left hand side is Germany and the right is in The Netherlands. So of course some friends lived on the right side, some other friends on the left side, so it was just totally familiar that you go abroad.

Going abroad therefore signifies familiarity rather than dislocation due to the close proximity of other countries. In regard to what happens to motivations for Erasmus among mobility habituated students, it seems that they become less concerned about developing new skills or enhancing employability and more oriented around personal issues. For example, one female interviewee had a rationale for doing Erasmus in Poland that was less about developing intercultural skills and more about satisfying her own interests.

> It was not very pragmatic, it was really not much about liking the city or something, because we [the interviewee and a long-time friend] both have never been to Poland before, so it was really pretty much all the same to us, we didn't know any other cities, we didn't really know any history or culture, anything of Poland, but we really felt like getting to know something new and because of my background in Luxembourg I already knew a lot of […] France, I have been to Spain several times, so I have been to a lot of places in Western Europe […]

What seems to (re)define Erasmus motivation is prior experience of mobility, including a personal history of intra-European migration. That this student undertakes mobility with a friend also has implications for engagement with the host society, and other exchange students, a point she discussed extensively in the interview. The programme is thus used differently for those who already know how to practice mobility and

those who are moving abroad for the first time, a theme we will develop in Chaps. 5 and 6. Individually driven and collectively practiced mobility have different meanings. Suffice to say, an exchange visit made by an experienced traveller risks becoming inherently touristic or even an exercise in narcissism, particularly when shared with a close friend or partner, totally losing sight of employability and interculturality due to an extensive focus on personal exploration.

Another factor that seems to change orientations towards exchange visits relates to incoming students to Germany from countries of origin where Erasmus is relatively novel. This is demonstrated by Mira from Serbia, who also holds a managerial position in a student international organisation. She relates how this prior involvement helped her throughout the whole Erasmus experience:

> I always say that [the association] helped me get the Erasmus because in Serbia Erasmus is very competitive, so only the top students can get it, which was the case of the generation of people that went to [my] university […]. So, it was only the ones who were very good students, plus they had to have some extracurricular activities, some very impressive ones, so it […] helped me to come up with a very nice application and also help me with every other aspect, because I was in contact with the Erasmus students, I know what they look for, what they feel, what they would like to improve or not, so basically I knew, for example, how to take the best advantage of Erasmus. So I didn't waste any time, I knew it was also the time for me to get into a different education system, so what I did, because I had already passed all the exams at my university, so I actually didn't need that many credits, I took some classes that I couldn't take anywhere in Serbia, so I took three classes that don't exist in my country, and that's from like the educational part. For my personal part I tried to have a very busy schedule, to travel almost every second week, sometimes almost every week and I also took the classes, so it would give me freedom, you know, to travel on Friday or on Monday, something like that.

Being in such a position clearly puts an exchange student under additional pressure to perform and set a good example, but also opens up the possibility of taking advantage of educational opportunities not present at home. In this way, we can see that there is more value in Erasmus for such students, in contrast to those from societies wherein exchange visits

have been routinized. Another source of inspiration that can provide a change of emphasis during an Erasmus visit is observation of the talents possessed by other people. Returning to the account of Hans, he explained how this can be inspirational:

> I met a lot of extremely high potential people, one person who is speaking five languages, planning a diplomatic career, with that CV you just have an open mouth, you just wonder how they did that in their lifetime, and this was something also very interesting to me because you just were floored […] by these people, and you know, this is what you did in your life and this is what they did their lives. […] in comparison to those you know, they are doing everything for their career, and this was something new to me, a personal thing that became clearer or nearer to me […] to the point that I decided to myself that I'm willing to do this and to be engaged in my career, but only to a certain point as […] I want to have a family, I want to have kids, or children, and to have a life full of quality in different aspects, and so these high engaged career people to me do not have that living quality.

We can therefore observe the value of a 'role model', in part as a source of inspiration but also as kind of warning. Crucial to this evaluation is the idea of what constitutes quality of life. Hans does not want to be an achiever at any cost. While on the one hand he rejects the idea that having a good life is associated with free time, making reference to his lack of interest in the 'partying and drinking culture' of Erasmus, he also values family life and doing things like taking a walk along the Danube.

Conclusion: Contrasting Motivations?

What we are trying to demonstrate in this chapter, but obviously not prove given that we do not have sufficient evidence, is diversity in motivations for undertaking Erasmus, with contrasts between nations and, perhaps, across regions within participating countries. A major differential appears to be pre-existing level of employability. The aspiring Italian students we looked at previously were not ready to start competing in the labour market in many cases, while the interviewees discussed above were quite close to being

job-ready, or at least better able to produce reflections about what is needed by the labour market, where there is a high level of competition, and how they cope with this demand. It is also noticeable that there is a contrast in attitudes towards the fact that Erasmus is funded by European taxpayers. The interviewees were focused on extracting the maximum amount of funds out of Erasmus for their own benefit while the candidates where trying to demonstrate what they could contribute to the programme.

This is not a criticism of these students, who are probably just demonstrating a realistic attitude, as well as conforming to the individualized, neo-liberal attitudes that prevail within many European societies. Seeing Erasmus as a revenue stream is in fact a common practice and something that we will observe in subsequent chapters of this book in regard to universities (Chap. 4) and civil society organizations (Chap. 8). It may also be that the rather florid approach of the Erasmus applicants is a reflection of not yet having being exposed to some of harsh realities of life, and having to re-position oneself as just one competitor among many seeking support from agencies such as the European Commission for the project of self-realisation. In any case, the distinction between 'career oriented' and 'experience oriented' Erasmus students, put forward by Krzaklewska (2008), probably deserves to be enriched by additional nuances and meanings given the changing nature of labour market challenges.

Looking back at the motivation statements there also seems to be a generic faith in the fact that the mobility experience will be beneficial, somehow, whereas the interviewees have more direct applications in mind. It may be the case that before an exchange takes place, it is imagined as kind of moratorium period prior to the start of full adulthood. This idea has been defined in Psychology literature as being a 'niche' in which a young person can find his or her place through self-experimentation (Erikson 1968). In this process, time-taking is conceptualized as something that allows young people who are not yet ready yet to assume 'an adult role' to delay doing so by 'provoking lightness' and 'playfulness' (Erikson 1968, pp. 157–185). In this phase, emphasis is put on spending time with friends, engaging in leisure and lifestyle pursuits (Brannen and Nilsen 2002, p. 520). Exchange visits can in theory be used as moratoria. However, the Erasmus 'format' we introduced in the previous two chapters intro-

duces personal and professional imperatives. Exchange students are thus put into a position wherein there is a danger of oscillating wildly between wanting to have the time of their lives and enhancing practical labour market readiness skills.

The interviewees who participated in this study, while sometimes advocating having a good time, and a time of discovery during the exchange, distance themselves from a hedonistic party culture often associated with Erasmus students, and are eager to discuss their own goals within the boundaries of the programme's framework. While this can be a bias of the sample, which as we said, was strongly self-selected in regard to engaging with people who actively wanted to talk to us about their opinions and experiences, the difficulty of meeting the aims of having a good time and becoming ready for work might explain the emphasis on foreign language learning, since this in some ways ticks both the conviviality and employability 'boxes'. Whether or not Erasmus actually creates moratoria during exchange visits is another matter. The benefit of conducting interviews with those who have completed Erasmus tell us something about what actually happened rather than what people think will take place. This is a theme that will be explored further in Chaps. 5 and 6, but for now we can say that students may become a lot less idealistic when confronted with challenges awaiting them in the labour market.

While a great deal of expectation exist in relation to the political and civic goals of the programme (see also Wilson 2011), our material shows that other dimensions of motivation, guided by individual interests, are also be important and arguably, conceptually more interesting, particularly when revealing links with the neoliberal logic that informs the employability focus of the European institutions; creating competition for jobs rather than creating jobs so as to minimize costs for employers. We can therefore see a kind of repositioning of the self through mobility, although not necessarily in a manner that will please European policymakers concerned with having a more explicit recognition of European values and the addressing of social problems via Erasmus; perhaps they do not appreciate that individualized success is more of a European value than tolerance or civic conscientiousness. Young people, therefore, do not

go abroad via Erasmus on a whim, and neither do they necessarily create value for European societies in terms of communal activities and political participation.

Notes

1. One specific element that is important to underline here is the aforementioned pragmatism of the statements, namely the fact that this material is meant to convince a committee that the applicant is worthy of receiving funds.
2. For instance, university graduate career booklets can be considered a means for demonstrating the correct attitude. For an exploration of this theme in the UK and Italy, see Cuzzocrea (2009).

References

Andreotti, A., Le Galès, P., Fuentes, M., & Javier, F. (2013). Transnational mobility and rootedness: The upper middle classes in European cities. *Global Networks, 13*(1), 41–59.

Brannen, J., & Nilsen, A. (2002). Young people's time perspectives: From youth to adulthood. *Sociology, 36*(3), 513–537.

Brooks, R., & Waters, J. (2011). *Student mobilities, migration and the internationalization of higher education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cairns, D., Cuzzocrea, V., Briggs, D., & Veloso, L. (2017). *The consequences of mobility: Skilled migration, scientific development and the reproduction of inequality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cairns, D., & Smyth, J. (2011). I wouldn't mind moving actually: Exploring student mobility in Northern Ireland. *International Migration, 49*(2), 135–161.

Cuzzocrea, V. (2009). Careers in shaping. Experiencing the graduate career propaganda in Italy and England. In P. Koistinen, A. Serrano-Pascual, & L. Mosesdottir (Eds.), *Emerging systems of work and welfare* (pp. 43–63). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Cuzzocrea, V., & Mandich, G. (2016). Students narratives of the future: Imagined mobilities as forms of youth agency? *Journal of Youth Studies, 19*(4), 552–567.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
Feyen, B., & Krzaklewska, E. (Eds.). (2013). *The Erasmus phenomenon—Symbol of a new European generation?* Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
Garsten, C., & Jacobsson, K. (2004). Conclusion: Discursive transformation and the nature of modern power. In C. Garsten & K. Jacobsson (Eds.), *Learning to be employable. New agendas on work, responsibility and learning in a globalizing world* (pp. 274–289). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Ieracitano, F. (2015). I 'nuovi' cittadini europei: la generazione Erasmus. In M. C. Marchetti (Ed.), *L'Europa dei cittadini. Cittadinanza e democrazia nell'Unione Europea*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
Krzaklewska, E. (2008). Why study abroad? An analysis of Erasmus students' motivations. In M. Bryan & F. Dervin (Eds.), *Students, staff and academic mobility in higher education* (pp. 82–98). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
Maiworm, F., & Teichler, U. (1997). *The Erasmus experience: Major findings of the Erasmus evaluation research project*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Commission.
Mitchell, K. (2012). Student mobility and European identity: Erasmus study as a civic experience? *Journal of Contemporary European Research, 8*(4), 491–518.
Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student mobility and narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. London: Routledge.
Papatsiba, V. (2006). Making higher education more European through student mobility? Revisiting EU initiatives in the context of Bologna process. *Comparative Education, 42*(1), 93–111.
Recchi, E. (2013). *Senza frontiere. La libera circolazione delle persone in Europa*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
Vogt, K. C. (2018). The timing of a time out: The gap year in life course context. *Journal of Education and Work*, *31*(1), 47–58.
Wilson, I. (2011). What should we expect of 'Erasmus generations'? *Journal of Common Market Studies, 49*(5), 1113–1140.