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Mika Launikari

Homo interculturalis – Identity, interculturality and career learning within European Union institutions

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Abstract

In its policies and strategies the European Union (EU) has addressed the importance of developing human capital, fostering educational attainment and promoting cross-border movement of people for careers and learning. Intra-EU labor mobility is said to balance out skills shortages and gaps between the EU member states. With an increasing labor force mobility within the EU, employers across Europe can capitalize on skills that talented people from diverse backgrounds bring. This is considered to increase the EU's economic competitiveness in the global market.

Talent and competences are one thing, successful functioning in an intercultural professional environment is another thing. It is obvious that gifted people are an asset for employers. However, that is not enough, if staff members from across the globe cannot work efficiently and interact constructively together at an international workplace. Understanding more profoundly the qualities that make individuals interculturally competent, and how such capacities can be further developed in a supranational career context are at the core of this research. Based on this qualitative research, it seems that a homo interculturalis europaeus – an intercultural European wo/man – is gradually emerging. Ideally, an individual's ability and sensitivity to cope well with diversity in society should be nurtured by education and training from early on in life, and not wait until working life.

The intercultural dimension among staff at EU institutions is currently a relatively unexplored terrain. This novel perspective is the starting point for this academic research that examines the subjective dimensions of intra-EU labor mobility among staff members working for decentralized European Union agencies located in three different EU countries, and the development of their identity, interculturality and career capitals. Within this context and in view to career capital, the research aims at exploring 1) how identity capital can be understood as a developmental resource of an individual in relation to his/her identity and multiple identifications (incl. personal, professional, European vs. national), and 2) how interculturality capital can be comprehended as an individual's capacity to perform in an interactional and co-constructivist process with diverse people.

The qualitative data for this doctoral dissertation were gathered through thematic interviews held individually with a total of 20 interviewees. The respondents of 14 different nationalities were staff members of three EU agencies: the

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, Greece); the European Training Foundation (ETF, Italy); and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound, Ireland). At the time of data collection in 2015, all these three agencies employed between 115-130 staff members each. The main motivation for selecting these three decentralized European Union agencies for this research was that they all operate in the fields of education, training and working life, which are thematically tightly linked to this doctoral dissertation. Human resource development, skills analysis, career management, work-life balance, working and living conditions, education-to-work transitions and lifelong guidance are some of the areas and issues in which these given agencies are actively engaged at a European level.

A 4-stage process including description, categorization, combination and interpretation of data has been applied to this doctoral research. The analysis process has been cyclical rather than linear as, during the analysis, moves back and forth within the data were required to approach the material from different angles. No strictly predefined protocol in conducting the analysis of the transcribed data has been used, but the central themes have been identified by reading and re-reading the empirical materials numerous times. This way a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the social reality, which the data are a specimen of, has been drawn.

The results show that the participants seem to have been attracted by the intercultural aspects and career opportunities of the European Union agencies. Many respondents were multi-mobile, and some of them had initially moved abroad for reasons other than working for an EU agency (such as pursuing degree studies in another European country). They addressed their body of knowledge (i.e. career capital) more from person-centered than contextual and external perspectives. Thus, personal motivation, professional competences and social networks were assets discussed in more depth in relation to their global careers. In general, respondents were constructively critical about how professionalism is expressed in an international work environment, and how interculturality and Europeanness are demonstrated. They occasionally questioned what it means to be intercultural or to feel European. The respondents appeared to be very much aware of the complexities of identifying themselves as European, even though they feel it is an essential aspect of who they are and what they are supposed to represent in their professional roles. Based on the narrative biographies of the respondents, it is not possible to say for sure, if the fact that the participants work for EU agencies leads them to such positions.

The common characteristic of identity, interculturality and career capitals seems to be their processual, interactional and contextual nature. The results suggest that in an international professional environment the investigated capitals are closely intertwined. They express themselves differently depending on prevailing conditions, and respond to various circumstantial factors usually in a flexible

way. Perplexities and uncertainties experienced around interculturality originated usually from the need to have one's referential frameworks modified and related identifications adapted to living abroad and working at a supranational level. The interviewees seem to have developed their sensitivities towards diversity and their ability to interact in a constantly transforming international environment, but they seem to lack tools, even knowledge for more profoundly understanding how to cope with these capitals.

As the institutional context of this research is highly unique (three decentralized EU agencies), the relevance and applicability of the findings to other contexts (even to other decentralized EU agencies) may be limited. Hence, the results, for instance, cannot be generalized to be valid to all European Union institutions.

Keywords: intra-EU labor mobility, European Union agencies, self-initiated expatriation, career, interculturality, identity, and capital.

Helsingin yliopisto, Kasvatustieteellinen tiedekunta
Kasvatustieteellisiä tutkimuksia, 44

Mika Launikari

Homo interculturalis - Identiteetti, interkulttuurisuus ja työuran aikainen oppiminen Euroopan unionin instituutioissa

Tiivistelmä
Euroopan unionin (EU) poliittisissa ja strategisissa linjauksissa korostetaan inhimillisen pääoman kehittämisen, koulutustason nostamisen ja maiden rajat ylittävän henkilöliikkuvuuden lisäämisen tärkeyttä. EU-maiden välistä epäsuhtaa osaavan työvoiman kysynnässä ja tarjonnassa voidaan tasapainottaa kannustamalla kansalaisia lähtemään ulkomaille töihin. Työnantajat eri Euroopan maissa voivat hyötyä siitä osaamispääomasta, jota muista maista tulevat työntekijät tarjoavat heille. Työvoimaliikkuvuuden uskotaan parantavan EU:n kilpailukykyä maailman markkinoilla.

Osaaminen ja lahjakkuus ovat työnantajille tärkeä voimavara. Ne eivät yksin kuitenkaan riitä, mikäli työntekijät eivät osaa toimia tehokkaasti ja rakentavasti työyhteisössä, jota leimaa kulttuurienvälinen vuorovaikutus. Tämä tutkimus lisää tietoa siitä, mikä tekee ihmisestä interkulttuurisesti pätevän ja tarjoaa ymmärrystä siihen, miten tätä ominaisuutta voi edelleen kehittää monikansallisella työpaikalla. Tämän tutkimuksen perusteella näyttää siltä, että homo interculturalis europaeus – interkulttuurinen eurooppalainen ihminen – on vähitellen syntymässä. Ihmisen kykyä ja herkkyyttä käsitellä kulttuurista moninaisuutta yhteiskunnassa tulisi kuitenkin koulutuksella edistää jo varhaisesta lapsuudesta lähtien, eikä vasta aikuisena työelämässä.

Interkulttuurista ulottuvuutta ei ole tähän mennessä juurikaan tutkittu Euroopan unionin instituutioiden palveluksessa olevien työntekijöiden kohdalla. Tämä tuore näkökulma onkin keskeinen lähtökohta tälle tutkimukselle. Tässä väitöskirjatutkimuksessa, osana EU:n sisäistä työvoimaliikkuvuutta ja kansainvälisiä työuria, selvitetään kolmessa eri EU-virastossa toimivien työntekijöiden identiteetti-, interkulttuurisuus- ja työurapääomien kehittymistä. Tutkimus keskittyy suhteessa kansainvälisiin työuriin tarkastelemaan sitä, 1) kuinka identiteettiin perustuva pääoma voidaan ymmärtää yksilön kehittämisvoimavarana suhteessa hänen identiteettiinsä ja moninaisiin identifikaatioihinsa (ml. henkilökohtainen, ammatillinen, eurooppalainen vs. kansallinen), ja 2) kuinka interkulttuurinen pääoma voidaan nähdä yksilön kykynä toimia vuorovaikutteisessa ja yhteisesti rakennettavassa prosessissa eri kieli- ja kulttuuritaustoista tulevien ihmisten kanssa.

Väitöstutkimuksen laadullinen aineisto on kerätty temaattisilla kahdenkeskisillä haastatteluilla, joihin osallistui yhteensä 20 vastaajaa. He edustivat 14 eri

kansallisuutta ja työskentelivät kolmessa eri EU-virastossa: Euroopan ammatillisen koulutuksen kehittämiskeskus Cedefop (Thessaloniki, Kreikka); Euroopan koulutussäätiö ETF (Torino, Italia); ja Euroopan elin- ja työolojen kehittämissäätiö Eurofound (Dublin, Irlanti). Aineiston keruuajankohtana kevättalvella 2015 kussakin näistä virastoista oli 115-130 työntekijää eri EU-jäsenmaista. Kyseiset EU-virastot toimivat koulutuksen ja työelämän alueilla. Euroopan tasolla ne mm. kehittävät inhimillistä pääomaa, analysoivat osaamistarpeita, tutkivat työ- ja elinoloja sekä koulutuksesta työelämään siirtymisiä, edistävät elinikäistä ohjausta, uranhallintaa ja tasapainoa työn ja vapaa-ajan välillä. Temaattisesti em. virastojen toiminta liittyy läheisesti tähän väitöstutkimukseen, minkä johdosta ne valikoituivat siihen mukaan.

Tutkimusaineiston analysointiin sovellettiin nelivaiheista prosessia, jossa kerätty aineisto kuvailtiin, luokiteltiin, yhdisteltiin ja tulkittiin. Analyysiprosessi on ollut syklinen pikemminkin kuin lineaarinen, sillä analyysin aikana aineistoa käsiteltiin edestakaisin ja tarkasteltiin lukuisia kertoja monista eri näkökulmista. Mitään ennakkoon asetettua tiukkaa protokollaa ei ollut luotu sille, miten litteroitu aineisto oli tarkoituksenmukaista analysoida. Keskeiset teemat tunnistettiin aineistosta lukuisten lukemisten tuloksena. Tällä tavoin syntyi käsitys sosiaalisen todellisuuden perustana olevista edellytyksistä ja merkityksistä, joista aineisto on esimerkki.

Tulokset osoittavat, että vastaajia oli houkutellut Euroopan unionin virastojen interkulttuurinen työympäristö ja uramahdollisuudet. Useat vastaajat olivat olleet ulkomailla työuran aikana monia kertoja. Osalle työskentely EU-virastossa ei ollut alkuperäinen syy maailmalle lähtöön, vaan se saattoi olla esim. tutkinto-opiskelu toisessa Euroopan maassa. Työurapääomaa tarkasteltiin enemmän henkilöön kuin ulkoiseen ympäristöön liittyvistä näkökulmista. Painopiste oli henkilökohtaisessa motivaatiossa, ammatillisessa osaamisessa ja sosiaalisissa verkostoissa osana kansainvälistä työuraa. Se, miten ammatillisuutta ilmaistiin tai miten se näkyi kansainvälisessä työympäristössä, saatettiin tarkastella kriittisesti. Yleisesti ottaen vastaajat suhtautuivat rakentavan kriittisesti interkulttuurisuuteen ja eurooppalaisuuteen, joskin he toisinaan kyseenalaistivat niiden merkityksen. Vastaajat näyttivät olevan tietoisia monitahoisuudesta, joka liittyy itsensä identifioimiseen eurooppalaisena, vaikkakin he näkivät sen olennaisena osana sitä, keitä he ovat ja mitä heidän odotetaan edustavan työroolissaan. Vastaajien henkilönarratiivien perusteella ei ole mahdollista sanoa varmasti sitä, ovatko em. positiot eurooppalaisuudesta seurausta siitä, että he työskentelevät EU-virastoissa.

Kansainvälisessä työympäristössä identiteetti-, interkulttuurisuus- ja työurapääomia yhdistää niiden prosessinomainen, vuorovaikutuksellinen, konstekstuaalinen ja läheisesti toisiinsa sidoksissa oleva luonne. Ne reagoivat joustavasti vallitseviin olosuhteisiin ja tilannekohtaisiin tekijöihin nähden. Interkulttuurisuuteen liittyvä hämmennys ja epävarmuus johtuivat tavallisesti siitä, että vastaajien piti muuntaa viitekehyksiään ja tarkistaa identifikaatioitaan suhteessa ulkomailla elämisen ja työskentelyn lainalaisuuksiin. Yhteenvetona voidaan todeta, että vastaajat näyttävät onnistuneen kehittämään sensitiivisyyttään suhteessa kielelliseen ja kulttuuriseen moninaisuuteen, parantamaan vuorovaikutustaitojaan alati muuntuvassa kansainvälisessä ympäristössä, sekä lisäämään ymmärrystään siitä, miten interkulttuurisuus vaikuttaa heidän identifikaatioihinsa henkilökohtaisessa ja ammatillisessa elämässä. Vastaajat kuitenkin tarvitsevat välineitä ja tietoa tutkittujen pääomien syvällisemmäksi ymmärtämiseksi.

Tämän tutkimuksen institutionaalinen konteksti on ainutlaatuinen (kolme hajasijoitettua EU-virastoa), minkä vuoksi tulosten sovellettavuutta toiseen yhteyteen, jopa muihin EU-virastoihin, voidaan pitää rajallisena. Niinpä tästä tutkimuksesta saatuja tuloksia ei voida yksiselitteisesti yleistää koskemaan kaikkia EU-instituutioita.

Avainsanat: EU:n sisäinen työvoimaliikkuvuus, Euroopan unionin virastot, työura ulkomailla, interkulttuurisuus, identiteetti ja pääoma.

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For most of the PhD study time (2014-19) I was working in the Finnish governmental services on a full-time basis. It would not have been feasible to complete my doctoral dissertation within five years without the support of my two employers: the former Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI).

My vocabulary is not fine-tuned enough to articulate how thankful I am to my mother, Seija Launikari, for modeling impeccability, sharing her love of learning, and emphasizing the importance of being devoted, determined and persistent. All this has helped me carry through the research process that took a lot of effort, energy and engagement.

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Helsinki, 1 April 2019
Mika Launikari

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ABBREVIATIONS

Cedefop	=	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (EU agency in Greece; acronym based on the French name of the agency: Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle)
EASA	=	European Aviation Safety Agency (EU agency in Germany)
ECHA	=	European Chemicals Agency (EU agency in Finland)
EEA	=	European Environment Agency (EU agency in Denmark)
EIGE	=	European Institute for Gender Equality (EU agency in Lithuania)
EMCDDA	=	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EU agency in Portugal)
EPSO	=	European Personnel Selection Office
ETF	=	European Training Foundation (EU agency in Italy)
EU	=	European Union
Eurofound	=	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EU agency in Ireland)
EU-OSHA	=	European Agency for Safety and Health at work (EU agency in Spain)
Eurojust	=	European Union’s Judicial Cooperation Unit (EU agency in the Netherlands)
FRA	=	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU agency in Austria)
Frontex	=	European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EU agency in Poland)
ILO	=	International Labour Organization
ISCED	=	International Standard Classification of Education

ISCO	=	International Standard Classification of Occupations
NATO	=	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	=	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	=	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UN	=	United Nations
VET	=	Vocational education and training

1 CAREERS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN VIEW OF IDENTITY AND INTERCULTURALITY

Embedded in the context of global careers, this doctoral research deals with identity, interculturality and career capitals. It looks into the individual labor mobility experiences of staff members working for the European Union (EU) public administration, and analyzes their views on the ways they identify themselves and how they career-wise relate to intercultural interaction in a multinational professional setting. Academic research on global careers suggests that rewards of an international relocation are rarely immediate, but with time personal growth and career learning usually take place and broaden the horizons of mobile individuals. In Theodore Zeldin's (2015: 116)[1] words:

> *"Past experience suggests that when people feel appreciated rather than threatened, they can become more curious about the world outside their own. One of the greatest compliments one can pay another is to show interest in them. One of the best ways of enriching oneself is to learn what others think."*

Specifically since 2004, Europeans in ever-expanding volumes are utilizing the opportunities there are for free movement between the EU countries (e.g. Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015; Van Mol & de Valk, 2016). Today young Europeans embark on periods of mobility for studying and training abroad (e.g. Teichler, 2017) and adults are migrating for work to other EU member states (e.g. Menghi & Quéré, 2016). The European Union institutions located in Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg and many other cities across Europe are highly sought-after employers among citizens. This is specifically the case for those with good qualifications and fluency in several languages (European Commission 2018a; Trondal, Murdoch & Geys, 2018). Moreover, the European Union continues to be an attractive destination for third-country nationals, who have different reasons and incentives to migrate (such as work-based migrants; refugees and asylum-seekers on humanitarian grounds) (European Union, 2017). In 2017, about 21.7 million (i.e. 4 %) of the total EU population were third-country migrants legally residing in the EU (European Court of Auditors, 2018).

In early 2019, before Brexit will become effective, the European Union with its 28 member countries is home to more than 510 million citizens (European

[1] A wide selection of recent academic research has been consulted for this monograph due to its thematic complexity, layered multiplicity, and interdisciplinary approach to investigating the given research problem. Therefore, more than 400 bibliographical sources have been included in the references.

Union, 2017). They represent a wide variety of national, regional, ethnic and cultural identities and affiliations. This diversity found in Europe today is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future regardless of the impact of globalization on the countries and their citizens (Delanty, 2016). Rather, the growing social, economic and political interaction among people is expected to magnify diversity in Europe in the years to come. This is likely to happen despite the somewhat divided political views there may be across the member states on the future of the European Union (Delanty, 2018).

1.1. Contextualizing free movement for employment within the European Union

The European Union as we know it today is a result of continuous development work that started as a peace project after the Second World War (1939-1945) (Delanty, 2018). In 1957, after several years of efforts to initiate the economic reconstruction and political integration of the post-war Europe, the Treaty of Rome was signed by six European countries[2] to found a new community (European Union, 1992; Shore, 2000; Wodak, 2004). From the outset, the ultimate goal of this European Economic Community – later the European Union – was to create ever-lasting peace in Europe[3] (Borchardt, 1995; Borchardt, 2010). The Treaty of Rome, officially known as the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, has been amended on numerous occasions (e.g. through the Treaty of Maastricht establishing the European Union in 1992; European Communities, 1992). Today, after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force in 2009, we know it as the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (European Union, 2016).

In the post-war period, European consciousness has been influenced by the aversion to war and military conflicts in Europe (Delanty, 2018). The Treaty of Rome declared that an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe should be achieved (European Union, 1992). Bellamy (2013) points out that this foresightful, yet ambitious goal from the 1950s has often been conceived as trying to have the different peoples of Europe integrated into one single European people, although the aim should rather have been to increase cross-border cooperation and deepen contacts between individual citizens. Shore (2000) takes a more critical stand on Europeanism. In his view, Europeanism is not strongly rooted among the peoples of Europe and thus European identity is not yet a reality.

Intra-EU labor and learning mobility is often regarded as a way to increase the socio-cultural integration of Europeans and their European identification

[2] Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany (i.e. West Germany), Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.
[3] In 2012, in the middle of the most severe crisis since its creation in the 1950s, the European Union won the Nobel peace prize for its efforts to promote peace and democracy in Europe.

(e.g. Bonin, Eichhorst, Florman et al., 2008). This may reflect the political views at the EU level. However, several researchers emphasize that a stronger pro-Europeanness does not automatically emerge (although it could), while staying for shorter periods in another European country, for example, on study exchanges (e.g.Wilson, 2011; Mitchell, 2015). The development of a European identity seems to depend on the context and supporting conditions (e.g. Sigalas, 2010; Van Mol, 2013; Van Mol, 2018). For example, the quality of social contacts abroad (e.g. Stoeckel, 2016), and how much one associates with Europe already prior to mobility play an important role (e.g. Kuhn, 2012).

The post-war time in Europe was a period when the national economies and societies were speedily recovering, which, however, created a huge demand for labor across the countries (Krause, Rinne & Zimmermann, 2014). This was one of the rationales behind the Treaty of Rome that laid the foundation for cross-border labor mobility in Europe. By fostering free movement of workers to balance out the supply of workforce between the six European countries ('founding partners') meant taking the first steps towards creating a single European labor market. Article 50 of the Treaty encouraged the exchange of young workers between the member states, and Article 49 addressed the need for increased cooperation between the national public employment services. In Article 51, social security measures to provide freedom of movement for workers were to be secured for them and their dependents (European Union, 1992). The aim of the Treaty was to remove barriers to labor mobility so that Europeans again could come together, overcome their haunting past, throw out the old and start anew.

Since the 1950s, the European labor market has seen many developments. Accordingly the discourse on labor force and mobility has changed over the past 60 to 70 years in Europe. From the mere demand-for and supply-of-labor discourse in the 1950s, the Europe of today is discussing work and employment from perspectives, such as women's greater participation and equal opportunities in working life (e.g. Christiansen, Lin, Pereira et al., 2017); work-life balance (e.g. Ghailani, 2018); brain drain as a consequence of labor migration (e.g. Kaczmarczyk, 2015); migrant integration (e.g. European Court of Auditors, 2018; Eurofound, 2014); recognition of skills acquired across borders (e.g. European Commission, 2015); key competences for lifelong learning to support employability (e.g. European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2018); career management, development and trajectories (e.g. Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015; European Parliament, 2017; Sultana, 2012); future skill needs (e.g. Cedefop, 2016); youth unemployment (e.g. Andor & Veselý, 2018); flexicurity (Bekker, 2018); as well as the impact of demographic, economic and social trends on the work force (e.g. Eurofound, 2016). Since 1994, intra-EU labor mobility has been facilitated by the European employment service network (EURES) that aims at improving transparency and information on job opportunities as well as living and working conditions across borders (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2016).

As regards the most recent EU-level labor market developments supportive to free movement of workforce, the European Union has launched the New Skills Agenda for Europe in 2016 (European Commission, 2016a) and the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017 (European Commission, 2017). The New Skills Agenda focuses on strengthening human capital, employability and competitiveness. Its key objective is to support the acquisition of skills through high-quality training, and to enable citizens to make well-informed career choices while looking for relevant employment (European Commission, 2016a). While working towards a more inclusive economic growth and greater social cohesion, the Pillar of Social Rights puts forward equal opportunities and smooth access to the labor market, fair working conditions as well as social protection and inclusion (European Commission, 2017). Furthermore, due to the steadily growing number of European citizens living and/or working in another EU member state, the European Commission sees a need for establishing a new decentralized agency, the European Labour Authority. This agency will provide support to individuals, businesses and national authorities on legal and social matters (including rights and obligations) linked to free movement and labor mobility within the European Union. This authority should be operative already as of 2019 and reach its full scope of activities by 2023 (European Commission, 2018b).

1.2. Background of the study - Decentralized European Union agencies

This doctoral dissertation is primarily placed in the context of intra-EU labor mobility and in the framework of decentralized European Union agencies as international workplaces. Thus, it is necessary to explain what the overall role and more specific function of these agencies within the EU governance are.

The starting point is that the policy competences of the European Union have gradually expanded. Following this development, the need for specialized expertise and knowledge in diverse EU policy areas has continually increased (Andoura & Timmermann, 2008; Barbieri & Ongaro, 2008). Already in the 1970s, but increasingly so since the 1990s, decentralized European Union agencies have been established across Europe to deal with particular challenges identified by the EU institutions and the EU28 member states (FRA, 2015). Under EU law all these agencies are separate legal entities with a proper legal personality in the EU country they happen to be located in (Andoura & Timmermann, 2008; Barbieri & Ongaro, 2008).

The establishment of European Union agencies means that specific EU-level regulatory authority and related responsibilities have been delegated to these independent institutions from the European Commission (Levi-Faur, 2011; Barbieri & Ongaro, 2008). This agencification of the EU administration can be seen as a balancing act in terms of having regulatory power spread more widely at the European level rather than giving all executive authority to the European Commission (Egeberg & Trondal, 2016). However, Scholten and van Rijsbergen (2014) draw the attention to the degree to which the agentification in the European Union is legitimate and raise the question of its legal limits. Among other things, they refer to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (European Union, 2016) that does not list these EU agencies among the possible authors of non-legislative acts.

Gaining more insight into the complexity of multilevel decision-making order of the European Union has been of academic interest. In particular, researchers have been analyzing the power relations and mechanisms between the European Commission and the European Union agencies (Barbieri & Ongaro, 2008). In their study, Egeberg, Trondal and Vestlund (2015) found out that EU agencies have become integral elements of the policy and decision making at the different European Commission departments. These close cross-institutional relationships between the Commission and the agencies indicate a centralized executive power at the EU level. Furthermore, Egeberg and Trondal (2017) argue that EU agencies are likely to lean more on the European Commission than on any other potential (supranational) authority. This, they say, resembles the national level ministry and agency relationships in the member states (principal vs. subordinate). Yet Barbieri & Ongaro (2008) point out that EU agencies have many distinctive features that differentiate them from the specificities that national-level agencies usually have.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that having such identifiable agencies to carry out clearly defined tasks for the European Union and on its behalf (instead of Commission departments) increases the utilization and accumulation of expertise and knowledge, and enhances transparency of the administration and management systems (Andoura & Timmermann, 2008; Deloitte, 2016). While performing technical, scientific and management functions that support the EU-level policy and decision making at the European Commission and the European Parliament (Andoura & Timmermann, 2008), these decentralized agencies provide the EU and the EU member states with unbiased, evidence-based policy advice for shaping legislative and other strategically important development processes at the EU and national levels (FRA, 2015). The policy work covered by the EU agencies includes areas, such as vocational education and training (Cedefop in Greece), human capital development (European Training Foundation in Italy), and working and living conditions (Eurofound in Ireland). Other important fields represented by these EU agencies are aviation safety (EASA in Germany), chemicals (ECHA in Finland), environment (EEA in Denmark), gender equality (EIGE in Lithuania), drugs (EMCDDA in Portugal), occupational health and safety (EU-OSHA in Spain), freedom and justice (Eurojust in the Netherlands), fundamental rights (FRA in Austria), external borders (Frontex in Poland), and many more (Deloitte, 2016; FRA, 2015).

Currently there are altogether 44 European Union agencies headquartered across the EU member states. They account for 1.5 % of the aggregate EU budget and represent a total of more than 6.500 posts (i.e. 13 % of all EU staff) with their staff members coming from all the EU member states (FRA, 2015). All these agencies belong to the EU Agencies Network (EUAN). This network aims to ensure good inter-agency collaboration as well as well-functioning cooperation with the main European Union institutions and individual member states (Deloitte, 2016). The daily life of over 510 million EU citizens is touched and influenced by the ongoing work of these EU agencies. Their joint added value is that they are working towards creating a globally more competitive Europe that is a better place to work and live for all citizens (FRA, 2015).

1.3. Overview of the aims of the study

The overall aim of this doctoral dissertation on global careers is to explore identity, interculturality and career capitals of staff working at decentralized European Union agencies. As shown in section 1.2., the main academic research interest has in the past years been in finding out and illustrating what the institutional arrangements and power relations between the European Commission and the decentralized EU agencies are. Apart from this, there seems to be scarce scientific evidence available on the decentralized EU agencies that would even remotely inquire into identity and interculturality as dimensions of EU officials' careers within these public administration institutions. This is something that emerged of the literature review done for this research.

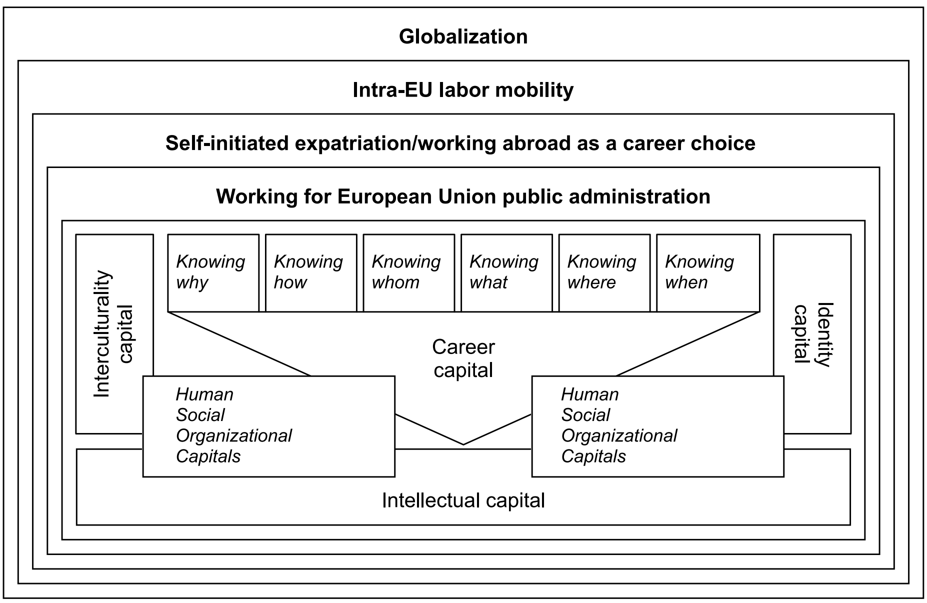
The above finding guided the choice of the research topic, context and focus. My instrumental justification is to enhance the pool of knowledge to better understand the experience made by staff employed within the EU public administration, and how that can be beneficial for the future development of EU institutions as multinational working environments. Intellectually this study contributes to previous academic research and established theories on identity, interculturality and careers by adding new insights from the specific context of the European Union and its decentralized agencies. Within this context, research on the intersection of the three keywords of identity, interculturality and careers is lacking.

As regards identity and interculturality, it seems that in the past years research attention has been directed more towards the European Commission, the staff employed there (e.g. Shore, 2000) and how the institution expresses and interprets itself (e.g. Koskinen, 2008). Some of the recent research studies with a focus on the European Commission staff and their careers have addressed topics such as multicultural skills development (Pagon, Banutai & Bizjak, 2011), impact of culture on interactions (Neyer & Harzing, 2008), European Commission officials' networks (Suvarierol, 2009) and their views on identity and cosmopolitanism (Wodak, 2004; Suvarierol & Düzgit, 2011), and pre- and post-recruitment factors shaping the role perceptions of European Commission officials (Trondal, Murdoch & Geys, 2018). In view of the decentralized EU agencies, some studies can be found on how staff members are recruited to these EU agencies (e.g. Egeberg, Gornitzka & Trondal, 2017) and what kind of career arrangements there are to support (inter)cultural socialization in different EU institutions (incl. agencies) (Suvarierol, Busuioc & Groenleer, 2013).

Hence, by means of this research more clarity is to be gained on how staff members working at decentralized European Union agencies located in Greece, Italy and Ireland relate to identity and interculturality in their daily working environment, and what are the meanings they give to these notions from the perspective of their professional careers in the EU public administration. Essentially, the research will look into the dynamics of the specific elements that constitute identity and interculturality capitals, and how they relate to career capital (e.g. Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). These three forms of capital will be framed by the model of intellectual capital, including human, social and organizational capitals (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Magrassi, 2002).

The visualization below (Figure 1.) depicts the dimensions of this doctoral dissertation. It shows how they are meant to come together as a theoretical frame of reference for examining and discussing their interplay. At the core of the visualization, where the different types of capitals are shown, is the individual, who is working at an international or supranational level. In this research, the workplace is the European Union public administration, i.e. three decentralized EU agencies.

Figure 1. Different forms of capitals in relation to intra-EU labor mobility and working abroad



Before an individual gets to work for an international or supranational organization, s/he first has to take a decision on finding employment abroad (career choice). However, if the given organization is located in one's own country, then for obvious reasons, it is not a matter of going abroad for the individual job applicant or staff member, but choosing to stay at a national level and work in an international environment there.

The broader context in which this doctoral dissertation is placed is the phenomena of intra-EU labor mobility and globalization, and how they influence the contemporary global labor market. For the sake of keeping the illustration as clear as possible no arrows have been used to visualize how the different elements are connected. In this theoretical framework the various layers and elements are sometimes more tightly, sometimes more loosely intertwined. The following chapters will address all of them.

In the following two subheadings (1.3.1.-1.3.2.) the core concepts will be briefly introduced as to help the reader to get an overview of the theoretical aspects of this doctoral dissertation.

1.3.1. Migration versus mobility and self-initiated expatriation

As already mentioned, this doctoral dissertation is placed within the broader context of intra-EU labor mobility, and therein self-initiated expatriation and working for the European Union institutions. Both of these phenomena will be looked at in this research. Here they will be briefly introduced as concepts for orientating the reader to the theoretical framework of the research.

Recchi (2015), Menghi and Quéré (2016) argue that mobility and migration are related concepts and that they can be somewhat confusing, if they are not distinguished for the European Union (internal dimension) and for the rest of the world (external dimension). Exactly this is the case in European Union law that conceptualizes the movement of people differently in view to citizens of the European Union and third-country nationals (for example, people from African or Middle East countries). There the term mobility is applied to EU nationals' right for free movement, whereas international migration refers to migratory flows of third-country citizens to/from the EU (Boswell & Geddes 2011: 3; Menghi & Quéré 2016: 17-18; Recchi, 2015). Following this line of thought, the term of intra-EU labor mobility will be applied to this doctoral research.

However, from many European Union documents and EU-related academic research it becomes obvious that mobility and migration are often used interchangeably and not always in a consistent manner regardless of what EU law stipulates. The following phrases are only examples to demonstrate the incoherent use of the given terms: *"Mobility of third country nationals across the external EU borders is of strategic importance [...]"* in the Communication on the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (European Commission, 2011:

3), and *"This volume shows the relatively high support for intra-EU migration as opposed to immigration from outside the EU […]"* in the academic research report on migration and mobility in the European Union (Batsaikhan, Darvas & Raposo, 2018: 6). Despite this confusing use of terminology, what is important to understand is the different legal statuses of internal and external movers (Recchi, 2015). Third-country nationals do not have European citizenship as all EU28 citizens do by default. This means that third-country nationals when entering any of the EU28 member states will have to go through border controls as they are not to be mistaken with the EU citizens crossing the borders within the European Union territory (Menghi & Quéré, 2016).

Furthermore, researchers have made efforts to create conceptual clarity in defining what a self-initiated expatriate (SIE; e.g. Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari, 2008) is, given that their number is on the rise in Europe and worldwide. Cerdin and Selmer (2014) propose a conceptual model that differentiates self-initiated expatriation from other types of international expatriate assignments. In their model, for being considered as a SIE four criteria are to be met simultaneously: self-initiated international relocation, regular employment abroad, a temporary stay abroad, and being professionally skilled/qualified. This model well applies to staff who works for EU institutions outside of their own country and who therefore can be regarded as self-initiated expatriates.

1.3.2. Identity and interculturality in a professional world

The complex notions of identity, interculturality and global careers are at the heart of this doctoral dissertation, and they will be explored and discussed in the following chapters. It is worth keeping in mind that these three terms are intangible concepts that represent various things to different people (e.g. Dervin, 2013 and 2016; Inkson, 2004). Exactly there lies the challenge of trying to get hold on how individuals construct and make sense of them, how they relate to them and what are the eventual inner or outer conflicts or tensions they encounter because of that. For understanding and giving meaning to intellectual concepts that stand for intangible ideas and abstract phenomena, we cannot trust our senses of seeing, hearing or smelling as is normally the case with tangible objects. Even at its best, our image of a non-physical aspect of our existence is a mere interpretation and reflection of the reality only, but does not represent the actual reality itself (Wuketits, 2000).

For making identity, interculturality and career slightly more tangible, we may metaphorically suggest that identity can be viewed as a multicoloured handwoven carpet with constantly changing patterns (i.e. fluid and solid elements of identity; Bauman, 2004 and 2007), interculturality as a table with a wide offer of delights that occasionally taste and look strange (i.e. diversity as a resource; Dervin, 2013 and 2016), and a career as a chair to be seated on or used as a support (i.e. career as a construction; Inkson, 2004). As generally known, a metaphor according to Aristotle is about giving a name to something that belongs to something else (e.g. Ricoeur, 1978). Aristotle also stated that metaphors in order to convey a meaning as precise as possible should be fitting and well corresponding, yet not apparently related with the given thing. Metaphors are helpful tools for us to understand intangible and abstract concepts, ideas, and phenomena that do not have correspondence to the physical reality as we know it (Travaglini, 2015).

Even the idea of a homo interculturalis – an intercultural individual – is an abstract notion (Klerides, 2018). Therefore, researchers are interested in finding out how individuals construct the identity they (re)present and how they identify themselves (Bauman, 2004; Bauman, 2007; Dervin, 2013; Risager & Dervin, 2014; Baynham, 2014). Risager & Dervin (2014: 7) argue that "identity and interculturality do not exist in themselves". In the context of interculturality, where individual agents with diverse backgrounds interact, identity should rather be regarded as a process instead of viewing it as a static object (Dervin, 2013). This makes an individual's identity – or his/her multiple identifications so to say – dependent on social co-construction in any given situation or context. Thus, an identity is something constantly evolving and multilayered (Risager & Dervin, 2014). Also Baynham (2014) discusses the emergent and performative dimension of identity development and suggests that the key is bringing identity about interactively, rather than bringing it along as a collection of personal qualities and features. That is, through interaction identity gets performed and allows the search for pre-existing identifications that form the basis for one's constantly developing identity. Scholars agree that there are both stable (solid) and fluid (liquid), and often contradictory aspects within identity and that they are differently demonstrated on varying occasions (Dervin, 2013; Risager & Dervin, 2014; Baynham, 2014), for example, when working and living abroad and not being in one's own country of origin.

Risager & Dervin (2014) argue that interculturality is an idea and a non-object just like identity. It gets born and it grows as an interactional and co-constructivist process between people across time and space (Dervin, 2016). However, the notion of interculturality is challenging, critical and intriguing as Dervin (2013 and 2016) sees it. In his view, too little emphasis is usually put on establishing a common ground and finding similarities between individuals. Instead, differences between 'our' and 'their' cultures are often highlighted, and what gets neglected or even forgotten is the connecting and uniting element between humans regardless of their origin. As Risager and Dervin (2014) point out, to a certain extent this can be explained through the nature of the concept of 'culture', which in itself is opposing, isolating and separating (i.e. easily putting different 'cultures' against one another and creating hierarchies of cultures, although no culture is better or worse than any other). In the end, all communication and interaction take place between people (but can be facilitated by technology), not between cultures and nations (Dervin, 2014).

This process- and interactional nature so typical of identity and interculturality also characterizes the contemporary protean and boundaryless careers (Hall, 2002; Inkson, 2004). Careers are influenced, shaped and co-constructed through the processual interaction we have with other people at work and in our professional networks (e.g. colleagues, supervisors, clients) (Hirschi, 2012). As our careers increasingly dwell upon constant change and ongoing learning (Hase, 2009), individuals are therefore encouraged to develop their career management skills (Sultana, 2012; Sultana, 2013). This is a consequence of today's world of work, where individual employees themselves are more in charge of managing and controlling their careers than their employing organizations are. Consequently, employees are taking career decisions more independently these days, and thereby looking for more individual freedom, self-fulfillment and self-determination in working life (Hall, 1976; Hall, 2002; Inkson, 2004). For some people such choices and decisions may even include self-initiated expatriation. Hence, in this doctoral dissertation, a career is understood as the patterns and unfolding sequence of a person's work-related experiences pursued within one or several industries, sectors and geographical locations that span his/her life course (adapted from Barley, 1989 and Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2010).

1.4. The structure of the study and its implications

This doctoral dissertation has been divided into three theoretical parts (i.e. chapters 2-4). Chapter 2 outlines the overall context of the research, whereby opportunities and challenges raised by globalization to societies and individuals are critically looked at. Also the most recent trends of intra-EU labor mobility, as well as the reasons and backgrounds of those EU nationals, who take advantage of cross-border employment in Europe are illustrated in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 focuses on the phenomena of protean, boundaryless and intelligent careers and self-initiated expatriation as a career choice. Moreover, chapter 3 discusses to what extent self-initiated expatriates' cultural adaptation abroad is possible, and what role do human agency, self-efficacy and resilience play in their adaptation process while working internationally.

Chapter 4 examines the concept of identity capital from multiple perspectives, including identity as a social construct, its stability versus fluidity, professional and territorial (i.e. European and national) identifications, and how a person's multiple identifications may intersect, merge, complement and contradict one another. Additionally, the essence of interculturality capital is explored in chapter 4, where its development and application are problematized, and partially linked to the notion of career capital and its utilization in the context of working internationally.

In chapter 5 the main aims of the study and the specific research questions will be presented. The target group and the methodology of the research will be described in chapter 6.

The results of this qualitative research that was designed to capture the subjective dimensions of intra-EU labor mobility and employment in the EU public administration are presented in chapter 7.1. on identity capital and in chapter 7.2. on interculturality and career capitals. By interviewing twenty (20) staff members employed at three different decentralized European Union agencies (Cedefop, Eurofound, European Training Foundation), qualitative data were received on their motives and strategies for international labor mobility and careers within European Union public administration. Moreover, the interview data give insight into the respondents' professional and personal reflections and approaches to identity and interculturality in view to working for EU institutions and pursuing an international career there. The data deriving from these narratives are analyzed and discussed against the theoretical framework (see figure 1. in chapter 1.3.) that accounts for understanding identity, interculturality and career capitals in the context of international careers within EU institutions, with particular emphasis on the individual's attempt to maintain their personal integrity and balanced relationships in an international environment that occasionally challenges one's worldview, values, personal and social identifications. Finally, the discussion inspired both by the theoretical aspects as well as the research findings is presented in chapter 8 followed by conclusions and recommendations.

This doctoral dissertation has inquired into a combination of topics (identity, interculturality and career capitals) and a context (personnel at European Union agencies) that has not previously been studied by means of qualitative research methods and with the theoretical approach chosen for this research. Both the theoretical modelling and the findings of this doctoral dissertation add new knowledge to understanding how working abroad – specifically within the EU public administration – influences individual staff members' sense of their identity and interculturality, and how they can be utilized and developed as capitals suited to pursuing an international career.

Furthermore, this doctoral dissertation has not only generated valuable insights for the academic discourse in the given research area, but also identified aspects that EU institutions as employers should be more aware of and take more into consideration in relation to their human resource management and development policies and strategies. Also staff members, who already are employed by an EU institution, or professionals interested in working for the EU public administration, can benefit from the theoretical approach, findings and discussion in this doctoral dissertation. Especially, this research may broaden and deepen individual professionals' awareness and understanding of themselves in relation to their capabilities and potential associated with identity, interculturality and career capitals.

2 CONTEXTUALIZATION: GLOBALIZATION AND INTRA-EU LABOR MOBILITY

This chapter will look into globalization and intra-EU labor mobility in order to set out the broader contextual framework within which this doctoral research is carried out. Firstly, contemporary globalization as a controversial phenomenon will be viewed from the perspective of the impact it is stated to have on nations, societies, cultures and individuals. The fact that globalization has increased the international dimension of human life and societies will also be reflected.

Secondly, as mobility and migration of people across the world are processes connected with and contributing to globalization, they will be addressed at the European Union level. Specifically the focus will be on free movement of labor that is one of the cornerstones of the European Union's internal market (the three other types of free movement are goods, services and capital) (Barslund & Busse, 2014). The aim is to give an overview of the most recent mobility flows between the EU28 countries (since 2008), and in light of statistics illustrate the ongoing changes and current patterns of workforce mobility in the EU labor market. Motives and backgrounds of those EU nationals crossing the country borders for employment will be briefly presented, too.

In the following subchapters, globalization will be discussed from a more theoretical, whereas EU labor mobility from a more sociological perspective.

2.1. Globalization, nation-states and citizens

Throughout human history, there has always been some level of globalization in terms of interaction and trade between people across regions. Globalization as such is nothing new, but has existed for centuries already (e.g. Ritzer, 2018). However, only in the past fifty to sixty years thanks to rapid technological advancement, expanding world trade and more economic transportation, globalization has accelerated immensely (Sparrow, 2012; Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014). The 21st century globalization means interdependence of societies, economies, technologies and people on a world scale, and that globalization utilizes existing connections to bring diverse individuals and organizations, local communities and nations together globally (Harvey, 2003). Accordingly, Beck (2010) suggests that novel concepts should be developed to capture the essence of current realities of interconnectedness, plurality, multi-locality and multiplicity.

Contemporary globalization is often viewed as a process predominantly characterized by economic unification of nations. Yet it is a much more complex and multidimensional social process to which also political, cultural, technological, educational, psychological and many other aspects contribute (e.g. Marsella, 2012). It is noteworthy to observe that the ideologies backing up the process of economic, political and cultural globalization are not neutral, but largely fueled and framed by the most dominant and powerful nations to foster and justify their future-oriented (self-)interests and ambitions (Steger, 2005). As Hearn (2015) and Urry (2010) argue the global processes are not some uncontrollable forces that autonomously shape the world over and above countries and people.

The nation-states themselves are one of the main drivers and basic preconditions of globalization together with international organizations (e.g. the United Nations UN, the European Commission, NATO, OSCE) (Hearn, 2015). The ongoing negotiation of powers between nation-states – to which citizens contribute with their choices, decisions and preferences (e.g. as voters in political elections; as consumers with environmental consciousness; as individual human beings with grass-root level) (Ferrera, Matsaganis & Tortola, 2017) – constitute new temporal-spatial patterns (Urry, 2010) as well as new flows and barriers (Ritzer, 2018). At the world level, a recent shift from free flows (of people, goods, finances) towards more restrictions and barriers (e.g. protective tariffs on foreign imports to foster domestic manufacturing) can be seen. This should not be considered as deglobalization, but rather as an early stage of another phase of the globalization process. (Ritzer, 2018). Thus, as Urry (2010) suggests, the geographical intersections of territory, metropole and place, with the social categories of gender, class and ethinicity, should be better captured in order to understand the future directions of globalization and its impact on countries and their citizens.

The social conditions that are currently underlying the independent nation-states are to a large degree affected by complex and often contradictory social developments at a global level (Steger, 2005). Thus, the traditional notion of the nation-state has been contested by the global processes and phenomena (Ku & Yoo, 2013; Hearn, 2015), such as multiculturalism, immigration, and establishment of international and supranational organizations (specifically after the 2nd World War). The consequence of this is that the sovereign nation-state is continually pushed to transcend the moral and material foundation of its functional and territorial base. In particular, the EU integration has brought about a fundamental territorial re-articulation (Hooghe & Marks, 2018), and in addition there has been a de-nationalisation of territories taking place in Europe (Antonsich, 2009). It is to be noted, however, that counterforces to this development have emerged as populism with emphasis on nation-state, national identity and anti-immigration has recently gained foothold in some European countries (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

Although the influence of globalization can be felt at all possible levels in societies across the world, there is a major problem with how globalization can be measured and explained as a complex phenomenon and a multifaceted concept. International progress to capture the aggregate characteristics of globalization (including economic, political and social dimensions) has been made in the past years (Gygli, Haleg & Sturm, 2018; Vujakovic, 2010). For example, the KOF

Globalization Index[4] has been developed to distinguish between de facto and de jure measures of globalization. It aims to assess data on economic and information flows, economical restrictions, personal contacts, and cultural proximity within surveyed countries. According to the most recent KOF Globalization Index the relationship between the de facto and de jure measures is highly bi-directional, and driven more strongly by the social dimension of globalization than by the economic and political dimensions (Gygli et al., 2018).

Even with highly elaborated indices the first critical question is to what extent they possibly can encompass the multidimensionality of globalization and what do they actually reveal of the phenomenon, and secondly how do they support policy-makers in their decision-making processes and individual citizens in their daily lives. Do such indices show, if globalization has had any impact on making the world a more equal place for people to live in? This needs to be explored and debated in other research studies. But as Borjas (2015) argues, regardless of numerous trade liberalization policies in the past decades, they have not contributed overly much to reducing international wage inequality or allowed people to rise from poverty and benefit from social mobility.

2.1.1. Globalizing societies

There is a widely shared view among researchers that globalization causes increased differentiation, discontinuity, unpredictability and individualization (e.g. Bizberg, 2009; Ray, 2007). As a whole these developments contribute to a world that becomes more liquid, fluid and complex (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). Thus, thinking that there could be a nationally pre-defined social reality or "national community as the terminal unit and boundary condition for the demarcation of problems and phenomena" (i.e. methodological nationalism by Martins, 1974: 276) does not go well together with the ever-changing globalization processes (Beck, 2000). Accordingly, Nederveen Pieterse (2015) suggests that countries have at least three alternative or intermixed approaches to responding to the globalization of cultures: homogenization of the world, the clash of cultures, hybridisation or synthesis.

Often globalization is regarded as one dominant monoculture that takes over other forms of cultures (such as national, regional, local, ethnic), absorbs them into itself and discontinues the traditional practices, patterns and values (Kaul,

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4 For the sake of the KOF Globalization index, globalization is defined as the process of creating networks of connections among actors at multi-continental distances, mediated through a variety of flows including people, information and ideas, capital and goods. It is a process that erodes national boundaries, integrates national economies, cultures, technologies and governance and produces complex relations of mutual interdependence. Source: The Statistics Portal https://www.statista.com/statistics/268168/globalization-index-by-country/ [29 May 2018]

2012; Castells, 2010; Beck, 2000). Yet, the world is diverse and people across the globe will remain heterogeneous. Therefore, it does not look likely that in any foreseeable future we humans would be living in a fully harmonized/homogenized world in which different values, beliefs, ideals and norms held locally today would have been erased and amalgamated into one universal culture tomorrow (Magu, 2015). Also Tomlinson (2003 and 2007) responds critically to homogenization of societies and views with suspicion any such development that would wipe out all the diverse local communities and leave behind a unified global culture where everything looks and appears the same. Kaul (2012) regards such a globally homogenous culture as a threat to some societies as (too much of) external influence from abroad or other cultures could erode the foundation of some traditional/indigenous communities.

Globalization as we know it today is a complex phenomenon that poses real and pronounced threats to nations, their cultures and citizens (Castells, 2010), but it also presents new opportunities for societies and how their citizens respond to different forms of cultural diversity in their daily existence (Hong & Cheon, 2017). More likely than homogenization of the world is a dynamic interaction and fusion to take place between the local and global levels. In Nederveen Pieterse's view (2015), this phenomenon known as glocalization, ideally results in some kind of a mélange, hybridity, and syncretism between local and global cultures or levels. De Rivera and Carson (2015) add that that some societies, cultures and traditions will inevitably lose their foothold by globalization, but they may also take new forms and shapes by means of glocalization, which is about mixing, blending and adapting local and global processes into one that suits to people at a more local level (Nederveen Pieterse, 2015). This does not exclude the fact that there can be a (negative) influence of the global on the local, and in some cases of the local on the global.

The contemporary world culture is actually labelled more by diversity than simply being a replication of uniformity (Hannerz, 2015). As to date, no systems of meaning, expression or values have become totally homogenized, nor does it look probable to occur any time soon either (Ritzer, 2018). This is Delanty's (2010) position, too, as in the end, people's identity and consciousness are normally too mixed and undecided to result in a coherent fully-fledged collective identity. He continues that all collective identities (to the degree it is possible to have them at all) are created through mobilization. That is a process of transformation, co-construction and interaction and applies to national, European, global or any other collective identity and identification (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). All this is relevant to individuals' social identities as to feel like belonging to a certain society or collectivity, or through negation not belonging to any social community or group (Delanty, 2010).

On a societal level a capacity for self-interpretation and critique is required. Cognition, reflection and creativity are an integral element of the cultural model of society (Delanty, 2010). As Whalley (2005) argues, every society has its own normative standards and values as well as inherent self-understanding. In his view, the values shared within a society or community are under the influence of globalization and therefore they can interact in complex and unexpected ways. There are multiple scenarios as to how value-driven developments may unfold at a societal level. Delanty (2010) states that society cannot be reduced to or be expressed in any single all-inclusive collective identity – whether cultural, political, ethnic or any other – as it does not easily translate into one specific collectivity, nor can it be interpreted as an objective system of cultural or societal values and meaning shared by all its members.

2.1.2. Individuals and cultures influenced by globalization

In the era of globalization, the conventional society is said to come to an end. This forces people to unpleasant choices between national loyalties and cultural attachments, between social acceptance and affirmation of their own subjective personal truth, between challenge and conformity in the context of cultural diversity (Castells, 2010; Hong & Cheon, 2017). The individual is expected to establish a new sense of meaning and a new sense of belonging in life, and face a new range of identity options available to him/her in the given global context (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). The line that earlier used to be apparently distinct between intra-national and international has become increasingly blurred (Reese, Rosenmann & McGarty, 2015).

That is, as an individual's national, cultural and social boundaries become more exposed to the rest of the world, his/her attitude and behavior may change in relation to domestic-level decisions as a response to globalization (de Burgh-Woodman, 2014), to European Union integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2018) or to increasing cultural and ethnic diversity (Dervin, 2016). The response to these social, political and economic developments can be either positive or negative including a dimension of ambivalence as people usually hold both positive and negative attitudes to any phenomenon, such as immigration (Pacilli, Mucchi-Faina, Pagliaro et al., 2013). New kinds of anxieties about securities, social status, solidarities and identities (and lack of them) are created by globalization and transnationalization (e.g. Europeanization) of societies (Delanty et al., 2011). This may lead to tensions, conflicts and new demands around one's different territorial identifications ranging from the local to the global (Castells, 2010). Hong and Cheon (2017) suggest that although exposure to different cultures can enhance one's understanding, tolerance and acceptance of diversity, intercultural encounters can as well result in negative reactions such as aggression, superiority, and ethnocentrism.

Powell (2014) argues that the global interconnectedness and social interaction have increased through online and real-life networks. Nevertheless, these modern technological communication tools, channels and applications are not yet today necessarily available to all humanity in all the different locations throughout the whole planet. No matter how the interconnectedness between people is established, Hannerz (2015) and Harvey (2003) suggest that individuals relate differently to this global interdependence and cultural plurality in their lives. For many individuals this may mean having to sort out their personal, psychological, social and cultural identities as to understand who they are and in so doing find a way to (try to) make the connection with the rest of the world (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). To the above Giddens (1991) adds that some people may be more intercultural in their orientation, whereas others remain more locally attached, yet whatever happens or is done locally is shaped by events taking place far away and the other way around.

Grimalda, Buchan and Brewer (2015) discuss how the process of globalization eventually alters the dynamics, relationships and boundaries between in-groups (we) and outgroups (they). The authors question to what extent a salient in-group attachment and one's understanding of one's sense of self can be considered stable as to keeping one's regular in-group position in relation to outgroups. There are a range of social, cultural, technological and other factors that may shift, change or transform an individual's behavior, attitudes and identifications over time (Hannerz, 2015). These factors as part of globalization have started contributing to a progressive expansion of the rights of individuals as individuals, and not so much as members of groups or collectives anymore (Recchi, 2015). This, in turn, can lead to redefining the salience, relevance and primacy that the social groups have for the person in a more local and global context (Grimalda et al., 2015).

Grimalda et al. (2015) use the idea of a 'global other', who instead of only being a notion of somebody distant and nonspecific actually can turn out to be a more real and articulate image of faraway people living with us in this ever-globalizing world. The authors suggest that this new kind of familiarity with groups of people who earlier were considered as remote geographically, mentally and socially may spark growing engagement and proactive participation in network-based cooperation and help to discover novel opportunities for one's personal and professional life worldwide. Delanty (2006: 37) is somewhat critical to this idea while addressing the 'global other'. He states that "the Self (or the 'We') is not merely defined by reference to an 'Other' (a 'They') that is external to the Self […], but […] by the abstract category of the world". In his view, the social world is a complex construct in an ongoing transformation process, and as much as social scientists wish to explain it in terms of Self and Other, that is barely possible.

Moreover, researchers have tried to develop theoretical models and approaches to categorizing people in terms of how global, intercultural or cosmopolitan they are. As pointed out above by Delanty (2006) and Grimalda et al. (2015), there are so many parameters constantly at play that assessing or measuring the level or stability of such a dimension as interculturality or cosmopolitanism is highly difficult. Yet, for example, Buchan, Grimalda, Wilson et al. (2009) and Buchan, Brewer, Grimalda et al. (2011) have defined the characteristics of two different types of individuals, who are at the opposite ends of the globalization continuum, i.e. the reactants and the cosmopolitans. The reactants are mainly attached to their local collectives, and they do not seek contact beyond these boundaries (i.e. already established loyalties). Thereby, cosmopolitans are people who are actively engaged in world-wide networks, associate themselves more closely with the global community, and are more prone to interact with like-minded others globally. Most people, however, fall somewhere between these two polarized extremes of a world-open cosmopolitan and a backward-glancing traditionalist.

In most Western countries primacy to individual rights is given, which applied to the European level means that individuals should be able to freely establish opinions, take action and make political decisions – simultaneously both as EU citizens and as members of their own nation belonging to the EU (Habermas, 2012). Although citizens may look at globalization as an almighty superpower managed by the world leaders (a top-down approach), together they can influence the macro-level economic, political and socio-cultural systems worldwide (Hearn, 2015). They should understand that they are not completely powerless in these circumstances and that they can choose their (cultural) response to these local and global-level developments (Castells, 2010). Instead of being dormant, closed and passive, they should see themselves as proactive and engaged agents, who are in charge of their lives (Bandura, 1994, 1995 and 2001; Hearn, 2015; Delanty, Jones & Wodak, 2011). This is why bottom-up collective movements[5] initiated by individual groups against the hegemony of nation-states or multinational companies may grow so massive and loud that they challenge the top-down actors to such a degree that they have no choice other than to respect the citizens' voice and change their course of action to better reflect the values, ideals and beliefs of people (e.g. Gallo-Cruz, 2017).

2.2. An overview of intra-EU labor mobility

Labor force mobility and immigration for various reasons are processes of globalization. They have existed since living memory, and nor are they new phenomena in Europe either. Within the European Union, countries that for

[5] Author's remark: there are good examples of such bottom-up collective action, one of the latest being the #MeToo campaign and protest movement that quickly grew to a global and highly influential debate about sexual harassment and assault in late 2017 and early 2018.

centuries were sending out people to the USA, Canada or Australia have become immigrant-receiving societies. Since the end of the 2nd World War in 1945, specifically the Western European countries started attracting substantial amounts of labor force from abroad (Massey, Arango, Graeme et al., 1993; Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015; Recchi, 2015). As regards current population movements in the world, Castles et al. (2014) identify two central features: the regulation of international migration, and the impact of increasing ethnic diversity on the destination countries. This growing diversity is a consequence of both legal and illegal immigration, and it usually represents a major challenge to receiving societies in terms of integration.

In the past decades, short-term and more long-term mobility has become a more constant feature of the European labor markets, which has gradually transformed countries into diverse and multicultural societies (Pries, 2010). This is largely due to mutual agreements between the European Union member states. Originally free movement of labor force took full effect between the six founding member states of the European Economic Community in 1968 (Council of the European Communities, 1968), although the foundation for it had been laid already earlier in the Treaty of Rome in 1957 (European Union, 1992).

In early 2019, free workforce mobility in the European Union encompasses the labor markets of all the 28 member states apart from some transitional restrictions on access of workers from Croatia to the labor markets of some member states (Spaventa, 2015). Today EU workers have the right to seek employment in another member state without discrimination (incl. equal conditions of employment and work, social benefits, tax obligations) (European Parliament & Council of the Europe Union, 2011). Lately, a more critical undertone has accompanied the sometimes overheated politicized debate on intra-EU mobility after the Central and Eastern European countries joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, and their citizens started moving to the old EU member states (the so-called EU15) (Luining & Schout, 2017).

The cross-cutting goal of intra-EU labor mobility is to ensure convergence between the EU member states (Ehmer, 2017). Labour mobility is also regarded as a key driving force of economic development in the European internal market (Trenz & Triandafyllidou, 2017), and as an integrative mechanism that fosters European identification specifically among mobile (incl. regular cross-border commuters and Erasmus students studying in other EU countries), but to a certain degree also among sedentary citizens (Recchi, 2015). Recchi adds that mobile individuals are given a 'made-to-measure' dual presence, usually in their country of origin and in that of destination. This may or may not fuel a more transnational (e.g. European) identification in them.

Although free movement of citizens is an enshrined achievement of the European Union, labor mobility still remains greatly underexploited within the EU28 compared to other regions of the world regardless of the numerous drivers of mobility at the macroeconomic as well as at the individual levels (Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015; Recchi, 2015). Annually only 0.3 % of the EU population moves to another EU country, compared with 2.4 % in the US or 1.5 % in Australia (Dhéret, Lazarowicz, Nicoli et al., 2013). In 2016, some 11.8 million EU28 citizens were living in an EU country other than their country of citizenship, which corresponds to around 4 % of the total EU labor force. Of them around 9.1 million EU28 movers were either employed or looking for work (European Commission, 2018c).

Across the European Union, investments in developing human capital, fostering educational attainment, promoting intra-EU labor mobility (i.e. the free movement of EU citizens within the EU, in contrast to migration from and to third countries), and reducing skills mismatches are considered necessary for economic competitiveness in the global market (European Commission 2010). Although free movement of people is central to the notion of European citizenship, social cohesion and economic prosperity in the member states, intra-EU labor mobility is not likely to increase significantly in the coming years (Barslund & Busse, 2014; Ehmer, 2017). Individuals' decisions on labour mobility do not take place in a social vacuum, but in a wider economic context. Such decisions are often influenced by multiple factors, including educational and occupational choices and preferences of these mobile citizens as well as their social ties (Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015; Recchi, 2015; Castles et al., 2014).

As earlier studies have concluded, there are multiple structural barriers for people to take full advantage of their right for mobility within the EU28 (e.g. Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2008; Zimmermann, 2009; Triandafyllidou & Maroufof, 2013; Engbersen, Leerkes, Scholten et al., 2017). The main obstacles are the differences between the national labor markets, problems with mutual recognition and portability of skills and qualifications, social situations and circumstances of the individual EU member states, insufficient language skills, and citizens' lack of information on career-related mobility opportunities (European Commission, 2010; Barslund & Busse, 2014; Eurofound, 2014; OECD, 2016; European Commission, 2018c). Removing obstacles to support the free movement of workers in the European Union will thus have to continue (Krause et al., 2014; Arpaia, Kiss, Palvolgyi et al., 2015). However, these barriers will not easily be removed until there is a stronger political will on the part of the EU member states (Engbersen et al., 2017). For the time being, the EU28 is more concerned with tackling the political and societal challenges of the post-2015 refugee crisis than speeding up measures to intensify intra-EU labor mobility.

Currently, the spatial distribution and origin of intra-EU movers in Europe are not well-balanced (Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015). A consequence of the repeated economic crises of the past ten years (2008-2017) is a rise of circular mobility that can specifically be seen among EU-citizens originating mostly from the newer member states. More frequently than before they are moving back and forth several times between their home country and various destination countries (Kahanec, 2013; Andrijasevic & Sacchetto, 2016). The sending countries fear that their human capital base will be eroded (i.e. brain drain) when their well-educated and professionally qualified people leave for work in the receiving countries and eventually stay there on a permanent basis (Barslund, Busse & Schwarzwälder, 2015). Overall, the complex mobility patterns of highly qualified intra-EU migrants makes it difficult to single out processes of brain drain and brain gain in the EU (Dhéret et al., 2013). Intra-EU movers with good qualifications often hold positions in the destination country for which they are over-qualified. This is referred to as 'brain waste' (Kaczmarczyk, 2015).

In general, any restrictions placed on free movement of workers within the EU are considered more detrimental than beneficial to societies and economies. Thus, the idea of free Europe with no (or hardly any) internal border checks for intra-EU labor mobility has been largely supported, which reflects the establishment of the so-called Schengen area (Publications Office, 2009; Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015). However, the discourses on intra-EU labor mobility have changed since the recent waves of economic crises broke out. Today it is critically perceived in some EU countries and described as a factor challenging domestic quiescence (e.g. a main argument associated with the Brexit referendum in June 2016). The current political narrative has progressively changed from a discourse vaunting the merits of labor mobility and acknowledging the mobile workers' great input to the national economy to reinforcing a restrictive strategy on the principle of free movement and immigration in general. Hence, it is worth noting that attacks against freedom of movement are no longer confined to extremist political parties only, but have become increasingly visible among the mainstream as well.

Overall critical voices within the EU have become louder in the past decade and they cannot be ignored anymore. EU citizens have started complaining more frequently about the lack of transparency of the European Union and its institutions. This has put pressure specifically on the European Commission, and on other EU institutions as to increase transparent decision-making procedures regarding financing, data protection, etc. (e.g. Labayle, 2013). From the side of the EU, this has resulted in European-level efforts to engage citizens more in the matters of the Union, for example, through public consultations, hearings and structured dialogues. Also promotional campaigns have been launched to raise awareness of what the EU does for citizens in different policy areas[6], and how citizens can benefit from numerous EU initiatives, programmes and actions (including intra-EU mobility for learning and working purposes).

Out of the 9.1 million economically active EU citizens, who work and live in an EU country other than their country of citizenship (European Commission, 2018c), around 55,000 staff members work for the European Union services

[6] What Europe does for me? https://what-europe-does-for-me.eu/

spanning several policy areas (such as the European Commission[7], the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union[8], and different types of EU agencies[9] located in the member states). This doctoral dissertation will specifically address intra-EU labor mobility of staff working within the EU public administration. The new evidence deriving from this research will contribute to current EU-related academic and political debates, and be of value to EU institutions themselves for developing their human resource policies/strategies. Moreover, the research findings may be of use to EU bodies for creating more transparency of their institutional mandate and benefits they generate to EU citizens.

2.2.1. Recent cross-country labor mobility flows in the EU

Despite the relatively low overall number of economically active EU-citizens residing on a permanent basis in another EU-country, the mobility landscape within the European Union still remains highly dynamic (Krause et al., 2014). In various countries there seems to be a strong correlation between the increasing unemployment levels and the rising emigration flows when looking at the main trends in intra-EU mobility flows in the preceding years (Casto-Martin & Cortina, 2015). Especially in the aftermath of the outbreak of the repeated economic crises (2008-2012), emigration flows drastically increased from countries such as Portugal (+155%), Cyprus (+72%), Lithuania (+60%), Spain (+55%), Ireland (+36%) and Italy (+31%). In 2009-2013, the UK and Germany followed by France were the main destination countries for movers from the Southern member states (European Commission, 2014).

With a focus on shorter periods of time, a clear difference at the level of individual countries can be seen in terms of how their emigration rates have developed. For example, during 2012-13 mobility flows were much higher than during the previous two-year period (2010-11) from countries severely affected by the global crisis: Greece (+150%), Spain (+99%), Hungary (+78%) and Portugal (+53%), followed by Poland (+30%), France (+25%) and Italy (+23%). An opposite development can be observed in Lithuania (-16%), Ireland (-19%) and Latvia (-28%). They were all countries with large emigration outflows at the start

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[7] The European Commission staff on 1 January 2017 amounted to 32.546. Source: European Commission (2017). Human Resources Key figures Staff members. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-commission-hr-key-figures_2017_en.pdf
[8] The European Parliament has around 7.500 people working in the general secretariat and in the political groups. They are joined by Members of Parliament and their staff. In the Council of the European Union, around 3.500 people work in the general secretariat. Source: European Union website "EU administration - staff, languages and location" https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/figures/administration_en#staff
[9] The decentralized EU agencies employed 6.554 staff members in 2015. Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights FRA (2015). EU Agencies working for you. http://bit.ly/2If8X41

of the crisis in 2008-09, but less so as their economic situation improved during 2012-13 (European Commission, 2014).

Also a major change regarding the distribution of intra-EU movers across destination countries can be seen after the economic crisis started in 2008. Since then the UK's share has remained pretty stable, whereas in particular Germany, Belgium and Austria have shown a rising trend (European Commission, 2014). In 2016, the five main destination countries of EU28 movers of working age were Germany (2.94 million), the UK (2.32 million), Spain (1.40 million), Italy (1.18 million) and France (960.000) (European Commission, 2018c). The largest increase in influx of EU28 citizens during 2009-14 is demonstrated by Germany (+219 %), Austria (+86 %), Finland (+60 %), the UK (+57 %) and Denmark (+54 %) (European Commission, 2016b).

2.2.2. Motivation for labor mobility

An individual's motivation to relocate is usually explained through a combination of push factors in the country of origin and pull factors in the destination country (i.e. living and working conditions and prospects for the future seem to be more attractive abroad) (Massey et al., 1993). Initially this push and pull theory was developed mainly to illustrate the mechanism underpinning international labor migration (Todaro & Maruszko, 1987), but later on it has been applied to explaining student migration as well (Altbach, 1998). While the theory explains the workings of migratory flows, it is frequently criticized for giving narrow room for human agency. Human capacity to respond to societal changes or structural conditions (i.e. push and pull factors) is usually limited (Castles et al., 2014).

With regard to geographical flows, labor mobility in Europe no longer boils down to an East-West[10] phenomenon after 2010. Indeed, there was a particularly apparent South-North corridor emerging during 2008-2011 (mostly driven by employment divergences), which is largely replacing the previously East-West corridor (driven more by income differences). This phenomenon was a matter of push factors in Southern Europe (i.e. soaring unemployment especially in Spain, Greece and Portugal) and pull factors in other countries such as the UK and Germany with economic stability and stagnating respectively declining unemployment (Dhéret et al., 2013; Barslund & Busse, 2014; Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015; Trenz & Triandafyllidou, 2017).

The individual's decision to move is not made on absolute, but relative terms. A pull factor in the receiving country can only be of comparative advantage provided the situation elsewhere is worse. Aspects such as better labor market opportunities or living standards can only become a driver for mobility/migration

[10] The East-West (intra-EU mobility) corridor relates to enlargements: eight Central and Eastern European countries (EU-8) that joined the EU in 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 (EU-2).

(a pull factor), if people's situation is worse off (a push factor) in their home country (Dhéret et al., 2013). In this push-and-pull approach, individual decisions originate from a rationale, where the potential costs connected with migration – whether economic, social or emotional – are weighed against the anticipated benefits (Massey et al., 1993).

However, the complexity of mobility/migration cannot necessarily be explained by means of push-and-pull factors only. Castles et al. (2014) suggest that both ends of the migratory flows should be studied as there are pre-existing ties between sending and receiving countries due to colonization, political influence, trade, investment or cultural reasons (e.g. between Brazil and Portugal). This approach links to the work of Samers and Collyer (2017) on how geographical or spatial concepts are critically used to understand why migration/mobility happens. The notions of space, territory, place and distance should be made more explicit in theories and models explaining migration. For example, time and cost necessary for crossing borders (i.e. to overcome a distance) are not the same to everybody (EU citizen vs. refugee). According to Samers and Collyer (2017: 41) "territories are porous and migrants themselves shape the nature of territory and territoriality", which can be felt both in the countries of origin and destination.

Multiple factors affect people's decisions to relocate, among them the so-called network effect (Massey et al., 1993) that refers to the connections between individuals in a host country and friends and relatives left back home. The contacts that mobile people possess (i.e. network resources), and various familial, social and cultural factors that influence them, may explain why they often prefer to move to a certain country (instead of another) (Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015). Usually they expect the likelihood to be greater to meet their compatriots in that specific country. There is evidence that social networks are an important criterion for citizens from the new EU member states as 68% of them reported that they have friends or relatives in the EU country they would like to work in, while 51% of respondents from the EU15 did likewise (Dhéret et al., 2013). Existing networks are likely to reduce the duration of the adaptation period, as a social structure is already in place in the receiving country and other provisions can ease the overall adaptation phase for newcomers (Massey et al., 1993; Eurofound, 2014).

The central reasons given by European citizens for moving abroad indicate that economic and work-related aspects play the most important role, particularly among manual workers and unemployed people. Some 24% of this latter group declared that they wish to move to a specific country due to the employment opportunities there, while 43% said that they would move for earning more money (Dhéret et al., 2013).

2.2.3. Profiles of intra-EU movers

In order to understand the nature of intra-EU labor mobility, it is necessary to know who the movers actually are and what their background is in terms of gender, age, level of education and occupation group. The statistics for 2012-2016 reveal that there were slightly more economically active men among intra-EU movers (52 %) than women (48 %). In 2016, altogether 51 % of all these active EU28 movers had been living in their current country of residence for less than 10 years (European Commission, 2018c).

The age group of 15-34 year old accounted for some 34% of the total labor force of the EU (average over 2009-13). The period (2009-13) shows, however, that intra-EU movers tended to be less young than before as the proportion of those aged 15-24 was declining from 20% to 15% and for those aged 25-29 from 28% to 26%. This may appear somewhat surprising as one could have expected that rises in youth unemployment in many countries since 2008 would have increased incentives to look for a job abroad. But prospects abroad have not necessarily been attractive for potential young movers due to youth unemployment having affected the labor market of many destination countries, too. In contrast, the age category 35-54 years has increased from 31 to 34% during 2009-13, with a particularly strong increase in those originating from the Southern EU member states (from 31% to 38%) (European Commission, 2014).

Although the average level of education among intra-EU movers has increased, there still is a difference between Western European movers with higher levels of education and those from Eastern Europe with medium-level education (Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015). Overall, the proportion of movers with a medium-level of education has decreased substantially for all age groups, whereas the proportion of movers with a low-level of education decreased markedly only for the group of movers originating from the Southern EU countries. Most importantly, the proportion of highly educated intra-EU movers has gone up considerably (from 27% in 2008 to 41% in 2013) (European Commission, 2014). In 2016, the most recent active EU28 movers had a medium (40 %) or high level of education (40%), whereas those with a low level of education comprised 20% (European Commission, 2018c).

The main changes in terms of occupational sectors are that there are fewer intra-EU movers working in construction and manufacturing as well as domestic services. Service sectors have seen their proportions in employment of recent intra-EU movers increasing (such as accommodation and food services activities; administrative and support service activities; professional, scientific and technical activities: education; information and communication, health and social work). As regards occupation groups, the share of recent intra-EU movers working in high-skilled occupations (ISCO 1-3) increased from 26% (2008) to 34% (2013), while the over-qualification rate [i.e. the proportion of highly educated (ISCED 5-6) employed in low (ISCO 9) or medium-skilled (ISCO 4-8) occupations] decreased from 38% (2008) to 35% (2013) (European Commission, 2014). In 2016, the share of female movers, who reported over-qualification was higher (37%) than among male movers (27%). It is worth noting that many intra-EU returnees often cite over-qualification as a reason for their decision to go back to their country of origin. This annual return mobility of working-age citizens (20-64 years) amounted to 615.000 in 2015 (European Commission, 2018c).

2.3. Summarizing key points – People on the move shape the world and the EU labor market

In this chapter the impact of globalization on countries, societies and individual citizens as well as the current trends of labor mobility between the European Union member states have been addressed. Both phenomena can be characterized as complex, multifaceted and sensitive to social, political and economic conditions (Marsella, 2012).

The globe is said to gradually be moving towards one large network of social relationships across different continents. As suggested above, this may not become a reality in our lifetime, if ever, and thus we have to take a cautious stand on this vision of total interconnectedness of the world. Nevertheless, globalization takes multiple shapes and means different things to various social groups. This will undeniably affect the way individuals perceive themselves and their cultures, as well as how they relate to others and what the others represent (Delanty et al., 2011).

If the local cultures across the globe become more interconnected, we may see the emergence and development of new types of sub-cultures that are not necessarily anchored in any single region or specific location (Delanty, 2010). This could perhaps then be the point in time, when similarities between varied local communities and collectives will become more important than differences of any kind. Such a development could even contribute to a more holistic understanding of the global problems (such as plastic in the oceans) that we share no matter where we happen to live on this planet. But it remains to be seen, if this greater awareness among individuals will result in taking more global action for solving these common problems.

Mobility and migration are, on the one hand, consequences of globalization, and on the other hand, contributors to the globalization processes and developments (Harvey, 2003). European labor mobility – just like cross-border learning mobility of students – affects people, societies and economies in two different ways at least: on the personal and the aggregate level (Hong & Cheon, 2017; Hannerz, 2015). Although the focus of this doctoral research is to gain a better insight into the subjective experiences, motives and aspirations of individual movers looking for employment within the European Union public administration, it is worth keeping in mind that each individual, who crosses a country border for work becomes automatically part of the aggregate labor mobility flows.

The aggregate level of labor mobility refers to the economy as a whole (Gygli et al., 2018; Vujakovic, 2010). The question that needs to be raised is to what degree countries in general view cross-border labor mobility in Europe as a driver for economic growth, innovation and technological advancement. Or do they rather see intra-EU labor mobility (as well as labor immigration from third countries) as a threat to their national workforce, or even to state sovereignty? As governments are concerned with national security, completely open borders would mean that they cannot necessarily be sure who is coming into their countries. And do the anticipated benefits of free movement of foreign labor overweigh the potential risks at national level in the country at the receiving end?

Even if policy and decision makers want to increase labor mobility within the EU, ultimately everything will depend on the individuals. If another country does not offer such economic incentives or professional opportunities that it would make sense to move there for employment, the probability of a worker or jobseeker to make a career move abroad will be diminished (Massey et al., 1993). Also other factors weigh heavily on top of employment-related considerations before a decision to leave can be taken, such as family situation, schooling of children, language proficiency, social security, portability and recognition of qualifications and diplomas, housing, and social networks (Castro-Martin & Cortina, 2015).

3 SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATION AND CAREERS ABROAD

There is not only an academic discourse, but also an ongoing political debate on intra-EU labor mobility and its impact on individuals, societies, economies and labor markets alike (Krause et al., 2014). Both scholars and policy-makers are keen on understanding the personal-level processes involved in self-initiated expatriation, such as motivations (e.g. Doherty, Dickmann & Mills, 2011; Dickmann, Doherty, Mills et al., 2008), dimensions of global careers (e.g. Baruch, Dickmann, Altman et al., 2013), outcomes and relevance of career experience abroad (e.g. Mäkelä, Suutari, Brewster et al., 2016). As multinational companies and supranational/international organizations are increasingly looking for global talent, highly-skilled and well-educated self-initiated expatriates may have the potential to bridge this talent gap. These self-initiated expatriates are individuals, who on their own initiative have decided to relocate for employment to a country other than their country of origin (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014).

By means of this research new insights will be generated into understanding the specificities of working for the European Union. Thereby, the particular context of this doctoral dissertation is the European Union public institutions (i.e. decentralized EU agencies) that represent supranational bodies. In the following, the current developments in the global labor market will frame the discussion on protean, boundaryless and intelligent careers and self-initiated expatriation as a personal choice for having an international career. The experience of pursuing one's career abroad and adapting to a foreign environment will be addressed through agency, self-efficacy and resilience. They may either support or in case of their insufficiency hamper the working and living experience abroad and related intercultural adaptation there.

3.1. The global labor market: protean, boundaryless and intelligent careers

In the era of globalization, the dynamics of labor markets and the essence of careers have radically changed (Zimmermann, 2009; Krause et al., 2014). Among other things, today's societal developments (e.g. demographic changes due to ageing and immigration), the highly competitive economic environment worldwide and technological advancements (e.g. digitization, robotization) influence the operation and structure of the labor markets and what citizens may expect of their future in working life (Janta, Ratzmann, Ghez et al., 2015). In many fields of industry, business and public administration across Europe, this means that traditional occupational, institutional and geographical boundaries are broken down and more career possibilities, totally new professions and different forms of working emerge (Mayrhofer, Iellatchitch, Meyer et al., 2004; Cunningham, 2016).

Hence, an individual interested in self-initiated expatriation should critically reflect on how these globally changing labor market conditions may influence his/her own position, and see the potential they may hold for his/her professional future in another country. Thereby, one should bear in mind that the notions of careers and the interpretations of the psychological contract between employers and employees have changed as part of the workplace agreements (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski et al., 2007). Formerly these employer-employee contracts were more of relational nature, they shaped beliefs and expectations about reciprocal obligations and relied on mutual trust and lifelong loyalty, and they provided job security (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015). Contracts of today are more transactional, and largely based on a narrower set of specific monetary obligations between the parties involved (employee owes attendance and performance on the job; employer owes pay and advancement opportunities). That is, the degree to which an individual employee regards the psychological contract as respected or infringed has to do with the main outcomes (i.e. actual professional performance and career development, well-being at work, level of job satisfaction, etc.) (Zhao et al., 2007).

The contemporary psychological contract puts more focus on employees' professional adaptability (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012). The solely employer-driven approaches to career development and management are gradually coming to an end through the shift of individual employees being more in charge of managing their careers and taking related decisions more independently (Sultana, 2012 and 2013). Nowadays staff members are expected to take on a vast array of responsibilities, be flexible and prepared to move to completely new duties at a moment's notice as organizational priorities and practices evolve over time (Savickas, Nota, Rossier et al., 2009), but also to count with career interruptions due to restructuring industries, institutional mergers, downsizing, and delayering. Hence, the labor market has become less predictable and is to a great extent devoid of boundaries known to us earlier (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012).

As a consequence of the changing patterns of the labor markets across Europe and beyond, people today tend to have several jobs throughout their professional career instead of a lifetime contract with one company or organization only. Their careers and career paths have become more diverse (Olson & Shultz, 2016). As careers today are more flexible, less linear, and more self-driven (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012; Savickas, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009), also career trajectories are less scripted and more fragmented, the spectrum of career models wider, and the requirements for skills and competences more multiplied. Stable, even lifelong employment does not exist anymore the way it used to (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; Valenduc, Vendramin, Pedaci et al., 2009). Coping with all these elements of change in the labor market calls for resilience and career adaptability of the whole workforce (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012). This can be supported with individuals developing their career management skills (Sultana, 2012 and 2013) and preparedness for continuous career learning (Savickas et al., 2009; Savickas, 2012).

Although individuals' careers nowadays may in general appear more accidental and random compared to more rigid and structured careers in the past (Savickas et al., 2009; Bimbrose & Hearne, 2012), they are more strongly driven by their personal values and preferences, interests and motivations, dispositions and intentions, professional development needs, experiences and expertise (Olson & Shultz, 2016). Since the 1980s, individual careers and professional development have transformed into something more protean and boundaryless (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Baruch, 2006). This transformation is reflected in the concept of career that can be defined as the patterns and unfolding sequence of a person's work-related experiences pursued within one or several industries, sectors and geographical locations that span his/her life course (slightly modified from Barley, 1989; Greenhaus et al., 2010, 9).

A protean career is seen as a response to career paths that are changing and moving towards more individual freedom, self-fulfillment and self-determination (Hall, 1976; Hall, 2002), whereby a boundaryless career contests the more traditional approaches to organizational careers (e.g. Baruch, 2004). Individuals with protean attitudes are considered more self-directed and independent at managing their careers, but also more inclined to applying their personal values to their careers over the organizational values surrounding them (value-driven) (Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006). Those who navigate the changing world of work by pursuing a career distinguished by various levels of physical and psychological movement have a boundaryless career mindset (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Savickas et al. (2009) argue that individuals – more and more – are expected to be drivers of their own careers and make well-informed career moves between organizations, regions and countries.

Researchers stress that individuals are also more in charge of independently taking concrete action for improving their future employability through active participation in continuous professional development (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Developing transferable skills that can be applied to different professional contexts is seen by individuals as a way to determine how they manage their careers, accomplish their goals and achieve their aspirations (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015; Banai & Harry, 2004; Arnold, 2011; Cunningham, 2016). This applies to self-initiated expatriates, who as to remain competitive in the international labor market, will constantly have to focus on strengthening their professional competences in order to look interesting in the eyes of multi- or supranational employers (McNulty, 2014).

A typically boundaryless career means that an individual's career identity is not dependent on any given employer, the accumulated expertise is employment flexible, and the professional networks established are not specific to the employing company/organization, but can be characterized as non-hierarchical, worker-enacted and connected to a broader context such as an industry or occupational field (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). This well characterizes many self-initiated expatriates and their mobile careers. By demonstrating their self-determined readiness to cross boundaries and move from one international assignment to another, they increase their external marketability, and in so doing attract potential employers to offer them new employment that meet their value-driven career aspirations (McNulty, 2014; Mäkelä et al., 2016).

With such a boundaryless and protean approach to working and careers, a self-initiated expatriate, on the one hand, can find great enthusiasm in establishing and sustaining active relationships through and beyond institutional and geographical boundaries (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) as well as employment that is psychologically meaningful and intellectually engrossing (Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015; Banai & Harry, 2004; Arnold, 2011; Cunningham, 2016). However, on the other hand, there is always the risk involved that the outcomes of expatriation may not necessarily be that positive in the end (e.g. feeling rootless or not integrated in the professional environment or local community, employment-related promises not kept by the employer, etc.) (e.g. Haslberger, Brewster, Hippler et al., 2013).

Arthur, Khapova and Richardson (2017) argue that the expanding need for knowledge work worldwide calls for a broader and more holistic view on understanding evolving career possibilities and how individuals relate to new work arrangements. Their approach links with the notion of an intelligent career that conceptually embeds elements of protean careers (e.g. self-determination, personal values) as well as of boundaryless careers (i.e. crossing institutional and/or territorial boundaries for career choices) (Mäkelä et al., 2016). The intelligent career builds upon the competences obtained through six closely intertwined types of knowing (i.e. knowing why, how, whom, what, where, when) (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Jones & DeFillippi, 1996) that are applicable to examining self-initiated expatriates, their careers and their choice of preferred location internationally (Dickmann & Mills, 2010). They will be discussed in connection to career capital in chapters 4.4.1. and 4.4.2.

Furthermore, critics have raised concerns about the concept of a boundaryless career and identified aspects that should still be studied further in relation to it. Among them, Sullivan and Arthur (2006) state that the world of work is not completely without boundaries, but rather the question is how people can cross these physical (i.e. organizational, industrial and geographical) – and even psychological – work boundaries with a minimal level of friction only. Even crossing virtual boundaries and how that may influence an individual's multidirectional career and related characteristics should be paid more attention to (e.g. Baruch, 2004). According to Gerli, Bonesso and Pizzi (2015) and Baruch et al. (2013) individuals may encounter stress when they change from one occupational field or industry to another, or from one's home country to a faraway geographical location abroad. The more fundamental the change is, the more stress and uncertainty it generates, which in Gerli et al.'s (2015) view requires additional research.

3.2. Prerequisites for self-initiated expatriation as a career choice

Today multiple cross-border career opportunities are available for well-educated and highly skilled professionals interested in working for international or supranational organizations (Matthews & Thakkar, 2012; Baruch et al., 2013; Doherty, Richardson & Thorn, 2013), such as the European Union and the United Nations' institutions. Thus, qualified professionals are a highly sought-after resource for international employment these days (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). Until recently, assigned expatriates were mostly sent abroad by their mother companies for a limited period of time to be repatriated later on, and they used to offer the talent and expertise that was needed by the local affiliate in the host country (e.g. Froese, Jommersbach & Klautzsch, 2013). Today this is changing as globally operating business companies and international organizations more and more rely on finding the competences they require through internationally mobile experts and professionals (Jokinen et al., 2008). These self-initiated expatriates readily relocate there where their expertise is required and where they can offer their professional services (Jokinen, 2010).

To date the term self-initiated expatriate has become a well-established concept in the academic circles (Doherty et al., 2013). By a self-initiated expatriate (SIE) is normally understood somebody, who independently from any public- or private-sector organization launches and financially supports his/her own expatriation without being transferred or sponsored by an employer (Doherty et al., 2013; Doherty, 2013; Cao, Hirschi & Deller, 2012; Jokinen et al., 2008). McNulty & Brewster (2017) point out that the decisive criterion is to find recruitment at an organization regardless of the person's relocation abroad to take up the employment (recruited internationally) or as an international local. While Cerdin and Selmer (2014) and Doherty et al. (2013) approve of the core essence of the concept (i.e. people who without external support expatriate themselves abroad), they argue that there is a plethora of definitions used by scholars, and across them there is a wide variation depending on the perspective from which self-initiated expatriation at any given time is being studied and analyzed. Thus, more theoretical and conceptual clarity in how the term self-initiated expatriate is applied and interpreted will still be needed (e.g. Doherty, 2013; Doherty et al., 2013).

The prototype of an average self-initiated expatriate cannot necessarily be defined. All of them are professionals with their unique portfolio of skills, competences and experiences (Mäkelä et al., 2016; Dickmann & Cerdin, 2016). A common feature they are likely to share is that they usually are highly skilled individuals, have a personal goal for career enhancement, and accordingly, have taken a decision to pursue professional opportunities at a global level (Sarna, 2015). Self-initiated expatriates, irrespective of their national origin, relocate to a destination of their preference outside of their native country, or to an employer of their choice located in another country (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). This they do for various reasons without a fixed frame of time in mind, including motives of professional achievement and esteem- and status-building (Baruch, 2006), career development, social networks, and cultural orientation and interests (Dickmann et al., 2008; Doherty et al., 2011). To this McNulty (2014) adds the aspect of financial compensation and the question whether expatriation is realized because of it or in spite of it (i.e. how much do money and other perks weigh on the scale).

Based on their extensive research on self-initiated expatriation, Cerdin and Selmer (2014) have developed a theoretical framework that contributes to creating further clarity for understanding the phenomenon. Their model captures the main criteria for defining who qualifies as a self-initiated expatriate. For this to be the case, the following four criteria are to be met at the same time:

(1) **self-initiated international relocation:** making independently an international relocation without having company support in one's home country.

(2) **regular employment:** an intention to find a regular employment abroad is a sufficient condition to be categorized as a self-initiated expatriate given that occasionally a person relocating may be in an in-between-jobs situation, where the new employment contract does not start immediately after finishing their previous job.

(3) **intentions of a temporary stay:** being a self-initiated expatriate excludes a permanent stay in the country of relocation. The intention is neither to visit the host country just shortly (like tourists do) nor to settle down there forever (i.e. immigration may be considered of a more permanent nature).

(4) **skilled and/or professional qualifications:** researchers associate advanced skills and professional qualifications with a self-initiated expatriation, which traditionally is viewed as a career-enhancing activity. A high level of skills and competences can – in the first place – be seen as a prerequisite for being able to pursue an internationally oriented career.

The criterion 4 in the model (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014) suggests that before expatriation can be actualized, the person planning to expatriate him/herself will have to have a certain professional potential and capacity for doing so. A core concept closely linked to any kind of expatriation, but specifically so regarding self-initiated expatriation is motility. Motility can be understood as the capacity of people to be and/or become mobile in social and geographical space (i.e. it links together spatial and social mobility[11]). Motility describes the manner in which an individual appropriates the possibilities relative to movement and uses them (Kaufmann[12] & Montulet, 2008). Motility as it relates to expatriating individuals, is differentiated in terms of access to different forms and degrees of mobility (such as self-initiated expatriation), competence to recognize and make use of access, and appropriation of a particular choice (Kaufmann, Bergmann & Joey, 2004). Flamm and Kaufmann (2006) also refer to individuals' access rights and their aptitudes for mobility, when the local and geopolitical context is emphasized as a fundamental consideration.

There has been an increasing amount of academic research since the 1990s to get hold of what are the prerequisites for expatriation and how working in multinational companies or supranational institutions affects people's careers (Baruch et al., 2013), career-related identifications (e.g. Adams & van de Vijver, 2015), attitudes and behavior linked to adjustment abroad (Vromans, van Engen & Mol, 2013), as well as career progress and success (Cao et al., 2012). Earlier the research focus used to be more on understanding the expatriate experience and its benefits for the individual and the organization, whereas currently researchers are more interested in finding out how people adjust to work and develop their careers in an international environment (Tams & Arthur, 2007; Haslberger et al., 2013). Lauring and Selmer (2013) point out that there is abundant research on private-sector expatriates, but much less is known about their counterparts in the public sector, specifically this concerns self-initiated expatriates. By means of this doctoral research new knowledge will be generated about self-initiated expatriates within the decentralized European Union agencies as public-sector institutions.

3.3. Self-initiated expatriates' adaptation to working and living abroad

Researchers have increasingly studied self-initiated expatriates and their intercultural adaptation to working and living in another country from multiple

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[11] *Spatial mobility* refers to geographic displacement of concrete (e.g. people, machinery) or abstract (e.g. ideas, knowledge) entities. *Social mobility* can be defined as the transformation in the distribution of resources or social position of individuals, families and groups within a given social structure or network (Kaufmann et al., 2004).

[12] *Professor Vincent Kaufmann* has carried out extensive research on movement and mobilities in the field of urban and regional sociology. Although his research has not dealt with international mobility of people as such, his work provides a good framework for understanding and explaining the interplay of different factors influencing mobility and motility.

perspectives, such as contextual matters (Selmer, Lauring, Normann et al., 2015), job satisfaction (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2013) and career success (Simmons, 2016). Adaptation to any new circumstances can be seen as a long-term transitional process with considerable variance across individuals (Pietilä, 2010). Adaptation is the result of the individual (never-ending) acculturation process that a self-initiated expatriate undergoes while trying to adjust to the local conditions in the destination country (Berry, 2005). Thereby, adaptation to a new cultural context, what it requires and how it takes place have been conceptualized in a number of ways.

For example, Berry (2005: 698) suggests that acculturation is an ongoing "dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members". In Berry's model individuals fall into four different categories (Integration – Assimilation – Separation – Marginalisation) according to the degree to which they maintain their cultural identity and create looser or tighter relationships with the majority culture in the new country. Thereby, Kim's (2015) integrative communication theory emphasizes new learning (i.e. deculturation or unlearning of old cultural patterns), which is central for an individual to adopt, how his/her responses can be modified to intercultural interaction and negotiation in a mutually sensitive and constructive manner. Many researchers tend to agree that adjustment to a new country/culture consists of cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects (e.g. Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013; Haslberger et al., 2013; Vromans et al., 2013) that are at a constant interplay through the cyclical adaptation process that is called the culture-shock model (Adler, 1975). Culture shock is illustrated in five interconnected stages with psychological and emotional ups and downs (honeymoon – distress – re-integration – autonomy – independence) that (may) cause stress, anxiety and negative feelings to the individual until a sufficiently balanced state of being is reached within the new environment (Adler, 1975; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping et al., 2008). Yet, it can be debated to what degree the theoretical culture-shock model applies to real life, and specifically to multi-mobile people, who may have a substantial experience in adjusting to different contexts.

Hu and Meng (2015) draw the attention to research findings that at times seem to suggest that the more dissimilar the international environment is culturally to that of the self-initiated expatriate's own one, the more demanding the adjustment abroad usually is. However, the reality is more complex than this. Hemmasi and Downes (2013) found out in their study on the Cultural Distance Paradox that greater distances between host and home country cultures actually foster adaptation, because this motivates expatriates to learn about the new culture to a greater extent compared to being in a culture more similar to their own. Vromans et al. (2013) argue that depending on the country of destination, expatriates' adjustment and related expectations are likely to be more undermet on certain cultural aspects than on others. When comparing expatriate managers' adjustment in two neighboring countries – France and Germany – Selmer, Lauring and Kittler (2015) concluded, among other things, that stereotypical conceptions of national differences may be contested and that country-specific conditions seem to be increasingly influenced by globalization processes.

Cultural adaptation is a two-way street, a shared learning process (e.g. Pietilä, 2010). Adaptation to a new foreign environment does not only rely on the efforts made by the self-initiated expatriates, how interculturally oriented they are or how much they have prior knowledge about the destination country and its culture. Berry (2005) emphasizes that as to avoid conflict at an individual level, each group member will have to find a constructive approach to living and negotiating together with members of other groups. In Berry's view, this involves time-consuming cultural and psychological changes in a person's attitudinal position and behavioral routine for the sake of mutual accommodation and intergroup adaptation. Thus, for self-initiated expatriates to adapt, function and cooperate successfully, they are encouraged to develop a more intercultural mind-set and adopt a more global identification (Khapova, Arthur & Wilderom, 2007). Haslberger (2005) argues that previous international experience, provided it was mostly positive, may become a facilitating force for adaptation to a new host country. People, who in general assess themselves more attached to the world as a whole, seem to associate their self-interest more with that of the international community (de Rivera & Carson, 2015), which, in turn, may support their adaptation process.

As international assignments (incl. self-initiated expatriation) have become more important for both individuals' careers and global success of private companies and public institutions, also expatriate' career success and their intercultural adaptation have increased in importance (Cao et al., 2012; Simmons, 2016). According to Firth, Chen, Kirkman et al. (2014), expatriates with high cross-cultural motivation and psychological empowerment are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of work adjustment at early stages of their assignment abroad. But poor or mostly failed adaptation can make the expatriate experience highly unsatisfactory and result in less than average performance (van der Bank & Rothmann, 2006). This again may create real, but also more hidden financial expenses or losses to the employer, such as non-achievement of an individual's professional objectives, disrupted customer relations, and malfunctioning relationships with the host-country locals (McNulty & Tharenou, 2004).

Nevertheless, many expatriates look forward to career development when embarking on their international assignment, but they often underestimate the potential challenges to adjusting to life in their new cultural environment (Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007; Sarna, 2015). Researchers agree that expatriation challenges, among other things, one's worldview (incl. values, beliefs, attitudes, ideals, norms, interests, etc.) (e.g. Luke and Goldstein, 2006), identification (e.g. Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015) as well as has an impact on personal and professional aspirations (e.g. Kohonen, 2008). In the following chapters (3.3.1.-3.3.3.) human agency, self-efficacy and resilience as enablers and barriers of intercultural adaptation from an individual self-initiated expatriate's perspective will be discussed.

3.3.1. Agentic approach to intercultural adaptation

The social cognitive theory comprises three types of agentic instrumentality: individually exercised personal agency, proxy agency to influence other people to act on one's behalf for hoped-for outcomes, and collective agency, in which people take joint action to create their future (Bandura, 2002 and 2009). Bandura (2001) characterizes personal agency as a capacity to plan ahead (intention) and to make things happen (action) in one's life. The fundament of human agency is the belief of personal efficacy (Bandura, 2002 and 2009).

Motivation directs, energizes and sustains human behavior, whereby the incentive for individuals to act is to believe that they can generate desired outcomes and avoid less desired consequences (Porter et al., 2003). Crocker, Heller, Warren et al. (2013) argue that motivations and emotions are related, but distinguishable constructs that differ in the way they affect behavior and cognition. Motivation is the driver that makes an individual progress towards a given goal, whereas emotional affect arises when there is a difference between the realized versus the anticipated progress towards that goal (Carver, 2006). Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest that, if a particular activity is not intrinsically motivating for an individual, but lacks professional challenge, novelty, value or purpose, s/he will not act upon it or respond to it.

Human intention and human action are embedded as integral elements of agency in an individual's life and career development experiences (Chen, 2006 and 2002). Self-regulation of motivation, action through self-influence, affect and self-reflectiveness are associated with agency (Bandura, 2001 and 2002). They enable individuals to be better in charge of their own careers, and more easily adapt to diverse social and cultural environments. Exposure and adaptation to a new foreign culture can be seen as a learning experience (Zhou et al., 2008; Kim, 2015) that calls for an agentic approach (Bandura, 2002), but even more importantly a well-consolidated agentic functioning (Chen, 2006 and 2002).

An individual's free volition, ability and power to act and to take decisions are core aspects of agency (Frost, 2006) and thereby critical to learning and self-initiated expatriation (e.g. Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). Individuals with temporal forethought and built-in control over their decision-making processes (Bandura, 2001) are usually considered being able to autonomously manage their personal life and professional careers (Savickas et al., 2009) – whether that is at home or abroad. Hence, individuals can be viewed as creators of events and generators of experiences (Bandura, 2009). Accordingly, self-initiated expatriates' values, attitudes and beliefs play an important role in their interest development and choice processes when working and living abroad (Cao et al., 2012).

Chen (2006) connects agency to features, such as initiative-taking, pro-action, persistence and assertiveness that have an impact on a person's professional performance as well as his/her capacity and potential for career growth (Cao et al., 2012). Cognitive development – a constantly transforming, non-linear and complex process – occurs provided the self-initiated expatriate is able to link the new with the already existing knowledge and interact with it successfully within the intercultural context (Hase, 2009). That is, self-initiated expatriates, while engaged in problem-solving and new learning as a means to create, arrange, index and expand their knowledge base, construct their own subjective representation of objective reality (Hase & Kenyon, 2013; Billett, 1996). This process helps them to deal with and overcome critical circumstantial influences and change their course of action, would that be required (Bandura, 2002). An expatriate's agentic functioning abroad – provided the necessary desire, skills, and attitudes are in place – can be facilitated by means of already acquired intercultural competences, cultural intelligence, and language proficiency needed to succeed in an international role (e.g. McNulty, 2014).

The intercultural transformation theory views people as dynamic and self-reflexive, and assumes that they grow through intercultural encounters (Milstein, 2005). MacNaba and Worthley (2012) suggest that this is likely to increase their capacity for intercultural adaptation and enhance their intercultural intelligence. However, Bandura (2002) argues that the agentic functioning and the purposes of it are culturally developed, shaped and co-created, and consequently adapted to the given cultural circumstances and the reality prevailing there. That is, the culturally bound identifications, belief systems and agentic capacities form the psychosocial structures through which individual life and career experiences are analyzed and encoded. Thus, the agentic mixtures of personal, proxy and collective forms of agency fluctuate across cultures, and thereby have an impact on the individual adaptation process.

The 'optimal' prerequisites for a well-functioning agency in relation to self-initiated expatriation have been discussed above. However, multiple factors that cannot be fully controlled influence the agentic functioning of an expatriate abroad. Self-initiated expatriates are confronted by various stressors that make their international assignments and intercultural adaptation eventually stressful (e.g. Giorgi, Montani, Fiz-Perez et al., 2016). They could range from emergent fears and irrational anxieties of the expatriate to actual health problems, smaller accidents, conflicts at work or critical issues with family and friends back home (Bandura, 1995 and 1997).

Thereby, the overall mood and personal agency of an expatriate may get negatively affected as his/her cognitive and behavioral frames are not sufficient and effective to cope with the changing social environment (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013; Haslberger et al., 2013). Bandura (2002) points out that across all humans there are commonalities in how agentic capabilities are applied, but differences in how these inherent capacities are exercised by the same humans in their varied cultural contexts. Hence, self-initiated expatriates should be aware and sensitive enough to adapt themselves and modify their agentic responses to cultural diversity, and in so doing be better able to manage their personal agenda and relationships to others (Korhonen, 2010 and 2013).

3.3.2. Self-efficacy beliefs and intercultural adaptation

The notion of self-efficacy is essentially underlying the theory of agency and human intentional actions (Mulvey, 2014). Self-efficacy is a construct originally introduced by Bandura (1977). It relies on an individual's beliefs that regulate his/her agentic functioning through processes of cognition, motivation, affect and selection. These four main processes are normally intertwined, rather than isolated, in the continual regulation of human functioning (Bandura, 1994 and 1995). Due to their malleable nature, self-efficacy beliefs can either develop or deteriorate (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy is not about one's actual capabilities, but about believing in one's ability to successfully accomplish a task (Milstein, 2005). Thus, self-efficacy beliefs are central to human behavior as they are closely associated with the choices that individuals make and the preferences they have for following a certain line of action (Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines et al., 2008). Regardless of how a particular cultural context is enacted with social norms and standards, efficacy beliefs are always complex and multifaceted by their nature. They influence the way people think, act, feel and get motivated (Bandura, 2002 and 1995).

Bandura (1995 and 1997) has defined four main sources of self-efficacy beliefs: direct hands-on mastery experiences (actualized performances); vicarious experiences (observation of others); types of persuasion (e.g. verbal orally or in writing, etc.); and affective and physiological states, and their impact on self-confidence. As a fifth source, Maddux (2005) suggests imaginal experiences as a visualization method for individuals to be effective and successful in demanding situations (e.g. an athlete's mental preparation for competition can include mental rehearsal, visualization, imagery, and mental practice; Peltomäki, 2014). Oettingen (1995) argues that these sources of efficacy take variable shapes across cultures as they are weighted according to the individual culture's value and belief system, and some of them may be less accessible to certain groups (e.g. due to restrictive gender roles).

These self-efficacy beliefs can be contextualized and applied to self-initiated expatriation (based on Bandura, 1977, 1995 and 1997; Maddux, 2005), for example as follows: self-initiated expatriates' success on handling a difficult intercultural situation usually strengthens their self-belief, whereas failing at the task undermines it (i.e. actual performance). Seeing other self-initiated expatriates as role models, who succeed abroad through their persistence and arduous labor, can raise a person's self-esteem and contribute favorably to their future performance (i.e. vicarious experiences). Significant others (peers, managers, …) can persuade self-initiated expatriates and positively influence their efficacy beliefs, and in so doing encourage them to confront professionally or interculturally challenging issues that they eventually have been avoiding (i.e. persuasion). Experiencing long-term stress, depression, anxiety or joy and happiness may either dampen or boost confidence in one's skills (i.e. emotional and physiological states). Finally, self-initiated expatriates could eventually benefit from the visualization technique by applying it to coping with challenges of cultural diversity that they may encounter while abroad.

The intra- and interpersonal, contextual and environmental dynamics of an individual's everyday life largely define the degree of his/her self-efficacy (Chen, 2006). Chen (2002) also argues that the stronger an individual's professional self-efficacy, the greater is his/her competence and readiness to deal with complex tasks and master critical challenges successfully at work at an international level (Adam, Obodaru, Lu et al., 2018). Hence, special attention is needed, when individuals set their personal or professional goals (Savickas et al., 2009). Any career situation – such as self-initiated expatriation and adaptation to a culturally different environment – may get critical, if individuals over- or underestimate their capabilities and their efficacy beliefs are not in accordance with their aims and abilities (Chen, 2002; Bandura, 1997). This is a matter of calibrating one's beliefs about potential functioning as accurately as possible (Klassen, 2004). For example, too optimistic and unrealistic of an approach to believing that one is able to master basically anything is as risky as too pessimistic and self-critical of an approach to imagining that one is not totally capable of functioning sufficiently well abroad. Both approaches can potentially lead to a psychological and emotional backlash in the self-initiated expatriate's intercultural adjustment. In the end, the more self-aware and self-understanding expatriates are, the greater their intentionality and degree of action can be as regards their professional life and career success in a multicultural setting (Chen, 2006).

3.3.3. Career resilience as a support for intercultural adaptation

Resilience is a central construct in psychology (Hirschi, 2012) and crucial for the functioning of individual employees and teams in organizations (Britt, Shen, Sinclair et al., 2016). Yet it is not until quite recently that academic research has started addressing it more in relation to career management and development (Bimrose & Hearne 2012) and interculturality (Grossmann, 2013; Gunnestad, 2006). By resilience is meant an individual's ability to bounce back during difficult times and to cope with uncertainty, adversity and other significant stressors (Smith, Tooley, Christopher et al., 2010). It is about facing difficulties with resistance, practising one's capabilities to move through adversity and using that experience to become more capable (Ledesma, 2014). Seery (2011) argues that low-to-moderate levels of adversity may even be beneficial to strengthening one's propensity for resilience when encountering difficulties from minor irritations and trivial hassles to life changing events (e.g. expatriation).

There are several individual and environmental resources that people are inclined to draw upon in the face of adversity (Britt el al., 2016). Gunnestad (2006) has categorized these resources as external support (network factors), internal support (abilities and skills), and existential support (meaning of life, values, faith). These protective factors function together, however, always differently depending on the type of adversity faced by the person in question. Within an intercultural context resilience can best be understood as an individual's (or a group's) ability to negotiate stress, utilize the resources available through their cultural/ethnic background and apply them fittingly to overcome adversity created by interaction across cultures (Grossmann, 2013). According to Berry (2005) there are obvious differences between individuals and groups in how they cope with their acculturation, in how they handle related stressors, and to what degree they react and adjust psychologically and socio-culturally to environmental factors in ways that enhance their resilience.

Moving to a foreign country for a new job potentially has profound personal and professional consequences to the individual. As working overseas is usually accompanied by many critical aspects, a self-initiated expatriate's prior experiences may not necessarily be fully valid and applicable in the country of destination (Hu & Meng, 2015). Such unfamiliar conditions may provoke a feeling of vulnerability, fragility and inadequacy, and reduce one's capacity to function at an outstanding level at all times (London, 1983). However, those who have stayed abroad, are inclined to develop increased levels of self-confidence, resilience, autonomy, broadmindedness, congeniality (Inkson & Carr, 2004) and self-management skills (Hu & Meng, 2015). Moreover, Froese et al. (2013) argue that there seems to be a link between prior overseas experience and willingness to embark on international assignments. They also suggest that the higher the level of an expatriate's global-mindedness is from the outset, the better are his/her chances to deal with adversity abroad. Provided interculturality is well integrated in self-initiated expatriates' attitudes and behavior may increase their career and life resilience in a culturally diverse context (Deardorff, 2015; Hughes Fong, Catagnus, Brodhead et al., 2016).

Bimrose and Hearne (2012) suggest that career resilience deserves a greater attention as a set of skills and psychological resources within an intercultural context. Career resilience can be seen as a capability to acclimate to constantly changing circumstances, to take a positive approach to work, institutional and territorial changes, to have a constructive working relationship with a wide range of people with different backgrounds, to demonstrate self-confidence and a readiness for risk taking (London, 1993). Individuals' career resilience is closely linked to their self-perceived skills and competences, needs and motives, as well as values and attitudes in relation to their professional choices and preferences (Schein, 1992).

Bimrose and Hearne (2012) make an important distinction by pointing out that career resilience is associated more with the capability to overcome professional changes as they happen, whereas career adaptability demonstrates a more anticipatory and proactive approach to mastering such changes and challenges. By developing career management skills (Sultana, 2012 and 2013) to enhance individuals' ability to utilize educational and occupational information more efficiently for making well-informed decisions and transitions (e.g. self-initiated expatriation) may potentially result in strengthened career resilience and career adaptability. In the end, the reward of resilience to an individual in working life is an increased capability to handle critical career challenges and constraints with integrity and confidence (London, 1983).

3.4. Summarizing key points - International careers call for self-determination

From an individual person's viewpoint the ever-globalizing labor market has become more dynamic, even more turbulent from time to time, and the contemporary working life is characterized by constant changes (Zimmermann, 2009; Krause et al., 2014). Today it is not anymore our employer, who is in charge of our careers, but more and more we are ourselves (Zhao et al., 2007). Therefore, keeping up with professional knowledge, innovation and technological development becomes critical as new strategies need to be quickly and effectively applied to coping with changes taking place in our professional life. Hence, individuals will increasingly have to develop their capabilities and capacities to manoeuvre their careers quite autonomously whether that is at home or abroad (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012).

Navigating one's career path through these potentially 'stormy waters' with unexpected twists and turns is not necessarily a mission impossible, but calls for 'a map and a compass' to orient oneself into the best possible direction. An individual should be guided by his/her professional goals, motives and aspirations as well as by his/her personal values, attitudes, beliefs and ideals (Olson & Shultz, 2016). All this, if well based on the already acquired knowledge, skills and other resources, should lead the individual towards preferred professional futures. A lot of self-determination and self-regulation will be required along the way (Briscoe et al., 2006).

In an attempt to mobilize change, self-reliant and self-determined individuals have a tendency to look for career advancement and are committed to developing their professional expertise on an ongoing basis (Savickas et al., 2009). Yet, an individual's career does not exist in a vacuum, but is influenced by the employing institution or company, the labor market and the wider society and global economy. This broader environment offers opportunities and obstacles alike. Thereby, the external spheres have an impact on individuals' professional possibilities and the extent to which they are able to shape or reroute their career at any given point of time (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

When moving abroad for employment, the new external world usually is less familiar and eventually less transparent. This adds to the complexity of career-related decision-making as the external factors are more difficult to be controlled and to be fully taken into account (Chen, 2006; Adam et al. 2018). Although there are massive amounts of information available in the foreign environment, people from abroad may feel puzzled and be concerned about their 'maddening and frustrating insufficiency of being well informed'. For most people, this becomes a time-consuming matter of trying to figure out what information is reliable and can be trusted as to support their important professional or personal choices during their overseas stay.

Finally, self-initiated expatriation means working in an intercultural environment and coming in contact with individuals from all walks of life. How they think, function, communicate and interact may differ from one's own approach to life (Dervin & Jackson, 2018). This, in turn, calls for an ability to cope with cultural diversity successfully while performing one's duties to the satisfaction of the employing organization as well as its clients and stakeholders. By means of stable agentic functioning (Bandura, 2001), realistic self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977) and solid resilience (Hirschi, 2012) a self-initiated expatriate's adaptation to a foreign working and living environment and highly professional performance can be made possible.

4 IDENTITY, INTERCULTURALITY AND CAREER CAPITALS

To date, identity capital (IdC), interculturality capital (InC) and career capital (CC) have been studied pretty extensively, but not necessarily too much how they intersect in a global workplace. There is already an ample body of prior research on assigned and self-initiated expatriates in private-sector companies and their global careers. These studies have also touched upon identity transformation, intercultural comptences, career learning and professional development, and to some extent discussed these aspects together (e.g. Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Dickmann, Suutari, Brewster et al., 2018). Currently, however, academic studies on linking identity, interculturality and career capitals in the context of self-initiated expatriation and professional careers at European Union decentralized agencies (i.e. public sector) cannot be found.

Therefore, this research aims at contributing to the academic discourse on identity, interculturality and career capitals by putting the focus on self-initiated expatriates within the European Union public administration. In so doing, it provides novel findings on how they perceive the given forms of capitals. As a starting point, this doctoral dissertation addresses the notion of capital and uses it to capture and contextualize the essence of identity, interculturality and career capitals as an individual and collective type of a resource. Capital is usually known as financial resources, but it can also be considered as intangible assets (i.e. non-financial, non-material and non-physical resources) (e.g. Epstein & Mirza, 2005). Bourdieu (1986) has expressed symbolic capital in terms of cultural capital that means different types of knowledge, skills and experience, and social capital that refers to the scope and quality of one's professional networks and trusting relationships. They go beyond the more conventional types of wealth, and through them an individual can obtain, for example, influential status and significant success (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998; Sullivan & Sullivan, 2000). Bourdieu (1986) divides cultural capital into embodied cultural capital (i.e. an individual's cultural knowledge), objectified capital (i.e. creative works such as books, paintings, instruments) and institutionalized cultural capital (e.g. academic qualifications, educational attainment).

In its widest sense, this research deals with human capital development of global labor force. Therefore, the model of intellectual capital (IC) forms the broader frame of this dissertation. It consists of three main building blocks that are human capital (HC), social capital (SC) and organizational capital (OC)] (e.g. Magrassi, 2002). The foundation of intellectual capital is human capital that is the intangible aggregate knowhow possessed individually and collectively within an organization, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience (Ployhart &

Moliterno, 2011). This viewpoint guides the theoretical approach in this dissertation. The emphasis will be more on analyzing and understanding the individual/ subjective level than the collective level, although the latter will most likely appear from time to time.

Professional interaction and knowledge sharing through social networks and relationships inside and outside of an organization will be required for generating new ideas for innovation and change (i.e. social capital) (Mura, Lettieri, Spiller & Radaelli, 2012; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Organizational capital resides in the organization and comprises both tangible and non-tangible assets (Magrassi, 2002; Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). Material and financial resources, information systems, policies, procedures, and intellectual property are examples of organizational capital that is owned by the organization (Andersson & Andersson, 2017).

The mutual and at times contrasting dependency of individual and collective levels and perspectives are constantly present, when different forms of capital interplay in a workplace/ organization. The individual level relates to possession of knowledge, skills, and competences as well as attitudes and behavior reflecting a person's social identifications and belongings (Coleman, 1994). The collective level is required for utilization of individually possessed resources and briging them together with other professionals for meeting organizational or other important goals (Portes, 2000). Working on national or international teams and doing professional networking across country borders are examples of social interaction and human relations (Hirschi, 2012).

Identity and interculturality capitals may be considered as more personal-level resources and more tied to the individual him/herself (e.g. Côté, 2016; Dervin & Jackson, 2018; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996), whereas career capital is more directly linked to the professional or organizational environment regardless of the fact that it, too, belongs to the individual employee (e.g. Bontis, 1998; Swart, 2006; Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). Nevertheless, all these forms of capital – identity, interculturality and career – develop, mutate, transform and grow in human relations (Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Woolcock, 1998; White, 2002)

Within the above theoretical frameworks, the following chapters will examine identity capital (4.1.), different aspects of European and national identifications (4.2.), interculturality capital (4.3.), and career capital (4.4.). These concepts will underpin the empirical chapters to which the contribution of this dissertation can be related and discussed.

4.1. Identity capital - from a social construct to a resource in working life

Living in an ever-globalizing world makes individual identities less stable, less fixed and less permanent, and instead they become more protean and multifaceted.

As a consequence of this, the identity development of individuals has become a more complex process than it used to be (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). Today the individual development process may easily take a variety of directions and result in highly unorthodox and unexpected pathways that could not even be considered or foreseen some decades ago (Jensen, Arnett & McKenzie, 2011; Ahmadi, 2005). People are affected by changing global conditions that call for social adaptability and constant redefinition of one's multiple identifications (Côté, 2016). Accelerated interactions and faster exchange of information across people, groups, cultures and countries are a result of this worldwide development (Magu, 2015; Tomlinson, 2003).

Along human lifespan people's identities usually evolve and their identifications with and affiliation to diverse groups and cultures are subject to change and revision (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). In the era of globalization, as Magu (2015) and Tomlinson (2003) point out, people's identities are more loosely connected to a specific geographical location than they used to be. Their earlier more regionally anchored cultural identifications are not necessarily providing them anymore with a fully stable existential legacy and sufficient temporal continuity. This makes the boundaries between multiple cultural communities elusive and contingent (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015), and navigating the intercultural space becomes confusing without adequate cultural guidance.

No matter who we are or where we happen to live, becoming in the future as well as having been in the past and being in the present are closely intertwined (Hall, 1996; Bauman, 2004; Bauman, 2007; Dervin, 2013). Provided that identity is a lifelong evolutionary process, Pouyard (2015) suggests that identity could be viewed as a developmental resource that allows us to conduct and construct ourselves through relationships with others. Thus, we should explore how this developmental resource could become identity capital that allows individuals to strategically manage, develop, organize, and apply their identity-related resources in different institutional and social contexts (Côté, 2016), such as working and living abroad. Moreover, Côté (2005) argues that identity capital can be acquired through a process in which individuals invest in their preferred or chosen identity (or identities) and engage themselves in social interaction with other people in multiple contexts.

Identity capital is adaptable to the subjective and interactional dimensions of people's social lives in any given society (Côté, 2016), including private- and public-sector workplaces. Côté & Schwartz (2002) characterize identity capital as a developmental approach to identity formation, in which psychological and sociological understandings of identity are integrated. Sociologically, it assumes that many individuals in today's global world are to a large extent left on their own without sufficient institutional support as regards their developmental transitions in life (such as crossing geographical borders for work) as well as setting and achieving career goals. Psychologically, it suggests that psychological resources available to an individual become particularly important as they assist the negotiation with and progress through diverse social and developmental structures at national and international levels (Côté, 2016 and 2005; Côté & Schwartz, 2002).

Identity capital can be divided into tangible and intangible resources (Côté, 2016) that are also well applicable to the context of pursuing employment abroad. Many of the more tangible identity capital resources are constructed through social interaction and exchange in working life, such as professional reputation and status, access that networks provide to information, knowledge, expertise and material resources (e.g. Inkson & Arthur, 2001) (see chapter 4.4.2.). Also educational attainment, technical and social skills, competences and professional experience acquired in working life can be considered tangible resources (e.g. Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011; Hirschi, 2012) (see chapter 4.4.1.). Intangible identity capital resources comprise capacities such as human agency (e.g. Bandura, 2002), self-efficacy (e.g. Bandura, 1977) and resilience (e.g. Bimrose & Hearne, 2012) (see chapters 3.3.1.-3.3.3.), but also an individual's self-esteem and cognitive capacities to cope with challenges, opportunities and transitions in one's career path (Côté, 2016). Côté and Schwartz (2002) argue that certain internal identity assets become crucial for the individual for coping successfully with external structures.

In the following, identity capital resources will be addressed from the perspectives of identity as a social construct, identifications that individuals have with different social groups, the stability and fluidity of individual identities and related identifications, and what a professional identity entails.

4.1.1. Identity as a social construct

In straight forward terms, identity is the socially determined answer to the question of who I am (e.g. Erikson, 1959; Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). Brewer (1991) and Turner, Hogg, Oakes et al. (1987) look at personal identity as the individuated self that illustrates those qualities that differentiate one person from other people within a given social context. Hall (1996: 4) defines identity as a social construct with multiple dimensions and layers that is a complex, elusive and ambivalent concept, and continues that identities – within a continuous and never-ending process of transformation – are "never singular, but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions". Horowitz (2012) refers to identity as the degree of self-organization and the person's conscious and/or intuitive sameness over time. Identity as LaRossa and Reitzes (1993) argue is to be understood as self-meanings attached to a position and the associated roles it may contain. Not all the roles and related identifications are equally important to people, but nevertheless they are still integral elements of who they are (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015) and how their identity capital looks like (Côté, 2016 and 2005; Côté & Schwartz, 2002).

Self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) suggests that there is a collective self as opposed to a subjective self. Both of them are equally legitimate expressions and reflections of the psychological process of the self (Brewer, 1991). Erikson (1950, 1959, 1963 and 1968), when discussing psychosocial development, refers to the psychological sense of continuity (ego identity), the personal idiosyncrasies that make a person unique and separable from the next (personal identity), and the multiple social roles that a person plays (social identity or cultural identity) while applying his/her identity capital to mastering different changes and transitions in life (Côté, 2016 and 2005; Côté & Schwartz, 2002).

Social identity is a relational categorization of the self that defines who we are in terms of our similarities and differences with others and thereby depersonalizes the self-concept where ‘I’ becomes ‘we’ (Brewer, 1999). Social identity is about a shift away from the perception of self as a unique person towards self as an exemplar of some social category (Brewer, 2001 and 1991; Turner et al., 1987). Tajfel (1978 and 1981) describes social identity as an individual’s formal or informal membership in social groups that represents and transmits ideals, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and lifestyles that are meaningful to the individual for the given membership. Once people construct and express their social identities, the intersections between various aspects of their lives become more explicit, and allow them to share ideas, insights, information and resources (i.e. identity capital) for mutual support (Gilchrist, Bowles & Wetherell, 2010).

These two types of identities – personal and social or cultural – are cross-cutting and that a person’s preferences or choices in either one of them may or may not correspond or relate to the other (Turner et al., 1987). Just as the social or cultural identity is composed of several areas, such as behavioral, cognitive, and affective identifications (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga et al., 2010; Kim & Abreu, 2001), also the personal identity comprises multiple domains such as study and career choices, political affiliation, salient relationships and free-time preferences (Goossens, 2001). On the one part, this can be viewed as being recognized as a certain type of a person in a given context (Gee, 2001), and on the other part, described as shifting between publicly visible and publicly invisible arenas, where one’s other identities are kept hidden and unrevealed to the outer world (Goffman, 1959). In Levine’s (1999: 89) words social construction incorporates two ideas: “that we exist only in the eyes of others, and that to exist in the eyes of others is to lose something vital about existence”. This makes identity appear on the surface as a result of how we are perceived by others.

According to Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015) identities are like living organisms of their own. They tend to adapt to changing circumstances as to help individuals to make sense of their life and of their function within it (Côté, 2016; Côté & Schwartz, 2002). That is, identities are always created in social interaction between people, which usually has an impact on their self-representation (Dervin, 2013). Thus, individuals cannot be comprehended outside of their daily social context as they are in a dynamic relationship with the continuously changing society and culture (Erikson 1950, 1959, 1963, 1968). This means that identities should be viewed as performance that is continuously reflecting and responding to what once happened and is now happening around (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). The issue is not that of who we are today (being), but rather what we may be tomorrow (becoming) (Hall, 1996).

Individuals encounter inherent critical turning points in life, which may be due to changes in their increased self-knowledge and self-understanding (such as motivation, attitudes, values, decision making patterns) (Erikson 1950, 1959, 1963 and 1968). Brewer (2004), Correll and Park (2005) argue that once the self-categorization starts shifting from the subjective or individual towards a more collective level, the point of perception, judgment and evaluation as regards the consequences of events unfolding is likely to change accordingly from an individual to a collective level. Overcoming these shifts as well as critical turning points allows people to discover themselves and go beyond the personal focus and function at higher levels than the subjective level. This may result in increased personal agency (Côté, 2016) or ego strengths (Erikson, 1968), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and resilience (Smith et al., 2010) (see chapters 3.3.1.-3.3.3.), which all support individuals' application of their tangible and intangible identity capital in diverse social situations (including working abroad) provided they have a good knowledge of their identities and awareness of their related social roles (Côté, 2016).

4.1.2. Belonging to multiple groups means multiple identifications

People have multiple identifications dependent on their given social environment and that they therefore through weaker and stronger ties belong to several collectives and communities at any given point of time (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). Identification is a related term of identity, and it describes the psychological process by which an individual associates him/herself to a given social, cultural or political collective group, such as the European Union (Kuhn, 2015). As a rule, identification involves some kind of a recognition of some common origin or characteristics with another person or group in relation to the individual self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). That is, identification is seen as a construction, a never-ending process, which cannot be fully determined as it can always be 'won' or 'lost', retained or given up (Hall, 1996: 2). Different identifications influence a person's identity capital and shape the way it can be further developed and utilized (Côté, 2016 and 2005; Côté & Schwartz, 2002).

The socially constructed 'reality' is an articulation, projection and reflection of one's internal and external processes that allow an individual to acknowledge him/herself, relate to others, and in the end become alive, recognized and known by others (Delanty, 2010). Individuals are affiliated with a plurality of groupings (such as gender, profession, religion, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, belief systems) that define their personal identification in the prevailing context. All individuals have multiple identifications through the allegiances they have developed to different groups and sub-cultures within the broader society (Hall, 1996; Bauman, 2004 and 2007). These identifications can be grouped as social, communal or interdependent and to a certain extent they can be in conflict with one another (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). In social identification people sacrifice their self-perception as distinct individuals, whereas in communal identification they still keep their sense of self as unique individuals, but give up their personal demands for the sake of other group members. Interdependent identification means that people retain their sense of individuality and only relate to the collectivity as a mechanism for reaching their individualistic goals. Usually, as Brewer and Pierce (2005) suggest, individuals connect to other people by virtue of their shared attachment to the symbolical group and not by their personal-level relationships.

The concept of a collective identification comes into being on the basis of the feeling of belonging together provided several people project their personal identity on the same collective in a more or less similar manner (Brewer, 2001 and 1991; Kuhn, 2015). The subjective assertion of similarities and the positive evaluation of them separate the in-group from the out-group/s, and define who belongs to the collective and who does not (Brewer, 1999). Often such social comparisons result in in-group favoritism and solidarity, whereby one's in-group is assessed in more positive terms on various grounds (e.g. nationality, geography, ethnicity) than the outgroups (Grimalda et al., 2015). Yet detrimental influences and consequences of in-group's imagined superiority over outgroups are to be avoided as they – in the worst case – can trigger intergroup hatred and open conflict (Jackson & Smith, 1999; Brewer, 1999).

A compelling consensus between in-group members' criteria for similarity will result in a resilient we-feeling (Kuhn, 2015). However, as most people have multiple collective context-based identifications that occasionally compete or even conflict with each other, salience and primacy as a dimension should be added as to demonstrate to what degree one collective identification rules over the other (Dervin & Jackson, 2018; Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015; Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994). Occasionally, an individual's group identities do not coincide (converge), but they are potentially contesting one another. Roccas and Brewer (2002) propose four different strategies for individuals to define their social identification between multiple collective memberships: *intersection* of multiple group memberships, *dominance* of one main identification, situation- and context-specific *compartmentalization*, and *merger* of non-convergent group memberships. Whichever approach is applicable to an individual's social identification has an impact on the others who either are included as members of the subjective in-group or eventually not.

Erikson (1963, 1968) argues that a person's self-concept and the relationships that a person has between self and others are influenced by one's in-groups and how they are represented in one's social identity. The self has to be reflexive for being able to determine such belonging to any collectivity, i.e. seeing itself as an object and classifying itself in circumstantial ways in respect to other social groupings or categories (Turner et al., 1987; Stets & Burke, 2000; Dervin & Jackson, 2018). Turner et al. (1987) add that when individuals associate intensely with a social group, they go through a process of depersonalization and they assume that the other group members hold same values, beliefs and interests with oneself, and that the prevailing group norms are complied with by all of them. Asforth and Fredmael (1989) suggest that even in unfortunate or less favorable situations and circumstances (e.g. loss, suffering, failed action) individuals are inclined to maintain their identification with the in-group.

Finally, Dervin and Jackson (2018) argue that members of an in-group should not observe their outgroups as having certain predetermined qualities (i.e. essences) that destine and dictate who they are, how they think or behave. Attaching a preset biased view or attitude – whether positive or negative – to another group relates to the way stereotypes and stereotyping are used to categorize, generalize, and label different groups of people for reasons of othering (e.g. prejudice, discrimination, exclusion). This stereotyped classification that we apply to attributing a defined set of characteristics to any given group (such as other nationalities; ethnic, religious or sexual minorities; gender-based grouping) is often done based on exaggerated, faulty or even imagined qualities that the outgroup members supposedly possess or represent. A stereotyped group or its individual members are usually not seen for who they are and what they stand for in reality. This can be due to deliberate, unintentional or accidental misperceptions. One of the purposes for using stereotypes is to increase the mutual cohesion within one's ingroup and present it as superior to any given outgroup. This process of stereotyping has an impact on one's personal and social identifications, and on the relations between one's in-group and outgroups (e.g. Amossy & Heidingsfeld, 2004; Rudman, Ashore & Gary, 2001; Mamadouh, 2017).

4.1.3. The paradox of identity – stability versus fluidity

Adams and van de Vijver (2015) argue that negotiating and understanding one's identity is highly important for expatriates as that may have an effect on their job success and overall well-being while living and working in a socially and culturally different environment. People's experience of their own psychological well-being as Erikson (1968) suggests depends on how well they know themselves and how much continuity they possess in experiencing themselves. As already pointed out, an individual's personal and social/cultural identities and multiple collective identifications are under constant scrutiny, and over time they evolve through social interaction and negotiation with others (Turner et al., 1987; Dervin & Jackson, 2018). This usually means that one's identity and related identifications are never fully stable, but rather – to a varying degree – solid and liquid (e.g. Bauman, 2004 and 2007).

Rodriguez and Scurry (2014) suggest that expatriation or studying abroad (Dervin & Jackson, 2018) is a good source for developing one's self-confidence and self-awareness, and for gaining a deeper insight into one's identity. The extent to which individuals can have self-clarity about themselves is influenced by the level of their self-knowledge/understanding and self-esteem (Usborne & Taylor, 2010; Dervin & Jackson, 2018), how that is cognitively, psychologically and emotionally structured and how well they are able to handle their self-complexity (McConnell & Strain, 2007) expressed in terms of having control over numerous distinctive self-aspects (Lutz & Ross, 2003). This again is critical in view to how people (e.g. self-initiated expatriates) perceive, develop and apply their identity capital (Côté, 2016), and how successfully they are able to manage the dimensions of stability and fluidity of their identity in their daily life abroad. Living and working abroad as Adam et al. (2018) suggest is a particular transitional experience that enhances an individual's self-concept clarity.

Identity plasticity allows modern individuals to remake themselves and modify roles within groups as socially expected and acceptable (Ahmadi, 2005). Along the continuum of stability and fluidity or complexity and inclusiveness different social identities can be represented and put forward. Roccas and Brewer (2002), when addressing social identity complexity, argue that more important than the number of social groups with which an individual identifies him/herself, is the degree to which multiple identifications are integrated and differentiated in the person's cognitive representation of his/her collective memberships (Brewer & Pierce, 2005). Brown (2000) argues that the complexity of social comparisons increases, when people are expected to manage their social identities in intercultural settings and take stand on which identity strategy to apply in relation to numerous ethnic, linguistic, religious, national and even supranational categories and subgroups. Hence, the more reflexive individuals are in relation to their identity-related behaviors and thoughts, the more consciously they can choose their strategies (Côté, 2016).

People's identities are highly malleable and based on social comparison and on an element of stability and fluidity of identity-content across varying situations and contexts (Oakes et al., 1994; Dervin & Jackson, 2018). According to Oyserman, Elmore and Smith (2012) these situations are interpreted against one's self-knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes, prior experience and the meaning they make, and then judged either as identity-congruent or -incongruent. With their currently active identities people normally prefer identity-congruent actions, choices and decisions over identity-incongruent ones. Yet, Ahmadi (2005) suggests that the continuity of identity is not necessarily valid anymore. Because of discontinuity, individuals have a complete freedom to define themselves as they prefer at any given point of time. People may take on a different identity in each interaction (Hall, 1996) or even create easily mouldable 'artificial', 'fake' or 'manipulated' identities as fit for any given situation (Ahmadi, 2005). Finally, while individuals are actively involved in negotiating representations on themselves, their life experiences and their daily environment (Dervin, 2014; Dervin & Jackson, 2018), they usually associate themselves with people, who are more or less like them, but slightly superior on preferred attributes (Brewer & Pierce, 2005). This can be a strategic choice to develop 'who one is' (e.g. as a professional expatriate) and a way to compensate for any unresolved identity ambiguities one may have (Côté, 2016).

4.1.4. Expatriates' professional identity versus career identity

Nuttman-Shwartz (2017) argues that in today's world of work local, national and global levels of thinking are intervowen in professional and career identities in a multifaceted manner. Therefore, expatriates when relocating to a new country need to come to terms about their new social and career boundaries. This relates to their job role in the given professional context and to their social status in the host society (e.g. being the only expatriate or being one of many in the expatriate community) (Adams and van de Vijver, 2015). McKevitt, Carbery and Lyons (2017) point out that a clear professional identity lessens the uncertainty connected to facing novel career situations abroad or coping with changes and transitions in the more familiar occupational environments. Identity modifications may emerge as an outcome of expatriates' international experience and professional exposure abroad. Kohonen (2008) categorize them as identity shifters, identity balancers and identity non-shifters.

Expatriates' professional identity development is normally influenced by the length of their expatriate assignment(s), career stage (e.g. junior vs. senior), occupational/organizational identifications, the host culture/country as well as their own cultural background (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015). Georgakakis (2013), while looking into civil servants of the European Commission, found out that they cannot be referred to as a homogenous group of EU professionals. There are convergent (e.g. status-based social positions, levels of salary) and divergent aspects (e.g. social and national origins, seniority, rank, the tasks they fulfil) that affect their professional identifications and make them therefore heterogeneous.

Moreover, expatriates' often affluent position and privileged status mean that they can be relatively selective in terms of how much they decide to adapt to the new cultural and professional environment. Benson and O'Reilly (2016) refer to this group of people as lifestyle migrants. For them it is a matter of consciously and intentionally choosing expatriation for a better way of life and considering it as a process, not as a one-off event. It is more about optimizing the conditions that meet one's professional motives, aspirations and life goals instead of being forced to accept any job offer abroad regardless of what the social or economic conditions of it happen to be.

Professional identifications evolve around work that gives a person an income, but more importantly it usually gives a sense of purpose, fulfilment and opportunities for self-actualization. Work is a source of belonging, identity, challenge and status, as well as a platform for networking and social functions (Baruch, 2004). According to McKevitt et al. (2017) people see their work either as a job, a career or a calling. A plain job orientation means that work is simply a necessity without offering any fulfilment or pleasure, whereas a career orientation focuses on making progress and being rewarded. People with a calling fully immerse in their work as it gives them meaning and direction on a more spiritual level, and is instrumental to contributing to something larger (e.g. society, academic research).

In the academic discourse both professional identity (e.g. Ibarra, 1999) and career identity (e.g. Meijers & Lengelle, 2012) are frequently used interchangeably to refer to an individual's identifications in working life, although they mean slightly different things. Professional identity is a collective identity. It is never neutral, but biased as it is always seen and defined from a particular perspective (Trede, 2012). Ibarra (1999: 764) defines professional identity as "the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role". Adams and van de Vijver (2015) characterize it as a combination of personal, interpersonal, social and contextual factors that affect the way in which people perceive themselves. Professional identity also signals the particular skills and significant abilities that individuals possess (Smith & Hatmaker, 2014). The development of individuals' professional identity can best be supported by their profound self-knowledge (Usborne & Taylor, 2010).

Conversely, career identity is an individual construct and a subjective matter, and it reflects the multiple positions and voices that a person has in relation to work (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Although career identity is something that all individuals have, it does not reside solely within the individual, but is always co-created, socially situated, interactively performed and measured by means of its clarity, content and strength (LaPointe, 2010). Hirschi (2012) refers to career identity resources that are connected to how consciously individuals see themselves in relation to their work. This may include professional interests, competences, values, importance of work and meanings given to different career roles, but also beliefs, motives and experiences (Ibarra 1999). Career identity unfolds the life themes and identifications that people have for any given occupation or career within their socio-cultural environment (Nuttman-Shwartz, 2017). The clearer such themes and identifications around work are, the better the chances are to navigate successfully any career changes or cope constructively with transitions in the global labor market (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Working abroad contributes positively to enhancing an individual's career decision-making clarity (Adam et al., 2018).

All professional groups (e.g. EU officials) have their own specific reference frameworks for identification that comprises the professional context and sets implicit and explicit standards, rules, criteria, principles and norms for correct behavioral and ethical conduct in relationships with customers, suppliers, stakeholders, employees, founders and beyond (Jaremczuk, Mazurkiewicz & Molter, 2014). As professional knowledge, skills and competences are critical to developing and strengthening professional identity, many professional groups (e.g. psychologists, teachers, career counsellors) have identified a widely accepted set of key competences that define their professional practice (Hiebert & Neault, 2014; Sultana, 2009). To keep up with new professional demands and related standards, competences are constantly further broadened and deepened by means of continuing professional development (Mulvey, 2013).

Today's careers being self-directed and multidirectional, more entrepreneurial and less continuous (LaPointe, 2010; Baruch, 2004) directly affect individuals' professional identifications and the way they use, demonstrate and upgrade their expertise as part of their identity capital (Côté, 2016). An individual's professional identity is a result of the projection made against his/her particular professional group and the circumstances prevailing there, such as the established 'good practice' that legitimizes the repertoire of proper behaviors within one's professional community. As all professional practices are subject to never-ending modifications means that one's professional identity is constantly being renegotiated and reshaped (Jaremczuk et al., 2014).

4.2. Feeling European, feeling national or a mix of them

As this doctoral dissertation is placed within the context of the European Union public administration, where individuals from all over Europe are employed, it is therefore worthwhile looking into two territorial identifications as collective identifications, namely European and national. To what extent do they exist in people's minds, and if they do, how do they eventually intersect, merge, complement, and contradict, are critical aspects to be explored. Feeling European or feeling national is only one of multiple identifications people may have. This Europeanness or nationalness or a mix of them is normally incorporated into other dimensions that are salient and relevant to the individual (e.g. Hall, 1992; Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015).

In the following, the European identity will first be briefly discussed within the political agenda of the European Union with related key milestones, and how it has been orchestrated supranationally by the European Commission and EU leaders (chapter 4.2.1.). Then the focus will be turned to academic research as regards the relation between the two territorial identifications (i.e. European and national) that European citizens may have (chapters 4.2.2. and 4.2.3.).

4.2.1. European Union's political agenda in relation to European identity

The indivisible and universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity are the foundation of the European Union, and the principles of democracy and the rule of law are its pillars of governance (European Union, 2012). These values declared by the European Union are a desirable state of becoming and held characteristic of European belonging and identification (Triandafyllidou & Kouki, 2016). Recently, some EU member states (such as Hungary and Poland) have deviated from the shared principles of rule of law, democracy, and fundamental rights. In case of the Polish and Hungarian governments, the EU institutions have so far been ineffective at re-establishing their compliance with the basic European values (Halmai, 2018).

Belonging to the European Union and being European are not synonymous, nor are the European Union and Europe. Aspirationally, the European Union is to be seen as a cultural entity with a shared European identity that goes beyond of solely being a transnational alliance (Kennedy, 2012). A vision expressed by one of the founding members of the European Union, Mr Robert Schuman (1963: 35), drew attention to the fact that for the EU ever to become an economic entity or military alliance, it must first be a cultural community in every meaning of the word. Since the 1970s, Europeanisation of identities has been rather a significant part of the social and political change in Europe (Delanty, 2010; Kuhn, 2015). Historical, cultural, geographical, ethnic, linguistic and political factors, at least, are at an interplay and contribute to shaping a European identity that ideally should be based on a joint foundation of mutually shared values and principles (Triandafyllidou & Kouki, 2016). However, the fluid notion of a European identity and the degree to which citizens' identifications contain any orientation or reference to Europe are widely debated and contested across several interest groups and stakeholders (Risse, 2001; Kuhn, 2015).

The Copenhagen Declaration on the European Identity (European Communities, 1973) was adopted by the member states of the European Communities of that time to specify their relations with other countries and among themselves regarding their responsibilities in global affairs. The aim was to strengthen unity as a European necessity within the common civilization in Europe and to make progress to construct a United Europe. Among other things, the Declaration highlighted the legal, political and moral order to be respected, the diversity of national cultures within a common European civilization to be preserved, and the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice and human rights to be defended. Although the Copenhagen Declaration was meant to give the European identity its originality and dynamism, it must only be seen as an expression of political will, not (yet) as a social construct (Delanty, 2010).

Many EU leaders and policy-makers anticipate that an all-encompassing European identity will become a widely shared identification in the long run. Thus, they often refer to it as something that already would be part of every EU citizen's social experience and personal reality (Harrie, 2006; Thiel & Friedman, 2012). In 1992, a European citizenship was institutionalized by the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union (European Communities, 1992) with the objective to connect better together the European and national levels, i.e. bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. Even if this European citizenship strengthened the social dimension of the European Union and made it to one single entity (instead of being a union composed of member countries driven by their national priorities), critics point out that a fully-fledged conceptualization of the European citizenship where citizens share a common identity is still largely missing (Tsaliki, 2007).

'Unity in Diversity' was launched as the official slogan of the European Union in the late 1990s. Identity politics uses collective identity either as a basis for political mobilization (bottom-up) or as a construction of political authorities to support their strategic goals (top-down) (Karolewski, 2010). The European Union can be comprehended based on its top-down approach that becomes apparent in the policy-level measures used to create a collective European identification (Triandafyllidou & Kouki, 2016). By applying the top-down approach, the political elite in the EU aims to establish a new collective identity to legitimize their policies and political agenda that otherwise might not get adequate support from the citizens (Karolewski, 2010). Strategic actions, structural contexts and systemic processes are the means of the top-down approach to foster collective identity development (Wendt, 1999).

Delanty (2010) argues that the idea of 'one for all, all for one' (i.e. 'Unity in Diversity') demonstrates substantial relevance today, although this is not yet an actual reality in Europe. It is about a process of becoming united as well as growing towards that unity in spite of all differences and diversities there are in Europe. Diversity is not a historical given or pre-existing quality, but an identity to be created and achieved through a process of making (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). Risse (2010) adds that the contemporary Europe is made of its individual narratives. The presence of these unique and distinctive narratives (diversity) contribute to a shared sense of identification and belonging (unity) that in the long run transcends any political, cultural, ethnic, territorial or any other borders in Europe.

In the early 2000s, an alarming discourse surfaced across the EU member states about the democratic deficit of the European Union and how that had made citizens emotionally disengaged from the Union (Favell, 2010). Already from the 1990s, promotional campaigns and policy-level measures had been conducted by the European Union institutions for targeted messaging to enhance awareness of Europe among citizens in the member states (Mendez & Bachtler, 2018). Such action included getting across the idea of a European identity and citizenship more strongly as an integral identification among people's multiple identifications (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). The systematic use of the European Union symbols[13] in these promotional activities has been a chosen strategy to strengthen a common European identity (Mendez & Bachtler, 2018). These EU symbols, however, are still mostly experienced as something external from the national cultures. Despite that, they have been relatively well absorbed into the national contexts, yet they do not fully carry the psychological significance of a collective identity (Panebianco, 2004; Favell, 2010; Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015).

Since the financial crisis started within the European Union in 2009 and the refugee crisis in 2015, the European Union has been shaken up and faced credibility problems as well as skepticism in the minds of citizens. The public opinion has shown a diminishing appeal for Europeanisation, and the views of citizens and national-level public figures (such as leaders of political parties) have become increasingly polarized between those in favor of and those against the European Union (Favell, 2010). Nonetheless, the Eurobarometer[14] 2018 shows that the majority of all EU28 citizens (70 %) currently feel that they are citizens of the EU (European Commission, 2018d). Yet, as scholars have pointed out, the Eurobarometer survey is an institutional instrument and its results are often used for political purposes. Thus, some criticality and caution should be exercised with interpretations made and conclusions drawn therefrom (e.g. Aldrin, 2011).

Today any collective identity, such as European identity, is exposed to numerous interpretations and various discourses. As Davidson (2008) states, European identity is a thin and unstable identification today, which is due to the great individual and cultural diversity in values and moral norms across the European countries. Thus, Delanty (2010) suggests that we should not try to explain the world in simplistic terms and think that there can only be a thin (and vague) common European identity opposed to a thick (and strong) national identity. Thin identities, as Delanty (2002) argues, are culturally far too neutral in that they do not imply a separation between the self and the others, whereas thick identities are highly exclusive and based on alterity (otherness). The dualism between thin versus thick conceptions of culture should be avoided in Delanty's (2010) view, and no political identity should be underpinned by a cultural identity comprehended as a whole form of life. Finally, only if the European Union will be able to deliver its core values to the citizens according to democratic participatory

[13] For example, the EU star flag, anthem, single currency (euro), passport with burgundy coloured covers, the Europe Day (9 May) (European Communities, 1987).
[14] The Eurobarometer survey is based on a questionnaire to map out annually how well liked the European Union is and what the public opinion is of a number of things on a scale from 1 to 10 (Favell, 2010).

processes, people's identification with the EU can be reinforced and the European identity made thicker (Davidson, 2008). To this end, the political and social model of European identity should embrace plurality, and see the world not only as black and white, but as mélange (i.e. both thin and thick).

4.2.2. Towards European identity as a collective identity

The study of European identity is a vast research area and goes across several academic fields (such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, education, political science), tackles a wide range of research questions and employs multiple methodological approaches. Research that has been conducted in the past decades on European identity well illustrates the multidisciplinary character of such studies. The more recent scientific research has looked at European identity from a number of perspectives, such as democracy and citizenship (e.g. Habermas & Derrida, 2003; Habermas, 2012; Castiglione, 2014), Europeanisation (e.g. Trenz, 2015; Risse, 2001; Risse, 2010), Euroscepticism (e.g. Weßels, 2007; Boomgaarden, Schuck, Elenbaas et al., 2011; Recchi, 2015), external relations (e.g. Bátora, 2016), learning mobility (Kuhn, 2012; Mitchell, 2015; Sigalas, 2010; Stoeckel, 2016; Van Mol, 2013 and 2018), and migration and intra-EU labor mobility (e.g. Favell, 2010; Favell, 2014; Trenz & Triandafyllidou, 2017). The main interest among researchers lies in finding out and understanding how European integration affects citizens' daily lives, and how they respond to it in their attitudes, behaviors and identifications (e.g. Kuhn, 2015; Recchi, 2015). In this research, European identity is mainly viewed as a summation of numerous simultaneous identification processes (cultural, ethnic, territorial, religous, etc.) that people may have (Van Mol, 2013).

Different models to describe the basis of European identity have been proposed by academics. Walkenhorst (2009) argues that European identity can be explained, for example, by means of European history, common political culture and civic identity, Europe as a space of exchanges and cooperation, and as social collectiveness. Thereby, Delanty (2010) suggests that the essence of European identity can best be understood based on four narratives: the shared political tradition, the political unity, past divisions and traumas (e.g. the 2nd World War), and the critical cosmopolitan approach to cultural phenomena (Delanty, 2018). According to Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015), European identity could either be viewed as a national identity, or as an all-inclusive umbrella that merges together multiple national identities with similarities and common elements, or as a more civilizational idea of values and cultural contents that makes Europeans distinguishable from the rest of the world. Though, none of these approaches alone, as researchers tend to agree, is able to exhaustively explain their distinctive arguments around European identity and its complexity.

Kuhn (2015) points out that the key with a European identification is whether citizens incorporate the European collective into their self-concept – or perhaps not. No-one's intersecting social identities (incl. European identification) can be politically defined as they always are socially co-constructed, though, to a certain extent they can be politically influenced (Delanty, 2010). For European identity to qualify as an authentic collective identity, it should first have a shared group reality, and actually be more than the total of the individual identities of Europeans together (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). Thereby, EU citizens should (be able to) take onboard a more spread-out group affiliation than their national one (Kuhn, 2015), and (voluntarily) see themselves as Europeans, and then willingly represent their Europeanness within an established institutional framework supporting their identity (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). Any collective identity carries cognitive, evaluative and affective meanings to the individual (e.g. Schwartz et al., 2010; Kim & Abreu, 2001). Seeing or not seeing oneself as part of the European community refers to the cognitive, whereas identifying oneself as European to the evaluative dimension. Through the affective attachment a person associates both as part of and with the whole collective (Kuhn, 2015; Fuchs, 2011).

The more Europeans become exposed to other countries, cultures and people in Europe, the more likely they are to integrate a degree of Europeanness into their personal and social identities (King, Lulle, Morosanu et al., 2016). The continuously increasing cross-border mobility for studying, training and working abroad has shaped identities and identifications among EU citizens (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015; Mitchell, 2015; Stoeckel, 2016), but it has not necessarily made them more pro-European or more strongly associated with Europe (Kuhn, 2012; Sigalas, 2010; Van Mol, 2013 and 2018). The behavioral change of mobility among people is obvious, but not yet the attitudinal change as there still seems to be socio-psychological resistance to adopting a stronger or a more approving identification with the European Union. Nevertheless, this 'new' Europe of free movement is not to be defined as a nation or a state, but rather as a still-to-be-defined space of growing mobility and migration, trade and all kinds of exchanges across the civic, cultural, social, intellectual, political, and economic domains of life (Favell, 2010).

Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015) argue that the European integration process has benefited the highly educated and well-off citizens. They become more attached to Europe due to their relatively easy access to cross-border mobility, whereas the 'losers' (blue-collar workers with low levels of education, limited language skills, etc.), who have lower accessibility to such opportunities, consequently lack a sense of European identity. Salamonska and Recchi (2016), when examining how EU citizens' cross-border practices affected their identification with Europe, found out that the transnationally oriented people scored high on all forms of mobility, whereas the more sedentary locals remained aloof from them. Moreover, the study revealed that the more transnational individuals were less likely to have nationalist views.

At a European level, as Risse (2010) points out, there are two main identity constructions that compete with one another: the somewhat traditional, introverted, and primordial identity of an exclusionary nationalist ‘fortress Europe’, and a more modern, enlightened, and secular Europe. This relates to the question of how ‘open’ or ‘closed’ European identity actually is for the inclusion of ‘outsiders’, such as third-country migrants and ethnic minorities (e.g. the Roma people). Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015) argue that the European Union can be viewed as predominantly ‘white’ and ‘Christian’, which raises the issue of where is the borderline between inclusive (in-group) and exclusive (outgroup) characteristics in European identity in relation to diversity and plurality. For the time being European identity “as experienced on the ground by citizens […] is neither ethnicity-blind nor religion-neutral” as stated by Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015: 143).

4.2.3. European identity vs. national identity

The European integration since the 1950s has had a deep-rooted and longstanding impact on the European Union citizens (Recchi, 2015). Risse (2010) argues that many of them by now have at least some kind of a European identification (‘European identity lite’) parallel to their national identifications. Still people are divided between those, who only identify with their own nation (‘exclusive nationalists’) and those, who associate with Europe to some degree (‘inclusive nationalists’). Moreover, Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015) point out that as European identity constantly has to compete with national identities makes it weak.

For some people, it is insurmountable to think that national and European identities could exist as one. Risse (2004) suggests that these two identifications can coexist as there is nothing incompatible between them. If citizens only could find a halfway between their otherwise incompatible European and national identities, the cognitive dissonance would reduce and they would be at ease with both (Favell, 2010). Still today most national identities seem to be more appealing to citizens than an explicitly outspoken identification with Europe (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). Nevertheless, the identification with Europe is much stronger among the younger generations and the highly educated citizens than often expected or reported in the media (Kuhn, 2015).

In Dascalu’s (2013) view European identity is often regarded as a supranational identity that goes beyond any national identity linked to national territory. Thus, there are two central issues associated with the concept of European identity: whether a European identity transcends the identifications of individual citizens based on their more local in-group identities (national vs. transnational narratives), and whether the European integration process has any effect on strengthening such a European identification (Thiel & Friedman, 2012; Recchi, 2015). Risse (2004), Risse and Grabowski (2008) suggest that the differences between European and national identities are not restricted to territoriality. Instead the diverse identities are in interaction with each other in multiple ways: they can be separate (no overlap), cross-cutting (some overlaps), nested (one inside the other) and reciprocally influential (marble cake).

According to Risse (2010), Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2015), the marble-cake model has gained foothold as the European identification has become more interwoven in the national identity narratives. Not only is a European dimension embedded in national identities, but there also are multiple national interpretations of European identity. Integrating European identity into one's self-concept should not mean that individuals abandon their national identity, but rather that they oscillate between the two complementary identifications (Dascalu, 2013). It is therefore important to listen to how EU citizens feel about Europe and European identity as to get a better insight into their attitudes, beliefs, values and identifications (Favell, 2010).

European identity could be seen as an internal transformation of national identifications, whereby a gradual Europeanisation of national identities will become more obvious. However, the constellation should not be European against national (Risse, 2004; Risse & Grabowski, 2008), even if identity from its very nature is about sameness and distinctiveness, and calls for difference and contrasts to become visible and recognizable (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). The challenge is, how feelings of belonging and identification can be added and/or transferred from one sense of peoplehood to another, from one's nation to the European Union (Kennedy, 2012).

The processes of national identity formation and nation building are to be seen as political products (Utz, 2005). The mobilization and stabilization of the nation-states have their origin in the 19th century. Common memories, ethnicity, symbols and myths of the nation-states' communal past as uniting factors were essential in binding collectives together. This was done to justify and give meaning to the present as well as to shape the future politically, socially, economically and culturally (Stråth, 2011). The principles of self-rule, self-determination and self-awareness of the people are underlying their territorial autonomy and peoplehood, and contributing to the idea of national unity (Delanty, Jones & Wodak, 2011).

Today a nation means a sovereign state that according to international law has a permanent population, a defined territory, a legal system and an economy, one centralized government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other sovereign states, and is not dependent on or subjected to any other power or state (e.g. Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). If these parameters apply, it is possible for an individual to create a personal sense of belonging to one nation (i.e. national identity). Provided this develops to a common culture with shared values, it then unites the members of the national collectivity (Smith, 1992). As long as the stories of communal origin are perceived as real by the community members and they provide the support for the nation, they – whether fictitious or genuine – serve their purpose (Cinpoes, 2008). Their main aim is to reinforce the power of the nation state, maintain social coherence, keep the national narrative alive and on some occasions keep it under control or even change it (Utz, 2005).

In Europe, the nation-state has traditionally been seen as the economic, cultural and political entity of society (Favell, 2010), whereby a high degree of cohesion, mutual trust and a sense of collective identity are considered holding existing national communities together (Kuhn, 2015). This is supported by institutional frameworks (such as national education and training systems) through which national culture and identity are constantly produced, reproduced and transmitted (Utz, 2005). Kuhn (2015) argues that whatever ties people together within nations eventually ties them together across nations, too. It remains debatable to what degree EU-level institutional frameworks can support the development of European identification among its citizens. For example, making territorial borders more permeable to facilitate free movement of people, goods, services and capital across the European Union, has made some EU citizens afraid of losing their national territory (Favell, 2010), (e.g. the Brexit is an example of this).

Finally, co-nationals may not necessarily be extremely close to each other, but in relative terms they are closer between themselves than they are in relation to outsiders. This national consciousness relies on the awareness of one's own in-group as well as the awareness of the others. A feeling of belonging that has a relative value is expressed by national identity. This relative value is valid only to the degree to which it contrasts the feelings that in-group members of the nation hold towards non-members (e.g. other nationalities) (Triandafyllidou, 2002). Thus, strengthening the sense of one's national belonging and the feeling of superiority of one's nationality (e.g. Grimalda et al., 2015) may result in ridiculing other (European) nationalities by using critically toned or pejorative stereotypes of them. This, in turn, may hamper the development towards establishing a stronger European identification across the people of the European Union. So, the key to removing stereotyped thinking among EU citizens is to increase their everyday interaction with other EU nationals. Learning more about the other by means of working, studying and living in and doing business with another EU country is a good starting point for this (Favell, 2010).

4.3. Interculturality capital – from word to a real asset

This chapter aims at discussing the concept of interculturality capital from the perspectives of how it can be understood as well as how individuals, such as self-initiated expatriates, can develop and apply it while interacting with other people in an environment characterized by cultural, ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity, complexity and hybridity. This doctoral dissertation acknowledges the fact that the term of interculturality is not necessarily applied universally or interpreted similarly across different disciplines as will be argumented below. Interculturality as a term will be used throughout this research to address the acquisition and application of related capital in the context of international careers and working abroad.

Interculturality is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, and therefore multiple perspectives are required. The main academic disciplines engaged in studying interculturality have traditionally been anthropology, communication, education, linguistics, psychology and sociology, but also human resource management and organizational management are increasingly getting involved in it (e.g. Thomas & Peterson, 2014; Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt, 2013) as well as guidance and counselling (e.g. Launikari & Puukari, 2005; Portera, 2014; Sultana, 2017). This multitude of disciplines is also reflected in the varied terminology that is being applied to refer to the wide range of knowledge, skills and competences that can be considered intercultural.

Scholars, depending on their theoretical approach and academic orientation, use terms such as cosmopolitanism (e.g. Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Delanty, Jones & Wodak, 2011) or cosmopolitan capital (e.g. Lindell & Danielsson, 2017), global competences (e.g. Schejbal & Irving, 2009; Liu, Adair, Tjosvold et al., 2018), intercultural capital (e.g. Pöllmann, 2013; Pöllmann, 2016) or cross-cultural capital (e.g. Thomas & Peterson, 2014; Lindsay & Shen, 2014), intercultural competence (e.g. Deardorff, 2015; Cerdin, 2012a; Lustig & Koester, 2006; Bennett, 2009; Byram, 1997), intercultural intelligence (e.g. Urnaut, 2014), international competences/skills (e.g. Cerdin, 2012b), international mobility capital (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002), intercultural maturity (King & Magolda, 2005), intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), and multicultural skills and competences (e.g. Pagon et al., 2011; Launikari & Puukari, 2005).

According to Koegeler-Abdi and Parncutt (2013), literature seldom views interculturality as a whole, but rather focuses on aspects of interculturality (such as intercultural communication or teaching) and therefore the interpretations made of interculturality are often affected by disciplinary boundaries (Thomas & Peterson, 2014). Liddicoat (2011) suggests that interculturality is shaped by the contextual agendas in which it is created and expressed. In his view, similar agendas may exist in a number of contexts (e.g. policy, research, practice, professional development), and thus it is not possible to regard interculturality as a self-apparent and autonomous concept. Interculturality is about how we engage ourselves with diversity, yet this engagement may vary substantially based on the contexts. Against this background, a more overarching approach to understanding and examining interculturality would be helpful provided the differences in assumptions held and methods applied across disciplines in different contexts could be bridged (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt, 2013; Liddicoat, 2011).

As Risager and Dervin (2014) point out, interculturality – while being an abstract idea – is an interactional and co-constructivist process between individuals across time and space (Dervin, 2016). As such the notion of interculturality is critical and intriguing (Dervin, 2013 and 2016). Establishing a common ground and finding similarities between individuals with different cultural/ethnic background should be given more emphasis in an intercultural setting, and less focus should be put on differences between ‘our’ and ‘their’ cultures (Dervin, 2013 and 2016; Luke & Goldstein, 2006). The connecting and uniting element between humans regardless of their origin should not be missed out. Would similarities between people not be discovered, this can to some degree be due to the nature of the concept of ‘culture’, which in itself is opposing, separating and even isolating (i.e. different ‘cultures’ are put against one another and hierarchies of cultures are created, although no culture is better or worse than any other) (Risager & Dervin, 2014). The key dynamic in interculturality is that the national, European and global dimensions become largely intertwined. This opens new discursive spaces that through their critical function may alter the social world and the individuals in it (Delanty, 2006).

All people are different no matter where they come from and life shapes the way an individual sees, understands, experiences and judges the world around him/herself (Dervin & Jackson, 2018). Thus, the notion of culture as a construction that would easily explain the behavior of people has started losing its power as a product of meaning-making processes (Dervin, 2014; Froese et al., 2013). Delanty (2010) explains culture as something that binds individuals or represents something mutually shareable for them, but argues that the problem currently resides in the way culture is associated with a particular form of life. He suggests that a (new) more general definition of culture should be found as to make it possible to accommodate for the divergent perspectives and approaches found in the contemporary world. This calls for acknowledging the fluidity, liquidity, scatteredness and fragmentedness of all forms of human life (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). Accordingly, individuals with their personal values, beliefs, ideals and interests, and how they may influence their behavior, attitudes, identifications, life choices and decisions have lately gained more academic terrain among scholars (Held, 2003).

4.3.1. Towards homo interculturalis - capturing the essence of interculturality capital

There is no one single definition of interculturality capital due to multiple disciplines stating their legacy in the area as illustrated above. Over the years, scholars have based their definitions and/or descriptions of interculturality capital on different theoretical frameworks and approaches. At least one common element can be found in practically all of these definitions, i.e. readiness for interaction that takes place between people from different origins (e.g. Dervin, 2014; Leung, Ang & Tan, 2014). Interculturality capital is about human interest, conscious openness towards cultural diversity, and social relations well-fitted to a diverse and complex world, and the willingness to interact with the 'other' (Mau, Mewes & Zimmermann, 2008; Froese et al., 2013). It is defined by the dynamics of human interaction within international contexts (Igarashi & Saito, 2014). Thus, in this research when discussing interculturality capital, the foundation of it is largely the interactional and co-constructivist dimension instead of seeing it merely as a strictly defined specific set of concrete skills and competences that, for example, to a varying degree could be acquired through training without even being exposed to intercultural encounters in real life.

Homo interculturalis represents (i.e. an intercultural human being) the above qualities and approaches to co-existing with other people. Klerides (2018) contrasts homo interculturalis with homo nationalis. In his view, homo interculturalis is compatible with the principles of cross-border integration and cooperation, whereas homo nationalis represents the opposite of this. The way homo interculturalis approaches international relations is peace-loving and world-embracing. For him/her the world consists of a horizontally organized universal network-based community, where diverse equal, permeable and overlapping cultures exist side by side and share a common fate. While homo nationalis enacts attitudes of division and separation ('we' and 'they') and believes in the superiority of his/her own nation over other nations, homo interculturalis promotes a mentality of global interaction, curiosity and equality. In his/her globalized imaginary, homo interculturalis critically questions the obsolete role and position of many entrenched institutions and policies.

For homo interculturalis, interaction and communication are prerequisites for developing interculturality capital at individual and collective levels (Pietilä, 2010). Thus, individuals or groups, who want to enhance their interculturality capital instead of only becoming interculturally capitalized (Dervin, 2006) or mature (King & Magolda, 2005), should pay attention to how and what they (want/need to) learn through and from the intercultural encounters they have (Dervin & Jackson, 2018). This is also a critical consideration for professionals who are planning a career abroad as they need to assess the scope of their existing interculturality capital and how it could be developed to meet the demands of pursuing employment at an international level (e.g. Cerdin, 2012b).

Interculturality in its very essence is about human encounters and human co-existence. The challenge with diverse definitions of interculturality (capital) is that they are usually presented as statement-like lists of abilities and qualities that an individual is expected to possess in order to be successful in an international and intercultural arena. Thus, different fields (e.g. anthropology, education, human resources and organizational management, psychology, sociology) should come up with a common agreement on what generally is understood by interculturality capital and how that could be adapted in a flexible way to each field. As the selected examples of definitions or approaches to defining interculturality (capital) from different fields below show, there is still space for rethinking as to illustrate the width, breadth and depth of such intercultural capabilities and capacities that qualify an individual as having a sufficiently high level of interculturality capital. The multiple views presented below should ideally be merged together for having a more holistic and transversal interdisciplinary theoretical model on interculturality capital in the future.

Pöllmann (2013) suggests that interculturality capital should be viewed as a type of embodied cultural capital, because it is not readily recognized as traditional capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Also Lindell and Danielsson (2017) discuss interculturality capital as a distinct form of cultural capital that people should be able to identify and accordingly cultivate and utilize in their personal and professional lives. Pöllmann (2013 and 2016) goes on defining interculturality capital as intercultural skills, competences, and sensitivities, and specifies that it can be actualized in terms of awareness, acquisition and application – yet it means something substantially more than mere intercultural competences or intercultural sensitivity. All forms of interculturality capital are also forms of cultural capital in that they are implicitly and explicitly embedded in the cultures through which they have emerged, Pöllmann (2013) adds. Thus, all forms of cultural capital can be seen as types of intercultural capital provided that the cultures – through which ever processes they have evolved – compose an element of intercultural connection and blend as all cultures these days actually do.

Luke and Goldstein (2006) are very much in line with Pöllmann's idea as they regard interculturality capital being made of the knowledge, skills, competences, experiences, psychological dispositions and understanding that an individual gains through a manifold of intercultural encounters. Murphy-Lejeune (2002) discusses the notion of interculturality capital that can be accrued through individuals' exposure to studying, training and working abroad and is composed of four constituent elements: family/personal background, previous mobility experience, the first experience of cultural adaptation, and personality features. Also Pöllmann (2013 and 2016) argues that interculturality capital is generated through an individual's exposure to, interaction with and learning from others in an intercultural context.

Lustig and Koester (2006) refer to intercultural abilities that are required to interact appropriately with culturally, ethnically and linguistically different people. Other researchers (e.g. Thomas & Peterson, 2014; Lindsay & Shen, 2014) add the competitive aspect to the above, i.e. interculturality capital encapsulates the aggregate set of knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences and personality dispositions that provides the individual with a competitive edge to coping successfully with culturally diverse situations. Furthermore, Bennett (2009) proposes that different values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are to be honoured as long as they do not threaten or insult anybody. The common goal is to construct a multilayered, intersectional framework (i.e. dialogue on culture, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age, sexual orientation, and so forth) that is based on 'both-and' instead of 'either-or', and that as much as possible builds upon similarities across people.

In relation to interculturality capital, learning objectives for individuals have been identified by Byram (1997). They are categorized into competence areas: knowledge about the other and one's own ingroup/s; attitudes; skills in discovery, interaction, interpreting and relating; and critical cultural and political awareness. Also Igarashi and Saito (2014) and Keating (2016) emphasize the learning dimension. They view an intercultural citizen as somebody, who should develop a mastery of a world language, be able to interact on a supranational level, and have a broader mental frame that goes beyond the local towards the more global level (i.e. affiliations of citizenship transcend the nation-state). Finally, from an organizational management perspective, leaders of globally operating companies and institutions should have a well-developed capacity to adjust to culturally changing environments and to effectively manage multinational staff. Understanding employees with diverse backgrounds is a prerequisite for influencing and inspiring them so that they will be committed to working towards the common institutional goal (den Dekker, 2016).

Constructing interculturality capital as suggested above requires at least social interaction and communication, reflection and introspection, willingness for continuous learning and easy access to learning resources, development of sensitivities and exposure to diversity, search for commonalities across different people, and readiness to adjust to constantly evolving situations and circumstances. These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

4.3.2. Developing and applying interculturality capital

Researchers tend to agree that there are multiple ways to develop and apply one's interculturality capital. As illustrated above, they also seem to share a common understanding that getting exposed to intercultural interaction in real life is an efficient way to learn about cultural diversity and to become acquainted and more skillful in that area. Intercultural adaptation and learning are a lifelong quest and a never-ending process (Pietilä, 2010).

The processes of development and application of interculturality capital take place at internal (individual) and external (collective) levels. This calls for a positive recognition of difference on both levels. The external others are easier to be recognized – positively or negatively – than the ones within (Delanty et al., 2011). Pöllmann (2013 and 2016) suggests that these processes – to a varying degree – can be either intuitive or reflexive, iterative or continuous, inclusive or exclusive, direct or indirect, enabled or constrained. According to Delanty et al. (2011) internal interculturality calls for a recognition that entails a self-transformative dimension. Only through reflexive self-problematization, acceptance of one's incompleteness and the realization that there is no absolute certainty or truth of anything can an intercultural mindset be developed. Moreover, Luke and Goldstein (2006) argue that a self-critical, reflective and even reflexive relation to one's worldview is needed from time to time as to review one's personal value and belief system in relation to these constantly evolving and socially shaped processes (Risager & Dervin, 2014; Dervin, 2014).

For an individual who is working abroad, there are at least behavioral, cognitive and emotional/affective forms of engagement and adaptability that may support the learning and development of one's interculturality capital (Flores & Sprake, 2013; Bennett, 2009; Dervin & Jackson, 2018). Behavioral engagement is characterized by the degree to which people are engaged in learning-related interaction with others (Lobel, Neubauer & Swedburg, 2002), whereby behavioral adaptability is the ability to switch successfully between multiple cultural frames, readiness to communicate and take action that enhances the common good and reduces prejudice and conflict (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013; Haslberger et al., 2013). Bandura (1977) suggests that through their direct experience or ongoing observation people learn the behaviors, customs and norms of other cultures and countries.

Cognitive engagement relates to an individual's self-efficacy perceptions (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003) and to the effort invested in learning to obtain new skills and to comprehend complex phenomena. Thereby, cognitive adjustment means gaining insight into the host culture's collectively shared patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013; Haslberger et al., 2013). Emotional engagement deals with how individuals feel about their learning experience (Taylor & Statler, 2014), and affective adjustment with how a person copes with positive or negative feelings experienced in an intercultural setting (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013; Haslberger et al., 2013).

Farrell (2010) suggests that interculturality capital is primarily linked to the areas of behavior and communication. Thereby, individuals' effective intercultural interaction relies on their ability to demonstrate and apply their acquired knowledge, skills and competences appropriately in such situations (e.g. King & Magolda, 2005). Pham and Tran (2015) point out that intercultural relations often are multi-faceted, wide-ranging and subtle, which usually adds to the challenge of being able to fully mobilize one's interculturality capital in order to navigate such social encounters successfully. Pöllmann (2013 and 2016) states that interculturality capital is dependent on, and has an impact on the conditions within which the intercultural dialogue is performed. This interaction is influenced by individuals, whose diverse and even unfamiliar manners of acting, reacting and interacting play an essential role in making such opportunities become a real intercultural encounter (Dervin, 2014).

The process-like Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Bennett (1993, updates to the model ever since) demonstrates how individuals experience and engage with such cultural differences and suggests that they move from ethnocentrism towards ethnorelativism through six developmental stages (i.e. denial – defense – minimization – acceptance – adaptation – integration). Once they reach integration, interacting with diverse cultures feels natural and comfortable to them and cultural awareness is an integral part of their everyday interactions. However, Bennett's model is of course a simplification of reality, and thus it is not able to fully capture the complexity of human interaction and intercultural learning. Neither should it be used for predicting how an individual's intercultural sensitivity evolves over time.

Finally, in a world of growing economic and social interdependence, interculturality capital is becoming a noteworthy form of an individual's cultural capital and a sign of sociocultural distinction (Bourdieu, 1986). This calls for going beyond the boundaries of the prevailing national loyalties and traditional solidarities (Delanty et al., 2011). In the end, an individual's interculturality capital – when well applied to the global context – may have an economic value in the sense that it generates a financial profit to the person and his/her organization (Pöllmann, 2013).

4.4. Career capital for a global labor market

The long-term survival of any organization today largely depends on how efficiently it is able to conduct its production, research, development, innovation, and customer service processes, how well it manages external stakeholder relationships (Šlaus & Jacobs, 2011; Magrassi, 2002), and above all how its staff is kept properly motivated for the work (Bontis, Dragonetti, Jacobsen et al., 1999; Porter, Bigley & Steers, 2003; Carver, 2006; Crocker et al., 2013). Young, Marshall and Valach (2007) suggest that globalization creates a stronger need for sensitivity towards and awareness of cultural diversity across occupations, workplaces, companies and organizations, industries, cultures, and societies. Thereby, intercultural work places need to pay special attention to their management system, leadership styles, human resources policies (McCuiston, Wooldridge & Pierce, 2004), communication strategies, innovation processes and cross-border networking (Matthews & Thakkar, 2012) as to tackle the challenges linked to their diverse workforce and international business and operational environment.

As supranational institutions, such as decentralized European Union agencies, are expected to find a balance between their international alignment and local attachment, they usually take targeted measures to attract and retain a professionally competent workforce both from abroad and among the locals (e.g.

Egeberg et al., 2017), who create benevolent relationships across a wide range of stakeholders locally and globally, and establish and manage well-suited operating systems and structures (Cuganesan & Petty, 2010; Pynes, 2009). Therefore, the European Union agencies, as Egeberg et al. (2017) found out, apply meritocratic instruments when recruiting their personnel, regardless of their geographical location in Europe. The same authors argue that recruitment based on merits reinforces healthy and non-corrupt governance in the EU agencies, and supports the transparency of knowledge, skills and competences of their staff.

Identifying the right experts is of course a critical question to any organization looking for new personnel. Thus, professionals considering to work for an international or supranational institution should think in terms of the different forms of capitals that they possess and assess their suitability to assume a position in an intercultural environment. In the following section, career capital will be discussed in relation to the demands of a global labour market.

4.4.1. Career capital as a body of knowledge

Recently the notion of career capital has become more prominent in the global labor market where organizations look for internationally minded, professionally talented, agile and flexible individuals (Swart, 2006). Career capital is mostly an individual rather than organizational level construct (e.g. Bontis, 1998; Swart, 2006; Lamb & Sutherland, 2010). The components and the state of equilibrium of career capital are under constant transformation and reflect the emerging and changing demands of the professional environment (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Thomas, Smith and Diez (2013: 3) refer to career capital as "people, their performance and their potential in the organization", whereas Magrassi (2002) to companies or organizations in which their employees' knowledge and competences reside. Bontis et al. (1999: 393) talk about "the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organization its distinctive character", while Chowdhury, Schulz, Milner et al. (2014) regard it as a valuable resource that can make the institution inimitable and help it to sustain its competitive advantage.

Lamb and Sutherland (2010) define career capital as the collection of an individual´s personal characteristics, knowledge and skills, professional experiences and achievements as well as relational networks that transcend company, occupation, industry and even country boundaries. These work-relevant knowledge, skills, abilities and other aspects (such as educational attainment) that an individual possesses are needed for successfully mastering a specific job and for contributing to the collective human capital of the institution (Coleman, 1994; Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011; Hirschi, 2012) according to the prevailing organizational standards and norms as well as to the satisfaction of the employer (Heckman, 2000; Fugate et al., 2004; Inkson & Arthur, 2001).

The notion of the intelligent career builds upon the outspoken assumption that individuals, such as self-initiated expatriates, are supposed to augment their competences, increase their self-understanding and enlarge their relational networks for further growing in their professional careers (Parker, Khapova & Arthur, 2009; Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Banai & Harry, 2004; Cunningham, 2016). Based on the theory of career capital, individuals devote their time and effort to making an investment in their careers, and in so doing they expect a worthwhile result in terms of improving their career competences (e.g. Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Hirschi, 2012). These interdependent career-based investments that people make and through which their careers unfold are different types of knowledge that they need for being successful at work and in professional life (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Arthur, Claman, DeFillippi et al., 1995; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Parker et al., 2009).

According to DeFillippi and Arthur (1994), Arthur et al. (1995), DeFillippi and Arthur (1996), Inkson and Arthur (2001), Parker et al. (2009) the types of knowledge can be characterized as follows: *knowing why* is about one's identity, aspirations, motivations and self-discovery, whereas *knowing how* relates to skills, competences, expertise as well as tacit and explicit knowledge that are required for a particular occupational role or a specific industry, and that are transferable to other professional contexts. Developing and managing one's professional and social networks in the interest of career progression belong to *knowing whom* investments. To broaden up the model, three more dimensions have been added to it by Jones and DeFillippi (1996): *knowing what* to understand any given industry's requirements (incl. opportunities and threats), *knowing where* to have insight into the locations and boundaries there are to enter, train, and advance within one's professional context, and *knowing when*, which is linked to the timing and choice of activities in one's career path.

Systematically enhancing one's career capital strengthens individual employability in the global labor market and creates chances for career advancement and success (Ng, Eby, Sorensen et al., 2005). Yet, as much as continuous professional development may seem self-empowering to the individual, there are potential risks to the portability and transferability of one's career capital to new contexts (Dickmann & Cerdin, 2016). A large part of skills learnt on the job usually are somewhere between firm-specific and general, but they are not necessarily completely transferable to other working environments (e.g. national vs. international). Less transferable and more unique knowledge is usually organization- and industry-specific and of high value for the employer (Becker, 1993; Swart, 2006). This type of occupation- and organization-specific knowledge may take years to accumulate and it can optimally result in innovations, improved company performance or strengthen the institutional brand/reputation (IIRC, 2016).

As Jokinen (2010) states the portability and transferability of the competences acquired from an international environment is of importance not only to the individual expatriate him/herself but to the current employer as well. Thus, being able to demonstrate and make one's career capital visible and transparent to current and future employers is increasingly important. Specifically this is the case for self-initiated expatriates, who often are concerned with change and advancement in their profession (Dickmann et al., 2008), and driven by their motivation for achievement, excellence, influential power and status (Baruch, 2006).

The theory of career capital is considered as an applicable approach to looking into the career development of individual expatriates within an international career context (Inkson & Arthur, 2001; Suutari & Mäkelä, 2007). Prior research shows that career capital evolves when people are on expatriate assignments, and that to some degree their skills and competences acquired abroad are transferable from one international assignment to the next one (Jokinen, 2010). Mäkelä et al. (2016) found out that the most transferable type of career capital that expatriates had obtained from abroad was knowing-how, whereas knowing-why and knowing-whom were less recognized and not so evident. In the research conducted by Dickmann et al. (2018) knowing-how related career capital became significantly stronger among expatriates as a consequence of their sojourn abroad. Dickmann and Harris (2005) reported on expatriates whose international assignment had favorably influenced their knowing-how capital and who developed their meta-level competences while working abroad.

This conceptualization of knowledge (i.e. knowing why – how – whom – what – where – when) has been considered by some scholars as limited. They argue that the model largely misses out the behavioral aspects of individual competence that transcend the bare knowledge that people have acquired along their professional path while crossing diverse boundaries (e.g. Gerli et al., 2015). Thus, the social and emotional competences that are so highly valued in today's global labor market should be an integral element in the analysis of career experiences, progress and individual responses to related opportunities and challenges, such as transitions across occupational fields, institutions and even geographical locations (Haslberger, 2013). Hirschi (2012) describes such psychological resources as an individual's favorable psychological qualities (cognitions, motivations, affects) applied as effectively as possible to the work role and career context. They influence career development through trait-like (e.g. introversion vs. extraversion) and state-like aspects (e.g. career agency and career resilience). Individuals who are emotionally more competent usually show higher self-efficacy and greater resilience in the face of adversity and therefore are more handily able to cope with demanding situations and changes in their professional environment at an international level (Gerli et al., 2015).

Haslberger (2013) refers to a mature level of knowing why, which he sees as necessary for an individual to further develop the relevance of his/her knowing how and knowing whom. Knowing-why is paramount for motivation, commitment and learning, and thereby it improves an individual's professional performance. Aspects related to self-awareness, self-esteem and sense of oneself have been identified as areas where expatriates have improved their knowing-why capital (Dickmann et al., 2018). Individuals learn about themselves while living abroad as they have to mirror their personal and professional values, ideals, beliefs, aspirations and identifications against a foreign framework of reference (Dickmann et al., 2008). This, however, may occasionally result in a culture shock in the new environment (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly et al., 2012), but in the end it usually shapes their attitudinal and behavioral responses (Dickmann et al., 2008). Leung, Maddux, Galinsky et al. (2008) suggest that living and working in a foreign context broaden one's intercultural mindset and sensitivity as well as increase overall creativity.

4.4.2. Career capital relies on well-functioning professional networks

Career capital is about an individual's professional networks and relationships. This form of capital resides in human relations and not in individuals themselves (Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Woolcock, 1998; White, 2002). The networks relate to the knowing whom type of knowledge and how it is applied through interaction with others in the career context (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Knowing whom comprises the intra- and inter-organizational contacts that are needed for the development of one's knowing how capital (Dickmann & Harris, 2005). Lazarova and Taylor (2009) suggest that the importance of well-functioning professional networks will increase in line with the future expansion of boundaryless careers.

Networks between individuals and communities constitute a valuable asset for the conduct of social affairs and collective actions in both private and professional spheres of life (Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Woolcock, 1998; White, 2002). They are a source of professional information, peer learning, knowledge sharing, emotional support and access point to cooperation and new career opportunities (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Extended networks of mutually beneficial contacts allow individuals to perform more effectively as they have an easy access to specialized knowhow (Dickmann & Harris, 2005). Furthermore, such relationships give individual employees a better insight into the work of their colleagues within the wider institutional environment (Inanc, Zhou, Gallie, et al. 2015).

Belonging to a group allows the individual member to mobilize the collectively-possessed capital to the benefit of him/herself and the whole group (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). This notion is reflected in Bourdieu's (1986: 247) view on the role of networking as "the aggregation of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition". Coleman (1990), when addressing networks, argues that they are defined by their function. They are not a single entity, but different entities that consist of some aspect of a social structure and facilitate actions of people who are within this structure.

The value of any network relies on the quality and quantity, range and density, strength and structure, content and diversity of social contacts and relations that individuals and groups have at their disposal (Hirschi, 2012). Waldstrøm and Haase Svendsen (2008) argue that only when social relations are utilized, they factually turn into capital, which is valued by an individual. Any social interaction is based on the expectation of receiving some kind of a return on the investment made (i.e. time, money, effort, etc.) (Hirschi, 2012). Normally the short- and long-term goal for individuals is to establish purposeful relationships that they can systematically employ for creating material or non-material benefit (White, 2002), whether it is financial, social, symbolic, spiritual, emotional or psychological. Putnam (1993) views trust and solidarity between individuals as an essential element that facilitates cooperation and coordination for mutual benefit.

No single network of relationships is a social given, but a result of a continuous effort to generate and regenerate meaningful and valuable connections of lasting nature that enable access to material and immaterial benefits (Hirschi, 2012). All networks are highly context dependent and take many different intertwined shapes (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, the context needs to be known and well understood, before it is possible to fully get hold of the social power and potential in one's networks. For example, expatriates' international networks usually expand while working abroad, but at the same time their domestic ones may get to suffer – specifically this is the case the longer the assignment in another country is (Li, 2016).

New intercultural competences and career capital can only be leveraged through interaction with other international professionals (Cao et al., 2012). Inanc et al. (2015) argue that in many professions hands-on expertise is acquired by means of informal learning that takes place through the work-related activity itself (i.e. trial and error in problem solving) or through knowledge sharing among employees or them being involved in communities of practice (i.e. social relations). As the knowledge base within international organizations is often more fluid and liquid, it becomes crucial that staff members employed there are encouraged to openly share their knowledge with their colleagues originating from different corners of the globe (Magrassi, 2002).

Smedlund (2008) suggests that three different types of approaches to knowledge generation are needed: to create knowledge from potential knowledge, to transfer tacit knowledge and to implement knowledge based on codified knowledge. Magrassi (2002) contests this ideal situation by stating that in reality employees' knowledge is not captured, transferred or shared with others. In his view, the reason for this is that individual staff members lack the means, mechanisms and even incentives to make their knowledge effectively available to others. Also individual expectations of explicit outcomes ("hard rewards", e.g. promotion, financial benefits, reciprocity), and of implicit outcomes ("soft rewards" e.g. personal reputation, relationship with salient people) as well as altruism for organizational benefits influence employees' knowledge sharing behaviors (Wang & Hou, 2015). Moreover, different role perceptions of individuals may have an impact on the way culturally infused capital is being utilized and shared in an intercultural workplace. This was a finding made by Trondal et al. (2018) when they examined role perceptions among temporary officials in the European Commission in relation to their behavior, choices and decisions as members of the institution.

According to Sułkowski (2017) staff members, both locals and expatriates, at an international workplace establish ties with each other based on their professional roles and tasks. These ties created reflect the diversity of the personnel and improve access to high-quality information and knowledge resources. Such exchanges go beyond the actual things exchanged and become signs of mutual recognition and as such strengthen the cohesion and belongingness within the international collectivity (Waldstrøm & Haase Svendsen 2008). This is supported by Mäkelä's (2007) research findings that suggest that close ties among expatriates function as channels of knowledge sharing within institutions and across borders. Expatriate relationships even demonstrate a higher multiplying effect, whereby knowledge becomes effectively accessible to more people.

4.5. Summarizing key points – Building up identity, interculturality and career capitals is a lifelong journey

Chapter 4. has looked into identity, interculturality and career capitals as forms of assets and resources that are highly desirable in our globalizing world and in the European labor market. For reasons of readability, these types of capital have been presented separately, although in real life they coexist and are largely intertwined and inseparable. Interculturality capital is an essential element in the identity capital of an individual, who is working internationally and demonstrating his/her career capital. Vice versa, identity capital is an important ingredient of an individual's interculturality capital and its related growth potential within an international career context. Awareness, development and application of one's identity and interculturality capitals can be seen as a prerequisite to successful employment and career development at an international or supranational organization, such as a European Union institution.

Identity and interculturality capitals are contained and expressed within a professional's career capital, and they become visible through the utilization of the different types of knowing (i.e. why-how-whom-what-where-when) in a national or international work environment (DeFillippi & Arthur 1994; Jones & DeFillippi, 1996). At the outset, identity, interculturality and career capitals are individually possessed assets. They become alive and get developed through collective-level professional interaction and exchange inside and outside of a workplace (i.e. public- or private-sector organization). From an employer's perspective, the key is to have an overview of each individual staff member's resources as well as of the collective stock of identity, interculturality and career capitals within the whole organization. These types of capital, when well applied and suited to the professional context, contribute to the overall performance of the employing organization and allow a more focused development of its human resources and utilization of networks for improved production, innovation, service provision, etc. (Suikkanen & Linnakangas, 2004; Little, 2003; Firer & Williams, 2003). Therefore, the way training and working is organized, and how well different forms of capital acquired through formal, informal and non-formal learning are recognized by employers, are important considerations, when addressing competence development and knowledge creation at individual, organizational, industrial and societal levels (De Grip, 2015).

Living, studying, working, interacting and travelling in a global world have an impact on our identity and interculturality (Bauman, 2004 and 2007). The increased interconnectivity of people, phenomena, cultures and nations (including the European Union), the more plural composition of societies as well as the greater diversity of belief and value systems contest people's established worldviews, social identifications and professional roles (Hannerz, 2015). These multifaceted developments force individuals to make sense of their multiple identities, to develop a new sense of belonging, as well as to come in terms with the relationship between global processes and local realities as regards their careers and professional competences (Côté, 2016). It remains to be seen, if individuals with all their accumulated intercultural exposure, interaction and experience at a certain point will identify themselves as homo interculturalis.

A particular feature of globalization is transnationalism that makes countries, even unintentionally, plugged and entangled into events happening in faraway places. Any event on the other side of the planet may affect local level developments as well as individual lives and careers in another country (Ku & Yoo, 2013; Hearn, 2015). This is critical to individuals, who in relation to these global developments, will constantly have to renegotiate their life position with themselves and with their environment taking into account events unfolding around the world. Thanks to modern technology, the world has shrunk and cross-border communication has become a daily practice connecting people in real time from all over. This undoubtedly shapes the way we relate to our global neighbor in another country or continent, which in turn influences the way we perceive ourselves and who belong to our in-group (Powell, 2014).

As this chapter has tried to demonstrate, identity and interculturality are a lifelong quest, a never-ending journey, a mission that can never be fully accomplished. The fluidity and plasticity of both identity and interculturality make them to mouldable constructions that can be adapted to different contexts despite eventual circumstantial or confusional challenges therein (Ahmadi, 2005; Dervin 2014). The constant reshaping, remaking and reforming of one's identity and interculturality have undoubtedly become a valuable and effective instrument for an individual in today's society and world of work. In short, neither identity, nor interculturality is a static or stable concept, but rather they are a matter of 'being' and 'doing' at the same time. Thus, we may encapsulate that identity and interculturality 'being' refers to a fixed and given state of who one is, whereas identity and interculturality 'doing' is more about what one actually does to the state of 'being' oneself (adapted from Stets & Burke 2000). Hence, giving a clear-cut answer to the question of "Who am I?" – which by its very nature is a perennial issue to humans – is hardly ever done that easily.

As an individual's identity transforms and interculturality evolves across time and space, therefore they resemble the many different reflections we can see of ourselves in a house of mirrors. The basic idea behind a house of mirrors as we know is to be a maze-like puzzle. The reflections from the numerous mirrors can be pleasant, humorous, perplexing, even scary. The point is that the visual images reflected are usually more or less distorted, fragmented and scattered – yet identifiable in one way or another. Of course one reflection is just one reflection in time, and not the whole truth of who we are and what we stand for. The numerous mirrors with thousands of reflections are like a puzzle, where the pieces of our identity and interculturality are not necessarily exactly the way we wish them to be in order to project an image and represent identifications that make us appreciated in the eyes of the others. The house of mirrors is a good reminder to us that even if we may think that we can do just anything with ourselves, still we cannot control how others see and experience us. We are the empty still-to-be-filled-up awareness of the processes of identity and interculturality development influenced by change, impermanence, instability, success and failure, and evolution itself. Indeed, for most of the time we have a blind spot about ourselves, which means that even if we tend to think that our identity is crystal clear and to the point, it usually is not, but blur at least to a certain extent both to ourselves and to the world around us.

This chapter has also shed light on the European Union level developments in making European identity a reality for the citizens of the currently 28 member states. From an individual EU citizen's perspective, the European Union is not yet an entity, where the same values are shared across the countries and a common European identity is acknowledged by every citizen (Kuhn, 2015; Triandafyllidou

& Gropas, 2015). As part of the European integration process, European identity has been launched on a political level (European Communities, 1973), but to date it has not fully succeeded in becoming a culturally and socially based collective identity among all EU citizens (Kuhn 2015). There are several reasons for this, one being that European identity is competing with national (or other territorial) identities with which people traditionally associate themselves more strongly (Risse & Grabowski, 2008).

As regards staff working for European Union institutions, it is not possible to say, based on the literature review done for this research, if their professional identity is collectively European (such as having EU officials as their main reference group) or if it is more associated with a specific group of professionals (such as being a lawyer oneself may mean that one's primary reference group could be lawyers rather than other EU officials). According to Georgakakis (2013), although EU staff are subjected to processes of historical unification and social integration, they remain a diverse group of professionals. This implies that it would be false to expect them all to march in step or feel professionally associated more or less the same way in relation to the European Union as their employer.

The European Union relies on a European people and on all the multiple national and other territorial identities there are across Europe. The aim of European identity is neither to contradict any other identity, nor to impose one identity over the others, but to coexist side by side with all of them (Dascalu, 2013). This approach, on the one hand, puts the emphasis on the importance of national and/or regional identities and their due right to difference, and on the other hand, promotes the right for a shared identity and a collective culture. For several decades already, European identity with common values and principles have been put forward by means of European art, culture, research, education and training, citizenship, and other initiatives/programmes. This seems to have had an impact as recent research suggests that EU citizens are in the process of developing a European identification parallel to their national or other territorial identities (Kuhn, 2015).

5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this doctoral dissertation is to examine and discuss identity, interculturality and career capitals of staff working at three decentralized European Union agencies: Cedefop, Eurofound and ETF located in Greece, Ireland and Italy. To date there is not such a plethora of academic research available on staff members employed at the European Union institutions, specifically at the EU agencies, and how they relate to identity, interculturality and career development within an international context. Thus, researching their professional and personal experiences presents an interesting opportunity for gaining more insight into their capacity building in relation to identity, interculturality and career within the context of European Union public administration.

As was shown in the theoretical part, multiple notions, concepts and constructs are intertwined within the complexity of these abstract phenomena being addressed by this research. The previous chapters have unfolded theoretical approaches that help to understand the numerous aspects connected to the development and application of an individual's identity, interculturality and career capitals within an international work environment. The contextual framework, within which this study is placed, consists of three major components and levels: the ever-globalizing economies and societies, intra-EU labor mobility and European Union institutions as workplaces. Against this background, the main interest of this research is to explore how staff members within the European Union public administration perceive and perform identity, interculturality and career, and how that influences their identity-related and intercultural awarenesses and sensitivities.

Thereby, the first task is to examine how the interviewees view and use their identities as a developmental resource and how they make sense of their multiple social identifications. This will be done by sorting out how individuals identify themselves personally and professionally with their ongoing learning at work, how they relate to the European Union and Europe, and what are the meanings they give to national stereotypes in their social encounters. Secondly, the aim is to investigate the dimensions of developing and applying one's interculturality capital, when working in an international environment and living in a foreign country. This will be examined through the perceptions expressed by the interviewees in relation to career capital, human agency, self-efficacy and resilience. Moreover, the challenges and opportunities identified in connection to enhancing and constructing identity, interculturality and career capitals will be discussed along the way.

Throughout the presentation of the results, they will be compared and contrasted to the theoretical approach chosen for this research. The condensed essence and synthesis of that will be reflected and highlighted in the conclusions chapter, where proposals are made for addressing additional theoretical aspects that eventually could be examined in future studies as identified and suggested by this research.

5.1. Specific research questions for this study

This doctoral dissertation derives from research carried out on experiences of staff members working for three European Union agencies. The aim of this qualitative research has been to examine aspects of subjective experiences of this diverse target group within their intercultural and international working and living environments. Thereby, based on the data analysis conducted this study aims at finding responses to the research questions below that will be answered in chapter 7 on identity, interculturality and career capitals.

In the context of pursuing employment at an international level, dimensions of career capital and career development, but also personal growth have been approached through the following questions:

1) How can identity capital be understood as an individual's developmental resource while working and living abroad in relation to
   - the role their daily interaction within an intercultural environment plays in shaping and eventually contesting their multiple identifications at personal and professional levels; and
   - the way they associate themselves with the European Union and Europeanness as contrasted by their other territorial identifications, such as national identity?

2) How can interculturality capital be comprehended as an individual's capacity to perform successfully in an interactional and co-constructivist process with diverse people, seen from the perspectives of
   - perceiving interculturality in their personal and professional lives;
   - the development and application of the different types of knowing they possess and use in their intercultural and international work place (career capital);
   - human agency, self-efficacy and resilience as means of supporting adaptation to an intercultural environment?

Identity, interculturality and career capitals are closely intertwined, and thus they should be viewed and presented together as one merged type of capital. In this research, however, the results will be presented separately for identity, interculturality and career capitals. This is done for reasons of simplicity and for better highlighting the specificities of each type of capital. In the discussion chapter their mutual connectedness will be addressed.

5.2. Three European Union agencies as venues for the qualitative research

For this doctoral dissertation, staff members at three decentralized European Union agencies[15] - Cedefop, European Training Foundation and Eurofound – were interviewed in 2015 (for further details of them, please see chapter 6). The main motivation for choosing these three decentralized European Union agencies for collecting research data was that they all operate in the fields of education, training and working life, which are thematically tightly linked to this doctoral dissertation. Human resource development, skills analysis, career management, work-life balance, working and living conditions, education-to-work transitions and lifelong guidance are some of the areas and issues in which these agencies are actively engaged at a European level.

In the following, these EU agencies are briefly introduced as to provide readers with some insight into their role, function and capacity within the EU policy context.

Cedefop is the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, founded in 1975 and located in Thessaloniki, Greece. According to its mandate, Cedefop contributes to the development of vocational education and training (VET) policies and their implementation in Europe. This is done in close cooperation with the European Commission, EU member states' governments, social partners, researchers and experts. By means of its EU-wide comparative analyses and expertise gathered through research and networking, Cedefop provides evidence for formulating European VET policy. In 2015, there were 122 staff members working at Cedefop.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) was established in 1990. It is based in Turin, Italy. ETF supports the EU neighboring countries to develop their human capital through education, training and labor market reforms. This work focuses on the lifelong development of individuals' skills and competences by improving the vocational education and training systems in the currently 29 partner countries in South-Eastern Europe (specifically the non-EU countries in the Balkan region), Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, and Central Asia. In 2015, ETF employed 130 staff members (ETF, 2016).

Eurofound is the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, established in 1975 and located in Dublin, Ireland. Its mission is to offer knowledge to the development of better social, employment and work-related policies in Europe. To this end, it works in partnership with national governments, employers, trade unions and the European Union institutions. The main activities of Eurofound are to undertake research on trends and

[15] The information presented in 5.2. is taken and applied from the institutional websites of the given EU agencies (incl. www.cedefop.europa.eu, www.etf.europa.eu and www.eurofound.europa.eu). The number of staff at these agencies in 2015 was provided by their Human Resource departments in March 2018.

developments in the quality of work and life, industrial relations, employment and structural change, as well as to explore and assess related policies and practices across Europe. In 2015, there were altogether 115 staff members at Eurofound.

6 METHODOLOGY

This chapter on methodology will present the target group of the research, and the process of collecting, transcribing, analyzing and extracting data, and reporting the results of the study. Moreover, research bias and how it was tackled and reduced to a minimum will be discussed as well.

6.1. Sampling of the target group at three decentralized European Union agencies

From the outset, the target was to have at least 20 interviewees from the three pre-selected European Union agencies (see chapter 5.2.) as evenly spread as possible between them (around 6 to 7 informants from each of them). The major risk involved in this approach was that it could be difficult to get a permission to access the staff of the given institutions, and even if a permission would be granted, there was no guarantee that any volunteers or a sufficient number of them would show up for the research, or that there could be a radical imbalance between the different agencies.

A letter (see annex 1.) was sent to the Directors of Cedefop, Eurofound and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in October 2014 to ask for their permission to access their staff for research interviews (data collection). Permission was granted by the three Directors, who then designated one of their staff members to assist in identifying volunteers for the research at their agencies. These contact persons were given a background paper (see annex 2.) and guidelines for informing their colleagues about the research and about the possibility for volunteers to contribute to it.

For sampling purposes some basic, but not overly specific criteria were given as to ensure that a sufficient number of volunteers could be found. The goal was to attract a group of informants as mixed as possible by involving both men and women of a broad age range with different levels and fields of education, who represent various nationalities, diverse professional backgrounds/ occupations/ hierarchical levels, and different marital statuses and family situations, both first-timers abroad and internationally multi-mobile individuals. As the staff of these three agencies consist of both the locally recruited and those hired from other European (Union) countries, it was necessary for the given research to ensure that within the sample there would be a majority of interviewees, who were from abroad (i.e. outside of their ow country of origin). Also locally recruited staff members could express their willingness for participating in the interviews.

In the end this sampling procedure resulted in altogether twenty (20) volunteers, who fulfilled the initial criteria and agreed to being interviewed. There were ten (10) from Cedefop, and five (5) from both Eurofound and ETF (see table 1. below). Thereby, the target of having 20 interviewees was met, although the Cedefop representation was slightly overweighed. As the table 1. shows, the geographical spread among the interviewees covers most of Europe in broad sense. However, there were somewhat more 'Southerners' and 'Westerners' at Cedefop, whereas more 'Northerners' and 'North-Westerners' at Eurofound and ETF.

The final sample comprised twelve (12) men and eight (8) women, whose age range was 29-63 years. They represented 14 different nationalities (incl. 2 respondents who had a double citizenship) and their educational attainment on the ISCED scale (International Standard Classification of Education) corresponded to levels 3 to 8. The respondents held various positions at the above EU agencies: the sample included assistants, experts and people with managerial positions/ team leadership responsibilities. The respondents categorized as experts with varying levels of juniority-seniority were mostly researchers and project managers.

Half of the informants (i.e. 10 people) had been working abroad once or more before entering their current position at the EU agencies, and thus they qualify as multi-mobile individuals. The length of their international experience ranged from a couple of years up to nearly 30 years. The two locally recruited respondents among all the interviewees did not have any prior experience of working abroad, but they had been employed by the agencies for several years at the time of the interview (i.e. substantial experience of a intercultural working environment and EU administration; and as such relevant for the research).

Table 1. Background information on the individual interviewees.

Number of interviewee	Gender	Age	Region of origin	Agency
1	Male	30+	South-East Europe	Cedefop
2	Female	60+	Southern Europe	Cedefop
3	Male	40+	Eastern Europe	Cedefop
4	Male	50+	Southern Europe	Cedefop
5	Male	30+	Southern Europe	Cedefop
6	Male	50+	Western Europe	Cedefop
7	Female	50+	Western Europe	Cedefop
8	Male	50+	Western Europe	Cedefop
9	Female	40+	Southern Europe	Cedefop
10	Male	30+	Southern Europe	Cedefop
11	Male	50+	Central Europe	ETF
12	Female	40+	Northern Europe	ETF
13	Male	40+	Southern Europe	ETF
14	Female	60+	Western Europe	ETF
15	Female	60+	Central Europe	ETF
16	Female	50+	North-West Europe	Eurofound
17	Male	30+	North-West Europe	Eurofound
18	Male	20+	Southern Europe	Eurofound
19	Female	50+	North-West Europe	Eurofound
20	Male	30+	Eastern Europe	Eurofound

Before the individual interviews took place two things were done. Firstly, the respondents were asked to complete an online questionnaire to provide some basic background information about themselves to the researcher (in January 2015; 19 out of 20 completed the questionnaire). Secondly, all interviewees were requested to complete and sign an informed consent (see annex 3.), whereby they were informed about the research objectives and gave their permission to the anonymous use of the data they provided for the research. For confidentiality purposes as well as to maintain anonymity, no such details will be revealed in this dissertation that would allow the reader to identify any of the respondents. Numbers from 1 to 20 have been given to individual informants, and they will be used to refer to them as regards quotations and excerpts from their interviews. No further details about the three EU agencies are disclosed in this research.

6.2. Data collection procedure and interview structure

For the research, interviews were considered as the most appropriate method given the unique contextual circumstances and politically influenced characteristics of the research venues. Thus, semi-structured thematic one-to-one interviews with twenty (20) staff members of the three EU agencies were used to collect in-depth data on an individual level. The interviews were held in the premises of the three agencies during February-March 2015 (in a private room or a meeting room facilitated by each of the agencies), and they were conducted in English with an average duration of approximately one hour (ranging between 35 and 85 minutes). All interviewees were highly fluent in English and they were able to express their professional views and innermost thoughts and sentiments in a rich and to-the-point manner. Before starting the individual interviews, the informants were explained the purpose of the research, additional clarifications were given if questions were raised by them, and the anonymity and confidentiality of all data provided were emphasized.

A conversational guide with four broad themes divided into subthemes was applied to the interviews (see annex 4.):

- Part A: Motivation for working at an international level/for a European Union agency;
- Part B: Managing one's life, learning and career in an international/intercultural setting;
- Part C: Developing and using one's skills, knowledge, competences and networks in an international working context;
- Part D: Who I am today and how working in an international/intercultural environment has contributed to what I am.

As semi-structured interviews are characterized by both structure and flexibility, they thereby create a space for exploring respondents' views, perceptions and inner thoughts (Nunan, 1992). This was done in a dialogical manner between the researcher and each individual participant on a face-to-face basis apart from one interviewee with whom a telemeeting was organized due to unexpected circumstances at the time of the interview. This methodological approach made it possible to unfold personal narratives that emerged from the lived experiences of the interviewees (Merrill & West, 2009). That is, the respondents were able to reflect on their professional careers in the European/international context, make sense of their lives abroad as well as become more aware of their multifaceted identifications.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in full by the researcher himself at weekends during late May and early July 2015. The recordings were well audible and thus easy to transcribe. Only on some points, one or two words may have been pronounced by an interviewee so unclearly that it was not necessarily possible to grasp them. Despite this, nothing essentially valuable got lost in the process. Altogether the interviews generated more than 200 pages of transcribed material (i.e. A4 sheets, Times New Roman 12-point font, spacing 1).

6.3. Methods and data processing

This research relies on the methodical collection, analysis and reporting of qualitative data. This process has contributed to and informed the construction of the theoretical framework applied to this doctoral dissertation. The transcribed interviews were analyzed by means of a narrative and interpretive approach, whereby research was seen as a channel for communicating the respondents' experience, 'their story' (Robert & Shenhav, 2014). To make sense of the narratives, a 4-stage process including description, categorization, combination and interpretation of data (Hirsijärvi & Hurme, 2011) has been applied to this research. The analysis process has been cyclical rather than linear as, during the analysis, moving repeatedly back and forth within the data was needed to be able to approach and understand the material from different angles (Ruusuvuori, Nikander & Hyvärinen, 2010).

No strictly predefined protocol in conducting the analysis of the transcribed data has been used, but the central themes have been identified by reading and re-reading the empirical materials numerous times. The initial thematic coding was done based on these multiple readings of the interview data. This way a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the social reality, which the data is a specimen of, was drawn (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011). Repeatedly reviewing the data collected made ideas, concepts and features become more apparent. They were tagged with codes, and finally categories were established to group the data analyzed. Following the categorization of the data, academic literature was studied and consulted in relation to the initial findings as to establish the conceptual and theoretical framework (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

The reading of academic research aimed to study the phenomena emerging from the data analyzed, including motivation and professional aspirations, careers and professional adaptation, identity formation and intercultural interaction in the context of intra-EU labor mobility. Analytically these central features were framed by theories of labor mobility (i.e. self-initiated expatriation), career, identity construction, including different territorial identifications (i.e. national and European), and development of interculturality.

This process of analyzing large amount of data has been time-consuming and confusing as at first the analysis only gave controversial and/or conflicting results. Clarity and understanding gradually followed based on systematic work with the data (Ruusuvuori et al., 2010). The Foucauldian notion of discourse being that it is a culturally constructed representation of reality, not an exact copy, helped to ask questions to make sense of the data when doing the textual/content analysis. These questions guided in analyzing the data: what is being represented here as a truth or as a norm? how is this constructed? what is joined together, what is kept apart? what identifications, what kind of learning, actions and/or practices are made possible, and how do they become visible in the data? (Peräkylä, 2007; Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011).

Based on the data analysis, two major themes emerged. In the context of working at an international level, aspects of professional aspirations and career development as well as personal growth were looked at through

- identity development and transformation of an individual's multiple identifications influenced by changes and transitions experienced within an international/intercultural context (identity capital).
- exposure to and interaction with diversity at work and in life as a means to enhance and diversify one's intercultural capabilities (interculturality capital) and professional body of knowledge (career capital).

These broader themes guided the grouping of the individual narratives and allowed the identification of similarities and differences, commonalities and controversialities, implicitnesses and explicitnesses across them. They were developed and synthesized in the analysis, and exemplified by means of quotations excerpted from the individual interviews.

6.4. Research credibility and research bias

My own personal life and professional experiences at an international level led me to launch this doctoral research. I was born in Sweden to Finnish parents, and the year I turned eight our family moved to Finland. In the early 1990s, I took part of my university studies (Master's degree in economics and business administration in Helsinki) in Vienna, Austria, and some years later I worked for a short period in Denmark. For five years (2007-2012), I lived in Greece, where I was employed at Cedefop (one of the EU agencies in this research). There I was in charge of lifelong guidance and entrepreneurship learning at the European Union level. Since mid-1990s I have been professionally involved in internationalization of education and employment, and in that capacity I have been to around 40 countries, mostly in Europe. This international exposure has definitely expanded my mental horizons, influenced my worldview and contributed to feeling very European, and thereby it has unavoidably shaped my interpretive framework and approach to conducting this research, which factor cannot be fully omitted from the data analysis. Since the beginning of 2019, I am based in Brussels, Belgium, where I work as a career guidance expert on the European Commission's new Europass portal on lifelong learning and career management.

As I myself have previously been part of the Cedefop staff (during 2007-2012) studied in this doctoral dissertation means that I well know the context, in which EU experts work and function as well as what the demands, challenges and opportunities of their work are. On the one hand, this gives me valuable insight into understanding, what the interviewees shared with me, whereas on the other hand, the fact that I was an EU expert myself earlier, can also limit my view and interpretive capacity. Because of this, I may eventually have taken certain things for granted or may not have given them the meaning a complete outsider would have done. In which case ever, I have conducted this research to the best of my ability, and in doing so I have always made an effort to reduce any type of bias there is to a minimum.

In this research, some of the interviewees from Cedefop were my former colleagues. While I was working at Cedefop myself, I used to have a strictly professional relationship to the given colleagues, who voluntarily participated in this study. During the years at Cedefop, we did not interact workwise with each other that much as our obligations did not intersect that frequently. However, we may occasionally have had lunch together at the staff canteen, but we did not socialize and spend time together outside of work. Of course it is evident that over a 5-year period you get to know your colleagues a little as individuals, too. This may have had an impact on the way the data have been analyzed and interpreted by me, as well as on how the data were originally provided by some of the informants at Cedefop.

The ethical challenge in relation to the data collected specifically from some respondents at Cedefop has been how to stick to the gathered data only without allowing any prior information or impression about these former colleagues to influence the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the given data. Another ethical issue has been how to treat all collected data equally so that the final result would give a presentation as fair and truthful as possible of altogether 20 interviewees from these three different EU agencies (i.e. being as neutral and objective in relation to all individual respondents and their narratives). Therefore, while processing the data, nothing but the data were the source of information.

This doctoral dissertation is an example of qualitative research. Therefore, the measures and tests to establish validity, reliability and generalizability of quantitative research are not applicable or appropriate for evaluating the credibility of this research. In qualitative research, validity refers to the integrity and application of the methods used, and how accurately the results reflect the original data. Thereby, reliability is about the degree of consistency within the analytical procedures applied to conducting the qualitative research (Hirsijärvi & Hurme, 2011; Eskola & Suoranta, 2014). For reducing the impact of biases and ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings of this doctoral dissertation, the following methodological strategies have been incorporated in the design and implementation of the research.

- Biases in sampling were acknowledged (Hirsijärvi & Hurme, 2011): out of the 40+ EU agencies in Europe only three of them were selected to this research for reasons explained elsewhere in this dissertation. Had more financial resources been available to conducting this research, either more agencies could have been taken onboard (i.e. broader representation of EU institutions) or alternatively the number of interviewees increased at the given three agencies being part of this study (i.e. wider scope of individual views and perceptions).
- The researcher's prior interviewing experience contributed to conducting the interviews professionally, successfully and without any complications. This was advantageous in terms of ensuring that the quality of data collected was not influenced by unnecessary mistakes or amateur-like uncertainty (Eskola & Suoranta, 2014).
- Continuous critical reflection on methods applied (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2011): this included careful planning of every phase of the research process, consultation of supervising professor and other researchers on each phase prior to moving on, and reporting back to them on actions completed to assess their relevance to collection, analysis and reporting of data. This way of working contributed to ensuring sufficient depth and quality in the overall research.
- Record keeping has been done meticulously and diligently (Hirsijärvi & Hurme, 2011): every phase of the research was documented (a decision trail on choices made) to ensure that interpretations of data were as consistent and transparent as possible. Moreover, personal notes on issues and impressions emerging along the way have been written as to keep track of potentially important aspects and perspectives that should not be forgotten or ignored.
- Verification in data analysis: the quality of interpretation of what was said was increased through multiple readings of the data (i.e. transcribed interviews) over a period of three years (2015-2018). The analysis was based on diverse perspectives and numerous intersecting inquiries to the data in order to avoid

one-sided and simple answers as well as to exclude speculative interpretations of things expressed and meanings given to what was initially shared. This allowed to produce a more comprehensive set of results and a representative picture of the combination of topics studied. Interpretations that derived from the data analysis followed clear thought processes and systematic data handling principles (Ruusuvuori et al., 2010).

- Respecting diversity of views within data for understanding social structures and individual actions (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2011): similarities and differences across individual respondents were strongly visible in the data collected. The richness of their different and sometimes contrasting perspectives has been incorporated in this doctoral dissertation by giving the interviewees an explicit voice through the use of a high number of verbatim quotations in the result sections (chapter 7). Demonstrating the multiplicity of views this way aims to increase the robustness of the research results and to ensure that an outsider will gain better insight into the European Union context of this study.

It is worthwhile pointing it out here that the selected target group of EU staff members for the research has special characteristics. They are not necessarily to be considered as average EU citizens embarking on a mobility period abroad. Rather they represent well-off and well-educated individuals with an array of disciplinary backgrounds and a wide variety of knowledge, understanding, and expertise in education, training, labor market and working life. They do work in socio-economically privileged conditions (incl. high salary and other benefits). So, it has been evident from the outset of this study that the selected target audience (i.e. experts working for the EU administration) can be regarded as 'la crème de la crème', even an elite group of people in Europe. Their prior life experiences have made them to what they are (or were at the time of the research interviews). All this has influenced their attitudes, values, and worldview, and how that is reflected in their narratives. At the same time, though, they are people, who often have multiple mobility experiences in different countries/different international organizations, who usually possess excellent language skills, and are used to working in a multinational environment. This makes them an ideal research object as they happen to represent qualities that the EU is already actively promoting to all EU citizens. Nevertheless, caution is to be exercised as regards the extent to which the data and the results can be generalized to other contexts, even to other EU agencies.

Finally, this has been a self-initiated and self-funded research that I have conducted on top of my full-time employment in the Finnish governmental services. That meant many interruptions to the work on the research as well as spending many weekends and holiday breaks on making progress with it. The fact that I have not been sponsored or funded by any external bodies, has given me more freedom and autonomy to organize my research work according to my own schedule and style of working. During the doctoral studies (2014-2019), there has never been any kind of an interference to influence my integrity as a researcher from the side of the University of Helsinki or any other external individual or institution in Finland or abroad.

7 RESULTS

This chapter will showcase the findings of the research in relation to identity, interculturality and career capitals. The results in both subchapters (7.1.-7.2.) are presented in such a manner that the reader can effortlessly see the connection between the actual findings of this dissertation and the theoretical and conceptual framework introduced above (mainly chapters 3 and 4).

7.1. Identity capital in an international environment

In this research, identity is regarded as processual and relational, whereas the act of identification is seen as characteristically contextual and interactional (see chapter 4.1.). Neither identity, nor multiple identifications are static, but they are in constant transformation. The aim of this chapter is to present the results of the qualitative data on the multiple identifications expressed by the participants in relation to how they perceive themselves as individuals and professionals, how they relate to feeling European, and how their awareness of the self and the other has been shaped through the process of working and living at an international level. The data analyzed derive from semi-structured interviews conducted in depth with individual participants, who in their narratives described their diverse identifications connected to their professional careers in the European Union public administration and their private lives in a foreign country.

7.1.1. Who am I? Personal qualities of interviewees

'Who am I?' is a question that crosses our minds every now and then (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2015). It usually takes us to think about how we are similar to or different from other people. Understanding one's uniqueness and special way of belonging to the world are important considerations for being able to define one-self in relation to one's social environment (Brewer, 1991; Turner et al., 1987). Going through changes and transitions in life, such as moving to another country and living there, usually challenges our identity and the related self-organization of our multiple identifications (Horowitz, 2012). Whatever we bring with us from the past (e.g. values, beliefs, ideals), may or may not be valid at present in the new social context. Thus, we may wonder how our identity is being informed by the international environment, where we happen to be, and how that will eventually shape our numerous identifications and sense of belonging over time (Hall, 1996).

Despite the fact that this research is mostly focusing on the professional aspects of life and on the individual interviewees' perceptions of their different types of skills, competences and other capabilities, it also addresses the interviewees' identifications on a more personal level. In this study, each interview started by asking an ice-breaker question to the individual participants. The phrasing of the question was: *"Could we start by you first telling something about yourself as a person? Who you are and what your life interests are?"*. Many did not necessarily expect the interview to commence with such a personal question, but after they had recovered from their first bafflement, they willingly responded to it apart from one interviewee, who wanted to give an answer to the question later on during the interview, which also happened. For the sake of the research, the purpose of the question was to explore what the personal level identification of the interviewees was, and how they – without a prior alert – would briefly define and describe themselves after working at an international or supranational level for several years.

In the individual responses, the interviewees characterized themselves in a relatively positive tone and manner. Their self-presentation relied mostly on putting favorable attributes forward. There were also those, who were more self-critical in the way they described their personalities, but nobody said anything negative about themselves. Many also spoke about their hobbies, lifestyles, families, and cultural interests. Only one person mentioned his political involvement, whereas some other more taboo-laden subjects, such as religion (e.g. religious affiliation) and sexuality (e.g. sexual orientation), did not feature at all. The personal stories shared, mostly stayed in one's safety or comfort zone. No major revelations were expected of the interviewees on this point, and none were received either.

These self-presentations were relatively short. However, despite their brevity, numerous aspects could be extracted from the answers given. Based on the data analysis of the responses to this ice-breaker question, three main groups of personal qualities identified among the interviewees could be composed: 1) Curiosity (e.g. Klerides, 2018); 2) Determination (e.g. Cao et al., 2012), and 3) Open and positive attitude (e.g. Oyserman et al., 2012). Their essence will be depicted in more detail below, where selected quotations will be provided, too.

For the interviewees curiosity meant that they had the desire to explore life, to broaden their personal and professional horizons, to learn and to know more about phenomena that they felt connected to or were interested in. There were those who were curious in more earthly terms, whereas some others were also more intellectually curious with an inquisitive mind. For example, being adventurous, spontaneous, and living here and now were expressions used that can be attached to curiosity. A common quality among the interviewees was their open-mindedness and certain kind of fearlessness in front of anything new. This is well visible in the quotation below made by a female interviewee in her 40s, who has been studying and working abroad since the early 1990s. She used a somewhat self-ironic style and described herself with a blink in her eye:

> [Quotation 1] *"Well, I am, I think I am a little bit crazy. I think it takes a little bit of crazy to do what I have done in my life. Eternally curious,*

> *always very curious, maybe in order to survive … maybe even a little bit immature. That I am actually able to tackle things that I go head on even and I don't think as much as maybe one could, so it takes maybe a little bit of childlikeness to actually do some of the things that I have thrown myself into. I never go where the fence is the lowest, I tend to go where it is the highest. I do not know why."* (Interviewee 12)

Not being all too controlled or inflexible as a person or afraid of throwing oneself into something unconventional can open you totally new personal and professional avenues. Being a little crazy is not the same as being totally reckless or utmost impulsive without taking into consideration that our decisions usually have consequences. So, acting in a considerate manner while jumping into the unknown seems to be the cornerstone of the above lady's style and approach to living.

Things do not usually just fall on our lap from the sky, but we often need to stretch ourselves to make things happen in life. Introducing changes to our lives calls at least for patience, resilience and dexterity. Determination as represented by the participants was about their dynamic mindset and ability to go on in life regardless of difficulties or challenges faced. It was also about being hardworking and committed to achieving the goals set, having mental strength as well as being decisive, resilient, daring and even risk taking. Influencing and changing things, and making them move were qualities that could be linked to being determined. Such personal traits are illustrated in the quotation below by a male interviewee in his 50s, who realizes that many small efforts are needed for having the big things changed in life.

> [Quotation 2] *"It is important that things are moving, that I also get the feeling that I can change things, even if of course we cannot often change the big things in the world or that what we want, but also the smaller ones are important, I think. So that's something I maybe can say in general, and this probably links also then to the professional world, I want to move, I want to change things."* (Interviewee 11)

In the above comment, you can sense a positive undertone, and how the speaker's positive belief in his own personal capacity of being able to influence bigger things, may in the end move mountains. All in all, having a positive attitude towards life in general, but specifically towards other people, was something that came out of the individual responses. Interacting, communicating and socializing with family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances were said to bring joy, happiness and positivity to life of many speakers. This positive approach was characterized by the participants as being open, social, extrovert, optimistic, friendly, easygoing, empathetic and communicative.

Being positive and outgoing are states of mind that can be helpful in social interaction and adaptation to a foreign country. A genuine interest in other people and life in general is shown in the two quotations below. The first one of them is by a male participant in his 50s, who is not only describing himself, but also doing good promotion for Greece as a country where you can enjoy life and have a good time.

> [Quotation 3] *"I would say easygoing, I love life, I love humor, I love good life, good wines, good music, I enjoy my job, I enjoy living in Greece, I love my wife. So, no special complaint."* (Interviewee 6)

This man above has lived in Greece for a long time. Knowing that Greece as a society and economy has been severely hit by the financial crisis (from 2010 onwards) has apparently not affected the given interviewee's positive view on life. This may also indicate that those people working for the EU public administration are financially protected by their professional environment, and thus they have not suffered in monetary terms from the consequences of the financial crisis as many of the local Greek people have. Thus, these EU civil servants can easily continue walking on the sunny side of the road without any major financial worries in life.

This following quotation by a female interviewee in her early 60s, who is living in Italy, illustrates the importance of social relations to her, but specifically the discoveries she is able to make through them, and the meaningfulness they seem to give her in terms of cultural learning and personal development.

> [Quotation 4] *"I think that I am a very open person, who likes to be with people from different cultures, people with many different characters […] I have friends from many different backgrounds, and this gives me a lot of possibilities for discovering how to live in other contexts. I like it very much. I am very open to new relations and to new life contexts, because this inspires me."* (Interviewee 15)

As the sample of this research is relatively small ('only' 20 interviewees), it may thus not necessarily be possible to conclude that the above personal level qualities – curiosity, determination and positive attitude – would be such qualities that people who work or consider working in a supranational environment should absolutely possess. These three types of qualities were well visible in this research, and therefore, we may suggest that from the perspective of motility (i.e. the capacity of people to be or become mobile in social and geographical space; see chapter 3.2.), they can be considered as useful assets in relation to embarking on a mobility period abroad or to conducting a career in an international setting.

7.1.2. Professional identity

Professional identifications were not explicitly addressed through the interview questions as such, but based on the narratives of the interviewees, many-sided data on their occupational, work- and career-related perceptions were collected.

This allowed the analysis and interpretation of how they professionally identified themselves and expressed that in relation to their career trajectories and occupational roles and duties in their current international work environment. As the data reveal, there are multiple perspectives into professional identity and how the different elements and levels of identification are intertwined in the global labor market (Nuttman-Shwartz, 2017).

The interviewees, as mentioned already earlier, represent a heterogeneous group of people from different EU countries (see also Georgakakis, 2013). The fact that they all pursue an EU career does not automatically imply that they would perceive themselves professionally in a uniform or homogeneous manner regardless of sharing the same reference framework being the EU public administration (Jaremczuk et al., 2014). Although, for pretty obvious reasons, the European (or international) dimension is a quintessential part of their professional identification, mostly their work-related identifications derive from other elements, such as expertise obtained and developed over the years (Smith & Hatmaker, 2014), academic study fields and disciplines (incl. level of education attained) (Bourdieu, 1986), contextual factors such as occupational titles, hierarchical levels, and social relations (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015), and in some cases upward social mobility compared to one's parents was mentioned as a factor that contributes to professional identification. Moreover, the respondents shared their views on career learning and professional conduct as requirements for high-quality results (Mulvey, 2013) and for being acknowledged as a professional at the institutional and international levels.

The majority of the interviewees have been in working life both in national and international contexts for more than ten years already, some even for much longer and in several locations abroad. Along their careers, they have developed versatile in-depth expertise through which they also define who they are and what they stand for professionally. Mostly their expertise originates from the public and academic sectors, but more rarely so from the private sector (i.e. entrepreneurship, business management) or from private-public partnerships. Due to this background, most respondents seem to identify themselves as public servants, which is their legal position within the EU administration, too. Contextually their prior public-sector experience ranges from national governmental positions to regional or sectoral level administration, and from international assignments at supranational organizations to foreign representations in one's own country.

As one male participant in his late 30s with multiple mobility experiences in public-sector positions in Europe stated [Quotation 5]: *"I think a lot of myself is my professional work"* (Interviewee 5). Those informants with business life experience were keen on being able to carry over their professional expertise and experience across sectors (both ways) as to feel professional and professionally acknowledged by their colleagues. This is illustrated in the comment made by a male interviewee in his 30s, employed at Eurofound, who reflected on his prior management level experience and role in generating cash flow for the private business he was working for.

> [Quotation 6] *"I delivered and managed large teams […] and varied working environments. I have had up to 150 staff reporting in to me previously. So, I think I was very successful. We increased our revenue turnover year on year during that period of time, organically growing the business as well […] I think that would be beneficial (here at the EU agency) […] probably the unique selling point to go to a private employer would be the experience in the management of public funds and tendering and procurement at a kind of an EU level."* (Interviewee 17).

The range of educational attainment was broad among the informants (from upper secondary general and vocational to doctoral level). More important as a professional identifier than the level of education seemed to be the field of studies in which one's vocational education, bachelor, master or doctoral degree had been obtained. Either the qualification acquired (such as librarian, terminologist, economist) was mentioned or the category of academic disciplines studied was referred to (such as social science, political science, pedagogy, innovation management, human resources). Specifically for those with a doctoral degree, who were involved in research activities in their current position, the importance of their study field was considerably prominent and decisive for their professional identification. As one of the respondents with a doctoral degree put it:

> [Quotation 7] *"[…] if you are looking for an experienced researcher in social sciences in general, and in particular in such fields as economic approach of education and training issues … you have found the right person (laughter)."* (Interviewee 8)

The roles and positions that some of the respondents had in these three EU agencies were mainly described by means of their job titles (i.e. business card) and the way they as individuals were placed in the institutional hierarchy. As the given EU agencies are hierarchically relatively flat means that the number of managers is limited (e.g. heads of unit or department), and most staff members have different types or levels of expert or assistant positions. In many cases, when the interviewees referred to their job titles, they did so in a pretty neutral manner without being extremely satisfied or unsatisfied with the title they had (such as project manager, property manager, assistant to the head of unit). It was like stating the obvious only. Yet, job titles seem to carry a different value and meaning to different people. For a female interviewee in her early 50s, the job title appeared to be a serious professional matter as in her opinion it did not well reflect the duties and competences she had:

> [Quotation 8] *"I have not managed to have my title changed, which has been a battle. If they would change my title that would be an implicit*

> *recognition of my skills. I really like, if I could change my title, because I cannot be an assistant for all my life."* (Interviewee 16)

In some responses, accountability to the European citizens for how the public money at the EU institutions is spent was specifically highlighted. It was suggested that if staff members in the EU administration were made more accountable for the efficient management of the public purse, this would not only improve their professional commitment and conduct, but also boost their professional self-esteem. These aspects were highlighted by a female interviewee in her 40s.

> [Quotation 9] *"[...] give people more freedom to let them establish work plans, give them budget accountability, give them responsibility. People do not need titles and big rewards. The biggest reward is that people are motivated, and people feel motivated, when they can be masters of what they are doing [...] The rules and regulations are actually stopping you from delivering what you could [...] For me it is disappointing to see, I enjoy my job very much, but I think that we could do much more, would we (EU) be a lot flatter and more empowering to people and thus motivating them more."* (Interviewee 12)

There were also expressions of frustration about the degree of formality that adversely affected the 'real' work and took the focus away from carrying out research or running development projects as the comment made by a male interviewee in his 50s pinpoints.

> [Quotation 10] *"[...] there is a high level of formality in all this. I think for sure, part of this is due to the fact that we are a European Union agency. We have rules on the ways we can spend money. But I am also sure that this is a little bit in the heads* (of the management), *they are so square, and everything has to be formal."* (Interviewee 4)

The administrative and bureaucratic burden sometimes hampered meeting objectives and achieving high-quality results, and decreased continuity in implementing and developing activities. Not being able to perform professionally in an optimal and flexible manner was experienced as demotivational and irritating, which occasionally was nibbling away at one's sense of professionalism as is shown in this quotation by a male participant in his mid-50s.

> [Quotation 11] *"[...] your working time that is already not enough to discover new things, to create new knowledge, but it has to be shared and devoted in part to tasks that an administrative assistant can do."* (Interviewee 8)

When on duty, the individual staff members from different countries do not represent their own country, but the European Union in all professional matters and situations. Some interviewees, such as a man in his 50s and a woman in her early 60s, stressed this aspect of their professional identification in relation to the cooperation they had with various nationalities at work.

> [Quotation 12] *"You know, because we work here as professionals. Everybody tries to work here as a professional, and I do not reflect on my* (name of) *nationality. I work as a professional in that way."* (Interviewee 11)
>
> [Quotation 13] *"I always see the person behind the face, country, political context, where the person comes from. The person is very important point of contact, not the politics behind."* (Interviewee 15)

According to the respondents, interaction with in-house colleagues appeared to be a relatively important aspect of their daily work at the office. The type of work is mostly such that you have to rely on the knowledge and expertise of your colleagues, and they on yours. Although colleagues make an effort to work well together and they genuinely try to be good team players, there still are situations when you have to be a little bit cautious. Specifically this has to do with how much you give away and what you receive back from your colleagues as this male participant in his 50s points out.

> [Quotation 14] *"The main problem in team playing is that you are open to free riding, to people abusing you. You have to watch a little bit. It is really a game, you give something, but you always keep an eye on the returns. You know, if you see things coming back, then you know you can be a team player."* (Interviewee 4)

At the same time, though, critical incidents between colleagues, superiors and subordinates, do take place, and they may negatively influence the social relations, mutual trust and one's professional confidence as this quotation by a female participant in her 50s shows:

> [Quotation 15] *"My boss at the moment, he recuperates things that I bring forward as if it were completely his idea […] I am not the type, who would make a big fuss about it, because I do not like confrontations, I do not like conflicts, I'm not comfortable, so I just sometimes accept how things are. If it is something really important, and if I can find a way of reacting, in a diplomatic way […] I will make my point. I cannot always find a way, sometimes I'm made with my frustration and I do not know how to deal with it."* (Interviewee 7)

Growing to one's full potential and strengthening one's professional identity through career learning and development were also addressed by the respondents. There were somewhat divided views as regards the benefits of training activities and on-the-job learning as methods to enhance competences or to gain more insight into professional identifications. Based on the narratives of this research, it appears that the longer your career and the higher the level of your education, the clearer your professional identification is likely to be (e.g. academic researcher, labor market expert, manager) and the less added value training courses of short duration can eventually give you. Moreover, there are pretty limited opportunities for professional development through work-based learning when your skills already are highly evolved. This is reflected in the following quotations by two male interviewees: the first one in his 50s and the second in his late 30s.

> [Quotation 16] *"In principle, this is not a job that really challenges me ... this is a place where I can give, but I have very little to receive. Especially from the people around, with all respect, they are nice people, but I know more on certain issues."* (Interviewee 4)
>
> [Quotation 17] *"I do not want this to sound like me being so on top of my skills (laughter), but there is not much more that I could do in the field in terms of skills. I have to keep them up to date, but the studies that I did are the best in Europe, and now I am an author, I was just publishing some articles [...], my skills are really at the high end what you do in this field."* (Interviewee 20)

But when you have only recently graduated and still are in the early years of your career, you have plenty to learn about yourself, your profession and related identifications. Your preferred direction may already be more or less clear, but you are still hesitating how to move towards your career goals and to reach a deeper understanding of your professional identity. This young man in his late 20s is pondering about his future career options.

> [Quotation 18] *"If I want to progress to be a manager, the smartest thing would be to go to the private sector and advance and then going back to the public, if I want to, if I want to keep my advantages and maybe there are other things."* (Interviewee 18)

Above an attempt was made to highlight some main features of professional identifications filtered through the data collected and analyzed for this research. It became obvious that the interviewees related to their professional careers and identifications through multiple positions and perspectives. The multiplicity of professional identifications is a reality among those who volunteered for this study. Therefore, as their professional identifications vary and expertise domains differ to a large degree, it is not possible to suggest any single professional identification that would sufficiently represent the diversity and complexity illustrated among all these respondents (i.e. one size does not fit all).

7.1.3. Feeling European

It is worthwhile noting that the data for this research were collected in early 2015. This was shortly before the refugee crisis broke out that shook up European societies and the European Union politically, socially and economically. Ever since 2015, but even before that, terrorist attacks have caused havoc in different

European cities and created fear among citizens. The economic crisis that begun in 2010 strongly affected Southern European countries (Greece, Portugal, Spain) and was a daily topic in the media Europe wide. Moreover, the extreme right-wing populist movements have gained foothold in several EU countries. Thereby nationalism as a politically legitimate ideology has become a force that has unified groups of citizens across EU member states during the past decade. In 2016, the UK referendum on the British EU membership resulted in the majority of Brits voting for leaving the European Union (Brexit will become effective in 2019). The US presidential elections in 2016 with the speculated Russian involvement in them have not gone unnoticed in Europe either. All these developments together (and many more) have contributed to increasing obscurity and insecurity across the western parts of the world in the past few years.

Today, against this background, it is not necessarily easy to define what Europe means or Europeanness stands for. It may be possible to tell where the geographical boundaries of Europe and more specifically the political boundaries of the European Union begin and end, but to what extent do we share a collective European identification is much more debatable. Surely Europe is not a fixed variable that remains constant throughout time. Thus, as circumstances change also the meaning we give to or associate with Europe – or with our own countries for that matter – will be different.

As the theoretical part of this study already showed, there is quite some ambiguity and inconsistency around European identity. It persistently resists to be defined and does not readily grow to something collectively shared. This exactly is the main reason for this research to address and explore the topic based on the individual narratives of the interviewees. This study aims at providing some additional insight into understanding European identity and the multitude of interpretations, explanations and meanings that are connected with it.

The interviewees at the three EU agencies were asked to reflect on what 'feeling European' means to them personally (if anything at all). The interview question was formulated so that it did not contain the words identity or identification as to avoid pinpointing what the research was specifically trying to address. Because of phrasing the question like that, the interviewees gave their responses based on what they freely associated with the notion of feeling European. This brought a plethora of ideas, impressions and identity-related perspectives explicitly to the fore. Moreover, for many interviewees the European dimension was vividly present throughout their narratives and not only in their response to the targeted question on the given topic. This European-oriented thread in their personal life and career history added to the richness of views found in the data on how the interviewees expressed their relationship with Europe.

Knowing that the interviewees themselves represent the European Union may eventually have influenced their views on feeling European. A common characteristic distilled through the data analysis was actually that the European

Union political agenda on European identity can be relatively clearly heard in the responses of most interviewees. On top of that, however, there are multiple views that reflect and spring from their personal life experience. Altogether the observations shared by the interviewees about feeling European spread over a wide range of phenomena. They can be categorized into three main groups that can be looked at from the perspective of how the respondents identify (or dis-identify) themselves with Europe.

1) European values and challenges: political dimension
2) Territorial identifications: European vs. national levels
3) National stereotypes: alive, but professionally kept aside

In the following, the key findings in relation to the above thematic areas will be presented bearing in mind that the data were gathered already in 2015 and thus they reflect that one point in time only.

7.1.3.1. European identity as an 'obvious' outcome

The responses to the issue of feeling European were for obvious reasons affected by the fact that the interviewees work for the European Union, which is to be regarded as a politically influenced working environment. As one male participant in his late 30s expressed this [Quotation 19]: *"[...] probably it* (feeling European) *means something, especially working for a European institution ... because we are every day in contact with the European Union, European construction [...]"* (Interviewee 1). The same type of comments came also from other informants, which somehow indicates that once you have chosen to work for the EU, you 'have to' (show that you) believe in it as well. However, the quotation below by a male respondent in his 30s suggests that indeed working for EU institutions influences you, but more importantly, if you happen to see the real value in all this Europeanness, then there is a chance that you may be able to integrate it as one additional identification into your multiple collective identifications.

> [Quotation 19] *"I do feel very European. I think it actually means that we are part of this EU community that is really built on different countries in a way, and very different identities. But I think we all share in a way this common history, you know, all people are related to each one, some more than other, then I think ... as I see because I work for an EU institution and I have worked for several EU institutions. You know it is being part of ... this part of the world, there is this specific, very particular, this to me means being European."* (Interviewee 5)

The values and principles that the European Union is said to stand and fight for – as defined by the EU policy documents (European Communities, 1973; European Communities, 1992; European Union, 2012) – were mentioned by several respondents. Frequently reference was made to aspects connected with human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect of human rights on which the European Union is founded (Pinelli, 2012) and free movement of goods, capital, services and people. In this research, however, the aim was not to assess to what degree the respondents possibly have internalized these official, politically set EU values, but rather to find out if they were addressed at all. These two quotations below, though, speak in favor of the interviewees having adopted some of these EU values, specifically the notion of democracy.

> [Quotation 20] *"It is a life in democracy. This is very important for me."* (Interviewee 15)
>
> [Quotation 21] *" " [...] for me now the idea of Europe is the idea of democracy, no borders, no frontiers to move across countries [...] to me has always been a dream and I wanted to live this dream and I feel I am doing it."* (Interviewee 13)

While taking a stance on what feeling European means, many interviewees referred to the history of Europe and the original idea behind establishing the European Union (i.e. a peace project after the 2nd World War). In historical retrospective, especially respondents from the former Communist countries highlighted the importance of basic freedoms, such as freedom of speech, gathering and movement that many of us in the western part of Europe take for granted. [Quotation 22] "*This* (freedom of speech) *is something that we did not have few decades ago*" (Interviewee 3) and [Quotation 23] *"I really do remember how it was to live under the Communist era [...] I do believe that what we have now* (i.e. EU) *is better than what we had in the past."* (Interviewee 20). Also those who had experienced the dictatorships and military rule of Spain and Greece specifically addressed freedom of speech and democracy, and considered them as basic human rights in today's world.

Identifying common challenges at the European Union level is one way of relating to being and feeling European. Many interviewees, due to their work within the EU policy and strategy context, have to closely follow up what is happening in the bigger picture. They seemingly had a good insight into and an overview of issues that should be tackled and solved in the European Union and in the individual member states. Despite some critical views expressed by the respondents about the European Union, European integration and what is generally happening across (some of) the EU countries, they never were in opposition or total rejection of the EU and the important role it plays in the international arena. Again, maybe because of their institutional role and position, the interviewees represented a mostly constructive approach to the future development of the EU.

The fact that the interviewees work for EU agencies tends to make them first look at the European level in their professional context, and only then connect more to the member state or national level, if at all needed. Among other things, some interviewees argued that more attention should be drawn, for instance, to minimizing competition between the individual countries as that is not beneficial to them or the European Union itself in the global race. Also reducing bureaucracy and focusing more on content instead of rules and regulations should be a goal for future. Improving the functioning of the European and national labor markets was addressed, as well as taking measures to foster recognition, portability and transferability of skills within and across countries. Overall, Europe was seen as a family and/or a community of neighboring countries working together to achieve common goals, although that was also considered quite challenging and problematic due to different interests across the EU28. As some respondents put it [Quotation 24] *"Being part of this set of countries, in a way, that are 'fighting' with each other, but still trying to collaborate"* (Interviewee 5) and [Quotation 25] *"By working for the EU institutions you are really becoming aware of how complicated Europe is ... we are at some point capable of mutually agreeing on doing stuff, and actually doing that"* (Interviewee 20). The European Union was also seen as [Quotation 26] *"something that is being united and goes beyond your own narrow church ... that you are motivated to work together"* (Interviewee 11).

In the future, it should be better clarified what the shared European objective entails [Quotation 27] *"[...] as maybe* (it) *is not developed enough, not explained more than it is. Policy makers maybe should substantiate more what it means being European [...]"* (Interviewee 8). Hence, in view to the future of Europe and to sustaining and implanting the common politically aspired European values, some respondents suggested that the European Union should increase its efforts [Quotation 28] *"[...] to create a Europe where education is everything"* (Interviewee 13). The reasoning behind was that today's school children and young people will be tomorrow's adults in Europe, and then they will be the ones to take the lead in where the European Union will be going. Thus, promoting learning and practising of foreign languages more and making a European mobility experience compulsory to all citizens would support the achievement of this vision. This would also be helpful in moving towards a European Union of citizens and strengthening the common values across all people and countries.

Moreover, some interviewees drew the attention to the official EU symbols, and their role in raising citizens' awareness of the European Union, its goals and achievements. Those of them who addressed these symbols (e.g. the EU flag, common currency or passport) regarded them positively. There was a firm belief among the respondents that if citizens become more exposed to different EU initiatives, measures and programs (such as Erasmus) in their daily life, these common symbols could contribute to strengthening their identification with the European Union in the long run. At the same time, it is not enough to promote the mere symbols alone, but concrete action to create more visibility for the benefits offered by the European Union to individual citizens will be required as well. These EU symbols, to some degree at least, were meaningful for the interviewees themselves as they seemed to willingly associate with them.

In this subchapter, the focus was on the more political dimension of European identification and how the individual interviewees related to it. As regards this political dimension (as analyzed and reported above), at times there was something said in the individual interviews in such a manner that it appeared as if it was just said, because it had to be said, but it was not necessarily fully reflecting the speaker's mind or inner world. Maybe this was because of the quite complex and abstract political dimension of the European issues addressed by the speakers. Nevertheless, this impression of participants occasionally speaking somehow from outside and on the surface is more based on sensations received from some of the interviews than being directly derived from the data analysis as such.

One may wonder, if certain things were simply statements based on 'homework' well done. Was something uttered only, because the interviewees in their institutional role and position felt that they had no option other than to refer to the EU values, principles and symbols, for example? Of course there is absolutely nothing wrong in demonstrating that you are aware of and sufficiently informed about the underlying policy level rationale behind your professional capacity. The question is only, if this what you say also genuinely reflects how you identify with the more political Europe deep inside yourself.

7.1.3.2. Territorial identifications – European vs. national

As the theoretical part of this research already suggested, individuals often have multiple territorial identifications (such as local, regional, national and European) among their other collective identifications. Usually these territorial identifications interact with each other in numerous ways: they may or may not overlap, they can be found one inside the other, or be mutually influential. The degree to which they are inclusive or exclusive and additive or integrative between themselves varies from person to person (Risse, 2004; Risse & Grabowski, 2008). The data analysis of this doctoral research reveals that – depending on the context – such territorial identifications (e.g. European vs. national) may grow stronger or weaker in importance, vary in content and expression, and become challenged and confused due to changes in one's social environment such as moving to another region or country, and adapting to the new conditions there.

For many interviewees, Europe was a geographical territory and not only a politically defined region or a block of countries (i.e. European Union). The informants associated Europe with short distances, easy to travel around and being different from the other continents such as Asia, North America, Africa or the Middle East region. Also the diversity within this geographical entity being Europe was addressed from multiple perspectives, including all the different languages spoken, different viewpoints held across the countries and the differences between the 'politically correct north of Europe' versus the 'more corrupt south and east of Europe'.

The interviewees were well aware of and even proud of their family roots and 'cultural' origin, but that was barely ever stated as being their number one territorial identification. In most cases among the participants, their European (or occasionally global) and national identifications were intermixed to a varying degree, and their comments given reflected a sense of multiple belonging. It was never only about one or the other identification, but seeing them more or less merged together as these quotations show: [Quotation 29] *"[...] we are somehow by default Europeans, being what we are. So, it is not an additional identity that we have to construct on top of our national identity, it is somehow embedded in the national identity."* (A man in his 30s, interviewee 10) and [Quotation 30] *"Prior to starting here* (EU agency), *I would not have felt overly European, but having worked with European colleagues, I do get a strong feeling of community [...] I am happy to be seen as a European ..."* (Interviewee 17), and [Quotation 31] *"Yes, I feel that I am not only* (name of nationality). *I feel that I belong also to Europe, to Brussels, to Luxembourg, to England ... me is part of all European people."* (a woman in her early 60s, interviewee 2).

The views of the respondents on their home countries, national or cultural backgrounds and related identifications can roughly be divided into three main approaches: 1) being (constructively) critical, 2) having mixed feelings, or 3) being more or less neutral with some positive or critical views occasionally.

For some interviewees the reason for leaving abroad was that they felt somewhat unsatisfied with their own country and what they had there. The grass simply looked greener on the other side of the fence for them. There were also those, whose criticality about their own country increased while they were living abroad. This was mainly due to seeing their national context (society, economy, politics, …) more clearly and objectively from a distance. However, it is worth noting that criticality in the narratives did not automatically imply negativity or that their country of origin would have lost meaning for them. These somewhat more critical views were often a result of individual interviewees coming to realize how they had changed while living overseas and how this personal change also influenced their vision of their own country as this man in his 50s states.

> [Quotation 32] *"I realize how easy it is to be European, and how difficult it is to be an* (nationality) *[...] To be* (nationality) *means to be such a political* (nationality), *political class, which is an extractive class, and they do anything they can for you to put the money in their pocket [...] it makes it really difficult to pay taxes, the tax becomes a gift to a wealthy person. Why should I give my money to someone who puts it in his pocket and runs away without taking care of the common things, schools?! No, no way, I'm sorry! But then, if you know that you are in a system, where this money is put in use, I am only happy to pay taxes [...] the good of the group comes before the good of the individual. So I'm really happy to pay taxes whatever it takes as long as the community thrives. But in* (name of

country) *this is not happening, if I see anything it is the collapse of the communities. I do not like it at all."* (Interviewee 4)

Those with contradictory feelings in relation to their own country and their national identification did not necessarily feel confused about themselves or anything else for that matter. Rather it was about connecting various types of aspects, both positive and negative, as objectively as possible to their nation and what was happening there. This is illustrated by the quotations made by a female participant in her early 60s and a male respondent in his late 30s.

> [Quotation 33] *"I am European. That comes to mind. I am* (nationality). *Sometimes I am so ashamed of my country, sometimes I also love my country of course. I hate this whole nationalist approach that you see in many countries* (including her country, too) *[...]"* (Interviewee 14)
>
> [Quotation 34] *"After being here for ten years, I found out, I am still finding out, when I am now going back to* (name of country) *and talking to my family, that they are finding me much more nuanced. And sometimes even my general, let's say, my ideals about what I would support for instance politically. I became much more socially liberal than I would be back in* (name of country). *I am finding* (name of country) *society much more conservative, which I might not probably perceive that way, if I still would be living there. But that it is only, because I am now living abroad and I am attacked by other ideas all the time."* (Interviewee 20)

There were also those interviewees, who had a more or less neutral and harmonious relationship to their country. This does not imply that they would not feel good about their country or see anything wrong in it. As the following example shows, sometimes it is possible only retrospectively to realize how you relate to your country, and how your territorial (or any other collective) identification may have transformed over time. In the quotation below we can see how the interviewee's life expanded in ever-growing geographical circles and how this process influenced his view on belonging and identification at different territorial levels within his own country at a young age (before he went abroad for studying and working). It seems that the feeling of being close to his little home village, region and country has followed him throughout his life.

> [Quotation 35] *"I come from a small village* (name of country), *so rather from a rural area [...] there I went [...] to the primary school and the lower secondary school, and moved then to a smaller city, commuting every day to the upper secondary school, and then I studied at the university in my region, where I then also started to live in a student dormitory. And this was my first important experience abroad in a way, and this is already something how to say substantial, if you come let's say from a village and if you are not grown up in a city [...] abroad can be relative, it does not need to be in another country or in another continent [...] it*

> *can be something that you just change your usual environment, and […] maybe this experience brings you further."* (Interviewee 11)

Later on, during his university studies, the interviewee went as an exchange student to Berlin in the late 1980s. Back then the locals there were not always able to realize where he came from, even if his native language was German, but started guessing [Quotation 36] *"[…] in the Western Berlin they always asked me, if I am a Turk. When I was living and studying in Kreuzberg* (East Berlin), *then they thought, when I came to a kebab or something, they said, are you a Russian, because they identified that you were not Turkish or something […]"* (Interviewee 11). As this example shows, the basis of judgment for an outsider, who sees a stranger on the street for the first time, is usually the other person's physical appearance and how s/he happens to speak, move and behave. So, no matter how clear, solid and stable our own national (or any other) identification is, we will never be able to fully control, how the external world sees, judges or defines us.

From the individual narratives it becomes pretty obvious that there is no fixed or strict line of separation between different territorial identifications (mainly being European and national in this research). It seems to be up to the individuals themselves to freely define where they belong to and how they relate to a specific region, country or continent. As a group of individuals, the respondents seem to have established a relatively positive attitude towards being and feeling European, and that they mostly appear to be at ease with their European identification. This, however, does not mean that they would hold a totally trouble-free territorial relationship to Europe and the European Union, or that they would not be critical about this dynamic and constantly evolving relationship. Thus, among the interviewees, knowing who they are and where they work, we can see that a European identification at an individual and a collective level is slowly emerging. This evolution seems to be happening quite effortlessly and without putting their other territorial identifications in jeopardy, though they may occasionally be contested and revised by the interviewees themselves as some of the quotations above showed.

7.1.3.3. National stereotypes – alive, but professionally kept aside

In the European Union there are countries that are not only geographically remote to one another, but that have historically experienced different realities and politically different regimes. These geographical characteristics cannot be changed, whereas historical and political developments in the past can be given new meanings and interpretations today. It seems that these factors from the past continue influencing Europeans' perceptions of life, how they relate to their own nation and to other countries, and how they view the European Union level developments.

All the national diversity found in Europe can be a potential source of stereotyping, and it may contribute to interpersonal conflicts, intercultural misunderstandings and communication problems, and challenges to achieving common goals (Mamadouh, 2017). Despite many positive attributes that the interviewees have associated with Europe in general, also some critical aspects were addressed, such as the psychological division there still seems to be between the 'old' and the 'newer' member states that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 (i.e. Central and Eastern European countries).

> [Quotation 37] *"What still is striking to me is the lack of awareness of Western Europeans about Central and Eastern Europe [...] sometimes I have the feeling that for many people there is almost like a vacuum between Germany and Russia [...] actually sometimes it is quite damaging to mutual understanding, because we in Central and Eastern Europe are actually quite focused on knowing the history of Europe and the main countries. And my experience that on average we know much more about the Western countries than the Western Europeans know about Eastern countries. That actually creates a mismatch."* (Interviewee 20)

As the speaker points out this eventual lack of awareness and interest among the Western Europeans may be a result of too little information given to them about the Central and Eastern European countries (through education and training), or that the 'westerners' have not yet been sufficiently exposed to these newer member states (e.g. gaining own experience through travels in these countries). Potentially this constellation, as described above, could strengthen negative stereotypes both ways (West <-> Central and East). An increased level of interaction between EU citizens could be the cure for reducing the risk of misperceptions and for improving the level of knowledge, provided such an imbalance between the European countries exists in real terms.

Stereotyping inherently involves negatively or critically tuned generalizations and is based on biases, beliefs and expectations onto other people and groups of people. Stereotyping normally happens without first acquiring factual information about the other/s to counter one's own stereotyped thinking (Fiske, 2010). Stereotyping also helps in constructing one's own identity as it supports people in defining who they are in relation to others. The fear factor of not knowing or understanding something can provoke intolerance and ignorance in us, because we may feel threatened by the unknown. Experience with and exposure to the unfamiliar can ease the burden of false assumptions and prejudices, and allows us to discover the truth about the differences (Rudman et al., 2001). Yet, there are many similarities across 'cultures' as well. Being well informed about to what extent and how exactly similarities and differences across countries are globalized in today's world will help us to deal better with them (Tien, 2015).

Based on the research data, we can see that according to the interviewees stereotypes do exist and that many hackneyed national stereotypes persist amid the fact that they are inadequate. This is highlighted by two male respondents both in their 30s who stated: [Quotation 38] *“ […] I tend to put a little bit of a stamp based on where they are coming from without necessarily this being the only or the main element […] of course there is something that is influencing the way people perceive you based on where you are coming from.”* (Interviewee 1), and [Quotation 39] *“[…] you are kind of preprogrammed with stereotypes, there is nothing you can do until you realize that the stereotype is probably wrong […]”* (Interviewee 17).

People are divided into in-groups and out-groups, and they clearly differentiate between them. This feature is somehow obvious in these comments, although the participants also stress the ability to see behind stereotyped thinking and respect the individual: [Quotation 40] *“[…] we are all racists to a certain extent … I mean difficulties you can meet dealing with people … maybe more to do with individual personality than citizenship … I think personal factor is very important.”* (Interviewee 6), and [Quotation 41] *“[…] they* (stereotypes) *exist of course, we cannot deny that … if we want to be understood and to understand, we should first not judge other people how they are […]”* (Interviewee 7). Further, it is also worth bearing in mind that there is a huge variation among individuals within any national group: [Quotation 42] *“But you also have those with same nationality, you can also find them being the total opposite, the stereotypes are kind of an easy trap to fall into [...]”* (Interviewee 16).

The respondents mentioned several times how certain nationalities could be considered as ‘squared’, ‘structured’, ‘diligent’, ‘industrious’ and ‘direct’ in relation to other nationalities regarded more as ‘being a bit lazy, more relaxed and laid down’, ‘not on time’, ‘having quite a lot of flair’ and ‘more flexible’. Despite this relative categorization of different nationalities, arguments were given both to justify as well as to contest the use of stereotypes as follows: [Quotation 43] *“In a way stereotypes are useless, but when you are in a country, you do have certain stereotypes … I think they help you navigate in a way.”* (Interviewee 5), and [Quotation 44] *“Well, I had more stereotypes before coming here. So, I had some expectations … you are a* (nationality), *you are going to behave in a certain way. Sometimes it reflects the stereotypes, most of the time no.”* (Interviewee 18).

More interestingly, the respondents stated that stereotypes somehow lose their power in the intercultural professional environment and do not really influence the daily work at the office between colleagues from all over the European Union. This can be exemplified through the following view by a male participant in his mid-50s [Quotation 45] *“I have the impression that people* (at work) *behave without having these stereotypes guiding their behavior and actions [...]”* (Interviewee 8). To a certain extent, as it seems, working for the EU can even ‘harmonize’ the professional conduct in relation to acting in a stereotyped free manner: [Quotation 46] *"[...] I kind of learnt that the stereotypes are kind of wrong. Certainly here* (at work), *maybe that's because various nationalities are no longer in their own country, and they have probably changed, they have adopted this uniform approach of the agencies or the Commission"* (Interviewee 17).

The above examples show that once people spend time with colleagues from a number of countries, they appear to be able to learn a lot about them and their backgrounds and eventually begin to understand, accept and know them on a more personal level. Then the (national) overly generalized stereotype becomes somehow irrelevant in the daily working environment as there is so much real-life evidence not supporting it anymore – although they might emerge in times of crisis. This is reflected in the following views: [Quotation 47] *"... I think a stereotype might have a kernel of truth, but it is important that you do not treat people according to the group, but for what they are ... and how they treat you ... this is the real importance of the multicultural environment that you have the opportunity to get to the human or personal level of people from different cultures."* (Interviewee 4), and [Quotation 48] *"[...] I think it is finally up to the person, it is the person, it's not the stereotype [...]"* (Interviewee 9). In overall terms we may suggest that the more open one is to embrace and accept the others no matter how different they are, the better one can combat prejudices and stereotypes. Discourses on stereotype – or on a lack of it – are very unstable and contextual, meaning that people often manipulate them as part of their own identification (Amossy & Heidingsfeld 2004). This means that the aforementioned utterances which show signs of questioning stereotypes must be considered carefully.

7.2. Interculturality capital at work and outside of work

In this chapter, a look will be taken at how the participants of this research see their own career and life experience abroad and how the intercultural environment may have shaped them as individuals and professionals. The focus will be on presenting the main findings of this doctoral research in relation to the contextual and interactional dimensions of interculturality capital (Risager & Dervin, 2014; Dervin, 2016; Liddicoat, 2011) at work and outside of work. These dimensions will be addressed from the perspectives of how awareness, development (acquisition) and application (Pöllmann, 2013 and 2016) of people's interculturality capital can support their adaptation to working and living abroad (Berry, 2005). Adaptation to an intercultural environment will be specifically looked at by means of agency (Bandura, 2002 and 2009), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and resilience (Smith et al., 2010). Career capital possessed by the individual interviewees will be illustrated in connection to interculturality in their professional context (i.e. European Union public administration). Finally, the prerequisites for expatriation and repatriation will be briefly discussed.

7.2.1. Interculturality in everyday professional environment

Three different European Union agencies are the professional context of this research. The intercultural dimension is vividly present there on a daily basis and it materializes itself basically in any type of encounter the staff members from across Europe have among themselves. As the data reveal, their social encounters may contain a varying degree of formality, and thereby range from strictly formal professional discussions (e.g. meetings with directors and heads of unit/departments) to semi-formal work-based interaction between colleagues (e.g. exchange of information as a daily practice) as well as to more relaxed and informal style (e.g. lunchtime conversations at the staff canteen).

Generally speaking, interaction among staff relies largely on verbal communication (Pietilä, 2010; Dervin, 2014). For many this means that they cannot use their native language for work, but have to speak and write English, which is the common working language at the EU agencies and for non-native English speakers often their second language. Oral and written English of outstanding level and great fluency is expected of all staff members. Native languages are of course used at the office, when interacting with one's own countrymen provided there are other colleagues from the same country or language region (e.g. the German or French speaking countries of the EU). Some non-native English speakers also pointed out that it can take a toll on your energy, when you are constantly supposed to function effectively in a foreign language. For example, this aspect was raised by a male interviewee in his late 30s, who originally comes from South-East Europe.

> [Quotation 50] *"It is a little bit a challenge working in a different language. But then also having this need of learning and speaking other languages […] we need to have also another* (foreign) *language […] we have to master a third language. I had to study for this* (French). *I had to take some exams […] more recently I decided to go back to polish my English* (laughter). *Now I take an English course. So it is … in all these years, let's say, I tried to learn at least three other languages than my mother tongue."* (Interviewee 1)

As the above quotation shows, on top of improving your English through daily practice with your colleagues, the agencies – thanks to their great linguistic diversity – are also an excellent arena for developing your mastery of other foreign languages. Actually working for the European Union means that you are required to demonstrate sufficient skills in three different EU languages, one of which can be your native language (provided it is an official EU language). However, language learning at the office can also take place in a more informal manner as this young man in his late 20s describes:

> [Quotation 51] *"I am in contact with people of different backgrounds, and I learn new things. I like to hear and learn new words* (in other languages), *even if they are common basic things like 'good morning' ... but I mean I find myself in saying some weird things some time, but it* (practice) *might be useful when you meet new people."* (Interviewee 18)

Greeting colleagues in their own language can be seen as a gesture that implies friendliness and politeness provided it is said in such a tone that the other feels that you are genuinely sincere and polite. Apparently such a greeting is meant to show 'cultural' sensitivity towards the other. However, from the data analysis we can also see that communication styles across nationalities – in broad terms – may differ, and this sometimes causes tension and confusion to intercultural interaction. Things said or written may be well meant by the other nationality, but as they have been expressed somewhat differently (in terms of tone and style) from what the other person is used to in his/her own country, may create unpleasant situations. The quotation made by a male interviewee in his late 30s exemplifies well the different communication styles and what kind of reactions they can provoke.

> [Quotation 52] *"Even though Eurofound is an EU institution, because it is embodied in Ireland now for 40 years, and quite a number of staff are Irish, the Irish culture actually influences Eurofound very deeply […] that this kind of a straight talk, sorry, is quite typical for Poles and for Germans, is not so typical for Irish people […] in many occasions when you would just say something straight in a Polish or German environment, you have to say around in the Irish environment. So that was really a shock, that you really have to find out how to work on different issues and how to work with other people in a respectful way and that is perceived as respectful, because it is quite easy to create unnecessary misunderstandings."* (Interviewee 20)

As was pinpointed in the quotation above, even the degree to which these EU agencies are 'truly European' can be debated. These three EU agencies in this research also employ local staff from the country, where they happen to be located for decades already. Obviously the local influence can be felt in the working culture of these agencies, but to find out how much exactly that is, requires another study (assessing this aspect of local impact is not part of this doctoral dissertation). That the local influence in the daily working environment can be perceived by somebody coming from another country may be taken as a sign of sensitivity and as an ability to identify such more underlying patterns at the office.

Individuals in an intercultural workplace, even if influenced by the local reality, tend to put on their 'cultural antenna' in order to cope better with diversity there. This comment below by a female interviewee in her early 50s addresses the risk of losing oneself, if one becomes all too sensitive and responsive to every little aspect there is that should be taken into consideration in intercultural interaction. It is important to have control over one's distinctive self-aspects (Lutz & Ross, 2003), but too much control may create a social handicap and make you cautious of entering social interaction.

> [Quotation 53] *"I sometimes think, because of this working environment, where we have to be so aware of differences, this has been ... this has been adding to that what is in fact a strength, but if it is too extreme, you can forget yourself, or you can become less assertive or not really visible or ... and, so that is something that is on my mind a lot in the past few months that I wonder, in fact, I'm more aware of, has that element of having to be aware that there are differences not been a little bit too much?"* (Interviewee 19)

In an intercultural environment, as was pointed out above, the difficulty coefficient often increases, because people constantly have to interpret and understand what is taking place in their social relations and to find out what is the correct behavioral style and appropriate standard of interaction (Lobel et al., 2002). Adaptability to the prevailing intercultural circumstances will be needed, although it may occasionally be challenged due to confusion within oneself and with the external world. Adapting to and functioning well in one's everyday social relations abroad can be a most self-validating and psychologically empowering experience. However, obtaining self-concept clarity (Adam et al., 2018) from intercultural interaction does not actually only occur through successful and instantly rewarding, but also through less successful and painful experiences.

Having a willingness and ability to adjust to what is taking place in intercultural interaction is helpful. This came through from the data analysis and is well illustrated in the following quotation by a female interviewee in her early 40s. At its best intercultural communication allows you to learn from the others, choose the most preferred things from them and have them integrated in your own communication or working styles.

> [Quotation 54] *"You see how different perceptions people have from different countries, how different reactions are on the same subject. This is quite good, because then you choose which one suits you better. Which one is better ... also the communication skills, you see how people communicate, the different nationalities communicate, so you choose, you learn different kinds of communication, organization of working methods."* (Interviewee 9)

As in this case above, intercultural cross-pollination and -fertilization allow things to grow to something better than you would ever be able to achieve on your own without this exchange of ideas, information and experiences with different nationalities. If you acknowledge that people can be different and you willingly use this diversity to your own benefit (and to the advantage of the collective whole), you can improve and develop yourself both professionally and personally.

However, not everybody sees the world in the same way necessarily. There are deviating views to how diversity expresses itself – if at all – in the daily professional life at the EU agencies. At the time of the research interviews, this man in his mid-30s had been with Cedefop for two years (his first supranational work experience). From his perspective, there did not seem to be any major differences between the various nationalities at the office as the following quotation suggests.

> [Quotation 55] *"People are the same. So, no matter, if we are Greek, Italian, Spanish, Finnish, we are the same. We have the same thoughts, the same fears, the same agonies, hhmm, it may sound peculiar, but I do understand it, I see it now that Europeans are quite a homogeneous group of people, at least people, who work at Cedefop."* (Interviewee 10)

We may relate to the above comment at least on a more universal level provided we focus on the basic needs that we have as human beings and that we would be afraid of not having fulfilled (such as food, clothes, shelter, safety). Describing all European people, or in this case all his colleagues, being more or less the same goes somewhat against what the other interviewees have shared in their narratives. Following Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural sensitivity development, it seems that this given respondent may be 'in denial' about cultural differences (stage 1 in the model), and is thus unable to experience them in great detail. Yet another interpretation, maybe less likely though, could be seeing the situation the other way around: perhaps this given respondent has a highly evolved European identification and is therefore able to associate with his European colleagues through the perceived or imagined sameness of them that he supposedly has discovered.

Nevertheless, the intercultural working environment shapes you whether you are aware of it or not. Usually you are (Adam et al., 2018). Sometimes there may be situations or events unfolding that can be regarded as moments of awakening. You may simply become so upset by something happening in front of your eyes that you have immense difficulties to keep your emotions under control. In the same instant, you may come to your senses and realize how immature your own inner reaction is. As the female interviewee in her early 50s well describes below, there are two 'contrasting forces' fighting in her. On the one hand, she knows to value her intercultural awareness, but on the other hand, she happens to get provoked by what the others are doing.

> [Quotation 56] *"[...] working well in any organization like this, it teaches you how to think without even noticing it. You don't even realize it, but it does actually teach you, how to accommodate to these differences, how to get along together, how to live together. When I say live together I mean in the professional environment, you know, how to negotiate actually,*

> *you know, sometimes stormy waters, and then still achieve ultimately whatever […] one thing I hate to see down in the dining hall is, I hate to see all the nationalities to eat together, I hate that […] I hate to see them lunching together* (one nationality sticking together). *But then you see that part is most me. That is what I am about. I am about mixing and I have done it for really all my professional life […]"* (Interviewee 16)

From the above quotation, we may indeed wonder, how understanding, tolerant and accepting we are in the end. What we show on the surface to the others (i.e. correct non-judgmental behavior) may not necessarily correlate with what and how we feel and think internally (i.e. irritation or aggression because of the behavior of the others). A sign of emotional maturity is the interviewee's ability to deal with her inner affective reaction (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013), and not act upon it, for example, to arrange a major scene by 'attacking' her colleagues to make them hear, how negatively she perceives their 'national gathering' in an intercultural environment, where in her opinion everybody should be mingling.

Based on the data analysis, we can synthesize that the interviewees working at these three EU agencies in most cases seem to have a genuine interest and willingness to understand their different colleagues, and find ways to interact and communicate with them as constructively and effectively as possible (Dervin & Jackson, 2018). In the professional environment differences of cultural and national origin across staff are tolerated provided they do not disturb or hamper the work that needs to be done. As long as those differences do not lead to insulting or offending anybody, there is a general acceptance of letting all 'flowers bloom'. Similarities and commonalities are usually sought among colleagues, and differences are mostly seen as a potential source for learning, even if it sometimes means that you first will have to get puzzled, confused and troubled.

7.2.2. Career capital – Professional performance and intercultural interaction

As highlighted in the theoretical part of this research (see chapters 4.4.1.-4.4.2.), career capital consists of six different types of knowing that respond to the questions of why, how, whom, what, where and when (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Jones & DeFillippi, 1996). This model of career capital has been used as a reference framework to explore and to analyze to what extent the different types of knowing can be found in the narratives of the respondents of this study. Based on the analysis, we see that the three first types of knowing (why, how and whom) are more strongly visible in the data than the remaining three types (what, where and when).

This relative richness of the narratives on motivational (why), professional (how) and relational (whom) aspects over requiremental (what), locational (where) and time-related (when) elements may indicate two things at least. Firstly, personal motivation, professional competences and social networks are assets more directly tied to individuals themselves and therefore more controllable by them, too. This eventually makes them easier to talk about as they are familiar and natural topics to people. Secondly, individual experts have less power along their careers over external factors, such as the broader industrial ecology, or other requirements that may affect their careers, such as administrative, legal, technical or organizational boundaries. Not having a full overview of or much influence on all these external aspects may hinder individuals' readiness to talk about them in more depth. That is, the findings here on career capital are more person-centered than focused on the contextual factors outside of the individual interviewees. This, however, does not mean that the respondents would not have considered or taken into account the context in which they pursue their global careers. It definitely plays a role in how they can continue developing their career capital over time.

7.2.2.1. Motivation for working at an international level (knowing why)

A general view is that international careers are to be considered as an investment in one's professional future. Still for many it is not a realistic option as they do not see the personal and professional benefits that can be acquired through living and working abroad. But those who decide to seize the opportunity of relocating do it for a number of reasons and motives. Knowing-why is about one's aspirations, motivations and self-exploration in life (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994).

Pinto, Cabral-Cardoso and Werther (2012) examined the motives for accepting international assignments among expatriates and repatriates and how these motives relate to individual career outcomes. They found out that the most frequently listed reasons for working abroad were personal interests and career aspirations, namely: 1) to obtain an international experience; 2) to gain personal development in an international setting and 3) to have an opportunity for professional challenges and career advancement through the experience abroad. Many other academic studies are in line with the above findings (e.g. Crowley-Henry, 2007).

For this study, the motives and views of the interviewees for having an international career can be grouped into four main themes as follows: working within the EU public administration 1) often offers opportunities for continuous professional development; 2) fulfils personal curiosity and interests, 3) gives a chance to be part of a genuinely intercultural environment, and 4) provides for relatively stable and financially secure working conditions. Based on their narratives, most respondents can be regarded as being intrinsically motivated about pursuing an international career that is professionally challenging enough, provides a positive outlook and carries a larger purpose or deeper meaning for them (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, also more rational motives and arguments, such as level of income, were part of the choice process of some interviewees as the quotations further down show.

On the one hand, some participants emphasized that having an international career had always been their goal and finding an interesting job opportunity abroad had been their grandest dream from an early age. On the other hand, other participants said that working abroad had become a natural step in their career progression after several years of professional life within the national context, where many of them had already been involved in internationally oriented duties. Some respondents even explained that they had come across a job opportunity as somewhat 'happenstance' in their own field abroad, and had simply decided to apply for the job and in the end got selected.

Krumboltz (2009) explains happenstance as an individual's career destiny that cannot be predicted beforehand, but that unfolds in numerous planned and unplanned learning experiences throughout one's lifetime. This approach encourages people to keep their eyes open for new opportunities and once they are there to capitalize on them. Here below the three quotations specifically address this unexpected and unplanned aspect that made the participants launch professional careers abroad.

> [Quotation 57] *"It was again discontent ... leaving that national job where I had this international centre, EU centre, and that brought me forward [...] I did not like certain things there. And I started to dislike this and then I was looking myself already for other opportunities. Strangely this opportunity, I did not know about ETF at that time, though I was quite informed about the European agenda [...] (it was) just happenstance ... although I am advocating career planning, not everything can be planned ..."* (a man in his 50s, interviewee 11)
>
> [Quotation 58] *"The main motivation was going and working on labor market details ... and it happened to be here."* (a man in his 40s, interviewee 3)
>
> [Quotation 59] *"I never had this idea of working abroad ... it just happened."* (a woman in her late 50s, interviewee 7)

In general terms, for all informants starting to work in an international environment meant stepping out of their own comfort zone and facing numerous new challenges in their professional life. At the same time, many stated that initially, when considering working abroad, they were guided by their curiosity and eagerness to broaden and deepen their professional horizons. Had they not taken the chance to work at an international level, they would have missed out a tremendous opportunity for career advancement, continuous learning, professional networking and self-exploration. In most cases, but not for everybody, the work itself has been professionally satisfying as well as demanding, and without comparison to jobs at the national level. This quotation by a male respondents in his mid-50s, however, shows the opposite:

> [Quotation 60] *"My skills are definitely underutilized. This is quite clear. And the institution does not give me any opportunity for improving them or for going further. So, I have […] my own scientific life at home. What I do, is I do my research at home. I read at home for my own purpose, for my own topics. This is kind of a schizophrenia. I do my research work at home and I have a life there. So I don't really care about the non-demanding aspect of work here. I don't care about that, I know elsewhere I can do that. That's how I have resolved this problem."* (Interviewee 8)

At a more private level, motives for working and living abroad were seen as an opportunity to explore life from a fresh perspective, to learn about oneself, to become acquainted with a new country and its people, to gain independence and autonomy for standing on one's own feet, and to get exposed to a personal development that one could not expect of having back home. The man in his 30s (interviewee 1) may at first have been a little hesitant about entering an international career, whereas the woman in her early 50s (interviewee 19) was thrilled about doing so.

> [Quotation 61] *"[…] I was never too much interested to leave my country, but I was always curious how I would manage living abroad alone starting something totally new from scratch, hmmm … without necessarily any support from my family, friends or any other networks, only on my own […] This was actually curiosity, maybe it was not the main motivation to go for it … hmm…. then of course it was the professional challenge."* (Interviewee 1)
>
> [Quotation 62] *"I did not have a particular preference for a country for instance. It was just maybe that sense 'oh, there is something else and I would like to experience that'. And also maybe, yeah also the level of confidence that you know it should not be a problem, that there is always a way to adapt. I was not worried at all that it would be difficult or anything."* (Interviewee 19)

Specifically for those interviewees with families, the financial security and contractual stability that a career at an EU institution could guarantee were important considerations and decisive factors for accepting the job offer at the service of the EU agency. In some cases the wife of the spouse employed by the EU could not pursue a professional career, but had to stay at home in the destination country on a temporary or more permanent basis as finding a job as a foreigner matching one's qualifications was nearly impossible in the local labor market. This involuntary idleness created an additional psychological stressor and financial burden to the families, which to a certain extent, however, was balanced out by the good salary and other financial benefits of the spouse working for the EU agency. These two male interviewees in their 50s (interviewee 4) and late 30s (interviewee 5) had serious considerations about their families, spouses and the financial aspects of moving to another country.

> [Quotation 63] *"... I said that wage was an important part of the equation. With this wage we could easily, you know, relocate the whole family without excessive worries. That was one important element to bring in the discussion at home. So, we can go and we would have the means to make it easier. Yeah, because it simplifies life, you know especially in the first times, when you do not know where you are going, and you make mistakes, and if you are borderline with money [...] very stressful. If you can avoid that stress at least at the beginning, that's an important, an important component especially for families ..."* (Interviewee 4)
>
> [Quotation 64] *"She (wife) is staying at home and she is doing her PhD at the (name of city) university [...] She worked here for few months on a European project, but then she had to quit to take care of the kids [...] now we are thinking that she should start working again as financially we need it [...] I think she needs to work, this is one of the hard things also, because she has no work which is affecting her very much."* (Interviewee 5)

As the above two quotations show, career and personal dimensions of life are intertwined. A job may (or may not) be rewarding by itself, but nevertheless it may influence the way one's private life can be organized and how compromises must be reached in view to respecting the needs and wishes of one's salient people, such as spouse and children, when planning to move abroad or already living there (Krumboltz, 2009).

7.2.2.2. Demonstrating professional capabilities (knowing how)

It is a wide array of knowing-how that the interviewees of this research have acquired (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Those with somewhat longer careers have developed a substantial base of country-, context-, sector-, industry-, field- and/or function-specific knowhow that many of them possessed already before entering the EU agencies and that they to a varying degree can apply to their current jobs within the EU public administration. The younger interviewees with less work experience are still in the process of accumulating their professional knowhow as well as developing their skills and competences. In the following, the knowing-how type of career capital as demonstrated by the participants will be illustrated in relation to the EU agencies' recruitment procedures and the areas of expertise that have been identified in this research.

As pointed out in the theoretical part, the decentralized European Union agencies apply meritocratic criteria and principles to selecting their staff members (Egeberg et al., 2017). This means that in the recruitment processes independently conducted by the EU agencies, skills, knowledge, competences, expertise and qualifications of the applicants (i.e. their knowing-how; DeFillippi & Arthur,

1994) are thoroughly screened and scored. The selection procedures at the EU agencies usually take a long time (up to several months). The applicants, who make progress in the recruitment process from the initial phase to the final round, may have to present themselves at interviews multiple times.

The quotations below illustrate the stress and excitement that two of the interviewees experienced, when they had applied for jobs at Eurofound and the European Training Foundation, and had to go through the selection procedure at these agencies. This first quotation is by a male interviewee, who at the time of his job interview was in his late 20s.

> [Quotation 65] *"I applied and I got an invitation for an interview. That's how it started. […] I got an email from Eurofound saying that I am invited for an interview. And that was really like big news as I did not expect much. Then I went through this painful process of interviews, presentations ... you know how it is, it's not the easiest bit. And actually even if it wasn't a full EPSO*[16] *check and process, they were really, really diligent and it took, I think three meetings in total actually before they decided on employment […] the whole process took 4-5 months in total."* (Interviewee 20)

As always in recruitments, you as an applicant are tested and expected to demonstrate your capacities and convince the potential employer to hire you.

> [Quotation 66] *"I had to do an interview and a written test […] I think the interview went really well, the test I was not sure about, because you know the test was that you had to advise the minister about this and that. So, in the end I became second, so I did not get the job, I became on a reserve list. […] But one year later […] this phone call comes from ETF […] They called me and they said that there is a position probably, are you still interested. I said yes, I am interested, but I cannot say now that I can do it. No, you do not have to […]* (later) *I called them and said, I am available. […] then the first December last year I started* (here)*."* (Interviewee 14)

The above quotation by a female participant, who was around 60 years of age at the time of her recruitment, shows that sometimes you may not be the one to get the job straight away. In that case you are normally put on a reserve list of the agency for future openings matching your qualifications and expertise. If you are lucky, they may contact you for the next open vacancy suited to your professional profile. This is what happened to the lady above. In the end she got selected and thereby the agency was able to fill up the vacant position.

[16] EPSO stands for the European Personnel Selection Office. Its role is to serve the EU institutions by providing high quality, efficient and effective selection procedures that enable them to recruit the right person, for the right job, at the right time. Source: https://epso.europa.eu/about-epso_en

Based on the individual narratives, six areas of expertise where skills and competences are required within the EU context could be identified. It is worth noting that these areas below are not necessarily equally represented across all the three agencies. This is due to the interviewees being a diverse group of people with varied personal and professional qualities that – for obvious reasons – are not evenly spread throughout these areas of expertise. Nevertheless, the categorization is based on an attempt to present the essence of their work and the types of expertise their duties require in a synthesized and condensed manner. By framing the work of these EU experts this way may give us a clearer idea of the overall demands they face and responsibilities they have. This categorization below is something that is not part of the original career capital model, but derives purely from this qualitative research. The quotations attached exemplify the six broad and complex areas of expertise and show what kind of professional environments these EU agencies are.

Area 1 – EU institutional affairs, member state and partner country relations cover cooperation, coordination, negotiation and networking across communities of policy, research and practice.

The multifaceted expertise that is required in this first area is illustrated by a female interviewee in her early 60s. She is involved in cooperating and interacting with diverse experts from across Central Asia. They are brought together in different ways to various fora for developing education and training in their countries.

> [Quotation 67] *"Now I am the leader of a big school development project, best school development project in Central Asia [...] we have different clusters, capacity development clusters for people from ministries, for policy makers, for social partners, capacity building for VET school directors and teachers and trainers. We deliver training to them, training on quality management, quality assurance in VET schools."* (Interviewee 15)

Area 2 – EU policy and strategy development consists of the contribution that these three EU agencies make to promote, implement and analyze policy measures in the fields of vocational education, labor market, human capital development as well as working and living conditions.

The special expertise required for the policy dialogue between the EU agency and the national authorities in the partner countries is exemplified by a male interviewee in his late 40s. The aim of policy dialogue is to provide support to the national reforms that countries are implementing.

> [Quotation 68] *"I think I am good at advice on education and training strategy reforms, and I also gained this environment of international policies, not only European ones [...] I am a very good facilitator of*

> *policy dialogue, which is also one of our core competences at ETF."* (Interviewee 13)

Area 3 – Management, coordination and administration comprise, for example, procurement, facility management, human resources, financial management, administrative assistance.

This area comprises systemic, procedural and organizational expertise that is needed at different hierarchical levels for running the agencies effectively. The quotation by a female interviewee in her early 50s showcases some of the duties she has in relation to various processes at Eurofound.

> [Quotation 69] *"The unit that I manage has a very diverse set of tasks. […] it means I would have meetings with different individuals or groups in my unit in relation to those different topics […] I would prepare with the directorate the agenda of the monthly management meetings, and I also have meetings with my colleagues of other support units. I deal with internal control, there is a management system here […] When it comes to the annual reporting, I am responsible for making sure that all the data analysis on the performance of the organization is properly put into the report. So basically all the business processes that make sure that we can run the organization […] are going through my unit. So there is a lot of meetings (laughter)."* (Interviewee 19)

Area 4 – Intercultural, interpersonal and multilingual interaction includes communication and collaboration with in-house colleagues and external contacts.

This area of expertise is at the core of this research. The quotation below by a male interviewee in his late 20s shows the importance of foreign languages and people skills in the daily office life when interacting and communicating with colleagues from different parts of Europe.

> [Quotation 70] *"I am in a new position, I am learning, which is highly stimulating. And I am surrounded by people of a different culture and a different background, and so on. And this is beneficial. My English has improved, because I speak English and French all the time. For instance, I could not have reached such level of English and French while staying in* (name of his own country). *So that is something good."* (Interviewee 18)

Area 5 – Communication, promotion and documentation consist of activities to inform the key stakeholders and individual citizens about the work of the EU agencies.

Promotional activities and various communication channels are used for reaching out to the European audience and for creating visibility for the benefits that these agencies generate to various target groups. This type of expertise is illustrated by a female participant in her early 60s.

> [Quotation 71] *"I organized big exhibitions, cultural exhibitions in order to get Cedefop more visibility to the people here in Thessaloniki. I was also behind all this* (Agora conference) *organization and the practical issues of all this. A lot of work. It is something that I like very much [...] I am very good in communication with people, very good in dealing with people and their personal needs [...] but also with professional necessities."* (Interviewee 2)

Area 6 – Development and provision of services and resources aim at supporting European citizens on their learning and career paths.

Service development that takes place in multinational and intercultural setting is a specific area of expertise. The quotation by a male interviewee in his 50s depicts how he together with member state representatives contribute to making European citizens' life better and easier.

> [Quotation 72] *"[...] always have a different perspective and that we can all live together. Just give you a concrete example. I was in charge of developing the first (European) CV model. So I had to manage requirements from Germans 'this is how things are', different perspectives from Scandinavians, for example, not to mention the Anglo-Saxon. The Brits, they were completely different. It was a very interesting experience to have all this in a bag and keep the rest of it."* (Interviewee 6)

The areas of expertise clustered above represent the major categories of knowing-how type of career capital that could be identified in the study. For each individual staff member these areas of expertise are differently weighed and mixed depending on their role, position, function, hierarchical level and type of responsibility at the EU agency. The scope and variety of expertise needed for an assistant position are naturally more restricted compared to an expert or a manager position. Moreover, caution needs to be exercised in making any claims about the direct transferability (Jokinen, 2010) of these six areas of expertise to other EU institutions, or even stating that they would be fully applicable to the rest of the staff (i.e. those not interviewed) at the three EU agencies that were included in this research.

7.2.2.3. Professional cooperation and networking (knowing whom)

Knowing-whom is part of career capital (DeFillippi & Arthur 1994) and relates to networks accessible to individuals and groups through their professional relationships (Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998; Woolcock, 1998; White, 2002).

This research found out that the professional contacts at the disposal of the interviewees comprise a wide range of institutions and individual experts working for them at supra- or international and European, national, regional and sectoral levels across Europe and beyond. Altogether they represent multiple professional communities. The most frequently addressed were the communities of policy and strategy (politicians, policy and decision makers), research (researchers in higher education and research institutes), social partners (employer representatives and trade unions), education providers and their staff (e.g. VET schools and teachers), external service providers (EU agencies' procurement of materials and supplies and/or of expertise not available in-house), and European citizens (who are seen as beneficiaries of the effective implementation of EU policies and strategies). The Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission staff, inter- and intra-agency colleagues (at all hierarchical levels across all departments/units within and between the EU agencies) were key partners of the informants.

The quotations below give some flavor of the nature and multitude of the professional interaction with various stakeholders. Specifically these selected examples address the cooperation with the European Commission, the EU partner countries, external service providers and in-house colleagues. They also illustrate some aspects of the demands of the actual work carried out by the interviewees. At least proactivity, impact, control, motivation, and inspiration are highlighted as critical dimensions for being able to carry out one's duties well. Moreover, a sense of professional responsibility and commitment is signaled in these statements.

The European Commission and the experts working there are a daily cooperation partner for many of those who work at the decentralized European Union agencies. In this cooperation it is not so that the European Commission would dictate how things are to be done, but you as a representative of an EU agency can influence the cooperation by expressing your own professional views. Sometimes this is critical as to make sure that things move into the best possible direction as this male interviewee in his 50s argues below.

> [Quotation 73] *"The (European) Commission has something in mind, but they do not know what and how. If I want to have a satisfactory involvement, I have to be proactive and tell them: this is a good idea and you should proceed like this and not like that. You should not leave other people take the wrong decisions for you, because then you pay the price."* (Interviewee 6)

Those interviewees, who work closely together with national-level representatives in different countries, need to have a good overview of the developments there. Sometimes they as external experts can see great potential for improvement in those countries, but they may not have such a powerful position that they could actually speed up or influence the national reform processes. This can be frustrating at times as the male interviewee in his 50s below describes.

> [Quotation 74] *"We work with non-EU member states, and you travel to this country, to that country, you make very nice and interesting experiences, different experiences, difficult ones, very extremely nice ones. It's in a way always something on the move and hugely interesting. What*

is sometimes a little depressing is that you cannot have that impact you want to make on these big changes." (Interviewee 11)

The European Union agencies frequently rely on external expertise. For example, they may outsource thematic studies to groups of researchers (at universities or research institutes), who carry out the data collection and analysis on behalf of the agencies. The work of the external researchers is always supervised and monitored by the agency staff. This is done to ensure that the researchers fully comply with the EU agency's standards and requirements as is shown in this quotation by a female respondent in her early 50s.

> [Quotation 75] *"Tomorrow I have to go on a field trip visit to Spain, whereby I will go visit the field work office that work on the survey [...] it is a semi-kind of audit, to check that they are doing what they should be doing. It is also to see how they are getting on, so it is kind of motivational. It is combination of a whole lot of things, and I am going to be meeting with the deputy, the project director, director of field research, director of this and that."* (Interviewee 16)

Working in pairs and on teams with different colleagues is an everyday practice at the EU agencies. As the male interviewee in his 30s below points out, pooling together different types of expertise available at the office makes it possible to initiate and run joint research, development and innovation projects in-house.

> [Quotation 76] *"Now I have a new project that I have initiated with* (name of colleague). *It is about organizational learning, and there I feel like home, because* (name of colleague) *is well read about these things with organizations and I have my experience from the innovation management science approach with which we can construct a joint project. This is what we have started to do now."* (Interviewee 10)

Against the data analyzed, it seems that within the European or international environment, making progress and reaching results are often based on a collective effort that calls for committed action by various players at different levels. The work of the interviewees can be characterized by high dependency and reliance on accurate and correct information timely provided and exchanged. Not only from the above quotations, but throughout all the interviews, knowledge sharing was addressed as a critical factor – in one way or another – in the diverse forms of interaction that the informants had with multiple stakeholders and experts. Knowledge sharing with colleagues can even be a source of inspiration as this lady in her early 60s says.

> [Quotation 77] *"That idea that you have experts here which you can use for sparring, that is great. And that also makes us all better experts, and that also makes us an organization of expertise. That is so super, so*

> *great […] it is also about expertise, how you become better experts, not to sit in an isolated tower, but to discuss and challenge each other. That is not for everybody […] I think we have a really good team, at least a really good core team, where people are actually willing to do that.”* (Interviewee 14)

Mostly mutual sharing seemed to work relatively well and benefitted all those involved in the internal or external collaboration. However, occasionally also hiccups and bumps were experienced as information provision may have been ill timed or not fit for the purpose, or even misleading and in worst cases withheld from the other party. For the sake of adequate performance and smooth cooperation within the EU context or internationally, well-functioning internal and external professional contacts seem to be a necessity. They provide access to resources available within the existing relations and allow developing them further (Waldstrøm & Haase Svendsen 2008).

7.2.2.4. Navigating professional pathways of learning (knowing what, where, when)

Within the data analyzed, the three remaining types of knowing (what, where and when) were less addressed by the interviewees than the previous ones above. Thus, knowing-what, -where and -when will be highlighted here under one and same heading. These types of knowing can be characterized as being more contextual and less trait-like or personal in nature as pointed out earlier. Because of the external dimension, these types of knowing may be less controllable and less influenced by the individual professionals themselves.

Knowing-what is about understanding the requirements, opportunities and threats of any given industry (Jones & DeFillippi, 1996). This knowing-what links back to the six areas of expertise described earlier (i.e. knowing-how), and it becomes accessible through the utilization of the professional networks (i.e. knowing-whom). That knowing-what is a highly contextual type of knowing and that it often contains tacit knowledge was reflected in the individual narratives. Knowing-what cannot necessarily be found in books as it resides in the individuals and their professional experience from the given industry or field. Building up one's knowing-what usually takes a long time and calls for versatile exposure to the given context and its multiple levels (such as local, regional, national, international; institutional and sectoral).

The quotation below by a male respondent in his mid-50s exemplifies at least two things: firstly, the deep field- and subject-specific contextual knowhow that an individual researcher has developed over the years, but that is not always acknowledged by his/her hierarchical superiors or external actors, and secondly, insufficiency in intra- and inter-institutional exchange of information and knowledge (at least on a one-off basis), which may have caused some frustration to the interviewee.

[Quotation 78] *"Instead of asking us what would be of interest in terms of topics to be addressed, the (European) Commission or our directorate will come up with requests that sometimes have nothing to do with what we (experts/researchers) think is more urgent or more important. Just as for example, how to monitor the mobility of IVET learners. I am not saying that is not important, but I really think that there are topics that are much more urgent in the current situation."* (Interviewee 8)

It is in any institution's interest to attract and retain competent staff and to offer them opportunities for continuous career development and advancement (e.g. Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Šlaus & Jacobs, 2011). Knowing-where deals with boundaries that there eventually are to enter, train and advance within one's professional context (Jones & DeFillippi, 1996). For some informants the reason for starting to work for the European Union agencies was that there had not been too much of real growth potential in their professional field at national level or that they had great difficulties in finding a job matching their qualifications in their own country. This situation may have brought them to the EU environment with new challenges for broadening and deepening their professional specialization.

Based on the narratives, the EU agencies seem to offer frequent opportunities for on-the-job learning to most of their staff, and in some cases they even provide additional support to individual employees for further studies (including degree programs at higher education institutions). Yet, at a certain point, specifically after a longer time with one institution, staff members may start pondering how to move on with their careers, and where and how that could be. The quotations below by two male informants depict the limitations that they have identified in relation to how far one possibly can advance within the given EU agencies, pretty small as they happen to be.

Both speakers address the fact that moving upward vertically is problematic and not likely to happen, unless somebody from the upper hierarchical levels quit their jobs or new posts are created that are placed hierarchically higher than one's current position is. On a more short-term basis, if you decide to stay at the agency, the only thing you can do is to spread your wings horizontally and try to find new meaningful tasks that you can integrate in your current job profile.

[Quotation 79] *"The real challenge is how to go further with the career, because you know there is always a balance you have to strive between the working life and family life. As I said, this is typical bureaucracy, and here you cannot really advance far in a small organization, because you can either become a professional in your area, which I am now or at some stage you can be promoted to be head of unit [...] But in a small organization like this [...] it is either you wait for the death of your boss or retirement, or you can move to a different organization."* (Interviewee 20)

[Quotation 80] *" [...] when it comes to work, I am fine with the place where I am ... I do not feel like sort of climbing the hierarchy or the ladder or this type of thing .. it is more like working on the task I work now and understanding more and more the substance [...] But given the hierarchical structure of the institution, there is very little scope for climbing the hierarchical ladder."* (Interviewee 3)

Knowing-when is about the timing and choice of activities in one's career path (Jones & DeFillippi 1996), which is closely linked to knowing-where above. The individual narratives illustrate that many interviewees have had points in time, when they had felt that they may have been somewhat lost with their career direction or that they have been desperate about finding new professional challenges. This has often led to considering a career move and to looking around for novel opportunities elsewhere. Different strategies and approaches have been applied to making a career shift. Sometimes this has involved systematically planning the next step and considering various options with care, while at other times, it has meant trusting one's gut feeling and courageously jumping into something totally new in an international environment.

Based on her narrative, this female respondent in her 40s below, seems to be somebody who easily takes decisions and always makes an effort to move on in her life. This tendency manifests itself specifically at times, when she is not fully satisfied with the prevailing conditions and circumstances, but has an urge to have things changed in her professional life.

[Quotation 81] *"After a year I gave up, I'm like this is not working, I want out. So I applied to join UNPD Iraq, as a head of office in Northern Iraq, and I got the job [...] So then I went to Northern Iraq, I was the only woman, head of office in Iraq at that time. It was not an easy transfer. There was another favorite to get that job. I still got it, because I apparently knocked the socks out of the interviewer. So I was one of the three women in the compound of 200 people. That was not easy, with military escorts to go anywhere outside of the compound. Then I wanted out, I had my son [...] and later I moved to Italy (ETF) with my family [...]"* (Interviewee 20)

None of the interviewees had ever regretted the 'jump' (i.e. professional change and transition) that they made to start working at an international level no matter how great the challenges and difficulties occasionally may have been. For all of them, their careers abroad have been a life-enhancing and empowering experience without comparison. Life is about acting upon the opportunities that happen to come your way. This approach helps you to have a more satisfying life (Krumboltz, 2009).

7.2.3. Life outside of work – Efforts required for becoming integrated in host society

This research also inquired into the experience that the interviewees had made outside of work while living abroad. As many of them had prior mobility experiences from a number of countries, and not only from the European cities, where these three European Union agencies are located (Dublin, Thessaloniki, Turin), they sometimes referred to their other foreign sojourns in their narratives, too. Mostly they based their reflections on the current experience that they were going through in Ireland, Greece and Italy.

Practically seen all interviewees reported that living abroad may not always have been easy and simple, but the years spent abroad were considered as meaningful to their personal growth. From the data analysis, three main themes in relation to becoming integrated in the host country could be identified: 1) Proficiency of country language (McNulty, 2014), 2) Opportunities for breaking the ice with the locals, i.e. integration (Berry, 2005), and 3) Availability of free-time and how it is prioritized. Depending on the individual interviewee, these themes above could either be enablers or barriers. These three themes will be briefly summarized below.

In Ireland, where English is spoken, language as an aspect of societal integration was not an issue addressed by the interviewees. Thereby, those participants living in Italy and Greece often said that due to their insufficient knowledge of Italian and Greek, they frequently faced difficulties in communicating and interacting with the locals in those two countries. This lack of linguistic ability occasionally caused minor hiccups, for example, running one's errands (e.g. banking, public administration) or participating in social activities with the locals (e.g. hobbies) did not always work out that easily.

Not knowing the language of the host country sufficiently well was clearly a barrier, however, many said that luckily you could get by with English relatively well in your daily life outside of work in Italy and Greece. Interviewees confirmed that a good practical level knowledge of the local language is the key to accessing Italian and Greek societies, yet many of them did not necessarily have more than just basic skills even after staying in the country for several years already. There were of course some interviewees, who had become either fluent Greek or average-level Italian speakers, and were happy to use these languages for communication and interaction with the locals. Lack of time and effort, and the need to prioritize other important things in life (e.g. family obligations) were listed as reasons for not making progress with the language of the country.

This male interviewee in his late 30s (without spouse or family at the time of the interview) reflects on his own experience in Greece, and tells that even with his limited Greek skills it is of course possible to get to know Greek people, but to become closer friends with them often requires a much more advanced knowledge of the Greek language. Because of this, his social life outside of work seems to suffer to some extent, and his personal relations rely more on socializing with colleagues from the office.

> [Quotation 82] *" […] I didn't make the effort maybe … to speak the language … this is also an important element for not being well integrated and here of course I lose a lot in social life […] I have friends, hmm… many let's say from work, few also from outside … I also have some Greek local people […] they are not colleagues […] I cannot say that they are friends, or good friends, they are acquaintances […] Greek people, they are quite friendly … I mean … they can be quite friendly and open … so, somehow it's not totally difficult to make friends with them, although at the same time they are quite a closed society and especially if you do not speak their language, it is difficult to break into their circles."* (Interviewee 1)

The above participant had also realized that his societal integration did not go so well due to the linguistic challenge, but also that from a foreigner's perspective the Greek society did not seem to be overly open, welcoming and receptive to outsiders. The aspect of integration is also visible below, where a female interviewee in her early 60s is comparing her two different experiences from abroad, being Brussels earlier and now Turin. She characterizes the EU capital as very international, whereas Turin in her eyes is highly Italian and much less international. In her view, the degree of internationality and interculturality of the given environment has an impact on how well and easily a foreigner can become part of it.

> [Quotation 83] *"When I was in Brussels, it was easy. Because Brussels is a very international town, many cultures, you can find many cultures. When I went out of the office, it was an international environment. People, who worked in the Commission also came from abroad. So everybody had the interest to meet somebody else […] so it was very easy to develop a private life in Brussels, very easy. Turin is different. When you come out of the ETF building, immediately you are in an Italian environment, not anymore international environment. And Italian people … they are not … it is not so necessary for them to meet foreigners. They have a very close relation to members of the family, for example, every Sunday they are … they have lunch in the family altogether and they are very close with the family."* (Interviewee 15)

The above participant considered herself privileged in the sense that upon her arrival in Turin some years earlier, her landlord had immediately invited her to his family, and from there a nice private relationship had developed. So, it may be that you just happen to bump into some nice local people in the foreign country, and in case you are on the same wave length with them, it may be an excellent access point to walk into their local culture and expand one's social network locally.

Also the importance of school as a place where you as a parent – through your children – can get connected with local parents was emphasized by those interviewees with families. This female interviewee in her 40s with a school-aged boy had been successful in finding her entry point to the local community through her son.

> [Quotation 84] *"I have lots of Italian friends, which is a difference between me and many other people at this office, because I have only been here for nearly 3 years, and I actually have a wide network of Italian friends. I probably have 15-20 Italian friends. I phone every week with them. I have a wide network of Italian friends. It is very easy. You have a child, you take them to the school and all of a sudden you meet all the mothers […]"* (Interviewee 12)

It seems that through children it is potentially easier to break the ice and become acquainted with local parents, who take their children to the same school as you do, and who themselves come to the same school meetings as you do and participate in different events the school is organizing.

However, those interviewees living with their families in Greece were not necessarily as successful in making contacts with the locals as the above lady staying in Italy. A male interviewee in his early 50s told that the Pinewood American International School in Thessaloniki, where his children go, is a private school and therefore expensive. This means that children of Greek or any other nationality frequenting the given school usually come from wealthy families. Although you may be a well-paid civil servant working for the European Union, and the EU agency is even covering the schooling expenses for your children, still you may get surprised to find out how rich some of the Greek and other parents and families can be. Too much or too little wealth may become a barrier to get to know one another.

> [Quotation 85] *"The school is our inroad into the society, an inroad into a very specific society. You know, Greece is in pain* (financial crisis started in 2010 and the Greek economy completely collapsed). *If I go to the birthday parties of one of the kids that the school makes, I realize that I am not rich at all. These are people I have never seen with such a level of wealth. I went to a place where you had a swimming pool, we had entertainments […], we had a maiden going around serving things […] and his work desk* (the owner of the place) *was a wing of a plane. I said 'Oh, okay this is wealth to start with!'. And I am well off by any standards. I'm okay, but when I look these guys, they look at me in a completely different way as if I am a commoner. Of course it is very difficult to relate to these people. What do we have in common? Nothing."* (Interviewee 4)

If no commonalities with children's parents can be easily found through school, as the quotation above shows, then you clearly will have to look elsewhere for finding like-minded locals or other people, such as other expatriates living in the same city. You may also choose to take a totally different approach to building bridges between your own national culture and the local culture in the foreign country. It may involve children and adults alike, be based on free-time activities that bring people from all walks of life together at weekends, and all this allows different nationalities to learn from one another, and in the best case become friends. In his free-time, the male interviewee in his late 30s is actively involved in organizing community happenings. Through these events his own country and his countrymen living in Ireland become more visible and better known to Irishmen and other nationalities, too.

> [Quotation 86] *"[...] we do a lot of community-based events, for example, this Saturday actually we are creating an event, where we are inviting* (his nationality) *and Irish people and any other nationalities to celebrate* (his nationality) *and Irish cultures just two days before the* (his country)*-Ireland soccer game, which will happen this Sunday. I still think we will win* (laughter), *but we are meeting together, the kids from the school will perform some folk dance. Irish people are cordially invited. We are also showing some pictures of* (his country) *and Ireland, made by* (his country) *people living here, also to provide* (his nationality) *food to Irish people, and things like that."* (Interviewee 20)

The speaker above is passionate about making these two different nationalities meet at a grass-root level. This means that he and his family do a lot of voluntary work with other engaged people to make these social events happen. Based on his narrative, the interviewee seems to find his involvement in such community-based activities personally highly meaningful and rewarding. He is willingly allocating most of his free-time to supporting his countrymen to become better integrated in the Irish society, and at the same time giving Irishmen an opportunity to learn about his country and culture.

For the other interviewees, the use of their free-time for getting intensely involved with the local community was not really the case. However, this does not imply that they would not at all seek contacts with the locals in the evenings or during the weekends – they do of course, but in a less engaging and less rigorous manner for most of the time, at least compared to the speaker above running community-based activities. It is obvious from the data analysis that people have different interests and situations in life that define how they can prioritize the use of their free-time between different things. Those interviewees with spouse and children reported that in their free-time they are highly family-centered and want to do things together with their nearest and dearest. Also the homework of their children from school takes an enormous amount of time and energy, and parents often will have to help their little ones with that. This does not leave much space for getting to know the locals and for socializing with them. Moreover, many interviewees spoke about their demanding work including regular travelling abroad for meetings, conferences, training events and so forth. This is an additional burden in social terms as one's absence does not make it any easier to establish oneself locally. As you happen to be out of town so often, it becomes hard to keep up with your social engagements.

In summary, we may say that although these interviewees live in a privileged EU-bubble at work, they would very much like to come out of that bubble in their free-time and become somewhat better connected with the local people and the society and country in which they are living. As pointed out above, no matter how much they would like to have at least some locals in their social life, it is not always easy to do that. For some it happens more naturally and by accident, for some others it may mean more of a personal struggle (by trial and error), before they really manage to get through to the locals and have mutually engaging relationships with them. Knowing the local language seems to be important for social integration in the foreign country, yet language should not mean everything as there are other dimensions in human interaction, too. Finally, for many interviewees exploring oneself through encounters with diversity in a foreign country has at times been a fascinating and rewarding, but also a confusing learning process. Living abroad has made them discover how complex they sometimes are as human beings themselves and how many distinct layers of being human they have.

7.2.4. Human agency, self-efficacy and resilience as means to adapt internationally

The qualitative data collected and analyzed in this research are representative of a snapshot of a moment in time (interviews conducted in 2015), and of an assorted group of individuals, who have chosen to work in a particular universe (i.e. European Union public administration). In the interviews carried out no direct inquiry as such was made into the participants' agentic functioning, beliefs supporting their agency, or capacity to bounce back from adversity. However, as these features could be relatively easily identified in the narratives of the respondents, therefore their role was analyzed in relation to adaptation to working and living in an international environment. Sorting out participants' interviews revealed some commonalities, but also specificities linked to how they seemed to be utilizing their agency, self-efficacy and resilience in their career path and international adaptation.

Based on the data analysis, a recognition could be made that agency, self-efficacy and resilience seem to be a necessity for the successful launch and conduct of an international career. Moreover, they provide a source of psychological strength to individuals for coping with their adaptation to an intercultural working environment and life abroad (Berry, 2005). According to this research, personal agency, self-efficacy and resilience are applied to the individual adaptation process mostly at an institutional (EU agency), a contextual (supranational policy and strategy environment) and a local level (country of destination). These different levels are often intertwined and cannot always be strictly separated from one another in the analysis of the data.

The institutional and contextual levels are more directly connected to the professional sphere of life, whereas the local level is more associated with life outside of work in the host country. Some of the critical considerations made by the interviewees about having an international career and relocating abroad were associated with these levels. Their considerations typically included, for example, harsh competition for the job (is it worth the effort as you are not the only applicant), country of destination (city lacking an international community, worries about schooling of children or employment of spouse), financial aspects of employment (sufficient level of income to support oneself and family), and professional aspects (adequate chances for career development in the long run). Identifying such constraints and realistically assessing them can be viewed as a precautionary measure to avoid embarking on a mobility experience that would take you beyond your capabilities, means and resources, and in so doing eventually affect your agentic functioning adversely.

7.2.4.1. Agentic functioning in individuals' life-career management abroad

As we have learnt in the theoretical part (chapter 3.3.1.), personal agency is an individual's capacity to plan ahead (intention) and to make things happen (action) in life (Bandura, 2001). Agentic functioning is largely driven by motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) that manifests itself in an individual's free will, perseverance, initiative taking, dedication and determination (Cao et al., 2012). In the analysis below the focus will be on personal agency, whereas the two other agency types – proxy and collective agency (Bandura, 2002 and 2009) – will not be looked at here as they did not feature so strongly in the data.

Based on the analysis, working at an international level has been a relatively explicitly outspoken intention among most interviewees. This has expressed itself in their willingness, eagerness and interest to take targeted measures towards having this aspiration fulfilled (e.g. actively looking and applying for international jobs, telling their network members about being available for a career abroad). The actions that the interviewees have taken to make their dream become a reality have in many cases been supported by the circumstances that at least to some extent have been to their favour (e.g. right timing, information and support from their network contacts, word of mouth circulating about a job opportunity), but not necessarily always as the quotations below will show.

What comes out of the analysis is that even if there have been situations where the interviewees have been reactive to what is happening to them, mostly they show a tendency towards being proactive, action-oriented and transformative when navigating choppy waters (Bandura, 2009). They are not necessarily caught by surprise when a smaller wave catches them, but rather they know to anticipate the tides of life and are seemingly well in tune with and prepared for what is going on in their international environment. This more proactive approach to life is further helped by their ability to analyze and reflect on who they are as individuals and professionals in relation to their social surroundings (Milstein, 2005).

That the interviewees have got employed internationally at the given EU agencies is mainly based on their own efforts and on their free volition to do so. Their reasons, motives and aspirations (see 7.2.2.1.) for looking for an international job may have slightly differed from one another. However, at least one interviewee shared an anecdote about how she had to be pushed a little (reactive), before she took the step to apply for an open vacancy at the European Commission in the late 1980s, when she was in her early 20s. In view to what is said below, it seems that her level of motivation and determination was not necessarily very high at that time, when she still was pondering what to do. In the end she took action, applied and got the job at the Commission (and afterwards she got employed by Eurofound).

> [Quotation 87] *"[...] there was this competition for the EU, and my mother had seen this and said I should apply. I kind of said, no I am not going to apply for that. I do not know why I said, but anyway I went, I did it, I applied and then it came through [...] that I had got to the competition stage or to the interview stage [...] It was probably one of the best things that you know could ever happen to me, but I did not realize it at the time obviously [...] I was just 22. So, I arrived in Brussels, I did not know anybody, at least I could speak the language, one* (foreign) *language* (French), *I did not know anybody."* (Interviewee 16)

Establishing contacts as a newcomer can be quite a time-consuming exercise. However, her adaptation to Brussels went well from early on after she had taken a conscious decision on staying away from her own countrymen living in the city (i.e. avoiding ending up spending all her free time with them). Instead, she systematically made acquaintances with other nationalities, some of which became good friends to her in the EU capital. Indeed personal agency is also about daring to live one's life in a foreign environment in such a manner that one's integrity, identity and independence are not at stake and put under pressure by other people and their expectations. The choice to keep a distance to one's own countrymen may for some seem rather abrupt and strange, but it can also be seen as a specimen of feeling strong enough to stand on one's own feet.

Proactivity is about self-initiated efforts to introduce a change that leads the individual towards a more preferred future, for example, in the world of work or in the personal sphere of life (Chen, 2006). With his proactive attitude and endurance, the young male interviewee below, is taking his first steps in working life after his graduation from the university, and making his best attempts to find employment in his own field of expertise. All his financial sacrifices and continuous efforts made previously finally brought him a reward. His position in the labor market improved, and through that more permanence and stability came to his life.

> [Quotation 88] *"I moved to Luxembourg to work for […] an Italian company […] I started working there as an HR assistant. It was my domain, my area of competence […] but it was a traineeship. It was a period of 6 months. At the same time I was looking for other opportunities […] I came across a call for traineeships at Eurofound. So I applied […] I then got a call for the first interviews, and then a second one, and finally got an offer. I started working at Eurofound in Dublin. I was very happy, because I was coming from Luxembourg […] There is not a lot going on in Luxembourg, especially when you are a trainee and you are unpaid, life can be very difficult."* (Interviewee 18)

Initiative taking is part of human agency, but so is risk taking. Sometimes taking risks is needed for moving forward in one's professional career and for getting out of a situation where you feel stuck. However, occasionally hastily taken decisions and fast fixes to problems may have unexpected consequences that go beyond one's direct control and power. Before the female interviewee in her 40s below started working for the EU institutions, she spent several years on working for multinational companies and the United Nations' services in different parts of the world, where she career-wise went through numerous changes and transitions. Here is an example of one of her experiences:

> [Quotation 89] *"[…] then I got a job with Danone. I was basically lucky enough to have companies headhunting me. But I ended up choosing Danone in Paris. I was bored out of my mind. They gave me two jobs instead of one in Danone. Then I said I am still bored out of my mind. So then they tried to […] move me somewhere else. I said: guys, this is not working for me. Then Google became my best friend. I typed poverty, job and Ivory Coast. Because I was so obsessed to go working in Ivory Coast. And up came a job vacancy for […] a JPO* (Junior Professional Officer) *in Ivory Coast, poverty specialist. It was destiny. So I packed my bags, and was all happy to move to Ivory Coast. […] End of September 2002 the violence broke out* (there) *[…] Then I got a call from the JPO service centre for the UNEPD. I cannot go to Ivory Coast, because people are being evacuated."* (Interviewee 12)

No matter how easy or dire the circumstances are, decision-making capacity is an integral element of agency (Frost, 2006). Back then the interviewee above was not able to go immediately to Ivory Coast, but she was temporarily transferred to another destination. A year later she had to go through a fight with her employer for finally being able to resume her duties in Ivory Coast. That is, agentic functioning – as this case above demonstrates – can be fueled by great determination and profound commitment, and from time to time, it may call for having a conflict or a disagreement, provided it is professionally well justified and that it supports one's career aspirations.

Not only do the quotations above reflect various dimensions of agency, but also the interviewees' beliefs in their personal capacity to function effectively (self-efficacy) as well as to be in charge of their careers (career management skills) and personal lives in an international environment (Zhou et al., 2008; Kim, 2015). Moreover, the same quotations illustrate certain aspects of resilience in how the interviewees were coping with stressors affecting their professional lives and transitions. In the following two sections, self-efficacy and resilience will be looked at in more detail.

7.2.4.2. Trusting one's capacity to perform well abroad

Self-efficacy is about trusting one's abilities and believing in one's capacity to accomplish a task successfully (Bandura, 1977; Milstein, 2005), as well as to influence events that affect one's life and control over how these unfolding events are experienced (Bandura, 1994). In addition, as already pointed out in the theoretical part (chapter 3.3.2.), individuals should neither overestimate, nor underestimate their beliefs in relation to their ability to function, but to calibrate them in relation to their potential functioning as optimally as possible (Klassen, 2014).

From the individual narratives we may see that self-efficacy is not anything stable, but something that tends to fluctuate in relation to what is happening in a person's life. Anticipating positive developments that one feels being able to influence to a certain degree seems to boost self-efficacy, whereas encountering changes and transitions that contain unknown elements for the individual may contest one's ability beliefs and thereby eventually reduce the level of self-efficacy. Among the interviewees it was never a question of them being completely without self-efficacy. Occasionally, it was about finding oneself critically reviewing what was going on and trying to understand how one possibly could master the situation. This may have resulted in eventually second guessing one's choices and decisions, holding back and becoming more defensive, cautious and less proactive, when feeling challenged for any particular reason. This kind of self-reflexivity in sorting out how one relates to events or incidents taking place and to social interaction with others can be considered as an essential ingredient for gaining more clarity of one's ability to take successful action (i.e. calibrating beliefs).

For the sake of highlighting the diversity of aspects of self-efficacy found in the data, the interviews have been analyzed against the five sources of self-efficacy (i.e. actualized performances, observation of others, social persuasion, affective and physiological states, and visualization; chapter 3.3.2.) (Bandura, 1995 and 1997; Maddux, 2005). The main focus will be on capturing how these sources are visible in the interviewees' adaptation to working (and living) in an international and intercultural setting. This analysis revealed at least four common features across the narratives:

- setting concrete goals or at least having an understanding of where one wants to go is important for achieving results;
- learning about oneself and admitting one's vulnerability support actions to be taken for moving towards the goals set and into the preferred direction in life;
- accepting that one's goals and actions usually are influenced by external structures and powers; and
- seeking support from peers and external experts may strengthen one's self-efficacy.

In the following, the five sources of efficacy are exemplified by selected quotations of the interviewees. These five sources are present in different combinations and to a varying degree in the individual narratives. These examples below do not only illustrate a strong sense of self-efficacy among the informants, but they also depict some more vulnerable aspects associated with self-efficacy beliefs (such as fears, doubts, worries and related stress).

Actualized performances (source 1 by Bandura, 1995 and 1997) are about how well (or poorly) a person performs in relation to handling a critical situation, such as dealing with a challenging intercultural incident. Such performances may take many different shapes and forms, and sometimes they require a more long-term approach. Individuals with high self-efficacy are not afraid of difficult tasks, but usually consider them as challenges to be tackled rather than as threats to be avoided. The female interviewee in her early 60s below demonstrates a strong sense of self-efficacy. When she was younger, she had set herself an ambitious goal and was strongly committed to it. Her attitudinal approach could be stated as 'If you can dream it, you can make it'.

> [Quotation 90] *"When I was 25 years old, I decided to go and live in Luxembourg. I mean, okay, before that I participated to that general competition that the European Parliament had announced for English-spoken assistants […] We were 150 persons, and we succeeded only 15. So, I was one of these 15 persons […] I had this challenge through and via this competition. Of course I prepared a lot myself […] for 3 months to practise on a typewriter. Because at that moment was existing only IBM typewriters. So, I had to stick on my time. Because I had, for example, to type I do not remember how many words … in 10 minutes. It was very hard, I mean very hard preparation for me during the whole*

> *summer. But it was worthwhile because after all I succeeded […] I started working with the European Parliament in December 1980. I remember that I arrived in Luxembourg with half a meter of snow (laughter) with my suitcases at the train station, 26 years old, and looking around and wondering what am I doing alone […] in this bloody place […] I thought that I was on another planet, alone not knowing any person, not even knowing where to go to stay for the night. I found a hotel there just opposite from the train station."* (Interviewee 2)

The above interviewee definitely proved that she was keen on enhancing her personal and professional accomplishment and becoming engrossed in the given activity (i.e. typewriting). Although she achieved her goal (i.e. passing the competition), she seems to have entered her 'new' life in Luxembourg without having prepared herself mentally very well for what was expecting her there upon her immediate arrival. Nevertheless, as she told in her interview, she very quickly recuperated from this initial shock and was able to settle down well in her new working and living environment abroad.

Observation of others (source 2 by Bandura, 1995 and 1997) is about seeing other professionals as role models. They may demonstrate such outstanding qualities in coping well with challenges and difficulties that we wish to become a little bit like them and perform as well as they do. Their example motivates us, makes us work harder and boosts our self-esteem. Yet, the other side of the coin is that we, in our minds, may raise the professional standards far too high, and feel that we possibly cannot reach the level of performance of our role models or professional peers. This quotation below by a male interviewee in his 30s well illustrates, how not knowing the context sufficiently well beforehand, may lead to unrealistic expectations of what one actually is supposed to deliver and how to function there.

> [Quotation 91] *"So, the international experience here in Cedefop was again an issue that I was thinking about before I came. I did not know how things would be. I was somehow afraid of it […] I would not know if my English would be sufficient. Again I would not know what the modus vivendi is, how things are done here, so how I should communicate with people, what is in their 'dos' list and in their 'donts'. It took me some time to understand the processes […] but through (name of a colleague), given the fact that I had many things in common with him, but he also had international experience having worked at other European institutions. Through him I managed to understand this world of European institutions. (name of colleague) for me was like a mentor, you know at the same time playing it unofficially during our lunches, when he used to explain or discuss, but doing it in a funny way, in a very nice way. So I praise his existence at Cedefop and I am very sorry that he left."* (Interviewee 10)

This more experienced colleague of the interviewee (i.e. a newcomer being somewhat lost in the new professional environment) was very helpful in terms of explaining him the contextual and professional aspects of what it means to be working for the European Union services, which apparently facilitated the interviewee's adaptation to his new working community. Through this exchange of information and knowledge transfer the interviewee started seeing his colleague as a mentor and a role model. The fact that this salient colleague left the agency after some time seems to have had an impact on the interviewee.

Persuasion (source 3 by Bandura, 1995 and 1997) suggests that individuals could be persuaded to believe that they have the skills and capacities to succeed. Getting verbal support and encouragement from colleagues, superiors or external bodies can increase one's self-esteem and help overcome self-doubt. This in turn can result in the person becoming highly committed to giving his/her best effort to the task at hand. Such positive feedback may also help the individual to gain a better insight into where s/he stands as a professional in relation to other experts in the field as the quotation below by a male participant in his 50s shows.

> [Quotation 92] *"I found out that the private company in Germany that wanted to hire me, they […] thought since I worked for the EU representation office of the government that is specialized in lobbying with EU institutions that I can lobby for them in the European Parliament and in the European Commission with contacts that they do not have […] But they liked the most I think that this was my added value to anybody else ... others can also talk, others are also nice and so, but the real market value was this, this experience that I had specifically […] worked in Brussels, in that location, and that I was in representation office with lobbying. This increased my market value enormously."* (Interviewee 11)

For the interviewee above, his experience with the German company seems to have carried several meanings. The most important probably being the fact that he came to realize the genuine value and relevance of his prior professional experience, and how it can be beneficial for him in the European labor market in the future.

Affective and physiological states (source 4 by Bandura, 1995 and 1997) play a crucial role in self-efficacy. They are about people's emotional and physical reactions to situations and how they feel about their personal abilities in a particular situation. More important than the intensity of the reaction is how it is perceived and interpreted, and what impact it has on an individual's stress levels and mood in face of a challenging task or a conflicting situation. Adapting to working and living abroad may come with emotional setbacks, and you may even become confronted by emotional states that you have not experienced before in such extremes. This is the case with the male interviewee in his late 40s, who still after several years abroad, is troubled by his loneliness.

> [Quotation 93] *"Then I learnt also a lot about loneliness […] I would say is the price you have to pay. You remain lonely […] even if you think that in an international environment you can have friends, but maybe not. So you are an international personality, you become an international personality. And this means that your life, it could be tomorrow in an airport, or after tomorrow at a hotel, or in a restaurant with people who you met at a meeting […] you live abroad, you always are learning about loneliness. […] But I mean in a way in the international environment you have to present your work at the end no matter how lonely you are […] you become a person that really needs a little bit of loneliness to restrict yourself and also to feel destroyed and then to rebuild again. Some kind of psychological way of becoming stronger and not to collapse."* (Interviewee 13)

As the interviewee arguments, no matter how you happen to feel, you always have to make sure that your professional performance will remain impeccable. Yet the even more important insight and deeper meaning that the person has been able to retrieve from his experience of loneliness is about reinventing himself and utilizing loneliness as a resource. Provided this emotional experience transforms itself into mental strength, it may help the person to develop a higher sense of self-efficacy in the long run.

Visualization (source 5 as proposed by Maddux, 2005) is about different methods and techniques that connect you with your imaginal capacities and allow you to process personal and professional issues by means of mental rehearsal and imagery. The female interviewee in her early 50s below, who has been working for some 20 years at the same EU agency, is together with a professional coach mapping out new career opportunities, and thereby preparing herself for a transition to a new professional field (eventually in her country of origin). Partly this is done through mental exercises for being able to grasp something that is not necessarily explicitly present or easily visible to the person.

> [Quotation 94] *"And I always say, I will go back* (to country of origin). *For the last two years it has been a big theme for me, and I am also working with a business coach for looking for other job opportunities […] I started in October with someone* (coach) *and the first thing we did was to look at the values you hold […] and the funny thing was that at the same time a very interesting job opportunity came up […] we used that to actually look at that job description and why that was interesting, what would be my qualities, etc. So that was very helpful […] I'm looking for probably something more in the field, more towards HR. So I have been looking at jobs and descriptions of people who are HR managers. Yeah, and I am seeing the coach now on Friday, because that is something to be explored further."* (Interviewee 19)

An individual's self-efficacy can make a difference in how goals, tasks, challenges and obstacles can be dealt with in a proactive and productive manner. As described above, relying on external expertise can sometimes be helpful in order to put plans into action more effectively. Yet nothing happens on its own as self-exploration always requires time and effort. The bigger the change you have in mind, the more you have to work on it and the more resources you have to allocate to the process (such as moving back to one's own country after several years abroad and adapting back to the national context).

7.2.4.3. Bouncing back from adversity abroad

As discussed in the theoretical part (chapter 3.3.3.), resilience is an individual's ability to cope with adversity, to recover from difficulties, and to adjust to misfortune or change with time (Smith et al., 2010). It is also about confronting uncertainty and challenges with resistance, applying one's capabilities to overcome them and using that experience to develop additional capacities (Ledesma, 2014). In this research – based on the data analysis – three broad areas where resilience has been needed by the participants, have been identified: professional life, family and free time, and personal health and well-being.

Among the individual narratives, there were numerous cases described by participants, where resilience had been required in one way or another, either in personal or professional spheres of life, and for various lengths of time. As the individual life experiences were hugely diverse, also the level of severity of experiences varied substantially from case to case in relation to resilience when working and living internationally or making cross-border transitions. In many cases the respondents had frequently encountered moments of frustration and annoyance due to minor stimuli affecting negatively their emotional state of mind (e.g. tension between colleagues, difficulties in keeping deadlines and delivering accordingly, problems with teachers at school). This is part of normal life, we may say and think. However, what comes across from the data is that living abroad sometimes escalates things and makes something minor and trivial become a much bigger issue than it eventually even is.

But there were also more dramatic cases attributed to long-term stress that resulted in serious consequences to personal health (e.g. burnout, other mental health issues requiring psychiatric treatment), or different types of harassment (mostly psychological), or institutional changes (e.g. restructuring organizations) that exhausted people. Those with spouse and children often (but not always) reported on having difficulties in meeting their family obligations as their professional duties and travelling for work took so much of their time and energy. For those who did not speak well enough the language of the destination country (specifically Italy and Greece), this handicap was an additional stressor as it affected their everyday life outside of work and limited interaction with the locals.

Mostly the interviewees demonstrated great endurance and toughness in coping with critical events unfolding in their personal and professional lives. But a few times, so the narratives, there were some interviewees, who in the end did not find any other solution than walking away ('escaping') from their stressful situation of long-term duration. Before this happened, they had really made their best effort to come out of the situation in one piece. But sometimes too much is simply too much and bouncing back from adversity is easier said than done. This quotation by a male interviewee in his 50s illustrates his really challenging situation and how he felt so powerless that he could not possibly change anything in the conditions that were completely against him.

> [Quotation 95] *"[...] we were a small department, we were four actually [...] in June of the given year ... the girl* (female colleague) *left, because she was in the pregnancy leave. In September we started classes, and the senior colleague I had, had a stroke the second week in the lecture, and at that very moment my head of the department told me he was going on sabbatical to the US. So, I was left with all the things. So I took in charge of that, and actually I carried over everything and at the end I was so tired that I really quit. There was also reorganization going on, they were pressuring us about moving [...] I was so tired, you know, maybe it was a time for a change. And that was basically 2004. That was the time when I went back to* (name of his country of origin)*."* (Interviewee 4)

In the above situation, realizing and accepting one's own psychological limits and capacities was apparently the only way out as the employing institution of the time did not see how extreme the situation had become to handle for the interviewee. Neither did they do anything to provide any support or additional resources to improve the critical condition. Running away was clearly the only chance to rescue oneself from the misery. The following quotation by a female interviewee in her 40s describes more or less an opposite case with roles exchanged. However, even so it was a considerably stressful period of time to the interviewee, who had to fight hard to counteract the negative developments, turn them back to a more stable course and re-establish normalcy.

> [Quotation 96] *"In UNPD Russia I got my boss fired, de facto, it is a fact. Because he was not delivering, and the fact that I came and I was delivering, put him under pressure. Because I came into a program, which was basically self-destructive. They had made promises left-right-centre, which they were not respecting, because they were not able to bring in the money to finance the activities. I came in and the activities they had financed ... and the activities they had promised to finance were not relevant and absolutely not sustainable. But I just came, raised the funding to finance the ones we had promised to finance, to clear the reputation, and then I tripled the budget in one year. Which led every donor to refuse*

> *to work with my supervisor and to work directly with me, which led him to be fired."* (Interviewee 12)

Both quotations above are examples of individual and environmental resources (or a lack of them) that people rely on when they face adversity. As Gunnestad (2006) suggests there are external resources through one's network relations that may be beneficial for coping with and resisting difficulty. In the first case, for the interviewee (4) this external support never materialized, whereas in the second case the interviewee (12) was able to access such support. In addition, Gunnestad also addresses the individual's internal support (abilities and skills) that clearly was well applied by the interviewee (12) to resolving the complicated situation. For the interviewee (4) internal resources definitely were there, but there was no point in using them as it would only have meant taking a fight against the wind-mills. The third type of resources in Gunnestad's approach is existential support (meaning of life, values, faith). We can only speculate if or to what extent the choice of leaving (4) and the choice of fighting back (12) in the given situations eventually reflect the individuals' worldview, value-base and belief systems as an existential support mechanism.

Below we have two first-timers abroad, who at the time of the events described in the quotations were in their early 30s (interviewee 20) and mid-30s (interviewee 3). Their quotations are about the challenges faced while trying to sort out various aspects of life in a foreign country and in a new institutional environment characterized by a highly diverse staff. At first the two newcomers were taken by surprise as they were not mentally prepared for the difficulty they actually encountered as they were anticipating something else to be the difficulty. Thus their stress levels are seemingly high and they are somewhat confused. They do not only have to deal with their ability to function well in the prevailing circumstances, but they also need to handle the confusion caused by their somewhat false expectations. All this apparently has created additional pressure for them and requires quite some resilience from their part.

> [Quotation 97] *"I was shocked, because I thought the biggest problem is to provide high quality service in your work place. However, the realization was that that is not the problem, because if you are well skilled you do it any way. It is more about how to go about the working environment, in which people are having so many different backgrounds. That was really a challenge. At least in the beginning. That is the biggest difference. In the national environment you more or less know where you are and what you can expect from people. In this environment it is really, really different."* (Interviewee 20)

The interviewee above had not expected that coping with interculturality at work would take such a toll on his time and energy. He was obviously perplexed as he was not instantly able to decipher the code of interculturality, but had to work hard on figuring it out. As a newcomer in the office, it is not necessarily easy to get to understand what exactly it is that makes your colleagues tick and what their priorities and values are. Finding this out took a while for the interviewee below, while he was busy trying to establish his new routines at work and outside of work, too.

> [Quotation 98] *"I think getting to the routine and getting a full understanding of the routine is ... is ...is somehow challenging. I think this was ... the hardest ... hardest part ... to set up ... set up your routines from all ... hmmm ... or meanings of the word. Getting, getting to know the environment, the basic stuff: shops, restaurant, bars. [...] This was the thing and also organizing your work here with different working styles of people here and different ... not talking about different motivations of people who are here ... you have people that ... are interested in ... the wage slip ... because for them this is, this is the primary motivation and then, and then you have people who are interested in the substance of the work."* (Interviewee 3)

Once you settle in and learn the name of the game in the new environment, you do not constantly need to be alert for unexpected hazards. With your improved situational and contextual awareness you can better monitor, scan, recognize and anticipate eventual hazardous situations, and with your further evolved resilience you will be better able to cope with any difficulty or adversity taking place in your immediate surroundings. Based on the individual narratives, it seems that the more integrated you become socially in your daily working and living environment, the better access you tend to have to collegial and other forms of support and resources. All this can be highly valuable for an individual who encounters any type of adversity while abroad.

7.2.5. Going abroad, returning home?

In the theoretical part of this research (chapters 3.2. and 3.3.) the requirements that ideally should be in place for an individual to consider launching a career abroad or at the service of a supranational organization were discussed (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014). Also repatriation (Froese et al., 2013; Pinto et al., 2012) was mentioned in the previous chapters as an aspect that people working and living abroad may need to take into account in their more long-term planning. On the one part, this chapter will address the advice and recommendations that the interviewees themselves have for people who think of going abroad for work (chapter 7.2.5.1.), and on the other part, their considerations about returning to their home country after several years of professional life in another country will be highlighted (chapter 7.2.5.2.).

7.2.5.1. Ready, steady, go! Towards a satisfying international experience

Many aspects in an individual's professional and private lives will have to come nicely together so that the overall experience abroad is at least satisfactory. The prerequisites for working and living abroad were touched upon with the interviewees, too. This was partly done from the viewpoint of what another person should take into account when considering a professional life overseas. The interview question was formulated as *"What is required for having a satisfying working and living experience in another country?"*.

The responses received to the given question reflected, to a certain degree, the international experience made by the interviewees themselves, and what they therefore thought would be important for somebody aspiring for career mobility in another country. From the data analysis, four main areas could be identified that an individual, who is interested in pursuing a professional life abroad, should pay attention to before embarking on such an endeavor. In the interviewees' view an individual's overall satisfaction abroad can potentially be supported by means of:

1) Quality of employment – many respondents emphasized the criticality of the work-related aspects, such as actual contents and concrete tasks that should be professionally interesting and match one's skills, competences and career goals. Also the institutional context should be supportive to ongoing career learning and development (e.g. Sarna, 2015)
2) Financial compensation (McNulty, 2014) – it is not income alone that determines how attractive a job opportunity or offer abroad is for an individual. It is a matter of multiple financial aspects, for example, to what extent the employer covers health insurance, removal expenses or pays for schooling of children, and how long the annual leave is.
3) Social and emotional competences (Haslberger, 2013) – networking skills and sensitivity to diversity as important assets were mentioned by several participants. Building easily up social relations is required for becoming well integrated in a completely new environment. Personal qualities such as open-mindedness, empathy, curiosity, self-confidence, positivity and realism were said to support an individual's adaptation process in the foreign country.
4) Country of destination – affinity for, prior familiarity with or at least an idea of the foreign country itself was regarded helpful as to settle well in there, including climate, lifestyle, infrastructure (airport, embassies, international schools), and language. Fluency in the local language was stressed, even if one can survive without it as in most places English is widely spoken.

An additional item that people aspiring to go abroad should remember is that the longer their mobility period is and the further away it geographically takes them, the more difficult it may become to maintain contacts alive with people back home. These days it is relatively easy and cheap to stay in touch by means of smart phones, social media and various online applications, but they do not replace the value of meeting every now and then on a face-to-face basis in real life. This is more or less what has happened to the male participant in his late 30s. Thus, he feels a little sad that he does not have such close contacts with some of his friends in his home town anymore. This is the price he has had to pay for choosing to live abroad. The social loss seemingly annoys him.

> [Quotation 99] *"After so many years I saw that it is quite difficult and it is impossible to keep the same intensity and of course you lose friends on the way, not the best ones as they will probably stay forever, but with them something is lost on the way ... okay, if the contact is not constant and then this distance contact is quite difficult by phone or by email or… okay, but I feel that it is somehow fading away and I am not happy about that and because I lose that contact in a way and but then I do not have so much here, so I feel myself a little bit trapped between two worlds and not being nowhere."* (Interviewee 1)

The above four-point list may give some food for thought to individual professionals, who are considering to launch a career in a foreign country. The list, however, must not to be considered as exhaustive, but indicative as it is based on opinions of people, who have spent a substantial time on working and living abroad themselves. There definitely are more factors that could be added to the list as they may influence people's overall satisfaction abroad (i.e. something that future qualitative research could look into). For example, tolerance of ambiguity and stress management skills did not explicitly come out of the data in the answers the interviewees gave to the above question. The data analysis shows that the interviewees themselves have repeatedly been under lots or pressure for various reasons, and that they often have been to situations where they have had to cope with diverging approaches and conflicting expectations, as well as to tolerate contradictions and uncertainty in their intercultural work place and outside of work, too (e.g. Gerli et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2010).

7.2.5.2. Transition back home – ignoring and downplaying international experience?

As the previous chapters already have indicated, a tremendous amount of professional development and personal growth take place when you are working at an international level and living in another country. But do international expertise and intercultural knowhow only be valid in supranational organizations or are they also valued at national level, would it happen that you after several years abroad decide to return to your country of origin, and start working there for a local employer? This doctoral research addressed competences acquired abroad and experiences made there also in terms of how portable and transferable they potentially are to national contexts (Jokinen, 2010).

In what follows, the interviewees share their speculative views and personal opinions on how they think and imagine that employers at a national level look at their European-level work experience. For most respondents this issue was like playing with thoughts as not all of them had necessarily made that experience of returning home and integrating in the local labor market themselves. Based on the opinions and views expressed in this research, we can only vaguely suggest that there eventually is something that may be creating a difficulty in having one's European expertise and intercultural capital smoothly carried over to national contexts as can be read below.

Many interviewees doubted that their international professional experience or their European Union knowhow would not necessarily weigh that much in their own countries, whereas a minority of respondents thought it would still be of use to national-level employers. Some participants stated in highly general terms that in their countries employers and citizens alike are often ignorant to anything that comes from the European Union, and thus trying to sell them their professional competences obtained in the EU context would be almost like a mission impossible. This hints at the possibility that contextually bound expertise and experience acquired, for example, from the European Union public administration do not necessarily easily translate into such career capital that would directly have relevance and value for public institutions (or private companies) in different European countries.

The interviewee below – a lady in her early 60s originally from one of the larger EU countries – explicitly points out that in the education sector in her country, where she used to be working earlier, her European expertise would not add value to the work carried out in the national context. Thus, she is reluctant to go back there.

> [Quotation 100] *"No, the* (EU) *knowhow would not be acknowledged as much as it should be. This is why I didn't return to* (my country) *... my former colleagues, I think of my former work, my former colleagues sometimes are not very much interested in something new, because this makes them uncomfortable. There are of course other people who like to know something that is out of the box. But all this new experience that I have gained outside of* (my country), *is not needed in the daily context where I have been working."* (Interviewee 15)

The contexts vary of course. Thus, we should bear in mind that all individuals with their expertise are unique, but so are employers. This means that there always is a chance that a national-level employer finds your job profile with international flair not only interesting, but well matching to the skills and networks they require for their current operations and/or future activities. This example below shows exactly such a more favourable national-level response to the European expertise that the female interviewee in her early 50s demonstrated to the potential employer in her own country.

> [Quotation 101] *"Well, straight away I would think of the fact that you have to work with different cultures, is an asset. If I think about* (my own country), *you would have a very diverse working force as well in terms of culture. But even if it was mainly people from the same nationality, everyone is different. So that sense of understanding and being alert that not everyone is the same. I think this is something that would be valued by employers, and I had one orientation meeting at the department in the national government in* (my country), *and it struck me how much my CV was valued because of that European experience, which I had not really thought ... considered, no!"* (Interviewee 19)

Even if a national employer would respond positively to what you can offer and is willing to recruit you, there may be other types of complications that you will face in the workplace due to your international experience. While you are trying to become integrated in the national organization, the challenge there can sometimes be your colleagues, who may not at all be internationally spirited and therefore may view you as a threat. Also the longer you stay abroad, the more you and your own country change in the meantime. So, it is not only about finding employment back home, it is also a matter of how to adapt back to the national context and the way things are done there. This is exemplified in the following quotation by a male interviewee in his late 30s.

> [Quotation 102] *"The biggest difficulty probably, for the person living abroad a significant amount of time, is coming back to the country, which is not anymore the same as the country the person left at a certain point. Just in my case, when I was leaving* (name of country), *we were just on the verge of entering the EU, and now we are already ten years after and the country amazingly changed during this time, not only because of the EU, but also for economic and political reasons. As I said coming back now would be to some extent quite a challenge. Of course everything would depend on where I come back to and what kind of a setup. But as I said it would be quite a challenge."* (Interviewee 20)

Working at an international level influences you as a human being and as a professional, but it may also influence your language skills in an unexpected manner. Normally, when working and living abroad, you improve your mastery of foreign languages. However, at the same time you may come to realize that you are losing the grip of your native language. This is because you learn all the professional terms and concepts in a foreign language (e.g. English in the EU context), but simultaneously you do not always make the effort to know those words in your mother tongue. So, in case of repatriation and not being aware that your native language may have deteriorated professionally while abroad, can make you fall into a fallacy of thinking that there is nothing or hardly anything that would cause you problems with adjusting to the national context. This quotation below well illustrates, how the male interviewee in his late 30s realizes that he is not able to use his mother tongue in an impeccable manner for professional purposes anymore.

> [Quotation 103] *"I actually do not know how I would react to being with people from the same culture. I think coming back to* (my country) *would be very hard, just the language. I have a hard time speaking* (my native language) *workwise especially, lots of words have come out, and yeah, some words that I would use in* (my country)*, I would have to relearn them, learn how, what is the pronunciation of, for example, this word in* (my language) *doesn't fit or things like that. That would be a little hard bit hard, even like on a practical level."* (Interviewee 5)

As we can see from all the points addressed above, portability and transferability of skills from an international to a national context is not solely about transferring your skills, but a much more complex issue. Based on the data analysis and the selected quotations, we may see that as people spend a significantly long time on working and living in another country, they tend to become gradually alienated from their own national environment. At the same time, they become influenced ('institutionalized') by their employing supranational organization and shaped by their destination country. This international environment – characterized by great diversity – seem to make the interviewees become more and more like hybrids that fit and function well in the international context, but that do not necessarily anymore easily adapt back to national level. Moreover, they often feel that they are unwanted back home and that their career capital is not appreciated there. Thus, many of them do not even actively look for employment in their own country, i.e. repatriation is not really an issue for the interviewees of this research.

7.3. Summarizing key points – Fleeting time, changing identities and homo interculturalis?

In this research, the issue of who am I today in relation to my social surroundings has been discussed by means of three socially constructed and constituted types of identifications – personal, professional and territorial (chapter 7.1.). Interviewees' personal and professional self-presentation as well as how they relate to Europe and other nationalities in their everyday environment have been looked into (i.e. the European Union public administration and life abroad). We well may notice from many of the quotations included in this doctoral dissertation that the interviewees often present themselves in interactional and contextual terms in view to their social and professional relations (Côté, 2016). This indeed is the core essence of identity, and through this process of identity co-construction, the interviewees have taken a stance on their subjective self ('I') as well as their collective self ('we') (Turner et al., 1987).

Identity capital – as already suggested in the theoretical part – can be seen as a result of a process through which individuals continuously engage themselves in social interaction with other people for developing their chosen or preferred identity in a variety of contexts (Côté, 2005). According to the data analysis, it is evident that the choice of the interviewees to work for the European Union (or at international level) is fully based on their free will. Potentially this also alludes that they therefore have more or less willingly and consciously entered a process, in which they are by default expected to explore and develop their multiple identifications. In so doing, they have had the opportunity to gain more self-clarity about themselves (Usborne & Taylor, 2010; Dervin & Jackson, 2018), and to enhance their identity capital provided that they have been cognitively, psychologically and emotionally able to manage their self-complexity in the international and intercultural environment (McConnell & Strain, 2007).

Temporality is traditionally understood as the linear progression of past, present, and future. Just as time is fleeting, also our identifications are passing and constantly transforming. Among the interviewees, it seems that much of their self-identification is rooted in their past and present experiences, but not only as also their future aspirations today contribute to the person who they are and who they wish to be later on in life. Even speculating about where they eventually are heading to or who they could have been, had they chosen differently in the past, is an additional dimension in their self-evaluation and in their effort to understand themselves better.

The following to-the-point quotation captures the essence of temporal and temporary aspects in an interviewee's life. This man in his late 30s is internally somewhat perplexed as what he once initially thought of being a shorter temporary phase in his life, now appears to have become a much longer and more permanent arrangement. He does not seem to have anything against permanence as such, only that this permanence in his life should be somewhere else, and not where it happens to be at the moment.

> [Quotation 49] *"I always, in a way, considered that this is a temporary step in my life. I never, and I still after seven years don't consider that this is the place, where I will be staying. I always have this temporary idea of my life and this is not so positive […] because I don't think I will be living here forever for different reasons."* (Interviewee 1)

As the above quotation reveals, the temporary nature of time ('temporarity') is always mixed with the continuous nature of time in our lives (temporality). If we look at 'temporarity' as a crosscut of time and space, and temporality as a longitudinal continuum across time and space, then maybe we can better relate to the relative permanence and constant change of our identities and identifications, too. At any given point of time (a temporary crosscut), our identity and identifications may appear as stable and durable, but throughout the continuous, never-ending space of time they always modulate and modify themselves into something that fits and functions for the individual in the given social environment, whether that is at home or abroad.

The chapter 7.2. showcased that the path towards becoming a homo interculturalis (Klerides, 2018) is a never-ending process (Pietilä, 2010). Therefore, intercultural learning should be seen as a lifelong quest. Sometimes it means being on a rocky road with twists and turns, ups and downs, backs and forths, getting lost and not knowing what will come next. At some other times it can be like flying on a space shuttle and looking at the planet Earth from the skies above, seeing the beauty of the globe, and realizing that we are one with all existence. Mostly these moments of feeling perfect harmony and complete connectivity with humanity and having great clarity about the human nature are quite rare. Rather this intercultural journey is about development and change through dark and light, drama and comedy, confusion and calm.

Observations made from the individual narratives of this research indicate that most interviewees have at least occasionally experienced difficulties in coping with the intercultural dimension in their lives. At times confusion and tension in intercultural interaction at work may have negatively influenced the respondents' capacity to perform in a solid manner career-wise. This has resulted in non-optimal use of their career capital, which they have experienced as frustrating and even irritating. According to the data analysis, the perplexities and uncertainties that usually follow from exposure to interculturality can be related to the changing referential frameworks that an individual living abroad needs to adopt and adapt to. Such adoption and adaption do not happen overnight, but call for preparedness and willingness for continuous learning through and from intercultural experience. Reflecting on this often demanding process of learning is the key towards gaining novel insights of self and the others. Thereby, one's own assumptions about and responses to interculturality should be regularly examined and critically evaluated, and if need be, modified to improve one's intercultural interaction in the future.

There is sufficiently evidence in this doctoral research to suggest that the European interviewees (homo europapeus) – through their intercultural encounters over several years – seem to have been able to successfully develop their sensitivities towards diversity (affective), their ability to adapt to a constantly transforming social environment (behavior), and their awareness and understanding of how interaction and communication are influenced by interculturality (cognitive) in their personal and professional lives (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger, 2013; Haslberger et al., 2013; Vromans et al., 2013). Nonetheless, the interviewees are definitely not unexperienced novices anymore as regards their by now elevated ability to beneficently engage themselves in intercultural interaction. Many of them seem to be making good progress towards becoming a homo interculturalis. For most of the time, while in search of deeper insights, clearer perspectives and better understanding, they are able to make sense of their intercultural experience.

We can conclude this chapter by stating that developing one's interculturality capital is done in real life by means of continuous interaction with people from different corners of the planet (and not so much in a training course necessarily). The relational, contextual and co-constructivist nature of interculturality (Risager & Dervin, 2014; Dervin, 2016) must always be taken into account as it defines the type and quality of capacities and sensitivities that are required for intercultural encounters in different social environments (e.g. private life vs. professional life). Above all, to live interculturality is about knowing oneself (i.e. identity), having a positive attitude towards the other, being curious about diversity and receptive to learning from the experience.

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This final chapter makes an attempt to rise above the theoretical framework and the results of this research and look at them more from a bird's perspective. Yet, everything that is discussed (chapter 8.1.), concluded (chapter 8.2.) and recommended (chapter 8.3.) will essentially be connected to the themes of the actual research. Implications for new theory formation and future research are addressed both implicitly and explicitly throughout the discussion, conclusions and recommendations subchapters.

8.1. Discussion

The main aim of this doctoral dissertation was to contribute to the understanding of how the notions of identity, interculturality and career capitals materialize in relation to global careers among professionals employed in a multinational environment. The specific context of this study was the European Union public administration. Three decentralized EU agencies (located in Greece, Ireland and Italy) were selected to the research for gaining new insights and knowledge on the logics and dynamics that underlie self-initiated expatriates' professional careers within the EU environment.

Based on the individual narratives placed within the framework of globalization and intra-EU labor mobility, identity construction and related personal, professional and territorial identifications as well as development of interculturality were addressed from the perspectives of careers at an international workplace and life outside of work in the destination countries. In this discussion chapter, the major research findings will be discussed, and their implications for future research and contributions to existing theories will be highlighted.

We have to be cautious with the results of this research and avoid making too far-reaching generalizations based on them. As has already been stated earlier, the respondents of this study represent an apparently elite group of European citizens, and therefore these results may not apply to a wider audience in Europe or beyond. The respondents can be viewed as the contemporary 'construction workers' of Europe, who through their daily tasks contribute to the European integration process (Thiel & Friedman, 2012). At the EU agencies, where they happen to be employed, they pool expertise and resources together to build a better Europe for today's citizens and future generations. These EU agencies and their personnel seem to be somewhat invisible to the general public and the fruits of their work are seldom well known to an average mainstream citizen. Therefore, this doctoral dissertation has made an effort to shed more light on what is taking place at the above three selected EU agencies, and how their staff members associate with identity-, interculturality- and career-related aspects in their professional and personal lives.

As argued earlier, there are at least three aspects in this research that differentiate it from many other studies in the field of global careers:

- Firstly, this research addressed supranational public sector bodies and their staff (i.e. EU agencies) in contrast to prior studies that mostly have been interested in examining assigned expatriates working for multinational companies in the private sector.
- Secondly, there is not much previous academic research available on studying staff of decentralized EU agencies. Prior studies conducted on EU personnel have until now focused more on the staff at the European Commission.
- Thirdly, staff at decentralized EU agencies have knowingly not earlier been examined on the intersection of identity, interculturality and career capitals within any such theoretical framework and from any such methodological approach as applied in this research.

For the above reasons, the results of this research contain novelty value, but as they happen to be highly context specific, therefore they cannot necessarily be easily translated or transferred to other contexts. Yet they may provide some fresh insights into comprehending the processes of how individuals relate to intercultural interaction in their social and professional environment abroad and how that influences their way of performing and co-constructing their identity, interculturality and international careers.

As was suggested in the theoretical part already, identity and interculturality are intertwined phenomena that should conceptually be brought more closely together (Risager & Dervin, 2014). Also the results of this study indicate that there is not one without the other. Thus, the issue at hand is to understand how exactly identity and interculturality integrally relate to each other within a professional career abroad and how the prevailing circumstances may influence that. The following paragraphs will continue processing this dilemma by answering the main research questions (see chapter 5.1.) after the more general discussion above.

• *Identity capital as an individual's developmental resource (research question 1)*

Based on this research, we may argue that the starting point always is the individual person with his/her identity and various identifications. In any social interaction – including an intercultural setting – two or more individuals and their identities/identifications come together, whereby different exchanges are enabled between these individuals and their individuated realities. This inter-individual meeting is about making sense about one's own existence in relation to the other person's (or people's) existence, and vice versa. Through these (intercultural) social encounters identities and identifications of those involved get shaped (Baynhamn, 2014; Dervin, 2013).

This constantly evolving co-constructivist process is not linear, but in fact, could best be illustrated more like a spiral in shape. The core is an individual's identity and identifications that are surrounded and influenced by the others in one's (intercultural) social environment. That is, the 'evolution' of identity takes place through a complex interactional process that spreads out into multiple levels and spheres depending on the contextual circumstances (e.g. supranational institution). Self-understanding, but also plasticity of one's identity (Ahmadi, 2005), are helpful resources for an individual to maneuver this spiral process successfully.

Moreover, this research points towards the realization that an individual's identity expresses itself through one's multiple identifications that are applied and adapted to social encounters in one's personal and professional environments (e.g. an intercultural workplace). Moreover, this study suggests that through sufficient self-clarity individuals are better able to cope with situational and contextual instability in their intercultural environment. Thus, the emphasis should be put on discussing what are the prerequisites and requirements that support individuals in better understanding their identity and multiple identifications, and the role they play along their careers (abroad) and in the development of their interculturality capital rather than talking about a specific set of skills and competences only. Hence, the importance of self-reflexivity as a means to gain deeper self-understanding and acceptance of oneself and the other must be underlined. That can result in better self-clarity which again may improve one's agentic functioning, self-efficacy and resilience in responding to and overcoming challenges and adversity derived from setbacks and difficulties in intercultural interaction (Usborne & Taylor, 2010). The basic idea behind all of the above is that only I and nobody else than I can facilitate a meaningful change within myself provided I am open, receptive, sensitive and responsive to people and developments in my daily surroundings, and that I am willing to consciously contemplate on how my behavior influences the others, and how they influence me.

From this research it became obvious that although some common elements were identified by the respondents in relation to Europe, feeling European and Europeanness, the overall impression still was that the idea of what Europe should stand for is relatively vaguely expressed and mostly lacking clarity and homogeneity. Based on a dynamic diversity of views and ideas shared in the research, the results suggest that among the respondents there was a willingness to establish a common foundation for better understanding what Europe means and how one could better identify with it. In the findings, both the political and social aspects of being and feeling European were present. It looks as if the political Europe and what it supposedly represents (i.e. EU level values, rights, norms) were not fully internalized by the respondents, whereas how they socially associated themselves with Europeanness was something more authentic, genuine and visibly more credible.

Nevertheless, the respondents at the three EU agencies seem to live in their 'European bubble', which means that they may even be said to be 'contaminated', because of the continuous 'radiation' they have from everything that is European or that comes from the European Union. Their reality is definitely different from the daily existence of an average EU citizen, who is not so massively bombarded by and exposed to the European ideology, but can mostly live in his/her own 'less-EU-affected bubble'. This suggests that the European integration process and related European identifications (may) look different for those, who are within the EU public administration and directly involved in these EU-level developments than for those, who are at the receiving end and being targets of the integration process and who barely can influence its goals and direction. Seeing things from within is something else than looking at them from the outside.

These polarized perceptions and contradictory views between those, who feel included and those who eventually do not, may challenge the sustainability of the European integration process as already has happened in some countries. Hence, if EU citizens are expected to become more closely associated with Europe and Europeanness, a strengthened grass-root level dialogue will be needed to make the European integration process more inclusive for them. Part of this integration is fostering free cross-border movement within the EU for all citizens. Although going abroad for studying, training and working purposes is expected to positively influence their European-mindedness in the long run (e.g. Favell, 2010), there is recent research evidence suggesting that the impact of mobility on becoming more pro-European is limited and not that obvious (e.g. Van Mol, 2013 and 2018).

Therefore, finding new participatory methods will be needed for promoting Europeanness and engaging individual EU citizens more in social, economic, political, environmental, cultural and other developments affecting us all in Europe. For example, if groups of citizens directly (instead of institutions only) could have more easy access to EU funding without heavy bureaucratic procedures, they could initiate joint actions across countries and work together towards common solutions to problems or challenges they have identified. Moreover, for becoming more involved in EU matters, citizens could rely more on digital platforms (incl. social media) for a common goal. Such platforms allow them to exchange views and experiences, to launch collective movements for articulating their key messages, and learn more about themselves, others, and their individual and collective identities (e.g. VOLT is a recent citizens' movement in Europe that strongly utilizes digital applications and platforms: www.volteuropa.org/).

Social learning across country borders may not necessarily result in consensus among those citizens participating, but it could make multiple, even differing voices better heard and captured as should always be the case in democratic societies. This, in turn, would shed more light on the processes and outcomes of collaborative action at a European level, which eventually could give valuable input to EU policy and strategy developments. The ability to deal constructively with various differences among citizens (e.g. cultural, ethnic, linguistic, political, …) can be developed provided transparency makes clear the intentions of the others. The key is to succeed in combining content-related processes with social involvement in order to generate relational outcomes and pragmatic solutions to the benefit of citizens and societies (e.g. Pahl-Wostl & Hare, 2004). This way EU citizens could get a better hold of European matters, become more strongly owners of the EU integration process, and strengthen their European identification.

- ***Interculturality capital as an individual's capacity to perform successfully in interaction with diverse people (research question 2)***

This research showcased that the interactional and co-constructivist nature of identity and interculturality capitals in connection to international careers and living abroad means that these types of capitals are constantly and continually transforming and mutating, eroding and renewing. Thereby, it was neither the aim of this study to identify a specific set of skills and competences, nor to suggest that by acquiring, possessing and utilizing a certain set of abilities would make you automatically successful at intercultural encounters (interculturality capital) or instantly know who you are (identity capital). Both identity and interculturality are abstract, fuzzy, polyphonic and even cacophonic concepts as this dissertation has demonstrated, and therefore due to these constraints, they cannot necessarily be defined, expressed or categorized in strict sets of skills and competences as researchers in several disciplines and fields previously often have tried to do.

As the results of this study indicate, exposure to challenges and diverse life experiences in another country can be an invaluable part of an individual's journey of personal growth and professional development. Moving abroad for employment and getting adjusted to working and living in a foreign environment are significant changes in a person's life, as has come out of previous studies and now out of this research. Such a transition – no matter how preferred, aspired and wanted it may be – is not only about relocating oneself geographically, but something that touches individuals usually on a much deeper level and that may provoke stress, fears, worries and insecurities. As the theoretical framework suggested and the findings confirmed, adaptation to and functioning in an international context is a complex psychological process that calls for affective/emotional, behavioral and cognitive capacities (Barrett, 2012; Haslberger et al., 2013; Vromans et al., 2013).

Yet, it is not a singular transition process only, but rather there are several processes of transition and adaptation that may coincide and can be simultaneously at play for an individual (Horowitz, 2012; Haslberger, 2013). In this research, the parallel transitional and adaptive processes that could be identified from the data and that the respondents had to cope with were contextual (EU policy and strategy framework, destination country), institutional (EU agency, EU regulations and administration, authorities of the destination country), as well as social and relational processes including linguistic and cultural aspects (interaction with staff at work and with locals in the host country). To different degrees, all these processes influenced the respondents of this research, who relied on various strategies to cope with these transitional and adaptive demands in their lives. In most cases, this hard work on managing different, mainly external forces and factors paid off to the respondents in terms of them enhancing their intercultural sensitivities (i.e. cultural antenna better attuned to diversity) and gaining more insight into their personal, professional and territorial identifications.

This study suggests that the experiential knowing that you have gained through an earlier transition and adaptation process while settling down in a new country can be helpful would you need to relocate again. Such previous adaptation experience seemingly carries some value and at least partially it can be transferred and applied to new social and professional contexts in other countries. This indicates that in any international adaptation process there seem to be universal features that carry over to different environments. The challenge for the individual mobile person is to find out what exactly these transferable universal features are and how they happen to be applicable in his/her new surroundings (including returning to one's own country of origin after several years abroad). However, at the same time the person should avoid using approaches that were context-specific in his/her past environment, but not necessarily typical or readily valid in his/her current context.

Rediscovering, redefining and repositioning oneself as a human being and as a professional is a crucial part of living and working at an international level. The vivid presence of interculturality in one's everyday private and professional life shapes and shakes one's views of oneself and the others. Thereby, the findings lean towards proposing that the interviewees lack tools and methods to understand what interculturality capital essentially is, how 'much' of it they possess themselves and how they could further develop and demonstrate it at their supranational workplace or outside of work in the foreign country. Thereby, the developmental challenge for academic scholars is to come up with new strategies and approaches that will help and support individuals to better grasp their interculturality capital. The more clarity you have about any type of your capitals, the stronger your agentic functioning and resilience will probably be in any given context.

According to the findings of this research, the interviewees could benefit from an exercise of carefully sorting out their career capital, for example, in relation to the model of six different types of knowing (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Jones & DeFillippi, 1996). Running such an exercise within an intercultural and supranational professional environment could reveal hidden 'black holes' where skills are to be further developed, but it could also make unutilized professional resources and capabilities more visible to the individuals and their employers. Through this exercise more food for thought could also be provided for finding out new ways to have career learning and development activities organized in a more effective way for the individual professionals and for the EU agencies themselves, too.

As a final remark, the fact that we are living in a rapidly changing world, where social, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual ideologies and technological processes bring unprecedented potential, but also previously unknown perils and turmoil, challenges our identity and our way of belonging to the world and being part of it through cross-border interaction. Therefore, individuals due to the times of change – probably more than ever before – need to develop and find creative ways how to utilize their identity, interculturality and career capitals when they chart their course forward in the ever-globalizing world. Being temporally and spatially closer to other people living on planet Earth is a tremendous opportunity to navigate one's path towards becoming a homo interculturalis, whose main interests are humanity, equality and peace, and who has the capacity to look beyond cultural differences and focus on similarities across all people.

8.2. Conclusions

This doctoral dissertation is based on an interdisciplinary approach. This approach was chosen in order to stimulate creation of novel knowledge on the complexity of the social phenomena studied in this research. Integrating multiple perspectives and critically reviewing them have contributed to the variety and richness of knowledge of this study, which has given us new insights into better understanding the overlapping nature of identity, interculturality and career in a European professional environment. Interconnecting different fields for the sake of this dissertation – mainly psychology, sociology, education, career development, human resources management, intercultural studies – has not necessarily always been easy. At the same time, though, it has made this research more unique compared to other studies that mainly have addressed global careers, identity development and intercultural competences from narrower academic perspectives. At the end of this chapter 8.2., the contributions of this study to academic discourse and theoretical underpinnings in the literature review will be highlighted.

The broader context of this research is today's global economy, where international/supranational organizations are expected to have strategies to attract and retain the most resourceful professionals for remaining competitive and innovative (e.g. Šlaus & Jacobs, 2011). At an international workplace, an individual expatriate's assets contribute to the aggregate stock of skills, knowledge, competences and expertise (i.e. human resources/human capital). It is in the interest of staff members and their employer to use these aggregate assets wisely individually and collectively for the success and development of their organization. In this doctoral dissertation that is placed within the EU public administration, identity, interculturality and career capitals have been viewed as individually possessed assets that are needed for global careers, that evolve through interactions and exchanges with other professionals (i.e. collectively), and become more finetuned through individuals' ensuing introspection and self-reflection. This constant individual and collective change and evolution may increase liquidity and fluidity within organizations, and be against an employer's preference for having certain stability and solidity at the workplace. As a result, supranational employers or companies, through their human resource and senior management, may want to support an ideology whereby employees are entitled to navigate between the two.

This dissertation studied staff at three different decentralized EU agencies, and thereby suggests that these institutions can be seen as a cosmos of their own, like a tiny little cell of reality in a wider universe. Although all these EU agencies have to comply with the common EU-level regulations and rules (i.e. sameness), they still are different from one another as their personnel are unique (i.e. diversity within and across agencies). This, in turn, means that within each agency the prevailing norms affecting daily work and social relations are constantly being co-created, renegotiated and validated by staff members, who at any given point of time happen to work and interact in that small cosmos shared with their colleagues. The aim of this research was not to compare how or to what extent these three EU agencies are different or similar (e.g. in view to intercultural interaction), but rather to identify commonalities that are visible and applicable across the staff of these three agencies in relation to identity, interculturality and career capitals.

What came across from the research was that individuals are at different developmental stages in relation to building up their interculturality and other types of capitals. Consequently, interculturality and intercultural encounters mean different things to different people, and because of that, they may influence their identities and identifications in multiple ways. Although many of the interviewees were told to cope well with diversity at work and accept, tolerate and like it in their daily professional life, the actual level of diversity in the agencies can be questioned. Among the 20 interviewees, there was only one person who was not white, i.e. the given agencies are predominantly white (N.B. color is only one aspect of diversity). This fact narrows down the possible exposure there can be to interculturality within the given EU agencies. Therefore the overall exposure becomes qualitatively and quantitatively reduced to something that does not represent a maximal range of diversity. In the end, it is more a matter of white, elite European diversity represented by well-educated and well-off professionals. This raises the question how well interculturality capital that individuals have accumulated at these EU agencies is transferable and applicable to a more global context with a much wider variety of diversity. This topic deserves a research of its own.

According to the results of this study, many interviewees showed signs of being aware of potential tension that occasionally may have featured in intercultural interaction. Whenever they interacted with their European colleagues, they did their best to actively minimize any friction as to avoid conflicts or confrontations with them. This usually meant making efforts to act in a correct, businesslike and amicable manner. At least on the surface, the mutual understanding seemed to be that things were to be done professionally without ending up having unproductive, time- and energy-consuming unpleasantries. This was the main approach to working together, however, humans as we are also some critical incidents of misbehavior were reported in the study. But overall, this reportedly respectful and politically correctly phrased, even highly civilized behaviour between staff members may sound a little bit too good to be completely true. Therefore, a new study looking into this topic would be recommendable as to find out, if there is anything else underneath that this current study did not capture.

The most critical views on professional competences (career capital) and how they were not fully utilized individually and collectively within the EU agencies came from interviewees with a doctoral degree (i.e. 25 % of respondents). They had a keen interest in conducting academic research as part of their daily duties, but the institutional environment was more interested in EU policy and administrative work, and therefore it was not supportive to their professional research-focused aspirations. This conflict of interests and different orientations (i.e. a mismatch) between individual staff members and their employer is an interesting finding. On the one part, the EU agencies seem to be eager to recruit employees with highest possible educational attainment for conducting research work, but on the other part, their institutional mandate is not the one of a university or a research institute. This dilemma created some motivational issues to those staff members being more academically oriented. The key question, in the end, is what could be done to reduce wasting professional/academic competences within these agencies and utilize them more efficiently for the good of the European Union and its citizens. Again future studies could examine this issue to find out how the use of human resources in the EU public administration could be further improved.

A high level of agentic functioning (e.g. Bandura, 2001, 2002 and 2009), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and resilience (e.g. Hirschi, 2012) illustrates the interviewees both as individuals and as a collective group of professionals. These capacities, essentially linked to the construction of identity, had helped the interviewees to become more resourceful in performing well inside and outside of the office. This came clearly out of the research. There was enough evidence in the narratives to suggest that these capacities of agency, efficacy and resilience had been tested and strengthened through challenges and setbacks that these individuals had sustained in life. Such experiences of adversity, whether of personal or professional nature and no matter how critical they had been, had usually contributed only positively to the respondents' self-directedness, self-sufficiency and autonomy without losing their ability to interact with others co-constructively. At least within this research sample, the qualities and capacities described above featured strongly. This finding allows us to propose that they are good to be had, when considering relocation abroad for career purposes. However, additional research will be recommended for elaborating more on the specificities of agency, efficacy and resilience of staff within the EU public administration.

As important as what the interviewees told in their narratives is what they did not share. Among the respondents, critical comparisons about the national versus the EU style of conducting affairs were completely missing. This could imply that the respondents had been away from their own countries for such a long time that they were not able to make any such comparison anymore due to not knowing how things currently were in their national administration ('alienation'). This finding did not mean that the participants would have been fully satisfied with how the EU administration functions. Yet, this may implicitly suggest that interviewees who already had longer careers in the EU or other supranational administrations tend to shift their reference frame from national towards more European/global. To what extent this proposed shift in reference frames also is reflected as changes in their territorial identities and identifications requires more research (e.g. national versus European/global).

From the researcher's perspective it was somewhat surprising to see that the discussion about feeling European did not go too much in depth and did not 'provoke' lengthier or more elaborated responses among the interviewees, who for years had been working within the EU public administration. By no means should their answers to the topic be considered as superficial. Yet the respondents could have put a little bit more flesh on the bones after all. Although the interviewees felt European, still the overall impression from their replies was that many of them had not really given that much thought to what feeling European eventually meant to them and thus they did not offer too much contentwise. It is difficult to see that this 'feeling European' would have been such a sensitive topic that it would have made the interviewees feel so uncomfortable that they therefore only gave relatively short responses. At least their body language or behaviour in general at the interview did not indicate any such psychological inconvenience that could have directly affected their answers. Retrospectively, we may say that getting a better hold of the topic of 'feeling European' among the respondents would have required a slightly different approach, for example, addressing Europeanness from multiple perspectives with more questions than actually was the case in this research. Definitely this issue of how EU staff members relate to Europe and Europeanness deserves more academic attention in the future.

With the research findings now available, we may say that these investigated capitals of identity, interculturality and career in a professional context are not something self-standing and separable from one another, but closely intertwined. Moreover, they express themselves differently depending on prevailing conditions, and respond to various circumstantial factors usually in a flexible, even elastic and stretching way. The common characteristic of identity, interculturality and career capitals is their processual, interactional and contextual nature. The results suggest that the interviewees of this research are aware of this specific nature, but that they seem to lack tools, methods and sometimes even knowledge for more profoundly understanding what it is they are dealing with and how they possibly could get a stronger hold of these three capitals for themselves. The challenge seems to be how a professional pursuing a global career could make something abstract more concrete, and how they could construct something more tangible out of something that is largely intangible and mainly resides in human relations that are strongly characterized by interculturality. According to this dissertation, it is not sufficient only to know who one is (identity), but how one professionally (career) and relationally (interculturality) interdepends on other people in a supranational working environment. This dynamic interdependent relationship between identity, interculturality and career in an international context is an area that calls for more interdisciplinary research in the future.

The main contribution that this doctoral dissertation makes to academic discourse is its contextual approach and how the research design was done. This was knowingly the first time ever that academic research focused on self-initiatied expatriates employed at three European Union decentralized agencies and addressed their views on identity, interculturality and career capitals within a supranational working environment. Another specific feature of this research is that it gave equal weight to the notions of identity, interculturality and career, and made an attempt to bring them together for discussing and analyzing them as one joint holistic whole. In earlier studies, the discussion and analysis have usually given more importance to one main perspective (e.g. identity) over eventual sub-perspectives. Thereby, the findings of this research add a new layer to prior literature by viewing the complexity of identity, interculturality and career as one almost unseparable and highly interconnected phenomenon in relation to global careers in the EU public sector.

It was evident from the outset of this dissertation that theories from several academic fields would need to be looked at for tackling this multi-faceted research topic. With the interdisciplinary approach applied to this research, the conceptual triangle of identity, interculturality and career makes a theoretical contribution to better understanding the dynamics of multiple levels and dimensions that are at an interplay in how individuals' see themselves and the others, and how they relate to intercultural interaction and professional careers within the EU public administration. No single academic field alone could possibly have sufficiently explained the interconnectedness between identity, interculturality and career. For example, although identity was mainly addressed from the perspectives of psychology and sociology, still other academic fields were needed for contexualising it in this research (such as education, career development, intercultural studies). Exactly this was the case with the two other main concepts, too.

The more practical-level contribution of this research is that it provides EU institutions (including managers and staff) with evidence that they could utilize for developing their diversity management (including in-service training), human resource development (e.g. recruitment, staff rotation, career management support) and institutional stakeholder relations (e.g. networking and cooperation). In addition, this doctoral dissertation may be of interest for other supranational organizations operating more globally for the areas listed above.

Finally, the reader is here reminded of the doctoral candidate's eventual positionality in view to drawing conclusions and making recommendations based on this research. As mentioned in chapter 6.4., I myself was working for five years for one of the EU agencies (Cedefop) included in the sample of this research. Regardless of how carefully I have tried to remain as neutral and objective as possible while analyzing the data, my experience from the EU public administration may still have influenced my interpretation and conclusions/recommendations deriving from there.

8.3. Recommendations

This doctoral dissertation has discussed and studied a combination of topics that can clearly be characterized as global, international and European. The research focus, however, has mostly been on the individual level within a wider societal context, and the main aim has been to understand how EU experts identify themselves and how they subjectively relate to interculturality and international careers. As this research and its findings supposedly will engage a broad spectrum of experts in the communities of policy, research and practice on different levels across education and employment sectors in Europe and beyond, it is therefore important to integrate multi-stakeholder perspectives into the following recommendations deriving from this doctoral dissertation. So, below recommendations will address education and employment at the European, national and individual levels.

- ***European Union level***

The European Commission acts as the politically independent executive body of the European Union and is in charge of preparing proposals for new European legislation. It also implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. In this role, the Commission should continue its work towards removing any EU-level obstacles there still are to intra-EU labor mobility, and with the national authorities of the EU member states ensure that EU citizens have access to reliable and accurate information about national labor markets and career mobility opportunities across Europe. This responsibility mostly falls on the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) at the European Commission. Within its mandate the new EU institution – the European Labour Authority (to be operative as of 2019) - will be expected to contribute to such legal and social conditions that are favorable to increasing free movement of workforce throughout the European Union.

As studies on intra-EU labor mobility have shown (see chapter 2.2.3.), the educational attainment of those being employed and seeking employment abroad has increased. This is an important message to be communicated to EU citizens so that they realize that in today's European labor market formal qualifications and higher level of skills and competences are sought by employers in the EU member states. Gone are the days, when people with low skills levels still easily found jobs. Thus, the European Commission – including the DG EMPL and the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) – should by all possible means continue promoting and implementing their policies, strategies, programs and initiatives that aim to raise skills levels and support mobility for learning and working purposes in the EU area. Also the three EU agencies selected to this research – Cedefop, European Training Foundation and Eurofound – carry out research and development activities that make a significant contribution to the broader EU policy goals in the areas of vocational education and working life. The results of their work should not only be addressed to policy and decision makers, but be popularized, translated into national languages and made handily available to European citizens.

This research has added nuance to understanding the specificity of staff working for three selected EU agencies. The lived experience of individual staff members in relation to their identity, interculturality and career capitals seems to be an untapped resource that could be made more transparent and better understood at these institutions. Creating more awareness and visibility of these types of capitals among staff and management, and explicitly stating what they are, could positively contribute to the overall performance of EU institutions. For example, the EU agencies included in this research could consider how to address, develop and make interculturality capital more visible among their staff and how this could be incorporated in their HR policies and strategies in the coming years. The observation derived from the data analysis is that everybody at the EU agencies talks about interculturality, but nobody really fully understands what it is. Therefore, neither the HR administration, nor individual staff members regard it as a valuable resource that could be more effectively utilized would its essence be better known. This may be due to the fuzziness and ambiguity of the given phenomenon. Nevertheless, this study suggests that interculturality capital, when well captured, improves smooth cooperation inside and outside of an organization. Moreover, if EU institutions start paying more attention to the systematic development of these types of capitals, it could also encourage the EU member states to initiate some action in the area in their national administrations. Even other supranational bodies (such as ILO, OECD, UN) could find an interest in benchmarking their internal staff policies and strategies following the related developments within the EU public administration.

Also some of the Europe-wide networks operating under the European Commission, such as the European Employment Services EURES (job mobility), Euroguidance (guidance for learning mobility) and Eurodesk (youth information), are key players in spreading information and knowhow about mobility opportunities in Europe. These networks should highlight the benefits of mobility at individual and societal levels even more than they have done in the past. In this regard, their primary target audiences are to be frequently addressed, including labor market advisers, guidance practitioners and youth workers, who can further disseminate such valuable information to their clients (i.e. individual citizens) interested in going abroad for studying, training, working or voluntary service. Participating in international youth exchanges at a young age may increase the willingness of an individual to consider studying and working abroad later on in life.

Finally, this research suggests to explore how inter-agency staff mobility could be developed in the EU in the future so that people, who have entered the EU public services at one specific agency, could be transferred to another agency after some period of time. There are many obstacles to this, one being that the agencies operate in a wide range of fields and thus your competence profile might not fit to a totally different field. Another aspect is that currently many EU job holders across all EU institutions have an indefinite employment contract instead of a temporary one. In case the majority of staff working for the EU had temporary contracts would completely change the situation (e.g. for a fixed five-year period). Those with their temporary contracts expired would be replaced by newly recruited staff from the EU member states. More rotation of existing staff and more turnover of staff in general would probably bring new creative and innovative thinking to the work carried out by the EU institutions. Increasing the number of temporary employment contracts at the expense of indefinite contracts would open the doors to the EU public services for more European citizens, who this way would get their first-hand experience in how the European Union actually functions and through that become more ‘Europeanized’ themselves. In the long run, this would have a multiplying effect on how average citizens see and experience the European Union as they would gain more insight into it from their friends and family members, who have started working on temporary contracts for the EU services.

• *National level across the European Union member states – Education sector*

The national Ministries of Education that are responsible for education and training policies, strategies and legislation in the EU member states are encouraged to further develop such conditions for formal, informal and non-formal learning that support individual citizens' acquisition, recognition and validation of skills and competences needed in the global labor market. The national education and training systems and related reforms should to a higher degree take into account the changing labor market demands and the future skills needs of employers at national and international levels.

Hence, the national core curricula for all levels and types of education and training should be revised at regular intervals in the EU member states. The national curricula should be evidence-based and rely on the latest scientific findings. They should also reflect and be representative of the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and sexual diversity that learners encounter in school and in wider society. In this way, they support identity and interculturality development of young and adult learners. The European, international and global dimensions should be embedded in all learning contents across different subjects, and the learners from an early age on should through their schooling be informed about learning, training and working opportunities in other countries.

In most European countries, the higher education institutions (HEIs) are in charge of the development and implementation of teacher and guidance counsellor education programs. The future societal demands on teachers and guidance counsellors will have to be reflected in the design and delivery of education programs addressed to them. Through their education, future teachers and guidance counsellors should become well equipped to support learners of any age in their learning and career paths in a global world. This international dimension of teaching and guidance needs to be further strengthened in teacher and guidance counsellor education across Europe. In the future, the professional associations of teachers and guidance counsellors should raise more awareness among their members of the impact that global education and labor markets have on teaching and guidance provision.

Education and learning providers at a local level across the EU countries should implement the national core curricula in the best possible way. Provided the international and intercultural dimension is part of the curricula means that schools and educational institutions will have to ensure that in all subjects it is well integrated in the learning contents, and that teachers have the professional competence to deliver that to the learners. Guidance counsellors, either placed within schools or at separate guidance centers that cooperate with schools, also are expected to be able to provide learners with information and advice on international mobility opportunities in Europe and beyond.

- ***National level across the European Union member states – Employment sector***

Labor market policies, strategies and legislation that are under the auspices of the national Ministries of Employment in the EU countries require regular revision to respond to the demands of the national and global labor markets. From the point of this research, they should support and foster intra-EU labor mobility and (work-based) migration of third-country citizens (i.e. non-EU citizens) and their labor market integration. The national ministries together with regional-level labor market authorities should make international careers to an attractive option especially for those who either cannot find a job in their own country or those who eventually could consider working abroad for a couple of years.

Across Europe the main task of the national public employment services (PES) is to connect jobseekers with employers as well as to ensure the effective operation of the labor market. In times of an evolving digital labor market ecosystem (incl. online resources, self-help tools and methods etc. available to individual job seekers), the role of PES is changing. Therefore, the need to facilitate frictionless and transparent interactions between PES, employers and job seekers (from local to global levels) becomes crucially important. For promoting and increasing the volume of intra-EU labor mobility, the national PES authorities across countries should cooperate more closely with each other on common topics relevant to ensuring that there is a well-functioning European labor market in the future. The European Employment Service (EURES) advisers are part of the national PES authorities in the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) countries. These advisers work directly with employers to help them find employees from other EU and EEA countries. Both the national PES and the national-level EURES advisers should continue making labor market information about other countries more easily accessible to citizens for them to consider taking up employment overseas.

There should be more financial and other incentives for individual employers to receive and hire employees from abroad. Would this be the case, eventually the number of intra-EU labor force mobility could start growing faster than it has done in the past few years. Specifically small- and medium-sized employers, who have recruited or will shortly be recruiting staff from abroad, may require external professional expertise (e.g. career guidance and other types of support) for the newly hired foreign staff members at the initial stage of their employment. Such external advisory service could be beneficial in terms of supporting the integration process of foreign employees in the company/institution and in the new society. Moreover, employers need more support in understanding and interpreting foreign qualifications and diplomas as to avoid making unnecessary mistakes in recruitment of employees from abroad.

- ***Mobile and to-be-mobile individuals***

This piece of research has made an attempt to illustrate, how respondents representing an elite group viewed their own professional careers in a supranational institution and personal lives in another country. Based on this dissertation, it is obvious that the mobility experience of those individuals, who have been working abroad, should be made better visible to those, who are still in the process of considering that as a career option for themselves, but have not yet taken a decision on should they move overseas or should they simply stay at home. Learning more about other people's real-life experiences is always helpful as it gives additional flavor and rich insights into grasping what it means to be living and working in an international and intercultural environment. Both the benefits and risks connected to a foreign sojourn should be pointed out as realistically as possible to those contemplating on taking the step to launch an international career.

There is much space for improvement across Europe as regards how repatriates could, on the one hand, be supported in their professional and societal integration when they return home from overseas, and on the other hand, how their international experience could be more constructively used to benefit those people, who consider a global career. Different types of actions and initiatives in this area could be launched, such as mentoring schemes (i.e. a repatriates providing their expertise to those interested in going abroad for employment) or learning materials and toolboxes that could be used for self-study by those who intend to step on a global career.

For the above reasons, we will need more qualitative research in Europe in the future on the subjective aspects of living and working abroad. Only a deeper understanding of the mobility experience will give us solid arguments to encourage more people to choose embarking on a professional and personal journey in a foreign country. Future research could also provide additional insight into how those, who return from abroad to their home countries could have their international competences better acknowledged and utilized at the national level than is the case for the time being.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Request to conduct interviews at EU agencies for doctoral research

Letter (6 October 2014) addressed to the Directors of Cedefop, European Training Foundation and Eurofound

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Mr Mika Launikari from Helsinki, Finland, a former staff member of Cedefop, where I was working for 5 years (2007-2012). Now I am pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Helsinki (Faculty of Behavioural Sciences).

My PhD studies (2014-2017) focus on **International Mobility Capital**, i.e. the added value that working abroad generates to individuals in terms of professional competences and personal growth, and how this internationally refined human capital can be made better visible in the European labor market. For my doctoral research, I wish to have the opportunity to conduct interviews at the following four European Union agencies: Cedefop, Eurofound, and ETF.

Your permission for interviews

Your agency represents a truly multicultural working environment with staff members from numerous countries. Thus, I would appreciate to have your permission for conducting interviews among the staff of your agency. These interviews exploring the individual staff members' international working experience will serve the collection of data for my PhD research. My research will solely focus on the individual employees and is by no means going to examine or analyze your institution.

I would like to run **individual interviews with at least five to seven (5-7) staff members of your agency**. More specific criteria for identifying volunteers among your staff will be announced once confirmed that I can proceed with this research at your agency. Finally, after the individual interviews have been completed, I still wish to carry out a **focus group discussion** with all the interviewees present at the same time for approximately 45 minutes.

It would be most helpful, if these individual **interviews** and the focus group session could be **organized at your premises** and if the staff members would be allowed to participate in this research during their working hours. A realistic work plan would be to run these interviews during two to three days. These interviews at the given EU agencies are scheduled for the period of **February-March 2015**.

Confidentiality

The interview questions will touch upon identity formation, professional development and life management in the overall context of working abroad. **All information** the interviewees provide to me for research purposes will be kept **strictly confidential**. All interviews lasting approx. 1 hour will be recorded and an explicit consent in writing to this will be specifically sought from each interviewee. Needless to say, participation in the interviews is fully voluntary, but I trust there will be employees at your agency who wish to contribute to this research.

Additional information

The **final results**, conclusions and recommendations of my PhD research will be **at your and your agency's disposal** once the doctoral dissertation will be published.

I will cover my own travelling, accommodation and subsistence expenses in connection with my interview trip to Greece/Ireland/Italy. The interviews as such will **not cause any expenses to your agency**. Only staff working time and a meeting room for interviews will kindly be requested.

In the attached document you can get an overview of the **research objectives, timetable and expected results**. Would you require **further information** about the research for taking a decision on permitting your staff members to participate in the interviews, you are kindly advised to contact me (Email: firstname.surname@helsinki.fi) or my **PhD supervisor Professor Fred Dervin** at the University of Helsinki (Email: firstname.surname@helsinki.fi).

Looking forward to hearing from you

I would be grateful, if you could give me your answer **by 31 October 2014** on whether or not these research interviews can be conducted among your staff members as described above. In case of a positive decision, the selection of the employees to be interviewed as well as the practical implementation of the interviews will be discussed and agreed on with a representative of your institution (e.g. Head of Human Resources) in the coming weeks.

Looking forward to hearing from you and hoping this research initiative will be well received by your agency!

Yours sincerely,

Mika Launikari
M.Sc.Econ., PhD Candidate (Education)
Department of Teacher Education
Faculty of Behavioural Sciences
University of Helsinki, Finland

Fred Dervin
Professor, PhD, FT, PGCE, FRSA
Department of Teacher Education
Faculty of Behavioural Sciences
University of Helsinki, Finland

ENCLOSURES: (1) Brief summary of the PhD research

ANNEX 2. PhD research outline
(to Directors and staff of EU agencies)

Title of PhD research – International Mobility Capital (IMC) as a professional and educational resource – Narratives of European Union experts on career development, learning and employability (2014-2018)

Introduction – Across the European Union, investments in developing human capital, fostering educational attainment, promoting labor mobility across countries and reducing skills mismatches are considered necessary for economic competitiveness in the global market (European Commission, 2010). The competitive advantage that can be created through international labor mobility/ migration, as Ackers (2010) and Holliday (2013) argue, relies on the employers' ability to capitalise on the positive contribution that talented people from diverse cultural backgrounds together can make in working life.

Although career mobility across Europe "in the spirit of free movement of people" is regarded as a tool for continued professional development, lifelong learning and acquisition of competences not possessed by everybody, still work force mobility remains modest within the EU28 area. Only some 8.1 million economically active EU citizens lived in another EU country than their country of citizenship in 2013, which corresponds to 3.3% of the total EU labor force (EU LFS, 2013).

Focus – Making visible an individual's International Mobility Capital, accrued through exposure to studying, training and working abroad, is vital for the mobile person as to present it as an integral element and valuable resource in his/her portfolio to (future/potential) employers. Thus, this PhD research aims at finding out, on the one hand, what are the dimensions of International Mobility Capital and, on the other hand, analysing what are the benefits and assets that career mobility generates to experts who work for European Union agencies. The specific research question is how International Mobility Capital can be defined, conceptualized and understood based on the narrative biographies of altogether 20 staff members of the following European Union agencies (i.e. 5-7 staff members from each agency incl. Cedefop, Eurofound, ETF)?

Expected results – This PhD research will contribute to improving the dialogue between education-training, world of work and academic research, and to achieving a better convergence of common goals and mutually beneficial collective action at local, regional, national and European/international levels across the fields of lifelong learning, employment and international mobility. The main outcomes of this research will be a theoretical framework for International Mobility Capital and recommendations on how an individual's International Mobility Capital can be made transparent in the EU labor market.

The results are expected to generate a valuable input to future academic research in the field and to contribute to the further development, formulation and implementation of European Union policies for international mobility for studying, training and working. This applies to the individual European Union member states and their national education and employment authorities, research bodies and other key players (e.g. social partners, higher education institutions).

Timetable

2014 (Year 1) – Establishing the theoretical foundation and designing the data collection and analysis.

2015 (Year 2) – Data collection (semi-structured interviews + focus groups) and preliminary data analysis.

2016 (Year 3) – Data analysis to be continued, concrete results/findings available, drafting doctoral dissertation.

2017-2018 (Years 4-5) – Final results and public defense of the doctoral dissertation.

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ANNEX 3. Consent form for data collection
PhD research by Mr Mika Launikari,
University of Helsinki, Finland

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking Part		
• I have read and understood the project information sheet dated DD/MM/YYYY.	☐	☐
• I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐	☐
• I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and recorded (audio or video).	☐	☐
• I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any	☐	☐
reasons for why I no longer want to take part.	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide for this project only		
• I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	☐	☐
• I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	☐	☐

*Please choose **one** of the following two options:*

- I would like my real name used in the above ☐
- I would not like my real name to be used in the above. ☐

Use of the information I provide beyond this project		
• I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the university data archive.	☐	☐
• I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
• I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publica-tions, reports, webpages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
So we can use the information you provide legally		
I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to Mr Mika Launikari, PhD Student, University of Helsinki, Finland.	☐	☐

Name of participant [printed]	Signature	Date
Mr Mika Launikari [printed]	Signature	Date

ANNEX 4. Interview template for data collection

Icebreaker question: Could we start by you first telling something about yourself as a person, who you are and what your life interests are?

Interview section A – Motivation for working at an international level / for a European Union agency

This section will explore ***motives and aspirations, hopes and fears, assumptions and expectations, goals and priorities, preferences, values, ideals and beliefs***.

- What happened/what brought you to this institution initially?
- How does your daily working environment look like?
- How would you describe your key motive or main aspiration for working for a European Union agency (i.e. working abroad)?
- What has this working experience given to you as an individual and as a professional? (and what it might give in the future?)
- Imagine that this EU agency had two offices (one here where we are now and one in your own home town). At the time of you applying for this job here (abroad), you could have applied for a similar job at the branch located in your hometown. What would you have done in that situation and why?
- Anything else before we move to the next section?

Interview section B – Managing one's life, learning and career in an international setting

This section will touch on issues related to ***managing one's life, learning and career when working abroad***.

- Could you please tell me how is your daily life here (in this city/country)? (describe a "normal average day")
- How do you interact with people at work and outside of work? (on a "normal average day")
- How have you adapted to your daily working and living environment here? (What has been easy and fun, what maybe difficult?)
- What is required for having a satisfying working and living experience in another country? What should be taken into account, if somebody considers a career abroad (name 3-5 key aspects/issues)?
- Anything else before we move to the next section?

<u>Interview section C</u> – Developing and using skills, knowledge, competences and networks in an international working context

This section will deal with the ***interviewee's assets (skills, knowledge, competences), resources (e.g. networks) and potential***.

- Imagine that I am a recruiter looking for an expert who is interested in working abroad (EU agency). How would you sell yourself as a professional to me? What arguments would you put forward?
- How do you see your own professional career development in this environment now and in the future?
- What do you think of professional skills, competences and other assets needed in this working environment in comparison to what would be required in working life in your own home country for same kind of an expert's position?
- Would you now decide to return to your own home country, how would employers on the national level look at your EU work experience and what you have become as a professional?
- Anything else before we move to the next section?

<u>Interview section D</u> – Who I am today and how working in an international/ multicultural environment has contributed to what I am

This section will focus on mapping out any eventual ***"evolution" in terms of identity formation,*** i.e. if the interviewee has transformed to something different from what s/he used to be earlier compared to what s/he feels of being now while working for the given EU agency.

- How does working in an EU environment make you reflect on what "feeling European" means? What does it mean to you personally (if anything at all)?
- How it is to be working in this kind of a multicultural environment with its specificities (incl. several languages, many nationalities, different professional standards, diverse professional and educational backgrounds, …) and how do you personally relate to that?
- It is often said that working in a multicultural environment makes you more aware of different cultures. How do you yourself look at your colleagues from across Europe? How do you relate to stereotypes regarding different cultures, countries and nationalities?
- How has this experience of working and living abroad contributed to what you are today as a human being?
- Anything else before we move to the last question?

FINAL QUESTION: Do you ever regret or have you ever regretted that you took the decision to come to work abroad/for this EU agency? And why is that?

ANNEX 5. Excerpts from transcribed interviews
(numbers 5 and 14)

- **Interviewee 5** (conducted on 25 February 2015)

INTERVIEWER: Could we start this interview by you telling me something about yourself, who you are as a person, as a human being?

Interviewee: Well, I think now at this point I am very family-oriented person, I have two kids ... I enjoy being with them. I think in general I like a lot of sports, … not outdoor activities, but like to play sports to be with friends, to play football, basketball. I like going to the gym. I like to have in my leisure time to have this kind of free time to do activities with people I like a lot. That's the main thing.

On who I am, that's more difficult. I mean, what I mean is that it is difficult to define who I am. I am a gentle person. I try to be good with people, and friendly, let's say, and then I think a lot of myself is my professional work. It is difficult to take it away, away from my professional work … is really my family … also I come from a small town in (name of country), so this also identifies me. I feel very attached, let's say, to my roots. That makes me a little bit who I am.

INTERVIEWER: Very good, thank you. Let's move on. How did your international career get started and what brought you to this EU agency?

Interviewee: I always say that I am a product of European policies. I have been saying this for a while (laughter). I left (name of country) when I was (age). I was in my first year of the PhD, what happened is that I finished my degree in psychology, and then I have always wanted to move away, to try … I was less interested in US in a way. At the university there was an option to go for an Erasmus (exchange). So, I had already finished my degree, but I could go still for Erasmus in the first year of my PhD. So, I went abroad on Erasmus for 10 months. I wanted first to go to the UK, basically to learn English, but when I had the interview for going to it, so my English was not that good. I had studied English for a long time, but during the university I had not practised. My English was pretty bad, I would say. So they said, we do not want to send you to England, because your English is not good, you have to go somewhere else, you can go to Italy or so.

Then there was an opening in (name of country), so I went to (name of country), to (name of a major city in the country). I am going to tell you the whole story. When I went to (name of country), I was told that I do not need to worry about anything. In (name of city in the interviewee's country of origin) they told, you do not have to worry about anything, because everything is very well organized. And they will contact you and they will find a place for you. I didn't do anything.

At that time the professor I was working with, there was a conference in (a city abroad) that year. So, I went with her to (this city abroad) for the conference. I met there somebody from the institute where I was supposed to work. You know, I have been looking through the list of foreign students and you are not there, you are not in the pedagogical institute. I have a paper here saying that I am an Erasmus student. So I think with this I should be fine. She said don't worry, when you come to (name of a major city in country X) you tell me and there is no problem, we will look for it. I went to (that major city in country X) and she said that you are not anywhere on the list. I went to talk to the student office and they … at the end it turned out that the professor who was in charge of the psychology students from Erasmus was not … had other assignments, so he had forgotten about that this year.

So anyway, that's the long story short. What happened then, just by chance because of that, I was signed to … because actually the thing that I had applied for, was not anymore in the institute. So, there were not any English speaking courses for me. 'So, you know we do not have any English speaking courses for you anymore, so you can go to the institute of international education at the end, that institute is specifically in English'. So I went there, I got in that programme for one year to do the master there. This was 1999. That was when I left, let's say the first year. I was going to be there for 10 months. The idea was that I would stay there for 10 months for doing my first year of the PhD. I was doing the PhD with (name of professor and name of university in the interviewee's own country). She was gonna direct my thesis, everything was very new. It is was specifically about conceptual change and pedagogy in education. This institute of international education was interesting, because it was not really pedagogy, it was more social sciences and theories of education and things like. The courses were very different. Everything was in English, for me that was new. The institute was very interesting also because it has a lot of international students. So and there is different, because the student body is higher level, only master and PhD. There were older people. At that time I was (age), so most of them, my colleagues in the class, let's say, were older than me. So, I was there for 6 months first, really always thinking that I am gonna eventually gonna leave and do my PhD in (interviewee's own country). But I was doing this master programme.

Then in January I came back after the Christmas holidays, and the professor asked me if I want to participate in a European project. What was happening, they were looking for somebody young, you know it was training and mobility of researchers programme, and they have a network of quite good universities, we had Oxford, we had Dijon, we had Humboldt University in Berlin. So it was really an international division, so it was a really good university, university department of international education. And they proposed to me to stay for 6 months on this project doing some work on organizational learning and training in companies that I was interested in … it was okay, it sounded interesting. And they would even pay me, which was even better. I was a young researcher for 6 months. For now it is half-time, depending on that we can decide how we will work. The 6 months finished in June 2000. And I was asked to stay to do the PhD. And in a way, you know, I think that they liked the idea that I had. I had to write something very short, not too long. I think they liked what I did, but probably they did not have too much of a choice. I want to believe I was good. So, I decided to stay and that was really a turning point … at that point I really, I was staying (name of destination country) for 2-3 years. Or going back home, I did not have a home, and I was sticking with the PhD, because I had been working on this project. I really did not talk with my professor in (city in interviewee's home country) and stuff, I had some contact, but not much, so it did not work very well with the professor back home, so I decided to stay.

(to be continued)

- **Interview 14** (conducted on 3 March 2015)

INTERVIEWER: Would it be fine if we start this interview by you first telling me who you are as a person, as a human being?

Interviewee: That's a really broad question … Well, you know it's difficult. I'm at the end of my career basically. Next week I will be (age). So I've got a real long life behind me already, both in working and in private life and so on, lots of experiences. In a sense all of the things which I treasure, which I like, which I find important in life, come together here both also in my work and in a way also living in Italy and so. So, yeah, there is a lot to tell. I find it difficult to … I'm married, no children, both me and my husband live in (name of interviewee's country of origin), because he works, both we have an international feeling, although we have lived most of our lives in (name of country of origin). We have for work and also for private life, we have travelled and worked abroad a lot, in projects and whatever ... yeah, what can I say?

INTERVIEWER: That's fair enough. Can we move on … would you mind describing your career path and how you started working abroad? What happened along the way that brought you to this agency?

Interviewee: I must tell you that my CV, if you are interested I could send it to you, is really strange. You know, it is not like a normal CV of somebody, you know, gets 18, goes to study, gets some master's degree, starts to work, and makes career, and then … for me it was more like a snake thing … when I was young, I had lots of interests, I still have lots of interests, so I found it really difficult to find a career what I would like to do. I had … so I made a lot of choices, which in the end did not turn out to be my profession. I studied history a bit. I was in kind of a medical thing for a bit, it was not that. Then I did a course which I finished like for social work. Then I found out that I do not work in this, and then in the end, but then I was already (age) and I made a drastic career switch, which everybody in my surroundings thought was ridiculous.

I chose to become a technician, it was really kind of strange, but there were a few things which were focusing, you know which were triggering me. My father has been mechanical engineer, so from my youth I always have had kind of a fascination, I think because of his … him, for you know big machineries, for technical interventions and things like that. But okay, I was a girl, and at that time it was in the 50s, there was no idea that I could start doing a technical. I mean, at that time it was really technical studies, and technical school you know was for boys, and the girls were out of it. The other thing was at that time in (name of country of origin), maybe also in other countries, there was a lot, a lack of skills of people in technical professions. So there were all these campaigns, also for women, to become technical. So I thought maybe this is it.

I was also very active politically at that time, on the left side. And for example, but I was so fed up with so many people talking, talking, talking and going on demonstration. So, I really had a feeling I want to do something practical, and I had this interest in techniques. So, I thought, let's start. So I went in a kind of a re-skilling, re-training scheme, and everybody thought I was really crazy. I was this girl with a bachelor in history and all kinds of other gifts, and whatever. And then I thought I really become a maintenance person, you know, but I did. It was tough, it was completely male environment, which I did not really like in particular. But I liked the fact that I could make things. So, okay you know, that was a part, I finished that scheme, and I worked for a company as a technician for 5-6 years.

At that time I already had met my husband, and he was actually the only person, who thought this was really interesting. He was a mathematician, he had just finished his studies and he had this idea that he wanted to go to Africa to teach. And for me it had not really occurred that I really wanted to go abroad, you know, but I thought it was nice. With my technical profession I can also do that. Yes. So in the end in 1990 we went to (country in Africa) together, we both had a contract. We went in one of these schemes, you know where these countries, like (name of African country) and (name of another African country) … they had just become independent, yes so (name of an African country) already also. There was lots of things to do, and so this was actually an organization who had helped in the struggle against Apartheid and so on. Now the new government of (name of African country) asked them to provide teachers, physiotherapists, and so on. So they had this scheme.

So, (male name), my husband and me went there. I worked there in a technical school in (a city in an African country), in the capital. We went for 4 years and he worked in a highschool, teaching mathematics. That was my first experience abroad, and that was great. And the great thing for me was and that has been a red thread in all this international work for me afterwards always. That for the first time I experienced that there are all kinds of different solutions to problems, way to do things, you know. And of course this was quite a different culture, although it has English roots because of these colonies. I was in a school which was supported by GIZ, German donor, but still it was a huge school with 600 students … these were all black boys and some girls also, and we were teaching them to become, you know, people, who were welder (inaudible) and so on.

So, that was great. And when ... we could have stayed, but we did not stay in the end, because at that time we saw that we were actually replacing as a teacher parts of (this African country's) teachers. Because when we started, we were really persons who filled a gap. There were lots of new school opening and they just did not have enough teachers, so they asked teachers from abroad. Fine. But in the meantime they were training (this African country's) teachers, which were good, you know, and they wanted also to become teachers. And there were all these foreign teachers, so we thought we have to go back.

So we went back, but from that point on we always said we want to go abroad again sometime. We'll see when and where. And we tried to find international work in our career, and in the first few years we did not succeed in that. I think it is a little bit like you. I started then … actually when I went, I did not have … how do you say, a license or programme … qualification for teacher, because I was a technician. I got the job, because I was a professional you know, but of course I wanted to do that in (interviewee's own country) also, to teach, and I did not want to go to the private sector, although I liked it, but I did not want to work in that complete mill environment. That was really my main thing.

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