Cosmopolitan Students at ISU

Executive Report
Prepared by students of Sociology 300: Senior Experience, Section 2, Fall 2015

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Short Summary:

This study was prompted by a call for a “cosmopolitan turn” in sociological research, and the process of “comprehensive campus internationalization” currently underway at Illinois State University. Our research examines the range of cosmopolitan interests and practices among domestic students at ISU, and factors that influenced those interests and practices. We conceptualized a cosmopolitan person as “one who displays openness toward the world beyond local communities and nation-states and is actively engaged and interested in that world.” Our methods included qualitative interviews, photo elicitation, and observation. The student populations we included were Veterans, International Business students, Master’s International students planning to go into the Peace Corps, and language majors. We also included undeclared freshman as a comparison group. We conducted interviews with 5 different people from each group, then requested that interviewees share pictures of objects that reflected their openness to the world beyond the United States. Our team also conducted many observations in highly trafficked areas on campus, looking for cosmopolitan behavior.

We found many similarities between the groups of interview subjects. All of the groups felt that travel and family had an effect on their cosmopolitanism. Family heritage was also found to be a prominent influence among all of the groups studied. Traveling abroad was a common practice amongst the International Business Majors, Language Majors, and Veterans. We also discovered some differences between the interview groups. Social media appeared to be influential mainly for the sample of undeclared freshmen. The Masters International students were the most focused on global issues. They also described volunteering and actively pursuing education as important practices. Club involvement was most prominent for International Business majors. Common interests amongst Language Majors were world cultures and languages, which also influenced their field of study. The most prominent practice for Language Majors was studying abroad. Military and deployment were obvious practices that were specific to the Veteran sample group. When analyzing the comparison group of undeclared freshman, it can be seen that they did not have the same cosmopolitan experience as the other four groups. However, their interest in travel and openness to different cultures was evident.

A lot of the photo elicitation pictures showed souvenirs that students obtained during trips abroad or things family members and friends brought back during their trips such as scarves, masks, and other figurines. Other participants provided pictures of even more personal things like pictures of drawings of family, combat boots, and flags.

In our 26 observations, we did not find many cosmopolitan interests, practices, or influences. Sporting events, though heavily trafficked, did not show us much. We saw little evidence of cosmopolitanism at the Rec Center. Places where we found the most cosmopolitanism were at Milner Library and campus dining facilities. In these locations, students were expressing their cosmopolitanism through their dress, language, and things they were watching on television. Some students wore clothing to represent other areas of the world and other areas beyond the local. They sometimes spoke languages other than English and watched sporting events of teams from around the world. The place with the most prominent cosmopolitan practices was the circus gym in the Horton South Gym. There were many international students and faculty involved in Gamma Phi; other members made sure to translate for them and help them understand what was going on and being said at all times. In addition, the theme for the circus this year is “Around The World.”

Scholars have written about sociology needing to take a “cosmopolitan turn” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2014; Beck 2011). Our research fits into this cosmopolitan turn. We are not only conceptualizing the concept of cosmopolitanism, we are also operationalizing that concept. Our findings show that different groups of college students can all have similar cosmopolitan interests, practices, and influences in their everyday life. We have found that a cosmopolitan turn in research can show not only these similarities, but also give great context for future, more in-depth research exploring how colleges affect or influence their student’s cosmopolitanism.
Context—Senior Experience class in Sociology

This research is the product of a semester-long study conducted by the Illinois State University Fall 2015 Section 2 class of Sociology 300: “Senior Experience.” This course is the research capstone course for Sociology majors at Illinois State University. Students are expected to conduct sociological research, analyze data, synthesize the related sociological literature, write up results and present their findings. This report is the culmination of our work. This research was approved by the university Institutional Review Board, and given the protocol number 2015-0278.

Cosmopolitan Topic and Significance

**Illinois State University and its process of campus internationalization**

The concept of cosmopolitanism is pertinent at Illinois State University right now, because the university is undergoing comprehensive campus internationalization and is developing university-wide global learning goals. Universities undergoing campus internationalization sometimes focus primarily on international students and students studying abroad, without giving deep consideration to how domestic students are prepared at home to be informed citizens within a globalized world. The need to know more about how our domestic students situate themselves within the larger world has been the inspiration for this project. We aim to raise awareness about the ways in which our students are already engaged in lifestyles that reflect cosmopolitanism. Study results point to ways in which more students may cultivate their own cosmopolitanism. Results may also contribute to ideas of how to make college campuses more globally engaged in ways that matter to students.

**Our conceptualization of “cosmopolitanism”**

A cosmopolitan person: Displays openness toward the world beyond local communities and nation-states and is actively engaged and interested in that world.

**The cosmopolitan concept within sociology**

Recently, there has been a shift within the social sciences. Many scholars have written about sociology needing to take a “cosmopolitan turn” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2014; Beck, 2011). The exact conceptualization of cosmopolitanism has been debated and has evolved over time.

Our conceptualization was influenced by three main ideas. First, we adopted the attention put on attachment to the world beyond local communities and nation states by Haller and Roudometof (2010) in “The Cosmopolitan-Local Continuum in Cross-National Perspective.” The reading stresses the cosmopolitan-local continuum, which is based on level of attachment to both local communities and nation-states. Hannerz (1990, cited by Hawkins, 2010) influenced many researchers’ conceptualizations. Hannerz wrote that cosmopolitanism “includes a stance towards diversity itself, toward the coexisting of cultures in the individual experience. A more genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the other. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences…At the same time however, cosmopolitanism can be a matter of competence… a personal ability to make one’s way into another culture” (Hawkins, 2010, p. 4). Third, the idea of engagement also influenced our conceptualization. Hawkins (2010) changed Hannerz’s definition slightly by arguing that one has to actively engage in cosmopolitanism. He states that cosmopolitanism is not “reached” by “exhibiting an understanding and appreciation of different cultural experiences” but rather “seeking out and valuing the difference of cultural behaviors” (2010, p. 9). We agreed that there needs to be a component of engagement when it comes to cosmopolitanism. Through the ideas of attachment beyond local communities and nation states, openness towards other cultures and
active engagement in the pursuit of cosmopolitanism we crafted our conceptualization of cosmopolitanism, stated above.

**Literature Review**

Cosmopolitanism has become highly recognized in the social world. Many sociologists have taken a liking to this subject and have found their own ways to define and study it. Cosmopolitanism has been addressed in the work force (Morosanu, 2013; Hawkins, 2010; Cook, 2011), with respect to others around the world (Beck, 2011), among love and family relationships (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2014), as a continuum (Roudometof, 2005; Haller & Roudometof, 2010; Hawkins, 2010), and in school environments (Hinton, 2012). Throughout sociological literature, the concept of cosmopolitanism has been debated heavily. Authors wrote that there were many conceptualizations of the concept, often mentioning that it was hard for scholars to agree on just one (Roudometof, 2005; Haller & Roudometof 2015; Cook, 2011). Most of the work that has already been done on cosmopolitanism defines the concept by what it is not. “Nationalism is frequently conceptualized as the antithesis of cosmopolitanism…” (Brett and Moran, 2011, p. 188). Other works made note of the “openness” that has to exist for cosmopolitanism to exist (Morosanu, 2013; Skrbis and Woodard, 2007; Hawkins, 2010). Understanding the degrees to which people are connected to the global other (Beck, 2011) brings up an important point forged by Roudometof. He studied cosmopolitanism in relation to a continuum. Each of these researchers saw the importance of both “locals” and “cosmopolitans” (Hawkins, 2010, Roudometof, 2005, Haller & Roudometof, 2010). People who refrain from connecting with the world and other cultures outside their own are described as locals (Hawkins, 2010). One cannot be completely cosmopolitan or completely local. Brett and Moran (2011, p. 188) describe it well, saying “[Nationalism is] particularistic, exclusionary and backward-looking; [Cosmopolitanism is] universalist, inclusive and the cultural direction of the future in a globalizing world.” For the purpose of our research, we followed some of the ideas pulled from Christina Hinton’s dissertation. She sought in-depth knowledge of what it meant to be cosmopolitan in an education environment. Hinton interviewed students of various grade levels to gain an understanding of their cosmopolitan practices and skills (Hinton, 2012). The dissertation provided good ideas for how to begin further research on this topic and ways to write up questions about cosmopolitanism. Our study focuses on cosmopolitanism in a collegiate environment. Cosmopolitanism benefits students not only because it leads to positive social ties but also because students today are raised in an increasingly globalized world. We hope that our findings can be used to help universities transition into more globalized campuses and produce more cosmopolitan students.

**Research Questions**

What is the range of cosmopolitan interests and practices among domestic students at ISU? What influences those interests and practices?

**Methods**

Throughout our study we used three different methods to collect our data. We used qualitative interviewing, observation and photo elicitation. (See the end of this report for our interview guide, observation prompt, and photo elicitation prompt.) The combination of these three methods provided a wide range of knowledge on how students at ISU show cosmopolitanism, with a focus on their interests, practices, and influences. The in-depth interviews that we conducted with students on campus were followed by photo-elicitation, in which the participants gave us 1-3 photos that demonstrated their openness toward the world beyond the United States. As Clark-Ibanez stated in “Framing the Social World with Photo-Elicitation Interviews” (2004, p. 1513), “The PEI can be a powerful tool to simultaneously gather data and empower the interviewee;” we found this method gave important insights into the cosmopolitan aspects of our participants’ lives. In our observations we observed highly trafficked areas on campus; these
included Milner Library, dining areas, university sporting events and the ISU Recreational Center. Our observations were focused upon the actual presence of cosmopolitanism rather than its absence.

Sample

The sampling method that we used for our research was purposive sampling. In this sampling method, each sample group is selected for a specific purpose that has to do with the study. Our study is focused on cosmopolitan students at ISU. We decided to focus mostly on domestic students who we expected would have had some exposure to other cultures. We pulled from four different groups that fit these requirements including veterans, pre-Peace Corps Master’s International students, language majors, and International Business majors. Our final sample consisted of 5 students from each of these interview groups. We purposely did not sample specifically for students who studied abroad. We included a comparison group of five freshman students, who have not yet declared a major of study. This last group was added with the hope of learning how new students are already cosmopolitan upon entering the university. We collected photo elicitation from all but three of our interviewees.

Analysis Approach

As a team, we collectively agreed on several analysis procedures. First, we began the process by transcribing all of the interviews that we had conducted. After fully transcribing each interview, we then engaged in what is called line-by-line coding. Line-by-line coding involves the process of reading each line of a particular transcription, and then pulling out the main theme or concept of each line and listing it beside the transcription (Charmaz, 2006). This coding format allowed us to see the important aspects of the large mass of data we acquired during our research (Charmaz, 2006). For our next step we narrowed our analysis to target specific information that was related to our research questions. We narrowed our coded data into specific typologies that were grouped according to cosmopolitan interests, practices, and interests that stood out from the interview data. Most of the important data that stood out was redundant across the coded frameworks, which made it easier to find (Cook, 2015). Along with our analysis of the interviews, we conducted focused coding of the photo-elicitation data, by also identifying valuable information that went with interviewees’ cosmopolitan interests, practices and influences. We split up as a team into separate sub-committees to analyze each group’s interviews and photo-elicitations and we also split up into separate sub-committees to analyze our observations. Since we individually coded all of our data before creating these sub-committees we were able to recognize the most repetitive and intriguing patterns from the raw data. After compiling all our data and working in groups we were able to identify the most important findings that pertained to our research questions.

Findings from Interviews and Photo Elicitations

This study was focused on the range of cosmopolitan interests, practices, and influences in domestic students at Illinois State University. The following table shows a comprehensive list of these interests, practices, and influences across all interview groups. Each interview group articulated similar aspects of their connections to the world beyond the United States. These similarities were present in all three categories of interests, practices, and influences.
The following findings present the interests, practices, and influences that were most prominent within each separate interview group.

**International Business Majors**

After reviewing all of the International Business student interviews we found many reoccurring interests, influences, and practices. Most of the participants had traveled outside the U.S. with family or for a study abroad program. Most of them wish to do more international traveling in the future. The biggest influences we found were family and friends because of trips participants took when they were younger or their parents’ encouragement to travel. This traveling encouraged them to be more interested in global issues and to take action to be more aware. Most of these interviewees belong to the International Business Club as well. All of them also practiced a foreign language or want to learn one; one participant even talked about training his dog in Spanish.

**Important Interests**: Traveling, Foreign Language, and Studying abroad

**Important Practices**: Living/traveling abroad, International Business Club, and foreign language

**Important Influences**: Family/Friends, teachers, and classes/clubs

**Most prominent for International Business Majors:**

**Influences**: Club involvement, Family

**Practices**: Foreign Language, International Business club

**Interests**: Traveling, Foreign Language

**Important Quotes and Pictures:**

**Traveling**

“Just having that international experience has made me have a real soft spot for those international people here. I will help them do anything to the best of my ability because I’ve been there.”

- “Mr. Bigglesworth”

“Experiencing different cultures is something everyone should experience, I think. Different foods, different languages, you know, different beliefs.”

- “Ben”

**Family**

“My heritage is very important because my heritage was just taught in my life as a child…”
Foreign Language
“...One reason I’m minoring in Spanish, because it’s…really hard to convince yourself to go somewhere if you know you can’t communicate with the people there.”

“I plan to train my future dog in Spanish. Just because it is different. And if I have kids, when I have kids, they will have to interact with the dog in Spanish.”

- “Pep”

Club Involvement
“This photo was taken at the Consulate General of Thailand this weekend. It was a field trip that we went to for the International Business Club. As I talked about in my interview, the International Business Club is a great way to learn about different countries and cultures outside of the United States. We go on field trips to consulates to learn about different countries and their way of life.”

– “Ben”

“This picture is a cross I got on a 5 day trip called Kairos when I was in 12th grade. Kairos is a Greek word meaning time with God. Greek origins of religion are very interesting to me. Greek culture is very interesting to me. Many may not know but a lot of our American customs come from the Greek.”

– “Pep”

Language Majors
Regarding language majors, the most prominent themes we saw were travel and studying abroad. Family and heritage also played an important role in the lives of language majors at Illinois State. Most of these interviewees admitted to being influenced by the travels of their family members and noted their heritage being key factors. Other major influences stemmed from the schooling these individuals received. A majority of the language majors interviewed noted experiences in high school fostering their interest in language and other cultures.

**Important Interests:** Travel, Family Heritage, World Cultures/Languages

**Important Practices:** Study/Living Abroad, Classes, Travel

**Important Influences:** Family, School

**Most prominent for Language Majors:**

**Influences:** Family Heritage, School

**Practices:** Studying/Living abroad

**Important Quote and Pictures**

Family Heritage
“My first language is Spanish, so that’s what I speak at home and with my parents and other family…it’s the biggest anchor I have to my heritage. It’s like our core values come from our heritage and culture”

- “Ethel”
“I think my interest was mostly from my grandparents ‘cause I think they kind of have a cool story like running away. They had four children at the time when they were in Cuba, and my abuelo, my grandpa was a doctor. He told the authorities that he had a medical conference in the United States that he had to go to. And so he took my grandma and their four kids and they fled out of Cuba, and they just didn’t come back, and they flew on a plane over. There was one point when they were leaving that a security guard or something came over and took one of the kids, so they all got really freaked out, so my grandpa told my grandma, ‘You guys go ahead. I’ll stay and try to get our other kid back, but if not just go on without me.’ But, it just ended up being that they thought the other kid was lost and trying to find his parents, so they were allowed to come over, and they learned to speak English and stuff, and so I just thought it was kind of a cool story. He took some of my cousins too, or…some of their cousins.”

- “Rachel”

School
“I would say that was probably where my general interest started. I fell in love with the language…I took a course about world religions…history classes also helped me learn more about other countries and world issues”

- “Amelia”

“In grade school I took Spanish, so that gave me a little exposure, but in high school was where I really learned about other cultures. I took Italian all four year in high school.”

- “Amelia”

Studying/Living Abroad
“When I was younger I went to Canada to see Niagara Falls with my family. Then, my sophomore year of high school I went to Spain with my parents to visit my sister while she was studying abroad. Last year I studied abroad in Florence, Italy. Where I also visited Munich, Germany. Over my fall break abroad, I also went to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Ireland, and a few other places.”

- “Amelia”

“I am attaching the picture. I kind of did a three-in-one. The paddle represents how most of my friends are of a different race [as] me and how I am immersed in a different culture. The paddle represents my college life. This shows my interaction with people of all backgrounds and walks of life as does the American flag and my family coming here from Mexico. This leads to the Virgen de Guadalupe which is a symbol of my religion as well as my Mexican culture. This shows my openness to other cultures and other people.”

- “Ethel Foster”

Masters International Students

The most prominent factors that our interviews revealed about the cosmopolitanism of the Master’s International students are their interest in global issues, practice of actively pursuing education, and the influence of travel. Each of our participants within this sample group had an interest and passion for certain global issues, which they plan to be involved in through their Peace Corps service. These issues span from youth education to women’s rights to food justice and beyond. This plays directly into the practice of actively pursuing education. The global issues that were stated as interests inspired our participants to take classes and pursue degrees that would aid them in becoming influential for their chosen causes. The final factor of being influenced by travel was incredibly evident throughout our interviews. Our participants spoke of travelling throughout their lives and being influenced to continue to travel each time they visit a new place. The exposure they received from experiencing different cultures and confronting the fears associated with travelling to a different community or country positively influenced them to travel more often. All three of these factors
were instrumental in our participants’ decisions to go into the Peace Corps, as well as their ability to be a cosmopolitan individual and student.

**Important Interests:** Travel, Peace Corps, Global Issues

**Important Practices:** Travel, Active Education, Openness, Volunteering

**Important Influences:** Travel, Education, Friends (Local and International)

**Most prominent for Master’s International Students:**

- **Interests:** Global Issues
- **Practices:** Active Education
- **Influences:** Travel

**Important Quotes and Pictures**

*Global Issues*

“The tea pot and mug are from Nepal, and were made by women who had escaped violent relationships and were creating these as a source of income. I believe it is important to incorporate other cultures in your own life, even if it’s through household items.”

– “Leslie Knope”

“And looking at the fact that people still, to this day, cannot be fed, is appalling. It's such a fundamental right that's always been overlooked because you can look at somebody and unless they have a nutrition deficiency that results in bloated bellies or you can see that somebody is wasting away, you don't see them as hungry. So, when you're walking around, at least in the United States, you don't look at that person and say ‘wow, they didn't eat today’ or maybe they are eating but they're eating McDonald’s because that's all they can afford so it's interesting to see the social issue has been laying underneath the radar for a lot of people because it's so much harder to see. That's kind of what really sparked my interest for it and my passion for it. Nobody should ever go hungry. No one should ever wake up in the morning and wonder where their next meal is coming from. Or have to decide between buying medication or a meal. And going overseas is even worse because you see people on the streets and you see kids on the street who are begging for money and who look like they haven't eaten. How do you approach that? How do you create a community that, not only is feeding the people but allowing it to be done with dignity? And that's another really big [com]ponent of my life and my passion, is dignity. And how can we create a dignified society where people are given what they need and not disgraced for it. And not being told that they are being given handouts and not being told that they are on welfare and being laughed at and being accused of things.”

– “Maya”

**Active Education**

This is a picture that exemplifies the practice of active education. “Michelle” wanted to highlight her diploma for her undergraduate degree because she understood the importance of actively educating oneself.

“We’ve taken culture anthropology, and right now through the Stevenson center we do economic and community development classes. So we learn a lot about doing community development in other countries..."
and how important it is to learn about what they actually want and need, instead of coming over and saying, ‘This is what we do in the U.S., and this is what we are going to do here.’ So, I think that in my education, I have been taught quite a bit about other cultures and how to understand them better.”

- “Francis McIver”

Travel

“The first photo is of the map that hangs above my bed. It's something I see every day and makes me think of what people all over the world are doing. I put pins in each place that I have been and am always thinking about where I may get to go next.” – “Renee”

“I did find that the best places to go were the hole in the wall places and that the best thing to do was to ask the people who lived there ‘where is the best place to go?’ So we tried to, when we were on our own not with the tour guides, go to places where the locals liked to go.”

– “Leslie Knope”

Veterans

When it came to interviewing veterans, we found they had more in common than we thought. Each veteran was from a different branch of the military, yet they all shared the same common interests, practices, and influences. Even though there were small differences amongst them, the most common cosmopolitan themes that we found were family heritage and military for interests, deployment for practices, and family for influences.

**Important Interests:** Travel, Family Heritage, Global Issues, Military

**Important Practices:** Travel, Family Heritage, Military, Deployment

**Important Influences:** Family, Books, Family Heritage, Barriers (Language Customs), Military

**Most Prominent for Veterans**

**Interests:** Military

**Practices:** Deployment

**Influences:** Family Heritage

**Important Quotes and Pictures**

**Military**

“I was interested in joining the Air Force starting in my senior year of high school. Both of my grandpas served in the military and neither of my older brothers did, so I just had an urge to get involved.”

- “Mikael Ferdinand”

“Like at the end of high school, I was just bored with school, so I wanted to do something very adventurous. So I wanted to join the military. So being the competitive person I was, I thought if I was going to join the military, I might as well join the most extreme, known for, you know, pushing themselves to the limit.”

- “Zandapus”
Deployment

“Here's a picture of my boots I wore. These boots were with me when I went over to many different countries in the Middle East.”
– “Mikael Ferdinand”

“The scarves were given to me by an Afghan Army commander. His wife hand made them out of silk that came from China”
– “The Grandson”

Family Heritage

“Actually, my mother lived in Germany until she was four years old. My grandma lived in Germany for most of her life. And my grandpa was actually serving in the military when he met my grandma. After his four years were served he brought back my grandma and mother with him to the U.S.”
– “Mikael Ferdinand”

“My ancestors, well my dad’s family migrated here from Germany sometime during World War II. My mom’s father is from Puerto Rico and he used to work in the fields of sugar cane factories and my mom’s mother is from Mexico and her family originated from Mexico and sort of moved into Texas and then somehow got to Chicago.”
– “Zandapus”

Undeclared Freshmen

Regarding undeclared freshman, we found several interests, practices, and influences that were similar throughout. Almost all of the undeclared freshmen were interested in traveling, world cultures, and studying abroad. These were just interests, though. Being freshman, they may not have had the opportunity to travel or study abroad. Their interest in world cultures could also influence their desire to travel. Though their interests were broad, they haven’t yet acted on these desires. The most common practices we found were openness, the use of social media, and taking classes. These interests and practices have been mainly influenced by their family, school, teachers or professors, as well as social media.

**Important Interests:** Travel, World Cultures, Study Abroad

**Important Practices:** Openness, Social Media, Classes

**Important Influences:** Family, School, Teachers/Professors, Social Media
**Most Prominent in Undeclared Freshman**

**Interests:** Travel  
**Influences:** Family

**Important Quotes and Pictures**

**Travel**  
“Like I’ve always wanted to go to Europe my whole life. So whenever we would do a unit in class that was about Europe I would just be way more interested than any of the other places besides that.”  
– “Robby”

“This is a photo of a T-shirt my friend from home sold to raise money so that she could go on a trip to travel the world. She is currently in Thailand and she is traveling the world for 10 months and I would be very interested in taking part in a program like that”  
– “Robby”

**Family**  
“Not really, I would say my oldest brother had a bigger impact than them. He visited Central and South America a few years ago for a mission trip. He has also helped out in Haiti, when they were going through that rough time through his church group, I’m sure he will help out in another country again.”  
– “DG”

“This picture is of both of my grandmothers and my great grandmother. The symbol at the top is an ankh. It’s an African symbol that means everlasting life. I also have a tattoo of this symbol. This is a way for me to stay connected to my African roots.” – “El Jefe”

**Findings from Observations**

**Sporting Events**

For this category we had five observations of Hancock Stadium, Redbird Arena, Horton Fieldhouse – South Gym, and the Marian Kneer Field. We observed football, volleyball, circus, and softball games. All of these areas were highly trafficked with people dressed to support their specific athletic team. Although the football, volleyball, and softball games were heavily trafficked, not much was to be seen in terms of cosmopolitanism. This could be due to the fact they are Illinois State specific events so people are there to support ISU. Instead of people expressing their own cultures or heritages, it is more of an assimilation of the redbird community.
Of all the locations, cosmopolitanism was the most present at the circus gym in the Horton South Gym. There were many foreign or exchange students and faculty involved in Gamma Phi; the other members made sure to translate for them and help them understand what was going on and being said at all times. Another cosmopolitan aspect was the theme of The Gamma Phi Circus show this year. They decided to do “Around The World,” which requires the different acts to look into using traditional music and costumes to represent their respective countries.

Dining Centers

In this group eight observations were done in total. One was done in Einstein’s Bagels, two were done in the Watterson Dining Commons, two were in McAllisters, one in the Bone Student Center near Burger King, and three more were done in Tri Towers Dining Commons.

We saw some practices that stood out such as clothing being worn, languages being spoken, news/sports being watched on television, internet sites being viewed, music being listened to, the Syrian Refugee Crisis being discussed, and a variety of food being eaten. There were also some cosmopolitan interests observed including the news being shown on the televisions, the food offered, travel plans being discussed, and international topics being studied, such as Japanese history.

Milner Library

We conducted seven observations in Milner Library. Most of the observations were performed on the 3rd floor of the library, because it is the most trafficked floor. Our findings from these observations can be broken down into 3 areas; clothing, language and group interaction. Our findings are primarily based on practices of cosmopolitanism.

Within the area of clothing there was an example of a student wearing a soccer jersey supporting the Ghanaian soccer team, The Black Stars. This shows an interest in sporting teams outside of U.S national teams. The second area of language was evident in several ways. A group of students were studying French and switching between French and English throughout their time studying. Another group of students were speaking Spanish to each other, as well as English. In the final area of group interactions there were simple interactions between friend groups that included the sharing of stories about travelling to different countries. Another group of individuals were listening and singing along to Spanish music while carrying on a conversation in English.

Rec Center

We made six separate observations at the Rec Center. Overall, we did not observe much cosmopolitan activity there. Our observations revealed some cosmopolitan interests. Students wore clothing from different universities across the Unites States, which shows interests outside of our local community. They played sports that originated from countries outside of the United States, pursued fitness which is an important practice for many people outside of the U.S, displayed their family heritage through jewelry, and showed interest in ethnic foods through a show on one of the TVs at the Rec center. Also, we noticed multicultural interactions among students, and different languages being spoken (Spanish and perhaps Arabic).

Conclusion

Summary of findings

When analyzing the findings across the four sample groups with some international exposure (International Business Majors, Language Majors, Master’s International Students and Veterans) there were several cosmopolitan similarities that we identified. These similarities include a focus on family heritage, education/classes, and travel. Family heritage was mentioned as an influence within all four groups. Participants
were heavily influenced by where their parents or grandparents came from and how different cultures were part of their socialization growing up. They mention being interested in different cultures because they were exposed to more than just United States culture from the time they were young. Education/classes were spoken of as both influences and practices. Each participant was involved in classes that focused on the understanding of a culture or cultures that expand outside of the United States. Whether these classes were major-specific, required general education classes or electives, participants mentioned how much they learned and how these educational opportunities influenced a cosmopolitan attitude. The final similarity of travel can be observed as an interest, practice and influence. It seems that each participant had an experience of being interested in travelling from a young age. Whether it was hearing about family members’ travel experiences or learning about different places and people, they each had a desire to “see the world.” Following the interest in travel, is a practice of actually travelling. Some participants went on family or school trips, some were deployed and some traveled for volunteer purposes. Finally, the practice of travelling became an influence to travel more. Many participants spoke of needing to experience more and wanting to take in as many cultural and international experiences as possible.

We also discovered some differences between the interview groups. The Masters International group was focused the most on global issues. They also described volunteering and active education as important practices. Club involvement is most prominent for International Business Majors. Language Majors placed importance on their interests in world cultures and languages. It is these interests that influenced their choices as far as field of study. The most prominent practice for Language Majors was studying or living abroad. Military and deployment were obvious practices that were specific to the Veteran category. Social media appeared to be influential mainly for the “undeclared freshmen” sample. When analyzing the comparison group of undeclared freshman, it can be seen that they did not have the same cosmopolitan experience as the other four groups. They have not done as much traveling and have not had as much exposure as the other groups that we studied. However, their interest in travel and openness to different cultures was evident.

Several of the photo elicitation pictures showed souvenirs that students obtained during trips abroad or things family members and friends brought back during their trips such as scarves, masks, and other figurines. Other participants provided pictures of even more personal things like pictures of drawings of family, combat boots, and flags. Each item that was photographed held significance for our participants. The data obtained from our photo elicitation was an important step in understanding the cosmopolitanism of our participants.

In our 26 observations, we did not find many cosmopolitan interests, practices, or influences. Sporting events, though heavily trafficked, did not show us much. We saw little evidence of cosmopolitanism at the Rec Center. Places where we found more cosmopolitanism were at Milner Library and campus dining facilities. At these locations, students were expressing their cosmopolitanism through their dress, language, and things they were watching on television. Some students wore clothing to represent other areas of the world and other areas beyond the local. They sometimes spoke languages other than English and watched sporting events of teams from around the world. We observed some conversations about the Syrian refugee crisis. The place with the most usable cosmopolitan data was the Circles event at the Horton South Gym. There were many international students and faculty involved in Gamma Phi; other members made sure to translate for them and help them understand what was going on and being said at all times. In addition, the theme for the circus this year is “Around The World,” which brought forward several cosmopolitan practices, like dress and diversity of music.

Connections back to the literature

Simon Hawkins (2010) has given us the most important piece of our conceptualization by arguing that one has to actively engage to be cosmopolitan. He expressed his idea that cosmopolitanism is a person’s active engagement with the global “other,” not just an openness toward divergent cultural experiences. We incorporated these ideas about openness and engagement into our conceptualization of cosmopolitanism, and can conclude that our interview sample expressed these cosmopolitan characteristics. Each of our interview participants spoke about how their personal cosmopolitanism was directly tied with their ability to be open to people of other cultures or engaged with the other (Morosanu, 2013). We did find that active engagement increased our participants’ cosmopolitanism. However, cosmopolitanism can be present without strong cosmopolitan practices, which was evident in our undeclared freshman comparison group.
Our findings demonstrate how real the local-cosmopolitan continuum that Haller and Roudometof (2010) wrote about is; there is no one who is completely local or completely cosmopolitan. While there were research participants who were more cosmopolitan than others, they weren’t one hundred percent cosmopolitan and even the undeclared freshmen showed some real cosmopolitan interests.

One of the biggest interests and practices we discovered throughout all the interview groups was the desire to travel. While traveling the world does show an interest in the outside world we must remember a point emphasized by Cook (2011; 2015). She discussed how just travelling outside of one’s own country does not make a person automatically more cosmopolitan; you have to engage in that world as well. We must take into account that traveling with their families to other countries didn’t make our participants automatically cosmopolitan. They accredited the cosmopolitanism more to the experiences with different cultures they had while travelling, not just the travelling itself.

Though we identified cosmopolitanism through speaking with our participants, our observations of ISU’s campus did not bring about the same results. While there were small incidents of cosmopolitanism seen, they were often almost unrecognizable to those not looking for them. It can, then, be concluded that while students may have experienced travel or cultural openness, their cosmopolitanism was not evident at all times. It is, as Hawkins observed, “situated in specific contexts and any cosmopolitans could be constituted as locals by separate observers” (2010, p. 3). We might also say that Haller and Roudometof’s (2010) idea of the local-cosmopolitan continuum was apparent from our observations. Students expressed themselves by wearing clothing of other colleges and universities from around the United States. This shows an interest beyond the local, but not quite to the global level. Other observations contained documentation of students speaking languages other than English, connecting them to the world beyond the United States; however, they were dressed in typical American clothing, keeping themselves on a local level.

Hinton’s (2012) dissertation was most closely related to ours in terms of her sample and methods. She interviewed students of various grade levels to gain an understanding of their cosmopolitan practices and skills. As Hinton found, and we found as well, cosmopolitanism can be expressed in several different ways and it should be studied as such.

Scholars have written about sociology needing to take a “cosmopolitan turn” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2014; Beck 2011). Our research fits into this cosmopolitan turn. We were not only conceptualizing the concept of cosmopolitanism, we were also operationalizing that concept. Our findings show that different groups of college students can all have similar cosmopolitan interests, practices, and influences in their everyday life. We have found that a cosmopolitan turn in research can show not only these similarities, but also give great context for future, more in-depth research exploring how colleges affect or influence their student’s cosmopolitanism.

Strengths and Weaknesses, and Suggestions for future research

Strengths

Throughout the research process we, as researchers, identified several strengths within our study. While doing our literature review we found strength in the fact that this concept of cosmopolitanism is relatively new to the field of sociology. This allowed us to cover as much research as possible while reviewing literature, while also giving us the freedom to come to new conclusions. We were also able to personally consult one of the sociologists currently studying this concept (Nancy Cook), and bounce ideas for our study off of someone who was already immersed within the subject. Each of the researchers involved in this study are currently undergraduate sociology seniors in the college of arts and sciences at Illinois State University. This made the process of a literature review and a peer review less daunting because each of us were very familiar with reading and reviewing sociological literature in large quantities.

Another strength of our study was the diversity of our research methods, sample, data, and analysis techniques. We used several different methods for our data collection including qualitative interviews, observations, and photo elicitation. Those data collection methods, in combination with the variety of participant groups we used, and the inclusion of our comparison group, allowed for a rich collection of data. We
also used a combination of several analysis techniques when coding, including in vivo, line by line, and focus coding. The combination of these analysis strategies allowed us to extract appropriate data for our findings. The primary strength of our study lay in our team approach. Working as a team allowed for several opportunities that do not occur when a study has only one or two researchers involved. As a team, we were able to split up the vast amount of work required for this research process. This allowed us to stay away from getting overwhelmed, as well as play-off of the strengths of our team members. By having each of us focusing on different aspects of the project, we had meticulous coverage of our concept and literature. We were able to bounce ideas off of each other as well as use the knowledge of our professor, graduate assistant, and fellow sociologists. Throughout this entire process the support and encouragement of our team could not be measured highly enough. Another motivator for us was the fact that our study is going to be used for the good of our university and not just for a grade. We felt as though our hard work was more valuable because it will be used to help the people at our university who made it possible for us to become sociologists.

Weaknesses

With any research study there are bound to be weaknesses and ours was no exception. It should be mentioned that we are aware that our sample group cannot be generalized to an entire student population. We were also aware that our observations did not yield as much data about cosmopolitanism as we had hoped. Another weakness was the compliance and scheduling conflicts that came with using interviews as a data collection method. There are always bound to be some errors when working with large groups of people.

While we were able to work together very well, coming to conclusions was difficult because it is not possible to please everyone all of the time; each of us had to bend or compromise in some way. As seniors, we were generally inexperienced with conducting research and each of us felt the pressure of the time limitations put on us to complete this study. We had a mere three months from start to finish to complete our research and a longer time line would have beneficial for our study.

Future research ideas

As far as future research, we have many ideas on how to expand our study. It would be beneficial to open up the study to include more participant groups and possibly include faculty and staff of the university. If we had not had the time constraints we did, we would have liked to include more observation, including participant observation. Ideally, this study would be done longitudinally, with our participants being interviewed throughout their entire collegiate career. This way our data could highlight how cosmopolitan practices, interests and influences can change over time. We would have also liked to expand our data to code for beliefs and attitudes that could be cosmopolitan. We dissected the range of cosmopolitanism in students on campus, which leads to additional research questions. The following is a list of possible future research questions that we hope could inspire future research:

1. Why is there such a dramatic range of cosmopolitan behaviors?
2. Why do people want to be connected to the outside world?
3. What makes people feel comfortable representing themselves in a cosmopolitan way?
4. Does Illinois State University play a role in the cosmopolitanism growth of its population?
Interview Guide
1. Describe where you have lived and what countries you have visited in your lifetime. Where did your ancestors come from?
2. Growing up, what exposure were you given to the world outside the U.S.? (such as what parents exposed you to, what you learned in school)
3. Are you interested in the world beyond the United States? If so, what are your interests?
4. How are these interests evident in what you do? Could you tell us a story that relates to this?
5. What or who influenced your openness towards the world beyond the United States?
6. What barriers make it challenging to reach out to people very different than ourselves? [prompt to interviewer: for example, language differences]
7. What forms of media do you use? Does the media you use inform you or connect you beyond the United States? (Probe: What cross-cultural practices or situations grab your attention the most? Why?)
9. Do you engage with people from other cultures? In what settings does this happen?
10. Where at Illinois State University do you embrace or experience other cultures the most often?
11. Has being open to other cultural customs contributed to your success as a student?
12. Are you interested or involved in any global issues? Why? What made you interested in them?
13. Would you share your interests in the larger world with others, including children? Why or how?

Photo Elicitation Prompt
1. The first thing you will do is brainstorm objects that demonstrate your openness to the world beyond the United States. Note that we ask for objects. We do not want you to photograph other people or yourself.
2. Your next step will be to take pictures of the objects that you have chosen. We ask that you limit your pictures to three, but send us at least one. If it makes sense to do so, feel free to put several objects into one picture. They can also be photographed separately.
3. The third step will be to write a paragraph telling us why you chose these objects, what they mean to you, and how they demonstrate the openness mentioned above. Send this to us with your pictures. You can have a paragraph for each picture, or sum it up into one.
4. The final step is to send this information (pictures and descriptions) to (name of research team member). You will be notified as soon as they are received.
5. If necessary, we will meet for a follow up on the date discussed at the end of the interview.

Observation Protocol
Record Date, Time, Location

Once you find a seat and get situated, write down your first observations of the location. These are things you can see right away. These brief observations of the location let us know the type of environment being observed. For example: Is this place highly trafficked? Is it loud? Are there activities going on? How many people do you see?

Once you have the initial observations documented, dig deeper into the observation. This is when you should start to notice what types of people are gathered in or using these locations, how these people are dress, the activities they are partaking in, etc. Be as specific as possible! Write in a first person, narrative style. Things you may/should consider: What types of people are using this location? How are these people dressed? Can you see different cultures represented through clothing? What are people around you eating? Drinking? Reading? Listening to? Can you hear music of any kind? What kind is it? Who is sitting by whom? In what ways are people expressing themselves? Are languages other than English being spoken? What types of decorations are around? Remember, you are looking for the presence of cosmopolitanism, not the absence of it.
References


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