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Education and Political Efficacy Among Youth in Kosovo

*A field study on university students' perceptions on the effect of
higher education on political efficacy and political behavior*

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate perceptions on education's effect on political efficacy among university students at University of Pristhina, Kosovo; as well as how that seems to inform political behavior. Education is believed to have important implications on political behavior, an important factor for this is internal and external political efficacy, which allows research to disentangle educational effects on the individual's political behavior. In-depth interviews were conducted during a minor field study to examine these perceptions. Three ideal personality types were detected among the respondents in regard to their respective level of internal and external political efficacy, while the perception of how education informed these two components on the contrary was portrayed as uniform regardless of level of perceived political efficacy. It is found, in line with previous research, that education is perceived to increase internal political efficacy, making the individuals more confident in their capacity to understand and participate in politics. External political efficacy seems to be less informed by education and more so by the societal context in which the students find themselves. In a context such as Kosovo, which still struggles with its democratization process, this leads to low levels of external political confidence. Further studies are recommended to increase the understanding of, in particular, the external political efficacy among youths in Kosovo.

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Abbreviations

AEM	The Absolute Education Model
CS	Civil Society
CSOs	Civil society organizations
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ORCA	Organisation for Improving the Quality of Education
PEP	Political efficacy personalities
REM	The Relative Education Model
UP	University of Prishtina
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

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1. Introduction

Kosovo declared independence in 2008 and has since made socioeconomic progress (World Bank 2019a). Yet, many challenges remain for the country, which is one of the poorest in Europe. The country struggles, among other things, with low electoral participation, in the last legislative election in 2017 the electoral participation was as low as 41.3% (International IDEA n.d.), and the low turnout has been a trend during previous elections. Only when the first election was held in 2001, did voter turnout reach above 50% with a 64.3% turnout rate. The seemingly low propensity to actively participate in the electoral process is a point of interest, especially considering that previous research on motivations driving political participation in Kosovo is marginal (Hasani 2016: 1). In addition, understanding political participation among the younger population in Kosovo is important as about two-thirds of the population is younger than 30 years old. One strategy for doing this is to study the *political efficacy* among young people of Kosovo. The literature on political efficacy distinguishes between *internal political efficacy* and *external political efficacy* where the former concerns an individual's perception of one's own capability to understand and participate in politics, while the latter focuses on political leaders' responsiveness to one's participation. Political efficacy is found within a greater theoretical discussion concerning how education informs political participation. One strand of literature argues that education affects political efficacy partially through motivational effects and partially through relative resource effects (Rasmussen and Norgaard 2018).

Previous research on the educational effect on political behavior, including political efficacy has largely focused on long established educational institutions in western contexts. The same mechanism has been little researched in non-western contexts. Hillygus (2005: 41), argues that quality of educational institution attended does not seem to affect the positive correlation between education and political participation, yet this claim is based on a western context and its universal applicability can thus be questioned. The higher educational tradition in Kosovo is fairly young; the current system has been in place since after the war in 1999. At University of Prishtina (UP) "59% of [the] professors do not justify their academic rank" (Organisation for Improving the Quality of Education (ORCA) 2018: 45), which suggests that the quality of education cannot be considered to keep a similar quality of institution as those considered by Hillygus (2005). There are many private institutions for higher education, of various quality; however, since many who live in Kosovo cannot afford to attend these institutions the choice of this paper was instead to focus on the main university which is the

UP. To examine the educational effects on political efficacy in Kosovo is interesting because it is probable that the effects do not follow the same pattern as distinguished in western contexts. Consequently, this study can contribute with a more profound understanding of the empirical case while also contribute to theoretical building.

1.1 Purpose and Aim

This paper seeks to analyze how education is informing political efficacy among young people in Kosovo. The reasoning follows that university students are more likely to feel a heightened political efficacy as their skills increase making them more adept to participate in political situations and make their voices heard. Hence, derived from here used literature, and the contextual situation in terms of both higher education quality and enrollment in Kosovo the following research question is developed: *How do university students enrolled at University of Prishtina perceive that their education is affecting their political efficacy?* In addition, aiming to contribute to the broader theoretical literature on education and political participation, the paper also seeks to answer *How does the students' political efficacy seem to inform their political behavior in terms of latent and manifest political participation?*

To clarify, due to the nature of the qualitative method used in this study the aim of the paper is not to answer these questions for all students at UP but rather for the sample group which constitute the empirical data, further discussed in the research design.

Arguably, participation in politics is not possible unless the individual experiences oneself to possess the capabilities to participate in the political arena and the civic society. Likewise, in terms of participation it is equally important to experience that the likelihood to be heard by those in power is large enough as to make worthwhile the effort of actual participation. As this paper theoretically argue and empirically show, political efficacy among students in Kosovo is partially influenced by their higher education, while also to some extent informed by the political climate observed by the students. The choice of method for this study is in-depth interviews, which were conducted during a minor field study in Pristina, Kosovo in March-April 2019.

The paper is constructed in the following way: First, the empirical context is presented, including that of the higher education as well as trends of political participation within the country. Second, the literature and theoretical framework is reviewed, followed by a presentation of methodology. Subsequently a results analysis of the empirical data will be conducted. In a final step a number of concluding remarks are made.

2. Historical Context

Kosovo is a small country situated in southeast Europe, with an area of 10,887 square kilometers and a population of roughly 1.9 million (Judah 2008: 2). The region's recent history has largely been shaped by events formation of the state which came to be known as Yugoslavia in 1918. Yugoslavia was a federation consisting of six republics: Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro. Kosovo was not given sovereign status but was instead incorporated as an autonomous region under Serbia. By the weakening of the Yugoslavian state in the late 1980's Belgrade sought to assume control over the region and managed to do so in 1990 when Kosovo's autonomy was invalidated (Selenica 2017: 98f). An underground Albanian republic was formed, by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) led by Ibrahim Rugova, who sought to gain international recognition by non-violence. A few years after the formation of the LDK paramilitary groups, like the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), formed by people dissatisfied with the slow progress of the underground republic. Many of the people now in politics started their political career at this time, including the current sitting president Hashim Thaçi and prime minister Ramush Haradinja.

The situation became more strained by the end of the decade. At this point, some 2000 people had already died in the conflict between the Albanian KLA and Serb forces, and in March 1999 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened through bombings on major Serbian military sights began. The United Nations (UN) assumed control of the area under the terms of Security Council Resolution 1244, and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK) was set up to aid with the creation of a Kosovo assembly, government and institutions. UNMIK is still in operation today, although in a "status neutral manner" (UNMIK n.d.) following the declaration of independence by Kosovo.

2.1. Current situation

The Kosovan state proclaimed its independence in 2008, an act still not recognized by various countries in the world, including Serbia, Russia and China (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018: 5). Still battling for recognition of its independence, the country struggles economically as its presence on the international market is slim. Moreover, the fact that the country is not recognized significantly hampers movement for the Kosovo population.

Freedom House (2018) classifies the country as partially free, where weak institutions constitute an issue. World Bank's (2019b) *Worldwide Governance Indicators* portray a weak improvement over the last 10 years in Kosovo including the indicator for voice and

accountability. This indicates that the Kosovar citizens to a certain degree lack a possibility to voice discontent and induce change. The country is still divided along lines of ethnic affiliation; the greatest tension is found between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. As per the 2011 Census 91% are Kosovo Albanian and 3.4% are Kosovo Serb, although many Serbians boycotted the census making the number unreliable (Krasniqi 2012: 358). The economy, although showcasing a growth rate of roughly 4%, is weak and many Kosovars have migrated, or are attempting to migrate in order to escape unemployment which is at 35 per cent, although assumed higher as much of the rural unemployment remains unregistered (Möllers et al. 2017: 176). As up to two-thirds of the population is younger than 30 years, the pressure on the labor market will likely intensify in the coming years (Haxhikadrija, 2009, in Möllers et al. 2017: 177).

The legislative elections in 2017 were called early due to a vote of no confidence in the Kosovo Assembly in May 2017. The early election was scheduled within 30 days which is a very short timeframe. Although considered genuinely competitive and peaceful, issues such as inaccurate voting lists hamper the quality of the elections Coalitions between the largest Kosovo Albanian political parties were formed prior to the early legislative election, which quite likely made the process of deciding who to vote for confusing for the citizens. (EU Election Observation Mission 2017).

3. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The relationship between education and political efficacy is found within the wider discussion of the effect of education on political participation. In order to fully grasp the idea of political efficacy as an intermediary variable within the causal mechanism between education and political participation is the latter first introduced.

The conceptualization for political participation is to some degrees interwoven with the conceptualization of *civic engagement*, where the former conventionally has focused on electoral participation, and the latter has constituted a broad concept encompassing social capital among citizens (Putnam 1993). This paper utilizes a typology of different forms of civic and political engagement presented by Ekman and Amnå (Ibid. 295) (see Appendix 3) in order to better understand the engagement in Kosovo. What the authors primarily argue is that one must consider the “*potentially* political forms of engagement” (Ibid. 288), a kind of “‘pre-political’ behavior” (Ibid. 289) in addition to more traditional forms of political participation. This pre-political behavior is denoted as *latent engagement* and covers two types of civil participation, namely ‘social involvement’ (attention) and ‘civic engagement’ (action). The political participation, which is denoted as *manifest engagement*, is divided into ‘formal political participation’ and ‘activism’. The typology is further developed by having both individual and collective forms of participation for all subcategories. The idea behind the inclusion of latent, or pre-political behavior, is that “citizen engagement /.../ seems to be formally non-political or semi-political on the surface /.../ but nevertheless activities that entail involvement in society and current affairs” (Ibid. 288). Thus, a form of potential political participation that is important to capture in order to understand and explain political participation. Arguably, the level of participation is to a large extent informed by the individual’s sense of capability to participate, often denoted as political efficacy. The typology was helpful as many respondents tended to shy away from the idea of participation in ‘politics’ and instead used a different terminology that at times was hard to pinpoint as political participation.

The causal mechanism between education and political participation is well studied, however, there still remains some disagreement to what the main mechanism is. Already by 1970 did Lal Goel point out that the observed mechanism mainly has been studied in a western context; empirical evidence from India (Ibid. 340) indicate that the causal mechanism does not necessarily display the same effect in a non-western context as it does in a western context. To further understand the connection should be high on the agenda, primarily due to

the fact that education is considered to "provide the shortest route to the creation of a modern political culture" (Almond och Verba 1965, in Goel 1970: 334), principally due to the assumption of its strong causal link with political participation. According to Mikael Persson (2015) does the field of study contain strong research which point in different directions, suggesting that a causal mechanism is yet to be determined; further confounded by a discussion on whether "the effect of education is relative rather than absolute" (Persson 2015: 699). Nonetheless, it should not be ruled out – on the contrary, it should be assumed – that the causal mechanism of the effect of education on political participation vary according with context, meaning that although there is strong evidence for a certain causal mechanism with generalizable qualities, this does not necessarily indicate that the same mechanism holds true in all instances. Utilizing this view would allow for competing explanations regarding the causal mechanism which in many ways greatly complicate the field of study; however, the advantages are here outweighing any disadvantages. Arguably, a greater knowledge bank could allow for a better understanding of the actual relationship between education and political participation among citizens.

Norman Nie, Jane Junn and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry (1996: 12) argue that "there is common agreement that education provides both the skills necessary to become politically engaged and the knowledge to understand and accept democratic principles". On a similar note, education is also considered important within a post-conflict context (Selenica 2017: 95), as it "can make a critical contribution to reconstruction" (Milton and Barakat 2016: 405) processes, including to provide skilled individuals who can contribute to a widening of shrunken sectors in the society as a result of conflict.

The three dominating models regarding the connection between education and political participation, presented by Persson (2015), offer slightly different causal mechanisms (figure 1), where the conventional model, denoted *the absolute educational model* (AEM) argues education provides skills which enhance political participation. According to this model there is a direct effect between the level and quality of education and political participation (see Jackson 1995; Hillygus 2005). Contesting this view are two revisionist views; the *pre-adult socialization model* which stipulates political participation is determined by factors preceding education, such as family socio-economic status and personal characteristics (Persson 2015: 9), thereby functioning as an underlying variable (see Kam and Palmer 2008). The second revisionist model, *the relative education model* (REM) instead argues education leads to social status which, in turn enhance or deter political participation (see Persson 2013; Tenn 2007).

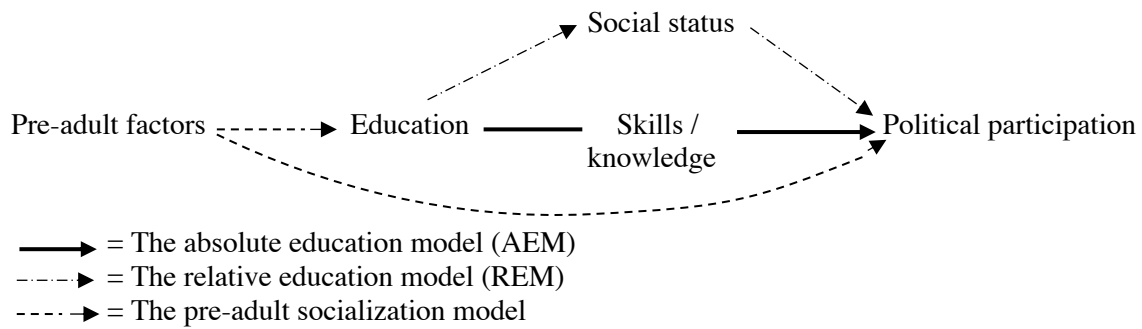


Figure. 1. Review of the three theoretical models concerning the causal mechanism between education and political participation (Persson 2015: 690).

For this study, it is primarily the AEM and the REM which are of interest. The pre-adult socialization model has by some been claimed the primary reason for an observed causal mechanism between education and political participation, where education then functions as a *proxy*, argued among others, by Kam and Palmer (2008). Arguing that the level of education one obtains to a large degree is determined by family background, is based on the claim that “[e]mpirical evidence suggests systematic patterns underlying educational attainment” (Pallas 2002; Pascarella and Terenzini 2005, in Kam and Palmer 2008: 614). However, it can still be argued that education ultimately affects political participation, the only difference being the education of one's parents. Which would direct the hypothesis back to the (still unanswered) question regarding the causal mechanism between education and political participation.

3.1. The Absolute Education Model (AEM)

The AEM claims education has a direct effect on political participation. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995: 305) argue that, “[e]ducation enhances participation more or less directly by developing skills that are relevant to politics”.

Summer Hillygus (2005) presents a hypothesis called the ‘Civic education hypothesis’; similarly, to the AEM it argues that education, and in particular civic education, provide the skill(s) and knowledge necessary to become political active. She performs regression analyses using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the US. The data is called ‘Baccalaureate and Beyond’ and combines survey data and information from student transcripts to study the driving forces within higher education that are affecting political participation and voter turnout (Hillygus 2005: 26). Hillygus concludes that her empirical analysis supports the civic education hypothesis, where language

proficiency and a social studies curriculum seems to be strong drivers for political participation and voter turnout (Ibid. 26; 37; 39; Nie and Hillygus 2001). Although she also notes that the AEM has “recently come under scrutiny” (Ibid. 28) (see also Persson 2015).

Robert Jackson (1995) focuses primarily on the connection between education and voter turnout; where he argues that “[c]itizens with a college degree /.../ are more likely to vote than those with a high school diploma.” (Ibid. 279). Jackson slightly strays from the terminology of the AEM when he carries forth a discussion on intermediary explanations for the impact of education on voter turnout. Note, here it’s a conventional form of political participation which is being considered; however, there is no reason why political efficacy would not also inform other kinds of political participation.

Jackson’s intermediary explanations all fall within the concept of ‘skills/knowledge’ found in figure 1, hence detailed as favoring the AEM as a causal explanation for the relationship between education and political participation. The intermediary variables are displayed in figure 2(B.), and are as follow: Political Awareness, Civic Duty, Political Efficacy, and Registration Status. Where civic duty is a sense of moral obligation to participate in politics and registration status is the actual process of registering to be eligible to vote (not present in all electoral democracies) (Ibid. 295). Based on regression analysis controlling the various variables against each other, Jackson concludes that political awareness, political efficacy, and civic duty “to a notable degree, account for the influence that [was] previous[ly] /.../ attribute[ed] to education.” (Ibid. 291), where the two former ones obtain the greatest influence. Registration status does indicate influence on voter turnout, however Jackson argues this is primarily due to the fact that registration is necessary for voting, thus, those who vote also register, meaning that the other three variables in fact operate through registration status to various degrees. As Jackson notes: “One would expect that more politically aware, dutiful and efficacious citizens would be more likely not only to vote but also to overcome the preliminary registration hurdle.” (Ibid. 293). The AEM establishes that there is a strong connection between level of education and electoral participation (Persson 2013: 129), however, this does not seem to hold true in many of the western countries which has experienced an increased level of education yet have not seen an increased level in aggregate electoral participation (Ibid. 111).

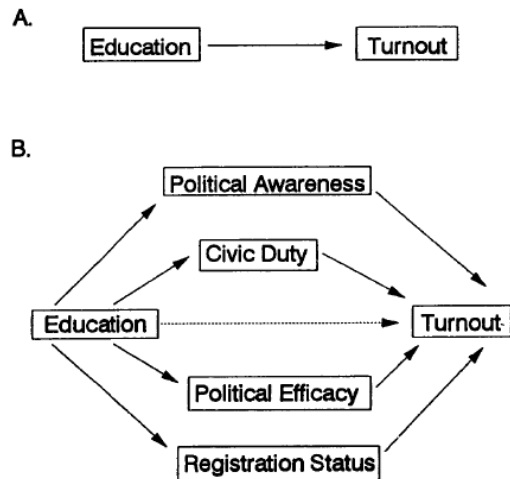


Figure 2. Causal framework depicting possible intermediary variables between education and voter turnout (Jackson 1995: 283).

3.2. The Relative Education Model (REM)

The REM stipulate that education affects an individual's likelihood to participate politically but that this relationship does not seem to hold true on an aggregate level (Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996: 39ff; Persson 2013: 111). The reasoning follows that attaining an education does have an effect on participation, however this effect does not seem to increase by one extra year of schooling (Tenn 2007: 458). Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry (1996) argue that the effect of education in fact can be divided into two components, what they choose to denote 'political enlightenment' and 'political engagement' (here political participation). These two components are affected differently by one's level of education. Political enlightenment is "noncompetitive in nature and /.../ characterized by a positive sum situation" (Ibid. 106), meaning that the level of enlightenment an individual acquires from education does not affect another individual's possibility to acquire political enlightenment. Political participation, on the other hand, is dependent on the competitive nature of education, and determined by an individual's "relative standing in the educational hierarchy" (Ibid. 107). In a highly educated society, an individual needs more schooling to be considered 'highly educated'. So, education functions as a "sorting mechanism" for the citizens post-graduation (Persson 2013:112). Persson (Ibid.) performs a multi-variate analysis on a dataset from 37 countries to test the REM. The data is a combination of individual-level data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems and the European Social Survey and allows for variation in both time and geographical location. According to Persson (Ibid. 122) the REM

“has far greater explanatory value than absolute education” when the two are controlled against each other.

Notably, the data only considers adult citizens age 25-70 “since earlier in life education has not yet had a chance to have its full effects” (Persson 2013: 115). This is an important disclaimer for this particular study since the focus here is on university students not yet graduated and will be addressed later on.

If the REM in fact has a stronger explanatory power for the relationship between education and political participation this has a profound effect on, among other, policy making. In the words of Persson: “[w]hile many scholars have attributed a central role to the education system in determining a country’s level of voter turnout, this role is likely overestimated if the relative education model is correct.” (Persson 2013: 129). It should also be noted that according to the REM, the students at UP should not showcase an increased level of political efficacy from their university studies yet as it is not the educational level per se, but rather the social status acquired post-graduation, and most likely post some years in the work force, which informs political efficacy. This idea corresponds with the findings noted earlier, that adults tend to be more political efficacious because their education has had its full effect.

3.3. Political Efficacy

Political efficacy is a two-dimensional concept which includes internal and external perceived judgment regarding one’s own capacities to participate in, and influence, politics: *internal political efficacy* and *external political efficacy*. The former concerns “personal beliefs regarding the ability to achieve desired results in the political domain through personal engagement and an efficient use of one’s own capacities and resources” (Caprara et al. 2009: 1002). What Rasmussen and Norgaard (2018: 25) describes as “the sense that one is capable of understanding the complexities of politics and governing”. The latter focuses on “people’s beliefs that the political system is amenable to change through individual and collective influence” (Caprara et al. 2009: 1002). Or “the extent to which political officials are responsive to ‘people like me’” (Rasmussen and Nordgaard 2018: 25). Arguably, the importance of the concept is: “[i]t is likely that the judgments people hold about their capacity to be effective in the realm of politics are critical to make them inclined to devote time and effort to stay informed and to participate actively.” (Caprara et al. 2009: 1004). Thus, a

political efficacious population will arguably also participate in the political system creating strong democratic institutions.

Rasmussen and Nordgaard argue there are two types of educational effects on political efficacy, and that these different types affect internal and external efficacy differently. These two different effects of education are denoted as the *cognitive and motivational effect* and the *relative resource effect*. The two concepts follow the reasoning brought forth by Persson (2013) among others, who claims there are absolute and relative effects of education. The cognitive and motivational effects of education, which could be considered as an absolute effect, is considered to be enhanced by education regardless if there are other individuals with a greater level of knowledge than oneself. It is also considered to be connected to personal characteristics. The reasoning follows, education provides an individual with skills and knowledge, which are likely to be confounded by the personal traits of an individual. An individual with an interest for the society and politics will likely further cultivate this interest, thus display a stronger educational effect than someone who does not have the same level of interest in political matters (Rasmussen and Norgaard 2018). Thus, internal political efficacy, whether or not one feels capable to participate in politics, is enhanced by the increased knowledge and understanding of political systems and practices provided by education.

The relative resource effect of education, what Persson (2013) describes as relative effects, concerns the comparative advantage of an individual's education, meaning the amount of education an individual obtains in relation to the rest of the population. The more educated a society is the smaller the comparative advantage and thus, the smaller the personal belief of amenability of politicians to one's individual influence, i.e. the belief that one has a say in politics decreases. Thus, in a society where the majority has obtained a high level of education people tend to feel less externally efficacious because their individual resources will not provide them with any greater level of influence or access to the political arena (Rasmussen and Norgaard 2018: 25). External political efficacy "has been found to be associated with general trust in the functioning of the political system and institutions" (Niemi, Craig & Mattei, 1991; Caprara et al. 2009: 2003), and thus captures the actual functioning of the political system to a greater degree than internal political efficacy. If the political system, and the political officials, in a society fails to be responsive to the population they are arguably not going to feel like their participation matter.

The literature argues that education positively influences internal efficacy, while external efficacy is determined by factors such as social status, thus indirectly influenced by education. There is little research done on these patterns in a non-western context, hence the

need for additional research in contexts such as Kosovo. This study will primarily use the theory of political efficacy; the AEM and the REM will be used as guide during the analysis of the empirical data.

4. Research Design and Methods

Literature details that political efficacy is influenced by education, primarily through a cognitive aspect, which informs internal political efficacy to a larger extent than external political efficacy. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not students enrolled at UP perceive that their education is informing political efficacy, while also noting how that seems to inform political behavior. In-depth interviews were conducted as part of a minor field study (MFS) to answer the research questions. The following sections will discuss the choice of the case studied as well as the selection and application of the method. In addition, the material and analysis of material will be presented, followed by the limitations of the study.

4.1. Case selection

Most studies concerned with the causal mechanism between education and political participation have been conducted in a western culture, among others the USA and Denmark (see Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Caprara et al. 2009; Rasmussen and Norgaard 2018), yet, to understand the relationship in non-western cultures is equally important. Especially in post-war societies, such as Kosovo, education is often deemed important for post-war recovery and to (re)build strong institutions (Milton and Barakat 2016), partially based on the assumption of a causal relationship with political participation.

The sample group of this study consists of students enrolled at UP, the largest institution of higher education in the country, which is also deemed to hold the highest quality (Rexhai and Pupovci 2015: 130)¹. All interviews were conducted in English. The case can be interpreted as a critical case where the specific sample group of university students constitute a *most-likely case*. As explained by Esaiasson et al (2017: 161f) a most-likely case stipulates that if the theoretical framework, in this case, of increased political efficacy does not hold true for the chosen sample group, is it likely that it will not hold true for other individuals with a lower level of education as education is deemed to increase political efficacy. On the note of choosing to interview university students and not a slightly older sample age group in the society, it is acknowledged that one can expect that political efficacy will increase with time since the full educational effect has not yet occurred (Persson 2013: 115). This could potentially mean that in maybe 10 years the latent and manifest political participation is

¹All of the higher education institutions but the UP were established since 2000 without adequate planning according to Rexhai and Pupovci (2015: 130).

completely different in Kosovo simply due to the fact that the educational effect of the people who are now students have fully showcased. This is however a bold statement, and more importantly, such an estimation is more guesswork than anything else. Regardless, the choice of interviewing students should be well considered, as a different pattern might very well have appeared had the sample been different. Yet, it is of interest to study how students in Kosovo themselves perceive that their education is informing political efficacy as they are given access to the political arena to a greater extent than before, especially with the right to electoral participation. With such an access one can assume students be given the possibility to acquire adequate political enlightenment in order to form informed opinions based on objective information available to them. If university students lack this opportunity, one must assume that others who are not acquiring a higher education lack this as well.

Below follow two components of the Kosovar context of importance to the case selection, namely the higher education system and the political participation.

4.1.1. The Tertiary Educational System in Kosovo

Kosovo's current tertiary educational system finds its roots in the UP established by late 1969. The university was the first in Yugoslavia – and in the history of Kosovo Albanians- where teaching was done in Albanian, thus, came to play an important role in the development of an “Albanianization of Kosovo” (Judah 2008: 53) and ultimately functioned as a driver for the quest for independence; a stance further strengthened after the downfall of Yugoslavia (Selenica 2017: 102).

By 1990, when Kosovo's autonomy was invalidated a shadow ‘Republic of Kosovo’ was set up, with a parallel system of governance and most notably a parallel system of education (the only functioning system of the shadow republic). By the time UNMIK overtook control by 1999 they put forth a post-war educational reform which focused on inclusion for the many different ethnic groups within the area. However, “[t]he issue of minority rights and minority access to education quickly surface[d] as one of the most problematic aspects of education” (Selenica 2017: 101) UP was once again considered as the foothold for Albanian nationalism. Serbian students were rejected from admission to the UP because admission of Serbian students was “interpreted as compromising the Albanian quest for independence” (Kostovicova 2005, in Selenica 2017: 102). The fragmentation of the higher educational system along “ethnic, religious and linguistic” (Ibid. 102) lines highlights the issues within the country to overcome previous contestation. Selenica argues that the

educational system has, to an exceptional extent, been “directly interwoven with conflict drivers and state-making dynamics” (Ibid., 96), while also, “kept reproducing a model of segregated peace, a deeply contested process of state-building and nation-building and a non-functioning state” (Ibid. 105). The percentage of number of students enrolled at higher education has traditionally been low, according to the 2011 census only as few as 6.72% of the entire population had higher education (tertiary) qualification (Rexhaj and Pupovci 2015: 104) leaving many with a low level of education. In recent years access to higher education has increased and according to recent statistics 110,137 students, 62.2% of those today aged 18-22, are enrolled at public and private higher education institutions in Kosovo (Mekolli et al. 2018: 140).² Thus, roughly 5.8% of the entire population are currently enrolled, making it safe to assume the percentage holding a tertiary qualification have increased from 6.72%.

According to Selenica (2017: 104f) the universities in Kosovo today fail to produce education which corresponds to the needs in the market. Instead higher education is used to “advance specific political agendas rather than advance the quality and standards of the education sector” (ibid.). That results in young Kosovars graduating with university degrees ill-suited for the demands placed by the market. Subsequently, there are strong reasons to examine how the educational system is perceived to affect political efficacy among the youth.

4.1.2. Civic and Political Participation in Kosovo

To better grasp political efficacy among youth we first turn to the general political participation in Kosovo. The observed engagement depends on what concept is used to “capture changes in citizens’ participation and engagement in politics and society” (Ekman and Amnå 2012: 284). As above-mentioned, the electoral participation in Kosovo has never been above 64.3%; according to statistics, voter turnout among youths was between the years 2009-2014 equal to or higher than the national voter turnout (International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) 2016: 1). Similar data for the election in 2017 has proved difficult to find. Findings from opinion polls performed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Kosovo indicates that as many as 48% do not believe they can create a change through voting (this number is not disaggregated according to age or level of education). In a recent opinion poll conducted by UNDP Kosovo (2019: 7f) between May-November 2018 as

² In the latest census carried out in 2011 the total number for people aged 20-24 was 161,467, the equivalent number for those aged 10-14 who would now be in the age of enrolling at higher education was 176,926 (ASK 2018: 30)

many as 50.08% of the respondents stated that they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the current political direction in Kosovo, see table 1.

Table 1. Satisfaction with the current political direction in Kosovo

Very satisfied and Satisfied	13.5%
Neutral (Neither satisfied, nor Dissatisfied)	36.4%
Dissatisfied and Very dissatisfied	50.08%

Source: UNDP Kosovo 2019

Findings from the same poll conclude that as many as 46% of the respondents “believe that their vote cannot change the situation in Kosovo” (UNDP Kosovo 2019: 19), see figure 1. In October 2017, the equivalent number was 38%. These figures are unfortunately not available by level of education but are disaggregated along ethnicity which depict that minorities in Kosovo tend to be more “pessimistic about the power of their vote” (Ibid.). Yet 69% answered affirmatively when asked about their likelihood to vote (Ibid. 18). Membership and volunteering within political parties are both below 15%, see table 2. Combined with statistics on electoral participation in the latest legislative election in 2017, this indicates that the general political efficacy most likely is quite low. Contrastingly, findings indicate that political knowledge is fairly high across all income levels in Kosovo (assumed to be informed by educational level) (Hasani, 2016: 38).

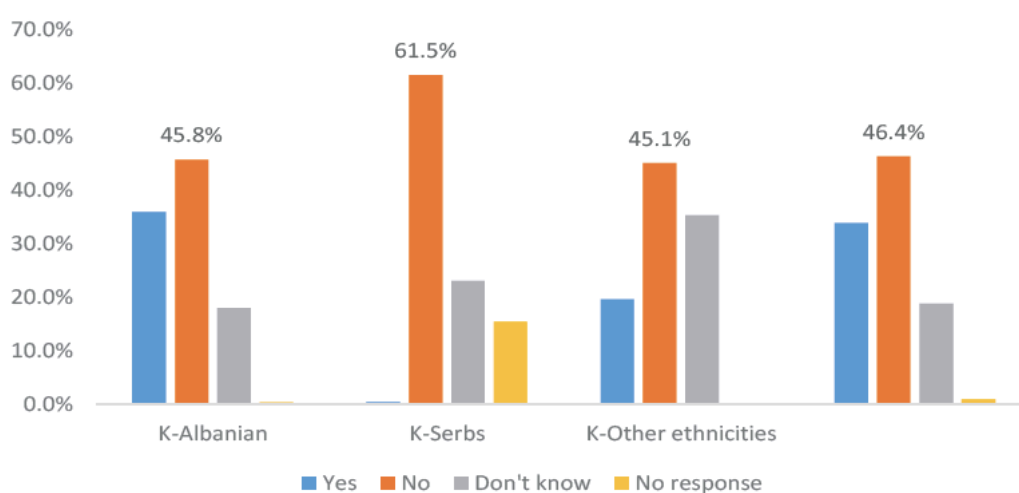


Figure 3. Perception that change can be made through voting, including ethnicity-disaggregate data. Figure from UNDP 2019: 19)

To capture the civic participation in Kosovo is a little more troublesome. The number of registered non-governmental organizations in Kosovo is 9,545 (KCSF 2018: 10), however a civil society organization (CSO) does not have to be registered to perform activities.

When respondents in a UNDP Kosovo opinion poll (Krasniqi 2016: 8) were asked about their perceptions of the civil society (CS) claimed 59% it can be trusted. A regression analysis indicated that “demographic characteristics such as age, education, employment status and salary are not significant in explaining trust in civil society” (Ibid. 9). Worrisome for the civic participation is that, “[a]lthough [a] growing trend, CSO membership continues to be low, suggesting a deep civic apathy” (KCSF 2018: 28). As per the 2018 Kosovar Civil Society Index few people are members in the CS (table 2). Similarly, the number for those that have participated, or supported activities organized by CSOs, depict a similar pattern, 16.1% of the

Table 2. Membership and volunteering with CSOs and political parties

Member of a CSOs	11.5%
Volunteered for CSOs in 2017	15.2%
Member of a political party	13%
Volunteered for a political party in 2017	10.7%

Source of data Kosovar Civil Society Index 2018 conducted by KCSF

surveyed respondents said to have supported a cause, see figure 2 (Ibid. 29). The population’s trust and confidence in the CS is decreasing, although these numbers indicate that the satisfaction with the CS is significantly higher than satisfaction with the performance of the key political institutions which is at 36% (UNDP 2019: 6). All in all, these numbers reveal that different forms of political participation are indeed low.

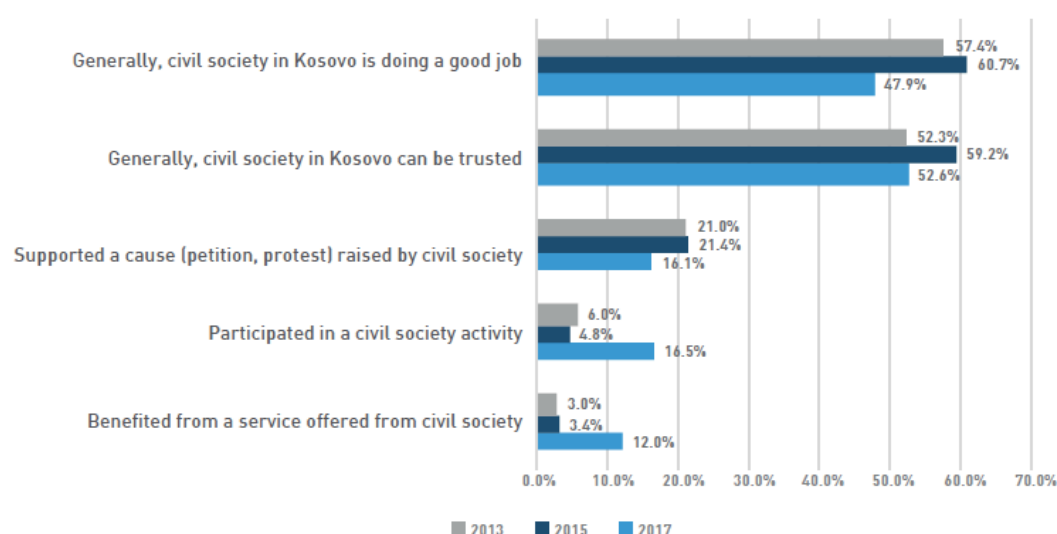


Figure 4. Perceptions and activity concerning CSOs. Source UNDP Kosovo Public Pulse XIV, found in KCSF 2018: 29)

4.2. Choice of Method

The starting point for this paper is primarily to make visible the perception of the students who are selected as observation, as well as to complement previous research, for which in-depth respondent interviews are used to study the respondents' own perceptions and opinions (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 236; 260). In-depth interviews also provide a good opportunity to record and follow up on unanticipated answers allowing for a possibility to deepen the understanding on perceptions on how education informs political efficacy in Kosovo.

The interview guide for the respondent interviews was compiled from a starting point in the literature, inspiration taken especially from Rasmussen and Norgaard's (2018) research on the relationship between education and political efficacy. Another interview guide was compiled for the interview with ORCA; the two can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

4.3. Application of Method

As this paper aims to study student's perceptions, the key empirical data consists of interviews conducted March and April of 2019 in Pristina, where all respondents at the time were enrolled as students at the UP. All interviews were conducted in English, based on the assumption that an individual with a higher level of English, thus presumably more educated, will have a greater likelihood of feeling politically efficacious. In total 13 interviews were conducted, including a pilot focus group consisting of three students. One respondent in the

focus group chose to be translated by the two other respondents, the same occurred in an interview held at a separate occasion, where a fellow classmate translated. Hence in the end 16 students were interviewed, out of which 14 will constitute the key empirical data for this paper.

Prior to all interviews the respondents were informed of the possibility to refrain from answering questions as well as the storage and presentation of the collected data, as a type of consent form. Anonymity was stressed in order to create a safe environment which invited honest replies.

The pilot interview brought awareness to the negative connotation of the term 'politics'. As the study concerned confidence towards different forms of political politics, the term was described prior to all interviews, particularly stressing different forms of political engagement, such as the practice of the government and political parties but also the actions of the opposition and the less formal political actions of the CS, what many respondents denoted as 'activism'. As a result, a terminology consisting of both 'politics' and 'activism' was adapted, on recommendation from the pilot-interview respondents, as well as a more rigorous explanation at the beginning of each interview to establish a connection between politics and 'social change'. This terminology was inspired by a typology of different forms of political participation developed by Ekman and Amnå (2012) (Appendix 3).

Some additional changes were made to the interview guide after four interviews, mainly concerning order of questions and in particular to ask about the respondent's view on differences between politics and activism. These changes had vocally been incorporated in the first four interviews. Thus, it is deemed that the initial interviews may still be included as empirical data.

The majority of the respondents interviewed studied within the Faculty of Philosophy, at the Department of Social Work, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Department of Archeology, Department of Philosophy and Department of Political studies. Two respondents came from the Department of Architecture, one student from the Faculty of Medicine and one student from the Department of Agriculture. Four of the respondents were master students, one of who's interview had to be discarded due to the language requirements for this sample collection.

The initial focus group was organized by a professor within the Department of Social Work. The additional interviews were acquired through the process of snowball sampling, meaning that each respondent was asked if they knew someone who would like to participate at the end of the interview (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 189f).

In addition to the interviews with university students, one interview was conducted with a representative from ORCA, a civil society organization attempting to raise awareness and improving the quality of higher education in Kosovo. This interview was primarily treated as an informant interview due to the organization's amount of knowledge of the quality of educational institutions. However, by the end of the interview questions targeting the representative's perception of how the education informs political efficacy was asked as well.

4.4. Material

As above-mentioned the empirical data used for this study consists of 14 respondent interviews as well as one informant interview. In order to answer the research question of how the students *perceive that their education is affecting their political efficacy* the empirical data was analyzed by five formulated themes with corresponding indicators, presented in table 3. Both affirmative indications as well as negative indications were noted in the interviews.

I make a distinction between knowledge and understanding, where the first is concerning having political fact and the second is a demonstration of being able to connect that knowledge to observed situations or the ability to analyze the political agenda in a more profound way than simply stating facts. The distinction is based on Hasani's (2016) findings that political knowledge is fairly high, coupled with the low participation numbers.

Occasionally a difference between self-perceived level and displayed level was noted, for example, some respondents placed themselves below average in political knowledge, yet portrayed a fairly high level of knowledge when talking more freely about issues of a political nature throughout the interview.

Table 3. Themes for analysis with corresponding indicators

<u>Themes for analysis</u>	<u>Indicators</u>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Express self-perceived level of knowledge of political matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questions within formal politics - Questions within informal politics (activism) - Indications of knowledge of political issues
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Express self-perceived level understanding - Indications of understanding of political issues
Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Express self-perceived level of interest - Indications of understanding of political issues
Desire to create social and/or political change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaks of a desire to create social change - Speaks of desire to participate in the civil society (denoted activism by many respondents) - Speaks of desire to participate in politics - Indications of desire in speech
Perception of ability to create social and/or political change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaks of ability to create social change in present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through activism - Through politics - Speaks of ability to create social change in future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through activism - Through politics - Indications of ability to create social change

4.5. Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The connotation of ‘politics’ as party politics and governmental politics which most respondents strongly refrained from could lead to a misrepresentation of actual amount of activities with political implications, affecting the validity of this study. However, as this was highlighted during the pilot-interview, and thereafter addressed carefully it is considered at least partially controlled for.

I am aware of the risk of the sample being biased in favor for politically interested individuals, which could potentially produce a biased result as well as affect the reliability of the study. This is evident in two cases where contact was established by a post on a networks-group on social media, frequently used by residents of Pristina. However, this is considered to amplify the design of a *most likely critical case* as politically interested individuals are

theorized to possess a greater degree of political efficacy which means that if this sample does not portray a high level of political efficacy is it even more unlikely that others in the society will feel political efficacy. The snowball sampling as a process to get in touch with respondents can also lead to bias in the results. The reliability of the study is dependent on the collection and analysis of the data which done by one person could constitute an issue. This can be partially evaded by transparency in the results analysis.

Although limitations in generalization, the hope of this study is to make a humble contribution in terms of understanding and depth within the field of study.

5. Results Analysis

In the following section the findings of the field study will be presented. The results and the analysis will be presented simultaneously as this is believed to provide the reader with a clearer apprehension of the findings.

Based on the empirical material three political efficacy personality (henceforth PEP) ideal-types, or rather combinations of traits of characteristics, have been detected. Their ideal nature means that there is not necessarily any actual respondent which perfectly corresponds to any of the three personalities. The idea is instead to use them as points of reference, in order to decipher the answers of the respondents (Beckman 2012). The three PEP ideal-types are the following:

		External political efficacy	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Internal political efficacy	<i>Low</i>	PEP 1	
	<i>High</i>	PEP 2	PEP 3

Figure 5. Political Efficacy Personality ideal-types

The question of whether or not political efficacy was informed by education is, as the aware reader will notice, not included in the PEP ideal-types. The reason for this is that the perception of how education informed political efficacy was more uniform in one sense; many of the respondents expressed some kind of awareness regarding how education has informed, or in some cases was expected to inform, political efficacy (although, important to note, none of the respondents used a vocabulary which included political efficacy or confidence if not first brought up by the interview guide). This discussion will be further developed once all the PEP ideal-types have been presented.

The vast majority of the respondents interviewed can be placed in proximity to the second PEP (high internal political efficacy, low external efficacy). As Hasani (2016) note, people in Kosovo tend to have a fairly high level of political knowledge, which manifested

itself among the respondents. This knowledge does not seem to translate to a high degree of external political efficacy, for example indicated by the low electoral participation. Although many respondents expressed a low level of knowledge and interest when first asked to rate themselves, the majority showcased a basic knowledge of political matters.³ In general, among the respondents, there was a slight discrepancy between the self-perceived level of knowledge above all, and the level of knowledge actually expressed. A similar pattern could be noted regarding understanding, although harder to argue for since understanding ultimately is subjective. What does seem to be the baseline is the fact that although the respondents could state some political traits of the country, many of them simultaneously acknowledged that due to the very state of party politics in the country there is a great deal within the political sphere which never reaches the public:

“[W]ith all this corruption and nepotism that’s going around here I think it’s really hard to really understand /.../ what they’re saying /.../ what they are really talking about, it’s all a mystery world apart from us [civilians]”
(Male, Social Work BA 1st year).

5.1. PEP 1: *Low internal political efficacy, low external political efficacy*

The first PEP ideal-type is quite straight forward; a low level of internal political efficacy combined with a low level of external efficacy. This is the category in which the respondents who portrayed these traits were closest to the ideal out of the three categories. The respondents were quick to portray themselves as not having a desired amount of knowledge, and in some cases interest, to be able to understand politics. From the theoretical standpoint of political efficacy this translates into a low degree of internal political efficacy. This often became evident when they were asked if they felt capable to participate in a political debate. This was expressed particularly clearly by one of the respondents:

“As I mentioned earlier to be potential debate material, I would not consider myself yet. I still have a lot to learn ahead of me”
(Male, Social Work BA 1st year).

Notably, this indicates an inability to participate at the moment, implying a low level of internal political confidence, yet, it does not display a self-perception of a complete inability to gain knowledge and understanding of political issues. When asked if the respondents

³ See Appendix 1 for specific knowledge questions asked, found under ‘Political knowledge’.

possessed a general understanding of the political process in the country was it clear that some did not feel they had an adequate understanding:

“To be honest I never understand [how the government works], it’s really complicated” (Female, Cultural Anthropology BA 3rd year).

Politics is seen as being both time-consuming and burdensome to keep up with:

*“I think [my political knowledge is below average], because I [don’t have] enough time to stay and watch what they are doing”
(Female, Vegetable and Crop fields MA 1st year).*

In one instance was it noted that understanding politics requires a high degree of knowledge which the particular respondent did not perceive himself to possess:

*“[O]f course I would like to [have an interest in politics] /.../ as soon as I advance I will start to seek more for political knowledge”
(Male, Social Work BA 1st year).*

Such a comment reflects the idea that only a few are capable to understand politics, and in order to do so, one must have a great deal of knowledge. This thinking will undoubtedly have large effects on the political efficacy, hence political behavior. Awareness of this issue is thus of importance, especially involving attempts to increase political participation among the population.

The low level of external political efficacy was uniformly expressed by the respondents who placed themselves closest to this ideal personality:

“I really didn’t understand why we had to go out there because no one would listen to us /.../ maybe sometimes it works, maybe sometimes it really doesn’t work. And you know, we can go out here and have protests every day, but I really don’t think that these people will listen to us. /.../ No matter how much we go out there and we yell. So sometimes I really don’t know what to do” (Female, Cultural Anthropology BA 3rd year).

Although there was a slight difference in the perception of what one individual can do compared to a larger – unified – group. Indicating a higher degree of collective external political efficacy compared to the individual efficacy.

“[W]hen there is just one person I think nobody will listen /.../. But when they see that the most of people are saying [the same thing] I think they

(politicians) will change their mind. But one person is so difficult to do something different in here.”
(Female, Vegetable and Crop fields MA 1st year).

5.2. PEP 2: High internal political efficacy, low external political efficacy

The respondents that placed themselves in the proximity of the second PEP ideal-type was by far the most numerous, although it can be tricky to talk about numbers in a qualitative study. This group of students all stated their educational level as being above the average, while also acknowledging that they had a decent level of understanding of political issues, both formal and informal ones, and most importantly perceived themselves as capable of understanding if they put their mind to it. All of them acknowledge that politics in Kosovo is difficult or confusing to understand, although they did not seem to find this insurmountable, as explained by one female respondent:

“the way our government operates it’s quite really hard to understand what they are doing. But /.../ one way or another it affects us so we have to understand what is going on”
(Female, Architecture.a BA 2nd year).

Respondents within this PEP ideal-type voiced reasons to why it is hard to understand politics in Kosovo, although not done very coherently. As indicated by the quote above, many simply mentioned the state or condition of party politics and the government; politicians are seen as corrupt, caring only about themselves. One respondent mentioned the international involvement in Kosovo, indicating that it is hard to understand who is really making the calls, national or international actors. Low accountability was expressed as reason to doubt the good intentions of politicians and making it hard to understand the agenda of the politicians; unmet promises lowering the level of trust. The difficulty of knowing who to vote for was usually expressed when talking about understanding as well, indicating frustration with the lack of politicians one felt confidence for. One respondent pinpointed this lack of transparency:

“I could be more informed if I wanted to in politics, but in the end it’s hard to say that in Kosovo because there’s a lot of stuff that nobody knows. Except the people who are actually in it” (Male, Archeology BA 3rd year)

Although this PEP ideal-type call for a high level of internal political efficacy few of the respondents placed in this category portrayed this perfectly. Many did voice conflicting statements throughout the interview, on the one hand calling out the difficulties and how they

do not understand all of it, only to in the next state that they in fact are capable. Nevertheless, they all did portray some kind of awareness of their own capability which qualified them in this category.

This fairly high level of internal political efficacy did not translate to a corresponding high level of external efficacy, for example:

*“So I am capable, I’m pretty sure I’m capable, I have more debates about [political issues] than other people do. But actually participating in it, that’s a different story, I don’t have experience in that”
(Male, Archeology BA 3rd year).*

This is in line with the findings of Rasmussen and Norgaard (2018) which states that external political efficacy is relative in its nature, meaning that it is determined by the perception on how one compares to others in terms of being able to affect politics. Many of the respondents, including those that placed within the two other categories raised opinions of politicians which portray a low level of responsiveness towards the citizens. And all respondents, regardless of what PEP ideal-type they resembled, did acknowledge that politicians do not seem to care about the political preferences of the citizens. This indicates that very few actually possess a sense of external political efficacy, which could be an explanation to the low electoral participation rate for example.

The fact that the respondents are still students was raised by several, as they remarked on the unlikelihood to create a change in the society as young people. One pointed out:

“[T]o change things here in Kosovo you need to have power and people to be pro you” (Female, Architecture.b BA 2nd year).

The same student made a remark that the voice of the prime minister weigh more than one million people, which displays the hopelessness many seem to feel in regard to create change as well as the distinction between politicians and ordinary people.

5.3. PEP 3: High internal political efficacy, high external political efficacy

A few of the interviewed voiced a high level of both internal political efficacy and external political efficacy, and even these cannot be considered to have showcased a perfectly high level of external political efficacy. However, three of the respondents, including one respondent which partook in the pilot focus group, did express a higher sense of external political efficacy than the others. Two of them did talk about active participation in different

organizations working towards political change in one way or another. The important thing to note here is the fact that the political character of the activism was explicitly noted, in which the respondents on their own accord described the work as ‘political’, something which many others seemed to refrain from. Arguably, an understanding of politics as a concept lying closer to that of the theoretical literature on education and political participation. Notably, they all acknowledged that politics is seen as being hard to understand, although it was also noted that politics is hard to understand everywhere. One respondent summarized it as:

“[T]here have been so many changes and shift, and you can’t even identify if a party is like more democratic” (Female, medicine 5th year)

Unanimously, the expressed external political efficacy within this PEP ideal-type was imagined in the future, a notion that was voiced among other PEP ideal-types as well, yet, for this category it was spoken of as an actuality:

“[S]eeing the level of education and knowledge that the politicians have, I feel confident in coming years I could participate directly in politics. /.../ But I mean, in a few years. Right now I don’t see [the political arena] as a perfect scene, should I say, I don’t feel like I would being in any of the political” (Male, Psychology BA 3rd year).

Two of them spoke of the possibility to pursue a political career (this was the case among some other respondents as well, however not spoken of with the same actuality):

“ Well I see myself in formal participation of politics, like I see myself where I can give the maximum contribution. /.../ but still I don’t really know how I’m going to do that, because I still not have the chance to like start” (Male, EU Integration and Public Administration MA 1st year).

Coupled with this high level of future external political efficacy an awareness of the current situation was raised; when asked about what political channels deemed the most fit to create change through one respondent replied:

“Not here, most of these [political channels] don’t work properly” (Ibid.)

The same respondent was also the only one among the interviewed who mentioned the low electoral participation, correctly citing the number, which demonstrated his knowledge as well as an understanding of politics, since he also connected the low electoral participation

with a failing trust towards politics among the population. The respondent's high level of both internal and external political efficacy could potentially be partially explained by his field of study, partially by a family background within politics and public administration.

5.4. Political efficacy informed by university studies

Concerning perceptions regarding how university education affects political confidence noted the majority of the respondents that education to a certain degree shapes their knowledge and understanding, hence increases internal political efficacy. In contrast, all voiced a perception of low responsiveness among political officials towards a potential participation on the respondent's part, hence a low level of external political efficacy.

The increased internal political efficacy was primarily within the respondents' field of study and involved an apprehension of the societal situation connected to the field. This was expressed clearly by one respondent enrolled at architecture when asked if attending university has changed her perception of the importance of politics:

*“[A]lot because you might have seen for yourself that Prishtina is quite a chaos /.../ the things that we study they help us /.../ knowing the people we're working with and with the society in general”
(Female, Architecture a BA 2nd year).*

Also expressed by the respondent studying medicine:

*“Extremely. Because even though university might not have given me much information to understand what is going on, it has made me see where are we failing /.../. Maybe if I were to study in another field, then I would see how the system is failing the people in another department for example.”
(Female, Medicine 5th year).*

Although noted that the situation is apparent even for those not attending university, many of the respondents stated how university studies helped acquire a more profound understanding. This idea is supported by previous findings by Rasmussen and Norgaard (2018), motivational and cognitive skills is the main effect of education on political efficacy; the students' remarks also suggest some explanatory power for the AEM which argues increased knowledge is the primary reason for political participation. It is difficult to single out one PEP ideal-type which demonstrated a stronger perception than other PEP-types in regard to how much their education affects political efficacy. Likewise, it is difficult to grade the different PEP ideal-types against one another with the particular data.

In terms of external political efficacy was there less of an awareness regarding a potential educational effect among the respondents, not to say there were no opinions, rather these were not consciously noted as explanations for a low effect. There is a realization present that education is not enough to make a change in the society, although many mentioned it should be the main thing. Many argued that attending university made them more aware of the state of politics in the country, and its implications on everyday life:

“[W]e have a lot of corruption in [the] university too /.../ I have seen that there are people here [who] deserve their place as a professor /.../ but they are very rare” (Female, Cultural anthropology BA 2nd year)

The statement is twofold, firstly it acknowledges the state of the politics in the country as being corrupt, and how nepotism and corruption is present for employment. Secondly, it recognizes the quality of the education offered by non-qualified teachers. This realization, or awareness, is not a product of the actual education in itself but rather from enrollment at university. It is however difficult to establish the difference between these as presence within the institution go hand in hand with attending classes. All the same, a lower educational effect on external political efficacy can be expected based on previous research on political efficacy.

As above-mentioned, many respondents spoke of a desire to create social change in the future, which often also involved the perception of having the ability to do so in the future. Due to the negative connotation of the word ‘politics’ a terminology of ‘social change’ was used. As a result, many voiced a desire to contribute in regard to social issues, few described this with a political terminology. This indicates that few of the respondents see politics, the formal form of politics that is, as a viable channel to actually create change which is troublesome. The perception of having a greater ability to create social and political change in the future indicates a belief among the respondents that particularly external political efficacy will increase with age, which is supported by previous findings (see Persson 2013). However, important to note is the fact that the formation, or foundation, of political efficacy does seem to be connected to higher education – based on the perceptions voiced by the respondents – even if it in some cases is the result of extracurricular activities accessed through university studies, noted for example by the respondent studying medicine.

In terms of whether the AEM or the REM has the largest explanatory power does the result not provide a clear inclination to one of them. It appears that a combination of the two holds the largest explanatory power for the connection between education and political participation among the respondents, although the data is insufficient to provide a clear

answer. As established, many respondents stated how an increased level of knowledge made them feel more capable to participate in politics (formal and informal), i.e. enhanced internal political efficacy. Depicted by one respondent:

“I think through university I have shaped my point of view and in the aspect of understanding the things which are really important /.../ for this I would say yes, my education shaped my perception toward the potential impact I could have in politics”

(Male, EU Integration and Public Administration MA 1st year).

This favors the AEM before the REM. All the same, many also voiced how education is perceived as a pathway to a better position within the society, with benefits such as easier to find employment and gaining more respect in the society, favoring the REM:

“Having a university degree and education tends to make people take you more seriously. So that’s the key, not because of the knowledge that you gain” (Male, Psychology BA 3rd year).

The remark towards social status as a result of a university education should not be confused with the thinking brought forth by Rasmussen and Norgaard (2018) concerning external political efficacy by educational comparative advantage. All respondents noted that current social status commonly is based on something other than education; particularly money was seen to determine power in the society. Another indication of the need to further research the relation between education and political behavior in non-western contexts.

To concluded, the respondents perceived that education did increase their knowledge, while also increasing their confidence in terms of capability to understand political matters. This occurred across all three PEP ideal-types. Important to note, education was not considered to be the only source of knowledge and understanding, several mentioned participation in activism as a way of increasing, in particular, their understanding. Some of these activities were extracurricular, accessed through the university. Or, that initial introduction to the topics of their (informal) political activities occurred through their field of study at the university. External political efficacy was not considered to be affected by the respondents’ education to a notable degree. Reasoning from the respondents to why the effect is as low as it is was not present, possibly because they have rarely been asked to think along those lines. There seems to be little assumption that education creates politically confident and capable individuals. Some respondents demonstrated a slight confoundment when first

asked how their education has affected their political understanding, although they had opinions given some time to think about it.

5.5. Political Efficacy and Political Behavior

What became evident from the interviews was a strong differentiation between participation in what Ekman and Amnå (2012) denotes as ‘formal political participation’ and ‘activism’; where the respondents voiced a greater level of political efficacy towards the latter. Many stated the reason for not participating in formal politics to be the corruption and nepotism observed among formal politics, what the respondents called ‘party politics’ or simply ‘politics’. It was observed that many of the respondents placed activism and politics in opposition of each other:

“[H]ere... activism is about the topics that concern us and the politics is actually, the activities of the politics and the causes there we stand for are... against each other all the time. We raise our voices for a cause and we have against us the government /.../ most of the time it’s two different topics” (Female, Architecture.a 2nd year).

There is a slight discrepancy between what the respondents denoted as activism and the typology by Ekman and Amnå (2012). Some of the activities the respondents referred to when they spoke of activism in fact falls under the category of ‘civic engagement’ in the typology, i.e. social work or activity with community-based organizations. However, one respondent considered activism to be the work of the political opposition party and referred to other kinds of activism, such as involvement in social movements, as simply the CS. This suggests that understanding of activism and political participation is not uniform across the society which could lead to confusion and thus hesitation to participate.

Some respondents commented on ‘real’ students and ‘real’ people as opposed to people in politics, or students whose parents are in politics or have high social status. This emphasize how people in politics are seen as being completely separate from the people and corresponds to the comments made by respondents that politicians do not care about the people. Another student pinpointed how activism is viewed as being for the people, in contrast to politics and politicians. There was a tendency among the respondents to favor activism before formal political participation. There was also a tendency to speak of change as possible if people united, often in activism, as this was the only way considered that politicians would actually listen. This speaks of a higher external political efficacy when the

individual is part of the collective, and although not mentioned in the literature of political efficacy it is proposed to be considered when looking at the implications of political efficacy on political behavior. This line of thought is evident in the typology of different forms of engagement (Ekman and Amnå 2012).

The general distrust along with the perception that politicians do not care about the people and their needs could help explain the low membership in political parties and the high dissatisfaction with the political direction of Kosovo. The empirical findings of this study indicate that few of the respondents are politically active, however, many spoke of a willingness to participate in protest and such if needed and for a cause they supported. This could suggest that the younger population will in fact be more politically active, but additional studies are needed. The KCSF alerts on civic apathy (KCSF 2018: 28), noticeable among some respondents despite their young age:

*“I was more interested in politics when I first started my political activism /.../ but when you see that it’s really really hard to change [politics] ehm you know you start letting some things go”
(Female, Social Work BA 3rd year).*

This is troublesome; if the younger generations inherit a civic apathy, and a pessimistic view regarding the possibility to change the current state of politics is it likely that political change will be slow. Yet, based on the way activism was claimed as a viable channel for creating change, as well as the voiced willingness to participate paint another picture. The desire to create change for the better was brought forth by all respondents, the problem being that few of the respondents saw a viable channel to actualize this desire.

Some respondents pointed out the issue with a distinct separation between formal politics and activism:

*“[I]n terms of the two concepts, like activism and politics, I think that these they have to be for each other and work together. There is no bad guy and good guy. They are like two ways for people to make a change”
(Female Medicine 5th year).*

This perception was voiced by all respondents in the third PEP ideal-type (high internal political efficacy, high external political efficacy) which indicates that political experience, not only increases knowledge and understanding of the political process but also make the individual more confident to participate.

6. Summary and Conclusion

To summarize, this paper has attempted to examine students' perception on how university studies affect political efficacy. In line with previous research, the empirical data indicates that perceptions regarding education's influence on political efficacy vary according with internal and external efficacy. The majority of the respondents voiced perceptions of their university studies informing political knowledge to a certain degree regardless if they voiced that politics is difficult to understand or not, although education was noted not the only source of knowledge or understanding. This indicates perceptions that studies positively inform internal political efficacy. Perceptions regarding the educational effect on external political efficacy was harder to discern; all of the respondents voiced that the sitting politicians do not care what the people think, and that they as students and young people in particular would not be listened to. The majority did not consider themselves to have any power to create change in the present beyond small matters at local level (this could include issues at the university). This indicates a low, or no external efficacy. However, what many did voice was a belief of being able to create change as part of a larger group of (young) people, or in the future. Such a claim not only indicates a presence of some form of external efficacy, be it projected towards a collective or the future, but could also be seen as an ability to evaluate the political arena. This follows the theoretical ideas that older people have a higher sense of external political efficacy (Persson 2013).

Activism was considered by many respondents as an arena where they could create change to a larger extent than with politics. Activism was also seen as being for the people compared to formal politics, similar opinions can to some degree be observed in the opinion polls on perceptions on the CS. An interesting point is that activism seemed to also be a way to differentiate oneself from political ties, while still being able to create a change in the society, mainly due to the perception of politicians as being corrupt and not wanting to be likened to a similar behavior. The fact that activism is not seen as political activity indicates that the respondents do not fully comprehend their ability to create political change as compared to simply social change.

In conclusion, the findings in this study suggests that university students in Kosovo tend to perceive their education to increase internal political efficacy, while the perception for external political efficacy is less clear. Many articulated that attending university made them more aware of the political situation, even the environment at the university increased their perception of politics as being corrupt and tainted by nepotism, and some even stated how

they had lost hope. Which reveals a decreasing external political efficacy. On the other hand, many simultaneously pointed out a greater ability to participate in activism, due in part to their increased knowledge within their field. This would then instead indicate a slightly heightened sense of external political efficacy. The perception of the concept of politics diverges from the conventional understanding of politics in a western context, undoubtedly confounding the mechanisms relating education to political behavior to various degrees. Previous literature concerned with education's effect on political behavior assumes that the essence of politics is something good and desirable. In Kosovo the practice of politics is perceived as 'bad' and participation is often refrained from, although the idea of politics is portrayed as desirable. There is a need to better understand mechanisms between education and political participation in contexts such as Kosovo, being aware of the limitations imposed by perceptions of politics as a concept and a practice is deemed of high importance when determining the educational effect on political behavior, including political efficacy.

In terms of the second research question which is concerned with how the perception of the students seem to inform their political behavior it can be concluded that the respondents who proclaimed to have a higher external political efficacy did in fact also speak of a more distinct participation, which included participation within formal politics and not only within activism. There was also a greater understanding of the necessity for activism and politics to operate with a similar intent to better policy practices in the country. This is important as it indicates that a great number of students do not benefit from university studies in terms of political behavior, a bleak picture as this is needed for Kosovo's democratization process. What has become clear is the fact that many university students do not feel politically efficacious enough to be able to actually participate in political activities. If those who acquire an education do not possess external political efficacy is it not likely that others who do not receive a higher education does so either.

Further studies are recommended in order to better understand primarily external political efficacy among young people in Kosovo. The empirical data follows the findings from Rasmussen and Norgaard among others, education only plays a small role in informing external political efficacy, the actual political situation seems to play a larger role.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Interviewees

Female, Architecture.a BA 2nd year. 2019.04.08 Pristina
Female, Architecture.b BA 2nd year. 2019.04.09. Pristina
Female, Cultural Anthropology BA 3rd year. 2019.03.13. Pristina
Female, Cultural Anthropology BA 2nd year. 2019.03.20. Pristina
Female, Medicine 5th year. 2019.04.09. Pristina
Female, Social Work BA 3rd year. 2019.03.14. Pristina
Female, Vegetable and Crop fields MA 1st year. 2019.04.12. Pristina
Male, Archeology BA 3rd year. 2019.04.11. Pristina
Male, EU Integration and Public Administration MA 1st year. 2019.04.09-10. Pristina
Male, Psychology BA 3rd year. 2019.03.12. Pristina
Male, Social Work BA 1st year. 2019.03.29. Pristina

Interview guide – student interviews

1. Education

Would you describe your level of education as being above or below average in Kosovo?
What is the likelihood that you will have a career corresponding to what you study today?
In what ways do you perceive (sense/comprehend) that your university education prepares you for your future life?

- Please describe how your education is improving your verbal skills/language.
- Please describe how your education is improving your understanding of the society.

How has your university education affected your understanding of the local/national political debate? (legitimize both sides of the spectra)

- Has your understanding of activism changed from your university education?
- Has your view on international politics been affected to the same degree? If yes/no, explain?

Do you feel that your education has changed your perception of the importance of politics/activism?

2. Political knowledge

How would you describe your interest in local and/or national politics?

How would you describe your interest in activism?

How would you describe your knowledge of local and/or national politics?

- Could you for example name the sitting President and Prime minister?
- Could you name the former President and Prime minister?
- Can you briefly describe the demarcation process?
- Would you describe your political knowledge as above or below average in Kosovo?

Would you say it is hard to understand politics here?

What is the biggest issue in Kosovo today? In the city? At the university?

- What could you do to change this?
- What are the obstacles for you not being able to change things?

- Do you feel that it is easier to change things having a university degree compared to not having a university degree?

3. Social Status

What does your parents do for a living?

Please describe how you comprehend your own future social status.

What do you feel is more important in current state of the society, to have a high social status or to have a high level of education?

Do you feel that a high social status is important to obtain a job?

How would you describe the connection between social status and politics?

Do you feel that a high social status is important to influence politics?

- Does this differ at local and national level?

What is the process to get in touch with someone from the government?

- What is the likelihood of this succeeding?

4. Political Efficacy / Confidence to create social change

In what ways do you see yourself capable to create social change /changes in the society?

- For example, are you capable to participate in the political debate?

In what ways do you experience that your voice creates social change?

- Is this above or below the average person in Kosovo today?

Please describe the ideal way to create social change (give examples formal and informal political channels)

Internal

In what ways do you feel yourself capable to understand politics and the political issues facing your country?

Do you feel that you are more or less capable to understand the agenda of an activist group?

Would you describe yourself as informed about important activism questions today?

Would you describe yourself as equally informed about political questions?

External - informal

How would you describe the role of activism in Kosovo today?

To what extent do you experience that your political voice affects local politics?

- Does it affect national politics to a similar degree?

How would you describe the difference between participating in activism compared to politics (like a political party or voting)?

External - formal

Do people like you have a say/influence in politics here?

In what ways do you think that the politicians care about what people like you think?

How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?

In what ways do you feel that voting makes a difference in Kosovo today?

To what degree have you voted in the elections you have been able to vote in?

- Do you feel your vote(s) mattered?

How would you respond to the following statement: “People like me don’t have any say about what the government does”?

How has attending university influenced your perception regarding to what extent you can affect the political debate?

If you wanted to become a politician, how would you go about it?

Could you succeed as a politician if you wanted to?

Appendix 2

Interview guide – Interview with organization ORCA

1. Quality of institutions

How would you describe the quality of education offered at the University of Prishtina?

- Does this differ from other universities or colleges in the country?

Would you describe the level of education the students receive from UP is above or below the average person in Kosovo?

Do you perceive that a university education here in Kosovo prepares young people for their future life?

What are the biggest issues concerning university education in the country?

What are the ways in which ORCA are working towards improving the quality of the university institutions?

2. Political implications

Please describe any ties/connection between political figures and the staff at the UP.

Would you say there is a connection between how the university is run and those in political power?

Would you say that corruption is a major issue at the university?

Please describe how higher education here in Kosovo produces political capability among the young population. (both understanding of, and confidence to participate in politics)

Appendix 3

Typology on different forms of political and civic engagement, from Ekman and Amnå (2012: 295)

	Non-participatory (disengagement)		Civil participation (latent-political)		Political participation (manifest)		
	Active forms (antipolitical)	Passive forms (apolitical)	Social involvement (attention)	Civic engagement (action)	Formal political participation	Activism (extra -parliamentary political action)	
						Legal/ extra – parliamentary protests or actions	Illegal protests or actions
Individual forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-voting - Actively avoiding reading newspapers or watching TV when it comes to political issues - Avoid talking about politics - Perceiving politics as disgusting - Political disaffection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-voting - Perceiving politics as uninteresting and unimportant - Political passivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking interest in politics and society - Perceiving politics as important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing to an editor - Giving money to charity - Discussing politics and societal issues, with friends or on the Internet - Reading newspapers and watching TV when it comes to political issues - Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voting in elections and referenda - Deliberate acts of non-voting or blank voting - Running for or holding public office - Donating money to political parties or organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boycotting and political consumption - Signing petition - Handing out political leaflets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil disobedience - Political motivated attacks on property
Collective forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliberate non-political lifestyle, e.g. hedonism, consumerism - In extreme cases: random acts of non-political violence (riots), reflecting frustration, alienation or social exclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Non-reflected” on-political lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belonging to a group of societal focus - Identifying with a certain ideology and/or party - Life-style related involvement: music, group identity, clothes, et cetera - For example: veganism, right-wing Skinhead scene, or left-wing anarcho-punk scene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteering in social work, e.g. to support women’s shelter or to help homeless people - Charity work or faith-based community work - Activity community-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being a member of a political party, an organization, or a trade - Activity within a party, an organization or trade union (voluntary work or attend meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement in new social movements or forums - Demonstrating, participating in strikes, protest and other actions (e.g. street festivals with distinct political agenda) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil disobedience actions - Sabotaging or obstructing roads and railways - Squatting buildings - Participating in violent demonstrations or animal right actions - Violence confrontations with political opponents or the police