Adrian Curaj · Liviu Matei
Remus Pricopie · Jamil Salmi
Peter Scott *Editors*

The European Higher Education Area

Between Critical Reflections and Future Policies

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Editors
Adrian Curaj
UEFISCDI & SNSPA
Bucharest
Romania

Liviu Matei
Central European University of Budapest
Budapest
Hungary

Remus Pricopie
National University of Political Studies
and Public Administration (SNSPA)
Bucharest
Romania

Jamil Salmi
Global Tertiary Education Expert
Rockville, MD
USA

Peter Scott
Institute of Education
London
UK

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Adrian Curaj is a professor of Research Management and the Chair holder—UNESCO Chair on Science and Innovation Policies at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration.

Adrian Curaj has a Ph.D. in Control Engineering from the Politehnica University of Bucharest, graduated the EMBA program of the ASEBUSS Bucharest and University of Washington in Seattle-Business School and the Global Management Program—Kennesaw State University.

Adrian Curaj is the General Director of the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation since 2010. He was acting as the Romanian Prime Minister's Advisor on Science, Technology, ICT and e-Governance (2007–2008), and as the President of the National Authority for Scientific Research—Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport in Romania (2009–2010).

Adrian Curaj has been working as a consultant with World Bank, UNESCO, UNIDO, ETF and EC for studies in Tertiary Education, Science and Innovation, and Foresight. He has been actively involved as project leader or expert in many research projects, most of them in research management, higher education management and foresight, areas where he also published scientific articles and books. Two of the inventions he is co-author received gold medals at the Geneva Invention Salon 2009 and 2013.

Adrian Curaj is a member of the RISE—Research, innovation and Science Policy Experts HLEG. He was a member of EFFLA—European Forum for Forward Looking Activities (2012–2014), and a member of PEOPLE Advisory Group—EC (2007–2012). He is a member of the Romanian Commission for UNESCO and a member of the Board of Directors of the US Fulbright Commission in Romania. He was acting as the Romanian representative at the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

Adrian Curaj was twice awarded with Romanian National Distinctions, For Merits-Cavalier in 1999 and For Merits-Officer in 2008 for his contributions to Science and Innovation.

Liviu Matei is the Provost and Pro-Rector of Central European University Budapest (CEU) and a professor of higher education policy. He directs the University's centre for research in higher education and the CEU Higher Education Observatory, specialising in applied research in higher education policy with a broad international perspective. He taught at universities in Romania, Hungary and the USA. He consulted extensively for UNESCO, OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, for other international inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations with activities in higher education, as well as for governments in Europe and Asia. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the American University of Central Asia and serves on the editorial board of the Journal of the European Higher Education Area.

Prof. Remus Pricopie Ph.D. is the Rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) and was the Romanian Minister of National Education (2012–2014). His activity within the Romanian Ministry of National Education began in 1996 and included positions such as *Spokesperson*, *Secretary General,* and *Deputy Minister—(Secretary of State) for Higher Education, International Relations and Teacher Training*. Dr. Pricopie is also professor of public communication and policy dialogue at SNSPA.

Professor Pricopie has a Ph.D. in political science at SNSPA and he is a New Century Millennium Program Fulbright alumnus. His educational background includes a rich international experience especially in the United States of America and the European Union. Dr. Remus Pricopie has been Chair of the Task Force on Fostering and Building Human Capital (FBHC) of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), President of the Board of Directors of the Romanian-US Fulbright Commission and the Romanian representative in BFUG, to name just a few of the significant activities of representation he carried out during his professional career.

The activity of Dr. Remus Pricopie encompasses trans-disciplinary research in the areas of higher education management, internationalisation of higher education, public communication, public participation and collaborative public management. As a result of his research, professor Pricopie has published several books, book chapters and over 40 scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, in the areas of interest.

Jamil Salmi is a global tertiary education expert providing policy advice and consulting services to governments, universities, professional associations, multilateral banks and bilateral cooperation agencies. Until January 2012, he was as the World Bank's tertiary education coordinator. He wrote the first World Bank policy paper on higher education reform in 1994 and was the principal author of the Bank's 2002 Tertiary Education Strategy entitled "*Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*". In the past 20 years, Dr. Salmi has provided advice on tertiary education development, financing reforms and strategic planning to governments and university leaders in about 90 countries all over the world.

Dr. Salmi is a member of the international advisory board of several universities in Europe, Asia, Latin America, North America and the Middle East. He is also a member of the International Advisory Network of the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and the CHEA International Quality Group Advisory Council. Between 2008 and 2011, he represented the World Bank on the Governing Board of the International Institute for Educational Planning. Dr. Salmi is Emeritus Professor of Higher Education at the Diego Portales University in Chile.

Dr. Salmi's 2009 book addresses the "Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities". His latest book, co-edited with Professor Phil Altbach, entitled "The Road to Academic Excellence: the Making of World-Class Research Universities", was published in September 2011.

Peter Scott is the Professor of Higher Education Studies at the UCL Institute of Education. He was vice-chancellor of Kingston University in London from 1998 to 2010. Formerly, he was a Professor at the University of Leeds and Editor of The Times Higher Education Supplement for 16 years. He has also been a member of the board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England and was the President of the Academic Cooperation Association in Brussels from 2000 until 2008. He has been a member of the Academia Europaea since 1992 and also an academician of the Academy of Social Sciences in the UK. He has published several books including "The Meanings of Mass Higher Education", "The Globalization of Higher Education" and "The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies".

Contributors

Daniela Alexe is a policy expert at the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) and at the Center for Educational Policy—Bucharest (CPE), focusing on higher education, Bologna Process implementation and equity. Daniela Alexe is currently a doctoral researcher in political science at the National School for Political and Administrative Studies. Previously, she was the president of the National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania. As a President, she was responsible of the political strategy and she was coordinating the policy and organisational activities of the structure. As a student representative, she was involved in different institutional structures in the field of higher education (financing of higher education, quality assurance or qualification framework) and in national initiatives dealing with higher education or anti-corruption.

Dr. Paul Ashwin is a Senior Lecturer in Higher Education in here@lancaster, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University. His research has included "Analysing Teaching-Learning Interactions in Higher Education: Accounting for Structure and Agency" (Continuum 2009) and the Pedagogic Quality and Inequality in University First Degrees Project. His research interests are focused on teaching and learning in higher education and their relations to higher education policies. This

involves exploring questions such as: What counts as high-quality teaching and learning in higher education? How is this positioned in policies and practices? How do we research and theorise these competing notions of quality?

Jos Beelen is a researcher and a consultant on internationalisation of the curriculum at the Centre for Applied Research into Economics and Management at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. He is also a senior policy advisor for internationalisation at the School of Economics and Management at that university. In addition, he is the Chair of the Expert Community Internationalisation at Home of the European Association for International Education (EAIE).

Jos was the editor of EAIE's "toolkit", Implementing Internationalisation at Home (2007) and author of range of articles on the same topic. Jos is currently doing research into the implementation of the international dimension into higher education curricula, in cooperation with researchers from Europe and Australia. He is the coaching academic staff at the universities in The Netherlands and beyond in the design and implementation of internationalised curricula. One of the issues he focuses on is developing the skills of academic staff that enable them to assume ownership of curriculum internationalisation.

Enora Bennetot Pruvot is a Programme Manager at the European University Association (EUA). She contributes to public policy development in the field of higher education governance and funding. She has published on the topic of university financial sustainability and higher education funding and acts as editor for EUA's University Funding Articles series.

Sjur Bergan is the Head of the Education Department of the Council of Europe and represents the Council of Europe on the Bologna Follow-Up Group and Board. He chaired the Bologna group on Qualifications Frameworks in 2007–2012 and in 2012–2015 co-chaired the Working Group on Structural Reforms. Sjur Bergan is series editor of the Council of Europe Higher Education Series, the author of Qualifications: Introduction to a Concept and Not by Bread Alone as well as of numerous articles on various aspects of higher education policies.

Dr. Florin Buzatu is a graduate from the University of Bucharest, Romania, and received his Ph.D. degree from The Institute of Atomic Physics, Magurele, Romania. Following his doctoral studies, he worked at The Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russia, and Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, USA, on strongly correlated electrons and phase transitions in molecular systems. Upon his return to Romania, Dr. Buzatu served as Scientific Director of The Horia Hulubei National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering in Magurele, Romania, and (starting 2008) as General Director of The Institute for Atomic Physics.

Prof. Bernadette Charlier Ph.D. studied psychology and educational sciences at the University of Liège (Belgium) from 1974 to 1979. From 1979 to 1984, she was Professor at the Ecole Normale pour enseignants du secondaire I Saint Barthélemy in Liège. 1984–2000 Assistant, Lecturer and director of the multimedia centre at the

Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix in Namur. In 1996, she gained a Ph.D. in educational sciences at the Catholic University in Leuven on the topic «Apprendre et Changer sa pratique d'Enseignement». Since 2002, she has been a full Professor at the Center for Higher Education of the University of Fribourg. She conducts research on educational technology and adult education.

Igor Chirikov is the Managing Director of the Student Experience in the Research University International Consortium (SERU-I). SERU-I is an academic and policy research organisation based at the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California—Berkeley and working in partnership with the I-Graduate and the Higher School of Economics—Moscow. The Consortium is a group of leading research-intensive universities, policy researchers, and scholars, who collaborate to generate institutional, comparative, and longitudinal data on the student experience. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology and his interests include international comparative higher education, organisational change, institutional research and student experience. He previously worked as a Founding Director of Institutional Research Office and Deputy First Vice-Rector at the Higher School of Economics—Moscow. He was involved in several higher education consultancy projects including work for the World Bank and Sukhoi Aviation Holding Company. He is also currently a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Education (HSE-Moscow).

Diana-Maria Cismaru is a doctor in sociology, Associate Professor at the College of Communication and Public Relations, and Head of Public Relations Department at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest. She is the author or co-author of several books in Romanian Language: Public Relations—Cohesion and Efficiency through Communication (2011), Intelligent Organization (2009), Internal Communication in Organizations (2008) and coordinator of collective volumes as Innovation and Organizational Learning (English Language 2014). Her experience in research projects includes national and international projects, as: Scrutinising the impact of CCS communication on general and local publics (ERA-NET 2009–2010), Horizontal and vertical partnerships for increasing access in higher education (POS-DRU 2010–2013), EHR—Entrepreneurship for human resources (2012–2013), Public policies funded on research in higher education (PODCA 2013). She completed a stage of research in George Washington University in 2011. Other interest topics of research are institutional communication, reputation management and innovative methods of teaching.

Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik is a Project Officer at EUA. Her work focuses on university funding, governance and public policy development. She has published on the implementation of full costing in European universities and strategies for efficient funding of universities.

Hamish Coates has a Chair of Higher Education at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE), University of Melbourne. He was the Founding Director

of Higher Education Research at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) from 2006 to 2013, and between 2010 and 2013 also Program Director at the LH Martin Institute for Tertiary Leadership and Management. Hamish completed his Ph.D. in 2005 at the University of Melbourne and executive training at INSEAD in 2012. Through research and development, Hamish focuses on improving quality and productivity. Interests include large-scale evaluation, tertiary education policy, institutional strategy, outcomes assessment, learner engagement, academic work and leadership, quality assurance, tertiary admissions and assessment methodology. He has initiated and led many successful projects and was the Founding International Director of OECD's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes Feasibility Study (AHELO) Feasibility Study.

Laurent Cosnefroy is full professor in Higher Education. After having received his Ph.D. in social psychology, he worked as a psychologist for about 20 years. He then became associate professor in a Teacher Training Institute. He has served for four years in the French Institute for Education, part of the Ecole normale supérieure de Lyon. His main research topics are first focused on self-regulated learning, more specifically in the context of the transition between secondary education and higher education, and then on higher education teachers' professional development and professionalization.

Daniela Crăciun is a Ph.D. candidate at the Doctoral School of Political Science, Public Policy and International Relations at the Central European University (Hungary). She specialises in higher education policy, focusing on strategies for the internationalisation of higher education. Daniela's doctoral research proposes the construction of a typology of national policies for the internationalisation of higher education.

Que Anh Dang is a Marie Curie Early Stage Researcher at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, England. She has worked in the education sector for 15 years, including five years as Head of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Research Secretariat at Aarhus University, Denmark. She has published articles on higher education reforms, the role of the World Bank, foreign university campuses in Asia. Her current research project is concerned with the higher education policy in the knowledge economy and regionalism in Asia and Europe.

Federica De Marco has collaborated with the Special Projects Office of Ca' Foscari University of Venice since the 2011 and inside the program Sustainable Ca' Foscari, she handles the relations with international universities and international networks focused on the exchanging of sustainability strategies. In the last years, she worked also on methodology for identifying the teaching and research of sustainability and on sustainable rankings.

She is graduated in Economics and Management of Business at Ca' Foscari University of Venice with a final dissertation on the CSR of cultural institutions and is now research grant holder of the project "The sustainability at the University: research paths and empirical experiences".

Hans de Wit is the Director of the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation at the Università Cattolica Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy, and Professor of Internationalisation of Higher Education at the School of Economics and Management of the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences. He is a Research Associate at the Unit for Higher Education Internationalisation in the Developing World at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

He is the Founding Editor of the "Journal of Studies in International Education" (Association for Studies in International Education/SAGE publishers). He publishes a monthly blog in University World News on internationalisation of higher education, www.universityworldnews.com. He is together with Dr. Fiona Hunter co-editor of the annual 5th issue of "International Higher Education", the newsletter of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, focussed on the internationalisation of higher education.

He has (co)written several other books and articles on international education and is actively involved in assessment and consultancy in international education, for organisations such as the European Commission, UNESCO, World Bank, IMHE/OECD, IAU and European Parliament.

In 2005–2006, he was a New Century Scholar of the Fulbright Program Higher Education in the twenty-first century, and in 1995 and 2006 a visiting scholar in the USA and in 2002 in Australia. He is working in the Europe, USA, Latin America, Asia and Africa in projects.

He has undertaken quality reviews of a great number of institutions of higher education in the framework of the Internationalisation Strategies Advisory Services (ISAS) of the International Association of Universities (IAU), visiting Advisors Program (VAP), IQRP, IQR, Eurostrat, CeQuint (ECA) and the Dutch Flemish Accreditation Agency (NVAO). He is the co-editor of "Quality and Internationalisation of Higher Education" with Jane Knight, University of Toronto, OECD, 1999.

He has a bachelor, master and Ph.D. from the University of Amsterdam.

Hans de Wit is the founding member and past president of the European Association for International Education (EAIE).

Ligia Deca is a Ph.D. researcher in political science at the University of Luxembourg, focusing on Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education. She is also a policy expert at the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research and Innovation Funding in Romania (UEFISCDI), coordinating higher education-related policy activities. In 2014, she worked as an expert for the Council of Europe and as member of the "Science in Education" Expert Group set-up by the European Commission. Previously, she worked at the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and was the Head of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat (2010–2012). In 2008–2010, Ligia was the Chairperson of the European Students' Union (ESU) (2008–2010). Her professional experience also includes working as an expert for the Council of Europe and

leading the Coalition for Clean Universities—a pilot project aimed at fostering academic integrity in Romania.

Armağan Erdoğan was graduated from Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University in Ankara. She received her MA and Ph.D. degree on English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick in UK in, respectively, 1996 and in 2002. She worked as a faculty member and coordinated the international relations of Kırıkkale University. She worked both as the advisor at Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK) and as the head of the International Unit which lead the national implementation of the Bologna Process, and as the advisor at between 2008 and 2012. She also acted as the BFUG representative of Turkey between 2009 and 2015. Dr. Erdoğan is now a faculty member, the international relations coordinator and Chair of the Center for Higher Education Studies at Social Sciences University of Ankara.

Thomas Estermann is the Director for Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development with responsibilities for EUA's work aimed at strengthening universities' autonomy, governance, management and their financial sustainability. Prior to 2007, Thomas was the Deputy Head of Strategic Development and Deputy Head of Administration at the University of Music and Performing Arts of Vienna, Austria.

Linda Evans was a former student of European Studies and modern foreign languages, Linda Evans is Professor of Leadership and Professional Learning at the University of Leeds in the UK. Still fluent in French and German, she lived in France in 2011 as a visiting professor at the Institut Français de l'Education in Lyon and is actively involved in several francophone networks. Her research is focused both on the compulsory and higher education sectors and she is vice-chair of the UK's Society for Research into Higher Education. Linda Evans is recognised internationally for her expertise in researcher development and research leadership and has published widely in this field. Frequently an invited speaker, she has presented keynotes and plenaries in many countries, including Australia, Canada, South Africa, Mauritius, Belgium, France and Portugal. Her latest book, Academic identities in higher education: The changing European landscape (co-edited with Jon Nixon) was published by Bloomsbury in 2015.

Irina Ferencz a Romanian national, holds a Bachelor (License) in International Relations and European Studies of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and a Master in European Politics and Policies (magna cum laude) of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. She is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. programme at the International Centre for Higher Education (INCHER) at the University of Kassel (on student mobility in the Bologna Process). Irina joined the Brussels-based Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)—a renowned think tank in international higher education—as a trainee in 2008 and became a Policy Officer in 2009. She has so far authored and co-authored or co-edited six books, as well as further book chapters and articles. Her main interests and expertise are in the fields of

international student mobility (both quantitative and qualitative analyses) and in internationalisation policies at the university and national level, including the assessment of internationalisation through the use of indicators.

Cristina Fiț is a public policy expert at the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), with a special focus on internationalisation of higher education and the Bologna Process implementation. She was one of the co-authors of the "Internationalisation of Higher Education in Romania", study developed by UEFISCDI, and co-author of articles regarding internationalisation in Romania (published by Springer). She is now currently active within the Center for Educational Policy Bucharest (CPE). Previously, she was the vice-president at National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania. She also worked as PR Expert on human rights, women, minorities and ethnic groups for "Împreună" Agency for Community Development and E-Romnja NGOs. She studied at West University of Timisoara and at Romanian Diplomatic Institute.

Marzia Foroni works as a consultant in the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research on international cooperation and European reforms. Her main areas of expertise are the Bologna Process, European Union policies, internationalisation and students mobility. She is a member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, as Italian delegate, since 2008 and in the period 2012–2014 she coordinated, on behalf of Italy, the Ad hoc Group on the Third cycle, set up by the Bologna Follow-Up Group as thematic sub-group within the Working Group on Structural Reforms. She graduated at Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna, in International Relations, with a final dissertation on the implementation of Bologna reforms in three European countries. She further studied management in higher education and research institutes at the Politecnico di Milano.

Maria Francesca Freda Professor of Clinical Psychology, Member of Sinapsi Director Staff, Psychological Area. Mrs. Freda is the associate Professor in clinical psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature of the Naples University "Federico II". She is the president of the Master Degree Course in Dynamic, Clinical and Community Psychology. She works on the psychosocial intervention in institutions, with particular attention towards educational and health institutions. She has consolidated experience on narration and narrative methodology for as a device of the psychological clinical intervention, area of study in which she published Narration and Intervention in Clinical Psychology, Napoli, 2009.

Prof. Isak Froumin is an Academic Director of the Institute of Education at National Research University "Higher School of Economics" in Moscow. His responsibilities also include advising the university strategic planning and international cooperation.

Prof. Froumin was leading the World Bank education program in Russia from 1999 to 2011. His World Bank experience also extends to the projects in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Turkmenistan and India.

In 2011, he was the co-chair of the education part of the "Russia Strategy 2020" expert group. Since 2012 he is an advisor to the Minister of Education and Science of Russia Federation and the member of the Russian delegation at OECD Education Policy Committee.

Prof. Froumin is the author of more than 250 publications including articles and books in Russian and English. His current key research interests are development of higher education systems; university and school governance; foresight of education; educational and life trajectories.

Koen Geven is a Ph.D. student at the European University Institute. He holds a BSc in political science from the University of Amsterdam, an MA in public policy from the University of York and the Central European University. Koen is interested in research on social inequality, higher education and policy reform.

Delia Gologan is a Ph.D. student in political science at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, in Bucharest, focusing on public policies in higher education, equity in education and quality assurance of the Higher Education and an expert within the projects coordinated by UEFISCDI. She has graduated a Masters' Programme of Public Policies and European Integration at SNSPA and has been active as an international expert in the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of European Universities' Association (EUA) and a member of the European Students' Union Quality Assurance pool. Between August 2012 and August 2013, she was a member of the Council of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. She is now an expert within the Center for Educational Policy Bucharest (CPE).

Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans currently is employed as the Director of the Student Recruitment Directorate at the University of Hull, UK. Over the years, Jeanine has published on topics of Marketing of Higher Education, Internationalisation of Higher Education and Intercultural Competence. Since 2006 Jeanine is reviewer and member of the editorial advisory board of the Journal of Studies in International Education (JSIE). Since 2013 Jeanine is a doctoral research fellow at Centre for higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) at the Universita Cattolica del Sacra Cuore, Milan, Italy. In her research she focuses on intercultural competence as a graduate outcome and the implications for curriculum development and organisational capabilities and change at continental European universities.

Prof. Sarah Guri-Rosenblit is the Dean of Technology and Development at the Open University of Israel and a member of the Higher Education Bologna Experts Committee at the Israeli Council for Higher Education. She got her Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1984 in education and political science. Her areas of expertise are focused on comparative research of higher education systems, distance education and e-learning. She published books and dozens of articles in these fields.

She was selected in 2005/2006 as one of the 30 New Century Scholars in the Fulbright Program on: "Higher Education in the 21st Century: Global Challenge and National Response". From 2003 until 2009 she was a member of the Scientific Committee of Europe and North America in the UNESCO Forum of Higher Education, Research and Knowledge. She is currently a member the expert evaluation panels of Higher Education and Social Change (HESC) under the auspices of the European Science Foundation and the Bellagio Conference Center of the Rockefeller Foundation.

In the last decade, she was invited as a keynote speaker to dozens of international conferences that took place in Paris, Köln, Rotterdam, Maastricht, Copenhagen, Barcelona, Moscow, Wroclaw, Warsaw, Kassel, Prague, Beijing, Bogota, Toluca, UCBerkeley, University of Maryland University College, the World Bank in Washington DC, and in many international conferences in Israel.

Dr. Christen Hairston received her bachelor's degree in German and History from Furman University, her master's degree in Counselling, Student Affairs from Clemson University, and her Ph.D. in Higher Education Policy, Planning and Leadership from the College of William and Mary in Virginia.

Her entire career has been committed to supporting students through their educational journeys, conducting research to impact positive change, and serving as an active leader in higher education. Professionally, Dr. Hairston has worked extensively in college admissions, community engagement, teaching, assessment, institutional, academic, and policy research. Most recently, Dr. Hairston was an Assistant Professor in the Educational Enhancement Department at the American University of Antigua in the West Indies where she also served as the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Director of the Medical Scholars Program during her time. In 2015, she is entering a new role as the Director of Student Affairs and Pipeline Programs for the Clinical University at the Greenville Health System in Greenville, South Carolina, where she will be inspiring and educating students about health-related professions in the state.

Her dissertation, "The Impact of the Bologna Process and German Higher Education Reforms on Professorial Work at the University of Potsdam: A Case Study", sought to illuminate the implications of major policy reforms on the ways that professors defined their roles and experienced their career path at one German university.

Other research interests include international higher education systems, community engagement, student development (i.e. cognitive, identity, psychosocial), and finding ways to positively impact issues of social justice. Dr. Hairston is the recipient of the Galfo Dissertation Fellowship and most recently the Margaret Thatcher Medallion for Academic Excellence for Scholarship, Character and Service.

Robert Harmsen is Professor of Political Science at the University of Luxembourg, where he is currently directing the "Global-Uni" research project. Beyond higher education policy, he has published extensively in the wider area of

European governance, including work on Euroscepticism, the Europeanization of national polities and the European human rights regime.

Cezar Mihai Hâj Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI).

Cezar Haj is a public policy expert at the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), where he coordinates the activities within the project "Internationalization, Equity and University Management". He holds a Ph.D. degree in political science at the National School for Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. Previously, Cezar Haj worked as a World Bank consultant. He was also a member of the Bologna Secretariat (2010–2012), when he was part of the team that implemented the Bologna Process work plan 2009–2012 and organised the Bucharest Ministerial Conference (2012) and the Third Bologna Policy Forum, under the coordination of the Romanian Ministry of Education and the chairs of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Marian-Gabriel Hâncean is the associate professor of Organizational Sociology and Networks at University of Bucharest, Department of Sociology. His main research interest currently focuses on understanding organisational performance from a social network perspective. He also does research on the organisational behaviour of universities from an institutional analysis approach. In this area, his main research interests concern ranking mechanisms and benchmarking procedures within higher education. Further details are available on www.gabrielhancean.wordpress.com.

Dr. Fiona Hunter is a consultant, trainer and researcher in Higher Education, specialising in strategic change and internationalisation. She is based in Italy and works globally with public, private and faith-based higher education institutions. She works as a Research Associate at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan and is co-editor of the Journal of Studies for International Education (JSIE).

Georgeta Ion is currently associate professor at the Department of Applied Pedagogy of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She has a Bachelor in Psychology and Educational Sciences by the University of Bucharest, Master Degree in Management and Evaluation in Education by the University of Bucharest and from 2007 is Ph.D. in Educational Sciences by the University of Barcelona. Her research topics are related to the study of the higher education organisation and management and research—based policy and practice in education. She worked for the University of Bucharest and currently collaborates with the Centre for Development and Innovation in Higher Education and with national and international bodies in topics related to the research mobilisation and teacher training.

Elena-Mădălina Iorga is a Ph.D. candidate at NUPSPA Bucharest. Madalina is involved in a lot of research teams using her strong social interaction, sense of organisation, attention to details, planning and problem solving skills. Ms. Iorga has

direct experience in this field of operation thanks to volunteering activities in the International Conference R&D Perspectives. Promoting Innovation through Education, Culture and Communication, CCandPR, NSPSPA, Bucharest, 6 November 2009 and INSTALL project (Innovative Solutions to Acquire Learning to Learn). She is an important member of the research projects as the Instruments and mechanisms to increase and facilitate access to Higher Education based on horizontal and vertical partnerships between educational institutions, local and centralised structures of the educational system and social/sectorial actors, funded by the European Social Fund, POSDRU and supported by CCandPR—NUPSPA, in collaboration with The University of Bucharest and The Polytechnic University of Bucharest.

Ann Katherine Isaacs was born in Astoria, Oregon (1943). Ann Katherine Isaacs studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and the State University of Milan, where she received her degree in Early Modern History with a research dissertation on Sixteenth-century Siena. Research and teaching fellow at the Superior Normal School of Pisa from 1971 to 1975, from 1975 on she has been professor of Renaissance History at the University of Pisa. She has been active in a variety of key projects and endeavours in international research and the modernisation of higher education. A participant in the early Erasmus ECTS pilot project from 1989, member of the European Science Foundation project on the "Origin of the Modern State" in the early 1990s, she coordinated the European History Networks from 1990 to 2012, including designing and coordinating the Sixth-Framework Network of Excellence, CLIOHRES.net, in which 180 researchers from 31 countries addressed issues of citizenship, identity and inclusion/exclusion, producing 51 research volumes (www.cliohres.net). She has also been deeply involved in the Bologna Process and the Tuning Process around the world (Europe, Latin America, Canada, USA, Russia and Central Asia); she is ECTS/DS counsellor and Bologna expert; she received the Erasmus Gold Award for Innovation and Creativity in 2008, and a Doctorate honoris causa from the University of Latvia, Riga, for her contributions to the EHEA and the ERA. She has been active in the SSH Expert Advisory Group for the Seventh Framework and as an evaluator, on numerous occasions, for DG Research and DG EAC. Currently she is Rector's Delegate for European Programmes at the University of Pisa, and member of the working group on higher education and research of the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. She has designed and coordinates a large-scale Tempus project to build a Central Asian Higher Education Area (www.tucahea.org) aligned with the European Higher Education Area, as well as a new project on Public Health in Uzbekistan. She is the Erasmus and Ambassador for Italy.

Julia Iwinska is the Director of Strategic Planning at Central European University, Budapest. She is a member of the Higher Education Research Group and a researcher within the University's Higher Education Observatory research initiative. Recently completed projects focus on the issues related to internationalisation of higher education, internationalisation strategies, governance and university

autonomy and higher education reforms in Europe, with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union, as well as East Asia and South-East Asia, in particular Myanmar.

Annie Jézégou is a full professor in educational sciences at the University of Lille (France). She heads the research team "Trigone" working on adult education within the laboratory Cirel (EA 4354). She leads also a doctoral seminar and a Master's program on adult learning and instructional design. She is the chief-editor of the refereed journal transformations. For many years, she has to act as consultant on open and distance learning environments for companies, adult education providers or institutions of higher education. As researcher, she has worked for 20 years on the topic of self-directed learning in adult distance education (blended learning, e-learning, Mooc, etc.). The focus of her research is to develop a theoretical framework for distance learning environments that support learner's self-direction.

Elspeth Jones is Emerita Professor of the Internationalisation of Higher Education, Leeds Beckett University and Honorary visiting fellow, Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, (CHEI) Milan. Her specialisms include personal, professional and employability outcomes from international mobility, strategic leadership for internationalisation, internationalisation of the curriculum at home and abroad, global citizenship and intercultural competence development. She has published widely, including the edited collection, Internationalisation and the Student Voice (Routledge 2010) and is the series editor for the major new Routledge book series, Internationalisation in Higher Education.

Elspeth is a member of the Scientific Committee of CHEI, Milan and of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Studies in International Education. She is a visiting professor at the University of Zagreb, Croatia and Edge Hill University, UK. In September 2014, she received the European Association for International Education's Tony Adams Award for Excellence in Research. Elspeth is also the Chair of the Board of Directors, NCUK (a consortium of 11 UK universities).

Florian Kaiser is graduated in Psychology at the University of Trier. He has been committed to higher education issues since the beginning of his studies, working at the local Student's Union in Trier initially on social affairs, and later as head of the Student's Union Executive Committee. From September 2009 to August 2010, Florian was a member of the Executive Board of German Student's Union (FZS). From January 2011 to June 2012, he was elected to the Social Affairs Committee (SAC) and the Gender Equality Cross Committee (GECC) of the European Students' Union (ESU). From July 2012 to June 2013, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the European Students' Union (ESU). From January 2014 to December 2014, Florian was working as a Policy Assistant at the University of Liverpool for the SiS Catalyst project. Florian gained strong experience within European context not only from participating in many higher education events, but also from participating in the BFUG WG on Social Dimension and as an expert in the European Parliament. Currently Florian is involved in the European Access

Network (EAN) and the Global Access to Post-Secondary (GAPS) initiative and works as a consultant and trainer in the field of social inclusion and social mobility through (higher) education.

Ernő Keszei is professor of chemistry at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and head of the National Bologna Board in Hungary. He represents Hungary in the BFUG since 2010 and acted as co-chair of the BFUG in 2010 and 2011. He was the head of the Department of Physical Chemistry at Eötvös Loránd University from 1993 to 2007, and later the director of the Institute of Chemistry for a shorter period. He played an active role in the formation of the Doctoral School for Chemistry in 1994 and its reorganisation in 2001. He was an elected member of the Senate at Eötvös Loránd University for ten years. He served as the vice-rector for science, research and innovation at Eötvös Loránd University from 2010 to 2013. He participated in several international cooperative projects in chemical topics with European and Northern American universities.

Manja Klemenčič is Fellow and Lecturer in Sociology at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. She researches, teaches, advises and consults in the area of international and comparative higher education, with particular interest on the implications of contemporary higher education reforms on students. She has also researched questions of higher education internationalisation, academic profession, institutional research and student representation. Currently, Manja is working on a book manuscript entitled "*Student power in neoliberal age*" which investigates student agency towards academic and professional self-formation. Her methodological work is devoted to "*digital ethnography*" which adapts ethnographic and phenomenological methods of inquiry for digital use, thus creating conditions for large-scale participatory qualitative data collection on student experience for use by institutional researchers and scholars. Manja is Editor-in-Chief of *European Journal of Higher Education* (Routledge/Taylor&Francis), thematic editor of the section "Elite and Mass Higher Education in the 21st Century" of the *International Encyclopedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions* (Springer), co-editor of the book series *Understanding student experience in higher education* (Bloomsbury) and serves on the Governing Board of the *Consortium of Higher Education Researchers* (CHER). Manja received M.Phil and Ph.D. in International Studies from University of Cambridge, and held research positions at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies at Harvard University, Center for Education Policy Studies at University of Ljubljana, Center for Business and Government at Harvard University, Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels and Center for International Higher Education at Boston College.

Gergely Kováts Ph.D. is the vice-director of Center for International Higher Education Studies (CIHES), Corvinus University of Budapest, and also the senior lecturer of the Institute of Management, Faculty of Business Administration. He received his Ph.D. from Corvinus University of Budapest in 2013. He has been

serving as the secretary of the Office for Quality Development since 2007. His main fields of interest are institutional management and governance, higher education policy and funding, but he also teaches and pursuits research in organisational theory and public management.

Geneviève Lameul is a Teacher-researcher at the University of Rennes 2 in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her research domains are teaching and learning in higher education; adult learning and teacher professional development; educational technology and praxeological analysis. Her main research activities include a International collaboration in a project Franco-Canadian research on the effects of training and guidance on the practices of new teachers and student learning (2014–2017); participation in a study on teaching in higher education for the General Directorate of Higher Education and Employability (DGESIP, Ministry of Higher Education and Research) (2013–2014); an international collaboration in the HySup project: Hybrid systems, new perspective for a renewed pedagogy in Higher Education (Lifelong Learning Programme, Erasmus, 09/2009) http://hy-sup.eu (2009–2012).

Liudvika Leisyte is a Professor of Higher Education at the Center for Higher Education Studies (ZHB) at the Technical University of Dortmund. Her research focuses on academic work and organisational transformation in the context of changing institutional environment. Drawing on the sociological theories she explores the issues of (1) professional autonomy, academic roles and disciplinary cultures, (2) academic entrepreneurship, (3) the dynamics of governance and management of higher education institutions, and (4) evaluation of research and quality enhancement in higher education. Prof. Leisyte has published two monographs, a number of chapters in edited books including Handbook of Higher Education Theory and Research as well as Handbook of Governance and Leadership and peer-reviewed articles in Higher Education, Higher Education Policy, Public Administration, Public Management, Science and Public Policy, European Journal Higher Education, Journal of Workplace Rights. Prof. Leisyte is the member of the editorial boards of Higher Education Policy, European Journal of Higher Education, Acta Pedagogica of Vilnius University. Prof. Leisyte has been a reviewer for the Lithuanian Research Council, the Croatian Research Council, and the National Science Foundation and is a Chair or member of the board of various non-profit organisations (e.g. Futura Scientia, Female Faculty Network Twente).

Mikhail Lisyutkin is a junior research fellow of the Institute of Education and manager of the Laboratory for Universities Development at the National Research University "Higher School of Economics" in Moscow. He is also pursuing a Ph.D. in economics on a topic of the decline in higher education institutions.

His current key research interests are strategic management of the universities, performance of higher education institutions, institutional dynamics and development of the higher education systems.

Frauke Logermann (1988) is a recent graduate of the Double Degree Master Programme European studies holding a Master of Science degree from the University of Twente (NL) and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Münster. During her Master training, she was also recruited as a trainee for the European Commission and served as an intern at the German Academic Exchange Service. After her graduation in 2014, she had been working as a junior researcher at the professorship for Higher Education Research at the TU Dortmund. Since the beginning of 2015, she is working as a EU project counsellor and advisor at the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics in Munich.

Adina Maricuț is a Ph.D. student at the Central European University. She holds a BA in political science from the University of Bucharest, an MA in public policy from the University of York and the Central European University. Adina is interested in research on European integration (with a focus on justice and home affairs), policy theory and higher education.

Debbie McVitty is the Head of Policy for the National Union of Students. She leads a team of policy staff to inform the national policy debate within the student movement and ensure students' views, experiences and voices are represented in national and local policy decision-making. NUS policy work extends across further and higher education, and NUS is particularly concerned with campaigning for social justice in education and ensuring students can thrive and be successful. Debbie is also responsible for the Student Engagement Partnership, an NUS-hosted project to enhance student engagement in partnership with the higher education sector in England. Debbie's background is in higher education policy and educational development, particularly postgraduate academic development, widening participation and fair access and learning and teaching practice. She is a member of the OFFA Advisory Group, the HEFCE Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategic Advisory Committee and HEA, ECU and HECSU Boards. Debbie holds a doctorate in the English Literature from the University of Oxford and is currently registered on a Ph.D. programme in Higher Education Research, Evaluation and Enhancement at Lancaster University.

Shweta Mishra is a Researcher at the German Centre for Research on Higher Education and Science Studies (DZHW) in Hannover, Germany. She currently works on the EUROSTUDENT project, which compares the socio-economic backgrounds and living conditions of students in higher education systems in Europe.

She received her Ph.D. in social work from the University of Minnesota, USA. In the USA, her work primarily focused on exploring the educational outcomes of children with child protection involvement in the state of Minnesota.

Prior to receiving her Ph.D., she worked with the Government of India, implementing and evaluating community development programmes for women and children.

Her current research interests focus on the social dimension of higher education in Europe, social network analysis, and underrepresented groups in higher education.

Dr. José González Monteagudo is specialised in Qualitative Research and Life History Methodology. He has extensive experience on research (National Award of Research, Spanish Government 1986), with different research projects, research stays and teaching stays in University of Göttingen, University of Paris 8 (France), University of East London and University of Canterbury Christ Church (England), University of Milano Bicocca (Italy), Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña (Dominican Republic), etc. He published in Spanish, English, French, Italian, Portuguese and Catalan. He has been a visiting research fellow and visiting professor in England, France, Germany, Brazil and other countries. He uses Spanish, English, French, Italian and Portuguese as languages of work. From January 2008, Dr. Monteagudo has been participating in the European funded project RANLHE (Lifelong Learning, Transversal subprogramme, 814.000€): www.ranlhe.dsw.edu.pl .

Bogdan Murgescu is a professor of economic history and director of the Council for Doctoral Studies, University of Bucharest. He has been the Roman Herzog Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Berlin (1998–2000; recurring 2006) and visiting professor at the University of Pittsburgh (2002) and Central European University, Budapest (2004), and is currently the president of the Romanian Society for Historical Sciences and member of various academic boards. His main fields of interest are economic and social history, the methodological and sociological aspects of historical studies, the history of communism and of the post-communist transformation and the development of human capital. Since 2011 he serves as vice-president of the National Council for the Financing of Higher Education and has coordinated the yearly public reports on the financing of the Romanian higher education.

Dr. Alexandru Nicolin started his physics studies at Politehnica University of Bucharest, Romania, in 2000, and then moved to University of Copenhagen, Denmark, from where he graduated in 2008 with a Ph.D. in theoretical physics. Following his Ph.D., Dr. Nicolin joined The Horia Hulubei National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering in Magurele, Romania, where he is currently a Senior Scientist with the Department of Computational Physics and Information Technologies. In 2014, Dr. Nicolin defended his Habilitation Thesis at Politehnica University of Bucharest, where he now serves as Ph.D. supervisor.

Dominic Orr has worked for over 12 years at the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (Deutschen Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung). He has led the international project EUROSTUDENT for nearly ten years, which collects comparative data on the social dimension of higher education from nearly 30 countries in Europe and works closely in various international Bologna working groups (BFUG). His range of publications covers the

fields of governance and funding higher education, the social and economic conditions of student life, the social dimension of higher education and the international mobility of students. Currently he also works as an external senior policy analyst for the OECD's Centre for Educational Reform and Innovation on the topic Open Educational Resources (OER).

Filomena Parada is the vice-president of EURODOC. She is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Coimbra. She did her Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Porto. Her research focus is on Career Counselling/Vocational Guidance, Contextual Action Theory and Youth Transitions.

Dr. Attila Pausits is head of the Centre for Educational Management and Higher Education Development at Danube University Krems in Austria and academic director of the Erasmus Mundus Master Programme "Research and Innovation in Higher Education". Dr. Pausits is also vice-chairman of EAIR, The European Higher Education Society. His recent research interests and teaching portfolio are related to third mission, governance and leadership, rankings and indicators, as well as continuing education.

John Peacock is the president of EURODOC. He moved to Belgium from the UK in 2012 to do a Ph.D. at the Biomedical Physics Group at the University of Antwerp. His research is mostly related to "Hearing". Previously studied at the Glasgow University in Glasgow.

Marco Porzionato works as Director of the Planning and Evaluation Service in Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He is also Director of the Special Projects Office that developed and manages the program of Sustainable Ca' Foscari launched in the 2010 with the aim to include sustainability as a guiding principle for all University activities.

He is graduated in political science at La Sapienza University of Rome and is specialised in Law and Economics of European Community. Further, he earned a Specialist Master in University and Research Management at Politecnico di Milano.

Florian Rainer is responsible for supporting the Austrian Students' Union's (ÖH) international efforts and affairs within the international student movement. He studied pedagogics and sociology, and researches at the interface of arts and science in society.

Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin is the associate professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University.

Sauwakon was a Fulbright scholar (1988–1993) and a Takemi Fellow in International Health at Harvard School of Public Health (1995–1996). She received a BS in Pharmacy, an MA in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Public Administration (Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, State University of New York at Albany). Her dissertation won the best dissertation award from the US National Association of School of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) in 1993.

Her academic interests are in the areas of systems thinking, policy and management, education, pharmaceutical and health systems, and sustainable development.

Previously, Sauwakon served as Centre Director of South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization-Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED), Deputy Executive Director of the ASEAN University Network, Associate Dean of the College of Public Health at Chulalongkorn University, Deputy Director of Chula Unisearch, vicepresident of the Pharmaceutical Association of Thailand, member of the Policy Council of System Dynamics Society. She was also an adviser to the Thai Parliamentary Special Commission on National Health Insurance Bill, and adviser to the World Health Organization and other organisations on various projects.

Vanessa Rutherford (Ph.D., MA, BA, National University of Ireland Maynooth) is a Researcher and Lecturer in the School of Education, University College Cork. Previous appointments include Lecturer and Tutor (BA History, BA Local and Community Studies) at NUI Maynooth; Associate Lecturer (MA History) at The Open University; Lecturer (BA History) at Dublin City University; Lecturer and Tutor (Diploma in the Psychology of Adolescent Development), Centre for Adult Continuing Education and Department of Applied Psychology, UCC and Research Associate (Centre for Applied Social Studies), NUI Maynooth. Vanessa is involved in research which explores the social, political and cultural histories of schooling, education and childhood (nineteenth century, twentieth century and Contemporary). Methodologically, her work engages with discourse analysis and historical inquiry that extends to quantitative research. A major focus of her research is bringing an historical awareness to current educational thought and practice.

Vanessa is a member of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland (RAMI); Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI); The Society for the Study of Nineteenth Century Ireland (SSNCI); The International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL); European Education Research Association (EERA); The Society for the History of Children and Youth (SHCY); and the international research network PLACIM: Platform for a Cultural History of Children's Media.

Jan Sadlak is the President of IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence. In the period 2009–2011, he has been the professor and vice-rector for International Cooperation at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities/SWPS in Warsaw, Poland. From October 1999 to July 2009, he has been the Director of UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES), Bucharest, Romania. Prior to this position he was staff member and later on Chief of Section for Higher Education Policy at UNESCO, Paris (1992–1999). As Director of UNESCO-CEPES, he has participated for a number of years in the ministerial conferences and the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG). He is internationally recognised and highly cited academic and expert in higher education policy, governance and management at the system and institutional level as well as international relations [h-index 14, i10-index 17]. His

research interests and publications cover such topics as processes of reform and transformation in higher education, science policy, organisation of doctoral studies and academic qualifications, private higher education, academic excellence and world-class university, organisation and methods for quality assurance, benchmarking, academic rankings as well as ethical dimension of higher education and academic values. He has been involved in policy advice to major international organisations, governments and higher education institutions in Europe, Asia, Africa and Arab Region. He holds Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Comparative Education from the SUNY/University of Buffalo, USA, and MA in Economics from the University of Economics in Wrocław, Poland.

Cristina Sin is a postdoctoral research fellow at CIPES. Her interest areas include higher education policy implementation, the Bologna Process, teaching and learning, internationalisation and quality assurance/enhancement. She is primarily interested in the influence of European higher education policies on academic practice and on teaching and learning. In the past she worked as a Research Associate at Lancaster University (UK) in the Centre for the Study of Education and Training and, prior to that, at the Higher Education Academy in the UK, in educational projects for the improvement of learning and teaching. She has participated in research projects on the implementation of the Bologna Process, on implementation and evaluation of policies of quality assurance/enhancement and on teaching and learning in higher education. She completed a Ph.D. in Educational Research at Lancaster University (UK) analysing the implementation of master degrees in different national settings in the context of the Bologna Process.

Hanne Smidt is the Senior Advisor at the European University Association (EUA). She has been closely following the institutional implementation of the Bologna Process and the introduction of the European Higher Education Area through the EUA Trends reports that have tracked the implementation of the Bologna reforms from an institutional point of view. She has been the co-author of Trends 2010 and the Trends V.

From 2002 she has been involved in a wide range of projects that EUA has undertaken on the development of a European Quality Culture, on (Joint) Masters, and on Doctoral Programmes. She has also co-authored several studies on Lifelong Learning and on tracking the progression path of students and graduates.

The development of the Lifelong Learning agenda, widening access and the "European universities charter on lifelong learning" has been a core issue for her and she has, in this context, contributed to the Bologna Handbook with an article: "Do European universities have a strategy for lifelong learning?" She was the General Rapporteur at the EUA Rotterdam Conference "Inclusive and Responsive Universities", 2008.

Hanne Smidt started her career at Aarhus University and worked at the Danish National Rectors' Conference before joining the EC TEMPUS Office in Brussels in

1992. During her years in Brussels, she worked as an independent consultant for DG Relex (External Relations), for Danish Universities and for EUA as well as for the Confederation of European Rectors' Conferences. She also runs an independent higher education consultancy in Sweden specialising on projects supporting quality enhancement at Swedish universities and has been an advisor to the Danish, Dutch and Lithuanian governments on issues relating to lifelong learning, accessibility, retention and employability.

Jason Sparks is an Assistant Professor in the Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. His current research focuses on the internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan.

Dan Florin Stănescu Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, Hamburg University. Dan is the Associate Professor at NUPSPA in Bucharest where he is teaching "Communication psychology", "Organizational counselling", "Occupational health" and "Change Management" courses for graduate and undergraduate students. MS in Human Resources Management, National University of Political and Administrative Studies Bucharest. Wide range of experience in all aspects of Human Resource Management and Human Resource Development. Involved in consultancies activities in HRM for ten years. In-depth knowledge in elaboration of training curricula and training materials and delivery of short-term training courses. Experienced counsellor with more than five years of clinical practice.

Melinda Szabo has been working as a Project Officer for the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) since March 2013. She studied at the Babes-Bolyai University in Romania and has a Master Degree in Educational Management from the institution.

Before joining EQAR, Melinda worked in the Directorate General for Presidency in the European Parliament (2012–2013) and in the Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat (2010–2012). Her professional experience also includes work carried out as a Quality Assurance Officer at the Centre for Quality Assurance at the Babes-Bolyai University (2008–2010) and as a student expert for national (ARACIS evaluations) and international quality assurance reviews (Institutional Evaluation Programme student expert pool).

Ulrich Teichler has been professor at University of Kassel, Germany, from 1978 to 2013 and for many years director of the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel). He spent extended research periods in Japan and the Netherlands and was part-time or visiting professor in Argentina, Austria, Belgium, China, Japan, Norway, the UK, the USA and other universities in Germany. He coordinated many international comparative research projects; his more than 1000 publications deal primarily with higher education and the world of work, higher education systems in comparative perspective, international cooperation and mobility, the academic profession, and the state of higher education research. He is member of the International Academy of Education and of the Academia Europaea, former chairman of the Consortium of Higher Education

Researchers (CHER), former president and distinguished member of EAIR, vice-president and fellow of SRHE, and honourable member of the Gesellschaft für Hochschulforschung. He was awarded the Comenius Prize of UNESCO and the Dr. h. c. of the University of Turku.

Alex Usher is the President of Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA), a consulting firm which advises governments, institutions and corporations in the higher education sector on policy and strategy.

Alex's early career included periods as National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, a Senior Policy Analyst at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and as Director of Research and Program Development at the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. In the latter capacity, he co-authored two editions of the book The Price of Knowledge, which remains the definitive work on access and student finance in Canada.

In 2003, he left the Foundation to head the Canadian office of the Educational Policy Institute, an organisation which six years later became known as HESA. Since becoming a consultant, Alex has continued to work in student aid, providing assistance to Canadian governments as well as the World Bank, and governments in Tanzania, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands. He has also written a number of global comparative works on cost-sharing in higher education, most notably the Global Debt Burdens, a comparison of student loan repayment conditions in 9 countries, the 2010 and 2011 editions of World Year in Review: Changes in Tuition and Student Aid, and the 2005 and 2010 editions of Global Higher Education Rankings: Affordability and Accessibility in Comparative Perspective.

In addition to his work on student assistance, Mr. Usher has also worked extensively in the field of rankings, quality measurement and performance indicators. For six years, he partnered with the Toronto Globe and Mail of its "Canadian University Report" Rankings and in 2012 published Canada's first-ever field-normalised research rankings. He works frequently for the World Bank and other development agencies in Asia and Africa, and regularly partners with international companies such as Interbrand and Ernst & Young on various higher education projects. He also writes a popular daily commentary on Canadian higher education called One Thought to Start Your Day. He is based in Toronto, Canada.

Nicola Vittorio is Full Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics and Rector delegate for doctoral studies at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata". He is the vice-president of the Committee for the Development of Scientific and Technological Culture and Member of the Technical Secretariat for the Policies of Research of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. He has been the Dean of the Faculty of Science at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata", the President of the National Conference of the Italian Deans of the Faculties of Sciences and the spokesman of the Presidents of the Conferences of the Italian Deans. He has been one of the chairmen of the working group on the III cycle of the European Higher Education Area in the context of the Bologna follow-up Group. He is Distinguished Member of the Italian Physical Society, Member of the

Italian Astronomical Society, Academician of the Turin Academy of Science, Member of the International Astronomical Union and Member of the presidency board of the Italian Society for the Advancement of Science.

Lazăr Vlăsceanu is the professor of Sociology at the University of Bucharest, Department of Sociology. He has been involved in various projects related to higher education policy design and implementation, both in Romania and elsewhere. He published research papers and volumes on social research methodology, sociology of education and culture, and higher education reform and policy-making. More recently, his research interests have focused on social and cultural issues of higher education in the age of reflexive modernity (cf. Universities and Reflexive Modernity. Institutional Ambiguities and Unintended Consequences, CEU Press 2010).

Janine Wulz studied political science, pedagogics and public management. She is the former chairperson of the Austrian Student Union and works at 3s research laboratory.

Introduction

The Future of Higher Education and "The European Level"

In the first 15 years of the twenty-first century, the evolution of higher education in Europe was both predictable and special. The period of massification and globalisation, fuelled by the prevailing narratives that the knowledge society of the future required ever more schooling for larger proportions of the population and the European integration narrative suggesting that a genuine European identity could be constructed, reshaped the very foundations of European higher education. However, what looked like a permanent, or at least long-lasting phenomenon until recently, today looks less certain and a lot less predictable. Perhaps it is not even predictable at all.

Why is it the case that what developed in a rather unsurprising manner over the last 15 years, now seemingly looks uncertain and unforeseeable? In the current economic and political environment, does it even make any sense to talk about the future of higher education in Europe? Can one say anything relevant about European higher education's future without false pretences of scientific forecasting? Is there much that could be said that will be of practical use to the key partakers in decision-making and everyday practice in European higher education? And why have this discussion at this exact point in time?

These are questions that are addressed in this introduction to the volume of selected papers from the second Bologna Researchers' Conference, held in November 2014 in Bucharest. The generic theme of the conference was the future of higher education in Europe, first of all, but also incorporating global developments. The argument for possible answers presented in this introduction builds, both directly and indirectly, on the insights put forward by the papers and the contributions made during the discussions at the Conference.

Overall, there is a sense shared by many members of the community of researchers that times are changing for European higher education, and there is some anxiety about how the near-future might look. These concerns are expressed throughout this volume, which is composed of nine thematic sections. Beyond the

inquiry into important thematic aspects of the recent evolutions in higher education in Europe, could one also try to identify some fundamental, overarching factors that are changing (or perhaps have changed already), to understand where we are at present? Such "fundamental factors" may, in turn, represent important parameters for a discussion about the future.

The Bologna Researchers' Conference was purposefully organised just a few months ahead of an important gathering of the ministers responsible for higher education of the 47 countries of the European Higher Education Area, to be held in Yerevan, Armenia, in May 2015. It had the ambition to review existing research in higher education and contribute fresh new knowledge that could inform the deliberations of the ministers when they discuss and eventually decide on the future of the Bologna Process. A summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference, written mostly as a document for policy-making usage, is published separately from the present volume. Unlike that summary, this introduction is not bound to policy considerations for the eventual use of the ministers. Rather, it points succinctly to broader underlying factors of what could be an important moment of shifting dynamics and development lines in European higher education.

A Special and "Predictable" Period of Developments in European Higher Education Is Coming to an End?

It could be stated that, ultimately, two factors, more precisely two powerful policy narratives, can explain both the special and "predictable" nature of the major developments in European higher education during the last 15 years. These two policy narratives are the knowledge society narrative and the European integration narrative. Changes related to these two factors can help understand why this special period is already or might eventually be coming to an end.

When looking at the recent history of higher education in Europe going back to the early 1990s, but more clearly since the turn of the millennium, it is customary to talk about evolutions at "the European, national, and institutional" level. This is a very frequently used phrase (it is probably mentioned as such, or alluded to, at least once in most, if not all, of the papers included in this volume). Its relatively innocuous sounding pitch and overuse may conceal the novelty and relevance of a "European level" in higher education. The formation of a "European level" is a remarkable development for Europe and contributes to making the period so special, bringing with it new and important features with regard to the relevance of higher education and its place in broad political, economic and social contexts.

There were many important developments in the evolution of higher education on the European continent during this period. They extend from new challenges and new problems, to new policies, policy frameworks and instruments, and to new practices as potential solutions. Not all these evolutions are "European", that is continental or above the national—far from that. There is a lot that was and remains

national, subnational and also institutional, where the real work in higher education is done. Many of these developments reflect global trends in governance, finance and internationalisation, for example. In addition, not everything that is "European" is inescapably good or unproblematic. This era saw an enormous explosion in public speaking about higher education, often creating rhetoric flourishes rather than realities, at times like a *fata morgana* of continental policy-making, consisting of worthy commitments made and reiterated, but not really put in practice. And yet, what is significant is the reality that a "European level" in higher education has emerged. It is a remarkable reality, complex and in fact convoluted, but with real substance and impact.

Two main continental processes (which could also be called "projects") contributed to making a "European level" in higher education possible the way we know and live it today: the Bologna Process, launched formally in 1999 and leading to the creation of the European Higher Education Area now comprising 47 countries, and the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union, adopted in 2000, which included the project of the European Research Area. The present volume provides a good synopsis of the discussions regarding what really the European level is, and what it has exactly contributed.

This was a special period in the history of Europe, because it was defined by the emergence of a European space for dialogue in and on higher education (primarily but not exclusively a policy dialogue), and also, to an important extent, of a common continental space for action in higher education. This emergence in itself is a new and original development compared to the past history of Europe, and currently also compared to other parts of the world.

While the creation of a European space for higher education was a special defining element of this period, these two processes also simultaneously contributed to the predictability of the past 15 years. The Bologna and Lisbon processes were imagined as "projects". That is to say, developments over this relatively long period have been planned. Both the Bologna Process and the part of the Lisbon Strategy touching on higher education (continued with Europe 2020 Strategy of the EU after 2010) were based on continental-wide objectives that have been consciously adopted and explicitly stated. Generic timelines, when not clear calendars and schedules, have been adopted for the implementation of these objectives. Instruments and tools have been created to make possible the implementation of these objectives, including task forces and, sometimes, completely new institutions. Governance structures and mechanisms have been developed, and sometimes budget provisions have been made available as well. In short, European developments in higher education supported by the Bologna Process and the Lisbon/Europe 2020 Strategy of the EU have been, to a large extent, consciously planned and explicitly agreed upon. Their execution has been planned and projected over several years "in advance"; they have been "implemented"—almost like in a proper project, despite their large continental scope and in spite of notable intellectual, political and operational complications.

These remarkable characteristics explain, although still only partially, why such European developments have been, in a way, both predictable and special. They

have been predictable because they have been planned, and the overall design of the plan has not changed throughout this period, or at least not until recently. They have been special in part because the plan was a continental one, supposed to involve countries that are very different in so many ways (history and traditions, political and economic systems). What is also special, beyond the scope and the motivations of the plan and planning, are the ideas, objectives and means of these planned developments, which were original and innovative in many cases. Moreover, beyond the mere design and intentions, there have been many genuine and original achievements of these projects, or "planned developments", which also contributed to making this period a special one in the history of higher education. Many of the most important motivations and intentions, elements of the implementation machinery, and achievements are inventoried and reviewed in the present volume.

Invoking Bologna and Lisbon, though, is not enough to understand why what has happened during this time was special and predictable, and even less why this period might be coming to an end. One needs to look beyond the two processes, or projects, to understand what made them possible, sustained and influenced decisively their morphology. Bologna and Lisbon are remarkable historical occurrences that warrant such a deeper inquiry, going beyond just studying of their existence, characteristics and impact.

One could advance that two very powerful policy narratives (to call them so for lack of better concepts) and their interaction made possible and sustained these two processes. The recent corrosion of the two policy narratives (more immediately evident for one of them) is in turn responsible for the increased likelihood that developments in higher education in Europe will not continue the way that have progressed in the last 15 years or so. It was these two policy narratives that made these developments special and predictable. Their apparent fading away, in turn, makes future developments unpredictable. It is probably a purely speculative question for now whether other powerful narratives or a revised version of these two would emerge any time soon and eventually start playing a similar, or in other way important, role in influencing "the European level", or developments in higher education in Europe more generally.

In short, the two narratives are the knowledge society narrative and the European integration, or European construction narrative. The knowledge society is one of the dominant policy narratives of our times globally, perhaps the most powerful contemporary policy narrative. It has to do with the belief, often a conviction, that knowledge is already and will remain not only the main factor of production, influencing economic efficiency and competitiveness of a company, country or region, but also the main factor that underpins social progress generally (including "social cohesion", to use one of the favourite concepts of the Lisbon Strategy). Knowledge is therefore understood as being key to a better future, which, moreover, is a future that could be imagined, in fact planned in advance, and then shaped consciously (even "technologically malleable") in the form of a "knowledge society". Both the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy/Europe 2020 contain explicit language about the possibility and need to build a knowledge society in Europe/European Union. In fact, they are both what could be called knowledge

society projects, that is attempts at systematically building a knowledge society to address large societal issues. Knowledge is a key to economic and social progress, and higher education has a key role in the production, transmission, dissemination and even use of knowledge. Simply put, a core conviction of the last few decades has been that higher education is a key to building a knowledge society.

While the analysis here is restricted to a rather brutal *raccourci*, it helps nevertheless to understand how the knowledge society narrative, and the "knowledge society projects" it inspired, supported the emergence of a large consensus in Europe about the value of higher education. This policy narrative helped to put higher education very high on the public/political agenda in Europe and to mobilise large political and public support. The conviction or belief that the competiveness of a country, and in fact the whole future of that country or society, depends to a large extent on knowledge generated the related conviction that more and better knowledge was needed. More knowledge, in practice, meant support for more higher education, in the form policies for increased enrolments, for example, or for more research and advanced training for research to produce the advanced knowledge needed to be "the most competitive".

The other powerful policy narrative, the European integration, emerged after the fall of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe. In short, it was about the belief in the usefulness, perhaps need, of "more Europe", both larger and more integrated Europe, in order to be able to better address security, political and economic challenges, while pursuing specific European values, including cultural values. This narrative is also plainly visible in both the Bologna and the Lisbon/Europe 2020 strategy.

The interaction of the two narratives created unique conditions for new developments in higher education at the "European level". The underlying assumptions they fed into created a kind of policy "magnetic force field" helping to organise, and also to stimulate, a variety of ideas, initiatives and actions in higher education. These assumptions have been explicitly formulated in a number of occasions and documents during these years. A short summary could be as follows: Europe as a whole, or rather a more integrated Europe, could compete better in the world, it could also assert its own particular values and model of society (and in this way pursue a "European dream", different from the America dream, for example), by building a society based on knowledge. It was further understood, or believed at the intersection of the two policy narratives, that developing a European higher education area built with program (or plan), common structures, standards, quality assurance, internal mobility, etc., is a key to advancing the knowledge society in Europe and can help in this way to achieve better competitiveness, social cohesion and greater well-being for all European countries.

This argument is the path that explains what made possible remarkable European developments in higher education, and why they were both special and, in some way, predictable.

What we can see at present is that the force of these two narratives is diminishing. It is not a secret to anybody that the European integration process is stalled (which may help to explain why Bologna is stalled as well). There is no political

vision for a common European future and the public support for European integration has largely vanished. This, in turn, results in a different attitude to the idea of continental efforts, let alone integration or alignments in any area including higher education, and makes the future more uncertain.

We are also witnessing at least some corroding of the knowledge society narrative. This results, in turn, in less political support for and commitment to higher education. We hear leaders of some European Union countries (mainly in the East) arguing that capitalism is about capital, financial capital not knowledge, and for this reason banks are more important to save and keep alive than universities, in particular in times of austerity. We hear political leaders arguing that national competitiveness is not to be based on knowledge (and highly educated workforce), but rather on "skilled manual labour". These are only two examples, illustrating perhaps a new direction, although no systematic research is available to prove it as yet. In any case, we can already see in some countries of Europe diminishing political support for higher education, reflected in reduced budgets and a different attitude to enrolment ("we need fewer students, not more students"). Although other countries and the Commission of the EU appear to maintain a higher education policy discourse based on knowledge society principles and beliefs, differences of opinion are clearly starting to appear.

The simultaneous corrosion of the two narratives, significantly more marked in the case of the European integration narrative, results in lower levels of support and commitment, at least at political level, for the idea of European dynamics in higher education altogether. This can be seen whether by reluctance to continue older development lines, such as those already agreed upon under the umbrella of the Bologna Process, or to adopt new initiatives. This support has not disappeared altogether. Outside and within the political circles as well, there is still lot of support for the idea of continuing the "European level". This is the case with many students, academics, university administrators and higher education experts. However, even among these groups, we might be also witnessing diminished support, along with an entrenchment into national lines and ways of thinking, away from the European ones. With this, a remarkable period of special and predictable developments might be coming to an end. It should be said that this is a likely, rather than certain, scenario. Those who see the value of a European approach, perhaps side by side with enhanced national decision-making and initiatives, could still play a major role in influencing future developments. It is very unlikely, though, that the same patterns of developments would continue, given the change in the underlying "magnetic force field" created by broad and powerful policy narratives.

What the last 15 years have proven, in any case, and might serve as an important lesson for the future, is that the existence of a "European level" made possible remarkable achievements. These achievements have also been relevant at national level and would not have been there without the broader "European level".

If this analysis is reasonably accurate, it shows that we are indeed living through times of change in higher education in Europe, perhaps on the brink of an uncertain future, at least with regard to the "European level". This may raise several important questions: Whose mandate it is to think about the future of higher education in

Europe? Is it still reasonable to think about the European level, and what should that mean now? What could be concrete decisions and actions to be taken at this point? What is the role of research in this context?

The papers in this volume address, directly or indirectly, most if not all of the important aspects of these questions.

Re-imagining the Future of Higher Education in Europe. What Can Research (and Researchers) Contribute?

The papers collected in the present volume share a sense that higher education in Europe might be at a crossroads. It is also a sense of not just being at a crossroads, but perhaps of not having a map or GPS at hand. This volume represents a collective, although not strictly coordinated attempt to inform the discussion (and decision-making) about the future, specifically with a look to what research in higher education could contribute to producing a "map".

This is a very rich volume and any short summary, like the present one, would unavoidably be partial and unfair. The nine thematic sections provide a detailed analytical picture of some of the most important areas and issues in higher education in Europe. This is not meant to be an exhaustive picture. Rather, based on a selective analysis of past and current developments, the papers try to point out some of the key questions that would be important to ask when thinking (and eventually deciding, for those who have such a mandate) about the future of higher education in Europe. Detailed or only generic possible solutions are also put forward in a number of papers, mainly based on the study of various actual practices and experiences, rather than on pre-conceived normative models.

More specifically, the papers collected in this volume:

1. *Provide a picture regarding the current status of higher education in Europe*. This picture is put together in part by looking at the progress that has been made in various areas of the Bologna Process. The volume is a very good source to learn about the achievements of the Bologna Process to date. At the same time, missed opportunities as well as failures are discussed (such as in the area of teaching and learning, see the Klemencic and Ashwin background paper in this volume). Moreover, when drawing the picture of the current state of higher education in Europe, several papers, and even entire sections, look at important aspects that have been ignored as part of the Bologna Process or have been traditionally underdeveloped or overlooked in Europe in general (like rankings, diversification, or funding). The paper by Pruvot and Estermann, for example, provides one of the most complete analyses to date of policies, instruments and practices for the "funding of excellence" in Europe, which is not a Bologna topic.

A remarkable, and perhaps unintended, outcome of the volume is an understanding of what European higher education is about, resulting from a convergent set of contributions. An entire separate essay could be written based on these contributions. It would talk for example about the particular role of the state in Europe and also about the reduced entrepreneurialism of higher education institutions themselves (Usher thematic paper in this volume). Or about the Bologna Process as an effort to project European traditions and resist exogenous developments (Bergan thematic paper). It would also be about the various key features (not the official dimensions or action lines) of the Bologna Process: political, professional, administrative, or cultural and how they each play a role. The European developments in the area of doctoral education for example would belong to the more purely professional, rather than political or cultural dimension (Foroni thematic paper).

2. *Show in a practical, applied manner what the study of the recent history can teach us that could be used in the discussion about the future of higher education.* Many papers provide fresh knowledge taking a historical perspective. They try to understand why we are here and why and where certain things went wrong along the way. They also look at what could be done differently, considering these lessons that recent history is teaching us. For example, Bergan's thematic background paper is a fascinating historical analysis of the governance framework of the Bologna Process, which might become a must read for anybody interested to understand how Bologna works, why certain things do not work, how things could have been done differently and why they were not (like putting Bologna under the umbrella of an international organisation), or what could be done to improve the governance of the Process of or the "European level" more generally. Another example is a historical study of European research in higher education (Teichler, in this volume), pointing to the limitations and also to the value of the research in this area conducted in Europe, including why and how research in higher education has become interesting for policy-makers. Yet, another example of the historical approach and how it could inform policy thinking is the study of research funding in Central and Eastern Europe (Keszei et al., in this volume), showing that the disengagement of the state in favour of European funding only begot catastrophic effects. In one case, the study of the history of developments regarding the social dimension (Usher, in this volume) leads to the proposal for the creation of a new institution, a European observatory of the social dimension.
3. *Put forward new concepts and approaches to help better understand key evolutions or phenomena in higher education, in Europe and beyond.* Several papers illustrate the attempt to find valid and informative approaches that could shed new light into some of the difficult questions that could be asked or need to be asked when thinking about the future of higher education. They also hint to the more general question: how can we know what is relevant? The answer comes sometimes in the form of concepts with heuristic value. The study of the funding of Bologna (Bergan thematic background paper) serves well the

purpose to understand the overall process. Another paper (Matei et al.) suggests that the study of funding could contribute to understanding better or perhaps even reconceptualising a complex process such as the internationalisation of higher education. The overview paper on the internationalisation section (de Wit et al.), independently talks about the heuristic value of funding as well.

Several individual papers in the volume and a dedicated background paper (Salmi) discuss the concept of evidence and illustrate how it could be used at the intersection between research and policy-making.

4. *Provide an international comparative perspective to inform the discussion about the future of higher education*. While the focus of the conference was the future of higher education in Europe, it is repeatedly acknowledged in many papers that we need to think about higher education in Europe considering international developments and conditions. On the one hand, this is reflected in the regular use of a global comparative perspective. This helps, for example, to refine the understanding of concepts and developments that are usually believed to be very if not almost exclusively European, like the social dimension (Usher), or regional/transnational governance in higher education (Ratanawijitrasin). On the other hand, in several papers, an attempt is made to understand European developments, from the past and possibly in the future as well, not as isolated, European events, but as part of global developments (Salmi, Sadlak).
5. *Illustrate how research could contribute to the discussion about the future of higher education*. All papers have been commissioned by the organisers of the conference (the thematic section coordinators) with an explicit view to informing the discussion regarding the future of higher education. This is a very risky ambition, considering that the conference was a research, rather than a policy conference, and also considering that very diverse methodological and theoretical research horizons have been represented. The result, however, is compelling. The volume does provide useful insight for the discussion about the future of higher education in Europe. This insight is meant to be useful for the Yerevan ministerial conference, for the consultative members on the Bologna Process, and also for individual policy-makers, university administrators, higher education experts, student organisations, international, and other organisations everywhere in Europe. The points above illustrate how research could contribute to this discussion.

The discussion regarding the future of higher education in Europe, whether we accept that it is by now unpredictable or not, requires new and powerful ideas. The present volume tries to contribute to such a discussion, grounded in a large spectrum of research, from Europe and elsewhere.

Liviu Matei

Part I
Internationalization of Higher Education

Internationalization of Higher Education—What Can Research Add to the Policy Debate? [Overview Paper]

Hans de Wit, Ligia Deca and Fiona Hunter

1 Introduction

Since its beginnings, the Bologna Process was placed in the context of European and international cooperation, and in particular it was intended to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Higher Education by fostering the students' mobility and creating the framework for the international dimension of higher education. A first concrete step in this direction was made at the Ministerial conference in May 2007 in London, where Ministers adopted the strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting", encompassing the following priorities:

- improving information on the European Higher Education Area,
- promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness,
- intensifying policy dialogue,
- strengthening cooperation based on partnership and
- furthering the recognition of qualifications (London Communiqué Bologna Process 2007).

Until the Ministerial Conference of 2009, the main focus in mobility was on overcoming obstacles, and it was at that conference when the Ministers decided that

H. de Wit (✉) · F. Hunter
Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI),
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy
e-mail: j.w.m.de.wit@hva.nl

F. Hunter
e-mail: fionajanehunter@gmail.com

L. Deca
University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg, Luxembourg
e-mail: ligia.deca@uefiscdi.ro

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"In 2020, at least 20 % of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad." (Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2009). Three years later, the need to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the EHEA was again very high on the agenda of the Bologna Process Ministerial Conference in Bucharest, Romania, in 2012. Discussions on these subjects resulted in adopting a "*Mobility for better learning*"[1] Strategy—as an annex to the Ministerial Communique—and thus agreeing that all member countries would develop and implement their own internationalization and mobility strategies with concrete aims and measurable mobility targets, in order to contribute to the achievement of the EHEA objectives.

Converging with this document, the European Commission launched "*The European higher education in the world*" strategy (European Commission 2013) to promote mobility and cooperation between the member states and the non-EU countries. According to this policy document, "a comprehensive internationalisation strategy should cover key areas grouped into the following three categories: international student and staff mobility; the internationalisation and improvement of curricula and digital learning; and strategic cooperation, partnerships and capacity building. These categories should not be seen as isolated but as integrated elements of a comprehensive strategy." (EU Communication 2013). With that document, the importance of internationalisation of the curriculum and learning outcomes for all students, received a central place next to mobility, in the European policies for internationalisation of higher education.

This introductory paper provides the context for the following research articles, which were presented at the Second Bologna Researchers Conference, Bucharest, 24–26 November 2014, as well as a brief overview of their main foci and findings.

2 Its Development

The strategic notion and concept of 'internationalisation' date from the 1990s. Before, there was already a substantial tradition of research and practice on the international dimension of higher education, in general under the term 'international education', or under terms that reflect some kind of international activity. Basically these traditional terms were either related to mobility, such as study abroad, exchanges, international students or academic mobility, or related to curriculum, such as multicultural education, international studies, peace education, area studies. These terms described a concrete element of international education and later internationalisation, and in many cases were used as pars pro tot and as a synonym for the overall term.

[1] http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/%281%29/2012%20EHEA%20Mobility%20Strategy.pdf.

The use of 'internationalisation' in relation to higher education already can be noticed in publications in the 1970s. But it is only in the 1990s that the term 'internationalisation' really takes over from 'international education' as describing the different ways the international dimensions in higher education are taking shape. This shift is a reflection of the increasing importance of these international dimensions in higher education and of the related transfer from a marginal set of programs and activities to a more comprehensive process. In Europe, this shift was very much stimulated by the research programmes and mobility schemes, in particular ERASMUS, of the European Commission.

Internationalisation over the past forty years, since the start of the first European programmes (following initiatives in some countries such as Sweden and Germany), has moved from a reactive to a pro-active strategic issue, from added value to mainstream, although in many cases still more in intention and discourse than in practice. It also has seen its focus, scope and content evolve substantially. Increasing competition in higher education, the commercialisation and the increased cross-border delivery of higher education have challenged the value traditionally attached to cooperation in the form of exchanges and partnerships. At the same time, the internationalisation of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process (also referred to as 'Internationalisation at Home') has become as relevant as the traditional focus on mobility (both degree mobility and mobility as part of the home degree). Recent theoretical developments regarding 'Internationalisation at Home' outline that this term 'relates both to formal and informal curriculum, and aims to develop international and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes for all students regardless of whether they also take part in mobility opportunities.' (Beelen and Jones, present chapter).

Over the past 40 years, internationalisation of higher education has taken several forms and accents. In the nineteen seventies and early eighties, internationalisation in many countries was focused primarily on development cooperation and aid. In the second half of the nineteen eighties, internationalisation took a different direction. In most of continental Europe, thanks to the development of scholarship programmes and mobility schemes, in particular the ERASMUS programme, the emphasis focused from aid to exchange of students and teachers, as well as curriculum development. In countries like the United Kingdom and Australia, on the contrary, the emphasis shifted from aid to trade. Instead of scholarships, universities were forced by their governments to charge full cost fees to international students. Against all expectations, it has been surprising to see that this did not result in a decrease of international students but in a substantial increase, making the United Kingdom the number 2 and Australia the number 5 country in receiving international students who want to pursue a full degree abroad, behind the United States and close to Germany and France.

In the nineties, influenced among others by the Asian economic crisis—as the large majority of their international students come from these countries—Australia and the United Kingdom took the lead in a new direction of internationalisation, referred to as transnational education, cross-border delivery of education or offshore education. Their universities developed branch campuses and franchise operations

in countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Africa and so on. A shift in movement from students to the movement of programs and universities. Together with the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom are the leading nations in international higher education by their inflow of international students and their offshore activities. This shift in internationalisation, which has evolved further in the past decade, is referred to as a shift in paradigm from cooperation to competition, a more commercial approach to international higher education.

In continental Europe, this more commercial approach was originally seen with rather negative eyes. Free or low tuition fees higher education was and still is more common there, and that applied until recently also to students from outside the European Union. We see in the past few years also in continental Europe (Denmark, Sweden, The Netherlands in particular) a move to full cost fees for international students from outside of the EU, and there is an increasing pressure on national tuition fees.

Recently though, we also notice a reaction on the strong commercial focus in international education. The higher education sector has understood that too much of a commercial approach will jeopardize the quality of education, the reputation of the institutions, and by that the future inflow of national and international students. This implies more selection on international students, accreditation and quality control of their offshore operations, transfer of revenues to better facilitate, counselling and guidance of international students, and more emphasis on the internationalisation of their curriculum and on study abroad of the own students. Furthermore, ethical guides for cross-border activities were developed by international organisations, such as the International Association of Universities' 'Affirming Academic Values in Internationalization of Higher Education: A Call for Action', adopted in April 2012. The link between ethical considerations and internationalisation policies is increasingly seen as essential to ensure sustainable development, not only within the higher education sector, but also in society as a whole.

Finally, we also see a shift in geographical sense. The traditional divide between North and South and East and West of the past century is no longer to be taken for granted. The increasing importance of Asia, the developments in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa change also the higher education landscape and by that its international dimension. They bring new values, new approaches and new relations.

It would be too easy, however, to assume that everything has changed over the years with regard to the internationalisation of higher education, and that this change is primarily from a more cooperative model to a more competitive model. There are different accents and approaches. Competing trends exert contrasting pressures on higher education institutions and their internationalisation efforts: national priorities versus International trends; government steering versus institutional autonomy; diversification versus harmonization; competition versus cooperation; intellectual property versus open source (Guri-Rosenblit, present chapter). Internationalisation strategies are filtered and contextualised by the specific internal context of the university, by the type of university, and how it is embedded nationally. Internationalisation strategies are shaped at the programme level by the

different relationship these programmes have to market and society. An internationalisation strategy can be substantially different for a teacher training programme than for a school of dentistry or a business school. And internationalisation strategies may be different by level: PhD, master and bachelor.

In this context, it is not surprising that we see a call for a change of thinking about internationalisation, a move to mainstreaming it within the overall quality of education, a move to a more comprehensive approach and less revenue based. Several indications of this call are at the same time emerging. The essay with the title 'The end of internationalisation' by Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) might have functioned as a wakeup call, but other initiatives developed at the same time. In particular, worth mentioning was the initiative of the *International Association of Universities* (IAU) to start a discussion about the need to re-examine the concept of internationalisation and define a call for action based on it (IAU 2012a, b, www.iau-aiu.net). The group addressed three questions: Are the concept and the definition of internationalisation keeping up with developments in higher education? Is there a shared understanding of the concept? Has internationalisation lost sight of its central purposes? A call for action has been formulated by IAU based on their work (IAU 2012b, www.iau-aiu.net). The Global Surveys on internationalisation of higher education of IAU, as the 4th one of 2014 (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014) provide valuable input on the perceptions of university leadership in different parts of the world, and on trends in benefits and risks of internationalisation for higher education.

3 Impact

More than in numbers of mobile students, the impact of programmes such as ERASMUS has been on the internationalisation and the reform of higher education. ERASMUS has paved the way for the reform of European higher education under the Bologna Process, has been a pilot for its study point scheme ECTS, and was an initiator for the opening up to countries in Central and Eastern Europe to EU-membership, as it is for current aspiring candidate members. The programme stimulated both national governments and institutions of higher education to develop European and international strategies. The new 'ERASMUS+' programme reflects this global approach to ERASMUS and the ambition of the Commission to extend the scope and targets of the programme: an additional 5 million students studying abroad between 2014 and 2020.

In the Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, the two dimensions of internationalisation meet: cooperation and competition. On the one hand, both processes emphasise that there should be more cooperation resulting in a European area for higher education and research: 'A Europe of Knowledge'. On the other hand, there is strong emphasis on the argument that this cooperation is required in order to cope with the competition from the United States, Japan and, increasingly, China and other emerging economies. Also, the Communication,

'European Higher Education in the World', in which the European Commission presents its internationalisation strategy, reflects these two dimensions in the three pillars: mobility, internationalisation at home and cooperation and partnership.

However, there are also other voices speaking about the impacts of more than two and half decades of academic mobility in EU and the EHEA. The CoSMiCE project talks about the links between impacts of student mobility and responses to this phenomenon in the EHEA, as well as about the asymmetric mobility flows in the region (Wulz and Rainer, present chapter), which have been also analysed by other authors (Ferencz, present chapter).

4 The Future

The global higher education landscape and its international dimensions are constantly changing. The global competition for talent, the emergence of international branch campuses, growing complexity in cross-border activity and questions raised in the United States on the payment of agents to recruit students are just some of the issues that until recently were not at the forefront of higher education debates. However, these are now high priorities, not only for international educators, but also for university presidents, associations of universities, politicians and other key higher education players around the world.

The emergence of a global higher education space has implications for our way of looking at internationalisation. As the international dimensions of higher education have developed their own momentum and become a global topic of interest, the growing 'globalisation of internationalisation' requires a more nuanced approach to its interpretation and delivery than has hitherto been the case. Western countries have tended to dominate research and discussions on internationalisation, and the flow of students has been largely in their direction. However, as more countries attract inbound students and open up to internationalisation, their experiences offer new perspectives and issues for consideration.

Some of the same questions arise that have long been debated in the West, yet these different contexts offer insights that can inform practice elsewhere, whether related to the student experience or to institutional concerns. Over the past few years East Asia and South East Asia have become key recruiting regions, with Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, for example, all declaring themselves international education 'hubs'. To this list can be added China, Japan, Korea, India, Brazil, South Africa and the Middle East, among others, and many more if we include international branch campuses of Western universities.

Notions of importing and exporting countries are being turned upside down as students choose study destinations in countries once seen as merely sending students to the West to study. Global mobility flows are increasingly complex, then, offering new opportunities for those able and willing to access them.

Voices from countries with more recent international engagement should be heard as offering new perspectives and dimensions to the existing landscape of

international education. One such example is the insight on internationalisation as a lever for change, which has been documented for various countries (Sparks et al., present chapter; Hunter, present chapter; Deca 2014).

In essence, internationalisation efforts in higher education need to be focused on moving away from input and output to more of a process and outcome approach to internationalisation, ensuring that students and faculty are prepared and competent for an increasingly global and interconnected society.

In this process of globalisation of internationalisation to be effective, ethical, responsible and sustainable, the following priorities are according to Jones and de Wit (2012) essential:

- Learn from other, non-Western national and cultural contexts, not only through collaborations and transnational programmes, but also through perspectives on internationalisation itself.
- Ensure that no single approach or paradigm dominates the discourse, but take into account the nature of internationalisation as a comprehensive policy process, with all the policy stages that entails.
- See internationalisation not as a goal in itself, but as a contribution to the quality of students' education and research.
- Be more explicit about institutional and individual motivations so that internationalisation objectives and outcomes are clear and measurable, as well as in line with broader strategic goals.
- Pay more attention to faculty and student perspectives.
- Understand better the impact of international and intercultural learning outcomes on student employability, taking into account the perspectives of (international) employers.
- Continue research on the benefits of internationalisation and the impact on students, faculty and administrators.
- Understand better the link between internationalisation and multiculturalism.

5 Input from the Papers

These eight papers reflect both the ongoing conceptual debate on and the diversity of internationalisation in higher education in Europe and beyond: diversity by focus (abroad and/or at home), diversity by country and diversity by level and type of institution. Two papers are focused on mobility, two on curriculum and learning outcomes, two on specific countries (Italy and Kazakhstan), another paper on challenges of internationalization for institutions with specific missions and one on internationalisation in the global landscape.

Sarah Guri-Rosenblit talks about the competing pressures that influence the way in which higher education institutions view internationalisation and act to further it. She also talks about the unintended consequences of internationalisation and about the non-negligible effects of the national definition of institutional autonomy. This

balancing game becomes more complex and there are different ways in which institutions across the world have chosen to deal with the current maze of trends and international policies. This is why internationalisation is also used or seen as a lever for change (Hunter, present chapter), by either national or institutional actors. There are cases in which the top tier institutions in a country and its government decide to pursue a joint strategy to increase the prestige of the national higher education system and to push otherwise unpopular reforms.

At the same time, second-tier higher education institutions, such as universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands, academic colleges in Israel or community colleges in Canada, face different challenges pertaining to their distinct mission when embarking in internationalisation efforts (de Wit, Yemini and Randall). Based on the conclusions of the paper, it seems that despite the potential of such institutions that benefit from culturally diverse student populations, they often have difficulties in tailoring their actions in the field of internationalisation in order to best fit their overall aims and strategies.

Concerns about the impacts of the current mobility flows and the way in which mobility imbalances within the EHEA, but also between the EHEA and other parts of the world, could and should be mitigated, are voiced in two of this chapter's articles (Ferencz, Wulz and Rainer). Institutional, national and regional actors might have different perspectives on this issue (e.g. what is good for Europe might not benefit a certain category of HEIs in terms of student mobility) and the analysis of the existing impacts of internationalization, with a particular focus on mobility of students and programmes, might shed more light on what needs to be considered for future policy making.

Finally, internationalization at home and the development of intercultural competences seem to be issues which are discussed as second-tier concerns in a world pushed by a competitive impetus. However, it is clear that internationalisation of the curriculum and the ability of higher education institutions to actively design programmes that will foster intercultural understanding and trust is part and parcel of new definitions of quality higher education, which is what should drive internationalization in the first place. Two articles in this chapter aim to explore the new theoretical avenues regarding internationalization at home (Beelen and Jones) and the way in which the university social environment influences the acquisition of intercultural competences in Master programmes (Gregersen-Hermans).

What lessons can be learned from these papers and the discussions during the Bologna Researchers Conference? In the first place, internationalisation strategies are influenced by specific drivers and also by context-dependent starting points. National policies in this field should be clear about their intended purposes, as well as about the role of public authorities in supporting HEIs in their efforts to pursue specific purposes. This is key to positioning countries with a clear purpose and intention. It should not, just happen'.

In the second place, specific strategic approaches need to be developed for achieving specific outcomes. For example, in the case of internationalization at home, key aspects to be considered are developing appropriate teaching and learning strategies, strategies for the development of intercultural competences,

structured staff development strategies, or appropriate and effective assessment strategies. Also, institutional profiles should play a role in defining the most adequate path for internationalisation of higher education institutions with specific missions.

Other lessons are:

- Ethics and internationalization need be embedded in order for higher education to contribute to sustainable development.
- Mobility policies should shift to becoming a European responsibility. If the EHEA goals in this field are to be achieved, all EHEA students should benefit from the same conditions as the EU students. This might mean inter alia access to transparent EHEA-wide information on admission and funding in the different countries and institutions.
- There is need for more evidence-based policy making in the area of internationalization, and also for more willingness to reassess goals based on emerging evidence. For example, mobility imbalances might not be always detrimental to internationalization. Imbalances might need to be addressed, however, when one of the affected parties feels such a need, and in a way that does not limit freedom of movement. EHEA goals in this area (e.g. increased and balanced mobility) might need to be readjusted, as one of the EHEA goals is indeed increased attractiveness, but it is a fact that the most attractive HE systems are rarely seeing balanced mobility flows.
- More research is needed regarding the influence of institutional differentiation and concentration of resources (mergers, alliances) on internationalization trends; internationalization at home; the understanding and the definition of internationalization; effects and uses of mainstream internationalization policies 'at the periphery' (including in both countries and HEIs 'at the periphery').

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Internationalization of Higher Education: Navigating Between Contrasting Trends

Sarah Guri-Rosenblit

1 Introduction

The internationalization of higher education in the last decades reigns highly on the agendas of higher education systems worldwide. Universities in Europe, as well as in other regions, are expected to become key players in a global knowledge network. Higher education institutions are challenged today to move from operating mainly within state systems to an international arena. As a matter of fact, the medieval universities which were established in Europe since the 11th century were quite international in their nature. Medieval scholars communicated in Latin and often studied and taught at several universities in different countries of Europe. However, since the emergence of the nation states in the 19th century, universities served mainly nationalist ideas and interests. Each university has worked hard to establish its reputation and standing, mainly in the national context of its operation.

Some profound changes in the last decades have affected higher education systems all over the world due to the development of a global knowledge economy, the immense widening of access to higher education, continuous cuts of higher education budgets by governments, the emergence of the digital technologies, and the inter-connectedness of the world. All of these phenomena have affected various aspects of the traditional roles of universities and other higher education institutions at international, national and institutional levels. Operating in an international higher education setting has a crucial impact on shaping the missions, strategic planning and operational practices of higher education institutions in the current global society.

This paper examines five pairs of contrasting trends along which higher education systems, as well as individual higher education institutions, have to navigate in defining their missions and in shaping their operational strategies: serving

S. Guri-Rosenblit (✉)
The Open University of Israel, Ra'anana, Israel
e-mail: saragu@openu.ac.il

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national priorities versus operating within an international setting; government steering versus institutional autonomy; increased diversity versus harmonization policies; competition versus collaboration; and intellectual property versus intellectual philanthropy. On the continuum of these five contrasting trends, each higher education institution has to define today its functioning in its national context and in the international higher education network.

2 Serving National Priorities Versus Operating in an International Setting

Higher education systems, as well as individual higher education institutions, are required today to find the delicate equilibrium between being attentive to national priorities and local needs and, at the same time, adjusting to operating in an international setting. Internationalization and globalization are perceived as a key reality in the 21st century, influencing profoundly higher education (Altbach et al. 2009; Altbach and Reisberg 2013; de Wit and Hunter 2014; Guri-Rosenblit 2011, 2013; International Association of Universities 2012; Peterson 2014). Some scholars claim that the process of globalization "is a force more powerful than industrialization, urbanization, and secularization combined" (Douglass et al. 2009, 7). Some go so far as to claim that the globalization process will give birth to a new grand model of a 'global university'. In his book on *The American Research University from World War II to World Wide Web,* Charles Vest, a former president of MIT, predicted that: "A global meta-university is arising that will accurately characterize higher education a decade or two hence in much the same way that Clark Kerr's multiversity accurately characterized American research universities forty years ago" (Vest 2007, 108). A relatively recent position paper of the International Association of Universities stated that: "Globalization is now the most important contextual factor shaping the internationalization of higher education… Irrespective of contextual differences within and between countries, nearly all higher education institutions worldwide are engaged in international activities and are seeking to expand them" (International Association of Universities 2012, 1, 2).

At the national level, an important challenge for policy makers is to decide to what extent are they investing in strengthening a small number of universities to become world-class-universities. The emergence of a super model of world-class-universities constitutes a remarkable manifestation of the impact of internationalization in higher education (Altbach and Balan 2007). Many governments around the world are obsessed at present with establishing world-class-universities, dominated currently by leading research universities from the US, and a handful of universities in the UK and a few other countries. Germany had allocated in the last decade substantial resources to some key institutions to become the 'Harvard on the Rhine' (Guri-Rosenblit 2013). Japan had funded competitive grants to create centres of excellence in its leading research

universities. China has placed emphasis on creating world-class research universities. India, South Korea, Chile, Taiwan and elsewhere try to enhance standards of their mainstream research universities (Altbach 2013).

In the effort to create leading world-class-universities, policy makers at the national system level tend to prioritize a small number of institutions in order to improve their country's position in the rankings, often at the expense of the rest of the country's higher education system. International university rankings have become a familiar character of the higher education scene in the last two decades (Altbach et al. 2009; Altbach and Balan 2007; Kehm and Stensaker 2009; Millot 2014; OECD 2012).

Interestingly, though the effort to create and strengthen world-class-universities is conducted mainly by governments, most of the leading ranking tables focus mainly on individual institutions to be found in a small cluster of countries. Thus, university ranking that focuses on indicators such as research, publications and international reputation does not relate to the vast majority of institutions worldwide that cannot compete on the same playing field as world-class-universities. Millot (2014) argues that, in order to counter this perverse effect, attempts are being made in the last years to measure, rank, and compare national higher education systems, rather than individual institutions. Universitas 21, led by the University of Melbourne, constitutes an interesting example of comparing and ranking national higher education systems. Universitas 21 uses 22 measures grouped into four categories: resources, environment, connectivity, and outputs. The multiple measures provide a comprehensive view of the most important facets of higher education systems, including the roles and status of the top universities in each higher education system. However, the effort to compare national higher education systems is still in a nascent stage.

Obviously, in any given national higher education system, some universities are much more generously endowed and equipped to serve a broader range of functions in an international context, beyond the needs of their particular environment and society, while many others need to concentrate first and foremost on the present and future knowledge needs of their own communities, and develop their special loci of expertise (Guri-Rosenblit 2011; Ordorika 2006; Weiler et al. 2006).

Altbach (2013) argues that it is of tremendous importance to develop leading research universities, even in developing countries. There are usually few research universities in most national higher education systems, but they constitute a crucial part of any academic system, which, by its very nature, is most heterogeneous and includes different types of higher education institutions. Research universities in low and middle-income countries have crucial roles to play in making it possible for their countries to join the global knowledge society and compete in sophisticated knowledge economies. While research universities in the developing world have not yet achieved the top levels of global rankings, they are extraordinarily important in their countries and regions. Altbach claims that all countries need academic institutions linked to the global academic system of science and scholarship, so that they can understand advanced scientific developments and participate selectively in global science. Most countries can afford to support at least one university of

sufficient quality to participate in international discussions of science and scholarship, and conduct research in fields relevant to national development.

In addition to the trend of fostering world-class-universities, changing recruitment markets for students and faculty reflect one of the major shifts in higher education policies in the last decades. Many universities worldwide have developed an array of strategies to benefit from the international environment and attract non-resident students. The outreach of universities to international student clienteles could be activated at different levels, ranging from enrolling individual students from different countries, through collaborative ventures with other institutions (universities or business enterprises), to cooperative undertakings with governments, international corporations and intergovernmental organizations. The phenomenon of recruitment agents that are hired on a commission basis to recruit potential students has existed for decades in the UK and Australia. It is practiced currently on a growing scale also by the US and continental Europe, that aim to recruit mainly students in countries like India and China. The operation of such agents, and the ethical problems which such an operation entails, are subject to lively debates in the relevant higher education literature (Altbach and Reisberg 2013).

Transnational education is one of the potent manifestations of the impact of internationalization upon higher education (Altbach et al. 2009; Becker 2010; Bischof 2014; International Association of Universities 2012; Li 2014; Naidoo 2010; Witte 2010). The discourse on transnational education in the higher education literature is characterized by an ambiguous and complex terminology related to a plethora of manifestations of the mobility of students, academic staff, academic programs, and collaborative ventures in teaching and research. The terminology relates to a long list of terms, such as 'cross-border delivery', 'student mobility', 'credit mobility', 'articulation programs', 'franchises', 'joint and double degrees', 'off-shore provision', etc.

The number of transnational students worldwide, that either study abroad towards academic degrees or study within extensions or branch campuses of foreign universities in their own national jurisdiction, has increased dramatically in the last decade. US is the leader in setting branch campuses, followed by Australia, the United Kingdom, France and India. Among the host countries, the United Arab Emirates is a clear leader, hosting 40 international branch campuses (Witte 2010). China is in the second position among host countries, followed by Singapore and Qatar. The host countries have recruited prestigious foreign universities to establish local campuses, with the goal of expanding access for the local student population and serving higher education 'hubs' for their regions. Leading research universities, such as Cornell University, NYU, Texas A&M University and Carnegie Mellon, are responsible for operating professional schools in computer sciences, engineering, medicine, business administration, etc. Approximately three million students are studying nowadays outside their home countries. Estimates predict the rise to eight million international students by 2020 (Altbach and Reisberg 2013).

The mobility of international students is currently an important policy issue over the world. The UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand use a point system for

evaluating merits of immigrant applicants (Li 2014). Bischof claims that so far many countries, including European countries, offering cross-border higher education, do not have a clear policy and well-defined regulations related to franchising, validation and branch campuses. Bischof argues that the European higher education area with guaranteed recognition of degrees needs corresponding mechanisms of transparency and quality assurance related to cross-border offering of higher education programs by European countries. Such a quality assurance framework should include a joint European register of recognized, quality assurance higher education institutions and programs.

Commonly agreed upon standards and a white list of institutions adhering to them would help to ensure transparency and develop trust in cross-border education provided within the European higher education area (Bischof 2014).

Many activities carried on today in the direction of the internationalization of higher education have not addressed possible adverse consequences entailed in the internationalization process (International Association of Universities 2012). It is of tremendous importance that the leaders of higher education systems, as well as of individual higher education institutions, should define clearly their missions and operational goals on the continuum of the contrasting trends of serving national priorities versus operating in an international setting.

3 Government Steering Versus Institutional Autonomy

Government steering in many higher education systems has grown significantly in the last decades. In many countries, universities and other higher education institutions are subjected nowadays, more than ever before, to stringent quality control mechanisms and accountability measures. Many higher education systems worldwide are currently operating by mechanisms of incentives and sanctions imposed top-down by government steering and regulations. It is generally assumed that these mechanisms help to increase the efficiency of the operation of higher education institutions. On the other hand, governments encourage universities to mobilize alternative funds through operation beyond national boundaries, and enhance universities' leaders to think out of the box and find resourceful ways to operate in the international higher education market. In this sense, they are promoting institutional autonomy which might, in the long run, result in weakening the national affiliation of universities (Guri-Rosenblit 2011, 2013).

As a result of shrinking budgets, the funding of higher education institutions has become increasingly based on mixed sources. Institutions were forced, by the stagnation or decrease of public funding, to identify new resources or to develop resources neglected up till then (Guri-Rosenblit 2011; Teichler 2009). Such resources include the induction or raise of tuition, search for fee-paying international students, sale of research products and other services to the corporate world or to the public.

Though there is still a handful of countries (mainly in Europe), in which tuition for higher education is free in the public higher education sector, in many countries tuition fees were introduced where they did not exist before, and increased where they have already existed. Tuition fees have been introduced or greatly increased in Spain, the Netherlands, and Ireland in the 1980s, Portugal, Italy, the United Kingdom, Austria in the 1990s, not to mention the Central and Eastern European countries, in which they were introduced nearly everywhere. Also, outside Europe, the general tendency has been to raise tuition fees, particularly in Latin America, China and India. Moreover, many for-profit private providers of higher education have emerged in the last decades in many countries, charging high tuition fees, particularly in highly demanded fields of study.

The search for fee-paying students constitutes a leading reason for greater cross-border activity and transnational education. Institutions and governments in countries with well-developed higher education are creating initiatives to receive students from many developing countries or to establish branches and other off-shore operations beyond national boundaries, as aforementioned. Some universities in less-developed higher education systems seek relationships with other institutions which they view as more prestigious, to increase their chances of a higher reputation in global rankings.

In addition to raising tuition fees and expanding the fee-paying student clienteles, universities and other higher education institutions are constantly looking for additional resources to budget their ongoing operations. The sale of services, whether or not they are directly bound to the research or educational activity of the institution, increasingly represents part of the resources of higher education institutions. For the North American universities, it represents about 20 % of their resources, irrespective of whether the institutions are private or public ones (Altbach and Reisberg 2013). A growing number of universities have created in the last decades new entities that are intended to act as interfaces with the economic and social environment. These entities are professionally managed, according to a commercial logic similar to that of corporations with which they are in contact. They are charged with the marketing of research results, and of translating the technological or experimental activities into practical applications. This activity that generates supplementary financial resources also fuels the teaching and research sectors related to the traditional missions of these institutions (Guri-Rosenblit 2011).

It is important to note that some of the entrepreneurial activities of higher education institutions nowadays are not geared only to diversifying and increasing their budgets. Many higher education institutions are developing today broader internationalization strategies, to seek cooperative agreements that define themselves as global institutions. By the internationalization strategies they pursue a variety of goals—to enrich their academic programs, enlarge the knowledge and experience base for their students, host a more internationally diverse student body and faculty, provide more opportunities for their faculty to join international research networks and ultimately to develop a wide spectrum of joint activity that

will benefit all participating parties (Altbach 2014; Guri-Rosenblit 2011, 2013; Peterson 2014).

Peterson highlights an interesting pattern related to higher education international activities. Peterson claims that as we have entered a period of accelerated international engagement, country-to-country educational diplomacy is being overtaken by institution-to-institution relationships. While governments may view university cross-border activity as an important part of their diplomatic efforts, institutions are increasingly operating beyond sovereignty, based on their own strategies and motivations (Peterson 2014).

The Fulbright program sponsored by the US Department of State is an excellent example of public diplomacy furthered by policy makers at the national level of higher education. The principal goal of the Fulbright program has been to foster mutual understanding between people and nations. So far, it claims the largest movement of students and scholars across the world that any nation has sponsored. Also, the British Council constitutes a good example of national academic international diplomacy. With offices around the world, the British Council describes itself as the United Kingdom's international organization for educational opportunities and cultural relations. China decided to embark on such an activity since 2004. Its Confucius Institutes are designed to promote Chinese language and culture abroad. By 2011, there were 353 Confucius Institutes in 104 countries and regions (Peterson 2014, 2).

Many state-to-state relationships are replaced today by institution-to-institution collaborative ventures. The international operation of universities has shifted from being a marginal activity to a mainstream operation, no longer located exclusively in the international offices, but an integral part of university strategy. Institutions sometimes deal directly, not merely with other institutions in other countries, but with governments themselves. For instance, when the presidents of American universities travel to India, China, or any number of other countries, they often meet with government officials as part of their efforts to build educational relationships with those countries.

On the continuum of being subjected to government regulations, on one hand, and being encouraged to be resourceful and creative in generating more revenues, as well as enhancing their international status, on the other hand, more and more universities worldwide exhibit signs of entrepreneurial spirit. Such entrepreneurial efforts are encouraging many higher education institutions to vary their funding sources and accordingly reduce their dependence on the government, and act more independently in a global higher education network.

4 Increased Diversity Versus Harmonization

Government-induced mission differentiation of various-type higher education institutions has been an inevitable policy accompanying the massification of most higher education systems in the last fifty years (Douglass et al. 2009;

Guri-Rosenblit 2011; Guri-Rosenblit et al. 2007; Teichler 2009). At the same time, there exists in the last decades a growing tendency to harmonize higher education systems and make them more flexible for enabling students, academic faculty and programs to move freely beyond national boundaries. Most notably is the Bologna Process in Europe, followed nowadays also beyond Europe (de Wit and Hunter 2014; Teichler 2009).

Mission differentiation enables to assign different roles to various higher education institutions, and to develop suitable budgeting formulas that suit their missions and appropriate infrastructures. For instance, there are currently 33 different categories for classifying over 5000 higher education institutions in the USA by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2014). Nine different categories exist in the Carnegie Classification just for universities that grant doctorates.

Altbach argues that developing countries need to differentiate the missions of higher education institutions in their postsecondary system. Without an appropriate system, which would vary according to national requirements, research universities could not fully flourish in these countries (Altbach 2013).

Obviously, the institutional missions of different-type higher education institutions vary immensely. The need to adopt an international policy forces each university to clearly define its national and international missions. Being a world-class-university or aiming at becoming a world-class-university requires totally different infrastructures and operational strategies, as compared to a conventional university which operates mainly in its national milieu. Being a public university differs meaningfully from operating as a private institution; and being a campus university that teaches a few thousands of students differs from being a distance teaching university, that enrolls dozens of thousands, or even over a million students.

Each country has shaped the structure of its higher education system on unique underlying premises that seemed to fit best its political and societal needs. Multiple academic cultures flourished within the different states that have been manifested through diverse access policies, plural study tracks to a wide range of diplomas and degrees of different lengths and reputation, and a wide spectrum of different types of tertiary and higher education institutions (Guri-Rosenblit 2011).

De Wit and Hunter assert that with the flagship program of the European Union, ERASMUS, created in 1987 and the European Association for International Education founded in 1989 in Amsterdam, Europe has embarked on a new path of harmonization and internationalization (de Wit and Hunter 2014). Two rationales have driven the involvement of Europe in internationalization: the development of a united Europe and European competitiveness with the rest of the world (ibid.). Many European Commission policies since the late 1980s were driven by a powerful vision of a united Europe, of equal access to higher education, and of international education as a core activity in the curriculum, not only for personal development, but as a way to build a better world. It was against this backdrop that the Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999. The Bologna process was conceived and developed well because of the extremely positive experience and influence of

cooperation under Erasmus, hailed as one of the most ever successful European initiatives. The emerging Higher Education Area not only created an external identity for European higher education institutions, but it also generated a strong interest for the new instruments and models in other parts of the world regions, even though they may not always have been fully implemented yet across Europe.

It is of tremendous importance that each higher education institution should define its unique missions and operational goals vis-à-vis the structure of the higher education system in which it operates, and its international aspirations. Clearly, the operation of higher education systems, as well as individual higher education institutions in an international setting requires higher education institutions to coordinate and harmonize their operation through the creation of common academic currencies, regulatory collaborative frameworks and efficient quality control mechanisms.

5 Competition Versus Collaboration

Higher education institutions worldwide act today simultaneously on themes of competition and cooperation (Peterson 2014). In the world of higher education, as elsewhere, one cannot avoid competition, be it the diversification of budget resources, the recruitment of high quality faculty, and the appeal to either good students or well-paying students. The rapid rise of private higher education, both non-profit and for-profit, has become a global phenomenon capturing 30 % of the student population and enhancing greatly competition in higher education (de Wit and Hunter 2014). New forms of higher education, such as the massive open online courses (MOOCs), being hailed as a new game changer, contribute as well to the competition between higher education institutions in an international setting.

Side by side with the growing competition in the higher education arena, there is also a growing tendency of cooperation between higher education institutions. Successful cooperation holds a great potential for generating additional resources, recruiting new student clienteles, and enabling collaborative ventures to flourish. Many international bodies encourage, and even condition funding of research projects by forcing collaboration between several higher education institutions, preferably from different countries.

There are three major strategies that higher education institutions can adopt in responding to the growing competition: to strengthen their relative advantages and demonstrate excellence in specific areas; to collaborate with other competing institutions in an attempt to reduce the competitive risk; and to extend their operation beyond local and national boundaries to international markets (Guri-Rosenblit 2011, 2013).

Partnerships, if they are successful, create greater strengths. The basic underlying idea behind cooperation is that the *whole* may be greater than the *sum of its parts*. The synergy that comes from collaboration can often yield benefits well beyond those originally envisioned. A failure to collaborate results often in an

unnecessary duplication of efforts and in ineffective investments of scarce resources. But the fact is that successful collaborations are immensely difficult to achieve and sustain. Many failures are reported in the relevant literature. Many collaborative ventures turn to be more fanfare than reality, and those that have been implemented successfully did not always turn out as intended.

In fact, many collaborative ventures produce something different from the originally stated goals, sometimes for the better, and sometimes for the worse. However, it is of tremendous importance for higher education institutions to widen their collaborative agreements, both with universities situated in their national jurisdictions, and even more with higher education institutions or higher education systems beyond their national boundaries. It is also vital for universities to strengthen their ties with the corporate and business worlds. Successful collaborations bear a huge potential for creating a sound financial base for the future well being of universities.

Unlike the Anglo-Saxon countries which have adopted an explicit competitive approach to the internationalization of higher education, most of the continental European countries until the last decades seemed to pursue a different approach, which is more cooperative in nature. According to van der Wende (2001), this may be explained from a political and a value-based perspective. In many European countries, free access to higher education has been seen as an established right, which conflicts with the view of higher education as a commodity to be traded on a world market. The rationale to compete internationally had been absent, or even undesirable, in many European countries, such as France, Italy and Germany until the late 1990s. Where higher education funding has been virtually completely funded by the state, no fees were charged to students, and limited autonomy was granted to institutions, there were few incentives and no real options for higher education institutions in these countries to compete internationally. Not surprisingly, most continental European countries pursued, until the start of the 21st century, a cooperative approach to internationalization, which in terms of international learning and experience is compatible with the traditional and cultural values of European academia.

This has changed with the Bologna process. One of the major goals of the Bologna Process has been not only to consolidate and harmonize the European higher education systems, but also to enhance the international competitiveness of European higher education, mainly vis-à-vis the American higher education (Guri-Rosenblit et al. 2007; Teichler 2009). Such a goal promotes competitiveness in the continental European countries. Furthermore, there is already a competitive market in many European countries, enhanced by the proliferation of many private providers, mainly in niche areas, such as business administration, international law, computer science. This bottom-up expansion of private higher education in Europe took place because some countries were unable to meet the rising demand for studies in attractive areas of high market demand.

It is of great importance that each higher education institution should clearly define its actual and potential partners for collaboration, as well as its actual and potential competitors related both to academic programs and research.

6 Intellectual Property Versus Intellectual Philanthropy

Two contrasting trends are apparent in the field of knowledge generation in the last decades, and both trends have been enhanced by the knowledge revolution through the emergence of the digital technologies. Many countries have defined in the last decades stringent copyright regulations and invested great efforts in registering patents. A new 'cyber law' field has been born to deal with intellectual property issues in the Internet. At the same time, an intriguing movement has started advocating open source policies, and this movement is gaining momentum in an accelerated pace in the last 15 years (e.g.—MIT's Open Courseware, MOOCs, and many open educational resources projects), enhancing the trend of intellectual philanthropy in the world of academic teaching (Guri-Rosenblit 2010).

The Open Source movement, which is based on the technological infrastructure of the Internet, provides an illuminating example of collaboration among a growing number of higher education institutions. Clearly, more open access to sources of scholarly information, libraries, and software codes benefits all participants in higher education, but most particularly it benefits teaching and research in those countries that suffer from severe shortages in adequate academic manpower and research facilities.

Within the academic community there are currently many initiatives widening the open source usage all over the world (Altbach 2014; Biltzer and Schroder 2006; Guri-Rosenblit 2010). Many higher education institutions create open source infrastructures following the MIT Open Courseware initiative which started in 1999. Such open source frameworks enable to access instructional resources and academic courses in a plethora of areas. Another area in which the open source in academia flourishes relates to research products. Many funded research products are put available on the Internet. One of the most influential initiatives in the open source movement took place in academic publishing. There are currently a handful of open access journals where full-text articles are available for free online. Still, most of the journals publish just the abstracts of the articles, and charge a fee, either to individual users or to libraries, to access the full texts.

MOOCs are the latest effort to harness information technology for higher education. One aspect of the MOOCs movement has not been yet fully analysed—who controls the knowledge? Altbach argues that the MOOCs constitute a type of an academic neo-colonialism (Altbach 2014). Neither knowledge, nor pedagogy are neutral. They reflect the academic traditions, methodological orientations, and teaching philosophies of particular academic systems. MOOCs are largely an American effort, and the majority of courses available so far come from universities in US and other western countries. For the most part, the MOOCs' content is based on the American academic experience and pedagogical ideas. The main providers of MOOCs are also located in the technologically advanced countries. Others, in diverse and less developed regions of the world, are joining the MOOC bandwagon, but it is likely that they will be using technology, pedagogical ideas and much of the content developed elsewhere. In this way, the online courses threaten to exacerbate

the worldwide influence of Western academe, bolstering its higher education hegemony.

Universities, as well as other higher education institutions, should clearly define where do they stand in relation to enacting copyright regulations related to the publishing of their academic faculty and their research products, and in which domains do they join and enhance the open source movement.

7 Concluding Remarks

The internationalization of higher education requires a significant shift in the operation of higher education systems, as well as of individual higher education institutions. Operating in a most complex world, policy makers at the national level of higher education, as well as leaders of universities and other higher education institutions have to handle concurrently contrasting trends, and define their missions and operational strategies accordingly. The increased focus on international collaborative ventures, the growing link between internationalization, research and employability require the rethinking of the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions within national borders and beyond.

In acknowledging the great benefits of the internationalization of higher education, leaders of higher education at the system level or institutional level should be aware to the fact that the internationalization process carries on also possible adverse consequences, such as uneven benefits for diverse types of higher education institutions and particular risks for some institutions. In a relatively recent 'Call for Action' published by the International Association of Universities for *Affirming Academic Values in Internationalization of Higher Education*, higher education institutions are urged to clearly define the goals of their internationalization process: "As institutions develop their internationalization strategies, they should be clear and transparent about why they are undertaking a particular initiative, how it relates to their academic mission and values, and what mechanisms can be put in place to avoid possible negative consequences" (International Association of Universities 2012). The leaders of each higher education system in any given national jurisdiction, as well as the leaders of each higher education institution, have to interpret internationalization in the specific context of the structure and contextual setting of their operation.

This paper focused on five contrasting trends which characterize the internationalization of higher education. Higher education institutions are forced today to navigate between these contrasting trends. They do not have the privilege of choosing one or the other, but rather have to find a delicate and subtle balance between these opposing trends. On the basis of the five contrasting trends, which were presented in this paper, each higher education institution has to define today its functioning in its national context and in the international higher education network; the extent of its institutional autonomy in the framework of its national higher system; its unique role in the diversified higher education systems in which it

operates; its competing parties and its potential collaborators; as well as its policy towards intellectual property and intellectual philanthropy. The characterization of each higher education institution, as well as of a higher education system as a whole, can be marked on a continuum on which the contrasting trends are located, as outlined below. Such a description might depict the unique cluster of each higher education institution, as well as characterize the overall nature of national higher education systems, in relation to the contrasting trends which were discussed in this paper.

Contrasting trends		
Serving national priorities	?	Operating within an international setting
Government steering	?	Institutional autonomy
Increased diversity	?	Harmonization policies
Competition	?	Collaboration
Intellectual property	?	Intellectual philanthropy

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Balanced Mobility Across the Board—A Sensible Objective?

Irina Ferencz

1 Introduction

The Bologna Process has clearly had a significant contribution to re-shaping the European higher education landscape during the past decade, through the concerted efforts of European countries that joined this reform process to build a common space of education—what became in 2010 the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The main objective of the Bologna Process, that of creating a system of "easily readable and comparable degrees" (i.e. the initially two-cycle, and then the three-cycle system), has been promoted amongst others as a means to facilitate intra-European student mobility and as a tool to increase the "international competitiveness of the European higher education system" (Bologna declaration 1999). The number of international students coming from beyond Europe has been the main proxy used for measuring Europe's competitiveness compared to that of other higher education spaces. In fact, the ideal to increase student mobility—both internally and from the 'outside'—has clearly been at the core of the Bologna Process since the very beginning, actually already from the Sorbonne Declaration (1998), i.e. one year before the de facto signature of the Bologna Declaration.

Student mobility has been a constant theme in the ensuing Bologna Process ministerial communiqués—the political declarations of the ministers of education of Bologna Declaration signatory countries, which set the priorities and areas of joint action for countries part of this higher education space for usually 2–3 years. Ministerial communiqués underlined with regularity the need to remove obstacles to student mobility, to facilitate mobility by integrating mobility windows into the curricula of study programmes and by creating joint study programmes, amongst other support measures. Along the same lines, in 2009, in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve,

I. Ferencz (✉)
Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: irina.ferencz@aca-secretariat.be

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the ministers put forward the first concrete mobility-related mobility objective, namely that by 2020 "at least 20 % of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad".

The "20 % by 2020" mobility benchmark—as this is often called in European higher education jargon—is currently paralleled by another recently-set objective in the area of student mobility, namely the aim of "balanced mobility". This is what the present article focuses on, i.e. the concept of "balanced mobility" in the EHEA, and more specifically on its coming into existence as a policy goal, its potential understandings, its status quo and on necessary actions to reach it. Consequently, we first try to *trace and understand the goal of having more balanced mobility* between the Bologna Process countries, and to *sketch different ways in which the concept of "balance" could be interpreted,* given that policy references to balanced mobility leave room for interpretation. Next, we *try to provide an answer to the question Why has balanced mobility become an objective at this particular point in time*? Third, we present recent statistics on student mobility in the EHEA context in order to show how balanced or imbalanced mobility flows are. Fourth, we try to outline some possible *solutions for correcting different types of imbalances* encountered in the EHEA context. And last, we try to conclude from the findings of previous sections what would be reasonable to expect in the EHEA context with regards to this policy aim.

2 "Balanced Mobility" in the Bologna Process Context—Some Critical Reflections

2.1 The Origins

The call to support more balanced mobility in the European context was first made in (2007), in the London Communiqué, with education ministers of Bologna countries urging higher education "*institutions to take greater responsibility for staff and student mobility, more equitably balanced between countries across the EHEA*." A careful read of the ministers' call reveals that when the ministers asked universities to promote more balanced mobility, they had in mind student mobility *within* EHEA, i.e. bilateral student flows between EHEA countries.

The intra-EHEA focus of balanced mobility was kept in the ensuing communique of 2009, which specifies that "*Mobility should also lead to a more balanced flow of incoming and outgoing students across the European Higher Education Area*" (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communique 2009). The Leuven Communiqué adds thus an important note: that the aim of balance concerns not only the bilateral student flows between EHEA countries, but also the relation (or ratio) between total inflows and outflows of individual countries. Last but not least,

at the same ministerial conference, the education leaders also tasked the Bologna Process Follow-Up Group (BFUG)—the operational arm of this reform process—to look into "*how balanced mobility could be achieved within the EHEA*".

The response to the ministers' question came in (2012), in the Bucharest Communiqué, which stipulates that EHEA countries should "*strive for open higher education systems and better balanced mobility in the EHEA. If mobility imbalances between EHEA countries are deemed unsustainable by at least one party, we encourage the countries involved to jointly seek a solution, in line with the EHEA Mobility Strategy*." Therefore, the Bucharest policy document maintains the focus on balance *within* EHEA, but adds an important detail for understanding the rationale behind this goal, namely that a good solution for correcting imbalances could be bilateral talks between EHEA countries experiencing these situations.

The EHEA Mobility Strategy—*Mobility for better learning* (2012)—adopted by the ministers of education at the same high-level conference in 2012, adds some essential elements for the discussion and understanding of this policy goal. First, the strategy extends the scope of balanced mobility to flows between EHEA and non-EHEA countries, i.e. clarifies that balanced mobility is not only an internal objective, but also an external goal. Second, the ministers clarify that when they advocate balanced mobility they primarily mean to achieve more balance in *degree mobility,* rather than in credit mobility (which is by nature more balanced). Third, the strategy specifies that imbalances with regards to (too) high international student inflows were to be particularly tackled: "*Efforts made by governments as well as higher education institutions confronted with high levels of incoming degree and credit mobility deserve our acknowledgement and attention in order to strengthen the EHEA*." And fourth, it lists some actions on how imbalances could be addressed, advancing the possibility of multilateral—instead of bilateral only—action, as a last resort: "*If the findings show greater imbalances over longer periods of time, the governments concerned should jointly investigate the causes, consider carefully the advantages and disadvantages of the specific imbalance and seek solutions if deemed necessary. Dealing with the matter multilaterally might also be considered*."

Therefore to summarize, the Bologna Process policy documents (to date) allow us to conclude the following with regards to the balanced mobility aim. First, that balance is an internal (between EHEA countries), but as of 2012 also an external (between EHEA and non-EHEA countries), objective. Second, that balance is primarily to be sought in bilateral flows between EHEA countries (e.g. between the number of students from country X going to study in country Y and the number of students from country Y coming to study in country X). Third, that nevertheless, at country level, balance is pursued also between total inflows and outflows (e.g. between the total number of students going out of and coming into an EHEA country). And fourth, that particularly imbalances due to high inflows of degree-seeking students should be addressed.

2.2 The Caveats

Interestingly, the objective of balanced mobility was set in the EHEA context without any prior explanation of what is actually understood through balanced mobility. Or to express this differently, under which conditions mobility flows would be considered as balanced. Would only situations of perfect equilibrium between inflows and outflows be regarded as balanced or would small differences also be acceptable? These issues were not explored in the Bologna Process policy documents, balanced mobility lacking a proper definition therein. There are different potential explanations as to why this happened (or has not happened)—for example the ministers might have thought that the concept of balance was self-explanatory, or they believed that clarifying the concept would not be a task for themselves, but of the operational arm of the process—the BFUG.

Nevertheless, irrespective of the motives behind this lack of clarity, there have been earlier attempts to define what "balanced mobility" could mean. Applying this concept of balance to total student inflows and outflows, Teichler et al. proposed in 2011 to define as balanced a situation where the difference between inflows and outflows is smaller than 10 percentage points. Therefore, balanced would be not only cases where there is full equilibrium between the number of incoming and outgoing students (which is almost impossible to achieve in practice), but also cases where the differences are considered negligible or non-detrimental. This is the definition that we will be working with in the following sections in order to analyse how balanced or imbalanced EHEA mobility flows are.

Apart from the lack of a proper definition, another peculiarity of this objective in the Bologna Process context is that, while the concept of balanced mobility is pursued here primarily in degree mobility, the idea of reciprocity, of balance, is actually the cornerstone of another type of mobility, i.e. credit mobility (student exchanges). Therefore, balance in degree mobility is a borrowed concept. Reciprocity as such was one of the original aims of the ERASMUS Programme, in the sense that the programme wanted to break away from up to then traditional mobility patterns (i.e. East to West and South to North) and to foster also reverse flows (West to East and North to South). Therefore, even in the context of credit mobility balance was not meant as full reciprocity, but rather as having flows in both directions.

Knowing that the concept of balance is specific to credit mobility, we cannot help but wonder if it is at all applicable to or pursuable for degree mobility. Or to express this doubt differently—would governments have the same tools at their disposal to influence balance in degree mobility as they have in credit mobility? The short answer to this question is no, they do not.

Earlier studies (Kelo et al. 2006; Teichler et al. 2011) have highlighted the intrinsic differences between credit and degree mobility, labelling the first as a horizontal and the second as a vertical type of mobility. Credit mobility is horizontal in the sense that students move for study purposes between higher education systems that are more or less on an equal par. The main aim of credit mobility is

personal development and having the experience of another type of teaching and learning (to compare with one's own). In contrast, degree mobility is seen as vertical, in the sense that students generally move from one least developed to a more advanced higher education system, in the hope of getting a better education—a better degree—or a specialisation that is not available in the home country.

As the main drivers of the two types of mobility are different, so are their main funding sources. Whereas credit mobility is largely funded via different mobility programmes (either at the European, national or institutional level), degree mobility predominantly happens outside official funding schemes (i.e. is self-funded)—estimates are that at least 90 % of degree mobile students are free movers (Teichler et al. 2011). As a result, while governments can more easily shape the credit mobility flows and move towards more balanced exchanges by adjusting the funding they make available for these purposes, they do not have the same room for manoeuvre in degree mobility, which is preponderantly self-funded and driven by individual (career) needs. We will come back to these points in Sect. 4, when we try to outline potential courses of actions that are necessary to correct imbalances.

3 Why "Balanced Mobility" in 2007?

As presented in the earlier section, balanced mobility was first mentioned as a policy goal in the Bologna Process context in 2007. So what has happened in this period to explain the adoption of this objective at the supranational level, especially knowing that imbalances in student flows were not a new development for most European countries? Just as an example, many countries in Eastern and Southern Europe had for instance for more than a decade not only experienced, but also denounced a particular type of imbalance—"brain drain", i.e. the fact that much more of their students left to study abroad than students came from abroad into their higher education systems. This outflow of students to other countries coupled with often modest inflows was equalled to an export of talent, a situation no particular country wanted to find itself into.

Furthermore, in a recent study of Eurydice (2012), comparing the size of and differences between the numbers of incoming and outgoing degree-seeking students in the EHEA countries, the latter are divided into four types of systems, depending on the kind and magnitude of imbalances they experience. Accordingly, the "limited" systems are found in countries experiencing high outflows but lower inflows (those generally denouncing brain drain), the "closed" countries are those with low outflows and even lower inflows, while the "open" systems are characterised by high outflows but even higher inflows), and finally the "attractive", with low outflows and generally high inflows.

What the Eurydice study also does is clearly show that, while balanced mobility might seem like a hard-to-challenge objective—as the very notion of balance has an intrinsic positive value (balance is generally perceived as essentially good, while imbalance as negative)—there are situations where certain types of imbalances are

not only seen as positive, but also highly desirable. Just as there are situations in which balanced mobility is not necessarily positively connoted. And as the authors showed through their grouping of systems, for a long time in the European context high student inflows and smaller outflows have been actively pursued as an objective, whereas situations of low inflows and low outflows for example, while balanced, have been largely seen as undesirable. While countries with "attractive systems" (like the UK, France, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium) were seen (despite their great imbalances) as "the benchmark" in terms of student mobility, countries with "limited systems", although showing more balanced flows, were clearly not a model.

Therefore imbalances were not a new phenomenon in 2007 and certain imbalances in student inflows have not only been tolerated, but actively pursued. So coming back to our question, why balanced mobility in the Bologna Process in 2007? Because, particularly in the mid-2000s, some of the countries with "attractive" systems and which enjoyed greater power of influence in the Bologna Process became to an extent victims of their own success. Several of them started to feel some negative consequences of too high inflows of foreign students, either in the form of (hindered) access of their own nationals to higher education in specific fields (e.g. Austria and the French-speaking Community of Belgium) or related to the cost of education, i.e. questioning the legitimacy of educating foreigners by using national tax-payers' money in countries with no or not very high tuition fees (e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany more recently).

Two elements speak in favour of this interpretation in particular:

- the focus in the EHEA context on balance in *degree mobility*, although balance is a concept specific to credit mobility, as commented above, and although imbalances were equally observed in credit mobility (Teichler et al. 2011, p. 92, Vol. I); and
- the focus on imbalances related to *incoming* degree mobility, alluding to countries "confronted with" a high influx of students from abroad, although imbalances related to outgoing mobility ("brain drain") had a much longer history in the Bologna context.

The first type of negative consequence—limited access for own nationals—has been experienced by 2 countries in particular. Austria and the French-speaking Community of Belgium had been trying to cope for over a decade with a high influx of foreigners from neighbouring countries Germany and respectively France (with whom they shared the same language) in a specific subject area—medical and paramedical studies—regulated by a *numerus clausus* condition. As the German and the French applicants crossing the border and applying in the neighbouring countries became more numerous, they increasingly prevented the access of Austrian and Walloon students to this subject area. In 2005 for example, 40 % of the new entrants in medical studies in Austria were German nationals. To cope with this situation, the two EU member states decided in 2006 to introduce student quotas in this subject field, i.e. to reserve a number of places for domestic students and to thus limit the access of foreign (also EU) nationals (Pechar 2014). As of

2006, 75 % of study places in medicine in Austria and 70 % in Wallonia are reserved for own nationals.

This move has gotten both Austria and the French-speaking Community of Belgium in a dispute with two European Union institutions—the European Commission (EC) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ), for breaching a fundamental right in the EU context—the right to free movement (Garben 2012). After long deliberations, the EC (in 2007) and the ECJ in a preliminary ruling (in 2010) have concluded that, while imposing quotas for other EU-nationals violates the right to free movement in the EU framework, such practices could be accepted in very specific situations. The countries in question had to demonstrate that their national systems would be, without imposing such measures, at risk. Therefore, Austria and the French-speaking Community of Belgium were given a moratorium until 2016, by which time they have to demonstrate that the foreign medical students graduating in their countries leave after graduation, and that as a result the Austrian and the Walloon healthcare systems will inevitably be confronted with an undersupply of medical staff.

The second type of negative consequence felt by "attractive" countries had to do with the cost of educating large cohorts of foreigners and its legitimacy. One of the countries in this situation was Denmark. For years Denmark had been a net receiver of degree-seeking students from the other Nordic countries, or, otherwise said, the other Nordic countries were having big groups of their own nationals educated in Denmark (at the latter's expense). To cover for this extra cost for Danish universities, a compensation system was put in place already in 1996 in the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers, under which Denmark would be entitled to a lump sum for each student it enrolled from another Nordic country (Wächter 2013). The compensation system was managed through the budget of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Denmark not having to receive directly any payments.

It must be said though that this type of compensation mechanism, also found for example in Switzerland between the Swiss cantons, is not designed to redress the imbalances as such, i.e. is not meant to reduce the gap between inflows and outflows, but rather to remedy the financial consequences of imbalances and the burden off the country primarily affected by the imbalances. In other words, the compensation mechanism is a model of cost-sharing between the countries involved, but does not automatically lead to more balanced mobility.

National debates about the cost of educating foreigners have taken place in recent years also in countries like Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany, but have so far concluded with the finding that if only a small share of foreign graduates remain and work in their host country upon graduation then the economic returns significantly outweigh the initial investment in education. Given the strong link between degree mobility and migration, critical discussions have also taken place in France and the UK, as to the impact and rights of foreign graduates, but the two countries have not yet taken any measures to limit the number of international students.

4 How Balanced Are EHEA Mobility Flows?

Although we have seen that balanced mobility was very likely advanced as a policy goal in the Bologna Process by a group of influential countries (part of the "attractive" systems group and that experienced a specific type of imbalance), it is worthwhile to have a look at mobility statistics for the whole group of EHEA countries, to see how balanced or imbalanced student mobility flows currently are.

Concretely, we will look at the relation (ratio) between

- total inflows and outflows per EHEA country;
- inflows from and outflows to other EHEA countries (intra-EHEA balance); and
- inflows from and outflows to non-EHEA countries.

The analysis is based on data on international degree mobility for the year 2010/11, the most recent year available at the time of writing this article in the international data collection of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). Given the major effort to collect mobility data from the national level worldwide, inevitably this dataset presents figures less recent than those available in individual countries, but more comparable (thanks to common definitions used for data collection). We focus on degree mobility only, given the emphasis on degree mobility whenever balance is discussed in the Bologna Process context, but also because of the lack of an EHEA-wide data collection on credit mobility (which makes such an analysis for credit mobility impossible).[1]

4.1 Balance Between Total Inflows and Outflows per Country

Figure 1 presents for each EHEA country and for this higher education space as a whole the total number of incoming students divided by the total number of outgoing students, i.e. the IN:OUT ratio. Ratios with a value of 1.0, as well as with a difference of less than 0.10 (equivalent of 10 percentage points) are seen as balanced. Ratios with values higher than 1.1 are imbalanced towards inflows, while ratios with values smaller than 0.9 show imbalances towards outflows.

It is quite clear from the figure that only two (highlighted in green) of the 47 EHEA countries actually have balanced mobility flows—Norway and Greece. As

[1]Hypothetically, we could also imagine applying the concept of balance to bilateral flows between countries. But given the stark differences between the size of the higher education systems that are part of EHEA country and given the tradition of certain countries to specialize in certain disciplines that are offered to foreigners (e.g. medical and paramedical studies in Hungary, Romania, etc.) we find it hard to believe that this is what the ministers had in mind when adopting the balance objective. Further on, we could also envisage applying the concept of balance across study fields, and levels of study (Bachelor, Master and Ph.D.). However, given the lack of comparable data at supranational level on these parameters, we could not conduct any such analyses.

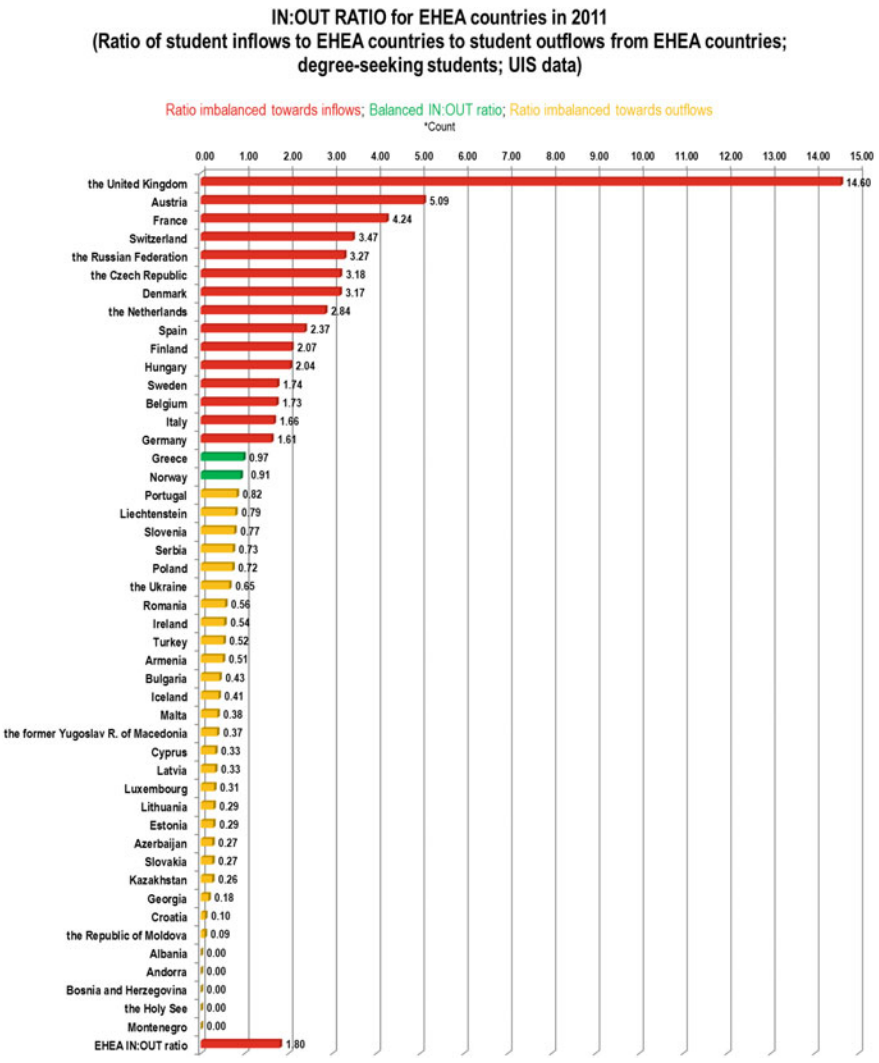

Fig. 1 IN:OUT ratios for EHEA countries in 2010/11. *Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See and Montenegro had no data available for inflows, hence the 0 values in the figure for the ratios

earlier commented though, the table also shows that the vast majority of EHEA countries (25 in total) are net exporters of students, while EHEA as a whole is imbalanced towards inflows, receiving almost twice more students than it sends abroad. This is because some of the main receiver countries of foreign students amongst EHEA members are also imbalanced towards incoming (15 countries, the UK—Germany group in the figure).

The size of imbalances also largely varies between EHEA countries—while for countries like Germany, Portugal or Liechtenstein the imbalances are not so significant, for the UK for instance, the number of incoming students is almost 15 times higher than the number of outgoing students.

4.2 Balance Within EHEA

Figure 2 presents for each EHEA country the number of students coming from other EHEA countries divided by the number of own students going abroad to other

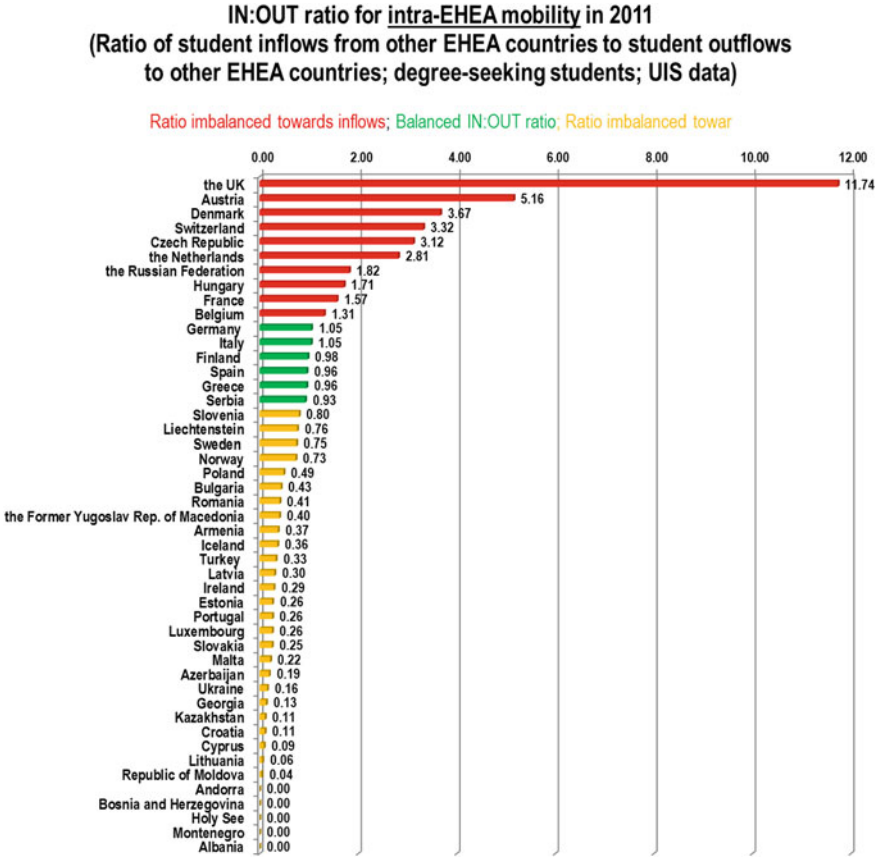

Fig. 2 IN:OUT ratios for intra-EHEA mobility in 2010/11. *Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See and Montenegro had no data available for inflows, hence the 0 values in the figure for the ratios

EHEA countries only (the IN:OUT intra-EHEA ratios), given that balanced mobility was first put forward, as seen above, as an objective for mobility within the EHEA block. Figure 2 shows however that comparatively speaking mobility flows between the EHEA countries only are more balanced than in the case of total mobility (i.e. if other countries of origin and destination are taken into account as well). Six countries (Fig. 2) compared to only two previously (Fig. 1) have balanced flows, receiving from other EHEA countries about as many degree-seeking students as they send to the same country grouping. Furthermore, only 10 countries compared to 15 countries previously (Fig. 1) are net importers of degree-seeking students from other EHEA countries. In several cases, the size of imbalances has also significantly decreased, e.g. for the UK from 14.6 to 11.74, for Germany from 1.61 to 1.05, etc.

4.3 Balance with Non-EHEA Countries

Figure 3 presents for each EHEA country the number of students coming from non-EHEA countries divided by the number of own students studying abroad in non-EHEA countries, because, as mentioned above, the EHEA Mobility Strategy refers, although much more briefly, to the need to have balanced mobility also with non-EHEA countries, i.e. countries that are not part of this educational block. In this respect, data presented in Fig. 3 is particularly revealing. The biggest imbalances that EHEA countries face are not in the student flows to and from other EHEA countries (i.e. in internal mobility), but with countries outside this educational space. Whereas overall the majority of EHEA countries are exporters of degree-seeking students (Fig. 1), when it comes to the flows between EHEA and non-EHEA countries, the majority of countries—32—are net importers of students. This leads us to conclude that in fact the biggest imbalances that EHEA countries would have to address are not with other EHEA countries, but with non-EHEA ones. And if EHEA countries continue to outline balanced mobility as a policy goal, then they should first and foremost be ready to correct their imbalances with non-EHEA countries.

5 More Balanced Flows—What Would This Entail?

Given the balanced mobility policy goal and the magnitude of imbalances presented in the previous section, an inevitable question is what kind of actions could and should be taken to reduce the gap between inflows and outflows? And related, would EHEA countries be likely to take such actions?

As mentioned above, while the Bologna communiqués mention bilateral and multilateral talks as a means to solve the imbalances, the solutions tried so far—compensation mechanisms—are not so much a tool to correct the imbalances as

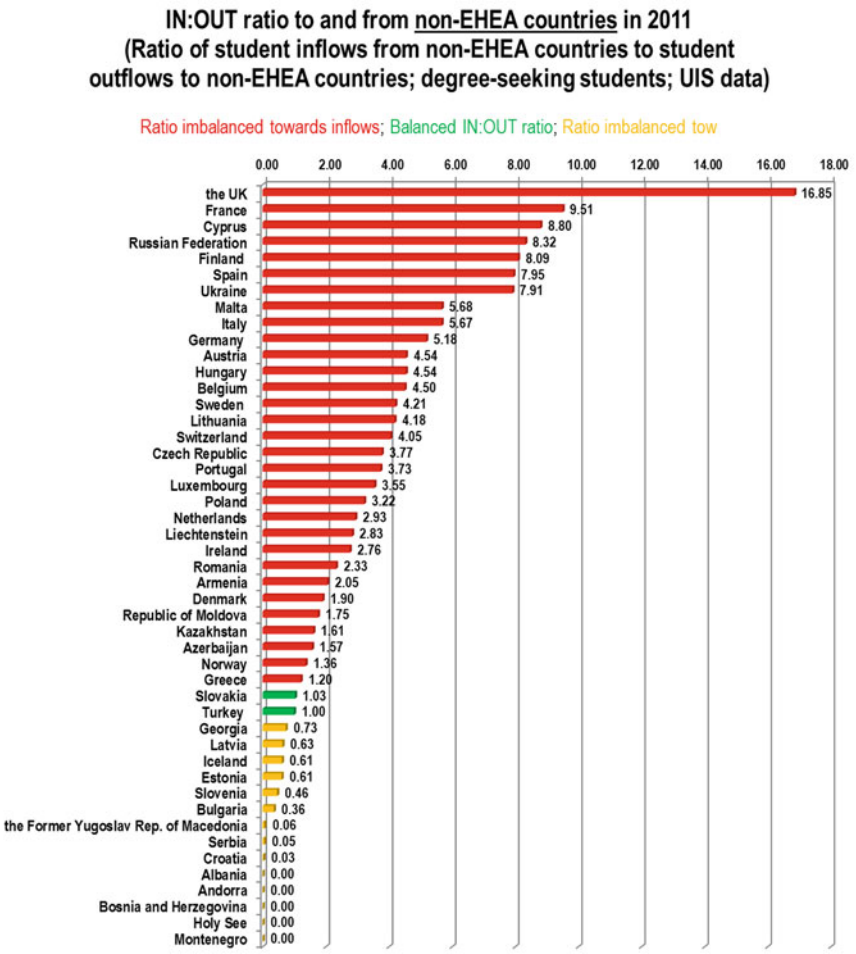

Fig. 3 IN:OUT ratios to and from non-EHEA countries in 2010/11. *Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See and Montenegro had no data available for inflows, hence the 0 values in the figure for the ratios

such, as they are a means to address the financial implications of imbalances. Therefore, limiting the imbalances would require other types of means.

For countries with imbalances towards inflows (i.e. higher inflows than outflows), a logical step would be to try to increase the outflows and/or to limit the inflows. While this seems possible in theory, in practice it is rather unlikely that countries would be willing to take such actions. Previous research has shown that supporting higher student outflows in degree mobility is very rarely a policy goal, given that high outflows are generally associated with brain drain—a situation that no country wants to willingly experience (Ferencz and Wächter 2012). The only circumstances

so far in which countries supported outgoing degree mobility were if they had limited internal capacity in higher education, and it proved cheaper to train their students abroad than to develop this capacity internally—notable such examples are Cyprus and Norway. But once countries develop such capacities at home, they are in general no longer willing to encourage outflows. Limiting the inflows seems also hard to imagine outside of very specific situations like those in Austria and the French-speaking community of Belgium, where high number of incoming students hinder the access to higher education of domestic students, if not for other reasons than at least because it would be a violation of EU's principle of free movement (for EHEA countries that are also EU member states). Also, as many European countries start to experience a decline in their university-age population, students from abroad become an indispensable resource to ensure the survival of many institutions. Not to mention that in more and more European countries the non-European students in particular are a very important source of revenue generation.

From countries experiencing imbalances towards outflows, i.e. higher outflows than inflows, the opposite would be expected, namely taking measures to decrease the outflows and/or increase the inflows. Again, we are sceptical that this would be possible via other measures than be restricting the right to free movement in the EU context, given that generally countries do not massively fund outgoing degree mobility (so their influence is limited) and that what drives degree mobility is individual will to get a better education elsewhere. So unless countries impose restrictions on the right to leave the country for study purposes or they substantially improve the quality of their higher education system to determine their students to want to remain "at home" (which is anyhow a long-term process), it's hard to imagine that governments alone can lower outflows. Higher inflows on the other hand are what most countries strive for, but something which is harder to achieve and which is a long-term process.

And let us not forget that most EHEA countries that have committed themselves to the goal of balanced mobility do not experience marginal imbalances, but significant ones—their discrepancies between inflows and outflows in one direction or the other being between 100 and 1600 %. Therefore, large-scale actions would be necessary to remedy the imbalances.

6 Conclusions: Balanced Mobility—A Reasonable Objective?

In the previous sections we have tried to dissect the objective of balanced mobility as articulated in the Bologna Process context. Specifically, we have:

- traced and tried to understand the goal of having more balanced mobility between the Bologna Process countries,
- looked into what exactly might explain the adoption of balanced mobility as a policy goal,

- presented statistics on current imbalances that would have to be addressed, and
- tried to identify necessary courses of action for correcting current imbalances.

In order to answer the question behind this article, namely of whether balanced mobility is a sensible policy goal, we would like to reiterate some of the main points we've made throughout the article.

First, the aim of having more balanced mobility was pushed through in the Bologna Process at a time when a group of "attractive" and influential EHEA countries (from a higher education point of view) were affected by very specific types of imbalance related to international student inflows, i.e. very high inflows of foreign students in specific fields of study or the rising costs of educating foreign students as a result of ever growing numbers. So when balance was adopted as a Bologna objective, the countries in question had a specific agenda in mind—the remedy of this particular type of imbalances (too high or costly inflows), although most other EHEA countries were experiencing another type of imbalance, namely too high outflows.

Second, balanced mobility was set first and foremost as an internal objective, although, as shown above, mobility flows between EHEA countries are much more balanced than flows between EHEA and non-EHEA countries. With the extension of the balance aim to non-EHEA countries, if EHEA countries want to achieve the balance objective, then it seems normal that they would first focus on the biggest imbalances, i.e. those with non-EHEA countries.

Third, in the EHEA, balance is sought primarily in degree mobility although it is a concept originating from credit mobility and though degree mobility is the type of mobility that is least under the control and influence of governments.

Fourth, although balance is a set objective, in degree mobility some imbalances have for a long time been regarded as not only positive but also desirable. We find it hard to believe that the general attitude towards this will change. Most countries aspire to become "attractive" systems (although these are highly imbalanced towards inflows) and to move away from being "closed" or "limited" systems (although these have on average much more balanced flows).

And fifth, given the types of imbalances encountered in EHEA countries, concerted action would be needed from EHEA countries, namely measures to either limit inflows and/or increase outflows or to increase inflows and/or lower outflows. As argued above, we find it hard to believe that most countries would be willing or even able (have the necessary resources) to take such measures.

From all these we conclude that balance across the board is not an achievable, nor a desirable objective. While measures to correct particularly detrimental imbalances in bilateral flows seem necessary and advisable, it is hard to make the case for balance as such.

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Challenges of Student Mobility in a Cosmopolitan Europe

Janine Wulz and Florian Rainer

1 Introduction

The CoSMiCE project focuses on student degree mobility in Europe from a student perspective. Students' unions all over Europe, representing 11 million students, discussed the benefits and challenges of student mobility and defined the key impact factors *of a country's approach* towards student mobility. This chapter puts spot on these factors and discusses their impact on European student mobility.

1.1 The CoSMiCE Project

CoSMiCE, an acronym for *Challenges of Student Mobility in a Cosmopolitan Europe,* is a project organized by the Austrian Students' Union (ÖH) and the Slovakian Students' Union (SRVS). This student project tries to link up with challenges and barriers of degree mobility perceived by students, and seeks to raise awareness in this dynamic process. Our focus on degree mobility is targeting students studying abroad which are following a full study programme. In order to sensitize the participants for the overarching theme of degree mobility, ÖH and SRVS organized a European wide seminar in Bratislava from 29.04. to 01.05.2014.

J. Wulz (✉)
University of Applied Science FH Campus Wien, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: janine.wulz@oeh.ac.at

F. Rainer
Austrian Student's Union, Office for International Affairs, Vienna, Austria
e-mail: florian.rainer@oeh.ac.at

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Representing a European-wide study, the CoSMICE project polling 47 students' organizations and 10 in-depth country studies in Armenia (ANSA[1]), Austria (ÖH), Belgium (VVS[2]), Denmark (DSF), Estonia (EÜL), Finland (SYL/SAMOK), Germany (fzs), Latvia (LSA), the Netherlands (LSVB) and Poland (PSRP), provides a qualitative insight in European students' degree mobility from the perspectives and experiences of students' unions. The questionnaire was distributed to all 47 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 39 countries that are members of the European Students' Union (ESU). This survey, which had over 20 open questions[3] relating to degree mobility, has been approved by representatives of several unions (VSS-UNES-USU, FZS, SRVS, ÖH and ESU). As countries within the EHEA differ strongly in their shares of incoming and outgoing students, the sample of states chosen for CoSMICE cover a wide range in this spectrum.

Austria and Germany have high shares of incoming mobile students and outgoing mobile students studying abroad, though Austria has 5.4[4] more incoming mobile students than outgoings, Germany has a ratio of 1.8. Denmark shows a low number of outgoing students, the incoming mobile students are more than threefold. Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands have average mobility flows in relation to other EHEA countries. Estonia and Latvia are representing countries with a high outbound ratio. Armenia, a Non-EU country, and Poland are having both low shares of incoming mobile students and low shares of outgoing mobile students[5] (cf. UNESCO 2010).

The method of content analysis (Bohnsack 1997) was used to analyse the answer patterns provided by the respondents. Six main factors that have an impact on student mobility itself and the perception of student mobility in the national context have been isolated. Those impact factors—*Recognition, Tuition Fees and Restrictions, Financial Support, Social Support, Public and Media Perception, Brain Gain and Brain Drain*—explain the diverse perceptions of European countries regarding student mobility, as well as the diversity of concepts dealing with incoming students. According to the authors, the clusters are reflecting the perceptions of students' unions to present a picture of the challenges and national variations across the European Higher Education Area. Moreover, the student project will be summarized by a publication with several contextualizing articles and interviews, *which has been released in February 2015.*

[1]Please find the full name of the unions' abbreviations as annex.

[2]Represents only the students in the Flemish community of Belgium.

[3]E.g. Are there problems with recognition/nostrification perceived by your union?

[4]Import–export ratio divides the net incoming mobile students by outgoing mobile students.

[5]For detailed information please have a look to the study of IHS Austria (Grabher et al. 2014) regarding calculations on degree mobility flows in the EHEA.

2 Student Mobility in Europe

Internationalisation of higher education is gaining momentum among policy makers, as well as practitioners at European, national and institutional levels. Internationalisation includes degree mobility and credit mobility. While degree mobility is conducted with the purpose of completing a whole cycle, to acquire a degree of Bachelor, Master or PhD., hence it is different from credit mobility, where students remain enrolled in their home institution and leave it to gain single credit points (ECTS). Other forms of internationalisation are cross-border delivery of education, as well as formats of 'internationalisation at home', like internationalisation of the curriculum, internationalisation of teaching and learning, and internationalisation of learning outcomes.

In the 1970s, the European Union started to cooperate on education and started first actions to enable mobility in higher education. Since the 1990s, international dimensions in higher education have become more reflected in policies, finances, strategies and research (Kehm 2011). The ERASMUS program already started in 1987. In 1999, by adopting the Lisbon strategy and starting the Bologna Process, the European Higher Education Area was established. In 2012, the Mobility 2020 strategy was adopted, promoting "high quality mobility of students, early stage researchers, teachers and other staff", including a mobility target by 2020 "at least 20 % of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study or training period abroad". The Communiqué by the European Commission "European higher education in the world" (European Comission 2013) launched in 2011, outlines in its strategy the promotion of international mobility of students and staff, for example through enhanced services for mobility, tools for recognition of studies, better visa procedures for foreign students and emphasis on two way mobility—into and out of Europe. Moreover, "internationalisation at home" and cooperation, for example in the field of joint degrees, are promoted.

Beside other factors, as learning foreign languages, internationalisation of curricula or knowledge transfer, physical mobility is the most visible part of internationalisation. Student mobility is enabled by the key factor of recognition of degrees and academic achievements (Teichler 2009). To grant the recognition for ERASMUS-supported and other mobile students, the European Credit Transfer System is being established since 1989.

The increasing number of mobile students indicates that the concept of internationalisation in European higher education has been subject to further development over the last twenty years "from the fringe of institutional interest to the very core" (De Wit 2011, p. 7).

International student mobility is figurated by an "outcome of a complex interplay of external and internal push and pull variables" (Rahul and De Wit 2014, p. 7).

A recent study (Niederl and Bader 2014) in Austria defined numerous factors for international student mobility: Push factors can be personal, such as the socio-economic situation, the individual academic abilities, social relationships, former international experiences. Other factors might be related to the situation in

the home country, such as the opportunities at home universities, quality of national offers or a high relevance of international degrees at the home-countries labour market. Moreover, financial opportunities (scholarships, loans), demographic, economic and political framework, living standard and living costs are relevant. Pull factors could be related to the field of study, the quality and reputation of higher education institutions, scientific freedom or a multilingual study offer. Other factors are related to service, as information on the host country, administrative support, recognition of degrees and qualifications, cooperation with international institutions and networks. A third group of pull factors are related to the place of study: study and living costs, security, openness, international communities living there, living and working standards and career perspectives, as well as cultural, economic, educational, language, political and religious reasons. Other factors are cultural offer, public services, public transport system or the climate (Niederl and Bader 2014). Mobility, as an important factor of internationalisation, is driven by various interests, aiming for international cooperation, but also facing competition and economic factors (Knight 2010). On the one hand, student mobility supports knowledge transfer, mutual understanding and peace, and provides opportunities for personal development as global citizens, and engagement in global networks (Hénard et al. 2012; Teichler 2009). On the other hand, student mobility is more and more influenced by market processes, such as orientation on global rankings, or the fact that international students are increasingly seen as a source of additional revenues from exports of higher education services (OECD 2013a).

Commercial interests are not the only challenge internationalisation and mobility have to face. Another challenge is imbalanced mobility flows that can lead to conflicts concerning funding and admission policies (Pechar 2009). The loss of intellectual capital, the so called 'brain drain', is a main source of concern in developing and emerging countries (EAHEP 2010), and individual challenges can mean additional burdens, such as costs and high risks for individuals as far as success is concerned (Teichler 2009).

Following from that, it can be said that internationalization of higher education might be led by different factors, such as political strategies for economic and or diplomatic reasons, the improvement of a country's home education system or the promotion of country and culture, though two central characteristics can be prescinded (Hawawini 2011). In consequence, we can assume that cooperation and competition move from margin to centre.

In the following, we will focus on student mobility as an important aspect of internationalisation. In 2013, more than 4.3 million students were mobile worldwide (OECD 2013a, b). In a real European Higher Education Area, according to the Communiques of the Commission, students are able to move freely across Europe and are no more bound to national borders when choosing their preferred university for their studies. Apparently, this goal is yet to be achieved. With the implementation of the Bologna Process, the EHEA has taken significant steps to its full realization; however, numerous challenges are still to be overcome. Moreover, several aspects should be re-problematized. In this chapter we discuss the diverse realizations and enablings of student degree mobility in a Cosmopolitan Europe.

3 Impact Factors on European Student Mobility

3.1 Recognition

Recognition is an essential prerequisite to ensure mobility, as signed in the Lisbon Recognition Convention (2007). All countries participating in the survey offer access to *professional recognition and information centres for proving* the students' qualifications; *professional recognition and information centres for proving;* in addition they are part of the ENIC/NARIC network to ensure transparent and reliable procedures. Still, students' unions of the reporting countries describe that the procedures of recognition are accompanied by diverse challenges and obstacles. Furthermore, there is no exact data available on the work of the national education bodies, apart from Belgium and Germany, which reported that 25–30 % (SVR für Migration 2012) of the enquiries were rejected. In most countries (AT, DE, DK, ES, NL, PL), the recognition depends on the Council appointed at the faculty level of the particular institution whether a diploma is approved or not. "Therefore it is a subject of discussion", LSVb (NL) states. PSRP (Poland) opines that "there is no clear process of appeal if a diploma is rejected, which causes doubts". If your application doesn't meet all the requested entry requirements, higher education institutions oblige you to do supplementary examinations. It is a common way to full recognition to complete supplementary courses before or shortly after starting the programme, ÖH (AT), DSF (DK) and PSRP (PL) report. Exceptions to the conventional recognition process are bi- or multilateral agreements concluded by governments, which allow a simplified procedure for certain degrees and certificates to enter the higher education sector.

Moreover, there are financial obstacles that students must take. Students holding foreign qualifications are subject to admission expenses and, at the same time, expenses to prove the equivalence of their certificates. The Austrian Students' Union denotes that the procedure of recognition can take up to 3 months with costs of €150 plus extra administration charges. In Germany there are costs of €43 for EU students and €68 for Non-EU students for getting the diploma recognized at a particular higher education institution. "Indirect fees for non EU citizens are raised via those application expenses", fzs (DE) observes. Non-EU country students are facing problems to a greater extent with recognition processes, due to political regulations and different structures in their higher educational institutions' curricula.

3.2 Restrictions and Fees

In all participating countries the legal body entrusted with admission to higher education programmes is the very HEI itself. Nevertheless, in all countries there are also general policies that relate to admission. This creates different forms of entrance qualifications, as well as a lack of transparency in handling the access to higher education.

In most countries (AM, BE, LV, NL, PL) higher education institutions are charging incoming students with tuition fees, as well as their own citizens, though there is the tendency to charge incoming students generally higher. *Significant distinctions of charges can be seen between EU, EHEA but Non-EU and Non-EHEA countries.* Furthermore, the amount of fees depends on the language in which the programme is held; programmes in English are calculated with additional fees, as reported from EÜL (ES), LSA (LV) and PSRP (PL). Students in Austria and Germany do not have to pay tuition fees while studying within the minimum of duration of their particular programme, plus two and four semesters respectively of tolerance. Consequently, different patterns to the levying of fees can be deduced:

- Fees for international students are higher than for domestic students (LV)
- Fees for Non-EU students are higher than for domestic students (AT, BE, NL)
- Fees for Non-EHEA students are higher than for EHEA students (DK, ES)
- Countries make no distinction between international and domestic student fees (AM)
- Countries are not charging tuition fees from foreign students (FI)
- Fees are contingent upon the language in which the programme is held (ES, LV, PL)
- Fees are contingent upon the duration plus semesters of tolerance (AT, DE)
- Students from developing countries—as defined by the respective government—don't have to pay fees or get just a minimum charge (AT, BE)

The level of tuition fees varies enormously; moreover, it is tied to various conditions, such as the country of origin of the student, the programme the student is enrolled in and the language of instruction. Estonia, for example, doesn't charge students from the EHEA if they study in Estonian language, though they charge students for programmes taught in English and students outside of the EHEA. Austria levies €363 from EU students and a twofold amount from Non-EU students. In Latvia, in the Netherlands or in Denmark the fees for certain programmes can cost up to €20.000 per academic year.

Further access arrangements can be quotas for particular study programs or restricted access in the so called *mass disciplines* by acceptance tests or by *numerus clausus*. Restrictions in the fields of study related to health science have been reported in Austria, Latvia and the Netherlands. The acceptance of only a significant number of applicants in medical subjects due to limited resources got Austria and the EU to agree on a special authorization, until 2016 up to every fourth university place is awarded to Non-Austrian students, thereof 20 % EU citizens and 5 % Non-EU students. Limited places and restrictions based on high school grade average, the so called *numerus clausus*, is a common practice in Germany and the Netherlands. Above all, an essential requirement is the ability to communicate in the given language, which has to be proven by certificates of a language proficiency test.

3.3 Financial Support

Within the European Union, diverse financial support mechanisms for student mobility exist, consisting of grants, loans, exemptions from fees or scholarships. There are different restrictions and various ways to access the subsidies of each country. Moreover, in every country, specific bilateral agreements allow particular incoming students getting portable grants and scholarships for certain degrees. Armenia, for example, offers financially supported study places in intergovernmental or international projects. In Denmark, the availability of scholarships is supported by all higher education institutions and the government. Likewise for EU, EEA and Swiss students can receive the same grants (about €780) as Danish students but linked to several requirements. Students can receive these scholarships in other countries (DK, FI, NL) as well, mostly under the terms of visa, residence permits, work permits or a work permit of their parents in the hosting country. Consequently, different patterns of financial support can be deduced:

- Grants and loans are available
- The host country offers only individual based scholarships
- Grants are only accessible by certain requirements
- Requirements: Country of origin, visa, residence and work permits, particular subject, parental income

Additionally, it can be perceived that governments pay *subsidies* in different rates according to the subjects (DK, ES). Estonia offers only scholarships for special subjects, like IT or engineering, *further*, they are only accessible if the course of studies is in Estonian language. Foreign students are not entitled to apply for student loans, but they have the right to receive educational grants similar to Estonian students. Germany offers individual based scholarships. *To be eligible as a mobile student for a grant of €500 in Latvia on academic year has to be completed*, yet loans in Latvia have the same conditions for every student, regardless of the country of origin.

When it comes to financial support for outgoing mobile students, the situation is diverse as well. Every participating country in this study has its very own financial mechanisms to support outgoing students, except Denmark and Finland which have concluded together with Iceland, Norway and Sweden the *Nordic Agreement* in 1996 (Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research 2012). The agreement has been set up to finance the imbalanced mobility and to increase the opportunities for students. "This means that students from the Nordic countries, who apply for public courses and programmes in other Nordic countries, are automatically granted admission if they hold the right qualifications for the programme. Also, the agreement establishes reciprocal recognition of all forms of examinations and descriptions or statements of educational attainment", DSF (DK) reports. The annual reimbursement in 2014 is approximately €4025 per student.

Austria established mobility scholarships based on the income of the students' parents, while Denmark pays *subsidies* to the tuition fees in the respective country.

LSVb (NL) reports that they have a portable grant system as well. Finland offers mobile grants and loans; this financial support consists of a grant (€298), housing supplements (max. €210, depending on the country) and an optional loan guarantee (up to €600). PSRP (PL) states that they have "private scholarships for incomings, but outgoing students are not allowed to apply for loans and need or merit based scholarships in Poland when they study abroad (even within EHEA)." Germany makes their national student support system (BAföG) also available for outgoing students with the same terms and requirements, though not every student is eligible for this support scheme. "The applicability depends mainly on the parents' income, the age and the study progress. For studying in other EU countries or in Switzerland the whole programme time is supported. For studies beyond the EU, in most cases just one year is supported by BAföG. BAföG is half a loan and half a grant", fzs (DE) explains.

3.4 Social Support

The social support of students is organized differently but almost all participating countries provide information about their particular higher education location via several media. Beyond that, countries or the individual institution offer guidance and consultation services, as well as social activities alongside academic duties. Armenia is currently creating a supporting network for students and the other reporting countries already established a network of social support. Austria has a widely elaborated informational and social supporting network offered by universities and the Austrian Students' Union. A lot of higher education institutions have an Office for International Affairs, as well as *buddy networks* (AT, BE, DK, ES, FI, DE, LV, NL, PL), which promote social contacts among foreign and local students. Furthermore informational campaigns and webpages are common to assist students at their new location, by providing information on deadlines, orientation or special dispositions. Orientation weeks are organized for example in the Netherlands, which are linked to a program called 'Make it in the Netherlands' that "aim is to make international students feel more at home", LSVb (NL) states. Estonia provides as well a tutor system, which assists foreign students with their daily issues. Germany moreover offers welcome packages, regularly scheduled events and cultural activities. PSRP reports that Poland is above all preparing their students for going abroad.

Yet, another factor of social support is the inclusion of students by language, therefore Austria, Belgium and Poland report that they offer courses with special allowances. Latvia organizes several university students' councils in English language, so foreign students can get involved more easily. "Latvian language courses are even required in Latvia if you stay longer than half a year", LSA states.

The housing situation is reported as being challenging for foreign students because of hindered access to information and rental requirements, like a work permit or a particular amount of income. In Belgium and Germany some student

accommodation places are reserved for incoming students. In Finland the student housing is ruled by Non Profit Organizations and "the queues are quite long", SYL and SAMOK explain the obstacles they are facing.

3.5 Media Perception

The public and media perception of international students can be regarded as merely positive, though there are aspects of scepticism and criticism, mainly related to the funding of higher education, financial benefits and employment issues. Among European countries, the degree and profile of student mobility flows diverge. On the one hand, there are countries that accept more students than they send out, and on the other hand there are countries which send out more students than they accept. Therefore student degree mobility is perceived in different manners around the EHEA.

ANSA (AM), VVS (BE) and EÜL (ES) have no information on their media perception since this matter isn't an object of public discussions. SYL and SAMOK (FI) report that there is not much debate on this topic in Finland, though "*they very welcome foreign students within the academic community*". In Denmark, for example, eastern European students—after the EU verdict—are seen as "welfare tourists" (DSF) who have now access to university and grants, while employers in Denmark point out that they wish to have more international talents to choose from. Others see the international students as a valuable contribution to society and its educational system, as they contribute with new perspectives. It often can be observed that countries with a high share of incoming mobile students, such as Denmark or Austria, portray the incoming students as people who take away university places when studying for free. Though the discussion in Austria isn't completely internationally focused, Austrian media reports are merely concentrated on German students who are stylized and typified as evaders of their *Numerus Clausus* system. In return, Germany is a favoured destination in Europe; "nonetheless Germany is a net exporter and the media reports mainly on incoming students. Newspapers narrate that only one out of two international students are actually graduating", fzs (DE) denotes.

The DAAD study (2014), which demonstrated the positive effect in several respects—academic and economic—of international students, however, was important for the positive public perception in a lot of countries, Students' Unions of Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Poland report. LSA (LV) shares a similar appraisement; it considers incoming students as a "treat to the states' economic development in long terms", as well as the Netherlands, who try to stimulate the mobility flows. Therefore, all political parties are gathering and working out strategies for the realization of a balanced internationalization strategy. In 2013, they already launched a plan to make the Netherlands a more attractive country for international students. "International students are mainly seen as value, also in economic matters", LSVb (NL) reports.

Poland perceives international students as a valuable part of the internationalization of higher education. Consequently, they try to make studying in Poland more attractive, since they are regarded as *beneficial* for the development of their country. "They are seen as a motivator to improve public administration. Creating comfortable conditions for foreigners is one of our priorities, both in academic and general contexts", PSRP (PL) describes the public perception.

3.6 Brain Drain and Brain Gain

Accompanied by the international student mobility flows, emigration and immigration depend on structural conditions and prerequisites of the higher education sector and labour market issues. Therefore, there is a public debate and, in a sense, a competition for top students. It is discussed as a significant advantage and considerable benefit to get and keep these students, and as a disadvantage for countries that do not have the means to keep their students.

Armenia and Belgium have no information on Brain Drain, *(n?)* or on Brain Gain. LSA (LV) reports "brain drain affection due to a high unemployment rate, it is seen that a lot of incoming students leave the country after finishing their degree." PSRP (PL) perceives similar *consequences? Effects, trends?*, "it is said that insignificant percentage of incoming students stay in Poland after finishing". Even for Austria it is hard to make the foreign students stay, due to the insufficient resources and available prospects in work. Therefore, Austria established the RedWhiteRed-Card, a special working permit for qualified employees from Non-EU countries (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2014), though only 213 out of 1700 student applicants from Non-EU countries got it in the year 2013 (Der Standard 2014). Staying in a country is primarily linked to working conditions; however language requisitions are described by ÖH (AT) and LSA (LV) as the main barrier. Following from that, these countries perceive effects and are aware of Brain Drain. The most important Brain Drain movement from Germany is towards North America, by 10,000 students. For this reason, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) established the German academic international network (GAIN). On the other hand, "*25 % of the international students request to stay after their studies in Germany, fzs denotes*".

25 % of the international students request to stay after their studies in Germany, fzs denotes. Otherwise in Denmark, "in 2008, 30 % of incoming students found a job", DSF explains, and "four out of five students wish to find a job after graduation." Denmark therefore expanded the work permit period for international students to three years, as opposed to six months before. Though, it has to be considered that a study from 2008 showed that half of the students of Denmark who finished their degree abroad in 2003 stayed abroad afterwards. Similar outcomes are reported by LSVb (NL), where 64 % of the international students wish to stay after the completion of their studies in the Netherlands. EÜL (ES) explains that "educational migration to Estonia has been stable in the recent years, making 12 % out

of the whole migration, but it is still about two times lower than the EU average (23 %) and even more for Finland (27 %)." SYL and SAMOK (FI) report that 70 % of the international students are staying at least one year in Finland.

4 Conclusions and Outlook

The perception of student mobility is very diverse among the in-depth analysed countries. The concepts of internationalization and welcome culture, in particular to degree mobility, are of different *interest* to students. Students who decide to study abroad have to face several problems, problems of European complexity due to different elaborated conceptualizations or different approaches to higher education philosophies based on their individual welfare considerations. Internationalization is a dynamic process which is forcing countries, amongst other aspects, to reflect on ethnicity and migration, on their identity, belonging and their concepts of encountering international students. Due to this European complexity, mobile students are affected of multilayered challenges. Following from that, we used the progressive project-title '*Challenges of Student Mobility in a Cosmopolitan Europe*' to deliberate our widened approach.

The following table provides an overview of the in-depth analysed countries approach towards student degree mobility (Table 1).

The isolated impact factors show the countries' perception towards student mobility. However, the indicators' impact needs to be seen in correlation with each other. Moreover, other factors, such as a country's welfare system or economic situation, do influence the approach towards student mobility as well, but have not been analysed within the CoSMiCE project. The isolated impact factors also put spotlight on areas where students see the need of modifications to enable student mobility for all.

A main challenge for mobile students is related to financial efforts. Tuition fees, living and study expenses, travel and high income differences between European countries are the main barriers for student mobility. Mobility grants are seen as the main solution to overcome this, by many student representatives. Even though there are already mobility grants and portable grants and loans, mobility is not affordable, irrespective of the individual socio-economic background.

Moreover, the chance to apply for financial support in the host country is often related to work permit and residence permit—regulations to be eligible for official backings are very diverse among countries.

Language policies differ considerably between the countries. On the one hand, they aim to support the integration of international students, by a broad offer of lectures in English, or opportunities to learn the language of a country for free. On the other hand, in some countries, by the requirement of a certain level, language becomes a barrier to receiving grants or access to higher education institutions. In those cases language is used as an exclusive regulation tool. The non-uniform

Table 1 Index of impact factors

Country/impact factor	Recognition	Tuition fees and restrictions	Financial support	Social support	Public perception	Brain drain and brain gain
Armenia	No problems/big problems for outgoings	$852 per academic year	Low-interest loans	Social support network in development	No information	No information
Austria	Problems perceived/long duration and charges	Limited access to certain subjects	Scholarships with different restrictions	Various forms of support	Most reports upon German students	Structural problems, brain drain is perceived
Belgium	Rejection rate of 30 %	€500 for EU students/up to €3845 for non-EU students	Grants due to bilateral agreements	Housing is perceived as a huge problem	No information	No information
Denmark	Supplementary courses	Fees only for non-EHEA students	Danish study grants for EU students with requirements/Nordic agreement	Various forms of support	International students are perceived as 'welfare tourists'	30 % of incoming students found a job/50 % of outgoing students stay abroad
Estonia	Problems perceived	No fees for studies in Estonian	Scholarships for studies in Estonian	Tutor system	Less discussions/Internationals are welcome	12 % of migration
Finland	No information	No fees	Scholarships with different restrictions/Nordic agreement	Various forms of support	No object of discussion	No affection/about 70 % stay after finishing their studies
Germany	Rejection rate of 25 %	Fees for university entrance certificate	Individual based scholarships	Mainly organized by local students' Unions	Diverse perception of internationalization	Brain drain movement from Germany towards North America

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/impact factor	Recognition	Tuition fees and restrictions	Financial support	Social support	Public perception	Brain drain and brain gain
Latvia	Problems with Eastern European countries	Fees for incoming students, dependent on the subject	Scholarships after studying one year	Language courses are obligatory for stays longer than a year	Internationals are considered as threat to economy	Affection of brain drain perceived /high unemployment rate
Netherlands	No information	Distinction between EU and non-EU, fees starting from €1800	Scholarships with different restrictions/portable grant system	Various forms of support	International students are mainly seen as value	64 % of international students would like to remain after the completion of their studies
Poland	Problems perceived	Free for EU students/English programmes are charged	Merit-based grants, exemption from tuition fees, scholarships	Various forms of support	International students are regarded as valuable part	No information

patterns can increase the asymmetries of mobility flows, too, within the social dimension of the mobile students (Cerdeira and Patrocinio 2009).

The balance between mobility flows is seen as very diverse. Countries with a high outbound rate and a low inbound rate are faced with 'Brain Drain' discussions and target to raise incoming mobility. Other countries are faced with a high number of incomings, and are faced with funding and admission issues. Those countries have differing reactions. While some countries developed policies based on solidarity and agreements between the main involved countries, other countries target to solve the problem by exclusion of international students in some areas. While these policies are mostly related to national or even nationalist discussions, others aim for a European discourse. Following from that, the share of principles in admission and funding of HE can be seen as prerequisites for meaningful mobility. Common agreements and negotiations based on democratization and quality should be favoured.

The main findings of the CoSMiCE project show the high diversity between European Countries and their regulations. Access criteria, financial and social support and language policies are not only contrastive, they are regulated by various bodies and are highly complex. Moreover, regulations lack transparency and international comparability. Students barely get the information they need to decide on their individual mobility due to diverse information policies and complex bureaucratic systems. Additionally, the complexity is not only related to educational policies, but also to migration and labour market policies.

Another main finding is related to the public discussion on student mobility. The Public and media perception is very ambivalent among all countries. On the one hand, mobility is seen as attractive and even necessary, on the other hand, discussions on brain drain and imbalanced student mobility flows led to negative perceptions of mobility.

To overcome the barriers towards student mobility, not only broad system reforms in the areas of students support or migration policy are required. Measures are also needed to enhance the information towards students by more transparency, social support, but also creating trust between educational systems and solidarity among European countries. Mobility remains a challenge in the space of a Cosmopolitan Europe, over and above special attention should be given to degree mobility and profound cooperation models within the EHEA and Non-EHEA, to finally overcome a higher education area of contrasting contexts and interplays of protectionist behaviour, rather than solidarity based cooperation.

As this survey has shown, national policies regarding student mobility are influenced by national debates and thus provide ambivalent opportunities for incoming and outgoing students—in terms of financial support, social support, but also migration policies and societal prejudices are factors that enable or hinder mobility. These ambivalent national policies lead to a situation, where students can barely overview and compare the different approaches and are often overwhelmed by the complexity of national systems, even if there are support measures. Degree-seeking students are not only confronted with financial and socio-economic barriers, but are also left alone in preparing, organising and funding their mobility.

Most likely this will lead to a less socio-economic diversified group of degree students, which should be further researched in future.

A conclusion of the described complex national approaches towards student mobility might be that student degree mobility must become not only an European issue, but an European responsibility to finally create a common European Higher Education Area.

Annex

Armenia—*ANSA*—Armenian National Students' Association
Austria—*ÖH*—Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft
Belgium—*VVS*—Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten
Denmark—*DSF*—Danske Studerendes Fællesråd
Estonia—*EÜL*—Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit
Finland—*SYL/SAMOK*—Suomen ylioppilaskuntien liitto/Suomen ammattikorkea kouluopiskelijakuntien liitto
Germany—*fzs*—freier zusammenschluss von StudentInnenschaften
Latvia—*LSA*—Latvijas Studentu apvieniba
The Netherlands—*LSVb*—Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg
Poland—*PSRP*—Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland.

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Redefining Internationalization at Home

Jos Beelen and Elspeth Jones

1 Introduction

Internationalization at Home (IaH) may be thought of as a rather narrow concept when the broader notion of internationalization of the curriculum is becoming increasingly the focus of attention in universities. This paper will argue that, nevertheless, IaH remains a useful concept in certain contexts and for certain purposes. For this reason a new definition will be proposed, which the authors hope will support its implementation.

We begin with a discussion of three concepts and their accepted definitions: those of internationalization, 'Comprehensive Internationalization' and internationalization of the curriculum. We then consider other, more contested issues.

We do not discuss a number of other notions that could be considered elements within an internationalized curriculum, such as Global education, Global learning, Education for global perspectives and Education for global citizenship, to name but a few. Those are subjects for other papers. Another aspect beyond the scope of this article is discussion of the term 'curriculum' itself, which has been variously interpreted (e.g. Biggs and Tang 2007; Webb 2005). We use the terms formal and informal curriculum, and accept that the formal curriculum includes pedagogy (teaching, learning and assessment) as a vehicle for its delivery.

J. Beelen
Centre for Applied Research on Economics and Management, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam, Netherlands
e-mail: j.beelen@hva.nl

E. Jones (✉)
Internationalisation of Higher Education, Harrogate, UK
e-mail: ej@elspethjones.com

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2 Accepted Definitions

2.1 Internationalization

The most frequently cited and most widely accepted definition of internationalization is that by Knight: "The process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education." (Knight 2004, p. 11).

Strong elements of this definition are the articulation of internationalization as a process, and the mention of the international and intercultural dimensions of the curriculum. These two aspects were important features at the time. The definition is also sufficiently broad as to encompass all activities of a contemporary university.

This paper takes as accepted Knight's definition, given its frequent and widespread usage.

2.2 Comprehensive Internationalization

Recent debates around comprehensive internationalization (CI) have sought to make clear the full extent of internationalization if an institution is to take seriously the challenges it poses. In effect, then, the concept of CI is an extension of Knight's broad-based definition. Hudzik provides an extended 'definition' of CI which encapsulates the concept: "Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility. Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalization and the motivations and purposes driving it." (Hudzik 2011, p. 6).

A shorter version is offered by NAFSA: "Comprehensive internationalization" is the planned, strategic integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the ethos and outcomes of higher education (NAFSA 2014, p. 1).

It is clear that CI goes well beyond the curriculum itself, but that this is a key element of a comprehensive approach, just as it is implied in Knight's definition of internationalization in 2004. Whitsed and Green (2013) go so far as to argue that CI cannot exist without internationalization of the curriculum.

2.3 Internationalization of the Curriculum

Leask's recent work sees curriculum internationalization being enacted not only through the formal, assessed curriculum, and the teaching, learning and assessment required to deliver it, but also through the informal curriculum. Formal curriculum is defined as: "The syllabus as well as the orderly, planned schedule of experiences and activities that students must undertake as part of their degree program." (Leask 2015 in press, p. 8).

While informal curriculum is described as: "Various support services and additional activities and options organized by the university that are not assessed and do not form part of the formal curriculum, although they may support learning within it." (Leask 2015 in press, p. 8).

Leask's most frequently cited definition of the process of internationalizing the curriculum (IoC), concentrates on the formal, assessable curriculum: "The incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, delivery and outcomes of a program of study." (Leask 2009, p. 209).

Throughout her work, Leask has stressed the importance of the careful construction of learning environments and made specific reference to teaching, learning and assessment processes, thus accepting their importance in delivering the internationalized curriculum. A new definition therefore makes this even more explicit and updates the 2009 definition: "Internationalization of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study" (Leask 2015 in press, p. 9).

This paper takes as accepted Leask's (2015 in press) definition of internationalization of the curriculum, as shown here.

3 Contested Definitions

3.1 Internationalization at Home and Abroad

In a later discussion of key concepts, elements and rationales, Knight (2006) distinguishes Internationalization at Home as one of two streams in internationalization, which she sees as interdependent rather than independent. She asserts that Internationalization Abroad consists of all forms of education across borders, mobility of students, teachers, scholars, programs, courses, curriculum and projects. Internationalization at Home, on the other hand comprises activities that help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills. This is a problematic distinction, apparently suggesting, for example, that Internationalization Abroad does not develop international understanding and intercultural skills, and that curriculum is not directly included in Internationalization at Home.

However, in further explanation, Knight does mention as "Internationalization at Home-related factors": the international/intercultural dimension of the curriculum, research collaboration and area and foreign language studies (Knight 2006, p. 128). Elsewhere, she includes curriculum as one of a 'diversity of activities' that constitute Internationalization at Home: curriculum and programs, teaching/learning processes, extra-curricular activities, liaison with local cultural/ethnic groups and research or scholarly activity (Knight 2006, p. 27). The authors feel that this undervalues the fundamental role of curriculum in the enterprise of Internationalization at Home, and that it is neither a 'related factor', nor an 'activity', but is at the heart of the concept.

3.2 *The OECD Definition of an Internationalized Curriculum*

Prior to the definition of IaH (Crowther et al. 2001) and IoC (Leask 2009), an internationalized curriculum had already been defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development: "A curriculum with an international orientation in content and/or form, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/socially) in an international and multicultural context and designed for domestic and/or foreign students." (OECD 1996, p. 6).

There was a prior version of this definition (Bremer and Van der Wende 1995, p. 10), which included only international content, but it was later modified to this 1996 version which includes "the form" of the curriculum as well. Having two very similar versions has led to some confusion, with both definitions being frequently used until this day.

Rizvi (2007, p. 391) criticizes the OECD definition in its original version (Bremer and Van der Wende 1995), which he finds represents a "neo-liberal imaginary of global processes". Beelen (2014) considers the OECD definition unworkable, since it stimulates a very narrow view of an internationalized curriculum, for example that it could be a curriculum with international content for international students only. Moreover, it does not appear to recognize intercultural opportunities in a domestic context. The authors believe that the OECD definition is no longer fit for purpose.

3.3 *Campus Internationalization*

Campus Internationalization, although frequently used in the context of universities in the United States, is poorly defined. Green and Olson (2003), in a work that bears the title 'Internationalization of the campus', discuss a range of terminology without defining campus internationalization as such. Nevertheless, it continues to be used often, confusingly, as a synonym for Comprehensive Internationalization. An example of this is in the online resources for internationalization of the curriculum

by The American Council on Education, which are presented under the heading 'campus internationalization' and based on the six interconnected target areas from CIGE's Model for Comprehensive Internationalization (American Council on Education 2013).

Campus internationalization focuses on creating a learning environment on campus that may encompass both the formal and the informal curriculum, but seems mostly aimed at the latter, i.e. the non-assessed elements, and yet it also includes Study Abroad. It includes both providing a welcoming environment for international students as well as stimulating outgoing mobility. This broad focus is demonstrated by the Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education, which recognize "outstanding initiatives" in different categories, including "internationalizing the campus". These have been awarded by the Institute of International Education since 2001. Dutschke (2009, pp. 70–72) mentions two winning practices, one of which involved a year of study abroad, while the other consisted of a short-term study trip. He therefore concludes that study abroad is still the main component of internationalization at most American universities and, moreover, that on-campus activities are often dependent on and linked to study abroad. Recipients of the 2014 Heiskell awards appear to represent a similar pattern (IIE 2014).

NAFSA's annual Senator Paul Simon awards for Campus Internationalization reflect a similar confusion of terms, as these also include Comprehensive Internationalization (see NAFSA 2014 for this year's recipients). However it is stated that the awards recognize 'excellence in integrating international education across all aspects of college and university campuses', which suggests they are intended to focus on the domestic campus.

As far as we can ascertain, Internationalization at Home differs from Campus Internationalization, according to these examples. For Internationalization at Home, international and intercultural teaching and learning on the domestic campus is the main aim, irrespective of whether the student experience is enhanced by mobility.

4 Internationalization at Home

4.1 What Internationalization at Home Means

While the context and delivery of Internationalization at Home need to be considered from organizational and academic viewpoints, the ultimate beneficiaries are the students, in this case all students, not simply those who have a mobility experience, and it is their perspective which is key in conceptualizing its meaning. IaH is distinctive through this explicit focus on all students in the core (compulsory) curriculum. This means that locating internationalization of the home curriculum in electives alone is insufficient, since such electives do not reach all students. In addition to the formal, assessed, curriculum, Internationalization at Home is also delivered through the informal curriculum, the non-assessed elements of the student experience, which are nevertheless provided by or associated with the institution.

Beelen and Leask (2011, p. 5) stress that Internationalization at Home is not an aim or a didactic concept in itself, but rather a set of instruments and activities 'at home' that aim to develop international and intercultural competences in all students. Just as with internationalization of the curriculum in general, IaH is specific to the context of a discipline and, within that, to a program of study in a given university (Leask 2012).

Internationalization at Home does not require the presence of international students, although that can be a benefit. If a broad concept of 'culture' is accepted (e.g. Jones 2013b; Jones and Killick 2013; Loden 1996), then every classroom has a diverse range of students. This can be the basis for exploration of the international and intercultural dimensions of the curriculum, whether or not international students are present.

Thus in, for example, the western European context, the language of instruction is not a relevant consideration in understanding or delivering IaH. Simply providing a program in English is insufficient for it to be considered an internationalized curriculum. If the program content and learning outcomes are not internationalized, and remain the same as in the original language, merely changing the language of instruction will not make them so.

A variety of instruments can be used to internationalize teaching and learning: comparative international literature, guest lectures by speakers from local cultural groups or international companies, guest lecturers of international partner universities, international case studies and practice or, increasingly, digital learning and on line collaboration. Indeed, technology-based solutions can ensure equal access to internationalization opportunities for all students.

The same is true for engagement with local cultural and international groups, which may also be available to all students, and can be considered a distinctive element of Internationalization at Home. Engagement may be as part of the formal curriculum through guest lectures and educational activities or part of the informal, non-assessed curriculum. However, it must be acknowledged that such arrangements may not be possible in all contexts.

Nonetheless, these types of activity are simply pedagogic tools and fundamentally, the internationalization of learning outcomes, pedagogy and assessment are at the heart of Internationalization at Home, just as for curriculum internationalization in general.

Internationalization at Home may look different in different contexts. In the geographical circumstances of Western Europe it operates on the assumption that students who do not go abroad for a traditional study period or placement may still travel to countries with different cultures and languages for personal reasons, which is not always the case in other parts of the world. Furthermore, in Western Europe, where distances between countries are small, short (even 2–3 days) faculty-led study visits to neighbouring countries are on the increase, facilitated by cheap air travel (Beelen 2014). This means that, geography permitting, universities can add short-term mobility within the curriculum, although this is not an option for all countries in the world. In the case of short-term mobility, although the actual time spent abroad may be relatively limited compared with traditional one or two semester credit mobility

programs, nevertheless it is the foreign country setting (customs, languages, lifestyles and so on) which provides the opportunity for intercultural learning.

The experience of mobility in general, whether short or long term, can however make a meaningful contribution to Internationalization at Home by extension into the domestic curriculum. This may be achieved, for example, through exploration of what students had learned from the experience, alternative perspectives they had gained or other dimensions of intercultural competence developed. By sharing their views with others who had not been mobile, all students can benefit, rather than simply the mobile minority.

Within internationalization, the focus is shifting from input and output to outcomes and these are not dependent on location (Aerden 2014; Leask 2015 in press). An example is in the online delivery of education which may cause a student to be enrolled in a foreign university while remaining 'at home' or in another location. A second is that in some western European countries, students may live in one country and be enrolled in a university across a geographical border. This is the case, for example when Dutch students study in Belgium or German students study in The Netherlands.

Transnational education (TNE), defined as 'Award- or credit-bearing learning undertaken by students who are based in a different country from that of the awarding institution' (O'Mahony 2014), is also problematic for traditional distinctions between home and abroad. Specifically, it poses questions for Internationalization at Home, since an international student enrolled in an offshore university campus may neither be at home, nor in the country of the awarding university. An example of this would be an Indonesian student studying in Singapore on an Australian degree program or a Vietnamese student studying in Malaysia at the campus of a UK university. Such students must not be forgotten in the drive to internationalize the curriculum.

In reviewing the origins of IaH, Teekens points out that, 'The main concern of internationalization at home remains just as relevant today: what do we do with the vast majority of students who are not exposed to intercultural learning and an international experience?' (Teekens 2013, p. 1).

4.2 Internationalization at Home: The Emergence of the Concept

The emergence of Internationalization at Home in 2001 can be interpreted as a response to the dominant practice of equating internationalization with student mobility, supported by generously funded programs like Erasmus. Yet, the first version of the Erasmus program (1987) stimulated individual lecturers to learn about curricula and teaching methods through meetings with colleagues in other countries. This enabled the development of curricula, modules, teaching materials and other educational products, which extended the focus to European and intercultural dimensions in education.

With the introduction of Socrates I (1994), responsibility for the administration of partnerships shifted from academics to administrators, for example in the International Office, which gradually led to the mobility aspect gaining ground over curriculum. This development was criticized by both administrators and academics as a top down method, compared to the bottom up approach of the first phase of Erasmus (De Wit 2002, p. 56). The shift from collaboration between individual academics to institutional collaboration and student mobility caused De Wit, looking back at 25 years of Erasmus, to express the wish that Erasmus would rekindle its previous "focus on curriculum and learning outcomes", which would also increase the engagement of academics (De Wit 2012). This move away from viewing the role of mobility as just one element of curriculum internationalization is particularly important. Lack of engagement by academics, in combination with skills deficits are acknowledged by many as the main obstacles to internationalization (e.g. Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014, p. 68). The more mobility is seen as an administrative task rather than as part of the academic curriculum, the less focus there will be on the learning outcomes arising from mobility and, in consequence, less engagement of academics in the process.

More recently, however, an increasing concentration on internationalizing learning outcomes is drawing attention to the need for structured and purposeful delivery of the international and intercultural dimensions of the curriculum (Aerden 2014; Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014; Leask 2015 in press). This means that academic staff are the key players once more, just as in the days of the first Erasmus program. The difference being that the focus is on internationalized learning outcomes and curriculum internationalization, in contrast to international partnerships. In the European context, the Bologna process was at the basis of the learning outcomes approach as a means of making programs more transparent. While Bologna was specifically aimed at structural reform, it may be argued that it has ultimately had an impact on the content and delivery of programs as well.

Yet, the articulation and assessment of internationalized learning outcomes remains relatively under-reported. For this reason, Jones (2013a, p. 113) concludes that the literature only contains a limited number of studies into the achievement of internationalized learning outcomes, and notices a "relative lack of research into the outcomes of an internationalized curriculum for all students". Another issue that will require sustained attention in the years to come is the alignment of internationalized learning outcomes with their assessment in a domestic context and across the years of a program of study (see Jones and Killick 2013).

4.3 Existing Definition

The only existing definition of Internationalization at Home is fairly short and narrow. "Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility." (Crowther et al. 2001, p. 8).

One of the issues with the definition is that it does not indicate what Internationalization at Home actually is, concentrating rather on what it is not. Another is that it does not mention the intercultural dimension or the acquisition of intercultural skills, while these were intended as key elements of IaH from the outset (Crowther et al. 2001).

4.4 Critiques and Appreciation

Over the years, Internationalization at Home has been criticized in the literature. It stands out as a western concept and has therefore been approached with criticism by African scholars (Brewer and Leask 2012, p. 247), and is not high on the agenda of universities in Asia.

Internationalization at Home has also been called a "movement", criticized for focusing on means rather than aims, and shifting into "instrumental mode" (Brandenburg and De Wit 2010, p. 16); for a tendency to focus on "activity and not results as indicators of quality" (Whitsed and Green 2013); or pretending to be guided by high moral principles, while not actively pursuing them (De Wit and Beelen 2014, May 2). Rizvi (2007, p. 391) refers to Internationalization at Home as an "activist network".

Yet, on the whole, internationalization of the curriculum at home has positive connotations, which led the (International Association of Universities 2012, pp. 4–5) to call on all universities to "affirm internationalization's underlying values, principles and goals" through "pursuit of the internationalization of the curriculum as well as extra curricula [sic] activities so that non-mobile students, still the overwhelming majority, can also benefit from internationalization and gain the global competences they will need."

4.5 Continued Relevance of IaH as a Concept

In spite of the imperfect definition of Crowther et al. (2001), the concept of Internationalization at Home still seems to play a useful role in certain contexts, particularly where the emphasis of internationalization efforts has traditionally been on mobility. By including IaH in the recent European Policy statement, *European higher education in the world* (European Commission 2013), it might even be said that IaH has gained momentum, and has moved into the centre of the debate on the internationalization of higher education. It has made its way into the policy agendas of many universities, and is also on the way to becoming part of the educational policies of some member states. For example, in The Netherlands, Nuffic has published two studies (Van Gaalen et al. 2014a, b), which form the basis for a Dutch national policy for Internationalization at Home. This increased attention is not limited to Europe, but it is also gaining traction for instance in South Africa and Latin America.

The continuing popularity of Internationalization at Home is enough reason in itself to explore the concept, definition and development in more detail. However, and more importantly, IaH is still used as a contrast to mobility within the broader concept of internationalization of the curriculum, particularly in situations where mobility has been the dominant approach to internationalization. In such cases, IaH emphasizes the point that internationalization of the curriculum 'abroad' reaches relatively few students in contrast to the non-mobile majority, who thus need the opportunity to benefit from internationalization of the curriculum at home. All of this adds weight to the requirement to re-address some of the issues.

It may be seen from the above that Internationalization at Home is essentially a subset of internationalization of the curriculum in that it shares a focus on both the formal and informal curriculum. But IaH excludes student mobility across borders, which is, in contrast, one element of curriculum internationalization. Internationalization at Home operates on the assumption that not all students will have mobility opportunities and that, while mobility can bring additional benefits for the mobile few, this should not be at the expense of internationalization for all.

Perhaps one of the key, and as yet unrealized, contributions of Internationalization at Home lies in framing a context for the development of employability skills. Many studies have shown that international experiences are instrumental in developing the kind of transferable skills which employers are looking for (Black and Duhon 2006; Crossman and Clarke 2010). Jones (2013b) calls for 'further exploration of the domestic intercultural context as a vehicle for the kind of transformational learning evidenced through international mobility' (Jones 2013b, p. 8), and argues the need for additional studies which confirm its value. This is supported by the *Erasmus Impact Study* (European Union 2014) which drives the message home that the non-mobile majority of European students depend on the domestic curriculum for the acquisition of the employability skills that mobile students acquire through study, or perhaps more importantly, internship abroad.

Internationalization at Home is thus a concept in need of a good definition, which may help to support its implementation.

4.6 New Definition of Internationalization at Home

We have argued that IaH offers a valuable reminder that internationalization of the curriculum is not simply about providing mobility opportunities, but that it is also crucial in domestic learning environments, emphasizing the need to reach all students, not simply the mobile few. At the same time, it provides a framework for incoming student mobility to support internationalization of teaching and learning, and also focuses on incorporating local intercultural learning opportunities into curriculum internationalization. The relevance and popularity of the concept of Internationalization at Home contrasts with the current definition which is not particularly enlightening and does not offer much clarification or support for those wishing to implement it. We therefore propose the following definition:

> Internationalization at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments.

The definition stresses intentional inclusion of international and intercultural aspects into curricula in a purposeful way. This implies that adding or infusing random internationalized elements or electives would be insufficient to internationalize a program. It also emphasizes the role of IaH for all students in all programs.

In talking of 'domestic learning environments', the definition makes it clear that these may extend beyond the home campus, and the formal learning context, to include other intercultural and/or international learning opportunities within the local community. These may include working with local cultural, ethnic or religious groups, using a tandem learning system or other means to engage domestic with international students, or exploiting diversity within the classroom.

It must be highlighted once more that these contexts may be seen as 'learning environments', but it is the articulation and assessment of internationalized learning outcomes within the specific context of a discipline which will allow such environments to be used as a means of achieving meaningful international and intercultural learning.

5 Challenges for Policy and Implementation

The process of internationalizing the formal curriculum at home, just as with other aspects of internationalization, is based on the capability of academic staff to develop, deliver and assess it. Many studies have identified this as a critical success factor and have offered ideas to support staff development for internationalization (e.g. Carroll 2015; Leask 2015 in press).

Additional food for thought is provided by *The Erasmus Impact Study* (European Union 2014) which notes that staff mobility can strengthen Internationalization at Home processes. It found that academics were aware that the skills they acquired abroad would have an impact when they returned home, so that "the Erasmus effect could be extended to non-mobile participants" (European Union 2014, p. 148). The study showed that 95 % of HEI's and 92 % of staff consider outgoing staff mobility an effective tool "to allow students who do not have the possibility to participate in a mobility scheme, to benefit from the knowledge" (Ibid, p. 149, Tables 4–6). A limitation of the study, however, is that academic respondents were those who had taken part in mobility. It is a well-known phenomenon that mobile staff are limited in number, and that the same academics repeatedly take part. We also know that staff mobility is only effective when it is part of a deliberate process of staff development, as noted by Brewer and Leask (2012, p. 251). Until we have further evidence we cannot be sure of the impact on home students. The self reported data from the *Erasmus Impact Study* are thus inconclusive. The impact of incoming staff mobility is equally unknown.

However, it is evident that staff development will be a key factor in making a success of Internationalization at Home. Even those academics who have studied, lived or worked in, or come from another country are likely to need support in adapting what may be limited understanding of internationalization practice to domestic, intercultural contexts. Staff development will need to focus on internationalizing existing, discipline specific learning outcomes within the home curriculum for all students, on appropriate pedagogy and associated assessment. Since the implementation of internationalization of the curriculum takes place at the level of departments and programs of study, staff development will also need to be delivered at that level. The implication for institutional policy is therefore that both implementation and support of academic staff, in relation to internationalization of the curriculum at home or abroad, will need to be embedded within departments.

6 Conclusion

By comparing the concepts and accepted definitions of internationalization, Comprehensive Internationalization and internationalization of the curriculum to those of Internationalization at Home, we have provided context for a new definition of IaH. It has been affirmed that IaH relates both to formal and informal curriculum, and aims to develop international and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes for all students, regardless of whether they also take part in mobility opportunities.

In recent discussions on internationalization, the constant introduction of new terms and definitions has been criticized (e.g. De Wit 2011). Although the authors are fully aware of this, they consider that the importance of clarifying the still useful concept of IaH overrides the urge to limit the number of definitions. They have therefore proposed a new definition of Internationalization at Home. Although defining it does not guarantee its implementation, since there are fundamental challenges to be overcome, it is hoped that redefinition might bring implementation a step closer.

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The Impact of Exposure to Diversity in the International University Environment and the Development of Intercultural Competence in Students

Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans

1 Internationalization as an Institutional Strategy for Intercultural Competence Development

One of the early and most common internationalization strategies implemented by higher education institutions to develop intercultural competence in its students is study abroad or student mobility (Teichler 2007a, b; Teichler et al. 2011; Wächter and Ferencz 2012). Related to the limited number of students and staff that can be reached through mobility, the focus of the strategies for developing intercultural competence within the higher education institutions shifted from offering courses in English for exchange students and stimulating student and staff mobility, to internationalization of the curriculum including an international and or European dimensions and perspectives in the substance of learning (Teekens 2006; Teichler 2007b; Van der Wende 2002); and to international marketing and student recruitment (Van Rooyen 2008; Van Vught and Rogers 2006) diversifying student and staff populations on campus and, thereby, addressing also non-mobile students and staff. The new adagio 'internationalization at home' has quickly gained ground since then (i.e. Beelen 2007; Mestenhauser and Ellingboe 1998; Mestenhauser et al. 2003; Nilsson and Otten 2003; Teekens 2007; Teichler 1999). Study abroad aims to give mobile students the exposure to a culturally different environment, while at the same time home students are assumed to benefit from the international classroom.

However, in an INSEAD working paper Hawanini (2011) raises serious concern if transformation towards truly global universities actually is taking place. Leask (2009, 2010) argues that a commonly observed form of token 'cultural tourism' by inserting some entertaining international examples in the course content is deemed insufficient to achieve international and intercultural learning outcomes. The need

J. Gregersen-Hermans (✉)
University of Hull, Kingston upon Hull, UK
e-mail: j.gregersen@hull.ac.uk

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for proven effectiveness of the internationalization activities that go beyond the impact on careers and labour market mobility (see for instance de Wit 2011; Deardorff 2009a) has increased in recent years. In the discourse on internationalization shifts can be observed from outputs in terms of internationalization activities to outcomes of these activities, for instance in terms of intercultural competence development and how this is assessed. Both in terms of accountability and impact of activities, the current discourse expresses the need for studies that clarify the relationship between the internationalization activities in higher education and its desired outcomes, like intercultural competence (Berg et al. 2012; de Wit 2011; Deardorff 2009b; Deardorff et al. 2012). The studies on assessing the impact of internationalization for developing intercultural competence (Alred and Byram 2002; Berg et al. 2012; Paige et al. 2003, 2009; Peppas 2005) however, primarily focus on study abroad and student mobility, on intercultural learning at the classroom level, on the experience and acculturation of individual students (Deardorff and Jones 2012; Smith and Khawaja 2011). Although some factors seem to influence the development of intercultural competence, such as immersion into the host culture, length of stay, previous experience abroad and language ability (i.e. Graf 2004; Littrell and Salas 2005; Paige et al. 2009; Vande Berg et al. 2009), the evidence for competence development in students is inconclusive (Berg et al. 2012; Hammer 2009, 2011). Bennett in Berg et al. (2012) clearly states that intercultural learning is not something that automatically occurs because of study abroad. Cross-cultural contact does not lead to intercultural learning per se. Even though students might have a transformative learning experience when studying or volunteering abroad (Jones 2010), this does not imply that they had an intercultural one (Bennett, in Berg et al. 2012). Many publications on the impact of these intercultural and international experiences primarily rely on self-reports of participants, which include increased knowledge of the host; increased awareness of the own cultural background; increased awareness of cultural different perspectives and respect for other cultures culture (Alfranseder et al. 2011; Jones 2010; Leask 2009; Montgomery 2010). It is not clear however to what extent these international or intercultural experiences actually led to intercultural learning. Assessment of intercultural competence development is a more recent trend, among others inspired by the Georgetown Consortium Project (Paige et al. 2009), which demonstrated the need for intentional and guided development of intercultural competence.

In recent years concern also has been raised about the international classroom as an effective strategy for the development of intercultural competence of both foreign and home students on campus (Harrison and Peacock 2010; Leask 2009; Thom 2010). More specifically, Leask (2009) argues that the development of intercultural competence rarely is an automatic outcome of cultural diversity in the classroom, and a campus culture is required that enhances interaction between international and home students. However, universities struggle with the integration of home and foreign students in and outside this international classroom due to stereotyping, lack of knowledge about the background of culturally different classmates, language issues and the desire to stay in the own cultural group (Harrison and Peacock 2010; Montgomery 2009). Montgomery (2009) found that

student's views on working in multicultural groups with an "AfL approach"[1] were more positive than a decade ago and perceived as adding value to their learning experience. Others (see for instance Li and Campbell 2008) reported negative perceptions of students to intercultural group work.[2] Montgomery (ibid) concludes that the wider context of the learning environment might influence the student's perceptions. Kimmel and Volet (2012) found that "*even when language was not an issue, students still preferred to work in non-diverse groups*". Outside the classroom the interaction between the various groups of students seems limited; students seem to interact primarily with students from their own country of origin or in case of foreign students with other foreigners. A survey of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) (Krzaklewska and Krupnik 2006) offers supporting data. Although the foreign students in the ESN study reported high levels of satisfaction with what they learned about the culture of the host country (92 % highly satisfied), high levels of satisfaction regarding their interaction with other foreign students, they were less satisfied with the contact with the local students (±50 %) (Krzaklewska and Krupnik 2006, p. 43). The latest ESN study (Alfranseder et al. 2011) reports similar trends. Although Erasmus exchange students are highly satisfied with the experience, they report less satisfaction on the issue of integration into the local community.

Despite these concerns and research findings, the daily practice in higher education informs it still is the implicit assumption of many HEI policy makers that exposure to diversity automatically will give the participants in university activities a sufficient degree of intercultural competence to maximally gain from the internationalization process. European universities have continued to engage in international partnerships for education and research; increased international student mobility and have grown their international student population (European University Association 2013) to provide their students with an international experience and, thereby, implicitly assume to enhance their competence to function effectively in a globalized world. The 4th Global Survey of the International Association of Universities (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014) confirms this finding for universities world-wide. Although higher education institutional leaders mention '*students' increased international awareness and engagement with global issues*' as the number one benefit of internationalization, the priorities for achieving these are mainly output based, such as mobility and increasing diversity on campus. De Wit (2011) refers to this approach as one of the nine misconceptions on internationalization of Higher Education. Bennett (in Berg et al. 2012) frames this as the traditionalist view (p. 91) on internationalization of education.

In this context, the question arises whether one also comfortably can state that universities deliver on the rationale for intercultural understanding and competence,

[1]AfL is an approach to learning where the process of learning is assessed as this occurs—see for instance Willis (2009) for a review of the AfL approach.

[2]However, the context of this study differed from Montgomery's. Students were assessed only on the final outcome of their group work and not on the collaborative process.

and actually achieve enhanced levels of intercultural competence in their graduates or that the end of internationalisation is approaching (Brandenburg and De Wit 2011). This study explores the impact of the various forms of social interactions of a university environment on this development. It contributes to the understanding of the impact of internationalization of higher education on intercultural competence development, and challenges and tests the traditionalist view and its implicit assumption that exposure to diversity leads to intercultural competence development. The research questions how the social environment at a university impacts the development of intercultural competence of students whilst on campus.

2 Theory and Concepts

2.1 The Contact Hypothesis for Intergroup Contact as a Theoretical Framework

The traditionalist view in higher education on intercultural competence development holds that exposure to diversity will lead to increased intercultural competence. This wide spread view reflects the Contact Hypothesis for Intergroup Contact—in short Contact Hypothesis Theory—which states that exposure to culturally different groups will lead to reduced prejudice (Allport 1954; Amir 1976). Allport concluded that for constructive and positive contact to develop between culturally different individuals in a mixed group, the situation must allow for equal status within the group, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. Pettigrew (1998) adds a long term perspective to the original Contact Hypothesis Theory. He concluded on the basis of his literature review that the contact needs to have friendship potential and sufficient time to develop, in addition to the four original conditions formulated by Allport. He points to a stage-wise process from initial contact between individuals from mixed backgrounds through established contact to a unified mixed group. Recent research has further enriched the understanding of the theory. Brannon and Walton (2013) found that intergroup contact and a sense of social connectedness increase the interest in the other culture and thereby reduces prejudice and stereotyping. Quality of the contact, salience of group membership, context of the contact, voluntary or forced all influence the impact of the intergroup contact on prejudice and positive and constructive contact. To what extent, why and how positive intergroup contact generalizes to other situations, the entire out group or uninvolved out groups, has not been specified yet through the Contact Hypothesis Theory. One could state that the traditionalist view (Bennett, in Berg et al. 2012) often found in Higher Education implicitly assumes that positive and constructive intergroup contact leads to intercultural competence. The question however is if the process and outcomes as described by the Contact Hypothesis Theory result in the development of intercultural competence. To answer this question, a clear definition of intercultural competence and how this can be measured are necessary. The next paragraphs review the

construct of intercultural competence, how this can be measured, and propose a tentative model for intercultural competence development that includes the impact of the social environment as specified by the Contact Hypothesis Theory.

2.2 Defining Intercultural Competence

A definition which has been widely accepted in the field is Deardorff's (2006) research based definition of intercultural competence and its assessment. Deardorff (2006) defines intercultural competence as behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately in cross-cultural situations, based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes, to achieve one's goals to some degree. According to Deardorff, key for intercultural competence development are the personal attitudes like respect for different cultures and values, openness and curiosity which lead to cultural self-awareness, emphatic understanding of other cultures, and the ability and willingness to behave accordingly. Deardorff's model is complementary to the Contact Hypothesis Theory because of the focus on these personal attitudes. Deardorff's definition however has its limitations as it does not specify any levels of competence. The actual learning and the underlying developmental processes are difficult to quantify based on Deardorff's theory. Comparisons between individuals and development over time therefore essentially depend on self-assessment or evaluation of an independent observer. In the next section of this paragraph, the selection of a developmental model for intercultural competence to further frame this research project is discussed, that is in line with the definition of Deardorff (ibid) and that allows for a quantitative assessment of intercultural competence.

2.3 Measuring the Development of Intercultural Competence

Although in the literature several models for intercultural competence development can be found (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009), this research project builds on the theory of the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) because of its strong research base, and uses the related Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) as the diagnostic instrument to measure changes in the level of intercultural competence of the participants in this study. The Intercultural Development Continuum has been derived from Bennett's (Bennett 1993, 1998, 2004) Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in which individuals increasingly are able to accommodate cultural difference in their construction of daily reality. Furthermore, as individuals progress on the developmental continuum, also the 'experience' of cultural difference changes and becomes more complex and integrated into a person's sense of self. The development is described as revolutionary, with distinctly different worldviews and developmental conflicts underlying each stage. Based on

Table 1 IDI worldviews and development orientations (Hammer 2009)

Intercultural development continuum	
Mono-cultural worldview	
Denial	Superficial awareness of cultural difference resulting in disinterest and avoidance of cultural difference
Polarization	A judgmental view of cultural difference in terms of 'we versus them'
Defense	An uncritical view towards the own culture as more positive and ideal and an overly critical view on other values and practices
Reversal	An overly critical view towards the own cultures values and practices and an uncritical view of the other culture's value and practices
Transition	
Minimization	Cultural commonalities, universal values and principles are highlighted masking a deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural difference
Global worldview	
Acceptance	Appreciation of other cultures and the acceptance that other cultures include both differences and commonalities compared to the own culture
Adaptation	The capability to shift cultural perspectives and change behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways

the theory of the DMIS, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) has been constructed (Hammer et al. 2003). The research findings resulting from the IDI led to the adaptation of the DMIS by Hammer (2009, 2011, 2012). He renamed the model the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC), which currently describes five consecutive and distinctive orientations of intercultural awareness and competence. In Table 1 an overview of the developmental orientations identified in the IDC are given.

The related IDI is a psychometric self-assessment instrument and repeatedly has seen confirmatory testing on content validity, cross-cultural validity and reliability (Hammer 2011). The IDI measures how a person perceives the own level of intercultural competence (PO), and the actual development orientation (DO), indicating the real level of intercultural competence. The orientation gap (OG) is the difference between the PO and the DO scores. According to Hammer et al. (2003), an orientation gap larger than seven IDI points indicates a person does not have a realistic perception of the own level of intercultural competence. The IDI includes the ability to insert customized questions.

2.4 A Tentative Model for Intercultural Competence Development

To test the traditionalist' view in Higher Education on intercultural competence development and synthesizing the literature reviewed above in this research project, a tentative model has been developed that explains the relationship over time

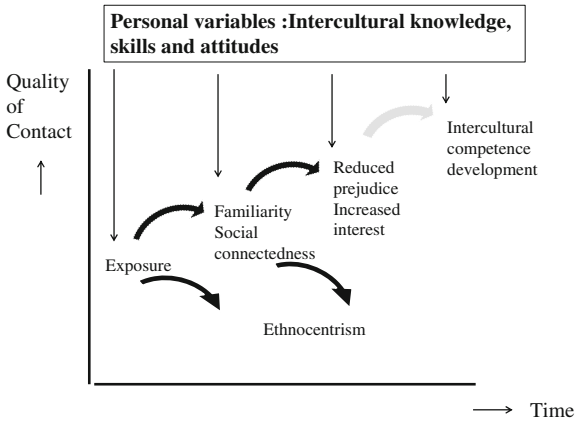


Fig. 1 The extended contact hypothesis model for intercultural competence development

between the quality of the contact or interaction between students in the university environment and the personal variables and history of these students. The tentative model expresses that over time intercultural competence is developed as a result of the interaction, which includes the type and perceived quality (satisfaction) of the contact as specified by earlier research (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998); and the personal variables as specified by Deardorff (2006, 2009a), which include intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills. The biographic factors which have been identified in the literature on study abroad as key factors influencing intercultural competence development are language ability, preparation for study abroad, independent living and previous experience abroad. These factors form part of the individual biography and are included in the personal variable set. The model is grounded on Contact Hypothesis Theory and extended with the research based models of intercultural competence of Deardorff. Figure 1 describes this extended model. The focus in this research project is on understanding the relationship between the contact variables: type of contact, satisfaction and frequency with that contact on intercultural competence development.

3 The University Case

The study has taken place between August 2010 and April 2011 at a non-Anglophone European university that is renowned for its international reputation. Most undergraduate and post graduate programs include an international or European dimension or orientation in the curriculum and are fully English taught.[3] During their study, the students have contact with students from different cultures in their tutorial groups and classes; they are taught by culturally diverse staff and have

[3]Except Law and Medicine.

the opportunity for an internship or study abroad. The university has successfully implemented an English language policy for students and for staff, and offers additional English language training for both groups. Most information and policy documents are available in English and the language used in governance is English, unless. Student services for international students are fully integrated in the standing organization. Study associations and sports clubs are open to all students, and their communication primarily is in English as well. At the time of the study, the student population of university X consists of approximately 45 % foreign students and 55 % home students. This international reputation has been confirmed both in international university rankings and an independent quality assurance agency, in terms of its internationalized curriculum, its international student and staff populations, and global employability of its graduates.

4 Method

A pre/post test observational design has been applied with a period of 10 months. This type of design is referred to as quasi-experimental design, in which real world events produced by the unfolding political and social processes' (Brady and Collier 2004, p. 302) constitute the treatment between the pre- and the post test. The quality of the social contact during the test period can be seen as the treatment.

The target group is first year master students. Masters entrants have already successfully completed a university degree and gone through transformative experiences which potentially could have influenced the impact of the internationalized university's social environment on intercultural competence development (Hammer et al. 2003).

The fundamental research question, how the social environment at a university impacts the development of intercultural competence of students whilst on campus, has been contextualized for this study into two measurable research questions. Does the level of intercultural competence of first year master students increase whilst on campus during the first nine months of study at University? How do the social interactions between respondents and other students and staff inside or outside the curriculum impact the development of intercultural competence of first year master students?

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI v.3) has been selected as method of inquiry. A questionnaire was considered completed when all 50 items on the IDI were completed. The IDI scale generates IDI scores between 50 and 145 points which have been normalized around the population mean of 100 IDI points at the median in the minimization interval. Table 2 gives the interval ranges for each of the five development orientations, and their relative expected weight.[4]

[4]The expected population distribution is reported by Hammer (2011).

Table 2 IDI development orientations; their respective abbreviations and interval ranges; and the relative expected weight for the normalized IDI population distribution

IDI orientation	Abr.	IDI scores	% weight
Denial	D	<70	2.28
Polarization	P	70–84.99	13.59
Minimization	M	85–114.99	68.26
Acceptance	Acc	115–129.99	13.59
Adaptation	AD	130–145	2.28

In addition to 50 items that measure intercultural competence, the IDI also includes a maximum of six customized questions and eight standard open questions. The customized questions in this study have been formulated in accordance with the specific focus of this study regarding the quality of the contact and the personal variables as described in the theoretical paragraph.

The final sample consists of 108 respondents, which is representative for the total population of first year master students.[5] The analysis of the response pattern suggests there are no intervening variables that affected the pre-test and post-test measurement.

To assess the impact of the social environment of the university on the development of intercultural competence, the post-test respondents have been allocated into two different test groups; a benchmark group (BM) consisting of first year master students continuing from an undergraduate program at the university (n = 31) and a quasi-experimental group consisting of first year master students that are new entrants (NE) to the university (n = 54). For a number of respondents (n = 23) it could not be identified if they were new to the university.[6] This group is referred to as the 'continuation/new unknown' group (UnK). The research resulted in various data sets, either directly generated by the IDI or constructed based on the IDI data.

5 Results

5.1 Development of Intercultural Competence After Nine Months of Study

Does the level of intercultural competence of first year master students increase whilst on campus during the first nine months of study at University? The results of the IDI indicate that the development orientation of the total sample lies in early

[5]95 % confidence with a 9.2 % range.

[6]Continuation from undergraduate to postgraduate programmes ranges between 40 and 60 %. Research indicates that 50 % of bachelor students considers continuation (*Source* Annual Report 2010).

Minimization at the pre-test, as well as at the post test assessment. The benchmark group and the unknown group score at the cusp of Minimization at the pre- and the post-test. The mean score of the new entrants is in Minimization. The mean IDI scores of the benchmark, the new entrants and the unknown groups for the pre-test and the post-test are given in Table 2.

The data in Fig. 2 inform the mean scores of each of the three groups and the total sample slightly decreased at the post-test. However, the development orientation is unchanged and remains in early Minimization. Regardless whether the respondents progress from an undergraduate program or are new to the university, t-tests for paired sample means could not confirm significant differences within each of the groups between the pre-test and the post-test.[7] Furthermore, no significant differences in IDI scores between the groups can be observed after 10 months.[8]

The IDI scores indicate the developmental orientation of the respondents. The IDI orientations of the benchmark and the group of new entrants compared to the population distribution for the pre-test are given in Fig. 3. The two test groups[9] appear to deviate from the population distribution. In the benchmark group, Denial and Polarization seem over-represented, and in the group of the new entrants Polarization seems over-represented. The global worldviews Acceptance and Adaptation are under-represented in the pre-test.

The post-test distribution seems to suggest the distributions of the benchmark group and the group of new entrants across the IDI Orientations have become more similar, however still deviate from the population distribution. Although there are some exceptions, in Fig. 4 a general tendency towards Polarization can be observed.

A series of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for small samples has been performed, assessing whether the observed[10] frequencies of the benchmark group, the group of new entrants and the total sample match the population distribution. The tests confirm that Polarization is over-represented and Acceptance and Adaptation under-represented for both groups at the pre-test, as well as at the post-test. A tendency towards polarization could not be confirmed[11] for the test groups separately. However, at the level of the total sample, a significant difference[12] has

[7]BM group: T = 0.18; df = 30; p = 0.86. NE group: T = 1.35; df = 53; p = 0.18. Unknown group: T = 1.52; df = 22; p = 0.14.

[8]ANOVA single Factor Analysis; T1: F = 0.78, p = 0.46; T2: F = 0.45, p = 0.64.

[9]The group of respondents of which it is not known whether they are new to the university has been excluded from the interval analysis because of the n < 30 and because the t-tests concluded there were no significant differences between the Unknown and the two test groups.

[10]A value of 0.5 has been added to each of the cells in the frequency table to avoid the empty cells. According to Agresti (1990), this enables the statistical analysis but does not influence the actual outcome, (p. 54). The reworked number of respondents is referred to as n′ and equals 33.5.

[11]McNemar's test for correlated samples failed to confirm statistical significance. In the benchmark group one case, in the group of new entrants three cases have been eliminated to enable this test. These cases were considered outliers.

[12](p = 4.34E-03).

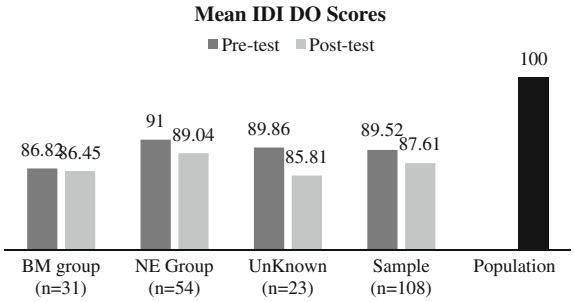


Fig. 2 The mean IDI raw DO scores of the benchmark group, the new entrants group and the Unknown compared to sample and the population mean

Fig. 3 The relative distribution of the pre-test IDI scores across the IDI orientations

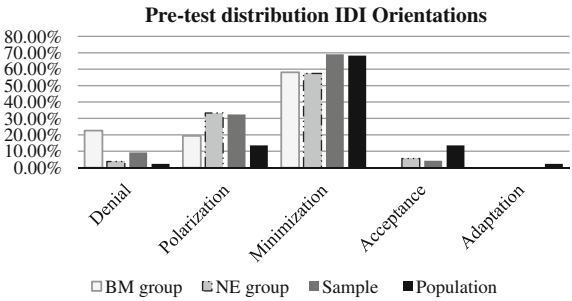
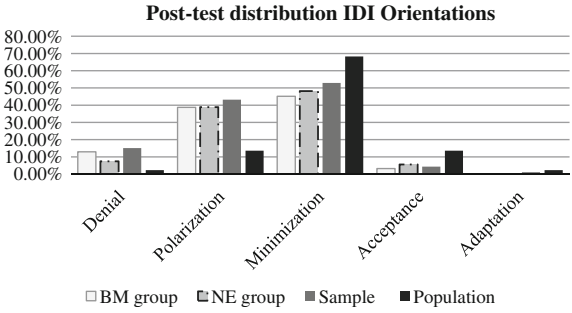


Fig. 4 The relative distribution of the post-test IDI scores across the IDI orientations



been found indicating that more respondents with a pre-test score in Minimization regressed to Polarization in the post-test than expected[13] if change had been random.

[13]A random probability of change in development orientation refers to a 50 % chance that a respondent remains in a developmental orientation and a −50 % chance that a respondent increases or decreases in developmental orientation.

In the benchmark group, change in development orientation and the direction of that change[14] occur randomly.[15] In the group of new entrants, significantly fewer participants changed in IDI orientation then if change had been random[16]; the direction of change however is random. For the total sample, the number of respondents who changed in orientation is lower than expected then if change had been random[17]; in case change takes place, the direction is random.

The range of available IDI Orientations within the sample at the pre-test and the post-test is relatively narrow primarily in the Mono-cultural and Minimization areas of the IDI scale.

The results so far indicate that the level of intercultural competence in terms of IDI scores does not increase in the 9 month study period, regardless whether respondents are new to the university. However, a tendency in development orientation towards Polarization has been confirmed. To better understand this tendency, an analysis for each of the pre-test IDI Orientation has been performed. The T-test for correlated samples confirms that the group of respondents (n = 10) with a pre-test development orientation of Denial progressed in the IDI scores at the post-test.[18] Six of these respondents progressed towards Polarization; one towards Minimization. No significant change in IDI scores has been identified for the group of respondents with a pre-test development orientation in Polarization; although six respondents actually regressed into Denial; and three respondents progressed towards Minimization. The group of respondents with a pre-test development orientation in Minimization regressed to Polarization.[19] This primarily can be attributed to the subgroup of respondents in early Minimization.[20] No significant change in IDI scores has been identified for the group of respondents who scored in Acceptance at the pre-test.

5.2 *Polarization*

Polarization is more salient in the test sample of first year master students than expected. Polarization can take the form of Defence and Reversal. To better understand how this group views diversity, their scores are further analyzed.

The respondents with a development orientation in Polarization and at the cusp of Polarization constitute one third[21] of the total sample. Of this group, for 52 % of

[14]The direction of change refers to a decrease or an increase in development orientation.

[15]Confirmed by exact binominal calculations.

[16](p = 0.04).

[17](p = 4.53E-03).

[18](p = 4.12E-05).

[19](p = 1.45E-02).

[20](p = 3.80E-02).

[21]26.7 and 5.9 % respectively.

the respondents Defence is the primary response to diversity; for 48 % of this group Reversal is the primary response.[22] In Fig. 5 the distribution between Defence and Reversal is given. Furthermore, the analysis of the individual IDI reports of respondents in Polarization informs that the majority of individual Defence—Reversal scores range between 40 and 60 %.

This finding implies that the respondents with a development orientation in Polarization are undecided in their response to diversity.

5.3 *Perception of the Own Level of Intercultural Competence*

Do the respondents have a realistic view on the own level of intercultural competence? The scores for the Orientation Gap inform that all respondents substantially overestimate their own level of intercultural competence. The Orientation Gap (OG) for each of the groups is larger than seven IDI points. Figure 3 gives the scores for the Orientation Gaps of the two test groups, the unknown group and the total sample; pre- and post-test (Fig. 6).

Even though for each of the groups the OG seems to increase after 10 months, this has only been confirmed[23] for the sample as a whole.

5.4 *Impact of the Social Environment*

How do the social interactions between respondents and other students and staff inside or outside the curriculum impact the development of intercultural competence of first year master students?

Overall,[24] the total sample was very satisfied (19 %) or satisfied (47 %) with the cooperation with the staff. The cooperation with students from other cultures was evaluated as very good (15 %) or good (44 %). For 11 % of the respondents the cooperation was neither good nor bad. Contact with other students in the education program was the most important for respondents in terms of improving one's intercultural competence (39 %); 24 % indicated contact with other students outside the education program was the most important. Contact with academics or with citizens of the city each was most important to 4 % of the respondents. The average scores per question assessing the contact variables per IDI Orientation are given in Table 3.

[22]IDI group report post test.

[23]$p = 0.05$; one tailed.

[24]Not all respondents fully completed the contexting questions.

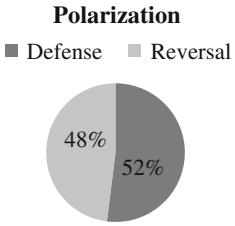


Fig. 5 The percentages of defence and reversal within the polarization orientation

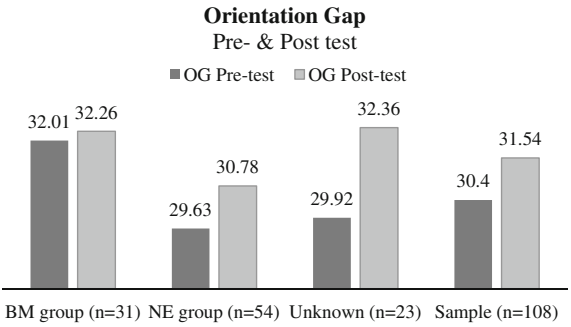


Fig. 6 The orientation gap of the benchmark group, the new entrants group and the unknown group; pre- and post-test

Table 3 The evaluation of the contact variables per IDI orientation

	IDI orientations			
Contact variables	Denial n = 10	Polarization n = 30	Minimization n = 64	Acceptance n = 4
Cooperation staff	1.63	1.18	1.83	1.8
Cooperation culturally different students	2	1.32	1.71	2.25
Most important contact	Students 100 %	Students 100 %	Students 86 %	Students 75 %
Frequency	2.25	1.22	1.95	1.5
	Legend			
Cooperation staff	Very good (1)—good (2)			
Cooperation culturally different students	Good (2)—neither good nor bad (3)			
Frequency	Every day (1)—a few times a week (2)			

Although the number of respondents in Denial and Acceptance are small and the results have to be interpreted with caution, the data seem to suggest that the respondents in Polarization are the most satisfied with the cooperation with staff and students from other cultures; that contact with other students is deemed the most important and that they engage with students from other cultures most frequently.

6 Conclusions

This study explores whether the level of intercultural competence of first year master students increases whilst on campus during the first nine months of study at the University, and how the social interactions between respondents and other students and staff inside or outside the curriculum impact the development of intercultural competence. It can be concluded that first year master students do not progress in the level of intercultural competence as measured by the IDI after 9 month of study; regardless whether they progress from an undergraduate program or are new to the university; and despite the fact that they study in an internationalized university environment. The implicit assumption of many university leaders has to be rejected.

Regarding the impact of the internationalized social environment, it can be concluded that the social interactions inside and outside the curriculum do not lead to an increase of intercultural competence per se, even though respondents are satisfied with the cooperation and have daily or weekly contact. The reported high level of satisfaction with the cooperation with students who are culturally different and its perceived importance for intercultural competence development indicate that students may not truly recognize cultural difference, and primarily work with what they have in common. Although this leads to positive intergroup experiences, actual intercultural learning does not take place. The tentative extended Contact Hypothesis Model proved useful for designing and understanding the results of this study, it is however insufficient to actually predict intercultural competence development.

On the other hand, the findings do suggests that students representing the more salient worldview(s) to diversity on campus impact the development of other students, and that the dominant group functions as a role model for other students on campus on how to respond to diversity. In this case the available range of IDI orientations on campus is narrow and primarily includes the Mono-cultural orientations and Minimization. Polarization is more salient in the group of first year master students than should be expected based on the population distribution, and a tendency towards Polarization has been confirmed. Respondents in Denial progressed towards Polarization, and respondents in early Minimization regressed towards Polarization. This analysis seems to suggest that the master students in Denial benefit from the presence of advanced levels of intercultural competence; master students in Minimization, and more specific in early Minimization, seem the suffer from lower levels of intercultural competence. The first year master students with the higher levels of intercultural competence do not seem affected by the presence the lower levels of intercultural competence. However, the impetus to progress to more inclusive global mindsets seems to be lacking, as opportunities for first year master students to learn from more advanced levels of intercultural competence on campus are not available.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the students in Polarization in this study are undecided in their response to diversity. In some situations they will be

uncritical towards the own culture and overly critical to other values and practices, whilst in other situations they will be overly critical towards the own culture and uncritical towards other values and practices. This indicates that the students in Polarization, in principle, are aware of and open to diversity, however they need guidance on how to appropriately interpret and evaluate the own and others values and practices.

First year master students substantially overestimate their level of intercultural competence, both at the pre-test and the post test. Furthermore, the Orientation Gap does not change between the pre-test and the post-test.

7 Discussion

The conclusions of this study concur with the conclusions in the literature regarding study abroad and student exchange. Exposure to diversity does not lead to the development of intercultural competence per se and regression may occur (Berg et al. 2012), especially when lower levels of intercultural competence are more salient in the institution and the range of available orientations is narrow. If universities truly intend to support their students to become global ready graduates, a pedagogical approach is needed that is intentional and helps students to recognize and reflect on cultural differences and commonalities; and that guides them to effectively and appropriately address their differences. Such a pedagogical approach needs to build on an understanding and diagnostic of the level of intercultural competence on arrival, as this determines the specific stage appropriate learning objectives (Gregersen-Hermans and Pusch 2012), and needs to embed the contact variables in the internationalized learning environment as specified by the Contact Hypothesis Model.

This study confirms a convergence towards the more salient worldview on campus. A further implication for university leaders therefore is to include targets in their internationalization strategies for raising the level of intercultural competence of all constituents—students and staff—on campus. This study highlights that students substantially and without exception overestimated their own level of intercultural competence. At the strategic level, this conclusion has implications for the research on the impact and effectiveness of internationalization, especially where this research relies on self-reports of students. Additional quantitative and qualitative methods are advised for assessing student learning, as well as the effectiveness of the internationalization strategy.

The post-test scores on the IDI confirmed the tendency towards the dominant majority, which in this case study are the polarization and early minimization orientations of the Intercultural Development Continuum. Although the following interpretation at this point in time only can be tentative because of the sample size, the result can be explained through the Field Theory of Social Psychology (Lewin 1951) and the process of co-orientation during cross cultural adaptation (Alred and Byram 2002; Byram 1997, 2003; Fantini 1995; Spitzberg and Changnon 2009).

According to the Field Force Theory, the social environment at the university and its salient level of intercultural competence is a state of equilibrium resulting from driving forces and restraining forces. Internationalization can be seen as the driving force aiming to progress the level of intercultural competence of its students. The restraining forces are possible organizational inertia (Hawanini 2011) or the lack of organizational capability to deliver on intercultural competence development (Gregersen-Hermans 2014). The pressure of the social environment and the need of an individual to fit in with the dominant majority as a survival strategy in an unfamiliar environment may have functioned as a confounding variable and hindered intercultural competence development in terms of the IDI. Increasing the driving forces whilst not addressing the restraining forces proved not sufficient to achieve a social environment in the university, which spurs intercultural competence development. Implication for university leaders is that strategies for internationalization need to include the identification of constraining factors and measures to redress or diminish these.

This study is based on a single case study so the results and conclusions have to be interpreted with caution. In this report the possible impact of previous experience abroad, language of instruction and nationality has not been included. The composition of the test group in terms of national background may be the result of an unintended selection bias caused by different patterns of mobility between Dutch, EU and non-EU students at the time of the research. Additional analysis needs to be undertaken. Furthermore, the assessment of the level of intercultural competence in this study relied on a single measure, the IDI. According to Deardorff and Jones (2012), for a more in-depth analysis of the level of intercultural competence a multiple assessment approach is essential. Future research on the impact of the social interactions on campus needs to take this into account.

The study highlights the need for more in-depth research into the actual development process that is taking place in an internationalized university, be it inside the classroom or extracurricular; not only relying on self-reports of students, but combining qualitative assessment methods development with quantitative measurement of intercultural competence; and also considering the social context of the university environment and the organizational capability to deliver on intercultural competence development.

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Internationalisation as a Lever for Change: The Case of Italy

Fiona Hunter

1 Introduction

The many changes introduced over the previous decade in Europe by the Bologna Process have called for new state-university relations and behaviours, as well as new understandings and enactments of internationalization. However, how this has been interpreted by national higher education policies has depended significantly on the different country contexts (Nokkala 2007). Italy represents a national system that has struggled to introduce effective Bologna reforms because of an unfavourable starting point: in the preceding decades, it failed to cope with the challenges of a changing higher education environment and with the explosion of demand for higher education (Van der Wende 2001).

This has had consequences for its higher education institutions operating in a resource dependency regime (Marginson 2007; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Although only the 66 state universities in the Italian higher education system[1] rely heavily on state funding, all 95 (including the 29 non-state universities who are essentially privately funded) are regulated by the Ministry for Education, Universities and Research (MIUR). If the national system, caught up in its own path dependency of historical legacy and practice (Krücken 2003), is slow, unable or unwilling to change, the universities will struggle to adapt, and their ability to

[1]This article refers only to universities and not to the non-university sector which is made up of 137 institutions in the academies of fine arts, conservatories, dance and theatre schools or other higher education institutions under the jurisdiction of other Ministries.

F. Hunter (✉)
Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy
e-mail: fionajanehunter@gmail.com

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interpret and respond to a more international and increasingly competitive environment will depend significantly on their own historical legacy and historically developed practices and identities. In other words, not all institutions will respond at the same pace or develop the same response.

2 Systemic Tradition of Central Planning and Uniformity

A highly centralized and uniform model of higher education, established at the time of Italian unification in the second half of the nineteenth century, has persisted over the decades, despite societal pressures for greater decentralization and diversification since the 1960s. Internal pressure groups have had only minor impact in pushing through reform measures and it has only been through exogenous drivers, expressed principally through the Bologna Process, that any headway in reforming the system has been achieved in recent years. Even this pan-European reform process has encountered strong internal resistance from a powerful and conservative academic community, able to influence political direction and take advantage of the inefficiencies of central planning policies and the often unstable and frequently changing political environment (Boffo 1997; Luberto 2007; Luzzatto 1996; Moscati 1991, 2002; Vaira 2003a, b; Woolf 2003).

The lack of any significant degree of genuine university autonomy and institutional variety has acted as an effective barrier to change by removing any 'institutional space' for bottom-up innovation or experimentation (Luberto 2007). Tertiary education has traditionally been provided almost exclusively by universities and, until the Bologna Process reforms, the dominant qualification was the one tier, long cycle, traditional academic degree known as "*laurea*", with an official length of four to six years. However, actual duration was significantly longer and wastage rates were extremely high, with over 60 % of students failing to complete their studies and often less than 10 % managing to complete within the official timeframe.

Furthermore, university degrees are awarded "*valore legale*" (legal validity) by the Ministry (MIUR), which exercises control over curricular content, credit weighting and academic ratios in order to ensure homogeneity of standards. Consequently, Italian universities have tended to interpret accountability to the Ministry in the legal and administrative sense of fulfilling requirements, and have, to a large extent, remained isolated from changes in their environment and the needs of external stakeholders (Capano 1998; Luzzatto and Moscati 2007).

Where reforms for greater diversification and decentralization were introduced, the universities' approach was often one of compliance, leading to cosmetic change rather than any significant shift in the traditional structure and culture of the institutions (Meyer and Rowan 1977). This behaviour has been apparent also in the implementation of the Bologna reforms.

3 Italian Higher Education Response to the Bologna Process

Italy acted uncharacteristically as a "first mover", and a landmark reform to redefine the Italian Higher Education landscape according to the Bologna principles was brought into force in 1999. Its objectives were clear: extend institutional autonomy and introduce a Bologna-compatible degree structure, credit system and quality assurance system. The expected outcomes were greater efficiency through increased enrolments and reduced wastage rates, enhanced graduate employability and improved access to the European Labour Market (Guerzoni 2001; Luzzatto and Moscati 2007).

In 2001, the reform swept away the traditional "*laurea*" replacing it with the "three plus two" structure ("*laurea*" and "*laurea magistrale*") and also introduced one-year Professional Masters, accredited directly by the universities, to facilitate access to the labour market. A fully compatible ECTS credit system was introduced to promote a more student-centred approach in curricular design, as well as to encourage student mobility and foster the development of lifelong learning opportunities. The first-ever national evaluation system, coordinated by a national committee with local university units, was established.

However, despite the far-reaching changes in tools and structures and the granting of institutional autonomy, centralization continued with the Ministry retaining significant control over content and severely limiting institutional discretion to characterize programmes (Luzzatto and Moscati 2007; Moscati 2002). Compression and fragmentation often characterized the new degrees, where the academic tendency was often to compress the old four-year degrees into a three-year program and then fragment into many modules. Interaction with employers to design new courses in line with labour market needs was limited principally to those disciplines that already enjoyed a tradition of interaction with external stakeholders.

Compression and fragmentation were often accompanied by proliferation with a doubling in the number of degrees, a burgeoning of branch campuses and new universities, and an increase in the number of academic positions in conditions of a stable or declining student population (CNSVU 2008). Despite an initial rise in student numbers, enrolment levels stabilized and then began to decline. Completion times and wastage rates that seemed to be improving in the early years of the reform slowly slipped back to pre-reform levels. The only constant upward trend appeared to be in the numbers of institutions and programmes that continued to offer a model of "more of the same", rather than any genuine diversification or innovation in institutional profiles or portfolios.

These outcomes suggest that many institutional responses to the reform were made more according to the traditional logic of academic interest, rather than any attempt at interpreting the spirit of the reform and opening up to a European Higher Education space (Luberto 2007; Luzzatto and Moscati 2007). The newly reformed higher education system still suffered from a lack of effective accountability able to

influence institutional behaviour, and the quality assurance system introduced under the reform package acted more as a data collector, devoid of any tools to assess and reward university performance (Perrotti 2002; Vaira 2003b).

Since the end of the first decade of the Bologna Process, and against a backdrop of political instability and economic decline, successive governments have intervened with several 'reforms of the reform' in an attempt to correct the distortions. Restrictions on content were relaxed in favour of greater institutional discretion, but credit requirements and academic ratios were tightened in an attempt to control proliferation. As a result, the number of courses fell by around a third, bringing bachelors and masters level degree courses down from 5879 to around 1200, and doctoral programmes from 2200 to 919 (ANVUR 2014).

With receding finances, the trend has been one of budget restrictions, but also one of tighter coupling between state expectations and institutional outcomes, along with the introduction of an element of domestic competition. Funding is increasingly linked to performance in an attempt to reward quality and efficiency in teaching and research, although this still has little impact overall. The number of new academic positions has been cut back significantly, but universities who perform well can hire more staff, while those universities that overspend their annual budget are subject to a hiring freeze.

Reforms have sought to further extend institutional autonomy and modernize governance in an attempt to make a radical shift away from a traditional inward-looking model typically centred on disciplinary rather than institutional interests and with very limited external representation, to one that is more agile outward-facing and responsive to stakeholder needs (ANVUR 2014; Boffo 1997; Stefani 2014). Transition towards a more autonomous model of quality assurance in line with European guidelines was completed with the setting up of the National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research (ANVUR) in 2012.

However, after more than almost a decade and a half of legislative attempts to improve the system and align it with European models of practice, recent results appear disheartening. Although in the period between 1993 and 2012, Italy has increased its graduate population in the 25–34 year-old age group from 7.1 to 22.3 % (from 5.5 to 12.7 % of overall population), it is still one of the European countries with the lowest proportion of university graduates (ANVUR 2014). Moreover, the latest figures show that in 2014 the Italian university is losing its appeal with enrolments down 20 % since the introduction of the Bologna reforms. Only three in ten of 19-year olds choose to enrol in a university, making it practically impossible for Italy to reach the European 2020 objective of 40 % of graduates in the 30–34 year old age group (Bartolini 2014a). Indeed, the target has been reset at around 27–28 % (Cammelli and Gasperoni 2014). Tertiary attainment rates in Italy among 25–34-year olds in 2012 were the fourth lowest in the OECD and G20 countries, ranking 34th out of 37 countries (OECD Reports 2014).

The decision not to enrol at a university may also be linked to low expectations of employment opportunity, but also the time spent in university in order to complete an education. The average time to finish a three-year Bachelor degree is 5.1 years, 70 % more than the official length and 2.8 years for a two-year Master.

Only one third of Bachelor students and 40 % of Masters students finish in the required time (ANVUR 2014). Overall, dropout rates have improved somewhat, but are still high with 55 out of 100 students completing their studies against an average of 70 in Europe (ANVUR 2014; Bartoloni 2014a, 29th May; Cammelli and Gasperoni 2014). Such disaffection is leading a growing number of Italians to seek their university education abroad. Around 63,000 students enrolled outside Italy in 2011, which was a 51.2 % increase on the numbers in 2006 (Marino 2014).

Those who do complete their studies are inevitably older than their European counterparts: Bachelor graduates are on average 25.5 years old and Master graduates 27.8, and in the current economic climate many are forced, rather than choose, to seek employment in the European Labour Market because of lack of opportunity at home (Bartoloni 2014a). Between 2008 and 2012, unemployment rates rose steeply and the proportion of 15–29 year olds neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) rose from 19.2 to 24.6 %, with only Spain and Turkey faring worse (OECD Reports 2014). The future looks decidedly bleak for many young Italians and far from the promised scenario of the Bologna reforms of the previous decade.

While there are strong regional differences, with Northern Italy generally performing better than the Centre and South (ANVUR 2014), it becomes apparent that despite the many attempts to modernize Italian higher education by successive governments over the last 15 years, structural dysfunctions still hamper any real change within the system. Centralized control based on legal homogeneity of qualifications has created a cumbersome model that makes the shift to the proposed model of the European Higher Education Area a slow and laborious one (Luberto 2007; Neave 1998). The Italian state promotes autonomy and diversity in its reform measures, but imposes regulations that encourage uniformity and rigidity, while the universities have typically resisted top-down reforms and appeared unable or unwilling to generate any bottom-up change from within.

4 Internationalisation as a Lever for Change

The data suggest that neither the state nor the institutions have been able to place the context of the reform beyond their own borders and embrace an agenda for change within the emerging European Higher Education Area (Berlinguer 2008). It would also appear that in the subsequent years of financial reduction, the universities have been forced to contain rather than expand or diversify their portfolios and operations. But do these data tell the full story? Or does an examination of internationalization policies and activities provide indications that change is indeed taking place, albeit to varying degrees and at varying rates across the system?

While Italy has always been an active and engaged participant in European programmes for higher education and in Erasmus in particular, the Bologna Process paved the way for new and more diverse forms of internationalization. Alongside the adoption of the specific action lines, the Italian Government introduced a

number of specific measures to further enhance mobility and internationalization of the curriculum and research, and these have been increasingly embedded in successive legislation for modernization of the higher education system and in each round of the three-year planning cycles for university development.

In the early years of the Bologna Process, legislation was introduced to enable Italian universities to enter agreements for the development and delivery of double and joint degrees, and this legislation was supported by three rounds of successive funding to encourage their realization and support mobility of students and staff. In applying for this special funding, universities were required for the first time to declare their strategic objectives for internationalization.

The program had a very strong uptake across the sector, with universities developing double and joint degrees at masters and doctoral level, and creating a robust foundation for participation in the European Erasmus Mundus program. In addition to the existing 138 Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters in which Italian universities participate, 9 new Joint Masters have been awarded under the first Erasmus Plus call (Erasmus Mundus 2014).

Successive programmes for internationalization have also encouraged the development of academic programmes taught in English, aimed at attracting international students and promoting international research collaboration. There are now 187 degree programmes offered in English that are formally recognized by the Ministry and offered at all levels, from bachelors to doctoral studies, spanning an increasingly broad range of studies from business and engineering to architecture, design, sciences, medicine and even humanities and law.

These initiatives, alongside support from bilateral agreements with a number of countries, including China, have increased the international degree-seeking student population at Italian universities, although the numbers are still low in comparison to other European countries. Italian market share was up from 1.2 % in 2000 to 1.8 % in 2009, with the Marco Polo Program for Chinese Students increasing from 74 students in 2003 to 5269 in 2011 (OBHE 2012). Italy clearly has potential as a country destination, as testified by the growing number of U.S. branch campuses (41 in 2012) that offer study abroad or even full degree programmes such as John Hopkins University in Bologna and John Cabot University in Rome (Caruso and de Wit 2013).

The objectives for the 2013–2015 period also offer, for the first time, the opportunity to internationalize the academic community by encouraging longer-term academic exchange in double and joint degree programmes, as well as short-term teaching contracts for renowned international academics and scholars in standard academic degree programmes (Bruno 2014, 31st January). This initiative has the potential to inject significant innovation into the system, given that currently 99 % of the academic community is Italian (ANVUR 2014).

As performance measurement becomes increasingly important in teaching, research and academic hiring, internationalization also becomes an important indicator. The new criteria for 2014 indicate that one third of funds will be assigned based on merit, according to the ANVUR evaluation, and these will include indicators of Erasmus mobility for both incoming and outgoing students (Bartoloni

2014b, 11th September). Universities are now being required to internationalize in order to receive funding, rather than being funded in order to internationalize.

Although there is no overarching national strategy for internationalization, it continues to take on greater importance, and this is reflected in the current government's efforts to develop a new set of reform measures for "la *buona università*" (the good university), aimed at correcting distortions, rewarding performance and opening up the system in order to enable Italy to catch up and align with the Europe 2020 strategy.

While internationalization is emerging increasingly as a key pathway for change and improvement, it should however be noted that reforms are being carried out with a reduced budget for higher education. Italy ranks 5th last in the OECD tables for public spending in education, and is the only country where real public expenditure on educational institutions fell between 2000 and 2011 (OECD Reports 2014).

Interestingly, while public sources fell from 94 to 89 %, the share of total funding for schools and universities from private sources almost doubled, with one third of total income now privately generated (OECD Reports 2014). While tuition fees have always been the principal income stream for non-state universities, they are now a significant source of funding for state universities as well. It can be argued that there is an increasing blurring of the divide between public and private higher education in Italy, and the emergence of dual accountabilities to both state and market. Internationalisation is accompanied by the phenomenon of privatization.

5 Institutional Responses

How are the universities responding to these increased pressures to internationalize? The first ANVUR report published in 2014 captured only limited internationalization, data but in a 2012 Bologna Experts Seminar on "Rethinking Internationalisation", results were presented from a survey on internationalization strategies at Italian universities. While the survey highlighted that the majority of the universities tended to develop short-term strategies with quantitative goals based on the three-year planning cycles, there were others that set longer strategic timeframes with a more qualitative approach that would enable them to profile and position themselves internationally.

Mobility remained the principal focus and objectives were integrating recognized mobility periods into the curriculum (92 %), international placements (83 %), international research experience (75 %) and intensive programmes (64 %). However, the focus on the curriculum across the three levels was also strong with efforts to develop courses in English (78 %), typically in collaboration with international universities or companies (72 %). The majority of universities (85 %) declared that they were developing mechanisms to recruit students internationally, such as offering scholarships and discounted fees, and developing specific support services and communication strategies. Internationalisation of the academic

community was also indicated by many as a priority through visiting professors (69 %), recruitment of international academics, including Italians working abroad (64 %), but also by encouraging more outward short-term mobility (50 %).

Equally strong was the focus on enhancing research through international partnerships (67 %) and funding (72 %). Universities also recognized the need to upskill professional knowledge across the university and, in particular, improvement of language competences (69 %). A smaller number had set objectives to improve support services (19 %) and build their strategic management capacity (14 %), while a significant percentage planned participation in international higher education management projects (44 %).

Indeed, co-operation was a strong element in many objectives for knowledge exchange (64 %) and promotion (50 %). However, the focus appeared to be on bilateral relationships, since few declared a focus on networks (11 %) and even fewer expressed the intention to develop regional engagement (5 %). Although 54 % indicated that they did not make use of any international consultancy or professional development services, a smaller group indicated that they had or planned to do so.

The survey revealed very diverse responses in how universities benchmark their international efforts. Both national and international rankings received a 10 % response rate. However, while only 10 % said they benchmarked themselves against other Italian universities, 22 % said they benchmarked against international universities in general and 12 % against similar international universities. A further 20 % indicated associations and networks and 17 % declared the ministerial indicators. Interestingly, 22 % did not answer the question. Italy does not currently fare well in international rankings, but a small number of its universities do manage to appear in the top 200 lists (Bartoloni 2014c, 16th September).

It is true that the survey on internationalization strategies indicates only objectives and not outputs or outcomes, but it does suggest that universities are increasing and diversifying their international efforts. While one third responded that they developed these efforts in response to national legislation, a further third indicated that their strategies go beyond ministerial requirements. This level of change suggests that a number of other changes are taking place within the institutions in order to meet their strategic goals.

Although teaching in English does not necessarily lead to an internationalized curriculum, the increase in the number of these programmes, offered either by the university on its own or in partnership with other institutions, suggests that a certain degree of curricular innovation is taking place. Enhancing exchange programmes or recruiting students internationally means classroom composition and dynamics are being altered. Efforts to internationalize the academic community will inevitably impact to some degree the tradition of a monocultural environment. Some universities may be in a position to exploit international academic labour markets in their search to attract the best possible talent through competitive salaries, while others may be exploiting co-operation agreements and developing creative solutions for longer-term staff exchanges and enhancement of international programmes and projects.

This would then suggest that new types of partnerships and alliances are emerging, that are stronger and more strategic to institutional goals. While for the majority this means integrated curricula such as double and joint degrees or collaborative short programmes, a small number of universities are spearheading a trend of setting up international operations or even launching branch campuses outside of Italy, often in collaboration with local institutions (OBHE 2012).

Internationalisation exposes and magnifies institutional weaknesses, and one way to overcome this is greater awareness of international practices. While for some universities this means seeking to enter the rankings by aligning with international standards and performance indicators, there is evidence that an increasing number of universities are using their partnerships and networks as a means to benchmark their current practice and improve the quality of their education and research.

Those institutions that are financially well-endowed have also been engaging in (at times major) physical plant investment to ensure their infrastructure meets international expectations, while others focus more on improvement of student services and international competences of academic and administrative staff, such as being able to communicate efficiently in English in an international environment.

While much of the focus of internationalization has been traditionally placed on enhancing academic prestige and positioning, new ventures in education, such as the setting up of international operations or the multiplication of summer schools and development of international recruitment initiatives, suggest that there is now a stronger economic rationale to enhance income generation and diversify the funding base.

In some universities there are also signs that internationalization efforts are linked to a re-aligning of governance structures to encourage more agile processes and break the patterns of traditional academic behaviour tending towards self-referential and change-averse patterns of decision making. While still apparently limited in scale, there is greater use being made of international expertise for environmental and institutional analysis in order to better inform the internationalization strategies and accelerate institutional learning.

So the survey results suggest that Italian universities are (at last) becoming more international as they choose to align with international standards in education and research; teaching in English, recruiting international staff and students, enhancing their international research profile; adopting international practices for academic recruitment, benchmarking against international universities and seeking to position themselves in international rankings.

As they engage in these activities, there are signs that the universities are beginning to develop entrepreneurial capacity as they reach out to new partnerships for new forms of co-operation and income generation, and encourage academic innovation. They are beginning to become more professional as they develop systems and processes that support their strategic direction and institutional goals, and adopt more sophisticated tools to measure their achievements in education and research.

In other words, Italian universities are changing and internationalization appears to be the lever for that change. They respond to national legislation, but it would appear also increasingly to market demand. The response to the competitive pressures of the new higher education environment is identified in internationalization, but in a manner that requires universities to develop a more adaptive and entrepreneurial mode of behaviour (Davies 1987, 2001; Shattock 2003; Sporn 1999). It requires a new set of competences, structures, tools and processes as well as cultural change. The new globalized environment is creating a shift in the higher education paradigm and is forcing universities to make fundamental changes in the way they operate. They begin to adopt new values and practices in order to adapt to a rapidly evolving context.

6 Patterns of Convergence and Divergence

As the Italian state and its universities begin to converge with international models, they diverge from the traditional model and break away from their own historical pathways. As a number of universities engage in increasingly ambitious strategies for internationalization, it appears that a degree of diversification within a highly centralized and uniform system is now taking place. This is in line with the logic of the Bologna Process that has led to structural reform to strengthen compatibility and comparability of qualifications, but at the same time calls for greater institutional diversity and encourages a more competitive environment (Nokkala 2007).

Not all universities will adapt to the requirements of the 21st century university in the same manner. Some universities may nurture the ambition to become globally positioned, ranked and accredited in order to position themselves at the forefront of their field, while others may choose to play a national or regional role. All are operating in the same national environment but their different trajectories, stages of maturity, geographic locations, regional environments, configurations of academic disciplines, key leadership figures and stakeholders will define their willingness and capacity to respond, whether to ensure educational excellence or simply to guarantee survival.

Figure 1 illustrates different interplays of internal and external conditions, and shows how some institutions respond more rapidly and intuitively to change, while others may be slower to react or even adopt a position of persistence. Internal drivers are described as either static (non-adaptive) or dynamic (adaptive), and the external drivers are either stable or turbulent. The continuous line indicates an institutional pathway as a result of a deliberate strategic choice to respond, whereas the broken line represents a pathway resulting from lack of direction and ad hoc decisions resulting in stasis and strategic drift.

If the pre-Bologna phase is considered to be a relatively stable period for Italian universities, in which the majority of universities, both state and non-state, were not required to respond to strong market pressures for change, they can be located in Quadrant C where they could adopt a static stance. However, in the current

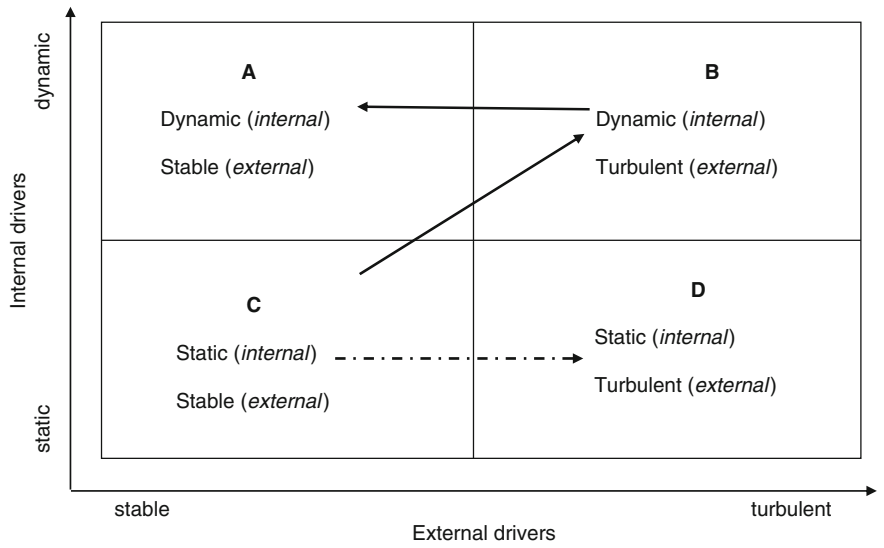

Fig. 1 Interplay of external and internal conditions (Hunter 2009)

turbulent environment, some universities have sensed the need to change and are developing a dynamic response, shifting to Quadrant B. While this is a challenging position for the universities, they will be better placed to take advantage of more stable external conditions in future times, as represented in Quadrant A, provided they continue to develop dynamic internal conditions.

The risk for other universities is that they persist in maintaining their static culture and will be unable to respond rapidly and creatively as the speed of change accelerates, causing them to drift into Quadrant D, the least favourable position of all. A pattern emerges, whereby some universities opt for internationalization in the belief that they have no other choice for institutional survival, while others may be more strongly influenced by state bureaucracy and practice, even though they are aware of the external pressures for change. These contrasting models produce a culture of stasis, since emulation of successful models is not always possible (Carroll 1993).

Internationalization, and the degree of change it implies, may not always be perceived as a desirable choice, but there appear to be an increasing number of Italian universities that recognize it as an inevitable one. As these universities engage in internationalization and look beyond their national borders for future direction, they are lifting themselves out of safe and familiar patterns of operation and measuring themselves against European and international universities in order to define their new identity and ensure their relevance as players, both within and beyond their borders.

A key factor in developing response to competitive pressures is institutional autonomy, reflected in the structures, processes and roles that enable the institution

to determine its own agenda and strategy. It is what Clark (1998) terms "self-directed autonomy" in contrast to "derived autonomy", as in the Italian case where universities become legally autonomous, but remain constrained by state funding mechanisms that pressure them to follow centrally determined guidelines and limit the available space in which they can develop a unique and innovative strategic response (Clark 1998; Davies 1999, 2001; Shattock 2003; Sporn 1999).

Pressures of external regulations and an unstable political and economic environment operate as powerful constraints to the emergence of institutional autonomy and capacity for innovation and long-term planning in Italy. As market pressures increase, Italian universities will need to be released from the Italian administrative tradition of procedures and rules in order to compete in the European and international higher education arena.

However, even in a constraining legal environment, there is evidence that some universities seek to identify and exploit the opportunities made available to them and that they are developing an "embedded institutional volition" (Clark 2004) for success. Internationalization becomes a natural consequence of that ambition. Indeed, they seek to free themselves from legislative constraints by 'leapfrogging' the national framework and exploiting international trends as a lever for change in their institutions.

7 Dual Accountability

Within the Italian higher education model of uniformity and centralization, universities initially had no particular motivation to exploit the autonomy made available to them in the wave of Bologna reforms and behave differently. That pattern has been interrupted by the new higher education conditions and increasing market pressures that are forcing them to adapt, and that adaptation is understood as internationalization. Italian universities are increasingly embarking on strategies for internationalization, not only in response to statutory requirements, but to competitive pressures in the emerging higher education markets at both national and international level.

This would imply that Italian universities are becoming increasingly accountable both to state and market, as they find themselves subject to contrary forces, seeking to meet the demands of their regulatory framework and respond to market pressures. Moreover, it would appear that, for some universities at least, it is the market that is becoming the stronger driver in the new conditions.

Externally-driven change is forcing them to make internal changes, albeit to varying degrees, in an attempt to position themselves in the new European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Process has created a state of flux and it is difficult to imagine that these "frontrunner" universities would have chosen to internationalize without the discontinuity it provided. Exposure to the wider implications of a European Market and competition is taking them in a new direction.

8 Isomorphic Tendencies

The impact of the Bologna Process has awakened international ambition and shifted focus and direction. Many of the changes that are introduced represent path-breaking features. The state and its universities are breaking away from the traditional models to achieve their goals, preferring to emulate international standards and practices. Globalization has been described as a common isomorphic agenda for system decentralization that is producing an anti-isomorphic prescription for institutional diversification (Levy 1999, 2004 Jan). This can lead to a paradox of decreasing diversity between countries and increasing diversity within countries, as universities identify with models beyond their borders.

The powerful commonality of the Bologna process unites European institutions through common practices and structures, while fostering greater organizational diversity and inter-institutional competition in the name of a globally attractive higher education area. It promotes convergence of structures and divergence of response. Structural convergence is increasing competition and requires institutional strategies of diversification for competitive advantage. While a pattern of convergence is emerging at the level of institutional strategy for internationalization, the strategy itself is to be divergent.

9 Conclusions

This short article suggests that this paradox is now emerging in Italy, although there is inevitably a certain amount of speculation, given the lack of data on the state of internationalization. As some universities engage in significant international endeavours, they become more nationally diverse, breaking traditional institutional pathways, but at the same time, they become less internationally diverse. They diverge from the national model as they emulate successful international strategies, position themselves internationally and form international partnerships and alliances for competitive advantage.

The Italian State and its higher education institutions have been conditioned by their previous historical accretion of experience and sense of purpose. They have struggled to implement the Bologna reforms and have met with only very limited success until now. International drivers for change however suggest that both the Italian state and an increasing number of universities nurture the ambition to strengthen their strategies and practices in internationalization in order to position themselves as European or international players.

Perhaps, at last, the positions of the state and its more ambitious universities coincide, and no longer on a position of persistence, but rather one of regeneration and revitalization. Change will come in any case to Italian Higher Education. Italy stands at a crossroads, and it is now only a matter of the extent to which Italian

Higher Education wishes to become an active agent in its own transformation and assert itself in the international arena, or succumb passively to the inevitable consequences of insufficient or slow response.

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Becoming Bologna Capable: Strategic Cooperation and Capacity Building in International Offices in Kazakhstani HEIs

Jason Sparks, Adil Ashirbekov, Aisi Li, Lynne Parmenter, Zakir Jumakulov and Aida Sagintayeva

Abbreviations

CIP	Centre of International Programs
CBPAM	Centre of the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility (Bologna Centre)
HEI	Higher education institution
IO	International Office
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore current practices and capacity strengths and challenges in International Offices (IOs) in Kazakhstani higher education institutions (HEIs), as they deal with integration into the Bologna Process and its ramifications for the internationalization of higher education. The paper reports initial findings from the first year of a three-year study on internationalization of higher

J. Sparks · A. Ashirbekov · A. Li · L. Parmenter (✉) · Z. Jumakulov · A. Sagintayeva
Graduate School of Education, Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan
e-mail: lynne.parmenter@nu.edu.kz

J. Sparks
e-mail: jason.sparks@nu.edu.kz

A. Ashirbekov
e-mail: aashirbekov@nu.edu.kz

A. Li
e-mail: li.aisi@nu.edu.kz

Z. Jumakulov
e-mail: zakir.jumakulov@nu.edu.kz

A. Sagintayeva
e-mail: asagintayeva@nu.edu.kz

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education in Kazakhstan, funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan (MoES). The focus of the project in the first year was on institutional engagement in internationalization, an area in which IOs and their staff play a key role. It is important to note that this role is an evolving one, being developed in response to the changing international and national contexts, including the Bologna Process. The following three questions are addressed in the paper: (1) What forms of strategic cooperation are considered necessary for effective engagement in achieving Bologna process goals related to internationalization? (2) Do International Offices have the capacity to engage effectively in strategic cooperation for Bologna process goals? (3) What do International Office staff perceive as necessary to develop their professional capacity to achieve these goals? By focusing on Kazakhstan, where little research has been done in this area, we hope that this paper will contribute one response to the appeal made by Deardorff (2012, p. 72), that "as we continue to engage in explorations on rethinking internationalization, it becomes crucial that we seek out and learn from many different perspectives".

2 Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical foundation of this paper is based on three strands of research. The first strand is literature on internationalization of higher education, particularly within the Bologna context. The second strand is higher education change, focusing on the challenges of changing institutional culture within a shifting national landscape of higher education reform. The third strand is capacity building and professional development, as it relates to the work of IO staff engaging with internationalization of higher education as part of the Bologna Process.

2.1 Internationalization of Higher Education

The starting point of this paper is the well-known definition proposed by Knight (2004, p. 11), who states that internationalization of higher education is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education". Rather than become fixed on definitions, however, the important point is "the question [of] why and how internationalization can contribute to the improvement of quality of education" (Brandenburg and De Wit 2012, p. 18). This is particularly salient in Kazakhstan, where major reforms to improve the quality of higher education are underway. The process of internationalization can be approached by higher education institutions in many ways, of course, but often begins with a focus on student and possibly faculty mobility in the early stages, together with the forming of international partnerships and networks (Knight 2013), followed by alignment of structures and policies to make higher education more internationally translatable. Engagement in

the Bologna process is key to facilitating these three aspects. At the institutional level, this early stage is often followed by a focus on internationalization at home, which centres on internationalization of the curriculum and integration of international students (Jones and Brown 2007; Leask 2013). Both these aspects are complex and require significant commitment and resources by many different parts of the institution. Attention to internationalization at home, in turn, leads to a greater focus on quality of internationalization, and on the embedding of internationalization throughout the institution, although for many institutions, this stage remains a mission statement aspiration rather than a reality (Jones and de Wit 2012). It is at this stage, if achieved, that internationalization makes the shift "from the margins of higher education to its core" (Jones and de Wit 2012, p. 36). For this paper, these various stages and aspects of internationalization of higher education provide a backdrop for discussion of the case in universities in Kazakhstan. These are not the only important aspects of internationalization of higher education, clearly, but other aspects are less relevant to the situation in Kazakhstan at this moment in time. An important point to note is that academic mobility of both students and staff is well funded by the government in Kazakhstan, and internationalization does not have the commercial, market-driven priorities that dominate in some other countries.

2.2 Institutional Change

The second strand of relevant research is institutional change in higher education. The national landscape of higher education is in a process of rapid reform in Kazakhstan as universities become more autonomous, meaning that institutional change is forced, rather than optional. However, responses to national and institutional change vary across universities, and are partly dependent on institutional culture. As Lumby (2012, p. 581) states, highlighting the multiple and diverse cultures that exist in any HEI, "culture is a fundamental shaping and disciplinary force on which organizations depend". Lumby goes on to emphasize that "while organizational cultures cannot be controlled, they can be influenced to some degree and… deciding on the direction of influence is a key moral challenge for leaders" (2012, p. 586). Within the higher education context, where leadership tends to be distributed, recent studies have highlighted the leadership role of professionals and administrative staff in collaborative leadership of higher education changes (e.g. Jones and de Wit 2012). This leadership role is relevant to our study of IO directors and staff in Kazakhstan. Another perspective that is potentially valuable in considering the role of IO staff in the realm of strategic cooperation in the Bologna Process is the role of social networks in organizational change within and across institutions. As Kezar (2014, p. 95) points out in an article advocating the use of social network analysis in conjunction with organizational theory to study higher education change processes, "informal networks of relationships have a significant impact on whether individuals decide to engage in change or reform behaviour".

Closer attention to social networks could yield insights into why and how certain reforms, including Bologna Process related reforms, are successful or unsuccessful within institutions or across systems.

2.3 Capacity Building and Professional Development

The third strand is capacity building and professional development, with a specific focus on the work of IO staff in HEIs. Although capacity building and professional development are occasionally recognized in relation to faculty development (e.g. Jiang and Carpenter 2014), there is very little international research on the existing capacity and perceived professional development needs of IO staff, with greater attention paid to barriers caused by lack of financial or strategic resources (e.g. Koehn et al. 2011). This may partly be due to the fact that much of the literature on internationalization of higher education is produced in countries which have traditionally been receivers of internationally mobile students, where there is considerable experience of international engagement, and where language may not be a barrier to international engagement. In many countries, however, collective experience of international engagement is limited at institutional level, and lack of proficiency in English may be a significant barrier to effective engagement in internationalization. Some of the issues are highlighted by Telegina and Schwengel (2012, p. 46), in an article about the Bologna process in Russia:

> …poor resources for international activities, understaffed international offices, shortage of competent and motivated personnel because of low salaries do not allow institutions to actively participate in international cooperation. The knowledge of foreign languages, the inter-cultural experience and the level of understanding of the Bologna principles and practices in many universities are still rather limited.

In dealing with problems such as these, questions of capacity building and professional development demand attention, within a wider context of reflection on what kinds of capacities are necessary to engage in internationalization for what purposes and for whose ends. Whatever the requirements for professional development for the Bologna Process in any given context, "the need to equip staff at all levels with the awareness and skills necessary for effective internationalization" (Taylor 2010, p. 104) is emerging as a priority, particularly given that "internationalization has become a major force for change in how the modern university is managed" (Taylor 2010, p. 107).

Together, these three strands of research provide a foundation for considering the perspectives of IO staff in Kazakhstan on strategic cooperation and capacity, as they engage in the internationalization of higher education within a rapidly changing national and international context of higher education, where universities are working with increased levels of autonomy and are engaging in the Bologna Process. Before introducing data results, a brief description of the national context of internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan is necessary to understand the full picture.

3 Kazakhstan Context

In the academic year 2011/2012, there were 146 HEIs in Kazakhstan, which has a population of approximately 17 million people. There are around 610,000 students studying in HEIs, of whom 320,000 study in state HEIs and 290,000 in private institutions (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency 2012).

Since its independence in 1991, reforms have dominated Kazakhstan's higher education system, with internationalization comprising a vital part of this process. By the end of 2011, the number of international agreements signed by the MoES with other countries in the field of education and science reached 124, and the overall number of agreements signed by higher education institutions was around 8000 (MoES, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2012).

In 2010, Kazakhstan became a full member of the Bologna Process. Since then, the Bologna Process has been a driving force of internationalization of the Kazakhstani higher education system. To some extent, as in Russia and some other post-Soviet countries, the Bologna Process has become "both a symbol and an embodiment of internationalization for … higher education" (Telegina and Schwengel 2012, p. 45).

Recognizing the necessity to promote and support internationalization of higher education institutions, the Kazakhstani government began to lay the legal framework with Laws on Education passed in 2007, granting Kazakhstani HEIs the right to establish direct cooperation with foreign institutions (MoES, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007a). Shortly afterwards, in order to facilitate the internationalization of HEIs, the MoES announced the decree on approval of Rules for International Cooperation Realized by Educational Organizations (hereinafter Order No. 661) (MoES, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007b). These laws and regulations act as the legal basis of IOs, regulating their responsibilities, mission and structure. Order No. 661 stipulates that the main tasks of IOs include establishing and maintaining international partnerships, intelligence research on national and international practices of internationalization, and providing logistic support to inbound and outbound academic mobility. IOs have different titles across HEIs in Kazakhstan, and are part of different administrative departments within the institution, most commonly the Department of Strategic Development or the Department of Science and Research.

As early as 2003, a handful of Kazakhstani HEIs signed the Magna Charta Universitatum. This gradually spread among HEIs and the Kazakhstani government felt the need to create a legal framework for it, thus triggering Kazakhstan's journey into the Bologna Process. In 2010, Kazakhstan became a full member of the Bologna Process, and its commitment to reform its HEIs according to the Bologna Process is reflected in the State Program of Education Development for 2011–2020, which stipulates "integration into the European Higher Education Space through bringing the content and structure of higher education into compliance with the

Bologna Process" (The Republic of Kazakhstan 2010). From this time, the requirement to comply with the Bologna Process has been stimulating reforms at institutional level.

Student and faculty mobility lies at the centre of reforms according to the Bologna Process principles. The government has issued the Strategy for Academic Mobility in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2012–2020, which sets a national target of 20 % of students being mobile by 2020 (MoES, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2012). This ambition is financially supported by the country's Academic Mobility Scholarships, currently managed by individual HEIs (Engberg et al. 2014, p. 28). Additionally, the well-established Bolashak Scholarships, managed by the Centre of International Programs (CIP), also provide incentives for students and faculty to study abroad. To coordinate the implementation of the strategy for academic mobility, MoES established the Centre of the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility (CBPAM, commonly referred to as the Bologna Centre) in 2012. It functions as a subordinate organization of the MoES to facilitate the proper implementation of Bologna Process principles at the national and institutional levels. CBPAM provides guidance to HEIs on the implementation of Bologna Process principles and collects data from HEIs to monitor the progress of Bologna-compliant reforms.

It is not compulsory for HEIs to have an office or person dedicated to the implementation of the Bologna Process, and HEIs can decide who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Bologna Process. Our survey of the websites of national/state universities show that some HEIs have a unit in charge of the Bologna Process, some assign the responsibilities to the IOs, some have both an IO and an office of the Bologna Process, while others delegate the task to various departments.

Examination of the mission statements and development strategies of the aforementioned HEIs confirms that internationalization and the Bologna Process are an integral part of these documents, although they are phrased in different ways. In general, from the 26 institutional documents (strategic plans, mission statements, and related online materials) analyzed, goals for internationalization and the Bologna Process fell into four categories:

- to provide education according to international standards
- to be incorporated into global or European Higher Education Area education space
- to implement reforms according to the Bologna Process principles
- to produce graduates who are competitive in the global job market

According to the institutional strategies and action plans collected, Kazakhstani IOs have varied roles and influence depending on the institutions. Usually, they cooperate with other departments to achieve institutional goals.

The review of the historical development of IOs and the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan shows that IOs already operated for some time prior to the introduction of the Bologna Process. The knowledge, skills and experience IOs accumulated over the years can be useful to assist the embedding of Bologna Process parameters

at institutional level. Institutional documents suggest that IOs are cooperating with other academic and administrative departments in achieving the Bologna goals.

4 Methodology

Mixed methods were used in this study to explore the official discourse of the significance of IOs in the internationalization process of higher education in Kazakhstan, as well as to examine the reality of IOs' operations at institutional level, in particular, their strategic cooperation with different agencies at various levels to implement Bologna Process principles. Multiple sources, including government policy, institutional strategic documents, interviews and a national survey provided rich data. The questions that guided the collection and analysis of data were:

- What forms of strategic cooperation are considered necessary for effective engagement in achieving Bologna process goals related to internationalization?
- Do International Offices have the capacity to engage effectively in strategic cooperation for Bologna process goals?
- What do International Office staff perceive as necessary to develop their professional capacity to achieve these goals?

Government decrees and action plans issued by the MoES were analyzed, as were reports published by CBPAM, and mission statements and development strategies of 27 out of 57 national/state universities. Our understanding of how national policies are interpreted and implemented at institutional level was deepened through a national survey, a roundtable discussion and interviews, all of which involved directors and staff members of IOs. In this preliminary research, 48 responses were received from the national survey. In-depth interviews were then conducted with three university International Officers and two senior leaders at CBPAM.

This combination of document analysis, survey and interviews at various levels provided material to explore international, national, and intra-institutional strategic cooperation between IOs and other agencies.

5 Results

This section is organized around the three research questions guiding this inquiry, and focuses on the following topics: (1) forms of strategic cooperation considered necessary for effective engagement in achieving Bologna process goals; (2) perceived IO capacity to engage effectively in strategic cooperation for Bologna Process goals; and (3) perceived IO professional development needs for Bologna Process work.

5.1 What Forms of Strategic Cooperation Are Considered Necessary for Effective Engagement in Achieving Bologna Process Goals?

Three dimensions of strategic cooperation required for Kazakhstani university IOs to achieve national and institutional goals for internationalization emerged from data analysis: international; national; and intra-institutional.

5.1.1 International Dimension

One form of strategic cooperation identified was the development of links between universities internationally (partnerships, strategic relationships, international cooperation, and joint projects). Combined, these forms of international linkage between institutions were identified in the questionnaire as areas of success for 19 of 41 International Officers asked to "describe a specific example of one activity that has been successful in your university". Given this perceived success, it seems fair to assume they are considered key forms of engagement necessary for achieving national and institutional Bologna Process internationalization goals.

5.1.2 National Dimension

National level strategic cooperation also emerged as important in the study, particularly with the MoES. Results from the survey of 48 university International Officers indicates that such support is unevenly perceived across Kazakhstan. International Officers were asked, "To what extent do you think the Ministry of Education and Science in Kazakhstan supports internationalization in your institution?" (Fig. 1).

While 79 % (37 of 47) respondents reported MoES support either "to some extent" or "very much," interestingly, 21 % (10 of the 47), reported "not at all" or "very little."

A key aspect of internationalization in HEIs in Kazakhstan relates to engagement with the CBPAM.[1] One of the interviewees formulates what seems to be a broader sentiment among the sample, namely that national policy for the Bologna Process is a very centralized strategy:

> The policy for Bologna is very centralized. The national Bologna Centre dictates our policy, and the universities only act as implementers. Universities do not act as policy makers. They don't produce their own strategy of the Bologna Process. Someone dictates to you, [and] you just do what they want you to do. And you need to send these reports back

[1]The interviewees often referred to CBPAM as "the national Bologna Centre" or "the Bologna Centre".

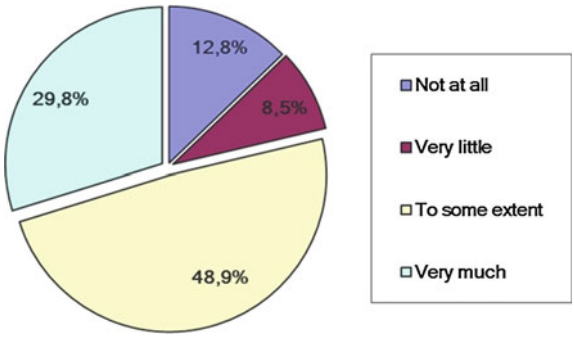

Fig. 1 Q3. To what extent do you think the Ministry of Education and Science in Kazakhstan supports internationalization in your institution?

to them. Every three months, the Bologna Centre sends these questions to every university and you have to fill in these numbers.

The work of the CBPAM appears, therefore, to be very clearly delineated for International Officers, suggesting more compliance than creativity or collaboration. This theme is elaborated by another International Officer as a division of labour between the IO and the Bologna Office (in those situations where institutions have both offices) on the main area of their work, student mobility: "Academic mobility is the work of the Bologna Office. They do the paperwork. The International Office is responsible for establishing partnerships. The Bologna Office works out the details."

This International Officer describes a situation in which Bologna Office staff within universities work directly with individual university administrative departments, such as Human Resources and Finance. In this context, not only is the IO bypassed by the Bologna Office, but the IO does not interact much with administrative departments: "The IO does not interact frequently with administrative departments, but the BP Office does." Understanding relations between IOs and Bologna Offices in universities that have both seems to be important to understanding internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan.

5.1.3 Intra-institutional Dimension

Within institutions, there appears to be strong strategic cooperation between International Officers and senior leadership. The key indicator of this strength is that International Officers report participation in the development of internationalization strategy with senior leadership. As one International Officer described in an interview, "The IO makes its part of the whole strategy of the university and other departments do the same".

As the figure below shows, 90 % of respondents reported they "strongly agree" or "agree" that their IOs are able to influence strategic decision-making for

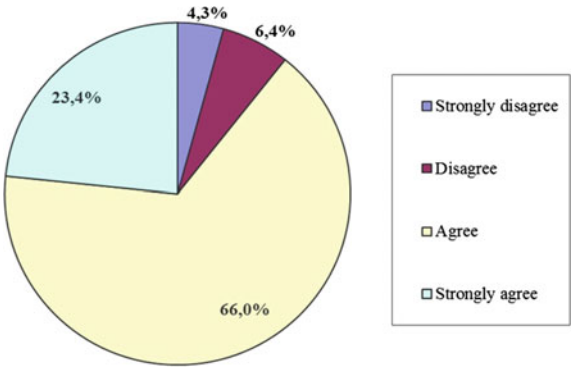

Fig. 2 Q13. The International Office is able to influence strategic decision-making regarding internationalization in our university

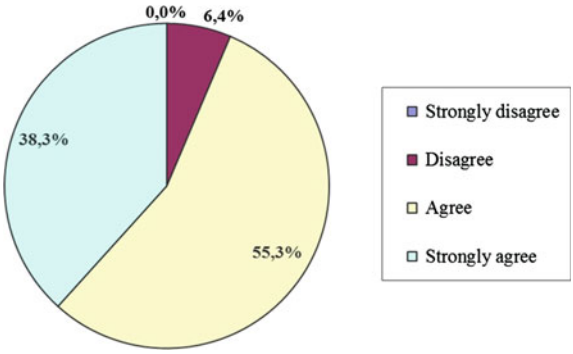

Fig. 3 Q14 The senior leaders of our university are supportive of the activities of the International Office

internationalization in the university (Fig. 2). This important strategic cooperation between International Officers and their senior leadership suggests a strong organizational foundation to build the capacity and role of IOs in further implementation of institutional and national goals for internationalization. It should be noted that we did not ask whether they believed they should have such a role, which limits any interpretation of whether an increased role in strategic planning is desired.

Similarly, when asked whether they feel senior leaders of their universities were supportive of the activities in their IOs, 94 % of respondents stated they agreed they were supported, while only 6 % disagreed (Fig. 3).

These results raise a further set of questions to be explored in the next round of inquiry: (1) What type of influence do International Officers seek to have with senior leaders in strategic decision-making processes? (2) What would facilitate that influence? (3) What forms of senior leadership support are currently being experienced by International Officers? (4) Which forms of senior leadership support would be most helpful for International Officers?

Another area of intra-institutional strength in developing strategic cooperation reported by respondents relates to the importance of all stakeholders understanding institutional strategy (Hayward et al. 2003). When asked whether they agreed that

the strategic goals of internationalization were understood by all university administrative staff, 13 % (6 of 47 respondents) stated they "strongly agree," 70 % (33 respondents) said "agree," 15 % (7 respondents) stated "disagree," and 2 % (1 respondent) said "strongly disagree."

5.2 Do International Offices Have the Capacity to Engage Effectively in Strategic Cooperation for Bologna Process Goals?

In terms of capacity to achieve Bologna Process goals, findings show that International Officers perceive both strength and challenge. Strengths include reported influence on strategic decision-making and language capacity. Challenges include staffing, language barriers, and ambiguous division of labour between the institutional Bologna Offices and IOs.

Strengths: Influence on Strategic Decision-Making

One strength for International Officers was already described above in the discussion of Key Question 1 on intra-institutional strategic cooperation. With 90 % of respondents agreeing that their IO is able to influence strategic decision-making for internationalization in the university, there is clear potential capacity to engage effectively within the institution to achieve Bologna Process goals. As one International Officer stated in an interview: "The International Office participates in strategic development. The International Office makes its part of the whole university strategy."

Strengths: Language Capacity

Another capacity to engage in strategic internationalization cooperation is language capacity. As one International Officer described, "English is very important in international partnerships. The [university] departments will go to the IO for assistance." Language capacity also emerged as important in responses to an open-ended question asking what the main tasks completed by International Officers were during the past week. In 39 responses, translation of texts was cited by 12 respondents. Furthermore, in every single response there were the inevitable, but still important to note, references to multiple forms of communication with international partners, including meeting foreign delegations, correspondence, video conference and so on. These tasks require more than just linguistic capacity, of course, involving as they do capacity to establish relationships with foreign universities, facility in working with myriad documents in diverse languages, and understanding of a range of issues such as accreditation and multiple programs—as well as the multiple regulations associated with each.

Challenges: Staffing

One key challenge in IO capacity to work towards achieving institutional goals for internationalization was staffing. When asked what needs to be improved to help IO staff meet the challenges of their jobs, one interviewee exclaimed: "Staff! It has

to be expanded. There were 4 and now 3." However, this is problematic given a range of challenges in finding and retaining qualified employees: "They need to have good English, proper background and experience. It's difficult to find the right person. Salary is a problem. I had problem finding a senior manager. The HR, who don't speak English, check their psychological background, but not English. When I interviewed them, their English was not what I expected it to be. People with the right credentials don't apply for this job. We offer [the post-holders] 20 % off at our clinic of the university, and the union also offers some discounts and free stuff. There are bonuses but not the salary. We are competing with other sectors [of the job market] for the right person. Universities are sometimes losing. When they are trained up by the universities, they move to other sectors for higher salaries."

This challenge of finding and retaining staff is exacerbated, according to this participant, because of the high job qualifications: "It's the same salary across the departments, but we have higher credentials. For example, we need to speak three languages, Russian, Kazakh and English! Same salary, but higher credentials!"

Challenges: Language Barrier

The language capacity described above as a strength was also highlighted in another interview as a challenge: "The first major problem is [the] language barrier. It may sound really ironic, but there are still, you know, more rural areas, with universities where International Officers cannot speak English."

In many ways, language barriers to the work of an IO in Kazakhstan might be understandable and even predictable; nonetheless, given the emphasis placed on this issue in our findings, it would be worth looking more deeply into this issue in order to understand the nature of the challenge and explore ways institutions might address it.

Challenges: Division of Labour Between Bologna Office and IOs

One potential challenge for IO capacity is suggested in interviews of Internationalization Officers who describe a division of labour between the Bologna Office, or those responsible for administrating Bologna Process work in institutions, and the IOs. More information is required on the specific ways Bologna Offices work within institutions, and on the relationship of institutional Bologna Process work and the IO. However, this issue highlights a possible need for training and other support for International Officers to facilitate successful institutional Bologna Process work, particularly given the possibility that the dimensions of institutional internationalization, Bologna Process work and the other IO work may be integrated into one office in the future. System-wide, this division of labour and function is complicated by the fact that, as described above, the relationship of the CBPAM to universities is not uniform. Some institutions have a dedicated Bologna Office on campus, some do not, but all universities are mandated to have a unit that functions as an IO, even though it may have a different name. The point here is that there seems to be a separation between the IOs and the Bologna Offices, even as they work toward the same goals in the same activities. This separation is described by one International Officer in an interview: "It's divided. Each of us does our work." But for this participant, when asked whether the work of the International Office and the institutional work done by the Bologna Office should be combined in

one office, she replied: "Yes, definitely. [Just like] our partner universities [who] would have a vice rector in international cooperation. There must be one person to manage this step and make sure that the university people know who to address. Mobility and exchange programs have to be in one person's hands."

Implicit here is a set of challenges related to what appears to be an artificial division of responsibilities across two institutions (the university and the CBPAM) and often within one institution (IO and Bologna Office) centred on one set of activities: academic mobility. (This participant described the emphasis on academic mobility this way: "As for now, we understand the Bologna Process as only academic mobility. Most universities do the same.") At issue is whether IO staff have the capacity to work across this division of labour to achieve institutional goals for one institutional strategic plan. This capacity challenge is suggested by one International Officer interviewed who described her view that her IO staff should be made aware of "Bologna Process related laws and articles", but they do not receive any information or training either at her institution or through the CBPAM: "I would introduce the staff to the Bologna Process-related laws and articles. They need to know. It's relevant to our work. But the university leadership does not initiate this training."

When asked whether her staff were ever invited to the CBPAM for training, she replied, "No. The IO is not invited."

At this stage, this challenge is merely suggested in the interviews and needs to be explored in greater depth as an issue that may become increasingly significant in the future, when the planned closure of the CBPAM devolves Bologna-related work to other national institutions in 2015. This could have a significant impact on the nature of IO work, and capacity development may emerge as important.

5.3 *What Do International Office Staff Perceive as Necessary to Develop Their Professional Capacity to Achieve These Goals?*

International Officers were asked in the survey what forms of professional development they considered should be provided for them at the national level. Responses are ranked in Table 1.

While the top two answers are predictable, to a certain extent, it would be valuable to explore in greater depth what sort of seminars or workshops abroad would be useful and why, and what sort of information International Officers feel is required and why.

Of particular interest is enthusiasm for the creation of a national association of University International Officers, ranked third among the five at 54 %. An important dimension of our three-year research project into internationalization of higher education in Kazakhstan is facilitating precisely such associations, and the need for such a network is alluded to by an International Officer during an interview: "The

Table 1 What kind of activities, opportunities or resources should be available for International Officers?

Rank	Number of times item selected N = 41	Percentage of respondents (%)	Answer choices
1	39	95	Participation in seminars/workshops abroad
2	27	66	Information resources—guidelines/recommendations
3	22	54	Creation of a national association of University International Officers
4	20	49	Professional development (seminars/workshops) in Kazakhstan
5	15	36	Legal consultancy

International Office rarely directly communicates with the International Offices in other universities. [Although] it happened before that when a university was going to set up an International Office, they called me and asked for my experience. It's more about experience sharing."

One important professional capacity resource for International Officers was already described above with regard to (lack of) training and information about the Bologna Process. Another interview participant described professional development opportunities in her institution as based on her Rector's "strategic vision about staff development, especially to meet [an] international level [of quality]." She elaborated: "I have attended a lot of trainings, like change management, human resources, coaching and communication. They were paid and organized by the university. The instructors will come to the university. We don't even have to leave the university. Staff can initiate trainings. There's a department responsible for this. I could have gone on professional development training programs on the Bolashak Scholarships. Almost 50 staff from various levels of our university went on it."

This description of professional capacity development opportunities at one institution would seem to point to the way for others seeking to develop IO staff capacity.

6 Discussion

The research reported here represents the first round of data collection, intended to highlight issues of importance that will be explored in greater depth in ongoing research. It is important to emphasize that this research takes place at a time when national policy is shifting the institutional architecture for Bologna Process administration and other internationalization policies.

6.1 The Potential for IO Leadership for Comprehensive Internationalization

Our results show that International Officers in Kazakhstan overwhelmingly report they are able to influence strategic decision-making for internationalization in their institutions. This influence suggests a strong cooperative relationship with senior management. But what role might the IOs have working more comprehensively across the institution, in ways described by Heyl and Tullbane (2012, p. 115) as working "across every facet of the institution" and "crossing organizational boundaries and entering fiefdoms of other power brokers (deans and other senior administrators)"? Extending the point a little further, Kezar's social network analysis may be valuable for exploring in more depth the ways the "informal networks of relationships" of International Officers can be leveraged for institutional change (2014, p. 95). Potential and need for IO leadership for comprehensive internationalization (Hudzik 2011) may increase if the role for IOs in Bologna Process work intensifies in Kazakhstan.

6.2 The Need to Increase IO Capacity for Bologna Process in Times of Institutional Change

As part of recent national policy for optimizing and rationalizing Kazakhstani government institutions, the roles and functions of state institutions are in a process of change, and this extends to those institutions related to internationalization of higher education: The CBPAM; the CIP; and the National Academy of Education. For example, the current CBPAM work on academic mobility scholarships is reportedly to devolve to the CIP (Engberg et al. 2014). Moreover, there is discussion of shifting the CBPAM responsibility for verifying overseas diplomas to the National Academy of Education (personal communication 29 August 2014). These institutional changes, and others that may become manifest through 2015, will certainly have implications for IOs in their work within institutions and with national-level institutions.

These institutional shifts provide strong argument for greater IO capacity for Bologna-related work. One mitigating factor in developing this capacity seems to be the current division of labour between the IO and the Bologna Office working within institutions. An important first step in strengthening IO capacity for the Bologna Process was cited by the IO interviewed above, who sought, but could not provide her staff with, Bologna Process training and information. This IO's perspective is consistent with that of Telegina and Schwengel, who cited among challenges to implementing Bologna Process goals the "level of understanding of the Bologna principles and practices" (2012, p. 46). As the demands on IOs for Bologna-related work increase, Kazakhstani officials and institutional leaders will need to explicitly address the professional development needs of IOs for that work.

6.3 *Making Professional Development for International Office Staff a Priority*

Taylor states that there is "a growing recognition of the need to equip staff at all levels with the awareness and skills necessary for effective internationalization" (2010, p. 104). Given the importance of IOs in internationalizing institutions, and the shifting institutional terrain for internationalization in Kazakhstan described above, it seems clear that professional development for IO staff needs to be a priority. While it would be wrong to assume that the changing work of Kazakhstani IOs will follow the same path as other countries, it is interesting to consider the need for and potential of professional development for IOs in Kazakhstan to enable them to undertake some of the roles adopted by senior international officers in other countries, such as "assessing campus internationalization" and "understanding and applying the trends in internationalization" (Heyl and Tullbane 2012, p. 125), "tak[ing] on even more active roles in promoting and coordinating international research and development activity" (Koehn et al. 2011, p. 344), "successfully spreading an internationalization ethos throughout the fabric of the university" (Heyl and Tullbane 2012, p. 127), and "becom[ing] repositories for research and expertise on maximizing the effectiveness of international collaboration" (Koehn et al. 2011, pp. 344–345).

These signal possible directions for the work of Kazakhstani IOs as higher education reforms and Bologna Process changes redefine their work. Whatever the actual nature of the changes in Kazakhstani IO work, IO capacity for success in this changing higher educational context seems premised in national-level officials and institutional leaders making a priority of "professional development and support for the administration of international education" (de Wit, as cited in Heyl and Tullbane 2012, p. 119).

7 Conclusion

Overall, there are three points from this paper that we would like to highlight in conclusion. The first is that the drivers of internationalization in Kazakhstan at present are not commercial. Mobility is well funded by central government, and universities do not engage in internationalization activities mainly for financial reasons. Different drivers result in different outcomes, and this is an interesting area for further study.

The second point is that HEIs themselves are proactive in engaging in internationalization. Engagement with the Bologna Process and academic mobility in Kazakhstan originated in universities, rather than as a top-down initiative, and this is important to take into consideration when considering leadership potential for strategic cooperation within universities. While the MoES and the CBPAM provide legal, financial and structural support for engagement in the Bologna Process and

associated activities, the onus remains on universities to engage in internationalization. The results of our survey and interviews show that International Officers already work closely with senior leadership and academic departments within their institutions, and there is considerable scope for them to take a wider leadership role in strategic cooperation at international, national and intra-institutional levels, especially as universities become more autonomous.

The third point is the recognized and urgent need among IO staff for capacity building through professional development. If IO staff in Kazakhstan were enabled to engage in the professional development they perceive as necessary, it seems likely that they would be able to take on the wider engagement of internationalization of higher education, beyond management of academic mobility.

Jones and de Wit (2012, p. 46) state that "the voices of countries who have come onto the scene more recently should be heard as offering new perspectives and dimensions to the existing landscape of international education". We hope that this paper gives voice to perspectives from Kazakhstan, as it embarks on its Bologna journey. With its rich multicultural heritage, at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Kazakhstan's internationalization journey may not follow the same path as other European countries, but if the potential of IO staff can be realized and the focus of engagement in internationalization can remain improvement of the quality of education and research, the journey promises to be an interesting one.

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Internationalization Strategies and Policies in Second-Tier Higher Education Institutions

Hans de Wit, Miri Yemini and Randall Martin

1 Introduction

A significant number of studies (Altbach and Knight 2007; Beerkens et al. 2010; De Wit 2013a; Deardorff and Jones 2012) indicate growing support for internationalization in higher education in recent years. According to the fourth Global Survey of International Association of Universities (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014), 89 % of universities worldwide claim to have an institutional policy or to have implemented internationalization within their overall strategy, and 22 % are preparing an internationalization strategy.

Indeed, internationalization is transforming from a reactive issue to a proactive, strategic one; from added value to mainstream. As such, its focus, scope and content evolved substantially. This growing interest has translated into active development of policies, programs, and infrastructure at institutional, local, and national levels, as well as a call for a more comprehensive approach to and action on internationalization in higher education (Hudzik 2011). Moreover, with the perception of internationalization as critical to higher education institutions, differences in the respective colleges and universities' ability to internationalize and in their scope and intensity of internationalization may influence their competitiveness and even survival (Cohen et al. 2014). While researchers generally accept Jane Knight's definition of international-

H. de Wit
Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI),
Universita Cattolica Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy
e-mail: j.w.m.de.wit@hva.nl

M. Yemini (✉)
School of Education, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv, Israel
e-mail: miriye@post.tau.ac.il

R. Martin
British Columbia Council for International Education (BCCIE), Vancouver, Canada
e-mail: martin@bccie.bc.ca

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ization as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight 2004, p. 11), the concept itself has expanded over the years and become rather broad and diverse, involving different stages, meanings, and rationales by country and region.[1] While most of the historical studies on internationalization in higher education focus on research universities, in the last decade, several important efforts were made to address internationalization in different types of higher education institutions —mainly in community colleges in the US (Manns 2014; Romano 2002).

Indeed, internationalization's mainstreaming results in its expansion beyond the traditional scope of research-oriented universities, including other types of education providers: in particular community colleges, applied sciences schools, and other institutions that typically proliferated with education's global massification trends and the rising public access to higher education (Yemini et al. 2014a). Research into internationalization in such 'second-tier'[2] institutions is lacking, with the exception of a few focused studies (De Wit 2011; Maringe 2009; Raby and Valeau 2007; Waechter 1999; Yemini et al. 2014a). The present study aims to characterize the nature of internationalization within 'second-tier' higher education institutions in Israel, the Netherlands, and Canada, describing the process on national, regional, and institutional levels. Such institutions, which comprise a substantial part of the higher education sector, distinguish themselves from 'research universities' by means of a vocational and professional focus on under-graduate teaching for bachelor or associate degrees and a local, provincial, or national scope in the employability their graduates are trained for and the research efforts they undertake. Moreover, these institutions are generally characterized as younger and more entrepreneurial in comparison to research-oriented universities (Yemini et al. 2014b).

2 Context

2.1 Internationalization in Higher Education

In most countries, internationalization has come to comprise an increasingly important element of higher education and of the academic enterprise. Individual

[1]For an overview of internationalization in higher education, see Deardorff et al. (2012). For a debate about the need to rethink internationalization (see International Association of Universities 2012; De Wit 2013b).

[2]In this study, we refer to 'second tier' higher education institutions as defined by Arum et al. (2007), for example. Indeed, the term lacks a singular, clear-cut definition and sometimes may induce controversial responses as it fosters classification based on traditional, conservative measures. We choose to use this term to describe a complex array of institutions in different countries that differ significantly from one another in their fundamental characteristics; thus, the full array of their respective characterizations is difficult to capture in one term. Notably, therefore, we use the term, 'second tier institution' in this study in an exclusively technical manner, not in any normative sense.

universities vary in their cross-border activities and their capacity to take advantage of global pressures and forces (Marginson 2007; Stromquist 2007). Increasingly, higher education institutions' management strive to internationalize their establishments (De Wit 2002; Hudzik 2011), while governments invest more resources in this process. De Wit (2002) details the rationales behind such institutional and governmental internationalization efforts, which include long-term or immediate economic benefits; national political benefits involving security, stability, peace, and ideological influence; an academic quest to meet international standards of teaching, research, and service; and quality of life improvements that result from learners' socio-cultural integration. Knight (2004) addresses the transformation in rationales for internationalization that took place in the recent decade from socio-cultural and academic justifications to mainly economic and political ones, including the concerns of aging populations and labour market development. Given this complex set of motivations for internationalization, diverse academic institutions may differ in their incentives to internationalize (Stier 2004); hence, comprehensive comparative analysis is necessary in understanding this phenomenon, especially within the more recently internationalizing second-tier educational institutions.

2.2 Second-Tier Higher Education Institutions

Since World War II, higher education systems have expanded rapidly and have been transforming organizationally. Researchers documented a tremendous growth in the number of students and the diversification of institutions of higher learning, as well as the massification of higher education (e.g. Teichler 2004). Usually, first- and second-tier institutions differ in their selectivity, curriculum, administration, cost, academic versus practical orientation, and prestige (Shavit et al. 2004, August). Despite the tremendous variations in the types of second-tier institutions (including community colleges, universities of applied sciences, and other academic and vocational colleges), as discussed in the definition of the term above (see footnote 2), such colleges are generally believed to open the gates of higher education to previously excluded social groups, thus enabling diversity. For example, four-year colleges in the US and some primarily two-year colleges in Canada are considered less prestigious than the elite or selective universities, but offer similar study fields and grant academic degrees. These institutions offer mainly vertical expansions, offering access to 'less successful' members of the same populations already being served by top-tier universities. Other newly-established institutions do not grant academic degrees (such as community colleges in the US) or take the form of vocational or semi-professional under-graduate training (e.g., the German Fachhochschulen). These institutions are expected to cater to new populations of students, thereby expanding student diversity (Ayalon and Yogev 2006).

Some (particularly European) countries have explicitly binary higher education systems comprised of universities and colleges of applied sciences (such as Austria,

Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands). In other countries, the differentiation is less stark. The status of the degrees such institutions grant is debated, and some countries (such as the US and Canada, as well as some developing economies) have initiated policies aimed at strengthening the vocational and professional dimension in higher education. In conjunction, resistance has emerged in many developing countries to second-tier higher education that is considered of lower status and prestige; the proliferated use of the label 'university' seems to maintain perceptions that do not always accurately reflect reality.

In summary, the definition of second-tier institutions is vague and their classification is diverse, evolving and with no clear direction. Although clear definitions and statistics are difficult to provide in most countries, these institutions comprise a substantive part of the higher education sector, tend to be vocationally and professionally oriented, focus predominantly on under-graduate teaching, offer mainly bachelor or associate degrees, and research issues of a more local or national scope.

2.3 Internationalization in Second Tier Institutions

In a study analysing the internationalization efforts of community colleges of different kind in US, Harder (2010) states:

> Internationalization activity in higher education is not a new phenomenon. There is, however, a growing movement toward a global knowledge economy and higher demand for employees with international experience has resulted in unprecedented internationalization efforts in higher education. Colleges recognize they must provide students with skills to succeed in globally integrated economies, culturally diverse societies, and multinational organizations (153).

Internationalization in particular seems less prominent in second-tier higher education institutions for several reasons. These reasons include the relatively less developed research programs at such institutions (indeed, research often provides an international platform for collaborative teaching and learning); inadequate financial and other resources; and sometimes also a lack of prestige and academic reputation, which hinders and challenges the development of international connections (Yemini et al. 2014a). Nevertheless, the barriers to internationalization are not sector-specific. Thus, community colleges may experience the same obstacles as other institutions, and the differences are usually a matter of degree.

In the current study, we employed secondary sources including a screening of scholarly publications and policy documents, as well as media analysis, combined with our own profound academic and hands-on experiences in research and implementation of internationalization in our respective countries, to develop a joint comparative analysis of internationalization trends in second-tier institutions in the Netherlands, Israel, and Canada. The comparison between those three OECD countries, located in different geographic regions and representing huge educational diversity, allows us to comprise a novel and interesting framework that will shape the future discourse on internationalization. We continue by briefly presenting the

higher education system in each of these three countries, accompanied by analysis of the internationalization trends practiced in each of the countries' second-tier institutions. We then conclude with comparative remarks and recommendations.

3 Case Studies: Israel, the Netherlands and Canada

3.1 Israel

3.1.1 The Israeli Higher Education System

Of Israel's approximately eight million citizens, a Jewish population forms the national majority of roughly 80 % and Palestinian-Arabs constitute a national minority of 20 %. The Israeli higher education system has grown dramatically since the early 1990s, from 70,000 students two decades ago to over 300,000 in 2014, and from just seven universities and several colleges in the 1990s to sixty-six institutions currently spread nation-wide. Until the 1980s, Israel's post-secondary public education system was divided into the academic branch—consisting of the seven Israeli research universities—and the non-academic branch that encompassed all other academies, such as teachers' training seminars. During the last three decades, most non-academic branches were upgraded to fully-recognized academic, degree-granting colleges. These colleges, scattered nation-wide, range in size from around 500–20,000 students.

Despite the expansion in the number of institutions, the higher education system in Israel suffered substantial budget cuts in the past decade. Reduced government funds, new immigration patterns, a weak local economy, and strong national economic initiatives have changed the political context in which higher education institutions operate, leading them to adopt more competitive strategies (Oplatka 2002). Thus, the colleges started to compete for students not only with other colleges, but also with research universities. Yet, despite recent budget cuts, accessibility to higher education expanded in recent years. Public attention has focused on the positive social aspects of extending higher education possibilities to a broader population. The Council for Higher Education (CHE), which is responsible for educational governance and policy, meanwhile, tends to view the expansion of Israeli higher education in the last decade as consisting of two stratified layers of institutions: the 'first tier' of universities, versus the 'second tier' of colleges, based on the research versus teaching orientation and the universities' exclusive ability to grant doctoral and post-doctoral degrees. This categorization meets increasing opposition from the leading colleges (especially from the private and more elitist institutions), which claim to have achieved the same status as research universities in regulation and funding.

From the early days of the Israeli higher education system, international academic cooperation has been one of its soundest and best-established foundations. Due to Israel's geographical regional isolation and the foreign academic origins of

the founders of the Technion and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (the first Israeli higher education institutions), the Israeli academy has always been interwoven into the American and European academic world. Significant numbers of Israeli researchers and institutes have participated in international or bilateral research and research groups; indeed, these tight ties, alongside Israeli academia's ability to be at the cutting edge of research in many areas, strengthened the international status of the Israeli academy. However, Israeli academia's main focus has been on research and participation in various international forums, either in scientific exploration or in diplomatic and political fields. Israeli research students are often granted advanced international study posts or grants for postdoctoral research abroad, mostly relying on personal ties or occasional bilateral agreements between academic institutions in Israel and abroad (Yemini and Ben-Artzi 2013).

3.1.2 Internationalization at Second-Tier Israeli Higher Education Institutions

In Israel, second-tier higher education institutions exploit internationalization to elevate their status and expand in their study programs (Yemini et al. 2014a). As in other countries like Norway (Kyvik 2002), the Netherlands (De Wit 2012) or the US (Coelen 2014), structural reforms in the Israeli higher education system tend to encourage second-tier institutions to attain a first-tier status through internationalization, among other initiatives.

Internationalization was largely absent from the agenda of Israeli second-tier academic institutions until the last decade, as until that point, these institutions were busy developing independent programs and establishing their national status as independent, stand-alone academic institutions. Given the CHE's financial guidelines that exclude international students from enrolling in funded programs and a complicated geo-political situation that largely discourages international students, the common incentives for higher education institutions to develop internationalization in other countries have been inapplicable in Israeli academia—particularly within second-tier colleges. Nevertheless, in the last few years, two major trends can be traced in this field. The first is an increasing participation of academic colleges in EU programs—mainly Erasmus Plus (formally Tempus)—at an even higher intensity than the participation of Israeli research universities (Yemini 2014). This occurrence results from the fact that Israel that joined Tempus in 2008 as a partner country, successfully participating in parallel as full member within the EU's research programs (Horizon 2020; see also the guidelines of the formal Framework agreements). Thus, research universities were not too enthusiastic to join less lucrative partnerships, such as those offered in the context of a Tempus partner country, which cleared out for Israeli second-tier institutions an extremely comfortable platform for international cooperation. Those entrepreneurial ventures opened up new opportunities for the colleges and fostered additional projects, programs, and partnerships with research programs in Europe and other parts of the world.

Moreover, Israeli colleges enrol a much more diverse population than usually attends research universities. Its students hail from different sectors and communities (Jewish and Palestinian-Arab; new immigrants, and those with ethnic backgrounds from different parts of the world); thus, second-tier colleges face the need and the opportunity to develop an intercultural dimension in education, which comprises an integral part of internationalization's definition (Knight 2004). Indeed, several colleges nowadays address this challenge by presenting extensive work on developing the intercultural dimension in their aims, function, and delivery of education (Cohen et al. 2014).

Notably, Israeli college directors interviewed in a previous study by two of the authors (Yemini et al. 2014a) interpret internationalization in differing manners, depending on the characteristics of the institutions they lead (as per Knight 2004). Indeed, Yemini et al. (2014a) found that although all second-tier Israeli colleges function under strict financial constraints and strive to upgrade their status and to compete with established research universities, it seems that colleges' orientation, population and location are the most influential factors regarding their motivation to internationalize. In general, directors of colleges that are located in the country's geographical periphery seem less motivated to internationalize than directors of colleges located in Israel's centre. Engineering, arts, and humanities college directors mainly from colleges located in Israel's centre focus more prominently on global and international issues, while teacher training institutions mainly stress cross-cultural elements, generally regarding Israeli minorities, such as Palestinian Arabs and immigrants. Moreover, colleges with a high concentration of minorities might identify opportunities for social mobility through international contacts. Beyond these institutional factors, the directors' personal backgrounds were also found to significantly impact their motivation to internationalize (Yemini et al. 2014a).

In another study focused on directors of graduate programs in research universities and colleges (Yemini et al. 2014b), the global-local debate also played a prominent role in the academic discourse. This study sought to analyze the perceptions of educational administration program directors in diverse institutions and contextual settings regarding the international, global, and intercultural dimensions in their programs' aims, functions and delivery. More specifically, the study undertook a selective assessment of 12 program directors from various Israeli higher education institutions including research universities, Jewish secular and religious colleges, and Palestinian-Arab colleges. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with program heads to uncover their motivation to engage their departments in internationalization processes. It was found that the main themes program directors mention regarding their motivation to internationalize can be broken down into several categories, namely (a) the purpose of the program in terms of preparation of graduates to local or global work place; (b) the program's relations with the institution's goals in terms of research or teaching orientation; and (c) the different meanings of internationalization as these leaders perceive them,

especially as relating to global/international or intercultural dimensions. Additional research is needed to shed light on the motivations for and obstacles facing internationalization in second-tier institutions in particular, within the complex tension of the global-local nexus in unique socio-political settings within Israeli education system.

3.2 Netherlands

3.2.1 The Dutch Higher Education System

Like other European countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, and the Scandinavian states, the Netherlands has a binary system of higher education, composed of research universities and universities of applied sciences. The Netherlands has thirteen research universities, including the Open University, all of which benefit from a strong international reputation. Indeed, in the various global university rankings, all but one appear in the top 200. Moreover, Dutch research universities average very high in the rankings of national systems, regarding both their publications and other criteria.

In comparison to other countries, the Dutch applied sciences sector is quite substantial. Of the 600,000 post-secondary students in the Netherlands, over 400,000 study in the nation's approximately forty universities of applied sciences, while the rest are enrolled in the thirteen research universities.

Over the past two decades, the universities of applied sciences have undergone a merger process, in which the 400 institutions were reduced by 90 %. The rationale behind this merger process was to allow for an increase in the number of students in this sector (instead of expanding the research universities), so as to maintain the quality of academic education and to reduce its costs. This process resulted in the emergence of large educational conglomerates, several of which comprise over 30,000 students. Indeed, in the same period, the number of students doubled, with enrolment expanding in all areas of study.

As in Israel, differences between the research universities and applied science institutions are rather explicit. Dutch universities of applied sciences used to provide mainly undergraduate education through a four-year program that in the past would culminate in professionalized rather than academic degrees, until in 2014 the Minister of Education allowed universities of applied sciences to grant B.A. and B. Sc. degrees (parallel to the ones offered as three-year programs at the research universities). Moreover, although the universities of applied sciences have been permitted to develop masters programs, these must be self-funded and cannot compete with the subsidized and higher quality graduate programs of the research universities. Resultantly, such advanced degrees are nearly nonexistent at universities of applied sciences.

3.2.2 Internationalization at Second-Tier Dutch Higher Education Institutions

Little systematic study has been carried out on the internationalization of universities of applied sciences in Europe in general and specifically in the Netherlands. The only extensive European analysis dates from fifteen years ago: *Internationalisation in European Non-University Higher Education* (Waechter 1999). In their introduction to this study, Bremer and Waechter state that this sector's relative newness, its lack of a research tradition, its more practical and professional orientation, its schoolish nature, and its more local mission and orientation can all explain the lag in internationalization within non-academic European higher education. Above all other explanations, Bremer and Waechter (1999, pp. 11–12) credit the structural disarray of this sector in comparison to the academic sector. Van der Wende (1999, p. 209) further explains the problems with differences in and recognition of the professional qualifications these institutions provide, as well as the diversity of the sector.

Although Waechter's (1999) study did not reach clear and univocal conclusions on whether universities of applied sciences' image of deficient internationalization was correct, this public image did lead to a rise in the volume of international activities. Most dominant among these new efforts was increasing student mobility, followed by teacher mobility. Internationalisation of the curriculum remained marginal, with the exception of those portions offered in English. There were few available international sources in the field of lifelong learning, but their policy and organization were mostly unsystematic. Student internships abroad were introduced in this period as well, but also lacked a systematic approach. Moreover, little change took place regarding the focus on foreign language teaching: English remained the dominant second foreign language, followed by the language of neighbouring countries. Moreover, partnerships were poorly developed and especially oriented towards neighbouring countries or the English-speaking countries (Waechter 1999, pp. 181–190).

Fifteen years later, some progress towards internationalization did indeed take place at these universities, but a pilot by Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organization NVAO on internationalization demonstrated that the lag behind the research universities remained. The universities of applied sciences scored lower than the academic programs on both international learning outcomes and integration of internationalization within the institutions' vision, mission statements and policy (Aerden et al. 2013).

Hence, rather than comparing these institutions' internationalization with that taking place at Dutch research universities, it is relevant to look at the specific function of the sector itself and their implications for its internationalization, and in particular for relations with the professional field. More so than universities, applied science institutions should consider this relationship with the professional field to be their underlying motive for internationalization. As Leggott and Stapleford state: "In the twenty-first century international labour market the development of employability skills and attributes through adopting international perspectives is

essential to the enhancement of the employment prospects of students" (Leggott and Stapleford 2007, p. 133).

However, the Dutch Small to Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) sector in particular, where the majority of the graduates of universities of applied sciences find employment, is insufficiently prepared for the worldwide knowledge economy. SME companies experience intercultural and language barriers when they operate abroad. International investments by Dutch SME-companies remain behind the EU-average, revealing numerous lost opportunities. Moreover, a study by the research group "Internationalisation and the International Professional Field" at the Hanzehogeschool Groningen mentions the lack of intercultural competencies of Dutch SMEs' staff, their insufficient knowledge of foreign countries and markets, and inadequate linguistic skills as important impediments for this sector (HanzeConnect 2008).

In contrast, in terms of student diversity, second-tier Dutch institutions are quite diversely integrated. In 2010, 14 % of their student population hailed from other cultures; notably however, in the cities of Western Holland, at institutions like the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, this statistic is considerably higher. Indeed, in addition to the requirements from the professional field, such student diversity also yields consequences for the management of intercultural and international competencies. Hence, this situation offers a challenge, but also an opportunity for internationalization.

Ultimately, the main obstacles to internationalization at second-tier Dutch higher education institutions comprise a lack of a teaching staff that can prepare students for a more international and intercultural career, lack of opportunities to develop joint and double degrees, ambiguity regarding the identity of their peers abroad, lack of access to research funding, and lack of a clear vision on internationalization as a sector. In contrast, opportunities for the sector to enhance internationalization are diverse, including its rich experience with internships, its strong relationship with the professional field, and its diverse student population that enables virtual exchange and mobility. In developing these opportunities, the sector can build on the experience of several of its institutions, which have managed to overcome the obstacles and the lack of support from the sector. However, in order to realize these opportunities, instead of following in the footsteps of the research universities and/or relying upon Education Ministry initiatives, as two recent documents (Coelen 2014; VSNU and Vereniging Hogescholen 2014) reveal to be the case at present, the sector must develop its own targeted internationalization strategy.

3.3 Canada

3.3.1 The Canadian Higher Education System

Canada is a federation, and constitutional responsibility for higher education in Canada resides individually with the three territories and ten provinces. Each

Canadian province and territory has its own Ministry or Ministries of Education and a separate and unique higher education system that reflects territorial, historical, organizational, and regional economic goals. As a result of this constitutional arrangement, a distinctive system of education, including higher education, has evolved in each jurisdiction. No national ministry or department of education exists, nor is there any integrated national system. When needed, national coordination and consensus are attempted most often through a body comprised of the respective provincial and territorial Education Ministers (the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, or CMEC). Notably, moreover, five Canadian national associations coordinate their respective sectors' activities: colleges and institutes; language schools; research and teaching universities; K-12 school districts; and a coordinating 'Bureau' for international education. Federal suasion and influence over national priorities are achieved through targeted means such as science and research grants, development or contract activity, international student and faculty mobility grants, and more recently through Canada's international education strategy and a coordinated international marketing and branding exercise. Additionally and of special relevance to Canada's second-tier institutions, the federal Human Resources and Skills Development department is jointly responsible with the provinces and territories for many matters, including the inter-provincial mobility of skills and some national qualification standards.

Post-secondary or higher education is available from both government-supported and private institutions, which, through legislation, are authorized to offer degrees, diplomas, certificates, or other credentials and records of academic achievement depending upon the nature of the institution and the length of the program. Universities and university colleges—and increasingly colleges, institutes and polytechnics—focus on degree programs, but may also offer some diplomas and certificates, often in professional designations. Indeed, universities no longer comprise the only degree-granting institutions in some jurisdictions. Notably, moreover, in Canada, publicly-funded colleges and universities offer the vast majority of PSE.

Over 135 public higher education institutes and colleges exist in Canada with thousands of campuses which, depending upon the jurisdiction, may also be called public colleges, specialized institutes, community colleges, institutes of technology, career colleges, colleges of applied arts and technology, or *cégeps* in Quebec (*collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel*). The sum of these would constitute the category of second-tier institutions in the Canadian context, although the categorization of first- versus second-tier institutions is not as clear-cut in Canada as it is in the other countries under investigation in this study.

The publicly-funded colleges and institutes generally share a common value system, in that they are actively engaged in their own communities' social and economic development; they are accessible to all who want to learn and find employment; they are learner-focused and committed to students' career success; they are closely connected to employers and their requirements; they are focused on applied learning and applied research; and they are committed to internationalization to a certain extent. Indeed, this system has an international reputation for

maintaining some of the closest connections to employers. Moreover, Canadian higher education institutions are currently implementing over $100 million of projects in 28 countries to share their 'Education for Employment' approach.

3.3.2 Internationalization at Second-Tier Canadian Higher Education Institutions

The diverse landscape of second-tier institutions in Canada presents differing approaches to internationalization, with particular jurisdictions and institutions demonstrating differing challenges and successes. The relatively more 'hands-on' worldview and mandate of the second-tier sector and the historically shorter span of their programs present both an impediment and support to internationalization efforts. Additionally, the relative lack of socioeconomic reach on students in second-tier institutions, as compared to those in the first tier ones, may well compound these other existing structural challenges and impede achievement of the same level and volume of engagement and buy-in of internationalization experienced in the first tier. For example, while many second-tier institutions do well to exceedingly well in terms of international student recruitment, they have a less stellar record of achievement in sending their own students abroad: the Association of Community Colleges in Canada (ACCC 2010) suggests that in 2007/08, "only 1.1 % of Canadian colleges' full-time students participated in out-of-country learning experiences" (12).

In contrast to the situation in Netherlands and Israel, in Canada, 95 % of both first-tier and second-tier post-secondary institutions included internationalization in their mandate. That said, the intersection between rhetoric and budget communicates an institution's commitment (or ability to commit) to the strategy. While mission statements reinforce internationalization, awareness of internationalization among college students is much lower than at universities. The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) report, A World of Learning (2009), suggests that "where 90 % of [Canadian] university students are aware of study abroad opportunities, only 51 % of college students are" (35). For example, Douglas College in British Columbia noted in its international strategic planning that students "indicated that internationalization is vague and lacks meaning" and that "59 % of students surveyed were unclear on what internationalization was 69 % see lack of funds as the key deterrent to study abroad." This final point is supported and reiterated by virtually all of the colleges.

Most of Canada's second-tier institutions have international strategies whereby, to the best of their abilities and resources, they seek global opportunities to enhance their reputations as well as opportunities for student and staff growth, and the furtherance of ties with local and global business communities. They generally recognize and value the unique contributions international students make to their mostly diverse and multicultural communities. The number of international students who have chosen to enrol in college programs has increased significantly in recent years and continues to grow. International student recruitment thus remains at the fore of

strategies and activities, as international student tuitions provide an integral source of revenue for second-tier institutions, in that these tuitions often fund the balance of the internationalization strategy as well as provide fiscal relief to other centres on campus; colleges reinvest this revenue to provide overall educational advancements for the entire student body, as well as in facility improvements. This situation is substantially different from the Israeli one, where international students comprise the least developed branch of internationalization at second tier institutions.

Resourcing and mandate issues do lead to challenges of policy and implementation of internationalization strategies. Even so, the Canadian second-tier system can boast many accomplishments in terms of rapid growth and deep engagement internationally in many of the hallmarks of internationalization. ACCC runs an annual awards program recognizing excellence and leadership in the international arena for colleges; within British Columbia, the British Columbia Centre for International Education (BCCIE) offers its own internationalization awards, many of which have been granted to colleges. These strategic moves are intended to encourage further growth and recognition of internationalization activities in the traditional academic and vocational mandate areas of its 'second-tier' stakeholders. Indeed, internationalization's link to Canadian economic competitiveness has been recognized, alongside an appreciation that possessing knowledge and the ability to apply it in a global arena are critical to personal and societal advancement. Axiomatically, internationalization is not just about competitiveness, but also plays a strong role in promoting inter-cultural understanding and the spread of human rights and democracy, especially in a country such as Canada that is dependent upon global migration patterns to grow its population and economy.

The challenge moving forward for Canada's second-tier institutions lies in the successful bridging between their traditional mandate for local community service and business and industry engagement, on the one hand, and the recognition that what was once local is now global, even for resource-based economies common in Canada, on the other. Institutional strategies must begin to reflect the fact that, encouraging and supporting local industry and local economy must happen on a global stage, that the economy is now global. Strategic outcomes need to reflect the fact that in order for graduates to engage in the new economy, their schooling must prepare them on the many levels that sound international education and training can provide.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Our comparative overview of second-tier institutions of higher education and their internationalization in Israel, the Netherlands, and Canada yields the following insights:

- The state of internationalization of second-tier institutions in the three countries is as diverse as the role, size, and position of these institutions in the overall higher education sector. In Canada, despite their unique characteristics, they

play a more similar role to that of the university sector. In Israel, these colleges direct their internationalization efforts primarily as a tool in their struggle towards becoming a university. In the Netherlands, universities of applied sciences lack their own vision and strategy and mainly follow the approach that their 'big brothers,' the research universities, dictate—even if such decisions are not in their direct interest. Moreover, it seems that each of the countries' institutions act on a different arena in their internationalization efforts, with a focus on intercultural dimension in Israel, international students' inward movement in Canada, and curricular internationalization in the Netherlands.

- Second-tier institutions are generally inclined to look towards research universities in setting their agendas, tending to emulate these institutions rather than to construct on their own strengths and opportunities. This general trend within this sector appears to be true particularly regarding internationalization.
- Second-tier institutions stress the opportunities of their applied focus and strong relation to professional fields, compared to research universities. The professional fields require graduates with hard and soft skills, which these institutions can provide, in addition to applied research. Bringing the international and intercultural dimension into these hard and soft skills and strengthening applied research will make these institutions and their graduates better skilled for a global workforce.
- Second-tier institutions underestimate the potential for partnership with counterparts abroad. While successful international partnerships between second-tier and research universities are abundant, for instance in the health sector and other sectors where research universities and second-tier institutions are complementary, unexplored potential for international partnership remains as well. Instead of predominantly seeking out partnerships with research universities, second-tier institutions should cooperate more closely across borders and identify their similarities and complementarities in applied research and in developing a global workforce.

The three country case studies of second-tier institutions and their internationalization situation and context provide an initial insight into a large group of higher education institutions and their international dimensions. As ever-growing numbers of students start their studies at second tier higher education institutions, the need to prepare them for the globalized and dynamic world becomes more urgent (Green 2007). Further research is needed on other countries with second-tier higher education institutions. In the US, greater attention is being focused on the internationalization of community colleges, where a comparatively large knowledge base exist (see the recent reviews and special issues analyzing the internationalization trends in community colleges)[3]; while in other countries most of the research efforts are

[3]For Example, the journal New Directions for Community Colleges dedicated a Special Issue to Community Colleges in Global Context (2013, Issue 161); The Community College Journal for Research and Practice dedicated a Special Issue to Internationalization Efforts of Community Colleges (2014, 38, 8).

devoted to internationalization of universities. A more profound understanding of their international dimensions, obstacles and opportunities will add insight regarding the internationalization of this important conglomerate of institutions of higher education, thereby shedding light on internationalization's broader evolution.

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Part II
Higher Education Financing and Governance

Background Note for the Section on Financing and Governance [Overview Paper]

Liviu Matei

The original ambition of the section on Financing and Governance of the 2nd Bologna Researchers' Conference had been to review key aspects in this area along the Bologna action lines. This would have meant a discussion about funding of the *Social Dimension in the European Area of Higher Education*, of *Student Mobility, Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area in the World, Lifelong Learning, Promotion of European Cooperation in Quality Assurance*, of any or all the other action lines. This was not possible in the end at this Conference and it might not be possible at all. It would have been a discussion, in a way, about *Funding Bologna*, which is a fascinating theme of reflection. The papers in this section are subsumed eventually, directly or only indirectly, to the seemingly more mundane theme of *Financing and Governance in the European Higher Education Area*. This, in fact, is not an uninteresting or simple theme either.

The European space for dialogue in higher education made possible by the Bologna Process has helped bring about new policies, concepts, tools, or practices in many areas of higher education, from the structure of degrees to quality assurance, and from student mobility to access and equity. There has been very little, or almost no such innovation brought about by the Bologna Process in the area of funding. Still, there are important elements of specificity, even originality, in Europe in the area of funding and governance; characteristics that have emerged because of or along with the advancement of the Bologna Process.

A defining aspect to consider when discussing characteristics of funding and governance in the European Higher Education Area has to do with the very fact that funding has not been a formal concern, let alone an objective, of the Bologna Process. Although the Process could be seen as a "project" (almost in a genuine, narrow managerial perspective, despite its large, continental scope of ambitions) it has not comprised planning about funding, or about funding instruments, as we would expect in any stark "project" (Matei 2012). There has never been a Bologna funding action line, a Bologna-wide funding policy, not even a Bologna-wide discussion about funding policies, let alone a Bologna budget. In a way, funding is,

L. Matei (✉)
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: mateil@ceu.edu

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surprisingly, an "absent theme" of Bologna. How could it then generate any developments, let alone innovative ones, in this field?

A second defining aspect is that key European characteristics (and some innovative developments) in the field of funding are indeed related to Bologna, however they have been started or steered from outside Bologna. An immediate example is the funding of student mobility under the Erasmus programs, a major innovative European initiative. The Erasmus programs are not Bologna programs, although they share the Bologna philosophy and were meant to support achieving important Bologna objectives.

In the European context, a discussion about financing and governance of higher education during the last 15–20 years will unavoidably identify significant elements and characteristics that are *specifically,* even *uniquely European*, whether they are linked to Bologna or not. This is not to say that there are no challenges, tools, policies or practices in these areas that are not similar to or common with those in other parts of the world.

In a simplified presentation, it could be stated that such elements of specificity are linked primarily to two sources. The first one is the traditional role of the state in funding and governance of higher education. For example, public funding remains the dominant source of funding in Europe, representing between 50 and 90 % of the income of universities (Estermann et al. 2013). The second one is the existence of large projects of a transnational nature ("European" projects) in higher education: the project of the *European Higher Education Area* itself, envisioned to be built through the Bologna Process and involving basically all countries of the continent; and the project of the *European Research Area*, which is a major initiative of the European Union in the area of research, including university research, with significant implications on higher education more broadly and extending beyond the borders of the EU. This is a very particular and interesting political, policy, and also operational context. Although this way of presentation is oversimplified, it allows nevertheless pointing to key dynamics, challenges and also contradictions in the field of governance and funding. The papers in this section will focus on some of these European challenges, dynamics, and contradictions.

A specific European characteristic is the tension between the dominant national nature of the funding and decision-making in higher education more generally, and the existence of transnational, European commitments in higher education. Such commitments, as expressed in the consecutive Bologna ministerial communiqués, for example, could be considered as joint European objectives. The question could be asked how are these European objectives funded? Or how should they be funded? Since there is no Bologna budget or budgeting, whose job is it to adopt and implement funding policies with regard to European-wide objectives? Is it the job of the national governments? Perhaps only for the parts that concern directly their own territories and citizens? This answer would be complicated and contradictory, considering the cross-border nature of many Bologna activities. Or perhaps it is the job of the European Union, which fortunately has a budget? Only that Bologna and the EU, or the EU processes in higher education more precisely, are not one and the same in terms of membership, legal foundations, or institutional functioning. Here

again, the question could be asked who should think about and decide on the funding of any and all of the dimensions mentioned in the introduction to this note and defining the European Higher Education Area? Clearly, there is no Bologna formal preoccupation, let alone institutional mechanism in place, to back the continental ambitions and objectives of the Process with correspondingly European-wide funding policies and mechanisms. The funding landscape is fragmented, with many cross-national differences. National funding policies may or may not consider Bologna objectives or commitments.

In fact, one could state that dynamics and developments at the institutional and national level in the area of funding are most often not related to Bologna. To date, however, there is no comprehensive study on how funding policies at the system level considers Bologna commitments or action lines. It is only rare that studies exist about, at least, how specific dimensions of Bologna are funded (see for example ESU (2013) for such an attempt).

The five papers in this section consider these and other characteristics of the European context with regard to funding and governance. They combine qualitative and quantitative methods, focusing on funding of particular areas, such as research and internationalization, or discuss funding patterns in an ambitious, comprehensive perspective. They identify trends and try to formulate policy lessons for this area, taking a comparative European and global perspective. One paper provides a mirroring perspective from another part of the world regarding the potential relevance of regional approaches to addressing challenges in university governance.

The chapter by Bennetot-Pruvot and Estermann is based on findings of the DEFINE project led by the European University Association. An applied policy study, DEFINE is one of the most important studies in recent times regarding the public funding of universities in Europe. In this chapter, the authors present a synopsis of the current patterns of public funding in European higher education. This is possibly the most complete and informative presentation of the patterns of public funding in Europe currently available. The funding patterns are analysed as responses coming from the public authorities to current societal and economic developments. The chapter looks in particular at funding modalities meant to increase efficiency in universities. Particular attention is given to two modalities, performance-based funding and the so-called “excellence initiative”, looking at how they are used in different European countries and drawing lessons about what factors make them efficient or less efficient instruments, at positive outcomes and unintended consequences. This is altogether a remarkable study. What is even more directly connected with the overarching theme of this section is that the comprehensive review of current funding patterns in Europe reveals no reference to Bologna or to the European Higher Education Area. It appears that funding stakeholders, public authorities in particular, see no need (or value) in referring to Bologna when discussing or deciding on these matters. In other words, it looks as if key developments in the area of funding in Europe are disconnected from the Bologna Process.

The chapter by Erno Keszei et al. provides a good illustration of the dilemmas associated with the relationship between national funding, needs and objectives, on

one side, and European ambitions and funding possibilities, on the other. The study focuses specifically on university research funding. The authors take as a starting point the level of the research performance in the universities of Eastern Central European countries, which remains significantly lower, compared to their counterparts in Western Europe and in other advanced higher education systems. But they also point out that the level of university research funding in Eastern Central Europe is dismal in comparison, which to a large extent explains differences in performance. What is even more worrisome is that national public authorities in this region appear to expect that European sources fill the gap. The authors claim that this attitude is dangerous. They argue that unless sufficient national funding is mobilized to support research, in addition to the European funding, there will be severe consequences in the short and long run. Their analysis looks at the funding of research in Eastern Central Europe in a comparative European and global perspective. Moreover, this analysis is developed considering not only traditional arguments pertaining to the logic of competitiveness and economic development, but also cultural and moral arguments, as expressed in European and UN documents and initiatives.

In their chapter, Vlasceanu and Hancean use a quantitative approach to study the relationship between funding and research performance. In particular, they address the questions whether and also how the increase of research funding leads to higher productivity and to an increased impact measured by usual indicators (Hirsch and Egghe index scores). The results, based on a Romanian case study, appear to indicate that increased funding leads indeed to more research and more publications, but at least in this case not at all to an increased impact. Their conclusion is that the volume of funding alone is not a good predictor for the impact of research, and that effective research funding policies must include other elements and incentives as well.

The chapter by Matei, Iwinska, and Craciun is an exploratory inquiry into the study of internationalization of higher education from a funding perspective. The authors propose that significant new insight in this area could be gained by studying patterns of funding of internationalization. They propose a simple and flexible conceptual framework to make such a study possible, to identify patterns of funding of internationalization and understand how they work. The chapter provides a series of examples to illustrate this new approach at work, primarily based on European experiences in internationalization. The authors argue that the insight made possible by this new approach goes beyond the simply factual (like helping to identify new mechanisms or instruments of funding of internationalization, or even identify new types of internationalization activities). It helps to better conceptualize internationalization itself and refine the study of internationalization. The authors further argue that the examples put forward in this chapter in relation to the proposed new conceptual framework for the study of internationalization add to the mainstream literature on internationalization and open new avenues of research of the internationalization phenomenon. For example, it is argued that funding patterns help to understand what "European internationalism" is, and what makes it a particular model of internationalization.

The chapter by Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin completes the section on funding and governance with a perspective from South East Asia. The author reviews in a comprehensive presentation challenges and recent developments in the area of governance in the countries of the region. She argues that the European experience of regional integration could provide an important set of lessons and models for addressing such challenges in South East Asia, with a particular focus on governance. This chapter argues for the relevance of the European experience, of the Bologna Process, beyond the borders of our own continent.

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Strategies for Efficient Funding of Universities in Europe

Enora Bennetot Pruvot, Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik and Thomas Estermann

1 Methodology

The DEFINE project (2012–2015) is run by EUA in collaboration with CIPES, the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (PT), and the Universities of Oxford (UK), Aalto (FI) and Erlangen-Nuremberg (DE), and the Copenhagen Business School (DK). It is co-funded by the European Union under the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Research has been conducted within the framework of the DEFINE project in three phases.[1] The data collection was first organised at system level through various rounds of consultations, questionnaires and interviews with National Rectors' Conferences, seeking to establish a detailed understanding of public funding mechanisms and their development over the past decade, identify frequent issues, and build a list of case studies for mergers and concentration measures. At this stage also a fourth pillar on operational efficiency measures at institutional level was integrated into the project structure as it appeared to be an important issue in several systems. This system level data, together with updated data of EUA's Public

[1]The study also explores the funding and management implications of mergers and concentration processes among higher education institutions. This paper does not include this pillar of the analysis, which is detailed in a thematic report available on http://www.eua.be/define.aspx.

E.B. Pruvot (✉) · A.-L. Claeys-Kulik · T. Estermann
European University Association, Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: enora.pruvot@eua.be

A.-L. Claeys-Kulik
e-mail: anna.lena.kulik@eua.be

T. Estermann
e-mail: thomas.estermann@eua.be

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Funding Observatory,[2] enabled the project team to develop funding profiles of 24 European university systems.[3]

In addition, qualitative information focusing on the institutional level was obtained through self-evaluation exercises and site visits of three higher education institutions selected for their experience with the topics and mechanisms under scrutiny,[4] as well as a seminar with university managers from across Europe organised in cooperation with HUMANE (Heads of University Management and Administration Network in Europe).

All of the above paved the way for three thematic focus groups. These groups gathered university leaders and managers with significant experience in the topic addressed (performance-based funding; merger and concentration processes; funding for excellence). The focus group format aimed to elicit feedback from practitioners on the impact and unintended consequences of the mechanisms analysed, and provide suggestions for improvement.

The analysis was presented to the wider university community on the occasion of the European University Association's Second Funding Forum in Bergamo, Italy in October 2014, which was used for validation and additional collection of case studies. Afterwards thematic reports and a final summary publication were released in 2015.

2 Funding of Higher Education Institutions

The European University Association's work on the financial sustainability of universities has previously focused on the opportunities and challenges associated to the attraction of diverse income sources (Thomas and Pruvot 2011) and the development of adequate financial management tools such as full costing (Thomas et al. 2008, 2013). EUA has also set up a Public Funding Observatory to monitor the development of trends in public funding for universities throughout Europe on an annual basis since 2008.

This paper primarily addresses evolutions in the ways public funding is delivered to universities, and how public authorities seek to calibrate these modalities to improve funding efficiency in the system. Early observations show that, while some funding tools are widely used in the countries considered in the analysis, they tend

[2]The annual reports since 2008 and the online tool are available here: http://www.eua.be/publicfundingobservatory.be.

[3]Austria, Belgium-Flanders, Belgium-French speaking community, Switzerland Czech Republic, Germany-Brandenburg, Germany-Hesse, Germany-North-Rhine Westphalia, Denmark, Estonia, Spain-Catalonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom-England.

[4]Copenhagen Business School on the Danish taximeter system; Aalto University on the merger process and the University Erlangen-Nuremberg on the German Excellence Initiative.

to cover different realities, thus making comparisons challenging. To understand these different realities one first needs to look at the overall funding context in each system.

2.1 Income Structures

Where system averages are available, public funding represents between 50 and 90 % of the universities' income structures. There have often been significant changes in the modalities through which public funding is delivered. In addition, one should bear in mind the important cuts made in the budgets for universities in a number of countries since 2008, which are described in EUA's Public Funding Observatory. In 2014, 15 systems had lower public funding available to higher education institutions than in 2008 (taking inflation into account).[5] Given the importance of this funding source for universities, changes in both the nature and overall amount potentially have the greatest effect on universities' long-term financial sustainability.

In 2013 tuition and administrative fees represented typically around 5 % or less of the universities' income in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden), as well as in Austria, Belgium (both systems), the Czech Republic, Estonia, France and Germany.[6]

In nine countries tuition fees represented 10 % or more of the universities' average income, and, as such, constitute the most important income source after public funding. Those include Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Spain, as well as the United Kingdom. However, as public authorities in many cases can decide about the introduction, abolishment or level of tuition fees, this income source can fluctuate considerably.

Generating additional income from other sources is therefore perceived as more and more necessary for the long-term financial sustainability of universities, and expectations of public authorities around this are rising. Here, we consider income generated by research contracts and provision of services (such as renting of facilities, catering services, consultancy, etc.), philanthropic funding, and, when possible, European funding.[7] Overall, these types of additional income sources exceed 10 % of the average universities' income in most systems (Thomas and Pruvot 2011, p. 27). A worrying trend though is that in some countries, national authorities tend to perceive European funds as a mechanism to compensate decreases in national public funding for the sector. This is problematic, not only because of the significant

[5] http://www.eua.be/publicfundingobservatory.

[6] Estonia and Germany have recently abolished tuition fees for students completing their studies within the regular timeframe/obtaining a certain number of ECTS per year.

[7] It should be noted that European funds are not always identifiable in the universities' income structure; this may be for instance the case of structural funds, which are delivered by the national or regional authorities, and may be thus labelled as national/regional funds.

amount of co-funding required, but also because European funds are allocated on a competitive basis—success in the competition requires institutional capacities and resources that in turn depend on financial means.

2.2 Public Funding Modalities

In most systems public authorities distribute funding to universities through block grants (see Fig. 1). The overall amount of the block grant may be determined in different ways though, through negotiation, on a historical basis, via a funding formula or through a performance contract. Often these elements are combined, meaning a part of the block grant is negotiated, another part might be determined on a historical basis, and again another part via a funding formula or a contract. The importance of these different elements in determining the overall amount of the block grant varies across the systems.

Public funding is also increasingly distributed based on competition, often through calls for project proposals, notably for research. Finally, other direct funding mechanisms also exist, such as targeted/earmarked funding for specific purposes, which may be allocated on a competitive basis, such as the Strategic Innovation Funding in Ireland, established as a mechanism for institutional restructuring and modernisation. Such funding may also be allocated directly to institutions (non-competitive): this is the case for the Higher Education Innovation Funding scheme in the United Kingdom, which focuses on knowledge exchange, or the "Successful Bachelor degrees" plan in France, which funds concrete measures aiming at improving the overall success rate in Bachelor degrees (e.g. individual supervision, new teaching methods).

Although formula-based block grants are the main way of delivering public funding in almost two thirds of the systems considered, negotiated block grants remain the most important mechanism in some big systems like France and Italy

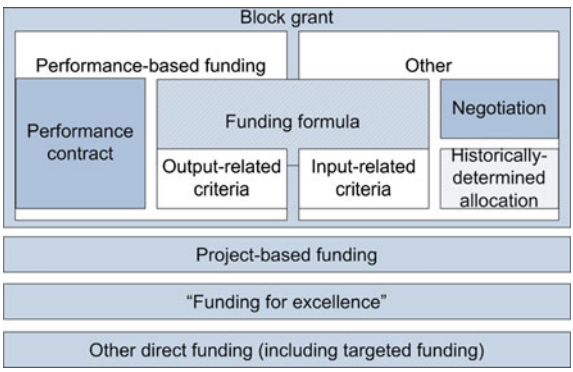

Fig. 1 Public funding allocation mechanisms

Table 1 An overview of allocation mechanisms for block grants across Europe

	Funding formula	Performance contracts (with impact on university funding)	Negotiated or historically-determined block grant
Primary mechanism	Brandenburg (Germany), Catalonia (Spain), Czech Republic, Denmark[a], England (UK), Finland, Flanders and French-speaking Community of Belgium, Hesse (Germany), Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania[a], Sweden[a]	Austria	Denmark[b], Estonia, France, Italy, North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), Norway, Switzerland
Secondary mechanism	Estonia, France, Italy, North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), Norway, Sweden[b]	Brandenburg (Germany), England (UK), France, Hesse (Germany), Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal	Austria, Catalonia, Czech Republic, Hesse (Germany), Hungary, Poland, Sweden

Note that this table was compiled in autumn 2014, as the data validation phase of the DEFINE project was still ongoing. Therefore this classification is provisional and might look different in later publications

[a]Teaching funding only

[b]Research funding only

and a few smaller ones (see Table 1). Most countries however, have a mix of different allocation modalities, and a first analysis shows a great diversity between systems. The following table gives an overview of allocation mechanisms for block grants across the systems considered and is a first attempt to group them.

3 Performance-Based Funding

The term performance-based funding is being used more and more often in discussions on university funding policy at national, as well European levels. However, it is understood very differently across Europe. In many cases it is used as a synonym for formula-based funding, often without taking into account the "input" or "output" related nature of the criteria used in the formula. Often, performance-based funding is also perceived as competitive funding due to the fact that it is used to distribute a fixed amount of money to institutions based on their relative performance. Performance or development contracts, and target agreements whereby certain goals are agreed between the funder and universities are also associated with performance-based funding, although they do not always have a direct impact on funding and are of different nature.

3.1 Funding Formulae

In many systems with formula funding, input indicators such as student numbers (at Bachelor level, then at Master level) often play the most important role in determining the amount of funding a university gets via a block grant. The corresponding output-oriented indicators (number of Bachelor and Master degrees) are used less frequently and or have often less weight in a formula. It is interesting to note the importance of some output-oriented criteria, which are usually linked to research output: doctoral degrees, international/European funding and external funding are considered the most important criteria, followed by teaching-related output criteria of Master and Bachelor degrees and ECTS points. Other commonly used output indicators are research evaluations and research contracts.

Current important policy priorities like internationalisation and student and staff mobility are also mirrored in funding formulae in several systems, through indicators such as the number of international students and albeit to a lesser extent the number of international staff. Denmark, for instance, uses an "internationalisation taximeter", granting the Danish universities a fixed amount per outgoing and incoming student. Finland takes account of the universities' international teaching and research personnel in its funding model, and all internationalisation-related criteria (including competitive international research funding) count for 9 % of the public funding.

The set of indicators is crucial, as the interplay of different indicators determines the effects the formula might have on universities. Negative effects on the quality of teaching and research are debated with regard to several indicators. Here are just a few examples:

Formulae heavily relying on study completion bear the risk of a decrease in quality and standards to foster quicker completion. This may lead to bigger classrooms, as universities try to take-in as many students as possible without increasing the number of teaching staff or courses. This risk might be mitigated, for instance, through the combination of study completion criteria with more input-oriented indicators such as student and staff numbers, as well as the implementation of internal quality assurance mechanisms and the development of quality culture within the institution.

Bibliometric criteria tend to privilege natural and social sciences over humanities, as they more heavily rely on empirical research which translates into a higher number of publications. Furthermore, bibliometric criteria bear the risk of a decrease in quality if used too excessively, as they then foster slicing of papers and name dropping in publications. Therefore, bibliometric criteria should not be the only measure to allocate research funding. Discipline specific criteria need to be added to compensate for the potential risks.

External funding, which may be acquired through research contracts with private partners, EU funds, or other types of competitive funding or philanthropic sources, appears quite frequently as indicator in funding formula, which, in turn, sets the value of the core funding that the university receives. Creating a direct link between

external funding and core funding may be used as an incentive for universities to actively develop partnerships, and strengthen income diversification strategies. However, if this incentive is used, it needs to take account of the fact that external funding often only offers partial coverage of costs. Universities then need to bridge the gap with their core resources. For it to be a sustainable mechanism, an increase in external funding obtained by the university needs to be coupled with a growth of the formula-based block grant, to cover the co-funding required by European and international funding programmes, as well as the indirect costs research and projects funded by those, as they are usually not fully covered. Reduced core resources will create additional barriers for universities to successfully obtain external funding because of a lesser capacity to bridge the associated funding gap (see Thomas et al. 2013, p. 12).

Also, indicators that are difficult to influence by universities should be used with caution. This is especially the case when criteria related to graduate employability are used (for example in Finland or Italy), and the quality of the teaching provided at the institution is only one of the determining factors. The institutional influence on student numbers may be limited by central regulation in some systems; legal provisions may also, for instance, hinder the capacity to attract international staff. More broadly, external factors such as the system-level regulatory frameworks, the general economic context, and the local environment or community in which the university develops its activities may have a stronger influence on the university's score for some criteria than the university itself, which undermines the assumed neutrality of a formula.

3.2 Performance Contracts

Another way of steering institutional behaviour is through so-called performance contracts, target agreements or development contracts, whereby certain goals are agreed between public authorities and universities. These are a common feature found in 15 of the systems considered in the study. However, they are of very different nature, and only in a few cases they do have a direct and clear impact on funding. Here are a few examples to illustrate the differences:

In Austria for instance, the contract is the outcome of a budget negotiation between the ministry and each university to determine the amount of funding per institution, whereby the minimum level is prefixed by law. The achievement of the contract's objectives can have an impact on the negotiations for the next funding period.

In the Netherlands, performance contracts were introduced in 2012 and since then a set amount of the block grant (currently 7 %) is distributed on the basis of objectives agreed between the Ministry of Education and individual universities in these contracts. After three years, a review commission will assess whether these objectives have been met, however it is to be seen whether this will then really have a direct impact on funding.

In Brandenburg and Hesse, two of the three German Länder included in the study, a certain percentage (2 % and respectively 5 %) of the block grant is linked to the achievement of the objectives agreed upon in the performance contracts specific to each university. However, the assessment is not very rigorous and underperformance is rarely sanctioned by funding cuts.

In Denmark, the development contracts are on purpose not linked to funding, but they are nevertheless seen as an important steering mechanism also by university management, as they can be used in discussions on the institutional strategy and internal funding allocation. Here, the impact on institutional management very much depends on the structure and the governance model of the institution.

A performance contract may also be used as a complementary instrument to a funding formula either to align the contract's objectives with the formula, or to mitigate some of the negative effects of a formula by, for instance, setting additional objectives for the quality of teaching and research. If it is an individual contract, this is also the opportunity to create a dialogue between the ministry and the university, and it can then be used as an effective management tool even if it is not directly linked to funding.

3.3 *Overview of Performance Elements in Block Grant Allocation*

A majority of systems consider their funding allocation mechanisms at least partially performance-based for teaching (via graduate-related criteria), with the most extensive case being Denmark (through its taximeter system to allocate funds for teaching), and partially or mainly performance-based for research, where indicators related to publications and external research funding are normally taken into account.

Table 2 shows that a primarily input-based formula is the most common way of block grant allocation for the systems considered in the study. However, it is often combined with other mechanisms, such as performance contracts or budget negotiations and historical allocation.

3.4 *Effects of Performance-Based Funding on Higher Education Systems*

Each parameter used in the funding system, whether it is an indicator within the funding formula or an objective in a performance contract, comes with potential risks and unintended effects. However, there are several ways of mitigating these risks, either within the formula, through a careful combination of different funding mechanisms, or through other measures, such as quality assurance to counterbalance

Table 2 An overview of allocation mechanisms for block grants across Europe, differentiating among formula types

	Funding formula		Performance contracts (with impact on university funding)	Negotiated or historically-determined block grant
	Primarily input-oriented	Primarily output-oriented		
Primary mechanism	Brandenburg (Germany), Catalonia (Spain), Czech Republic, French-speaking Community of Belgium, Hesse (Germany), Hungary, Ireland[a], Iceland, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland[a], Portugal, Romania[a], Sweden[a]	Denmark[a], England (UK), Finland, Flanders (Belgium), Ireland[b], Poland[b]	Austria	Denmark[b], Estonia, France, Italy, North Rhine-Westphalia, Norway, Switzerland
Secondary mechanism		Estonia, France, Italy, North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), Norway, Sweden[b]	Brandenburg (Germany), England (UK), France, Hesse (Germany), Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal	Austria, Catalonia, Czech Republic, Hesse (Germany), Hungary, Poland, Sweden

Please note that when this table was made in autumn 2014, the data validation phase of the DEFINE project was still ongoing. Therefore this classification is provisional and might look different in later publications

[a]Teaching funding only

[b]Research funding only

the negative effects. Within a funding formula, some negative effects of one indicator might be counterbalanced, for instance, by reducing the weight of this indicator with regard to other criteria used to determine the amount of funding. The choice of indicators and objectives is crucial and should be motivated by a clear policy, taking into account the diversity of institutional profiles. A formula or performance contract heavily relying on one or a very small number of indicators/objectives has a stronger steering effect, but this might also lead to a convergence of institutional profiles adapting their activities accordingly, and might thus contribute to reduce institutional diversity if most of the recurrent funding is allocated this way. A formula or performance contract with more indicators or objectives addressing different university activities might be more adequate to properly fund the broad mission of

comprehensive universities (see also Dohmen 2014, p. 26). The articulation with other funding instruments and modes of funding is extremely important, as it determines the funding environment and thus the effects on institutional behaviour.

4 Funding for Excellence

In many European countries, intense pressure is exerted on the higher education system to adapt to evolving economic and societal demands, as well as to the "culture of excellence" necessary to operate in an increasingly internationally competitive field. Policy responses to these challenges take many forms. Some countries have made extra financial resources available to foster the emergence of excellence "hubs" with a view to enable these entities (whether institutions, clusters of institutions, or clusters of sub-institutional entities) to compete internationally, to improve research and/or teaching quality, as well as to match better supply and demand on the higher education market. However, in a context of constrained resources, excellence schemes are also meant to increase funding efficiency, whether as a main objective or not. They often aim to remove inefficiencies and to concentrate funding by creating hierarchies between institutions.

4.1 Characteristics of Excellence Schemes in Higher Education

While it is common for the notion of "excellence" to be integrated in research funding, notably through competitive funding mechanisms, it is less often attached to broad restructuring processes.

Excellence schemes differ from regular competitive funding because they are essentially characterised as "exceptional", meaning that they are introduced as a separate measure outside of the existing regular funding mechanisms, and are also often meant to be limited in time, with, in case of perceived success, the possibility to renew the experience.

Their scope and intended recipients are also broader than in the case of regular competitive funding, targeting the institutional level, more often than not involving arbitration and commitment by the institutional leadership.

In this regard, Germany's "Exzellenzinitiative" offers a benchmark against which other schemes can be compared. The French "Investment for the Future" scheme is partly modelled on the German example. Both initiatives are supported by large funds, albeit distributed through different mechanisms. These schemes are multi-fold and reward not only research clusters, but also institutional strategies; in Germany the scheme also funds the establishment of doctoral schools. The Spanish programme "Campus of International Excellence" also addresses different objectives,

Table 3 A selection of "excellence schemes" found in Europe

System	Scheme
Austria	Creation of Institute of Science and Technology
France	Excellence Initiatives (IDEX)
Finland	Centres of Excellence in Research Creation of Aalto University
Germany	Excellence Initiative
Norway	"Centres of Excellent Research"
Poland	"Leading National Research Centres" (KNOWs)
Spain	"Campus of International Excellence" Programme (CEI)
United Kingdom	"Research Excellence Framework"

among which regional integration of universities features prominently, and is built on a combination of funding mechanisms. Elsewhere, schemes are significantly smaller and typically address sub-institutional entities, such as laboratories, and usually require them to cluster or establish research consortia, as the Polish "Leading National Research Centres" or the Norwegian "Centres of Excellent Research". The creation of new excellent institutions like in Austria or Finland is considered here as well as a form of excellence funding, in particular given the concentration of resources and the narrative surrounding these processes; finally, it may be embedded in regular core funding, such as the Research Excellence Framework in the UK.

It is also worth noting that excellence in teaching is an objective addressed less often than excellence in research, where the perception of international competition is perhaps more acute. Nevertheless, some systems have set up schemes focusing on teaching excellence. This is for instance the case of the French "IDEFI" scheme, which funds innovative teaching, or the "Quality Pact for Teaching" in Germany, which aims at improving the conditions of study and teaching quality.

Table 3 shows the measures included in the analysis.

4.2 Impact on Institutional Profiling and Restructuring

The more intense international competition for talent and for funds requires universities to make themselves more visible on the international stage, and distinguish themselves from competitors by developing a strategic profile. Excellence schemes are an instrument available to public authorities to promote this, with strategic profiling becoming a dimension of the application and granting process. Universities are therefore encouraged to identify, strengthen and capitalise on their strengths and assets.

Universities may invest strategically internally to create leverage effects. They may, for instance, provide seed funding to high-potential initiatives, creating an "internal excellence scheme" focused on the young generation. Such initiatives may thus be seen as a stepping stone towards success in the large-scale excellence scheme; they may also be envisaged as a corrective mechanism to perceived

shortcomings of the excellence scheme, that tend to privilege established research teams over promising ones; disciplinary over interdisciplinary work; certain types of academic fields over others.

This drive towards "profiling" or, to some extent, towards specialisation inevitably creates tensions within universities which, as comprehensive institutions, have a tradition of maintaining academic portfolios. In a context where institutions have often struggled to keep an acceptable balance between disciplines and academic fields, the pressure to focus on a limited number of flagship disciplines or even niches requires a real, concerted effort and innovative decision-making in the university.

The institution may also seek to adapt its own structure to improve its capacity to meet the excellence scheme requirements in terms of governance and flexibility, as well as enhance its ability to profile itself strategically. It was observed in the context of the study that restructuring tends to privilege flatter structures, sometimes eliminating intermediary levels of management such as faculties, and also favours reduced numbers of sub-institutional entities (larger schools/faculties/departments).

4.3 The Role of the University Leadership

In this light, the university central leadership is a key actor in all processes, from bringing together the various communities of the institution to making strategic decisions linked to profiling. The university leadership takes decisions related to the strategic reallocation of resources, a particularly acute question since it results in privileging particular areas or groups within the university often at the expense of others. It is the role of the university leadership to ensure the long-term sustainability of the activities funded under the excellence scheme, which by definition offers temporary support, and therefore requires a carefully planned exit strategy. The leadership must work towards the acceptance of sometimes difficult changes associated with restructuring and reallocation of resources. It must foster the development of an institution-wide strategy while preserving the institutional balance.

4.4 Exit Strategies for Institutions and Systems

Crucially, excellence schemes are viewed as time-bound initiatives to drive change, rather than a permanent funding mechanism. While in some cases it is possible to apply for a second grant, the underlying concept is one of temporary support.

Exit strategies are an important dimension of the sustainability challenge. Funding received by institutions in the framework of an excellence scheme supports additional, high-profile activities that in turn create high expectations and trigger new equipment and personnel costs.

Universities participating in large-scale excellence schemes may thus have to think strategically about the internal allocation of resources over the long term, notably to make resources available to cover the non-externally funded part of the activities, as for instance indirect costs. Excellence schemes may therefore have extensive consequences on the internal resource management of the universities.

By the time the funds run out, the institution must have fully implemented a leverage strategy helping to generate additional funds from private partners in order to maintain—if not further raise—the new higher level of activity. Candidate institutions often have to detail their sustainability plan at the stage of selection.

Public authorities and the university sector need to agree on an exit strategy for the excellence scheme itself. All stakeholders need to consider how successfully started initiatives may be maintained over the longer term with other types of funders supporting the activities undertaken. This question is particularly acute in countries where the financial situation has significantly deteriorated over the lifetime of the excellence scheme.

5 Efficiency Measures

Universities themselves contribute to shaping their environment, not only by adapting institutional behaviour to respond to the external pressures and incentive mechanisms set at system level, but also by actively seeking to improve their operations at institutional level. Discussions about operational efficiency at institutional level are taking place in a number of systems, albeit with different narratives and expectations towards universities. A more structured dialogue between public authorities and universities about efficiency has developed in the UK and Ireland, where universities themselves work as agenda-setters and proactively started communicating about the topic (see Universities UK 2013).

5.1 Types of Efficiency Measures

In many systems, such measures are imbedded in universities' day-to-day operations, but they are not explicitly referred to as efficiency measures. A good example for this is the use of information and communication technology and specific software in administrative processes, with a view to facilitate for instance enrolment or registration for courses.

When looking at existing practices across Europe, two types can be distinguished, administrative and academic measures, for which *some examples* are given in Table 4.

With regard to the academic practice, there is often a trade-off between efficiency and the quality of teaching, for instance when universities are pressed to ensure faster completion, which bears the risk of lowering standards to make students pass

Table 4 Examples of administrative and academic measures fostering efficiency

Administrative measures	Collaboration to drive costs down like joint procurement, asset sharing, shared services
	Use of information and communication technology
	Estates and facility management to reduce infrastructure costs
	Financial management and full costing to better understand and strategically reduce costs
	Improvement of administrative processes
	Human resource practices and regulations
	Organisational restructuring
Academic measures	Control of student numbers
	Faster completion
	Rationalisation of curricula
	Changes to student/staff ratio
	Collaborations, such as joint programmes and research

exams similarly to what was described with regard to completion criteria in funding formula. Similar pressure on the efficient use of funds comes from research funders who develop stricter scrutiny of projects and research activities. Therefore, it is all the more important that universities are enabled to develop their own strategies trying to balance efficiency and effectiveness and keeping up high quality standards.

In the administrative and the academic spheres, collaborations are a widespread means helping to make more efficient use of resources. Collaboration is sometimes driven by external pressures or incentives. Situations vary in Europe; sector collaboration may be the initiative of the universities themselves, or the impulse may be given by the public authorities. Institutions work together to secure additional money from specific funding schemes or to obtain large research infrastructures. Sector-level procurement is also a mechanism used in certain countries. This type of collaboration raises specific challenges, however, in particular in relation to the capacity to agree on the specific terms of reference. In some countries, dedicated agencies are set up for that purpose exclusively, although institutions are not obliged to use their services. This is important as regards the possible tension between achieving economies of scale on the one hand, and preserving some flexibility in the system on the other hand. Collaborative contracting with external providers seems most widespread in the area of maintenance services (IT services, security, catering); it seems there is ground for further collaboration in other fields.

5.2 Enabling Frameworks

The capacity of universities to implement efficiency measures partly depends on the governance and management structure and the degree of (de)centralisation of the institution. Highly decentralised structures, where faculties benefit from significant

autonomy from the central university management, face a bigger challenge in terms of cost efficiency, as the steering capacity of the central university management is limited. In such cases, there is however scope for action at the level of streamlining processes across sub-institutional units. There is also a case for sharing infrastructures, including IT services, as well as launching a common procurement process at the level of the institution. Centralised institutions have most of these elements dealt with by the central university management and can therefore save costs through economies of scale.

Regulatory frameworks strongly determine the capacity to develop and implement such strategies. In systems where universities do not benefit from significant autonomy, implementing efficiency measures may be more difficult, whether within the institution or through cooperation mechanisms. This is relevant for all dimensions of autonomy; organisational autonomy is necessary to create legal entities as appropriate, or adapt academic structures in ways to foster synergies and lead to efficiencies. Financial autonomy is a prerequisite for efficient estate management (enabling the university to own its buildings). Academic autonomy makes it possible to combine or create new programmes in a sustainable way. Finally, autonomy in staffing matters allows the university to decide on positions and salaries. It is also worth noting that political objectives for the sector may be conflicting; when the funding model seeks to foster competition among institutions, it may hinder opportunities to collaborate.

6 Conclusions

Public authorities have many steering levers at their disposal to shape their higher education systems, with a view to enhance efficiency. It should, however, be kept in mind that measures such as performance-based funding and excellence schemes can also have unintended consequences at system, as well as institutional level.

The analysis shows that funding instruments and efficiency measures should be considered within the overall funding system and the particular context in which universities operate. When designing new instruments or changing the modalities, the political goal behind this should be clearly communicated and a long-term perspective and a holistic view should be taken to consider also potential unintended effects. A continuous consultation with the sector is crucial to ensure that the schemes fit their purpose and the needs of the institutions. Administrative procedures should be kept as simple as possible; transparency of the funding instruments and clarity of rules to all actors are equally important. It should also be clear whether the mechanism is meant as a steering instrument to incentivise a certain institutional behaviour or whether it is a means to redistribute a set amount of money. If the intention is to promote a certain type of behaviour, it should be kept in mind that most of the costs of a university's activities are fixed. In a context of reduced public funding, there is therefore little room for manoeuvre in this respect. Setting up adequate steering mechanisms requires either an injection of additional

funding in the system, or freeing up resources through cost control (for example by adapting the volume of teaching or research activities). But funding models, in turn, can help universities in developing their own strategies to deal with changes in funding, provided they have the necessary autonomy to do so. Additional funding for universities can also be used to incentivise efficiencies at institutional level through support for collaborations in varies areas to share services, resources or real estate. Universities themselves should proactively engage in the development of funding policies with policy makers to ensure that the schemes respond to their needs.

Notwithstanding the increased need to rationalise and focus on value for money, efficient public funding models also need to provide sufficient and sustainable core funding to universities for them to properly fulfil their mission and respond to new challenges and societal demands.

Further findings and outcomes of the DEFINE project, including detailed recommendations to policy makers and university leaders, are available via the project website: http://www.eua.be/define.

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Financing Research Universities in Post-communist EHEA Countries

Ernő Keszei, Frigyes Hausz, Attila Fonyó and Béla Kardon

1 Introduction

A great number of economists and other experts have written papers and books in the last 50 years concerning the funding of higher education (see e.g. citations in Woodhall 2007), but almost all of them seem to ignore a UN document that is adopted and ratified in most countries of the world, thus it is considered as a law in action. Article 13, Section 2, (c) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights tells that "[the States Parties to the Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of the right of everyone to education] higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular *by the progressive introduction of free education*" (UN 1966; italicized by the authors). Of the 47 member countries of the EHEA, 43 have ratified this Covenant, except for Andorra, the Holy See, Moldova and the FYRM. While—in accordance to 2, (b) of the same Article—secondary education in almost all countries have been made free for anyone (even partly compulsory in most of the countries), the tendency in higher education seems to be the opposite, also in most of the EHEA countries.

E. Keszei (✉)
Eötvös Loránd University Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: keszei@chem.elte.hu

F. Hausz · A. Fonyó
Corvinus University of Budapest, Faculty of Social Sciences, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: frigyes.hausz@gmail.com

A. Fonyó
e-mail: fonyo.a@gmail.com

B. Kardon
Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: bkardon@rcisd.eu

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A highly esteemed document concerning the status of modern universities is the Magna Charta Universitatum, endorsed in Bologna 18 September 1988. The first point in its Preamble states that "at the approaching end of this millennium the future of mankind depends largely on cultural, scientific and technical development; and that this is built up in centres of culture, knowledge and research as represented by true universities". The main text also emphasizes—at several occurrences—the importance of research as an inherent part of university activity. Thus, a university cannot properly function if its scholars are not active in scientific research, and the future of mankind also depends on a healthy functioning of research universities.

An important initiative of the European Union has been to promote the formation of a European Research Area (ERA), which is more formal in its structure than the EHEA, comprising EU member states and a few associated countries. The Framework Programs for Research and Technological Development of the EU contributed to the development of research and innovation in Europe. Within the 7th Framework Program, the ERA has been formed, and a new ambitious framework program—Horizon 2020 for the period of 2014–2020—aims to further increase the global competitiveness of ERA. A combined effort of the Max Planck Society and selected European universities and research organizations resulted in a white paper during the planning period of Horizon 2020 which called attention to an unbalanced regional competitiveness regarding research potentials throughout the ERA (MPS 2012). It states that "Europe is being held back by persistent disparities in its research and innovation capabilities which are the key to future prosperity. … Yet many EU countries and regions, often with distinguished traditions of achievement in science, lack the high quality research capacity adequate to the challenges of today and tomorrow."

It is precisely this lack of high quality research capacity that is in focus of this chapter. After a brief historical overview on funding of HEIs, relevant statistical data will be shown to support the unfavourable situation of research universities of distinguished tradition of achievement in science in some post-communist Eastern Central European countries. After an analysis of the data, it is shown that efficient policies must be put into practice in order to ameliorate the perspectives of the research universities and the countries of the region concerning research, innovation and competitiveness.

2 Historical Overview

The origin of the first institutions which became modern European universities dates back to the 11th–13th century (a very concise discussion can be found in Dmitrishin (2013); for a detailed account of the history of European universities see the four volumes of Ridder-Symoens (1992–2010); in a shorter version in Wittrock (1993). Though these universities have quite diverse origins—including also some of them founded and managed by students—sooner or later, the majority of them have been chartered by sovereigns and the pope as well. There were a considerable

number of HEIs founded by the Catholic Church or by its institutions (the Jesuit Order played a paramount role in these foundations), which typically have been donated at the beginning of their history some endowment and properties that could be used for the financial needs of their operation. In most cases, sovereigns also donated properties for the same reason. During the 17th and 18th century, enlightened absolutism led to a state-determined government of the HEIs, and in many cases, additional donation of properties or endowment (or both) provided the means to cope up with the more rigorous standards prescribed by the state.

The most determining revival of European universities was a result of the reformatory ideas developed by idealistic scholars in Germany around 1800, which later became known as the idea of the Humboldtian university (Paletschek 2001). The exemplary "prototype" is the Berlin University founded in 1810, which, since 1949, holds the name of the Humboldt brothers. Determining features of this reform were that universities are genuine research institutions with the unity of research and teaching, and that the "academic freedom" consists not only of the freedom of teaching, but also that of research, which allows furthering pure science. Another feature of the new idea was that universities should prepare students for a humanistic role to serve mankind and also the state. An important implication of these reforms was that the state should be responsible to support both teaching and research at HEIs (Humboldt 1810). As a result of social and economic changes—e.g. the industrial revolution—the number of students and the need for research also increased during the 19th century. In addition to the construction of new buildings to accommodate the increasing number of students and the emerging research activities, the state also supported universities by direct subsidies, as their former resources were not sufficient to cover the costs of functioning according to new needs. With this more direct financing mechanism, state administrations vindicated a more direct influence on the management of universities as well. The 19th and 20th centuries have seen a continuous debate between the ministries responsible for education and the HEIs to interpret the sacred principle of "academic freedom". However, the typical situation in Europe was that, until the late 20th century, direct state subsidy became the determining—if not the only—source of university budgets.

A new epoch of higher education history began after WW2, with an ever increasing "massification" of higher education. This happened earlier in the US than in Europe, and earlier in Western Europe than in the Soviet-allied Eastern countries. In these latter countries, massification only occurred after the disintegration of the communist system. In addition to the great increase of the number of students, costs of scientific research have also increased in this period in a substantial way. Most of the countries could not provide the necessary financial support for higher education, thus many alternative forms of financing HEIs had been put forward, and also implemented (for a review, see e.g. Salmi and Hauptman 2006; Woodhall 2007). A recent complication of this situation has been the global economic crisis. The great social demand for many other services to be financed by the state does not allow for sufficient support of higher education in many countries.

Eastern European post-communist countries have suffered the greatest disadvantages during the last 70 years compared to other regions having traditional

universities. Communist takeover of power after the Soviet occupation, at the end of 1940s, led not only to a strict political and administrative control of the HEIs, but also to confiscation of their properties and loss of their endowments. As a result, total communist party control and completely state-budget dependent funding had replaced the partly independent funding and considerable academic freedom. In addition, research activity has been rechanneled to newly formed research institutes of the Academies of Sciences following the Soviet model, and universities have been left with little research, and a very low research budget. (In most countries, this separation of research and teaching survived to a certain degree until today.)

To illustrate this change, let us recall the fate of the endowment of the oldest surviving Hungarian HEI, nowadays called Eötvös Loránd University (Rácz 2010). At the time of its foundation, it was a Jesuit university, and the founder, Cardinal Péter Pázmány bequeathed an endowment of 100,000 Florins[1] to cover the costs of the institution. When adding a Faculty of Law to the other two faculties (and thereby transforming the institution into a proper university of the time), two later cardinals donated altogether an additional sum of 37,000 Florins to the institution. In addition, the cardinal of Hungary topped up the endowment with a yearly 10,000 Florins. At the inauguration of a Medical Faculty, Empress (and Hungarian Queen) Maria Theresa donated a great land property that previously had belonged to a rich monastery in central Hungary. After the dissolution of the Jesuit order by the pope in 1773, numerous large properties of the order have also been donated by the Empress/Queen to the university, and the entire capital of the Nagyszombat[2] Jesuits has been added to the endowment of the university. Even after the Versailles Treaty, when many of the properties of the university remained in territories of the newly formed Czechoslovakia, The Hague International Court made the decision in 1933 that the Czechoslovak state should pay a compensation for the loss of the properties of the university. The compensation for the 9200 ha land was enough to buy another piece of land of 4700 ha within the post-Versailles Hungary. All these properties and the entire endowment were lost after WW2, and the university became fully dependent on state subsidy.

The fate of other universities in the Soviet-allied countries was quite similar. Thus, they faced the formation of a market economy after the fall of the Soviet Union, without any alternative means of financing their activity than direct subsidy. The region's states after democratization and reorganization of their economy and budget structure had many challenges that needed financial means. After the 1990s, an initial increase in the educational budget was inevitable due to the late massification of higher education, but in most of the countries of the region, this tendency did not continue after the turn of the century, while the number of students in the tertiary education still increased.

[1] 1 Florin at that time was the equivalent of about 110 € at current price.

[2] Nagyszombat is actually Trnava, in Slovakia, where the university has been founded and operating from 1635 till 1780.

3 Comparative Study of Some HEIs from Different Countries

Though a vast literature is available on higher education financing, authors typically do not deal with funding research at the institutions, rather with different financing models concerning the *sources* of higher education budget. It is also difficult to find reliable data sources concerning research expenditures of HEIs. This is the reason why we have chosen to collect available actual budget data of some traditional research universities that can be found on their websites. As basic facts about their students and staff, as well as their total budget are typically readily available, we decided to collect data on the number of educational-scientific staff, the number of students, and the total operating budget of the institutions. A typical indicator in current literature when comparing the intensity of higher education financing in different countries is the expenditure per student in tertiary education (see e.g. OECD 2011). However, this indicator is not necessarily related to the intensity of research, rather to the intensity of the educational activity. Therefore, we decided to compare research intensity of HEIs in different countries based on the expenditure per academic-scientific staff member, which is an easily available indicator. At traditional research-intensive universities, practically every academic staff member is expected to actively participate in high-level scientific research; thus this is a suitable indicator to give information at least on the order of magnitude universities spend for research. Preliminary data collection clearly indicated distinct regions from the point of view of research funding at HEIs. For this study, we selected traditional research universities present in international rankings, having the best rankings in their home countries, whose data mentioned above are listed in Table 1.

A striking feature of the data is that the selected regions are markedly different concerning research budgets at universities. Looking at the normalized values of yearly university budget per academic staff, normalized to the smallest value of the Cracow Jagellonian University, we can distinguish the following groups.

In the US, this indicator is in the range between 20 and 60, private universities usually having a larger value. The next category is Eastern Asia, where the indicator has a value close to 20, except for Taiwan. Western European Universities fall between the values of 5 and 8, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg having somewhat lower a value, but it might be due to its different structure from the others listed. The last and least financed category comprises Eastern European Universities, close to the base value of one. Concerning the University of Vienna, its value is closer to those of the universities in the post-communist countries than to Western European ones. Among the four post-communist country universities, we can also find two categories that differ by a factor of two in the research intensity indicator. Charles University Prague is the best performing research university in the Czech Republic, and it is financed according to an output-based system of the country. Warsaw University is a beneficiary of prioritized financing of HEIs in Poland, also from European Structural Funds. Similar initiatives can be found neither in Austria, nor in Hungary.

Table 1 Operative budget, number of students and staff at selected universities

University[a]	Budget, million	Currency	Students	Academic staff	M€/person[b]	M€/person normalized[c]	Student/staff
Stanford	4800	US$	15,877	2043	1.77	57.1	7.8
Harvard	4200	US$	21,000	2400	1.32	42.5	8.8
MIT	2909	US$	11,301	1829	1.20	38.6	6.2
UPenn	6600	US$	24,630	4464	1.12	35.9	5.5
Princeton	1518	US$	7912	1177	0.97	31.3	6.7
Columbia	3460	US$	29,250	3763	0.69	22.3	7.8
Yale	2820	US$	12,109	4140	0.51	16.5	2.9
UCB	2160	US$	36,204	2236	0.73	23.5	16.2
UCLA	5900	US$	42,190	4300	1.04	33.3	9.8
Tokyo	235,816	¥	28,113	2558	0.67	21.5	11.0
Kyoto	202,124	¥	22,908	2783	0.53	17.0	8.2
Singapore	4821	S$	37,452	5313	0.55	17.6	7.0
Taiwan	16,208	NT$	47,748	2179	0.19	6.0	21.9
Coppenhg	8000	DKK	40,866	5023	0.21	6.9	8.1
ETHZürich	1512	CHF	18,178	4925	0.25	8.2	3.7
UOxford	1037	£	22,116	5809	0.22	7.2	3.8
UCambridge	805	£	18,899	6645	0.15	4.9	2.8
UParisSud	400	€	27,503	500	0.16	5.1	11.0
UHelsinki	670	€	35,189	4681	0.14	4.6	7.5
GUFrankfurt	490	€	42,067	2972	0.16	5.3	14.2
LMUMunich	1000	€	50,542	5248	0.19	6.1	9.6
FUBerlin	414	€	28,750	2420	0.17	5.5	11.9
HUBerlin	338	€	33,540	1999	0.17	5.4	16.8
RKUHdbg	624	€	31,535	5419	0.12	3.7	5.8

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

University[a]	Budget, million	Currency	Students	Academic staff	M€/person[b]	M€/person normalized[c]	Student/staff
UWien	522	€	91,898	6900	0.076	2.4	13.3
ChUPrague	8285	CZK	52,000	4400	0.067	2.2	11.8
WarsawU	240	€	53,500	3300	0.073	2.3	16.2
JUCracow	502	Zł	47,989	3844	0.031	1.0	12.5
ELTE	24320	Ft	25,899	2225	0.036	1.2	11.6

University	Year	URL
Stanford	Stanford University, CA. 2013/14	http://facts.stanford.edu/pdf/StanfordFacts_2014.pdf
Harvard	Harvard University 2014	http://www.harvard.edu/harvard-glance
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2013	http://web.mit.edu/facts/faqs.html
UPenn	University of Pennsylvania 2014	http://www.upenn.edu/about/facts.php
Princeton	Princeton University 2013	http://www.princeton.edu/main/about/facts/
Columbia	Columbia University 2014	http://www.columbia.edu/node/55.html
Yale	Yale University 2013-14	http://oir.yale.edu/sites/default/files/FACTSHEET(2013-14).pdf
UCB	University of California, Berkeley 2013	http://www.berkeley.edu/about/fact.shtml
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles 2013	http://newsroom.ucla.edu/ucla-fast-facts
Tokyo	University of Tokyo 2013	http://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/about/index.html#a003
Kyoto	Kyoto University 2014	http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/contentarea/ja/issue/ku_eprofile/documents/2014/facts_2014.pdf
Singapore	National University of Singapore 2013	http://www.nus.edu.sg/about-nus/overview/corporate-information
Taiwan	National Taiwan University 2013	http://acct2013.cc.ntu.edu.tw/final-e.html
Coppenhg	Københavns Universitet 2013	http://introduction.ku.dk/facts_and_figures/
ETHZürich	ETH Zürich 2013	https://www.ethz.ch/en/the-eth-zurich.html
UOxford	University of Oxford 2013	http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

University	Year	URL
UCambridge	University of Cambridge 2013	http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/planning/information/statistics/facts/poster2014.pdf
UParisSud	Université Paris-Sud 2013	http://www.u-psud.fr/fr/universite/chiffres-cles.html
UHelsinki	University of Helsinki 2013	http://www.helsinki.fi/annualreport2013/figures.html
GUFrankfurt	Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt 2013	http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/38072376/zahlen_fakten
LMUMunich	Ludwig-Maximilians- Universität München 2014	http://www.uni-muenchen.de/ueber_die_lmu/zahlen_fakten/index.html
FUBerlin	Freie Universität Berlin 2012	http://www.fu-berlin.de/universitaet/leitbegriffe/zahlen
HUBerlin	Humboldt-Universität Berlin 2014	https://www.hu-berlin.de/ueberblick/humboldt-universitaet-zu-berlin/daten-und-zahlen
RKUHdbg	Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg 2014	http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/universitaet/statistik/
UWien	Universität Wien 2014	http://www.univie.ac.at/universitaet/zahlen-und-fakten/
ChUPrague	Charles University, Prague 2012	http://www.cuni.cz/UKEN-109.html
WarsawU	Warsaw University 2012	http://en.uw.edu.pl/about-university/facts-and-figures/
JUCracow	Jagellonian University Cracow 2013/14	http://www.uj.edu.pl/en/uniwersytet/statystyki
ELTE	Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) 2014	http://www.elte.hu/kozerdeku

[a]Full name of the university, the year of the data along with the URL of the original source are listed above (all accessed 2 September 2014)
[b]All budget data transformed into € at the medium rate of 2 September 2014, prior to division by staff number
[c]Normalized to the smallest value in the table of the Jagellonian University Cracow

3.1 A Detailed Insight into the Hungarian R&D Financing in Higher Education

As a case study of the rather poor financing of Eastern European research universities, we would like to explore the case of Hungary. Similarly to all other Soviet-allied countries, HEIs have had limited R&D infrastructure by the dawn of the new era following the fall of Soviet Union, leading to the sovereignty of the countries and democratization of their society and economy. Another peculiarity of the R&D and HE systems of the Soviet-allied countries was that research has been allocated to a large extent to the academies of sciences running research institutes, rather than to HEIs. As a consequence, HEIs in the early 1990s did not have the necessary means to fulfil the expectation of a good balance between education and research. National authorities did realize this contradiction, and—in many post-Soviet countries—tried to adjust this balance accordingly.

In Hungary, the first government following free elections in 1990 also realized this handicap and signed a contract with the World Bank to receive a Structural Adjustment Loan (SAL) of which US$66 million, with an obligation to add another 5.5 billion HUF (the equivalent of cca 40 million US$ at contemporary course) have been allocated to the development of higher education (Kotán and Polónyi 2003). Though the contract contained several policy conditions on the loan, the committee charged by the government spent approximately 80 % of this sum for the development of research facilities at Hungarian HEIs (which was roughly 60 % of the total yearly budget of HEIs at the time). This initiative resulted in a humble but real "catch-up" of the HE sector concerning R&D potential.

Another development action in HE is associated with a second World Bank loan concerning modernization in Hungary. It has been signed in 1998, and most of the content of the policy agreement concerning higher education focused on new buildings and structural changes in the Hungarian HE system. Due to several reasons—mostly to the availability of much better loan conditions in the aftermath of the contract—the contract has been terminated by the Hungarian government before completion. The roughly 100 million US$ (cca. 22 % of the total yearly budget of HEIs at the time) has been spent for several purposes, but not really for the improvement of the R&D infrastructure (Kotán and Polónyi 2003). Thus, it was the first SAL in 1990–1994 that resulted in a considerable improvement of the research infrastructure in HEIs, and—as we will show—there wasn't another possibility to substantially improve the poor infrastructure of research in HEIs in Hungary ever after.

When trying to give a realistic picture of the R&D budget of HEIs, it turns out that it is not an easy task, as budget reports of universities are not really clear-cut in this respect, in the sense that research incomes as well as expenditures cannot always be distinguished from other (educational and general operational) costs. Concerning the sources of the budget, direct state subsidies already contain some contribution to research expenditure, and there are other resources for research purposes as well.

Let us discuss first recent direct state subsidies. According to Act CCIV of 2011 on Higher Education as well as the previous Acts, the state had to subsidize scientific development in higher education institutions (Act CCIV 2011, Section 84 (2)). Accordingly, during the years 2008–2012, Hungarian HEIs were entitled to receive normative funding earmarked for R&D activity (Central Budgets 2006–2013), which was roughly 15 % of the total direct state subsidy—the equivalent of some 108 million €. However, this funding was input-based, and part of a block-grant. Thus, even if it had been earmarked for R&D when allocated, HEIs usually spent a large part of it for operational costs of educational activity as there were no incentives coupled to the improvement of research. As a result, this non-negligible amount did not really help to improve research activities of HEIs. To accommodate legislation to the usual habit of HEIs, the HE Act has been changed, and the R&D-aimed part of the subsidy of 13.55 billion HUF for the year of 2013 has been added to an integral block grant, without earmarking its R&D share. As to its actual use, there are no reliable data available. Due to the bad financial situation of the HEIs, they probably have spent most of it again for other purposes than research.

Also in 2013, a system of performance based excellence awards was introduced to support R&D activity. Constructed upon similar principles as the German "Excellenzinitiative",[3] a Hungarian program for institutional excellence was launched; from 2013 on, Hungarian higher education institutions can be awarded excellence titles based on their performance. A total of 10 billion HUF (the equivalent of some 32 million €) from the national budget was exclusively dedicated for the support of institutions in 2013 that have been considered outstanding based on their performance indicators in their main fields of activity (Central Budgets 2006–2013). According to the 2014 Central Budget, a similar sum is foreseen for the title holding institutions. However, state subsidies for the HEIs that have the excellence titles did not change much altogether, as there were austerity measures for the fiscal consolidation of the state budget which resulted in cuttings also to the HEIs; i.e. a trend to reduce HE and R&D expenditures (Széll Kálmán Terv 2011). Allocations due to the excellence initiative hardly compensated for the decrease of the general state subsidies.

Due to the historical heritage of a large network of research institutions operated by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS), these institutions are great competitors to absorb state subsidies and other national resources for R&D. (Their combined scientific output is comparable to that of one of the three largest universities.[4]) On the other hand, HAS and its research institutes also cooperate with the actors of HE in several respects. The Academy runs programs to support research groups at the universities, and runs the successful brain-gain Momentum

[3]See http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/excellence_initiative/general_information/index.html.

[4]See the science maps of Hungarian R&D output: http://www.hungarianscience.org/maps_aggreg_20072011.php.

Program for the support of excellent Hungarian researchers who return from abroad to Hungary. Though this latter program supports in a large part researchers working at the HAS research institutes, a considerable share of these researchers get support from the HAS budget but work at universities.

A humble but important contribution to funding basic research in Hungary is The Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (Hungarian acronym: OTKA) that has been the major funding agency of basic research and related scholarships since 1986. OTKA allocates financial support for research projects, and has a budget of 7686 billion HUF in 2014 (Central Budget 2014). At least half of its support goes to HEIs, but it is only slightly higher than a mere 1 % of the total yearly budget (including non-state-subsidy sources) of HEIs.[5]

Summing up, direct state resources for higher education R&D purposes have decreased in the past few years. Though additional national budgetary sources are still available for higher education institutions, these are also available by other institutions as well, either as grants or tender calls of different funding agencies. Whether new programs could compensate for the abolition of the normative funding cannot be answered with full certainty; however, the current state of financing obviously has a negative effect on the R&D activity of HE institutions.

A determining feature of R&D development in Hungary—similarly to other countries in the region—is a strong dependence on the financial support coming from the European Structural Funds. During the 2007–2013 programming period, through the framework of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP), Hungary allocated 107 billion HUF from the European Social Funds to support the development of the higher education system, and to strengthen the infrastructure and human resource capacities of higher education research activity (SROP 2007–2013). The annual average funding reached 15 billion HUF—almost 50 % of state subsidies for HE R&D, and approximately the double of the total yearly budget of The Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (Central Budget 2014). In addition to the measures of the SROP, enterprise-focused projects within the framework of Economic Development Operational Programme (funded by the European Regional Development Fund) also offered participation opportunities for higher education institutions, but related data are not available at the time of the submission of this chapter. Measures of the SROP aimed at strengthening R&D capacities of HEIs to enhance their access to alternative sources of funding. This operative program can be considered as a success; R&D capacities of institutions have expanded, and a positive correlation was found between development measures and the acquisition of third party funding (Kutatóintézet 2013). It is interesting to quote the final conclusion of this part of the study: "The higher the support per academic staff [within these development measures], the higher the increase in acquiring other national and international R&D funds".

[5]OTKA ceased to exist as an independent agency from January 2, 2015 and became part of a central government agency responsible for a coordinated distribution of all public R&D funding, called National Research, Development and Innovation Office, created by the Act LXXVI (2014).

It is easy to conclude that the Structural Funds played a crucial role in strengthening Hungarian R&D capacities at HEIs. Eligibility in the system of Structural Funds, however, is based on the development level of regions (NUTS2). Given that the Central Hungarian Region belongs to some of the most advanced regions of Europe, the amount of available resources is very limited, and will be even less in the future. The fact, that the Central Hungarian Region is the most R&D intensive region of the country—almost 50 % of all higher education capacities and two thirds of all R&D capacities are concentrated in the capital and the surrounding region—the lack of available resources poses a significant threat. At the beginning of the programming period, some SROP measures could have provided supplementary funds to the Central Hungarian Region, but from 2012 on, state funded measures (using the Research and Technological Innovation Fund) were to set up to compensate for the lack of EU funds. However, their volume was much less than the loss in European funds. To evade a significant threat to the competitiveness of the country, higher education development strategies must be designed in a way that builds upon the synergies of possible funding sources.

Though the Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development only contribute less than 7 % to the total European R&D expenditures, they provide a considerable help for the Hungarian HEIs to support their research activity. Among the new member states, Hungary is ranked second in the number of accepted project proposals, and Hungary received the second largest amount of funding (after Poland) among these countries. Higher education institutions acquired 31 % of all these funds received by Hungary between 2007 and 2013; out of the total amount of 224 million €, 69,2 million € was utilized in HEIs

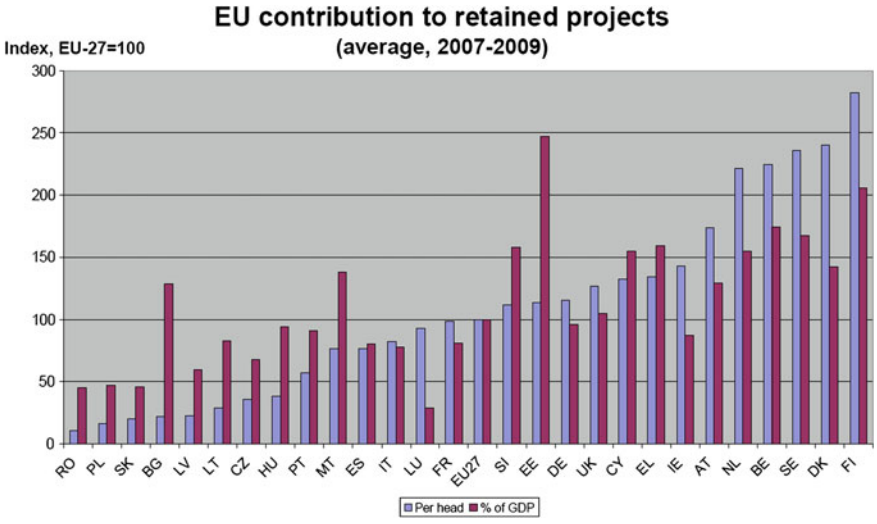

Fig. 1 EU member state contribution in the retained FP7 projects relative to population and relative to GDP of the respective countries (*Source* EC 2010)

(NIO 2014). However, to correctly interpret this data, it must be mentioned—as the interim evaluation of FP7 (EC 2010) revealed—that the performance of new member states—based on the number of inhabitants or economic influence—in the Framework Programme is still lagging behind the performance of older member states (see Fig. 1). The number of projects launched with participants from the new member states is significantly lower, and the average amount of funding for consortia members is also dramatically lower (less than 50 %) than in the case of other member states (EU15). The rate of success is also smaller in new member states. Despite of this low share, Framework Programmes are of great help for HEIs in Hungary, as well as in other post-Soviet countries in Eastern Europe.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the documents cited in the introduction concerning the role of higher education institutions in the economy and society, we can conclude that higher education—including research done in HEIs—is a public good for the benefit of the whole of mankind, and also for the countries which host the HEIs. Though the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is a law in action in the vast majority of the EHEA countries, its obligation to the progressive introduction of free education in HEIs seems not to be followed, except in a few countries. Even if we realize that, for the time being, within the present economic situation of the states, this goal is not realistic on a short term, states should be responsible to guarantee that HEIs can have the financial means they need to fulfil their important mission. The present trend to provide this financial means is cost sharing between different actors in the field of higher education.

Scientific research, or in a broader sense research and development, is a special kind of activity in HEIs due to its need for extremely expensive infrastructure and an extensive demand in human resources. Though research is a substantial element of the training procedure, its practice as well as its goals are beyond mere educational needs; thus it is necessary to involve other financial resources in addition to those which aim to support education only. Regions of the world where this R&D activity is at high level are privileged, and typically develop so that they are able to successfully face economic and societal challenges. Obviously, it is a global interest not to let any regions lag behind too much concerning necessary resources to maintain a stable society. It is therefore desirable within the EHEA also, that a reasonably balanced regional development be achieved.

In this chapter, we have focused on the situation of the R&D potential of HEIs within the post-Soviet Eastern European countries. Analysis of the data presented in the previous sections is not easy, but we can state some simple principles. We have tried to find robust indicators that can show important differences in the research intensity between traditional research universities in various parts of the world. The total operating budget per academic-scientific staff is an easily available and robust indicator. If there are big differences in the order of magnitude of this indicator, they

should be associated with a markedly different financing of the research activity. Obviously, differences in the operative costs spent for buildings, management and the basic staff providing services for education account only for a smaller part of the difference. The largest portion of the higher operative budget is expended by the institutions to support R&D activity.

Accordingly, from the point of view of research intensity, we can distinguish four regions of the world where traditional research universities can be found. The best financial situation is characteristic of North American research universities. Roughly, a financing less by a factor of two characterizes Eastern Asian universities. A factor of four to six less in budget is typical for Western European leading universities, while the budget of the best Eastern European research universities is a factor of twenty to forty less than that of their US counterparts. Considering the EHEA only, there are typically three- to eightfold differences between Western and Eastern universities. Obviously, this is an undesirable situation concerning regional balance both in higher education and research. If there aren't some specific measures to mitigate this imbalance, Eastern universities will lag behind even more, as a low research potential also means a great handicap to win research projects from various resources.

As we have shown on the Hungarian example, even relatively modest "injections" into the research budget can have an ameliorating effect on the potential to successfully increase the research income. The World Bank SAL initiative helped at the very beginning, but it is not a viable choice for more developed countries, as the World Bank only offers this kind of help to less developed ones. Furthermore, most of the Eastern European countries are indebted to an extent that they cannot afford to take much additional loans. Another possibility is the upcoming Framework Programme Horizon 2020 of the European Union. Its principle to distribute financial support based exclusively on scientific excellence should not be changed, and a *juste retour* approach would certainly not be justified. However, too narrow a focus on 'research excellence' can overshadow the benefits of full-scale involvement of the new Member States in the Framework Programmes and this should not be neglected either (EC 2010). A possible method to increase participation of the less favoured region is designing funding measures from cohesion policy instruments, specifically to increase the research potentials of HEIs. In order to help creating synergy between funds, the restrictive logic in ESF and ERDF might be softened; the possibility of combining funds from different sources (national budgets, structural funds and other international sources) could contribute significantly to bridging the existent resource gaps in Eastern European R&D projects. Another "softening" that could help would be the exemption of at least the higher education sector from the strict limitations of allocating structural funds into the most developed Central Hungarian Region, and similarly other regions in the same situation. (NUTS2 regions Prague and Central Bohemia share the same problem.)

To overcome the regional R&D imbalance, external sources are, of course, not sufficient. Governments in the region should be determined to make efforts into this direction. The amelioration of the research potential is not only a question of subsidies (even if they are necessary to initiate development), but a

research-friendly legal environment can also be of great help. In addition to initial budgetary help that should concentrate on increasing the potential of research excellence, legal measures to facilitate the support from third parties is also necessary. A concerted effort from the European Union, the ERC and national authorities could be the best guarantee in this less favoured region for the institutions with distinguished traditions of achievement in science not to lose their scientific potential. This would coincide with the goals of the Horizon 2020 program as well; to use the full potential of the new Member States in increasing EU competitiveness over other regions of the world.

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Policy Incentives and Research Productivity in the Romanian Higher Education. An Institutional Approach

Lazăr Vlăsceanu and Marian-Gabriel Hâncean

1 Introduction

Some recently introduced institutional arrangements in the Romanian higher education system aimed at increasing the quality of both research and teaching, while also providing incentives to Romanian universities for a better connection to the international stream of research and ideas. These arrangements have been set to drive the Romanian higher education system from a traditionally praised Humboldtian model, where research and teaching are harmoniously combined within each and every university, towards a model in which one might identify a differentiation based on the division of labour among universities, that is research-oriented universities versus teaching-oriented universities (Shin and Toutkoushian 2011). This key rationale of such a change addressed the need of universities to grow their specialized competences as to effectively and efficiently spend the rather scarce public resources, while relying on existing and prospective faculty.

We build on Schwarz and Teichler (2002) perspective that institutional framework determines, to a large extent, the theoretical and methodological standards that higher education research strives for or achieves. Moreover, as Mace (1995) showed, new funding mechanisms are expected to change the behaviour of academics, both in terms of teaching and research. Consequently, our view is that the quality of research productivity is affected not only by the funding levels, but also by the incentives conveyed by the institutional arrangements governing the higher education system. As argued by Estermann and Pruvot (2011), diversity in the funding structure is an important condition for universities to achieve financial sustainability.

L. Vlăsceanu
Department of Sociology, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: lazarvlasceanu@gmail.com

M.-G. Hâncean (✉)
University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: gabriel.hancean@sas.unibuc.ro

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While public funding is an important income source for Romanian universities, recently introduced incentives are expected to determine universities to seek out additional funding sources. However, we show that university income diversification and higher levels of funding are not the only drivers for higher quality in research. The introduction of performance criteria in the allocation of public funding should act as a driving force towards an increase in research productivity and its impact.

In the first section of this paper, we briefly analyze the legal arrangements recently provisioned within the Romanian higher education, from an institutional analysis perspective. We stress the most important changes brought forth from a manifold perspective: *academic career, quality assurance* and *funding*. In the second section, we shortly discuss the idea of scientific productivity, suggesting that citations and citation-based formulae (i.e. H-index and G-index) are acceptable tools for the measurement of research impact. Eventually, we report and discuss the findings produced after analyzing the scientific productivity of two classes of Romanian university departments (i.e. Sociology; Political Science and International Relations). We conclude by suggesting that an increase in the quality of research productivity is due to a combination of income diversification and funding growth, with institutional incentives that stress performance criteria.

2 Institutional Arrangements Within Romanian Higher Education

2.1 The Problem of Increasing Research Productivity

When approaching issues related to academic quality and research productivity in higher education systems similar to the Romanian one, at least two streams of ideas may be pointed out. On the one hand, there is a dominant stream that builds on the idea that public expenditures or public funding would necessary yield academic quality and research productivity enhancement. The best way of growing research productivity and academic quality would be that of increasing the flow of financial resources. There is also a rather marginal stream of ideas that works with the assumption that research productivity and impact could be improved by increasing the level of efficiency in spending public funding. In other words, academic quality and research productivity could be increased by holding the public funding constant while improving the mechanisms for a more efficient exploitation of the existing resources. From such a perspective, specific incentives and institutional arrangements are needed in order to determine a significant increase in the efficiency of spending the same quantity of financial resources.

These two streams of ideas may be considered as complementary. From such a perspective, we put forward a model in which we merge the need for increasing public funding with those incentives that would lead to an increase in the efficiency of spending input resources (such as funding).

As to test the model, we choose to provide a case study focused on the recent reforms in the Romanian higher education system. The reforms provisioned after 2011 have been legally set out for increasing the level of efficiency in spending public funding made available for academic research and teaching (see the Law of Education no. 1/2011).

Within Romanian tertiary education and R&D sector, increasing expenditure trends can be identified (as shown in Fig. 1), even if these are particularly small compared with other EU countries, and despite the provisions of the current Romanian Law of Education (according to the Romanian Law of Education, minimum 6 % of GDP ought to have been allocated in 2012 as expenditure on tertiary education and at least 1 % of GDP as expenditure on R&D).

Given the expenditure trends (Fig. 1), the scientific productivity reported for the same time framework also increased. For instance, the increasing trend of publications within the field of Romanian sociology (as shown in Fig. 2). The data plotted in Fig. 2 were collected using Publish or Perish software tool (Harzing 2007) and refers to the scientific productivity of the academics working full-time within Romanian departments of sociology.

The Law of Education (no. 1/2011) provided the legal basis for important reforms in the Romanian education system: new institutions for the selection and

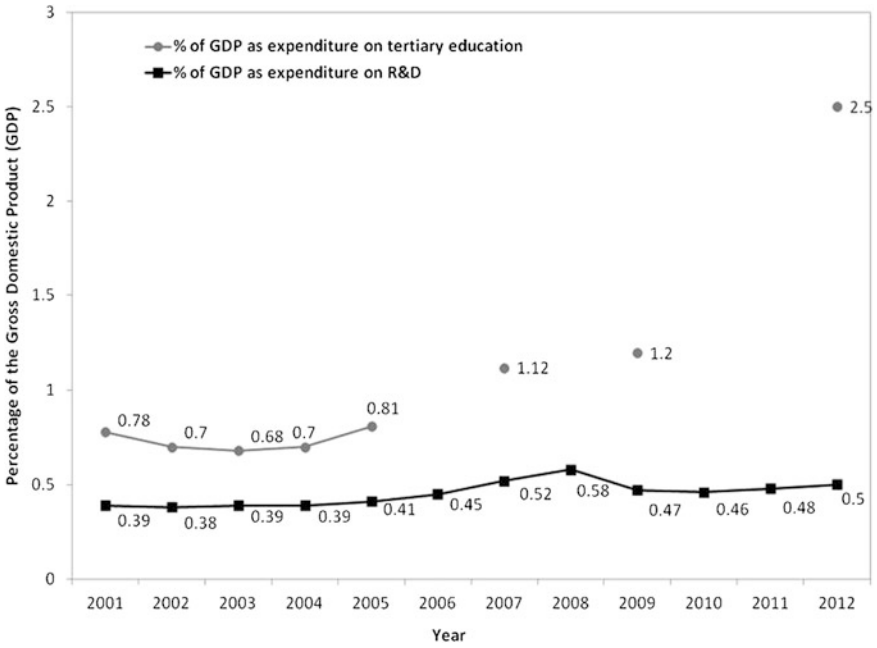

Fig. 1 Increasing expenditure trends, within Romania, on tertiary education and on R&D, as % of GDP. *Note* The *plotted data* were collected from Eurostat. The numbers for 2012 are computed based on official datasets reported by the Ministry of Public Finance of Romania

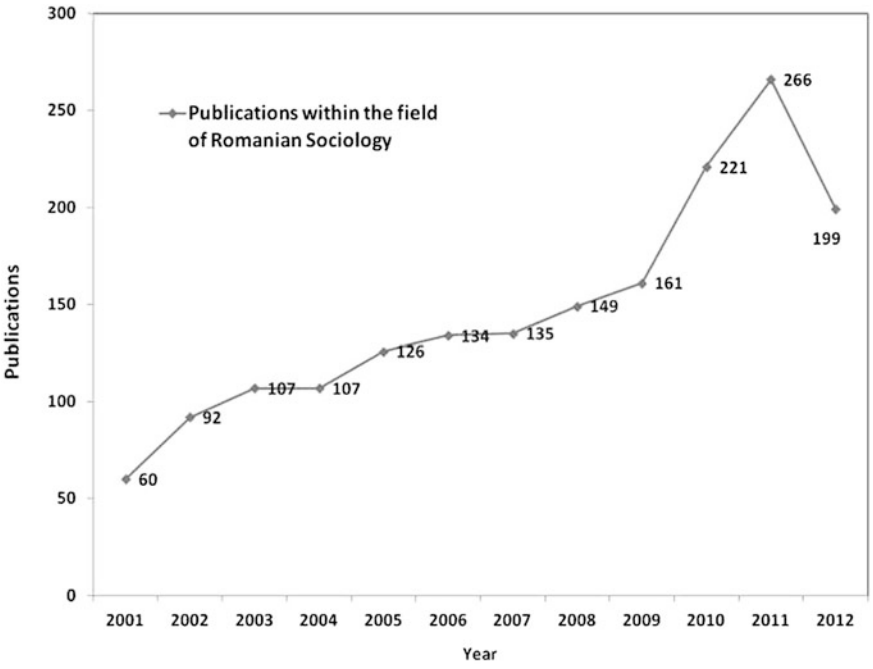

Fig. 2 The increasing trend of publications within the field of Romanian Sociology

recruitment of academic staff, a new mechanism of university funding, a new philosophy of higher education quality assurance and evaluation, a new arrangement for enhancing the institutional capacity of universities.

2.2 The Academic Career

By recognizing the need for auditing institutional policies focused on academic and research staff, the Council on University Qualifications and Degrees (CNATDCU) has formally introduced new quality evaluation mechanisms and schema. The new policy of staff development has thus rendered a shift from the traditional policy to a post-traditional one. While the traditional approach, in Romania, was based on principles of in-breeding localism and academic gerontocracy, considering age/seniority as the key element in the process of job recruitment and appointment, the post-traditional one relies entirely on peer-reviewed academic performances and scientometric outputs. The post-traditional approach is meant to be meritocratic, highlighting the knowledge productivity internationally acknowledged. For instance, according to the reforms provisioned in 2011, academic and research staff recruitment and promotion have had to take into account individual performances measured by specific criteria, such as: publications impact (e.g. number of citations,

G-index and H-index scores), number of publications (e.g. papers, books, book chapters etc.) included in internationally indexed databases etc. This post-traditional policy approach of providing new ways of moving up onto the academic career ladder ignores age and considers the ability of academics and researchers to connect, by excellence in research, to international flows of ideas and research communities. Under the given context, the policy expectation is that the new selection procedures would filter the occupational mobility and orient the academic career ladder towards breeding internationally recognized performance and originality.

2.3 The Quality Assurance Process

Concerning the quality assurance procedures, Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), using the ACADEMIS project as a vehicle, has made several proposals for redefining the quality assurance criteria and indicators. These proposals have aimed at changing the traditional philosophy of quality assurance and evaluation from an input oriented approach to the one which is highly standardized and relying mostly on results, particularly learning outcomes. The new philosophy is process-oriented and, especially, output/outcome oriented, matching European and international trends (Stensaker 2011). Stressing the process and the output/outcome features of higher education have been thought of as an adequate means for increasing the educational process efficiency and efficacy, while also providing wider and proper opportunities for an improved exploitation of the existing inputs into the process. Given the new quality assurance framework, a certain degree of resistance is expected on the part of some universities that lack the institutional capacity of adjusting their internal processes to the new institutional requirements. Within the near future, the problem of circumscribing this resistance remains open, while lessons learned from other reported cases (Beach 2013) might become relevant.

2.4 The University Classification Exercise and the Introduction of Performance Criteria

The most radical change produced by the 2011 Law of Education has been represented by the University Classification and Study Program Ranking Exercise. That was a national evaluation exercise which aimed: (a) to break the systemically in-built institutional isomorphism which kept hidden to stakeholders basic information on the differentiation of universities, and (b) to provide opportunities for emerging a more institutionally diverse system of higher education. There has also been an instrumental objective, in the sense that the university evaluation exercise sought to differentiate among universities based on their institutional mission and

performance. Consequently, Romanian universities have been classified into three distinct classes: advanced research universities, research and teaching universities, and teaching oriented universities. Furthermore, all university study programs were ranked. For instance, within the sociology ranking domain or within the mathematics ranking domain etc., all the corresponding study programs existing in the Romanian higher education system have been ranked into five ordinal classes (from the class A to class E).

These two outputs—institutional classification and study programs ranking—are to be highly flexible in time, so as to allow universities and study programs to evolve both within and between classes and ranks according to their academic and research performing outcomes. They have been intended to facilitate the institutional development of universities, enhance their quality assurance mechanisms, increase the quality of university internal operations and processes, and correct the informational asymmetry between universities and prospective students or stakeholders. The evaluation exercise has thus sought also to accomplish a substantial objective: that of providing universities with the necessary and accurate mechanisms for a better understanding and establishment of their own institutional mission and strategic development.

Both objectives have had salient expected consequences for Romanian higher education. The accomplishment of the instrumental objective has been expected to correct the informational asymmetry (e.g. with respect to prospective students awareness regarding the quality of educational services provided by universities). Put it simpler, different types of beneficiaries (e.g. prospective students, alumni, employers etc.) were expected to have the proper means to evaluate university study programs in terms of performance and, incidentally, to make informed choices. Moreover, even universities have been expected to have a clear and sound image of their own levels of scientific and teaching performance levels. Also, the accomplishment of the substantial objective would enhance universities' capabilities of attaining reflexivity. This reflexivity is expected to raise awareness with respect to the institutional mission, strategic action setting and community involvement.

2.5 The New Public Funding Mechanism

According to the reform, institutional arrangements, the public funding streams are to be correlated with the results produced by the university evaluation exercise (i.e. university classification and study program ranking). For instance, public funding should be so oriented as to take into consideration how university study programs perform (i.e. their position within each ranking domain). This principle of financing performance in both teaching and research rests on the idea of spending public resources more efficiently. Public funding streams should concentrate especially on those universities and university study programs that entail higher levels of quality in teaching and research (e.g. university study programs that hold top positions within each ranking domain, be that in teaching and/or in research, are expected to

receive more public funding, whereas university study programs poorly ranked either lose their public funding, or receive less financing for respectively research and/or teaching). This mechanism is expected to produce competition among universities and specialized study programs at the level of higher education system, and to forge the required incentives/payoffs to better structure university organizational environments. Within this type of institutional landscape, universities are predicted to orient their human resource strategies on appointing highly competitive academic staff and to consider improving and even removing that study programs that poorly perform (i.e. to cut off their losses). Though criticized, the idea of competitive funding seems to be a common feature for many worldwide higher education reforms (Marginson 2013).

Such reform policies, provisioned in 2011 with respect to academic staff recruitment and promotion, quality assurance, university classification, study program ranking or public financing, are expected to conduct the Romanian higher education system into increasing the level of efficiency in spending public funding.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Productivity and Its Impact

We shall here focus on the research area, leaving teaching for a later demonstration. When measuring research productivity and impact, various scientometric tools are available. Firstly, one may seek to measure academics and departments' number of journal papers, books, book chapters, patents etc. The highlight is thus on the quantity of publications from which one may estimate the scholar and/or department's research productivity (Johnes 1988). A larger number of published scientific items in a given unit of time would mean a higher level of individual research productivity. However, there are many drawbacks when using this approach. The most important one is that a scholar could publish a large number of publications, but without any real scientific impact, due to their low quality and lack of interest for other researchers. Such a drawback might be compensated by measuring the impact of a scholar's work in terms of citations (Shin and Toutkoushian 2011). In this paper, we consider citations as an acceptable measure for the quality and impact of research productivity, in spite of the controversies and discussions on its pros and cons (Toutkoushian 1994; Toutkoushian et al. 2003).

For illustrating such an approach, we consider the relationship between research productivity and academic quality impact by looking at the G-index and H-index scores (Egghe 2006a, b; Egghe and Rousseau 2008; Hirsch 2005; Woeginger 2008). Although G-index, H-index and other similar indices have been developed as tools for ranking journals, scholars or university departments, in this paper we refer to these formulae for other purposes. We treat G-index and H-index scores as proxies for estimating the impact of funding on academics' research productivity in two specific Romanian fields: *Sociology* and *Political Science & International*

Relations. Citations, G-index and H-index scores are measured both at an individual and departmental level, within the same discipline, building on previous similar research studies (Becher 1994; Feldman 1987). We keep the model simple, ignoring other factors that determine or affect scientific productivity, such as, for instance, personal career preferences, human capital, teaching workload (Porter and Umbach 2001; Webber 2011).

3.2 Methods

We used Publish or Perish software (Harzing 2007) to measure the impact of the Romanian academics' research productivity as this is distributed in two disciplinary domains. We collected G-index and H-index scores for all scholars working in the Romanian university departments of Political Science and International Relations (hereafter PS&IR) and Sociology (Table 1). The human resource composition of the 40 university departments was established using official data reports provided by ARACIS.

When considering the G-index and H-index scores, our stress was not on assessing their ranking potential, but on their descriptive guise, exploring the possible relationships between these results and the public funding mechanisms. We were thus interested in investigating whether increasing research funding would be positively associated with an increase in research productivity and its impact.

3.3 Data Analysis and Results

The distributions of individual G-index and H-index scores, split on ranking domains (i.e. Sociology and PS&IR), are available in Figs. 3 and 4. Inspecting the box-and-whiskers plots, one could notice that 50 % of the academic staff working in the departments of PS&IR and Sociology have a G-index score and a H-index score of zero. Put it differently, half of the academics in the Romanian departments of Sociology and PS&IR have publications that almost no one ever cited (or, at least, there is no file—e.g. paper, book, magazine article etc., indexed by the Google

Table 1 Population of scholars within the Romanian university departments of sociology and of political science and international relations

Academic ranking domain	Number of university departments	Number of full time working scholars/academics
Sociology	17 out of 17 accredited university departments	267
Political science and international relations	23 out of 23 accredited university departments	492

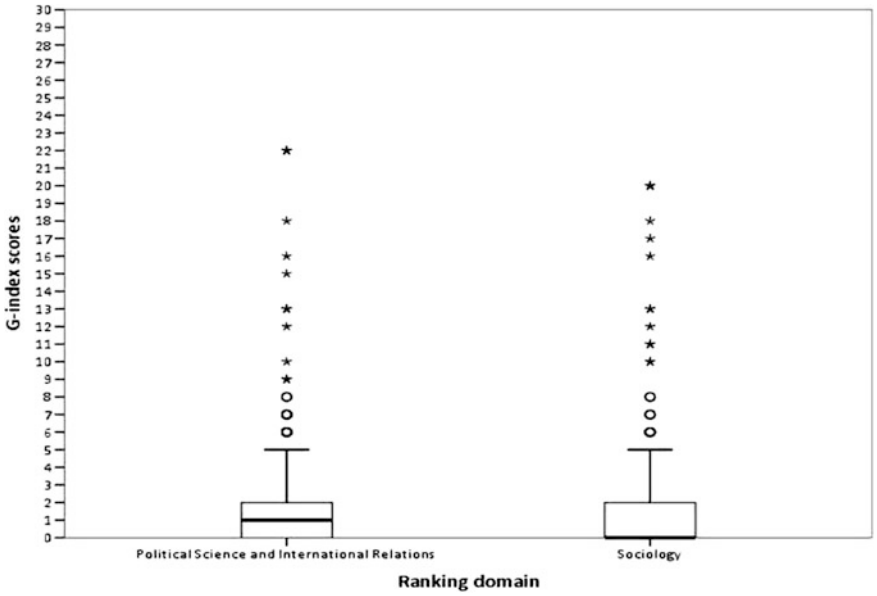

Fig. 3 Individual G-index score distributions for scholars working within university departments of two ranking domains: Political Science and International Relations, and Sociology

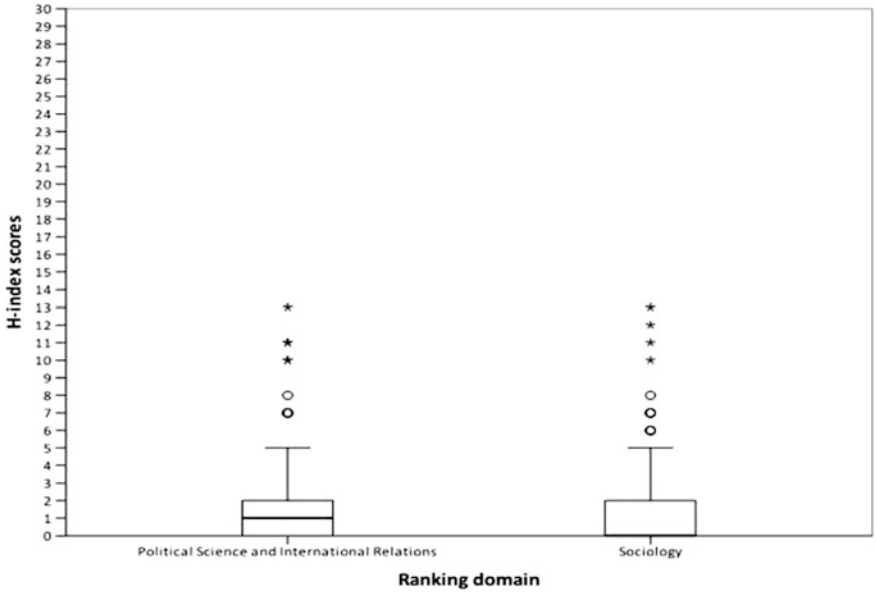

Fig. 4 Individual H-index score distributions for scholars working within university departments of two ranking domains: Political Science and International Relations, and Sociology

browser, that cites the scientific work published by the people working in the Romanian departments of Sociology and PS&IR). The top 25 % of the academics have a G-index and H-index score range of three, between two and five. Outliers are present in the score distributions and point out that there are some scholars whose work is more influential, seminal and have a greater impact (e.g. there is a G-index score outlier of 22 for PS&IR and of 27 for Sociology).

Male scholars have better G-index and H-index scores than female scholars, irrespective of the ranking domain (median = 1 for males and median = 0 for females), but a higher variation (S.D. = 2.1 for males and 1.4 for females). Although the difference between the two medians is extremely small, this could still be explained by the fact that the time spent in the system by male scholars is longer than the time spent by women. That is, in the university departments of Sociology and of PS&IR, male scholars tend to occupy higher academic ranks (professors and associate professors). The relationship between sex and academic ranks is stressed by Pearson's chi-square test: in case of Sociology ranking domain, $\chi^2 = 18$, df = 4, p = 0.00, and in the case of PS&IR, $\chi^2 = 38$, df = 4, p = 0.00. We also uncovered a positive correlation between the academic ranks (i.e. the period spent within the higher education system, as, until recently, the climbing on the academic ladder in Romania has been gerontocratic) and H-index scores ($\tau = 0.475$, p = 0.01, for Sociology, and $\tau = 0.450$, p = 0.01, for PS&IR) or G-index scores ($\tau = 0.469$, p = 0.01, for Sociology, and $\tau = 0.443$, p = 0.01, for PS&IR). It follows that male scholars score better than women and they hold the highest academic positions (i.e. professors and associate professors).

We wanted to control the *time* influence over the G-index and H-index score distributions. For doing so, we took into account only the scientific items published after 2006. We did this exercise for the Sociology ranking domain and the empirical findings suggest two things. Firstly, there is a positive relationship between the distribution of G-index scores and the distribution of G-index scores computed for publications published after 2006 in sociology ($\tau = 0.806$, p = 0.01). There is also a positive relationship between the distribution of H-index scores and the distribution of H-index scores computed for publications published after 2006 ($\tau = 0.821$, p = 0.01). Secondly, there is also a positive relationship between academic titles and G-index score distribution computed for publications published after 2006 ($\tau = 0.371$, p = 0.01). Even if the relationship between academic titles and G-index scores computed for publications published after 2006 is smaller than the correlation between academic titles and G-index score distribution (without time referral), it shows that professors and associate professor still have a scientific work with a larger impact (Table 2).

The differences among academic titles are smaller when compared using G-index and H-index scores computed for publications published after 2006, than when compared using G-index and H-index scores (computed without time referral). This idea is shown in Figs. 5 and 6, where one might inspect the differences among academic titles in terms of G-index and H-index mean scores, within the Romanian Sociology ranking domains.

Table 2 Comparing impact scores for the ranking domain of sociology

N	Professors		Associate professors		Lectors		Assistants	
	40	40	63	63	118	118	37	37
	G-index	*G-index after 2006*	*G-index*	*G-index after 2006*	*G-index*	*G-index after 2006*	*G-index*	*G-index after 2006*
Mean	6.38	2.53	2.59	1.54	1.23	0.81	0.24	0.19
Median	5	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
Mode	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum	27	12	18	15	15	11	3	3
	H-index	*H-index after 2006*	*H-index*	*H-index after 2006*	*H-index*	*H-index after 2006*	*H-index*	*H-index after 2006*
Mean	3.73	1.63	1.98	1.24	0.83	0.61	0.19	0.16
Median	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
Mode	2[a]	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum	17	7	13	13	8	8	2	2

Note The comparison was done controlling for the time effect

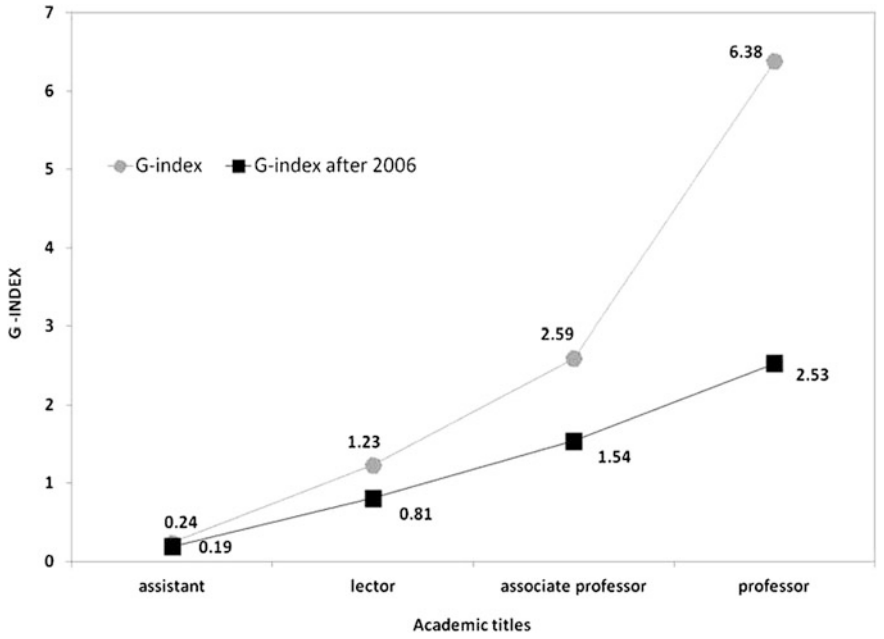

Fig. 5 Comparing individual G-index score means across academic titles, within Romanian Sociology ranking domain

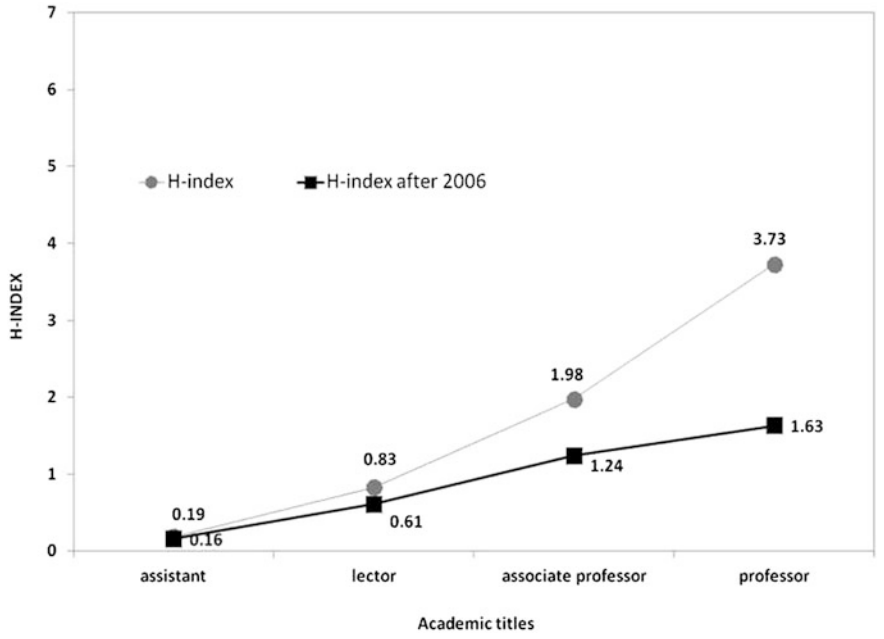

Fig. 6 Comparing individual H-index score means across academic titles, within Romanian Sociology ranking domain

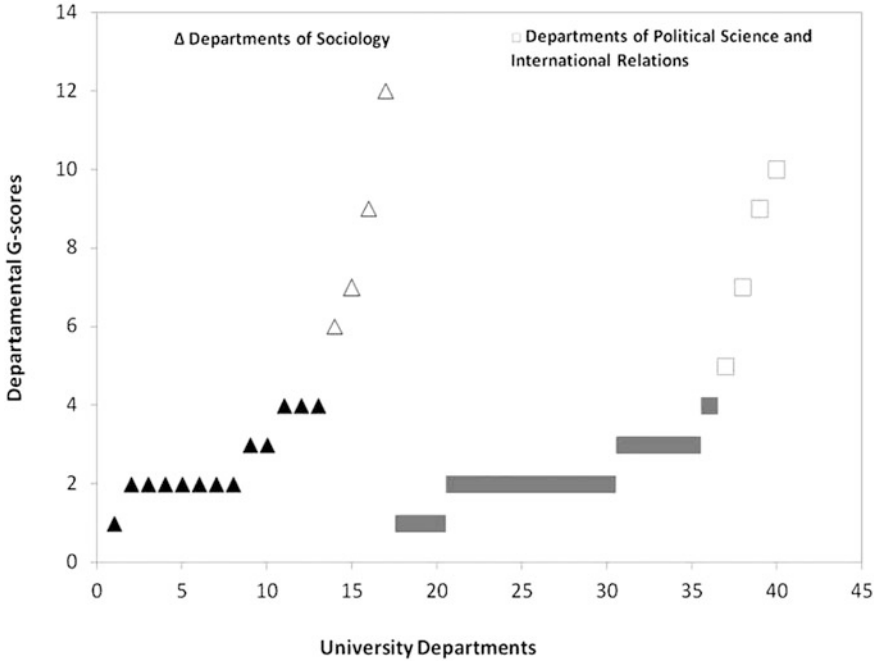

Fig. 7 Ranking the Romanian departments of sociology and of political science and international relations, using G successive index scores

Using the individual (nominal) G-index scores calculated for each member of the Romanian departments of *Sociology* and *PS&IR,* we were able to apply Tol's formula to compute the successive G-index for each department (Tol 2008).

In Fig. 7, one might investigate the distribution of successive G-index scores for all the 17 Romanian departments of Sociology and for all the 23 Romanian departments of PS&IR. As shown, the great majority has successive G-index scores between one and three, while the top departments (designated by empty triangles and squares) have successive G-index scores between five and eleven. This distribution of scores indicates at least a *cleavage* between *top* and *ordinary departments*.

Analyzing the raw data reported by the 17 departments of Sociology during the official University Classification and Study Program Ranking Exercise (2011), we uncovered some useful results for investigating the impact of research funding on the quality and research productivity. Firstly, there is a positive correlation between the *total funding*[1] reported by the departments and the *total number of publications*

[1]Official raw data on Romanian university research funding are extremely hard to find for academic purposes. However, we constructed the scale variable *total funding* by aggregating all the research funding streams that the 17 sociology departments reported to received during 2006 and 2011. By all the funding streams we understand: state funding, alternative to State national funding

Table 3 Results of non-parametric correlations among different types of university department funding and different types of research productivity impact proxies

Research productivity impact proxies	Types of university department funding		
	Total funding	Public funding	Private funding streams
Number of citations, computed for publications printed after 2006	$\tau = 0.082$	$\tau = 0.301$	$\tau = 0.244$
Departmental H index, computed for publications printed after 2006	$\tau = 0.099$	$\tau = 0.293$	$\tau = 0.249$
Departmental G index, computed for publications printed after 2006	$\tau = 0.155$	$\tau = 0.303$	$\tau = 0.335$

Note The correlation scores were computed for the University Departments of Sociology (n = 17) and neither of them was statistically significant ($p > 0.05$, two-tailed)

(e.g. papers, books, book chapters etc.) published between 2006 and 2011 ($\tau = 0.391$, p (2-tailed) = 0.05). There is also a positive correlation between *total number of publications between 2006 and 2011* and *public funding*[2] ($\tau = 0.477$, p (2-tailed) = 0.05) or *private funding streams* (non-state funding) ($\tau = 0.510$, p (2-tailed) = 0.01).

When measuring for the impact of the scientific productivity, we did not find any relationship between the *total funding/public funding/private funding streams* reported by the Sociology departments and *the number of citations*[3] or the *departments' H* and *G scores*[4] (Table 3).

4 Discussion

Our investigation uncovered three key results. Firstly, irrespective of gender or academic title, half of the scholars from the two academic disciplinary domains submitted to ranking (i.e. *Sociology* and *PS&IR*) published research items (e.g. papers, books, book chapters etc.) without any scientific impact (i.e. H and G index scores of zero). The mode of individual G and H index scores within each academic

(Footnote 1 continued)

and international funding. Moreover, the *total number of publications* was computed at the level of all Romanian sociology departments (there are 19 departments of sociology, among which ARACIS accredited only 17).

[2]Correlation was computed filtering out the private departments that do not receive public funding.

[3]Using Publish or Perish software, we computed the total number of citations for the publications published after 2006 by the academic researchers of the 17 Romanian sociology departments.

[4]We computed departmental H and G scores taking into account publications published after 2006. We consider *the number of citations* and the departments' G and H index scores as proxies for the impact of scientific productivity.

category was zero (i.e. *associate professors, lecturers and assistants*) except for the category of *professors*. Inspecting the data, we detected an extremely small modal difference between male and female scholars, in terms of G and H index scores. However, we suspect this difference to be caused by the period spent within the system and not by other factors (see, for instance, that male scholars tend to occupy better positions on the academic ladder compared to women).

Secondly, in each of the two disciplinary domains there are a few top departments that significantly outscore the rest. Using departmental G index scores, we could only discriminate between *top* departments and *ordinary* departments (Fig. 7). For instance, 32 out of the 40 departments are being extremely similar, having a departmental G index score range of three (minimum one and maximum four). Moreover, the *ordinary departments'* departmental G-index mean is only 19 % out of the best departmental G-index score and only 29 % out of the *top* departments' successive G-index mean.

These two results show that, at least in the fields of *Sociology* and of *PS&IR*, only a few departments publish scientific research items that have some impact (e.g. the maximum departmental G-index score for *Sociology* domain is 12 and for *PS&IR* ranking domain is 10). Unfortunately, we do not have the possibility of assessing the intensity of this impact, as previous similar studies conducted on the Romanian higher education do not exist. However, it seems to be highly sensitive that half of the scholars in each of the two fields have G and H index scores of zero.

Thirdly, there is no significant statistical relationship between the research funding and the impact of published research items. In this case, research funding acts only as a major incentive that inflates the number of publications and deflates their specific and overall impact. In the broad context of a poor Romanian state and of an underfunded higher education system, the issue of how to efficiently use the very few financial resources available should be explored. For instance, one may consider whether the public funding mechanisms should be associated with specific institutional arrangements so as to competitively direct the funds towards those departments that publish high impact research items (Fig. 7). As a matter of fact, this has been the policy option that was implemented after 2011 in the Romanian higher education system. It is now currently expected that the new institutional arrangements carry along incentives and procedures that, at least potentially, might enhance the efficient exploitation of the public financial resources.

Even if we have shown that the impact of the scientific research items published by the Romanian scholars from the fields of *Sociology* and of *PS&IR* has a low intensity, our results must be approached with due care. Firstly, our data are representative for only two domains of study. This means that we cannot extend our interpretations and findings towards other fields, and particularly for the whole system. Secondly, the impact of research items published by scholars could also be measured and assessed using other tools and criteria. Thirdly, we used mono-dimensional measures (H-index and G-index scores) as proxies to estimate scientific impact.

Furthermore, one may question the key assumption adopted in our analysis. We consider that rankings may prove to be a tool not only for adjusting informational

asymmetry, but also for addressing the need of increasing the efficiency in public money spending. Such an assumption was adopted for two reasons: (a) to see how rankings would work within two of the most recently expanding disciplinary areas of the Romanian system of higher education, and (b) to explore rankings' eventual policy consequences in terms of public funding and efficient use of funds in higher education institutions. Both issues are academically sensitive. Turning rankings into *inter alia* funding criteria may have unintended consequences that are questionable from the perspective of an equitable distribution of public resources, while the same option may facilitate the generation of those intended consequences which aim to decrease informational asymmetry for the students, and increase economic efficiency in the use of public funds. The two types of consequences are not necessarily consistent, and this joins the wide range of critiques towards the use of rankings in assessing higher education (e.g. different ranking criteria generate different rankings, their methodologies are systematically biased, produce significant errors, and are deemed to ignore creative thinking and teaching, while mainly referring to research results, etc.). Despite all this, it seems that only by changing the institutional arrangements within the higher education system and introducing different incentives, the quality of research and academics' research productivity may stand a good chance of getting improved, and face the competitive arena of today's higher education. Instead of opting for either availability of more public funds or financial efficiency while decoupling it from the level of existing academic performances, a better policy option would be to provide an institutional arrangement which combines financial incentives with the demand for an increasing research productivity and quality.

5 Conclusion

We argued that, at least in the disciplinary fields of Romanian sociology and political sciences, the research productivity is highly influenced by additional financial resources. Furthermore, we revealed that the quality of research productivity (defined by its impact) could be increased by a mixture of two factors: institutional arrangements (that carry specific incentives) and additional financial resources.

We claimed that there are two streams of ideas and policies within the Romanian higher education system: (a) a traditional policy approach according to which research quality can be improved by a higher rate of public expenditure on research and teaching; and (b) a post-traditional policy according to which research quality and productivity may be improved by increasing the level of efficiency in spending public money.

We aimed at questioning the traditional policy (or philosophy), arguing that an increase in funding is not sufficient for automatically increasing academic quality. Moreover, it seems obvious that this traditional way of thinking cannot be supported by any alternative means during periods of economic crisis, when

governments, more often than not, do not increase their rates of expenditures on higher education.

In the context of a poor Romanian economy and a heavily underfunded higher education system, provisioning specific institutional arrangements to increase the efficiency of exploiting resources could, at least theoretically, improve the quality of academic research. The reforms provisioned in 2011, as shown, were meant to introduce new institutional arrangements in areas such as quality assurance, public funding, academic career, university classification and study program rankings. Their goal has been to bring forth a Mathew effect: top university department deserve more money.

An illustrative example of how the two above mentioned philosophies operate is provided by the relationship between public funding and quality and productivity of research. An increase in the quality of the research items produced by the university departments could be attained by embracing the principles of the post-traditional philosophy that grounded the 2011 reforms. Accordingly, after ranking the university departments in five classes, only the better positioned departments in each ranking domain were to receive public money. This incentive was expected to drive the poorly performing university departments to increase their quality and research productivity. Consequently, the ordinary university departments would either improve their departmental G-index score as to catch up with the top departments, or identify alternative funding streams as to avoid demise. This incentive was thought of as introducing competition among university departments toward improving their quality of teaching and research and their research productivity. When university departments are different in terms of quality and research productivity, publicly and equally funding all departments, irrespective of their performance (e.g. departmental G-index scores), is a clear case of wasting critical public resources[5]; especially in cases where the impact of research productivity is zero. Changing the institutional arrangements and introducing new incentives could determine organizational change towards increasing academic quality.

Our findings also indirectly approach some additional topics that, in the future, may need further work and empirical investigation. Firstly, Romanian academics, at least from the field of sociology and political science, have a considerable non-academic productivity (e.g. columns in newspapers, ideas shared through media etc.). Has this non-academic productivity any relevance for various publics, including the political elites? Should this non-academic productivity be taken into account in assessing academic work? Secondly, there is a lot of confusion regarding university departments' mission. On one hand, academics are required to publish in high impact scientific journals, if they were to climb on the academic ladder. Consequently, measures like the ones mentioned in this paper are highly relevant and should be used as assessment tools by the university management. On the other

[5]Irrespective of the provisions of the Law of Education, in 2013, the Romanian Ministry of Education continues to finance university departments by the student number and not by the quality of their research and teaching.

hand, public funding is allocated on unclear criteria which are expected to stress also the importance of teaching. While reviewing research criteria, the needs for having appropriate criteria for teaching are pressing. From this point of view, it seems that there is a clear case of interest mismatch between policy-makers and academics (Scott 2010).

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Patterns of Funding Internationalisation of Higher Education. A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Internationalisation

Liviu Matei, Julia Iwinska and Daniela Crăciun

1 Introduction

Internationalisation of higher education is a multidimensional process. It is also a highly dynamic one (de Wit 2010; Knight 2008). While underlying long-term trends do exist (Marginson 2010), the actual manifestation of this phenomenon takes forms that are multiplying and changing in time and across countries and regions of the world (King 2010; Peck and Hanson 2014). Internationalisation has been sprouting fast, acquiring many facets, and it could be seen almost as an *evolving kaleidoscopic phenomenon*. This characteristic makes the study of internationalisation difficult, to the point that even defining it has become a challenging and often contested endeavour (de Wit 2010; Peck and Hanson 2014).

Nonetheless, internationalisation has been accepted as one of the most significant phenomena of our time in higher education. It is important for higher education systems, institutions, and individuals (Altbach and Knight 2007), and its momentous relevance concerns not only the broad sphere of higher education, but extends beyond its boundaries as well. It is commonly recognised, for example, that internationalisation has an impact on the development and competitiveness of national and regional economies. But internationalisation also has an impact on international relations and geopolitics (an important aspect that is often ignored, as it will be discussed in this study), migratory fluxes, or on the shape and dynamics of various aspects of social identity (also not frequently studied).

L. Matei · J. Iwinska (✉) · D. Crăciun
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: iwinskaj@ceu.hu

L. Matei
e-mail: mateil@ceu.edu

D. Crăciun
e-mail: craciund@ceu.hu

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This perceived, or perhaps simply real importance of internationalisation has resulted in a rush toward policies or policy attempts and initiatives, devised by various actors to promote internationalisation, shape internationalisation, participate in and take advantage of this historic phenomenon. Actors include higher education institutions, groups and individuals from within such institutions, associations of universities, national public authorities (sometimes regional public authorities as well, as it will be discussed in this article), non-governmental organisations, international organisations, and the list can continue.

Internationalisation has emerged as a key topic in higher education research and policy debates in the 1990s (Gürüz 2008), when the links between higher education, and economic and social development became more apparent (van der Wende 2001). Since then, internationalisation policies have evolved from being mere ad hoc initiatives to more structured measures that have a deeper influence on the higher education systems overall (Brandenburg and de Wit 2011; Teichler 2009). Today, internationalisation is seen by some as no less than the "central motor of change" in higher education (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014).

The amplitude of the phenomenon has been mirrored by a growing corpus of research trying to understand what internationalisation is actually about, and how to engage with, or promote it. Research on this topic, including applied policy research, is as important as it remains largely lacunar at present. The present article discusses aspects related to internationalisation that seem severely understudied to date, specifically the topic of *funding of internationalisation*.

The article makes a case for a study of the funding of internationalisation that can make a significant contribution to the broader understanding of the phenomenon and its consequences and effects; an understanding that hopefully goes beyond the immediately observable and somewhat trivial aspects. It is quite clear that any major endeavour in higher education would require some level of funding. In this context, one could easily claim that if internationalisation were a (or *the*) *central motor of change* in higher education, then the funding could be seen as the *fuel*. The investigative focus and potential relevance of this article, however, are not organised around this somewhat self-evident and not necessarily very informative truth. Rather, the article proposes a well-calibrated study attempting to identify existing patterns of funding of internationalisation in higher education that could offer fresh and relevant insights, and new factual knowledge about internationalisation, perhaps in surprising ways. Moreover, this approach could also help to better understand and refine the ways in which internationalisation is conceptualized and studied. It could help to provide elements for the definition of internationalisation and for its further study. It should be noted that this article is based on an early-stage of a comprehensive project, representing largely a literature review for the time being. Further research is planned as part of this ongoing project.

The following section presents key elements of the proposed new conceptual framework for the study of the patterns in funding of internationalisation. The relevance of this approach is also discussed along with illustrations regarding possible new insights that could be obtained from such an analysis.

2 A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Patterns of Funding of Internationalisation

Although the topics of internationalisation and funding of higher education, independently, have been broadly analysed in the literature, there is room to further explore how the internationalisation of higher education has been, can, and perhaps should be financed. References to funding appear occasionally in the literature about internationalisation (Childress 2009; Throsby 1998). At the same time, there seems to be no systematic study on the funding of internationalisation, which could, nevertheless, prove very useful in several ways. It would help more than just to substantiate the common statement that "funding is important, therefore (more) funding is needed". Funding is not just a simple material condition for internationalisation, of a binary yes-no nature (i.e. no internationalisation without funding). A careful analysis shows that funding can influence—sometimes in subtle ways—the overall direction of the internationalisation process, its motivations, and key professional or ethical aspects. As it will be discussed in this chapter, the decisions on how to fund internationalisation at the national level (for example whether to incorporate it into a larger funding scheme, such as the so-called "excellence initiatives", or to include it in the funding formulae) can actually define what internationalisation is in certain contexts.

It is not difficult to accept that funding might have an impact on the effectiveness of various internationalisation activities and practices. And yet, research regarding the relationship between funding modalities (or patterns) and the effectives of internationalisation activities is severely underdeveloped, if not simply largely absent. Such systematic studies could help to find out which financial tools might work better and which do not work well for successful internationalisation.

There is not much research either on how choices are made regarding which internationalisation activities get funded. This is true for both the institutional and the system levels. The existing research, however, does indicate that the choice of what is funded is an important policy aspect to be considered, with significant practical relevance. For example, is it true that only what has economic relevance is funded in the area of internationalisation? Or perhaps only "what gets measured gets funded" in this area (Choudaha and Contreras 2014)? Whatever the answer or answers are, they would teach policy makers, university leaders, and other actors involved important practical lessons.

A systematic study of the funding of internationalisation involves asking questions such as: Who funds what? For what reason? What are the consequences of particular funding instruments and strategies? What works and what doesn't in funding of internationalisation? What works better and under which conditions? What are the policy gaps with regard to the funding of internationalisation (not only funding gaps in terms of insufficient dollar or euro amounts)?

This is already a rather long list of questions, which could be expanded a little further. This, however, might raise concerns about the feasibility of such a study. In addition, as mentioned in the introduction, internationalisation is a complex,

multidimensional, and highly dynamic phenomenon. How can one grasp and study relevant and constant aspects in this large variety of manifestations of internationalisation? Can one identify patterns of funding and would their study be really useful?

We propose that it is possible to identify and study patterns of funding of internationalisation based on a limited number of factors or variables to begin with, as detailed below. These factors appear to represent a promising avenue for investigation. Clearly, more analysis and reflection is needed to define them (including an assessment of whether they are independent factors or not), and decide how to combine them for the purpose of building better and more complete heuristic instruments for the study of internationalisation.

Proposed factors/aspects:

1 **Sources of funding of internationalisation** (*who funds?*). Other than the important sources of funding that are usually considered in the studies of internationalisation (e.g. public authorities, institutions), a systematic scrutiny of the funding actors could identify new or neglected sources and their ways of operation.
2 **Types of internationalisation activities funded** (*what is funded?*). The types of activities funded could be identified and categorized primarily based on their **motivations**. A large literature about motivations is already available (de Wit 2010; Knight 2004; Kreber 2009; Qiang 2003). A study of funding patterns could even lead to the discovery of new motivations or better explain the already studied ones.
3 **Scope of the internationalisation activities funded** (*where do funds go?*—a special aspect of the question *what is funded*?). Internationalisation activities could be institutional, national, or international, for example. One interesting question illustrating the relevance of this factor is: who funds quality assurance elements of internationalisation initiatives, such as programs delivered abroad? (Should the government of the "exporting" institution fund quality assurance aspects or should the quality control mechanisms be developed on the side of the "importing" country? What happens to international higher education providers not certified or accredited in any particular country?) It is open for further consideration whether this should be deemed a separate factor or combined with another one (motivations).
4 **Instruments of funding internationalisation** (*how is it funded?*). The mapping and systematic study of the instruments would help to identify not only the traditional instruments, such as study abroad scholarships, but also the new or emerging tools, such as funding of internationalisation through formula-based funding or through excellence initiatives. Other funding instruments, which are relatively new in the European context, are, for example, the pan-European student loan scheme or the European pension scheme for researchers (which will also cover university academic and administrative staff to stimulate their mobility).

5 **Strategies for funding internationalisation** (another aspect of the question *how is it funded*? and perhaps also of *what is funded?*). Strategies refer to how instruments are selected, combined and used, in connection with other policy objectives and funding mechanisms at institutional, national, regional level. The study of instruments and strategies for funding could help to better understand, for example, issues of effectiveness of internationalisation activities, but also how funding can influence the direction of such activities, and even the very understanding of internationalisation as a policy objective.

2.1 Sources of Funding Internationalisation

One claim related to funding of internationalisation that is perhaps the most often mentioned in the literature is related to *funding as a barrier*. The 4th IAU Global Survey (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014) emphasizes that *lack of financial resources* is considered the main barrier to internationalisation. Specifically, 49 % of the 1336 higher education institutions from 131 countries surveyed ranked it as first on the list of barriers. One question that can be asked in this context is who funds, and perhaps also who should fund internationalisation? Is this a task for public authorities/public funding, institutional funding, or private funding? What is the current landscape in this regard anyway? These are complex questions. On the purely descriptive dimension, the situation is different in different parts of the world. In Europe, for example, public funding is a lot more significant than in the U.S. It can be assumed, however, that in spite of this diversity, relatively stable patterns exist with regards to sources of funding internationalisation, possibly not a long list of different ones, which can be identified and studied. The limited literature already available in this area offers interesting hints.

Altbach and Knight (2007) talk about "European internationalism". This could be considered as a particular model of internationalisation. It is possible to describe this model by linking it to broader developments in higher education in Europe (e.g. the emergence of the European Higher Education Area). At the same time, if "European internationalism" is a particular model of internationalisation, it could be argued that it is so by virtue of its funding characteristics as well, including specific sources of funding. "European internationalism" exists in part because it benefits from a particular source, or sources, of funding: the EU funding. As a type of funding source, the EU funding could be defined as "regional public source" in the conceptual framework. This type of funding source (unique in the world, to date?) might explain, or contribute to explaining, the particular characteristics of the overall European model of internationalisation. It certainly helps to explain the characteristics of particular (or unique) internationalisation initiatives in this context, such as the Erasmus programs or the European pension scheme for researchers, to name only two.

"Following the money" by looking systematically at the sources of funding of internationalisation in the European context helps to provide additional types of insight. It can be speculated, for example, that the total European funding supporting directly internationalisation activities is significantly lower than the sum of the national budgets allocated for the same purpose. Still, although the European (European Union, for the matter) funding is marginal in some cases, it does influence internationalisation activities significantly in most, if not all European countries. This situation could be conceptualized in terms of the interrelation between public national funding and regional public funding. We can discover, for example, that some countries in Europe have almost no international student mobility, except for that stimulated and funded by the EU (Matei and Iwinska 2015).

The 4th IAU Global Survey (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014) also indicates that, at a global scale, the largest source of funding for internationalisation activities is the general institutional budget (ranked first by 53 % of respondent institutions). External public funding comes second, ranked as the largest source by 24 % of the respondents. Private funding from foundations and corporations is ranked as the largest source by only 4 % of the respondents, as is funding from international organisations. This data is somewhat difficult to interpret completely (it is not clear, for example, what are the sources for the general institutional budget; agglutinating global data may mask, as it is rightly noted in the report, different patterns in different countries and regions of the world). It does provide, however, significant insight regarding *who funds* internationalisation by separating among different sources of funding. One could note here, for instance, the significant reliance on public finding in some places, or the limited role of the private funding everywhere.

If we could identify the most important sources of funding in general (categories of sources), we might be able to study patterns of funding. Moreover, it would become possible to zoom into particular situations and experiences (like in the case of the "European internationalism") and understand not only *who funds in general*, but also *who funds what specifically*, and analyse how particular sources of funding (alone or in interaction with other factors, such as types of internationalisation activities, of funding instruments) influence the orientation, nature, and impact of internationalisation activities.

2.2 *Types of Internationalisation Activities Funded (Motivations)*

The literature review conducted so far supports the conclusion that it should also be possible to identify patterns of funding of internationalisation by looking at *what is funded*, at the types of internationalisation activities that are funded. In particular, one could look at motivations or objectives of internationalisation activities funded.

One of the primary motivations for internationalisation activities in higher education is income generation ("commercial motivation"). This aspect of internationalisation is perhaps among the most often studied (Altbach and Knight 2007; Kalvemark and van der Wende 1997; van der Wende 2001). The list of traditional motivations for internationalisation includes, in addition to income generation (or "profit", according to Altbach and Knight): providing international and cross-cultural perspectives for students and enhancing curricula ("traditional internationalisation"), economic and political integration ("European internationalism"), or access provision and demand absorption (Altbach and Knight 2007). Other motivations include strengthening research capacity (a well-known motivation for internationalisation, by now) or international development and capacity building (Altbach and Knight 2007; Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014). Economic development and economic competitiveness (such as training students abroad to support economic development at home, or attracting bright students from other countries to boost competitiveness at home (Findlay 2010) are also considered as part of this somewhat traditional list of motivations for internationalisation, or types of internationalisation activities.

It is possible to identify systematically what is funded, looking at the motivations of various types of internationalisation activities. The list of categories seems to be manageable, and the use of this variable could prove useful in understanding how internationalisation is funded, and how it works. In addition to descriptive elements, which are very important, one could bring into the analysis a normative perspective as well. There is already a corpus of literature that questions the appropriateness of certain motivations, in particular from an ethical perspective. This is connected to funding as well. Should public bodies fund internationalisation activities that generate brain drain, for example?

Other than the explanatory value of the analysis based on linking funding and motivations, or its normative relevance, another important aspect is its heuristic value, or the capacity to generate questions, new knowledge and insight. In presence of certain internationalisation activities, asking questions about motivations and related funding can help to expand what we know, in significant and even surprising ways.

Two examples are put forward here, which, to the best of our knowledge, have not been studied to date. One is the network of Russian-speaking ("Slavic" or "Slavonic") universities, created after the fall of the Soviet Union in several of its former republics, which are funded by the federal Russian government. A similar example is a number of universities operating in Turkish, created and funded by Turkey in other countries, from the Balkans to the Caucasus and to Central Asia. It is difficult to put these examples in any of the known categories of motivations. While research on these experiences is missing, it appears that their primary motivations are neither commercial, nor economic (although such motivations may play a certain role), they are not about inter-cultural learning, and certainly not about strengthening research. Rather, they appear to indicate a different type of motivation, which we could call geo-political. This explanation might help to understand the particular nature of these rather unusual initiatives, from a funding

perspective as well. If in this case we combine two or three categories of funding, namely source of funding (public, but from another country), motivation (geopolitical), and eventually scope (regional/international) we could configure a particular model of internationalisation, which has not been developed before. Such an analysis may also help to shed light on particularly complex (and understudied or not studied) situations with regards to internationalisation. Such an example is the "internationalisation landscape" in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, which is home to several universities, including the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (funded from Moscow by the Russian government and operating in Russian), the Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University (a Turkish university with funds from Ankara and operating in Turkish), and the American University of Central Asia (an American-style university operating in English, benefiting from U.S.—USAID—government money and U.S. private foundation funds). If we add locally funded Kyrgyz universities, we have the picture of something that looks very much like a geopolitical battleground, involving particular internationalisation activities and structures. Such a battleground situation is not usually studied in the mainstream literature on internationalisation.

A completely different experience regarding the involvement of the state in the creation of an entire new university (and a new model of university), while paying attention to internationalisation desiderata and objectives, is from Vietnam. The government of Vietnam created and funded the International University in Vietnam (Altbach and Knight 2007), rather than going abroad to create a university in another country or sending its own citizen elsewhere. Obviously, the motivation of the Vietnamese government in this case was not geopolitical (like in the cases of Russia and Turkey discussed above), but more directly academic, social, and economic. If political motivations where at play, there where domestic motivations (addressed in part by a decision to fund internationalisation activities with public money), rather than motivations in the domain of international relations and geopolitics.

2.3 Types of Internationalisation Activities Funded (Geographic Scope)

There is some discussion in the available literature that suggests another way of studying what is funded in internationalisation, namely by looking at the scope of internationalisation activities. As Knight (2004) highlights, very often a distinction is made between institutional aspects of internationalisation (institutional strategies, mechanisms, and activities) and national aspects (national strategies, policies, or activities). One could also add, at least tentatively and subject to confirmation and refining through further research, internationalisation activities and aspects that are regional in their scope. The emergence of the European Higher Education Area and the developments in the European Union in higher education for the past 20–25 years are a good illustration for the regional scope category. Other examples

could be the Visegrad Group (consisting of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia[1]), which has launched initiatives aiming at promoting specific aspects of internationalisation among the member countries and extending them slightly to the neighbouring countries, or the Nordplus cooperation among the Baltic and Nordic countries.[2] An example from outside of Europe could be the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), whose cooperation is developing dynamically, including aspects relevant from the internationalisation perspective.

All examples from Europe already include specific funding policies and mechanisms that have been created to support these regional initiatives. The Nordplus total budget in 2014 was 9 million EUR, while the International Visegrad Fund had a total budget of 8 million EUR. In all cases, particular strategic approaches, with clear "motivations" and "sources", but also targeted funding, have helped to generate new dynamics in internationalisation, supporting a regional perspective.

Ignoring the "geographic scope" factor in the proposed analysis would make it very difficult to understand such developments. At a more general level, these examples show that using the "geographic scope" factor in identifying funding patterns helps systematise the variety of internationalisation practices and experiences in the world, as well as their impact and outcomes. The examples of regional cooperation models from Europe provide a vast and complex material for study of the patterns of funding of internationalisation, all the way from funding mobility to funding quality assurance, or from funding access to funding equity in internationalisation.

One interesting question that could be asked in this context is whether one could speak of internationalisation activities that are simply or primarily international, and therefore neither institutional, nor national or regional. This question is asked considering the existence of actors that are not anchored in national or regional legal contexts, and are not higher education institutions either. There are serious concerns for quality linked to the expansion of internationalisation (Broadbent and Middlehurst 2013). The need for quality certification (like accreditation of cross-border provisions) is not at present fully addressed by national structures or formal international structures and organisations. Some space has been created in this way for genuinely "international actors" who act "internationally", whether they are bona fide or just dubious, if not simply fake "certification mills" (a new industry emerging like the one of fake diploma mills) (Altbach et al. 2009). How such genuinely international activities (which could not be considered institutional, national or regional) are funded, can also shed light on this aspect of internationalisation. This is a potential additional argument for the more general point made here regarding the relevance of "scope" as a factor to be used for the construction of a conceptual framework for the study of patterns of funding the internationalisation of higher education.

[1]See http://visegradfund.org/about/basic-facts.

[2]See http://www.nordplusonline.org/ or http://www.nordplusonline.org/Who-can-apply/Nordplus-Higher-Education.

2.4 Instruments of Funding

What could be the usefulness of a systematic scrutiny of instruments of funding internationalisation?

Some of the more traditional instruments of funding of internationalisation have been studied extensively, for example, state scholarships to study abroad. Among the most impressive research in this area is the study by Perna et al. (2014) looking at how scholarships abroad serve to build human capital at national level. This study is extremely informative as it goes beyond the few relatively well-known experiences with government-funded scholarships in Kazakhstan and Brazil, or Norway in Europe (183 government-sponsored international scholarship programmes worldwide are analysed).

One could also look at the newer, emerging, or less traditional instruments of funding to understand how internationalisation activities, and even the understanding of internationalisation, evolve.

The DEFINE project led by the European University Association (EUA) published very informative reports focusing on the strategies for efficient funding and funding for excellence for universities in Europe. The reports (Estermann et al. 2013; Bennetot-Pruvot and Estermann 2014) are very useful for understanding the situation with regards to public funding in Europe. Although not intended as a study about internationalisation, the reports provide interesting insights regarding two instruments for funding internationalisation: excellence funding and funding formulae.

A number of European countries have used in the last several years a special funding instrument which consists of making available significant additional public funding for a limited number of universities, so as to promote excellence in these universities or, indirectly, across the system, expected to be reflected in better research, increased international competitiveness, and in some cases higher ranking positions as well. The amounts mobilized by national authorities are significant: 7.7 billion EUR altogether in France, and 750 million EUR in Russia for a period of four years, to give only two examples. What is interesting for the purpose of our discussion is that, at least in some of these countries, one explicit objective of the excellence funding was "fostering cooperation among research actors, and further internationalisation of the higher education institutions" (Bennetot-Pruvot and Estermann 2014). In other words, the thinking behind this instrument of funding envisages internationalisation almost as an objective in itself, rather than only as a means. This is relevant for the purpose of our article because it shows how using funding instruments can help as a heuristic to analyse and understand evolving conceptions on internationalisation. In this case, internationalisation as related to excellence (in research primarily) becomes almost, if not simply, an objective in itself rather than a means.

One could also discuss here how funding instruments influence the nature, or direction of internationalisation activities. The funding of the excellence initiatives is heavily oriented towards research, with a lot less attention (or money) for

teaching. Given the significance of the funding involved (usually really large amounts), as well as the public prominence of the overall initiative in all these countries, this "mere" instrument of funding influenced indeed the orientation, focus, and nature of internationalisation activities. In other words, the direct "bias" towards financing research changed the more generic understanding of internationalisation (understanding is largely and primarily about research now).

Another interesting finding of the DEFINE project, relevant in this context, is that funding formulae represent an instrument for funding internationalisation. In several European countries indicators for the allocation of public funding include explicit references to internationalisation aspects, such as the number of international students or international staff in the respective institution (Estermann et al. 2013). In Denmark, a so-called "international taximeter" method was founded, serving to allocate a certain fix amount per outgoing and incoming international student. In Finland, the internationalisation-related criteria for allocation of public funding (including for teaching and research personnel) account for 9 % of the public funding.

Such examples reaffirm that the study of instruments for funding internationalisation helps to understand internationalisation more generally. In these cases, the inclusion of internationalisation-related criteria in the core formulae for the allocation of public funding indicates a kind of *mainstreaming of internationalisation*, at least as a policy desideratum. Rather than *ad hoc* or would-be internationalisation activities, policy makers in these countries look at internationalisation as a core characteristic of the work of universities and of the higher education systems overall.

We could further illustrate the point by discussing other instruments of funding internationalisation activities. In the European context, one of the most innovative such instruments is the plan (in an advanced phase of preparation) of the EU Commission to launch a Pan-European Pension Fund for researchers (see for example Kelly 2015). The Fund is meant to support the mobility of "researchers", but also of academic and administrative university personnel, within the European Research Area. This type of mobility (a political objective in the EU) is otherwise hindered by different national regulatory systems, many of which penalize cross-border mobility when it comes to pension benefits. This is an example of a new funding mechanism which does not address traditional issues of "available funding" for internationalisation, but is rather designed in a novel way to counter legal provisions and regulations that have adverse financial implications on the international (or regional, here) mobility of university staff.

In sum, using funding instruments as a tool for studying internationalisation appears to be both relevant and feasible. The identification and study of instruments of funding could contribute to identifying patterns of funding. Patterns of funding, in turn, make it possible to gain relevant insight about internationalisation in a systematic manner, while avoiding the feeling of disorientation that might otherwise arise when confronted with the large and ever evolving variety of internationalisation experiences and facets.

2.5 *Funding Strategies*

When trying to identify and study patterns of funding of internationalisation, one could look not only at individual funding instruments, but also at funding strategies at institutional, national, or regional level. Strategies could include principles for funding, instruments and methods, institutions or agencies with particular responsibilities in this area (for the national or regional level), or units (in the case of higher education institutions).

We have undertaken a comparative analysis of national strategies with regards to internationalisation in several European countries in another study (Matei and Iwinska 2015). That analysis showed that studying national internationalisation strategies with attention to their funding aspects (or "funding strategies") is particularly informative to understand the key characteristics of internationalisation activities in a given country. Moreover, it allows understanding and perhaps even predicting the impact of various internationalisation activities.

Funding strategies can be identified and studied at institutional level as well. Where they exist, they usually make a difference. A comparative study by Childress (2009) offers a very good illustration of how different institutional strategies (e.g. differential allocation of resources) have an impact on the successful involvement of the faculty in internationalisation activities.

It can be expected that institutional strategies for the funding of internationalisation, where they exist, can be studied without significant difficulties. On the national level, however, it might be more challenging because funding relevant for internationalisation can be traced in a number of different policy approaches (e.g. related to economic development, competitiveness, labour, migration/immigration, foreign trade, etc.). Therefore, in studying the patterns of funding of internationalisation, one also needs to pay attention to policies, or measures that are not directly or explicitly aimed at supporting or influencing internationalisation. A recent example is discussed below to illustrate the complexity of the issue. Many other examples exist and can be reviewed.

Recently, two decisions with regards to funding (not funding of internationalisation per se) taken by the government of England have been expected by some higher education scholars or university administrators to have a very significant impact on internationalisation aspects, in particular on student mobility (Broadbent and Middlehurst 2013; Greennway 2012). The measures were adopted primarily in order to change the funding system for undergraduate students by shifting a large part of the cost burden on students themselves and their families, rather than on taxpayers. A related reason was to permit the growth of individual budgets of universities, while reducing the proportion of funding that comes from public sources. One of these decisions refers to the change in the maximum level of the tuition fee that could be charged for undergraduate studies (currently 9000 GBP), linked with the introduction of a broad and easy to access income-contingent student-loan mechanism. The other one is about the use of the same standards and rules with regard to tuition fees and student loans that apply to domestic students,

for all foreign students who are EU-citizens (this is in fact in line with European legislation). If the EU citizens are treated in the same way for the purpose of tuition fee payments (same cap) and student loans (same conditions), in turn, there was no government-imposed cap on tuition fees to be charged to non-EU students, which makes it possible for universities to raise tuition fees significantly above 9000 GBP for this group of students, without possibility to access the student loan mechanism.

These decisions, put in practice only recently (beginning with 2012 for the new tuition fee cap) were feared to have an impact on the flux of incoming students from other countries, and also on outgoing students. With undergraduate studies becoming more expensive in England, in fact at least nominally the most expensive in Europe, some expected an exodus of English students to other countries and also a loss of students from other countries coming to England (Greenway, 2012). It appears, however, that this was not the case. No exodus of students going out of England was reported and the number of students coming to England from the EU and from outside the EU did not go down, quite the contrary (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2014). One possible explanation for the fact that the anticipated reaction (higher outgoing and lower incoming student flows) has not happened could be that it is simply too early to see the effects of these measures. Another explanation, however, is that there are other factors that matter in this case, which are more important than tuition fees or compensate their expected negative effects. One such factor is the easily accessible loan system (for all EU, including UK, students). Under this system, domestic and international EU students can receive almost automatically a loan covering their tuition fee, which they will repay after graduation (if at all, for some of them) at a variable rate contingent upon the level of their income. In other words, students do not feel directly and immediately the burden of the higher tuition costs, and they may not have clear representation about how this would affect their financial situation in the future, after graduation. For non-EU students, it appears that despite a higher cost, getting a higher education diploma in the UK remains attractive, for the diploma itself, but also for other reasons, such as the possibility to remain and work in England (or the UK) after graduation.

This example is in a way about how anticipated effects on internationalisation of decisions on funding strategies and instruments have not materialized (effects that could have happened, but have not happened, at least as yet). It does show however, the relevance of looking at funding strategies that are not introduced specifically in relation to internationalization.

3 Conclusions

This exploratory paper brings up a seemingly obvious and yet complex and not sufficiently analysed aspect of the internationalisation phenomenon, namely funding. It argues that despite complexities, it is possible to study internationalisation from a novel perspective, with funding-related questions at the core.

The article outlines a preliminary conceptual framework of how such a study could be structured and identifies five key factors for funding of internationalisation. The proposed factors are:

- Sources of funding—Who funds internationalisation?
- Types of activities funded—What gets funding?
- Geographic scope of funding—Where is the funding going?
- Funding instruments—How is it funded?
- Funding strategies—What strategies are funding it?

The claim that internationalisation can be studied in a novel and productive manner (by identifying patterns of funding in this area that consider a small number of identifiable factors or parameters) appears to be at least partly supported by the arguments, data, and analyses provided in the paper, building on the proposed new conceptual framework. Significant more work is needed to further develop this approach and to put its intuitions and conjectures to test. It appears however, that this is a very interesting avenue for future research in the area of internationalisation.

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The Evolving Landscape of South-East Asian Higher Education and the Challenges of Governance

Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin

1 Introduction

From the time the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established over four decades ago, the South-east Asian region has experienced waves of rapid change when countries moved towards greater liberalization in their socio-economic activities and closer interdependence regionally and globally. Within this context, domestic and global forces have significantly transformed the region's higher education sector.

The introduction of ASEAN Community scheduled for 2015 is a regionalization push that arrives on top of existing changing trends that have shifted the landscape of higher education in South-east Asia (SEA). On the eve of the upcoming regional integration, ASEAN member countries face new challenges in their higher education sector—increased competition, needs for harmonization, and demands for human resources with knowledge and skills to thrive in a new and more integrated socio-economic context.

This paper aims to (1) provide an overview of the changing trends in and development of higher education sector in SEA, (2) describe key policy initiatives and current state of higher education governance focusing on higher education institutions, (3) review key efforts towards regional integration, and (4) identify challenges facing the region higher education sector and key policy questions.

S. Ratanawijitrasin (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University, Mahidol, Thailand
e-mail: sauwakon.r@gmail.com

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2 The Changing Landscape of Higher Education in South-East Asia

The past two decades witnessed significant change in SEA higher education sector —both on the demand and supply sides, as well as the national and institutional levels. Changes in higher education governance and finance have taken place within a broader shift in social, economic, and political context. Four major trends have characterized changes in higher-education landscape of South-east Asia: massification, diversification, marketization, and internationalization.

2.1 Massification

With rapid economic development and globalization drawing larger proportion of the population into labour market and driving demand for workforce with broader knowledge and skills and more technical capability, not only larger number of people seek higher education, but they also look for a wider range of options in higher education. This has led to a massive increase in the number of students going into higher education, which then resulted in the supply-side response to boost the number and variety of higher education institutions (HEIs) and academic programs. The increased supply, in turn, generates greater opportunities of access with greater number of slots and availability of options in higher education, in a reinforcing feedback loop.

The mass access to higher education is apparent in the explosion of the number of students and HEIs. Examples can be found in countries throughout the region.

In Cambodia, the number of students in higher education has jumped from around 10,000 in the 1990s to over 250,000 by 2014. Today most of them are self-pay students (Mak and Un 2014). Its neighbouring Lao PDR has seen its number of students studying in public HEIs increase from 4980 in 1994 to 91,713 in 2013. During this period, the number of students in private HEIs rose from 0 to 19,621 (Mitaray 2013). Although the rising rate in student population is less dramatic in Thailand, it is no less significant. The country's higher education students numbered 1.07 million in 2000, and doubled to 2.12 million in 2013 (NSO 2000; Sirisamphan 2014). In Indonesia—South-east Asia's largest country—students number rose from 4.4 million in 2008 to 5.8 million in 2014 (Sailah 2014; Varghese and Martin 2013).

On the supply side, a key driving force of the expansion of higher learning is government policy response to the demand pressure. Governments not only expanded public HEIs, but in those countries where private HEIs were non-existent, they also opened up the sector for private and overseas operators.

This trend is most obvious in the Greater Mekong sub-region countries. The number of higher education institutions in Lao PDR, for example, have increased from 10 (all government-owned) in 1994 to 141 (62 government and

79 privately-own) in 2013—a 14 times increase in two decades (Mitaray 2013). Cambodia has also witnessed a similar trend in its higher education sector. In 1994, there were only 8 public HEIs with no private institutions; but by 2014 the number of private HEIs becomes 66, surpassing the also growing number of public HEIs which stand at 39 in the same year (Mak and Un 2014). The public and private HEIs combined to a total of 105 institutions, an increase of over 8 times in 20 years. In Thailand, with the transformation of 40 teacher colleges and 9 technical colleges into universities in 2004 and 2005 respectively, the number of its public universities jumped from 27 to 76 within two years. The establishment of two additional new public universities brought the number of public institutions up to 78 by the end of 2005. Many private HEIs have also been introduced in the past two decades, which added up to a total of 144 HEIs—public and private—in 2012 (calculated from OHEC 2012). The number of HEIs in Vietnam more than quadrupled between 1987 and 2011. In 1987 there were only 101 HEIs, with 63 universities and 38 colleges (Thinh and Phuong 2011); by 2011, the number of total HEIs became 414, consisting of 188 universities and 226 colleges in 2011. Among those universities, 138 are public and 50 private (Huong 2011). Myanmar has also seen a tremendous expansion of HEI's in recent years, from 32 in 1988 to currently 169 (Thein 2014).

Even countries with very few HEIs two decades ago have seen the number of HEIs jumped significantly. Singapore government, in a strategic move, added three new public universities in 2000s, which more than doubled the number of its publicly-funded autonomous universities—from 2 to 5. Similarly, higher education expansion in Brunei Darussalam was also clearly policy-led change. Of the country's 4 public universities, 2 were founded in the 1980s and the other 2 in the 2000s.

2.2 Diversification

The expansion of higher education in the region has been accompanied by diversification of the sector in terms of types of providers, types of academic programs, institutional arrangements, as well as modes of delivery.

The shift in higher education landscape in many countries from an entirely or pre-dominantly public sector to one with ever increasing share of private sector providers is probably the most apparent change. The mushrooming of private HEIs has offered the population with much greater opportunity of access and diversity of choice.

The emergence of cross-border providers, made possible by the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), adds to the increase in variety of higher education options. For example, Monash University from Australia and Newcastle University have opened branch campuses in Malaysia; RMIT University—also from Australia—operates an overseas campus in Vietnam. Another cross-border provider is British University Vietnam, which is supported by a consortium of universities in the UK, providing generally the same courses as offered in the home universities in the UK (Tuan 2012). Singapore hosts the Asian campuses of several

world-class universities such as INSEAD, University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Digipen Institute of Technology, Germany Institute of Science and Technology (Lim 2012).

New arrangements are also made available on the program front. There are collaborations between HEIs in South-east Asia, with one or more HEIs outside, as well as within the region, to jointly offer a wide range of programs. Academic arrangement of these programs, as well as the terms used to call them, vary widely. There are joint degree programs, double/dual degree programs, sandwich programs, twinning/partnered programs, to name some.

In terms of modes of delivery, although the majority of education providers still rely on traditional methods of teaching and learning, a few online programs have emerged. These are programs that cater to popular demand, such as distant MBA programs offered by some HEIs in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand (mbastudies.com 2014).

2.3 Marketization

Three key factors have led higher education sector in South-east Asia in general to be more market oriented—the increase of private for-profit providers, the increase in autonomy of public HEIs coupled with the needs to partially self-finance, and the need of HEIs to compete for students, academic staff, and resources amidst the environment of enormous supply growth.

Marketization in higher education is more a topic of controversy than of comprehensive study. Concerns have been raised about many potential adverse effects of higher education marketization, particularly on the possible deviation of HEIs from providing access to quality education, commercialization of public properties, shifting away from unprofitable but necessary courses, and shifting personnel time from required education to profitable activities.

2.4 Internationalization

All countries in the region have made efforts at national and institutional levels to internationalize. Student mobility, faculty mobility, international program and academic collaboration are current dominant modes of internationalization.

One objective for internationalization efforts is to expose local students to international knowledge and experiences. Student exchange is common and expanding throughout the region. The majority of student mobility programs are bi-lateral arrangements; there are also a few multi-lateral programs. Many HEIs have internationalized their programs/curriculum. For example, Vietnamese government funds selected universities to develop “Advanced Curriculum” in partnership with overseas universities for local students, with English as the medium of

instruction (Tuan 2012). University Brunei Darussalam encourages its undergraduate students to broaden experience abroad during its required Discovery Year (Aziz 2012). Universities in Singapore provide international internships and international research programmes in an effort to prepare students for the global workplace (Lim 2012).

Another objective is to attract foreign students. This is the reason why a large number of HEIs offer "international programs" which are mostly taught in English. Some countries are more proactive in attracting foreign students. The Ministry of Education Malaysia has established Education Malaysia Global Services as the official gateway to promote Malaysia as a global destination for education, manage international student applications, managing information, and facilitate processes (EMGS 2014).

A few universities from the region also establish offshore presence. For example, the National University of Singapore has established the NUS-Suzhou Research Institute in China (Lim 2012).

3 Restructuring Higher Education and the New Modes of Governance and Finance

Traditionally, the higher education sector in all SEA countries was mostly small, inward-looking, with government playing a significant role. The vast majority of HEIs in each of the countries were government-owned; private HEIs were few or non-existent in some countries. Not only governments owned and funded HEIs, they also operated them as government agencies, exerted direct control over policy and procedural matters.

This pattern has changed in the recent past as the massification trend swept the higher education sector. The expansion and diversification of the system have caused tension to the traditional model of higher education. Governments can no longer keep up with increasing demands to provide free or highly subsidized education; new ways of financing and additional financial resources must be sought to meet the expansion.

In addition to enlarging the number of HEIs, another key policy has focused on responding to challenges of governance and finance. Most governments have shifted from a direct control approach to a regulatory approach by transferring certain policy, and operating authority and responsibility to state-owned higher education institutions in the form of increased institutional autonomy. Two general approaches to institution restructuring have been employed—(1) by transforming universities from a bureaucratic government agency to an autonomous body and (2) by granting greater authority on certain operational matters to universities, while retaining them as government agencies. The level of university autonomy varies among the countries, from Singapore with highly independent universities to a centralized system in Myanmar. Thailand and Indonesia have a mixture of public autonomous, government-managed, and private universities.

From the experiences of higher education development in South-east Asia, five observations can be made on the variations in the way reforms have taken place in different countries, which reflect the diversity in the essence and process of change.

First, reforms arrived at different times in different countries, depending on the socio-economic readiness and sometimes with clear link to the national political direction. For example, in Vietnam the doi moi reform started in 1986 subsequently pushed a significant expansion and development in the country's higher education as part of the policy to boost human resources for economic development. In Myanmar, the recent introduction of greater openness in its political system, following its general election in 2010, is bringing a new sense of urgency to reform its higher education sector, which has placed a number of restructuring plans on the policy drawing board.

Second, the pace of change also differs greatly. Some significant policy shifts take longer, while others happen more swiftly, even within the same country. For example, the move to transform teacher colleges and technology colleges into universities in Thailand in the mid-2000s was brief compared to the attempts to convert its public universities into autonomous organizations. The ease of change for the former was due to the fact that the legislation changed the colleges' organization *status*, and by extension the status of their personnel upgrading them from college to university, while keeping the *status quo* of the personnel as government employees. By contrast, the attempts to create autonomous universities faced far greater degree of bureaucratic resistance, as the initiative at the time demanded that the civil servants be converted to contract university employees, depriving them of the job security and benefits associated with government officer status.

Direction of change sometimes proceeds in twists and turns. The reform in Indonesia presents an example of this third observation. An Indonesian Government Regulation was issued in 1999 which provided the legal basis for selected public universities to become non-profit "legal entities." The status of seven public universities was changed into this class and became "State Owned Legal Entity (SOLE) Universities", with their own governing board and authority for major administrative and academic decisions. According to the reform plan, all university staff would become university employees instead of civil servants, as they formerly were. In 2008, the Law on Education as a Legal Entity was passed by the Parliament to expand this reform to the entire university sector. All public and private universities would become autonomous "educational legal entities" by 2012 and 2014 respectively. However, this new Law was revoked in 2010 by the Constitutional Court. In response, the government then issued a new regulation concerning the status of the university, returning each to a state university as a government agency under the direction of the Department of National Education. Then in 2012, the House of Representatives enacted the Higher Education Law allowing universities that met "Financial Management Code" to become "Public Service Agency" with conditional autonomy on financial management. Subsequently, in 2013, the government changed the status of seven public universities from "Public Service Agency" to a "Public University-Legal Entity," similar to SOLE (Kusumadewi and Cahyadi 2013; Varghese and Martin 2013).

Thailand provides another example of a long and winding process of change. The initiative to transform public universities, with the legal status as government departments, into autonomous organizations was proposed as early as 1964. A proposal was approved in principle by the cabinet in 1974, but was met with resistance from many universities. In 1991 the Cabinet submitted Bills to transform 16 out of the 20 public universities at the time into autonomous entities. The attempt again failed. Due to strong resistance, the idea had not been materialized until a condition set by an Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan agreement gave the policy a new momentum. In 1998, because of the need for financial injection to ease an economic crisis, Thai government sought help from international organizations. The ADB loan agreement set clear conditions for Thailand to transform all of its public universities into autonomous ones by 2002, with at least one university to change within the year the agreement was signed. Since the levels of resistance to change differed among the universities, the course of action taken then was to allow each university to manage its own academic community to determine when it would be ready for transformation. In 1998, one university was converted to autonomous status, fulfilling the initial requirement set by the ADB loan. However, it took another decade to achieve the transformation of the next public university. Between 2007 and 2008, seven more public universities became autonomous. The rest have remained government agencies until today (OHEC undated; 2012).

Forth, within a country, changes brought about by reforms have not always taken place across the board. This is apparent in a number of countries. While Singapore government has adopted policy to transform, and to form all public universities to be autonomous entities, many other countries have decided to start with a small, selected number of universities.

The Singapore Management University was established as the country's first autonomous government-funded university in 2000 (SMU 2014). Five years later, the Singapore Government moved to transform the other two existing universities —National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technology University— into autonomous institutions (Ministry of Education, Singapore 2005). These two universities were then corporatized in 2006, into not-for-profit, autonomous organizations registered as company limited.

Some countries chose to give a selected few of their HEIs—those with adequate capacity and potential—the autonomy first, rather than across the board structural change. That means that, while some HEIs are allowed more authority to make policy decisions, the remaining continue to operate in the traditional way—within bureaucratic management. For example, in Cambodia, a 1997 Royal Decree granted increased autonomy to selected higher education institutions by giving them special status as Public Administrative Institutions (PAI) with the expectation to increase administrative efficiency in a resource constrained situation. Indonesia, in the 1999 policy initiative described above, also converted a few selected public HEIs into autonomous bodies as pilot institutions (Varghese and Martin 2013).

Finally, the focus and extent of these changes differ as well. Reforms in different countries have focused on different areas, and allowed different levels of autonomy. Some changes are substantial, while others are more procedural. Autonomous universities generally enjoy greater freedom in setting their own policies, managing finance and human resources, as well as determining academic structures, programs and courses.

As the general trend of higher education reforms in all the SEA countries involves movement towards granting greater autonomy to HEIs, the discussion in this section focuses on the governance structures of the new forms of HEIs, and the scope and level of institutional autonomy. Four key areas of autonomy are discussed below with examples from different countries in the region—governance structures, finance and budget, personnel management, and academic matters.

3.1 Governance Structures

Devolution of authority from the state to the institution normally comes with creation of two dominant features in the HEI's structural arrangements: a stronger executive and a new governing body. Reforms generally resulted in the shift of the highest decision-making body from the relevant ministry overseeing the HEI to a governing board of the individual institution.

Governing boards are called differently in different countries, for example, board of trustees, board of directors, board of regents, and university council. The roles, authority, composition, and the process for appointing board members vary as well. Examples from general characteristics of governing boards in the three countries below demonstrate the range of such variations.

Public universities in Singapore are registered companies and are run as corporate entities. They are probably endowed with the greatest autonomy compared to their peers in the region. The boards of trustees are generally composed of significant proportion of members from the non-governmental sectors, such as business leaders, academics, and professionals, which are drawn internationally. Board members are appointed by the Minister for Education, and are charged with key responsibilities to chart the institution's directions, oversee and safeguard its funds and assets, develop initiatives for its advancements, and select and appoint the university president, as well as deans and directors.

Each public university in Thailand—autonomous and non-autonomous—has a university council as its highest governing body. A university council nominates its own members and chairperson, who is officially appointed by the King. Members of university council generally comprise of representatives from the university executives, faculties, government agencies, and external experts. It's a general tendency for Thai universities to include prominent retired government officers and academics on their councils. Many universities also appoint a few (normally one or two) business leaders as council members. University Council is responsible for setting policy and internal regulations, approve academic programs, supervising

academic quality, and monitoring and evaluation. The council also selects the university president (also with the King's official appointment) who is accountable to the council. Other university executives, such as deans and directors of the units in the university, are also appointed by the university council.

In Cambodia, members of the governing board in a PAI university are appointed by the government. From the HEI side, the rector and a faculty staff representative are seated on the board; other board members are officers from various ministries—particularly the parent ministry of the HEI and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), and other stakeholders such as donors. The board composition from a university can serve as example: on the board of trusties are representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Council of Ministers, MoEYS, Ministry of Economics and Finance. The board of trusties is responsible for monitoring and approving the HEI's development plan and finance, determining the number of personnel and defining structure and roles of subordinated units. The appointment of the university rector is made by royal decree, following the request of the Prime Minister proposed by the Minister of the HEI's parent ministry. Vice rectors and deans are appointed by the prime minister, while the ranks of vice deans and department chairs are appointed by the parent minister (Royal Government of Cambodia 2001; Varghese and Martin 2013; You Virak, personal communication, 12 March 2015).

3.2 Finance and Budget

Governments continue to fund HEIs which have been given greater autonomy or corporatized, with two important changes related to the finance of the institution. First, the method of government budget allocation changes from line-item budget to a lump-sum budget or block grant, and HEIs are given greater authority over its use; second, the HEIs are allowed to generate their own revenues. Besides government subsidy, other sources of finance for HEIs with autonomy include tuitions, self-generated revenues, and donations. HEIs in some countries, such as Cambodia, also receive financial support from international donors.

Authority over financial decisions among these HEIs varies. Generally, HEIs can fully determine the use of self-generated funds; however, different governments allow different levels of authority over the use of government budgets. Autonomous HEIs in Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia have full autonomy over finance and budget—on both the funds generated by HEIs and those allocated by the government. By contrast, PAIs in Cambodia are allowed to keep and manage self-generated funds, but need ministry's approval for important decisions to use the government budget (ADB 2012; Varghese and Martin 2013; Sam Nga, personal communication, 14 September 2014).

There are a variety of ways these HEIs raise funds, for example, offering degree programs and training courses which are in high demand, partnering with private HEIs in "franchise programs", raising tuition fees, seeking research grants,

commercialization of innovations, conducting consultancies, turning university properties into business facilities, and entering into business ventures.

3.3 Human Resource Management

Autonomy over human resource management is a controversial area in higher education governance reform. The issue regarding whether HEI's staff are required to change their status from civil servants to university employees in particular was a cause which slowed down reform in some countries. A system of dual-track personnel management has been employed to allow for smoother reform.

Two systems of personnel co-exist in Thai autonomous universities, for example. At the time of institution restructuring, but not later, public university personnel who are civil servants are allowed to choose whether to become university employee or continue the status of civil servant. The rules governing personnel management differ between the groups. The government promulgated a specific law —the Regulation of Civil Servants in Higher Education Institutions Act for the latter group. Salaries and remunerations for personnel in the first group are set by the university and are tied to performance, while salaries for those in the second group follow the civil service system. Although the salary levels, increments, and benefits for the two groups follow different rules, both groups are subject to university's performance requirements. In Vietnam, a Ministry of Education and Traning's Resolution on Innovation in Higher Education issued in 2010 grants presidents/rectors of HEIs the authority to determine the pay scale for faculties in accordance with their contributions. However, HEIs are to determine staff recruitment, assignment, and transfer, based on the approved annual personnel plan or report the decisions to the ministry (Thinh and Phuong 2011).

3.4 Academic Matters

Where authority to determine academic programs and courses lies depends on whether a decentralized or central planning approach is used as the basis of education system design. In systems where HEIs are given high level of autonomy, the final decision for the approval of academic programs rests within the university (Singapore and Thailand for example). In others, government provides the framework or set priority for academic program development (Vietnam and Cambodia for example). By contrast, in countries relying heavily on central planning, the government determines which programs and courses the HEIs are to deliver (Mayanmar for example) (Table 1).

Table 1 Key characteristics of governance in HEIs which are granted greater autonomy in selected ASEAN countries

Country	Singapore	Thailand	Philippines	Indonesia	Malaysia	Cambodia
Organization type	AU	AU	AU	PULE	(Corporatized), AU planned	PAI
Public HEIs with autonomy	All 5	15/80	HEIs which fulfil CHED's requirements	Selected (11)	Selected (9) (expect 5 more autonomous HEIs in 2015)	Selected (8)
Highest policy decision body	Board of Trustees	University Council	Board of Regents	Board of Trustees	Board of Directors	Governing Board
Selection of HEI top executive	Board of Trustees	University Council	Board of Regents	Board of Trustees	MOE	Ministry
Financial management	HEI	HEI	HEI	HEI	HEI	HEI and ministry
Set tuition fees	HEI	HEI	HEI	Ministry	MOE guideline (undergrad)/ HEI (graduate)	HEI
Employee status	University employee	Dual tracks	Civil servants	Dual tracks	Civil servants	Mainly civil servants
Set academic degree programs and courses	HEI	HEI	HEI	HEI	HEI proposes for ministry's approval	HEI proposes for ministry's approval

Sources Compiled with information from ADB (2012), Varghese and Martin (2013), and personal communications
HEI Higher Education Institution, *MOE* Ministry of Education, *CHED* Commission on Higher Education
AU Autonomous University, *PAI* Public Administrative Institution, *PULE* Public University-Legal Entity

4 Quality Assurance

The high wave of expansion in the number of HEIs in all the countries throughout the region, particularly the vast increase in private and cross-border providers, coupled with the devolution of government control to public universities have raised concerns over the quality of education these institutions provide amidst fiercer competition and financial constraints. Governments have responded by issuing new rules and oversights, as well as new structures for quality assessment. Systems of quality assurance have been introduced by all the countries, with evident differences.

In all ASEAN member countries, with the exception of Myanmar, governments have established national quality assurance agencies as the policy arm to ensure quality of higher education. This represents a general trend to place the oversight authority for higher education quality with a specialized national organization, and to entrust a process of external peer review for quality assurance.

Efforts to introduce an external mechanism to assess quality of higher education existed in SEA as early as the 1950s. The oldest established agency dealing with quality assurance in the region is the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities—PAASCU—established in 1957. PAASCU is a private, voluntary, non-profit corporation, which continues to play an active role in certifying the quality levels of accredited programs for private HEIs today.

Systematic government intervention to build a national organization for the purpose of assessing higher education quality has been a relatively recent phenomenon, however. Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC), the Philippines' Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Indonesia's Badan Akreditasi Nasional-Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT) were established in the 1990s. Other national quality assurance bodies in the region—Thailand's Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Singapore's Higher Education Quality Assurance Section (HEQA) and Council for Private Education (CPE), Vietnam's Education Testing and Accreditation (ETA), Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC), Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), and Lao PDR's Educational Standards and Quality Assurance Centre (ESQAC)—were all introduced during the following decade (SEAMEO RIHED 2011).

Myanmar does not currently have a national external quality assurance system. Councils within individual universities are responsible for the institution quality assurance. The Minister for Education formally chairs these Councils.

The names, years established, and key characteristics of the QA agencies in South-east Asia are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Structural characteristics of external quality assurance agencies in South-east Asian countries

Country	Agency	Founded	Type of organisation	Finance
Brunei Darussalam	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC)	1990	Centralised government Agency	Government
Cambodia	Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC)	2003	Independent Public Authority	Government + HEIs + donors
Indonesia	Badan Akreditasi Nasional-Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT)	1994	Independent Public Authority	Government
Lao PDR	Educational Standards and Quality Assurance Centre (ESQAC)	2008	Centralised Government Agency	Government
Malaysia	Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)	2007	Independent Public Authority	Government + HEIs
Myanmar	–	–	–	–
Philippines	Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	1994	Centralised Government Agency	Government + HEIs
	Certifying Bodies:- Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP)	1977	Umbrella Agency of Certifying Bodies for Accredited Programs in Private HEIs	HEIs
	National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (NNQAA)	1957	Umbrella Agency of Certifying Bodies for Accredited Programs in Public Universities	HEIs
Singapore	Higher Education Quality Assurance Section (HEQA)	2001	Centralised Government Agency	Government
	Council for Private Education (CPE)	2009	Statutory Board	Government

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Country	Agency	Founded	Type of organisation	Finance
Thailand	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA)	2000	Independent Public Authority	Government
Vietnam	Education Testing and Accreditation (ETA)	2003	Centralised Government Agency	Government + HEIs

Source Compiled from information presented in SEAMEO RIHED (2011)

5 Regional Integration and the Efforts on Higher Education Harmonization

The move towards regional integration—the ASEAN Community—in 2015 adds another important dimension to the ongoing changes in South-east Asian higher education sector.

In the ASEAN framework of integration founded on 3 pillars, education is considered a component in the Socio-Cultural Pillar of ASEAN Community. Key ASEAN policy documents on education—the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint issued in 2009, the Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation on Education signed in 2009, and the 5-Year Work Plan on Education (2011–2015)—do not include specific policies on higher education (ASEAN 2009a, b, 2012). The items contained in these documents that appear relating to higher education are general statements which involve promoting greater mobility of students and skilled workers, developing skills framework and common standard of competencies, and establishing ASEAN educational research convention to promote collaborative R&D; they are listed without indication on specific mechanisms to achieve them. On the economic arena, however, concrete regional initiatives with implications on higher education exist in the form of mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs). Between 2006 and 2012, ASEAN member states have signed seven MRAs to facilitate flows of professional and other services to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the ASEAN Economic Community. These MRAs cover engineering services, architectural services, surveying qualifications, accountancy services, nursing services, medical practitioners, dental practitioners and tourism professionals. The need to establish standards and requirements, and to set up infrastructures for certification and accreditation of these professional fields for mutual recognition will have significant implications on curricular of the related academic disciplines.

Although it appears that on the eve of ASEAN integration, a clear vision and concrete collective actions for the harmonization and development of regional

higher education remain absent from the Association's official policy priorities, individual member countries have introduced policies in the direction of harmonization.

Recently, governments in three countries have separately taken steps to revise or restructure their higher education systems to bring their systems closer to other members of ASEAN. The biggest change is the Philippines education system reform in 2012. The government added 2 more years to its secondary education to form a new "K to 12" system, so that the number of years for secondary school is in line with other ASEAN countries. Also in 2012, Myanmar introduced a credit system into their higher education. In Thailand, starting in 2014, universities have shifted the beginning of academic year from June to August. These changes mean significant steps forward for enhancing student mobility and contributing to efforts on building regional system for academic credit transfer and mutual recognition.

Meanwhile, a vast number of HEIs have reached out across borders in the region to forge closer ties, mostly by more extensive exchanges.

On the multi-lateral level, three regional bodies have carried out programs to facilitate greater integration. ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), a network of national quality assurance agencies from ASEAN member countries, has developed regional quality assurance framework for higher education to serve as a common reference point for national QA systems. The South-east Asian Ministers of Education Organization-Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED), an international organization under the direction of South-east Asian Ministers of Education Council, has promoted the idea for creation of an ASEAN higher education common space. It manages a multi-lateral student mobility program and proposes an Academic Credit Transfer for Asia (ACTFA). Another entity is ASEAN University Network (AUN), which is a network of 30 universities from ASEAN member states, operating student exchange program among its member universities and partners, with an ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS). Of these three regional organizations, only AUN is within the jurisdiction of ASEAN.

6 Reform, Regionalization, and the Challenges for Future Development

The enormous changes and the imminent regional integration have presented South-east Asian higher education with great opportunities as well as challenges.

South-east Asia higher education development over the past two decades has taken the directions of expansion, liberalization, and restructuring. Restructuring will continue to be a key policy effort in many countries. As regionalization will soon take effect, harmonization and mutual recognition will and should be the main focus of regional higher education policy in the next two decades.

At the national level, liberalization, and restructuring have made the region's higher education sector more diverse today in terms of governance and finance. In many countries, the scene of a relatively homogenous higher education sector entirely or predominantly populated with HEIs that were government agencies, funded solely with government budget, has shifted to one with a mixture of traditional public HEIs, public autonomous HEIs, private HEIs, and branches of overseas HEIs, financed by a mixture of sources. Even among the group of autonomous HEIs, diversity also exists in the structure and function of their governing boards. An obvious structural variation is the selection and composition of board members, particularly the proportion of external members from government and business sectors. National policy-makers face with a multitude of challenges. For instance, which paths or processes are to be taken to forge successful reform and manage transition; which are the effective policies and governance model(s), for their specific national contexts, to grant autonomy and capacity to HEIs, while maintaining oversight to ensure that the directions of autonomous HEIs continue to align with national strategic objectives and that they use public funds accountably. Also there are broader policy questions regarding the impacts of governance reforms and the performance of higher education systems on societal objectives, for instance, equity of access, quality of education, relevance and responsiveness of academic programs to the emerging knowledge and skill requirements, competency of the graduates to work in a world that is more interdependent regionally and globally.

At the institutional level, HEIs in the region face the new challenges of greater competition amidst the constraints of limited capacity and the need to be more self-reliant. HEI executives and board members need to find effective and efficient models to build capacity for teaching and research, produce innovations, attract students, generate revenues, internationalize, as well as enhance the HEI's standing locally and internationally.

At the regional level, there are currently multiple, yet non-coherent and sometimes overlapping efforts conducted separately to harmonize the region's higher education. This shows the sector's broad awareness and interest in regional collaboration to prepare for a more integrated future. It also indicates a need to find ways for the multiple stakeholders to work together in a coherent and coordinated process. South-east Asia can draw from the extensive experience of Europe—especially the Bologna process—to develop its own systematic and collective actions towards a regional higher education area. In particular, experience from Europe is valuable for SEA in managing a shared process to harmonize the diverse systems to create a regional higher education area where borders will no longer be barriers for academic mobility, credits and qualification recognition. The way forward for the regional integration requires that harmonization and creation of a regional common space in higher education be made a central policy priority of ASEAN, with a more systematic approach and concrete collective actions built around common regional goals.

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Part III
Excellence and Diversification of Higher Education Institutions' Missions

Seeking Excellence, Practicing Rankings, and Aiming at Diversification of Higher Education Institutions' Mission in the European Higher Education Area [Overview Paper]

Jan Sadlak

1 Introduction

This chapter has been written in order to formulate an overview for discussion of topics broadly reflected in three key words—*excellence*, *diversification,* and *rankings*. This topical triangle rightly suggests a degree of correlation between issues under consideration. Additional common thread for this essay is the reflection on the above three topics in the context of the Bologna Process and its outcome —the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

2 Excellence

"Excellence" is not explicitly mentioned in official documents of the Bologna Process as one of its key objective. In other words, "excellence", which should be understood as "striving for the highest level of quality and performance", does not serve as one of common denominators in normative hierarchies of academic quality of the Bologna Process. It suggests that seeking "excellence" is easier associated with a liberal approach to higher education, than with its role in idealized vision of Europe representing the hope of achieving social and economic progress together, in an atmosphere of collaboration, mutual understanding and friendship. To some extent, such perspective on excellence dominates in official documents of the Bologna Process—the communiqué, which are adopted by consensus at the end of bi-annual ministerial conferences. It coincides a dominant view in European academia in which response to global competition in higher education and research

J. Sadlak (✉)
IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence, Warsaw, Poland
e-mail: jj.sadlak@gmail.com

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should be based on "balancing the need for competitiveness with that of enhanced cooperation, social cohesion and solidarity" (EUA 2011).

However, the absence of specific reference to "excellence" in official texts of the Bologna Process does not preclude understanding that higher education plays an important role in a global competition, and in order to meet such expectations it is imperative that higher education must strive for excellence. The *Bologna Declaration* already points out that:

> The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a worldwide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions [text of the Bologna Declaration 1998].

Consequently, calls for enhancement of "attractiveness" of the European higher education, foremost by improving quality, has been a steady element of official communiqués of bi-annual ministerial conferences, as well as other documents elaborated for that most pan-European mega-project. Even if formally addressed to member countries of the European Union, an important policy argument for performant higher education of the European region was the Lisbon Strategy. It was devised in 2000 to make the European Union by 2010; "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and more better jobs and greater social cohesion." The more realistic "*Europe 2020*", which replaced the over-ambitious Lisbon Strategy, retains its concern for competitive higher education. In this context, seeking excellence is present in policy thinking at the regional, as well as national levels.

It is evident that achieving such ambitious goals implies going beyond minimal standards stipulated by established instruments of quality assurance such as accreditation. It is therefore not surprising to identify policy approaches and measures related to "excellence" at the national and institutional levels among countries participating in the Bologna Process.

A comprehensive analysis of excellence-driven policies shows that in about 50 % of countries of EHEA have such system-wide policies. Some countries like France, Germany and Russia have more than one such initiative. Certain countries, like the United Kingdom, do not have officially-labelled initiatives but in practice they adhere to promotion of excellence by using quality-driven assessment, and promotion of merges (Froumin and Lisyutkin 2015). It is actually hard to find a country that would openly admit a differing policy.

3 Diversification

There is hardly a modern system of higher education, at least in the countries participating in the Bologna Process, which would be organized around one type of institution and monolithic manner of operation. It is therefore quite normal that Bologna communiqués emphasise that more attention should be paid to the

potential benefits of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with institutions and programmes with different profiles and missions. It has been also argued that diversified higher education is a sign of the system's alleged capacity to better respond to labour market and social fairness.

Taking into consideration that one of the characteristics of Europe is historical, linguistic and cultural diversity, it is quite evident that diversification of higher education has its additional policy and educational raison-de-être.

Higher education literature distinguishes the following three categories of diversification (CHEPS (2008) Mapping Diversity Report):

- *institutional*, referring to differences in types of institution within higher education system;
- *programmatic*, relating to diversity of study programmes offered by higher education institution,
- *reputational*, which refers to prestige or status of higher education institution [or programme]

Discussing "diversification" of higher education in EHEA needs to be seen from a more holistic perspective of policies which resulted in massification, as well as expectations towards greater role of higher education in responding to varied challenges, often framed under a concept of "third mission" and its derivate foremost related to "sustainable development". It looks that diversification is gaining its rightly place in policy discourse, as well as institutional practices among countries of EHEA (Pausits 2015; Porzionato and De Marco 2015).

From the perspective of "excellence", diversification needs to be looked at in the context of the tensions between the need to expand higher education to accommodate social demand [mass higher education] and quality considerations. The latter one implies the continuing need to develop some elite forms of institutional settings, funding mechanisms and legal provisions. The author of a study commissioned by EUA—European University Association, points out that:

> Even Norway, which is most explicitly and consistently anti-elite in its academic and stakeholder values, shows an increased need for a high performing elite that can meet the most stringent demands of international competitiveness. While the idea of hereditary privilege offends dominant notions of equal opportunity and equal rights, the need to maintain elites in some form or another seems to persist and is usually met, obliquely rather than explicitly, with differentiated, often separate higher education provision (institutions or programmes) (Reichert 2009).

From the point of view of enhancement of academic attractiveness and benchmarks of excellence, "institutional diversification" can be perceived as synonymous with a concept of "research-intensive university" and its role in a given system higher education. It needs to be recognized that such diversification can also imply existence of hierarchy of status and prestige within the system of higher education. The latter one has a particular significance for university rankings.

The policy of institutional diversification undertaken in a number of countries of EHEA shows a growing understanding that in order to be sufficiently attractive, it requires concentration of resources. In such context, modification of existing or

creation of new institutional framework should not be dismissed. This is why a number of countries in the region has supported, by adopting appropriate legal measures often combined with financial incentives, initiatives resulting in mergers and other forms of 'strategic aggregations' measures (Curaj et al. 2015).

4 Rankings

The European higher education has a relatively brief history of "cohabitation" with "university rankings" which has been intertwined by three characteristic approaches: that of rejection, opposition, and acceptance. It is revealing, but not surprising, to see that advocacy of rejection has been coming foremost from lobbying organizations representing academia—institutions, faculty and students. All well represented in opinion forming and policy developing structures of the Bologna Process. In a way, it elucidates why "rankings" have not been mentioned, at least until very recently, in official policy documents of the Bologna Process.

> This situation is quite astonishing taking into consideration that, out of 47 countries participating in the Bologna Process, 23 countries nowadays have at least one "national ranking" [according *Inventory on National Ranking* published by IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence]. Not to mention that great number of higher education institutions and study programmes is covered by various regional and global rankings while reporting on occupied place [especially if this is high one] becomes a routine practice, not only for marketing purposes.

It is a matter of recognition, as well as of historical record, to point out that the first European meeting on university rankings was organized in Warsaw in June 2002 by UNESCO-CEPES in collaboration with the Kozminski University [at the time called "Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management"]. The title of the meeting, *Invitational Roundtable on Statistical Indicators for Quality Assessment of Higher/Tertiary Education Institutions—Ranking and League Table Methodologies*, reflects conceptual origins of university rankings, at least in the European context (Barrows 2013).

An important marking point of this cohabitation with university rankings, and not only in EHEA, was publication in 2003 by the team of researchers from the Shanghai Jiao Tong University of the *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (*ARWU*), commonly referred to as the "*Shanghai rankings*". It is this ranking, followed by several other global ranking initiatives, that led to verification of the arrogantly dismissive views about rankings. The good illustration of this change, applicable to university rankings in general, was a summary opinion presented in the influential French daily *Le Monde* when referring to "Shanghai rankings" by saying; "Une palmares qui irrite mai qui a su s'imposer" [Ranking which irritates but cannot be ignored].

It would be too optimistic to say that the current stage of cohabitation with rankings has reached a stage of acceptance, but even those doubting about the responsible place of rankings admit their rising influence and impact on higher

education overall, on institutions of higher education, and on policy and public opinion about higher education (Hazelkorn et al. 2014). Their actual role in contemporary higher education should be seen as a process, which has been well formulated in the context of findings of international independent survey, stating that:

> Rankings are used for specific and different purposes. Politicians regularly refer to them as a measurement of their nation's economic strength and aspirations. Universities use them to define performance targets and implement marketing activities, while academics use rankings to support their own professional reputation and status. Students use rankings to choose their potential place of study and research. Public and private stakeholders use rankings to guide their decisions about funding allocations. What started out as a consumer product aimed at undergraduate domestic students have now become both a manifestation and a driver of global competition and a battle for excellence in itself. (Expert Group 2010)

The above view affirms that in today's higher education, ensuring appropriate standards needs to be supplemented by appropriate response to public interest in sound information about how such standards are reflected in their activities. University rankings are responding to such needs.

A dominant narrative of criticisms of global university rankings is their methodological shortcomings reflecting "elite universities", also to be read as the Anglo-Saxon model of research intensive university, enjoying reputation and prestige build up by large endowments and celebrity professors. It is quite unlikely to find many followers of such a model of university among countries of EHEA. It is hard to say if the various "excellence initiatives" presented earlier will result in significant improvement in global ranking position of participating higher education institutions. A political response to this condition has been the European Commission initiative to come out with the European-model-friendly ranking—*U-Multirank*. In a certain manner, this rankings would also represent an alternative to the Shanghai ranking (Kováts 2015).

It is hoped that through its emergence on the EU higher education agenda, a new comprehensive ranking system will facilitate not only greater transparency and accountability of universities, but will also help policymakers to develop longer term strategies as part of the broader HE modernization agenda for Europe.

5 Concluding Remarks

History of higher education confirms its standing concern for academic excellence. However, if this preoccupation was foremost that of individual academic and given university, presented in this essay shows important changes reflecting profound transformation inside and outside of higher education. A recently published report analysing funding for excellence in European countries observes that emergence of "excellence schemes" along the emergence of various international rankings is one of the manifestations of the changing paradigms in the field of higher education (Bennetot Pruvot and Estermann 2015).

It is encouraging to observe that, instead of lamenting about the disappearance of "traditional university", there is a growing acceptance that emergence of a globally competitive higher education implies acceptance of system level policy and institutional level practice, where terms like excellence, quality-control, evaluation, efficiency, output perspective on learning, cost-sharing funding, accountability, performance indicators, rankings, competition, bibliometrics have become part of the idiom of any forward oriented higher education system or university, which finally is a goal of the Bologna Process (Standaert 2009).

In today's higher education, ensuring appropriate standards needs to be supplemented by the public interest in sound information about how such standards are reflected in their activities. University rankings, with all due shortcomings, are responding to such needs. The fact that university rankings have established themselves as information and transparency tools gives a light on fact that there is a limited set of alternative to rankings mechanisms reflecting performance of higher education. In other words, that it has proven "easier said than done" to come out with alternatives.

University rankings are an entrenched phenomenon around the world and are part of the "new landscape" of higher education. University rankings will continue to be one of the most passionately argued issues in higher education.

In the end, discussion about excellence, diversification and mission of higher education is part of the philosophical and political tug-of-war between more traditional cannon of higher education, economic conditions, national sensibilities, political pragmatism and imperatives of "rapidly changing world" (Sadlak 2014).

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Excellence-Driven Policies and Initiatives in the Context of Bologna Process: Rationale, Design, Implementation and Outcomes

Isak Froumin and Mikhail Lisyutkin

1 Introduction

Bologna Process is rightly seen as one of the most significant policy initiatives in the field of higher education. A comprehensive and transformative nature of this large-scale policy has resulted in a growing attention to universities' external accountability, to the organization of the quality and to the efficiency of the resources use (Sadlak 2011). Excellence-driven policies represent a more riffle approach to enhance higher education. The set of the governments' actions aimed at the improvement of national higher education system global competitiveness, most commonly represented by the transformation of existing universities into the so-called world-class universities (Salmi 2009) or establishing new world-class universities has been generally considered as the excellence-driven policy.

Started in a few countries and became a frequent practice when world universities ranking has joined the range of the top issues in higher education policy agenda, the excellence-driven policies became prior considerations in many countries. Consequently, "more and more countries are joining the race of building up world-class universities by establishing special initiatives" (Sadlak and Liu 2009, p. 16). These initiatives changed the focus of higher education policy discourse from the overall quality maintenance to supporting the limited number of universities aimed to achieve world-class status or global excellence (Altbach and Salmi 2011). At the same time, they affected the whole higher education systems by

I. Froumin (✉) · M. Lisyutkin
National Research University "Higher School of Economics", Moscow, Russia
e-mail: ifroumin@hse.ru

M. Lisyutkin
e-mail: mlisyutkin@hse.ru

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stimulating the competition between universities, by changing the financing patterns and thus promoting the most desirable model of Research University (Mohrman et al. 2008).

Practically, all modern higher education policies mentioned above somehow interact with Bologna process. They influence each other. The interaction between Bologna Process and excellence-driven policies and initiatives is most interesting, but controversial. Indeed, the excellence orientation is striving for the highest level of quality and performance, but does not serve as a common denominator in normative hierarchies of academic quality within the Bologna Process.

The objective of the research[1] represented in the paper is to look at the design and implementation of the excellence-driven policies in different countries in the context of the whole system development, and particularly in the context of the Bologna Process. Such policies could be considered as a sign of the more active role of the state in higher education development by designing and implementing new types of institutions and higher education programs. It can be argued that this is a new stage of the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in higher education (Bleiklie 1988).

The analysis starts with the rationale of these initiatives in the context of national higher education policies within the theoretical framework that puts the state in the centre of higher education policy. The next section is devoted to the design of such initiatives. Various excellence-driven initiatives, their common and unique features are analyzed to develop general design of excellence-driven policy. The implementation mechanisms and impact of the implementation of these policies is the focus of the next section. In the concluding section, the question of the relationships between Bologna Process and excellence initiatives in the context of the national higher education policies is discussed.

2 Rationale of Excellence-Driven Policies and Initiatives

The expression "excellence initiative" frequently used in the text was borrowed from the German policy in higher education. It means an initiative aimed to promote top-level research and to improve the quality of universities and research institutions in general, thus making Germany a more attractive research location, making it more internationally competitive (Kehm 2006). Making this definition more theoretical and universal, excellence-driven initiatives and policies can be described as a "large injection of funding by a national government aimed at

[1]J. Salmi's description of different excellence initiatives commissioned by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science used in the analysis. Part of this analysis was published in Russian (Salmi and Froumin 2013). Various national reports and regulatory documents related to the excellence initiatives are also used as a basis for the study. Another important source of the data and ideas was the set of interviews conducted in 2012–2014 with policy makers and senior universities administrators from seven countries.

financing the development of world-class universities in an accelerated fashion. These programs are usually very selective in terms of the number of beneficiary universities and the research focus of the upgrading efforts" (Salmi and Froumin 2013, p. 31).

There are different approaches to establish a group of globally competitive universities in different countries. The paper examines these approaches by looking at the excellence-driven policies and initiatives in more than 20 countries, including countries from the European Higher Education Area such as Germany, Denmark, Russia, and Norway, as well as the countries in other regions. Essentially, there are two main approaches to solve the problem of establishing a segment of globally competitive universities: to transform existing universities and to establish new ones. Certain countries, such as Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia and Singapore, have established new universities as greenfield projects, while the majority of countries concentrated on the modernization of the existing universities (Salmi 2009).

Table 1 shows the spread of the excellence-initiatives throughout the world. It should be noticed that Asian and American cases are included into the list; also they could help understand the relationships between the excellence initiatives and whole system-level policies.

This list is not complete because there are plenty of projects on individual universities' creation or development which deeply vary from the above listed initiatives and could come under separate analysis. Such projects are the Masdar University in Abu-Dhabi, the Nazarbaev University in Kazakhstan, Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technologies and Innopolis University in Russia, Paris-Saclay University in France, the KAUST in Saudi Arabia. Some relatively small scale government projects on improving research and graduate education in selected universities with the support of the leading world-class universities, such as MIT-Portugal program or Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology, are also not in the list.

We do not consider in this paper some projects of forming "strong" universities through a merger facilitated by the government, as Aalto University in Finland, the Beijing Medical University and Beijing University in China, the Victoria University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Despite being incomplete, the table clearly shows that the last 15 years are the period when excellence policies gained wide distribution. Why did this happen? Which functions are charged to excellence-driven policies and initiatives?

A range of interviews were conducted to look at the roots of different higher education policy initiatives. Interviews have shown that many of them grew from the "bottom" of the system, from institutional level. Governments and society often embrace and convert them into system-wide policies.

On the other hand, excellence initiatives almost always come from the top, often from the very high levels of the government. This requires looking at this issue through the theoretical lens of the relationship between the state and higher education development. Such theoretical framework was suggested by Carnoy et al. (2013) in the recent book on higher education development in BRIC countries. It was suggested that modern state takes a more and more central role in higher

Table 1 The list of national excellence-driven policies and *initiatives*

Year	Country	Name of the policy	Allocated funds
2002	Japan	Top-30 program (centres of excellence for 21st century plan)	US$484 million
	China	211 project	US$3 billion
2003	Australia	ARC centres of excellence	US$255.9 million yearly
	Norway	Centres of excellence scheme	US$1.5–3 million per CoE for a maximum of ten years
2004	China	985 project	US$6.6 billion (Phase II)
	South Korea	New university for regional innovation project	US$1 billion
2005	Russian Federation	Federal university program	US$411 million
	Taiwan	1. Developing a first-class university and top research centres	1. US$1.7 billion (Phase I)
		2. Teaching excellence development program	2. US$666 million
2006	Germany	Excellence initiative	US$2.35 billion (Phase I, Phase II)
		1. Brain Korea 21 program	1. US$2.1 billion (Phase II)
	South Korea	2. BK21-MS global internship program	2. US$1 million
	Russian Federation	Innovative university program	US$920 million
	Singapore	Campus for research excellence and technological enterprise	US$335 million
2007	Japan	1. Global centres of excellence program	1. US$640,000–6.4 million per center per year
		2. World premier international research centre initiative	2. US$108 million per year
	Singapore	1. Research centres of excellence	1. US$603.3 million
		2. Competitive research program funding scheme	2. 4–8 US$ million per program over 3–5 years
2008	Canada	Global excellence research chairs	Each 29 chair-holders and their research teams receive up to US$10 million over 7 years
	China	211 project (Phase III)	NA
	Denmark	Investment capital for university research	US$79.3 million
	France	Operation campus	US$6.2 billion
	Malaysia	Accelerated program for excellence (APEX)	NA
	Nigeria		
		World-class universities program	NA
	South Korea	National project towards building world class universities	US$720 million

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Year	Country	Name of the policy	Allocated funds
2009	Russian Federation	National research university program	US$1.6 billion
	Spain	International campus of excellence	US$313.3 million
	Thailand	National research universities development project	US$380 million
2010	Israel	I-CORE—the Israeli centres for research excellence	US$360 million
	France	Excellence laboratories	US$1.24 billion
2011	China	985 project (Phase III)	NA
	France	1. Excellence equipment program	1. US$1.24 billion
		2. Excellence initiative	2. US$9.53 billion
	Taiwan	1. Moving into top universities program	1. US$330 million
		2. Teaching excellence program (second phase)	2. NA
	Romania	Higher education reform bill	NA
2012	China	2011 plan (Phase I)	NA
	France	Excellence initiatives for training	US$185.8 million
	Germany	Excellence initiative (Phase II)	US$2.97 billion
	India	Universities of research and innovation bill	NA
	Poland	Creation of "national centres of research excellence" (KNOW)	US$90 million
2013	Russian Federation	Global competitiveness enhancement of Russian universities ("5–100")	US$880 million (2013–2017) (entire project will be implemented until 2020)
2014	Africa	Africa higher education centres of excellence	$290.8 million (The World Bank)
	Japan	Top global university project	$65 million (the project will be implemented for 10 years)
	Canada	Science technology and innovation strategy	$1.3 billion (the project will be implemented for 10 years)

Source Salmi and Froumin (2013) adjusted

education development because the expansion of higher education is the key for the development of modern economy, and because a state seeks the legitimation by expanding the higher education and showing its global quality, global competitiveness. This framework refers to John Meyer's on how and why states gain their legitimacy (Boli et al. 1985; Meyer and Rowan 1977). It is argued that under the globalization process governments need not only internal, but also global legitimacy to be competitive and to act as an equal partner in international collaboration.

Within this framework, the main reason for the government intervention in the form of excellence driven policies becomes clear. It lies in the fact that the governments are not happy with the slow evolution of the higher education systems. It is understood by the states that universities could play a significant role in the development of globally competitive innovation-based economies or in the global political and cultural competition.

Governments want universities to bring the fruits of the innovation economy as fast as possible. Governments accelerate the changes through the regulatory framework, push universities to compete internationally by offering them additional funding, and direct the universities on what and how they should do.

Some countries, for example, Australia and the United Kingdom, consider their higher education systems not just as innovation-based economy growth drivers, but also as direct economic agents that produce a significant part of the national GDP by selling the educational services, especially to foreign students. For instance, education exports are Australia's fourth largest export, generating $15 billion revenues each year, most of which in higher education. Over the past five years, international students have provided Australian universities with $18.5 billion (Group of Eight 2014, Australia 2014). For such countries as Australia, the existence of world-class universities makes the whole higher education system more attractive for the international students. This fact indicates that one of the main objectives of the world-class universities is the attraction of international students promoting the whole higher education system globally.

The role of universities in attracting foreign students and best professors as future cadres of innovative economy is indeed an important part of the rationale. Most countries realized that they should be on brain gain rather than on brain drain side. Internationally branded universities could be convenient and efficient channels for such migration of talents (Salmi 2012). Cambridge, ETH Zurich and Imperial College are world-class universities that may serve as examples of such attractors within the European higher education area.

Another important driver of the excellence initiatives is the growing focus on the research as a part of the public policy. Despite the fact that most policy documents describing the excellence initiatives state that such initiatives are aimed at improving the whole higher education system or at least the process of education at selected universities, in reality they create the conditions for the research universities, not the so-called teaching universities, to flourish. As K. Mohrman noted, the excellence initiatives promote a more or less universal model of global research university (Mohrman et al. 2008).

Various governments put the excellence initiatives into broader frameworks of strengthening the research productivity of the universities. They supported not just universities as a whole institution, but separate advanced research centres and individual departments as well. Like Germany or Canada, these countries created a comprehensive "excellence package" that included "excellence measures" of different scale. It helped these countries to involve more universities in such programs and to create favourable environments for them.

Similarly, the series of the states introduced "excellence initiatives" together with the measures to support excellence and innovations in education. Germany made the development of modern graduate school part of its excellence program. Canada, in its turn, introduced "The Canada Research Chairs" program to support research and innovation development in Canadian universities, and to attract leading scholars and scientists. French government is well-known for its initiatives to establish "poles of competitiveness" as the mechanisms to promote regional economic growth.

Some countries had quite specific additional rationale to introduce the excellence initiatives. Big countries like China, India and Russia, in addition to the reasons which were discussed above, tried to solve the problem of the regional development by establishing world-class universities in regions or macro-regions.

Another rationale to implement excellence-driven policies comes from the countries with the objectives for the development of specific sectors of economy. In this case, the French "poles of competitiveness" included the development of the universities that became the parts of the industrial clusters relevant to such activities as automotive industry, aeronautics, pharmaceuticals, instrumentation, communication equipment and chemistry (Bretones 2011). Abu-Dhabi invested a huge amount of money into the establishment of the Masdar Institute with a clear specialization in sustainable technologies as a part of the Masdar sustainable city project (Lau 2012). Brazil invited MIT to contribute to the development of a small university specialized in aviation. Singapore (having already two excellent universities) decided to create another one, also with MIT support, in the area of design (SUDT-MIT 2014).

The desire to have world-class universities has its roots not just in rational considerations, but also in the symbolic role of such universities. They are increasingly becoming a part of the legitimation of the state, like a football team or the national opera. The expansion of international rankings has made the governments vulnerable in defending their global legitimacy in the area of higher education. Before the universities were compared internationally, governments could hide behind the history of particular universities or could build impressive university campuses to create an impression that the country had great universities.

The rankings made the competition between the states very visible. It should be stressed that the international rankings are playing a more and more important role in such policies. The rankings are most commonly recognized as an indicator of success of excellence-driven policies (Salmi 2009). Moreover, in some cases there is a substitution of concepts when places in the rankings become main goals by themselves, but not the detectors of policy implementation.

This fact shows how the political and broad social and economic objectives of the excellence-driven policies shape the model of the world-class university. Indeed, the research and educational productivity of a particular university could be high even if this university does not have a lot of international students. However, these students are becoming a symbol of a global recognition and strong economic impact of such universities.

The emergence of the excellence-driven policies also reflects the growing influence of the New Public Management in higher education (Bleiklie 1988; Ferlie et al. 1996; Hood 1991; Stech 2011), such as performance based funding, accountability, external quality control, or business-like managerial practices. One of the objectives of new public management in higher education is the strengthening of the competition between the universities. Such competition leads to greater differentiation in higher education system (Froumin et al. 2014) and creation of segments of losers and winners. It should be admitted that the analysis of the histories of some excellence initiatives has shown that the government pressure was not fully coercive—it was supported by the winners—the leading universities that considered the excellence initiative as the opportunity for them.

Bologna process had also created favourable conditions for the excellence-driven policies. This process moved from very national (local) and peculiar higher education systems into more comparable and even similar mechanisms. Bologna Process has opened the door to the creation of a harmonized regional higher education space which was supposed to make European higher education more competitive and attractive, specifically to US higher education (Kehm 2010). The internationalization became the focus of higher education development. Therefore, the international recognition of the universities, their role in international academic mobility attracted more than ever the attention of policy-makers.

This analysis shows that almost in all cases the rationale behind such initiatives was in the state economic, political and social objectives. The "natural" development of universities was not the source of the policy changes.

3 Design of Excellence-Driven Policies and Initiatives

The question of the design of excellence initiatives has a number of elements:

- Does the initiative support the development of universities as an entity or certain individual units (departments)?
- Does it encourage mergers and acquisitions?
- What is its scale in terms of money and time?
- How are the universities being selected?
- What are the universities expected to do? What do they suggest to do?

It was found that the largest excellence initiatives were focused on the universities as a whole. There are two explanations that could be drawn from the interviews: (a) international rankings consider whole universities; (b) such design allows all resources of the university to be involved in its development.

It could be claimed that mergers were not the most important part of any of these initiatives. Exceptions are France, Denmark and China—countries which relied significantly on the merger mechanism (Salmi 2009). Also, Russian "Federal universities project", which was to establish a big regional or macro-regional

university through merging existing ones (Froumin and Povalko 2014), illustrates how mergers and acquisitions could be used to implement excellence policy.

Nevertheless, the reason not to use mergers widely proved to be simple—mergers take time; their first stage is very risky, because of disorganization and loss of priorities as shown, for example, from the research on mergers in Finland done by Ursin et al. (2010).

Such famous mergers that have created Manchester University, Aalto University and Strasbourg University happened with the same objective, but outside of the excellence initiatives.

The question of phasing and timing of excellence initiatives is also an important part of policy design. It should be stressed that the number of launched programs and the phasing of excellence initiatives are different from country to country. There was a single excellence program in Australia, Finland, Spain, Norway, for example. In Germany, South Korea, Taiwan multi-phase programs have been implemented, alternatively. The duration of each initiative (or phase) ranges from 3 to 7 years in most cases (Salmi and Froumin 2013).

Most countries adopted open competition as a mechanism to select particular universities which would achieve global competitiveness. Competitive selection is usually based on the previous records of the universities and their development plans. German government evaluated 137 proposals submitted by graduate schools and clusters of excellence, for example Salmi and Froumin (2013). The exceptions to this are China and Taiwan. China picked universities for the project 985 after the review of their performance and potential in a directive way. Taiwan government did the same taking current university-industry cooperation as the key selection criteria.

It is important to mention that in all cases the evaluation of these proposals involved international experts. For many countries, such involvement was the first step to the real internationalization of expert decision-making in higher education. Russian government has decided to include leaders of a number of foreign universities from Top 100 of Shanghai ranking into the selection committee. This selection committee was praised by the government and universities for the quality and transparency of its work. As a result, all members of the selection committee were asked to stay as the members of the Project Implementation Oversight Committee which was to monitor the implementation of strategic plans regularly.

The most interesting question of this part of the paper is what universities put in their plans? The answer is very straightforward—they put there the actions that directly or indirectly lead to the improvement of performance indicators used in world university rankings.

Simple calculations on performance indicators used by rankings show that research and publication activities worth nearly two thirds of the overall ranking score on the average. Indexes related to quality of the education worth 20 %. International presence comes out slightly more than 5 % in world university rankings. The universities and the ministries respond to this by making the development of improvement plans mainly research oriented. The quality of the education itself, as well as the international component in terms of students and faculty remains on the periphery (Salmi and Froumin 2013).

The study has found that in most cases the design of the universities' plans is based on clear indicators of universities performance. Much emphasis is on the idea that the aim of "pushing" universities for excellence is not only to achieve specific indicators, but to develop within-the-university culture of self-development and change management. However, the majority of the plans do not have specific elements of the design to achieve this goal.

Indeed, when governments start to push higher education institutions for excellence they make demands and requirements for universities' performance and activities. Considering that world university rankings constitute most frequently used complex indicators for conducting excellence-driven policy implementation (Salmi 2009), governments are guided (sometimes blindly) by rankings parameters. The indicators of the global rankings are used to develop and plan not just the outcomes, but the process as well.

Under the influence of rankings, governments make their direct requests for universities' productivity. At the same time, universities introduce their internal performance criteria to be highly ranked in the future. Cumulatively, it leads to the fact that selected universities change the content of their work significantly. The practice shows that in certain circumstances they do it for the worse, but not for the better.

As can be seen from above, on one hand the design of excellence policies fosters positive competition in higher education system; it also triggers the development of research activities. On the other hand, the policy design based on rankings indexes "governs how university administrators shape the policy and direction of institutions themselves in a bid to rise up the rank" (Barber et al. 2013, p. 20). Moreover, there are examples relating to different countries when the design of such initiatives leads to destructive change of emphasis of universities which participate in excellence programs.

When the design of excellence policy is developed and universities start to function according to new circumstances, governments need to support program implementation by monitoring preliminary results to timely adjust it for changing conditions. Also, each government needs to evaluate outcomes of the program it has introduced. These two questions of implementation and outcomes assessment of excellence-driven policies and initiatives are to be discussed in the next part of the paper.

4 Implementation and Outcomes of Excellence-Driven Policies and Initiatives

When considering the implementation mechanisms of excellence-driven policies and initiatives, a surprising fact was found—participating universities that are supposed to be the leaders of higher education system got more restrictions on their autonomy than other ("normal") universities. This is a very key characteristic of the implementation approach used by the governments. The allocation of big money

makes the governments worry about its efficient use. To ensure this efficiency and effectiveness, governments build complicated instruments to control the universities. For many centuries, the autonomy and internal energy of universities were the main sources of higher education development. The excellence initiatives represent different approaches where the push for the excellence comes from outside, from above the universities. The challenge for the governments is to find the right push instruments to ensure flexibility and internal motivation of participating universities.

The following questions were considered to elaborate on the governments approaches to develop specific implementation instruments:

- Who is in charge? What is the role of the government or the Ministry of Higher Education/Education on the implementation of excellence-driven policies and initiatives?
- How do governments allocate money? What is the degree of freedom?
- How do central authorities monitor results? How do they measure the effectiveness of policy implementation? How do they evaluate the progress?
- Do the authorities intervene and how?

In all the cases, the Ministries of Education (and Science or Higher Education) are in charge of the implementation process. Mainly, they partner with a national higher education or research funding agency. They usually delegate the function of day-to-day operation support to designated a program implementation agency (PIA). The role of such agency is to interpret the Ministry's policies, collect data, provide logistical support for the expert evaluation, and ensure the communication among the universities and between the Ministry and universities. In all the cases, these agencies were involved (even through the monitoring) into internal business of universities. It consequently manifests new modality of the relationships between the universities and the government.

In most cases, such agencies adopt business approaches when the program is being implemented. They use key performance indicators (KPI) to evaluate universities' progress, and encourage universities to hire consultancy companies to build effective management structure. The Russian agency hired a consulting company to teach universities how to use project management in their operation. These details confirm that the excellence initiatives are linked with the economic mobilization of the higher education systems under New Public Management frameworks (Bleiklie 1988; Stech 2011).

In some cases, such agency reports not to the Ministry unit that is responsible for higher education policy, but to some special project units. It means that the implementation of the excellence initiative is becoming a separate stream within the higher education policy implementation. In a number of countries such as Germany or Russia, program implementation agencies serve as technical support organizations carrying out selection or monitoring procedures. Furthermore, PIA exerts significant impact on resource allocation. Relying on decisions made by agency experts, Ministries grant, extend or cut off funding.

In the majority of the initiatives, the governments allocate special development grants to the participating universities which often mean that universities can only spend this grant for specific type of expenses. What is more, some governments, such as Canada in 2014 for example, set research and development priorities in a top-bottom way based on their own views when allocating money.

The accuracy of the spending is being carefully monitored by the governments of project implementation agencies. Interviews conducted during the research suggest that the intervention of the Ministry of Finance (or equal agency) is a quite common feature of the implementation process. This is another manifestation of the limits of the university autonomy imposed by the excellence policies.

According to Salmi's (2009) calculation on resource allocation per university by excellence initiative, the amount of money provided for universities differs significantly from country to country. While, Australia infused from $1million to $4 million to each Centre of Excellence in (2003), Chinese government has devoted nearly $300 million to Peking University and Tsinghua University in 1999. France has provided its "Operational Campus" with nearly $620 million in 2008.

It should be emphasized that monitoring of the implementation, as well as the monitoring of the results of the program is a difficult task. First, the implementation agency should find the right balance when increasing bureaucratic pressure on universities asking them for regular reporting; second, the time of such projects is too short to see the final fruits of the intervention. It means that the monitoring system inevitably uses short-term indicators to evaluate the progress.

In many countries, the academics complain that the implementation agencies or the ministries are pressing the universities for more reports (Hazelkorn 2011). Almost in all cases, the monitoring systems include annual or even semi-annual scanning of the changes in universities' characteristics and criteria used by the international rankings. Therefore, universities feel constant pressure to publish more and in better journals, to attract more international students and research contracts.

Even more, there is almost no outcome, but mostly process indicators and parameters (like number of international students) are being used to evaluate excellence policies. In Russia such indicators include number of joint programs, number of international researchers hired by universities (Froumin and Povalko 2014).

Thus, the monitoring systems are becoming an instrument of influencing internal policies of universities. As it was shown above, almost all excellence initiatives imply the development of the strategic plan (program, action plan) by the participating universities. The PIA follows the implementation of these plans through the reporting and monitoring systems. These strategic plans or "roadmaps" are usually based on specific activities or strategic projects. The example of the Russian Federation illustrates the significance of such "roadmaps" not so much for universities, as for program implementation agencies. Fifteen Russian universities were asked to develop and present their roadmaps before the PIA. One university out of the whole group was expelled from the excellence program by the reason of unsatisfactory "roadmap".

Criteria used to assess universities claiming for excellence serve as formal guidelines in many cases. Moreover, it is proved by the practice that universities reorganize their activity to comply with the criteria. However, their real performance quality could remain the same or, what is more, decline.

Several universities participating in excellence-driven programs were examined in the research. The analysis has shown that in a year or two many activities carried out by these universities become bureaucratized. Formal performance indicators imposed by international rankings such as the number of publications or the ratio of foreign students lead to the fact that higher education institutions introduce cumbersome systems of internal control to become top rated. To achieve their goals which are sometimes too ambitious, university administrators build a hierarchy to control the performance of each organizational unit or even each research or teaching employee. Our respondents complained that reporting back is sometimes more time consuming than doing their primary job. All the countries without exception use international review as an important instrument for the evaluation of progress. The Ministries recommend universities to create their own international expert panels to review the progress.

The discussion about the outcomes of the excellence initiatives is limited by the data available. There are three types of outcomes that are usually discussed in the literature and in the governments' reports: the changes in the ranking position of participating universities; the changes in other indicators used by the ministries within the monitoring of the initiatives; internal changes at the universities. It could be argued that the changes in higher education system as a whole should be considered as an outcome of excellence-driven policy or initiative. However, the analysis of the changes in the ranking positions does not show sustainable impact of such policies and initiatives (Table 2).

National reports on the excellence initiatives provide the information about other changes in productivity and quality of the participating universities. They report about increase in the quality of incoming students, about new facilities (mainly research facilities) and more international partnerships (Hazelkorn 2007; Salmi and Froumin 2013).

The interviews also show significant innovations in the management structure and management processes at the participating universities. They include: new incentives for the professors and researchers, interdisciplinary research centres and graduate programs. Units that are dealing with international publications, PR, and links with the industry have increased in scale and quality. In many cases, universities reformed their governance structure giving more power to the committees formed with external (international) experts. Many of these changes reflected the move of the university management to business model. Unfortunately, at some instances this business-type behaviour leads to questionable practices.

There are interesting examples when universities "go the vole" to comply with rankings criteria. Adventurous universities offer huge amounts of money to highly cited and internationally recognized scholars to change their affiliation. There are examples which boggle the mind when universities pay to journals indexed by Scopus or Web of Science for publication of the papers.

Table 2 Universities in TOP 100 of world university rankings

No	Country	2008		2011			2014		
		ARWU	QS/THE	ARWU	QS	THE	ARWU	QS	THE
1	United States	54	38	53	31	51	52	28	45
2	United Kingdom	11	17	10	19	12	8	19	11
3	Australia	3	7	4	8	4	4	8	5
4	Netherlands	2	4	2	3	4	4	6	6
5	Canada	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4
6	Germany	6	3	6	4	4	4	3	6
7	Switzerland	3	3	4	3	3	5	4	3
8	Japan	4	4	5	6	2	3	5	2
9	France	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	2
10	Sweden	4	2	3	2	3	3	2	3
11	China	0	2	0	2	2	0	3	2
12	Russia	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0

Academic Rankings of World Universities (2014), QS World University Ranking (2014), The World University Rankings—Times Higher Education (2014)

These findings make it reasonable to summarize this part of the paper arguing that the design of excellence-driven policies and initiatives based on clear formal indicators provides universities with the "guiding stars". It is clear for universities what should be done to perform well in terms of the excellence programs. But the question of how it should be done remains open and by no means all universities answer it for the real benefit of their development. Usually, the changes in ranking position are considered as the main outcome of success or failure for the university, as well as the state. An even more challenging issue is the real impact of excellence-driven policies on universities and on overall higher education systems in general—particularly in the context of Bologna Process.

5 Conclusion: Excellence-Driven Policies, Higher Education Policies and Bologna Process

The excellence-driven policies and initiatives are becoming an important part of the state higher education policies around the globe. They reflect new tendencies of competing states that mobilize and push higher education institutions for the changes to achieve globally recognized excellence. It would be too easy to blame governments for the excessive control, for constraints on the university autonomy. The states pursue their legitimate objectives, while the universities look slow for them. That is why excellence-driven policy is a clear manifestation of New Public Management policy in relation to higher education.

This set of policies inevitably interacts with the Bologna process. There are both synergy and contradiction in this interaction.

The synergy side relates to internationalization. Both policies consider the internationalization as a key process and objective. The aspiration to have more international students obviously corresponds with the Bologna Process priority of mobility. Such aspiration requires the creation of the favourable conditions for the international academic mobility. More and more universities introduce ECTS and Diploma Supplement in their attempts to attract international students. Creation of joint (international) programs is also the part of the excellence-driven policies. This also goes well with ECTS, comparable standards, mobility.

Partially, the synergy between the excellence-driven policies and Bologna Process appears in the common attention to the quality control. However it is possible to disagree with Stech (2011) who argues that the Bologna Process is another manifestation of the NPM because it has a number of elements that are in contradiction with the excellence-driven policies which indeed reflect the ideology of NPM.

The main contradiction between Bologna Process and excellence-driven policies lies in the difference between the target groups and the time frame. While Bologna Process is aimed at evolutionary modernization of the system as a whole, the excellence initiatives focus on a selected group of universities within relatively short timeframe. It can create risks of moving public funds to the very elite groups of universities. What is probably even more important, the expansion of excellence-driven initiatives can create an expansion of the direct involvement of the government into the operations of the universities. The temptation to use short and simple list of key performance indicators could be too strong. Indeed, if the government "successfully" manages the leading universities, it has good rationale to manage directly other universities as well.

At the same time, it should be admitted that the excellence-initiatives proved their impact on universities. The impressive pace of the positive changes at the universities participating in such programs is their significant result. Therefore, the challenge for the governments is to continue the push for the excellence while respecting and nurturing the universities autonomy and the culture of self-development at the same time.

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The Knowledge Society and Diversification of Higher Education: From the Social Contract to the Mission of Universities

Attila Pausits

1 Introduction

The European higher education policy has nowadays been dominated by an ambitious modernization of nation-state higher education systems. These reform processes have significantly influenced both core missions of higher education institutions (HEIs), namely research and teaching. The university's autonomy and governance, the Bologna Process, the Excellence Initiative, but also the changes in the funding of higher education (HE)—to mention some of the key issues—have led to a fundamental discussion on the role and responsibilities of HEIs (Altbach and Peterson 2007; D'Ambrosio and Ehrenberg 2007; Huisman and Pausits 2010). The changes range from comprehensive system reforms to institutional change processes, which are often expressed and propagated with headings like "from government to governance" (Bergan et al. 2011), "from teaching to learning" (Nygaard and Holtham 2008) or "from research to innovation" (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000). There are examples of a necessary change and a new alignment of the social contract (Daxner 2010) for HEIs, e.g. new financing models; trends such as the expansion of tertiary education; or the right of active participation in the process of lifelong learning (Davies et al. 2010).

But these new developments and changes lead to the same question: alongside teaching and research are there other tasks for a modern university in a knowledge society? If so, then the existing social contract between HEIs and society has to be renegotiated. Politicians, decision-makers and university administrators are in search for a new identity and a new strategic anchoring of the modern university in society (Kerr 2001; Molas-Gallart et al. 2002). In this process, they are repeatedly using the so-called 'third mission' (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997; Mahrl and

A. Pausits (✉)
Danube University Krems, Krems an der Donau, Austria
e-mail: attila.pausits@donau-uni.ac.at

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Pausits 2011) as a synonym for a modern university: a subject that has caused a variety of publications (Arbo and Benneworth 2007) and a series of meetings and conferences worldwide.[1] It often involves tasks not covered entirely through the first two traditional core functions of universities: teaching and research. The reaction, universities already have enough to do, and therefore do not need yet another 'mission', disappears in the media discussion of the renewal of the international and European higher education landscape. Both the policy and the universities themselves recognize a social, as well as, institutional need for (re) opening. The third mission becomes more and more the vehicle to leave the "ivory tower" (Mahrl and Pausits 2011).

The first step of this opening means to understand the university's institutional role. Even if by the term university we do mean a special form of organization, which is linked to operate with the specific mission in teaching and research, there are many different forms of implementation: the research-intensive, the regional, the teaching-oriented, universities for further education, both private and public universities, virtual, technical, applied sciences etc. (van Vught 2009). This variety makes comparisons difficult, and a classification is needed. Thus, differences can be uncovered, but sometimes also developed and protected. The U-Map project[2] funded by the European Union, delivered the first feasibility study on a European framework, similar to the Carnegie classification[3] and the Russell Group.[4] This comparison is inevitable, on one hand because of increasing competition and scarce resources, but on the other hand also for institutional profile-building, to provide differentiation among each other. It becomes evident, underlined through the development of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education by ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), and also within the systemic and institutional upgrading of quality assurance and development. These Standards are the common working measures and foundation of quality assurance agencies in Europe.

New mega-national quality assurance agencies are established these days to be able to fulfil their tasks and to be competitive on an international quality assurance marketplace, e.g. in Austria and Finland. Furthermore, the former national agencies are operating more internationally. For example, the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz has been evaluated by the Finnish accreditation agency, FINHEEC. From this example, it is again clear that international comparisons and benchmarks are not only generated by initiatives such as U-Map, but also by supranational quality assurance mechanisms. Therefore, for the review of institutional quality measures, international standards and quality requirements are to be used, and thus provide support for the institutional profile-building (Pichl 2012) in a global competition.

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[1]See http://e3mproject.eu/final-conference-note.html; http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/news/Pages/news-1-4-1434.aspx.

[2]See www.u-map.eu.

[3]See http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/.

[4]See http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/.

Standards and profiling are two elements of the current academic discussion that highlight not only the width, but also the depth of a particular complexity of knowledge production and interaction. The tasks of rectors are to develop an institutional profile of their universities, to identify and use external funding, to develop more efficient and effective organisations, and to sustain academic excellence with strategic advantages. In this context of a modern, entrepreneurial, and progressive university, we refer repeatedly to the third mission as a catalyst and barometer (Arbo and Benneworth 2007; Etzkowitz 2008; Molas-Gallart et al. 2002). It is assumed, that from the development of the third mission, the other two core areas of the university benefit as well (Mahrl and Pausits 2011). Up to now, there are no empirical studies on this theory. Does the third mission lead to the desired overall development and the contemporary university as an organization? Can such a mission and profile be used for further diversification? Or is it just another slogan on crisis-ridden skies of HE?

The following article deals with this phenomenon and attempts to develop a theoretical and conceptual framework of this third pillar of university activities. First, an overview of the relevant literature is presented, followed by concepts for describing the different dimensions and tasks subsumed under the term third mission. These concepts will help not only to get an overview of this area, but also to understand the challenges and limitations of the term third mission, as well as deliver indicators to measure third mission activities. Today, many rankings use different indicators to value the 'quality of universities'. In this article rankings will be taken as a point of reference, to evaluate them based on their focus areas. The key question is how many aspects and measures have been used so far to 'rank' universities based on their performance and quality profile? If we follow the international discussion about the changes in HE, then the rankings should also adapt their indicators based on the social contract (Mahrl and Pausits 2011; Montesinos et al. 2008). Therefore, the empirical part of this paper will analyse the indicators and group them related to the missions of universities, in order to see how far rankings reflect the third mission and the diversification of higher education.

2 Institutional Approach and Contextualization: Previous Research Findings

The importance of universities is based on their achievements in research and teaching, and not on their willingness to make institutional changes (Shattock 2003). Nevertheless, these same changes are necessary to develop these two core missions and to create the modern university environment. Standardization in research and teaching can be established by quality assurance and development (Brennan and Shah 2000). These standardization tools enhance unification of services and processes, and thus produce minimum standards. Additionally, this means a change in the basic expectations of the stakeholders towards the universities. The university as a "Community of Scholars" is becoming the "Community of Practice"

(Barnett 2003; Maassen and Olsen 2007). This is a new understanding of quality, which is supported by the development of indicators, standardized processes, audits and peer reviews, and implemented through professional university management. It means a shift in the institutional focus from an academic oligarchy to organization and markets (Clark 1983). The concept of the university described by Weick as a "loosely coupled system" (Weick 1976) has been transformed into new concepts. One of these concepts is aimed at extending the responsibilities of the university as a transformative characteristic (Barnett 2003; Kerr 2001).

The term 'mission' is derived from the Latin word *missio* (broadcast) and described at the beginning only by the extension of faith. The third mission of the university, however, has more to do with the organizational theory meaning of the term: a mission as a mandate (Altbach and Peterson 2007). In the literature, the third mission is derived from two different perspectives. One perspective focuses on the tasks of a university and subscribes the need to define another mission from the complexity of the tasks (Cross and Pickering 2008; Daxner 2010; Goddard and Puukka 2008; Mahrl and Pausits 2011). The other perspective justifies the third mission through the university as a special organizational form and the associated social role (Molas-Gallart et al. 2002; Montesinos et al. 2008).

Already in the 70s, the German Education Council defined Continuing Education as the third pillar of universities (Deutscher 1975). This aspect was enhanced, not in the least, due to the current debate about the importance of lifelong learning (LLL) and the role of universities in this context. Logical consequences are the development of LLL strategies in all Austrian universities, the establishment of continuing education centres within or outside the universities, and also in establishment of national or international networks for continuing education. It is clear that in addition to education, continuing education advances to core functions of universities. Universities advance from a "partner to teach" in certain stages of life, to a "partner to learn" for a lifetime (Davies et al. 2010).

Another approach to the third mission, from the perspective of tasks, can be made through research and the production of knowledge. In their publication Gibbons et al. (1994) describe the need for greater contextualization of the research, as well as an opening in the direction of the markets, and also the society and other stakeholders, as an integral part of knowledge creation. This means that the relevance of the research increasingly depends upon the customers and stakeholders. The authors refer to this as "Mode 2" and point out a progressive importance of science for and in the society. The new model should move away from hierarchical and discipline-oriented research towards more interdisciplinary and application-oriented research. This describes a widened understanding of research as a second mission of universities. At the end, both teaching and research are confronted with a change in their understanding and organizational purpose.

In teaching, these changes resulted in reform in the structure (the Bologna Process), and in the emphasis and expansion of postgraduate education at universities. However, in research, a number of new concepts (Edquist 1997; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000) on the role of universities in national innovation systems have been developed. This includes the concept of the Triple Helix (Etzkowitz and

Leydesdorff 1997). They describe the relationship between university, industry and the public sector, and thereby define, in addition to research and teaching, knowledge transfer to society as a further—third—task.

Both changes in teaching and in research indicate an institutional adjustment and modification of the original tasks, or at least an extension of those. In the development of such concepts, the "Entrepreneurial University" described by Burton Clark plays a significant role. The entrepreneurial university takes responsibility for its core tasks and yet, remains flexible and able to adapt adequately to social developments. Obviously, there is not one single approach to the entrepreneurial university (Clark 1998). There are rather multiple examples of good implementation in the national higher education contexts applying to the definition by Burton Clark. It is not about the use of a schematic model of the entrepreneurial university, but rather to find institutional and individual responses for a new type of university.

The modernization agenda of universities has many different aspects, however apparently all come together in this "new" third mission. Governments are demanding more accountability from the universities and more responsibility for the funds provided to them. New concepts of universities, such as the University Alto, an integration of three different universities in Finland into single one, or the Danube University Krems in Austria, the only public university for continuing education in Europe, are examples for a new differentiation of higher education. The quest for "World Class University" and elite positions in international university rankings as a measure of achievement on the one hand, and universities with a strong regional focus on the other hand, are two of many differentiations in a new global, national and regional competition for resources (Arbo and Benneworth 2007; Barnett 2003; van Vught 2009). The university will be increasingly characterized by institutional diversity in the future (Clark 2004; Shattock 2003).

Surprisingly, a comprehensive discussion on the third mission at the universities does not take place yet. It is rather dominated by topics viewed by involved actors as more important, such as funding and access to higher education. Both the involvement of stakeholder groups, as well as the gain of an understanding of all stakeholders on the meaning, form and interactions of the tasks in this context, is necessary. Common understanding about the goals of the third mission is needed to enhance further developments in this field. Therefore some of the key concepts are presented in following chapter.

3 The Taxonomy of the Third Mission

3.1 The Russell Group

The Russell Group, an association of leading research-intensive universities in the UK, had already installed a working group for the development of a concept for the third mission in 2002. The working group noted that universities have always provided a contribution to decision-making processes for wide society-related

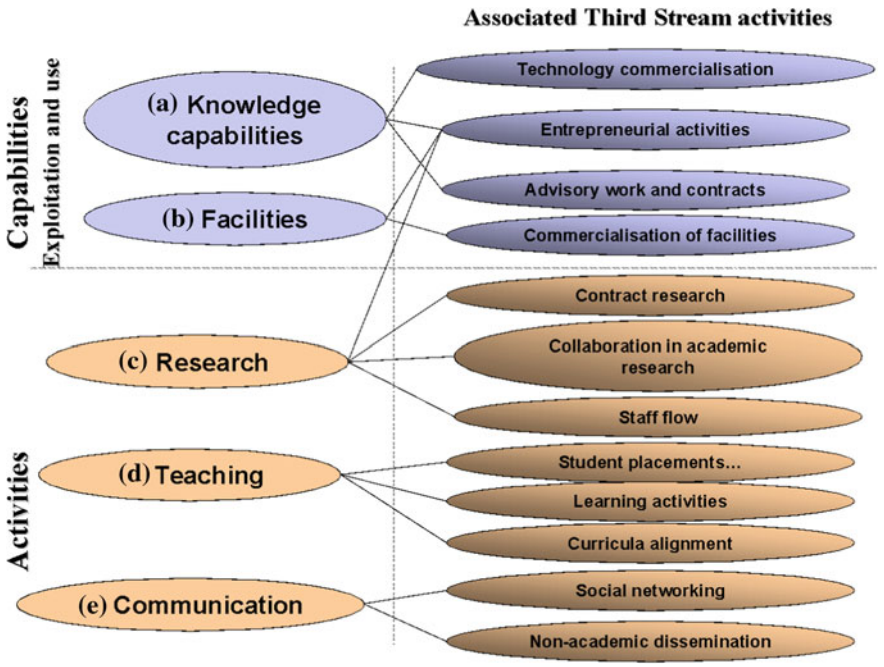

Fig. 1 Conceptual reference framework for the analysis of activities of the third mission (Molas-Gallart et al. 2002)

topics. Therefore, the third mission was defined as "the generation, use, application and exploitation of knowledge and other university capabilities outside academic environments" (Molas-Gallart et al. 2002). This definition suggests a rather broad understanding of the tasks associated with the third mission. The services provided by the university for the society are at the centre of this view, and are added to the first two missions, teaching and research, as a third object. Thus, it is more about transfer and not interaction. The aim is to activate performances of the university (capabilities) and use them in a broader context (exploitation and use) further on to enable activities, whose roots actually lie in teaching and research (see Fig. 1).

The third mission is the driving force (Mahrl and Pausits 2011) to continue the opening of the universities, to initiate an exchange outside the scientific system, and to find answers to social issues—in Anglo-Saxon university systems it is the common found market-orientation (Altbach and Peterson 2007; Enders et al. 2005; Rothschild and White 1993)—which has still to be worked out by many European higher education systems and universities. The European Union is trying to set some initiatives, such as the Bologna Process, the importance of employability and 'Knowledge Alliances'. Basically, it comes down to scientific, social and economic relations of the university towards society. These include the labour, continuing education, and knowledge markets (Hansen 1999). The Russell Report points out the importance of communication with these markets, and identifies the

non-academic dissemination of results as a task of the university. This non-academic dissemination includes, for example, reporting on research results in the media. The focus is the exchange with non-academic areas through teaching and research. As the figure shows, there are a variety of activities taking place outside the science systems, which have to also be understood as such. It is important not only to label the tasks for the purpose of better visibility, but also to check their measurability (Mahrl and Pausits 2011).

3.2 *Prime Network*

Some years after the Russell Report, a group of European experts called Prime Network on behalf of the 'Observatory of the European University', worked out another concept of the third mission, accompanied by an evaluation model (radar) to detect and rate activities in this context. They identified eight dimensions and associated indicators (see Fig. 2).

Similar to the Russell Report, the Prime Network also employs it to make the activities more visible and measurable. The model draws on five transverse characteristics as a framework for the activities like autonomy, strategic capabilities, attractiveness, differentiation profile, and territorial embedding. These are relevant for the third mission, because they affect the design options at the institutional level. These transverse characteristics describe the environment and provide the

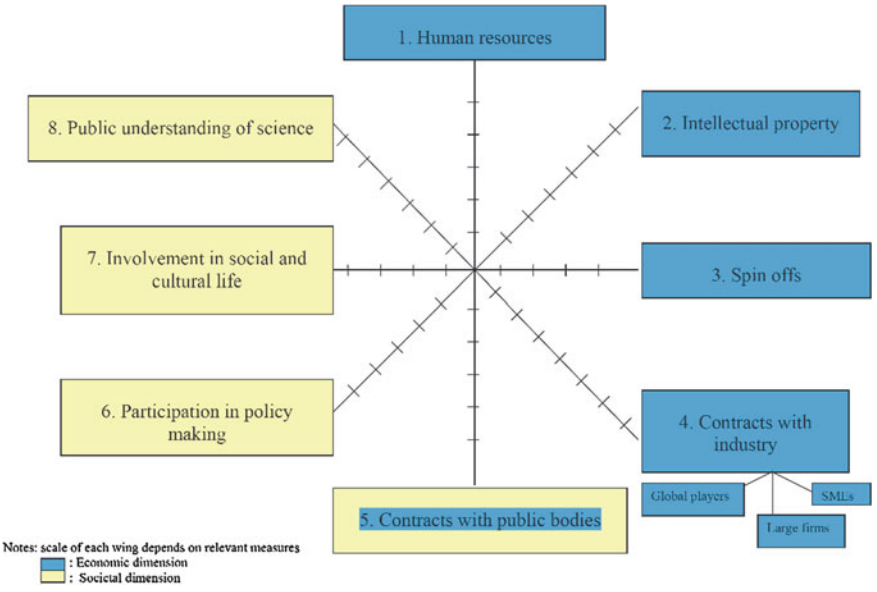

Fig. 2 Functions of the third mission (radar) (PRIME Network 2006)

framework conditions. The group concludes that the eight functions which can be assigned as the third mission activities are to be subsumed to two main dimensions.

On the one hand, the third mission has an economic dimension, in which resource-oriented economic action patterns can be seen. On the other hand, a social dimension, which can be understood as an increased understanding about science in society. These include, for example, initiatives such as the 'Night of Research' which has been carried out in Austria for years. Another element in the social dimension is the active participation and involvement in social and cultural life. This comprises, among others, the opening of the university libraries for public or participation of the university choir for singers from the region. The last activity that is designated as "commissioned work for the public sector" is attributed to two main dimensions. Although it is socially relevant, it also carries an economic importance, because resulting benefits are financed by the public.

The functions under the economic dimension are mainly the traditional functions of a Technology Transfer Office (TTO) or a Knowledge Management Centre. It is about the exploitation of research and the application of research in the form of innovation. Unfortunately, this innovation is understood in the narrow sense, for example, the field of social innovation is excluded from the concept. However, universities have an important role in the development of social innovation and to support it in the future. Therefore, an extension in understanding of the concept within the Prime Network would be necessary. Otherwise, the third mission is reduced to a conventional TTO, which certainly does not sufficiently satisfy the demands of a modern university and excludes socially relevant issues. Another activity within the economic dimension involves the flow of knowledge from the university to industry. Here, PhD students and graduates are meant to have had practical experiences outside of the university during their studies. This may be the research that has been conducted on behalf of the business sector, or work carried out jointly with a commercial enterprise or with a representative of a company. However, a research job can be counted under human resources, as well as contact with industry and thus count twice. This example also shows that smooth transitions exist between the different activities and for measurement a clear structure and allocation is required. In this activity, the main goal does not lie in employability, but in penetration of the science system into the non-university sector.

3.3 E3M

Another recent European initiative, "European Indicators and Ranking Methodology for University Third Mission" (E3M), has been working on the third mission. Their goals were to initiate an international and an internal institutional discourse on the role of the third mission, and to develop indicators that allow measurability of activities. The third aspect—unlike the previous two concepts—was to develop indicators of rankings. For the third mission activities, hardly any indicators are included in the current ranking systems for higher education. But the

third mission activities are gradually being seen as an integral part of university functions and activities and thus have to be considered in rankings.

To add more international perspectives and aspects, the group applied the Delphi method and was able to capture opinions of nearly 30 experts in Europe. As a result, three dimensions for the third mission are elaborated: Continuing Education, Technology Transfer and Innovation, and Social Engagement. Each dimension was divided and described in relevant processes, including activities. As a result, there were 18 indicators found in the field of Continuing Education, 16 indicators in the dimension of Technology Transfer and Innovation, and 20 indicators for measuring the Social Engagement.

In contrast to the other two models, one has a variety of possible indicators at hand. A first exemplary test—similar to the Prime Network—shows, however, that many of the developed indicators can only be used in a limited way, since relevant data is either not available, or not available in sufficient quality, or not available in a comparable form (Mahrl and Pausits 2011). Obviously, the data used by universities for monitoring and quality control today covers the area of the third mission only by a little or not at all. Conversely, there are no such factors in the target and performance agreements (e.g. in Austria) and, by contrast, controlling does not foresee detection of these data. Certainly, there is evidence in the context of continuing education, even if only rudimentary or with respect to third-party, and some connection with the work of the TTOs. But, there is little or even no data when it comes to the third dimension, the social engagement.

Perhaps because of this, universities have started to create, similar to business enterprises, self-initiated Social Responsibility Reports (SRR), even just to make this area more visible. Even if a SRR is not congruent with the dimension described by E3M as social engagement, it still shows an increased accountability of universities for their own environment and the region. Although universities are not per se regional development organizations, there are a greater number of universities that recognize the importance of involving the institution in a regional context (Arbo and Benneworth 2007; Lyytinen 2011; OECD 1999).

4 Differences and Similarities: The Third Mission as a Task

The different concepts presented indicate a common direction, but require further reflection and extensions. Even if all three concepts have different backgrounds for the conceptual development, they have come to relatively the same results:

- The activities in the third mission are based on the first two missions. Hence, we cannot speak of a third mission as an independent area or a separate task, but more likely as an integrative part of the university, which is very closely linked to teaching and research.

- To make the third mission visible, it is first necessary to define the dimensions and areas of activity, and clearly name the related indicators. Only so that the third mission can be detected and evaluated as well.
- Institutional transformations and diversification—similar to the concepts presented—are needed. The third mission is a strong system, and context-dependent strategy.
- A university does not need to use all of the dimensions of the third mission, but rather have an active portfolio of activities and ensure their anchoring in the strategy of the university.
- The indicators developed are often descriptive, and are difficult to measure because of missing data in the university. Here, it will be important in the future that universities collect more information about the activities in this context, and use it for the advancement of the institutions.

However, how can the question about whether the third mission exists or not be answered correctly? The third mission has always existed, but it was not seen as an additional task, but rather some initiatives made by single members of the university out of intrinsic motivation. Thus, these activities were not or only rudimentary strategically anchored. Nevertheless, nowadays it is increasingly necessary to strengthen the dialogue between the university and its stakeholders. True to the motto: "Do good and talk about it."

Analogous to the concept of the entrepreneurial university, there is not the 'third mission', but rather it is about an institutional anchoring and implementation of activities. Therefore, a variety of deployment paths and examples exist. At the same time, however, it is not sufficient to focus merely on one or the other activity, and to neglect the others completely. Relatively, it is a development of a portfolio of the third mission. The following table shows the differences and similarities of the presented models (Table 1).

All three models show an adequate scientific foundation, although through the different perspectives—national versus international—aiming at complexity reduction. The Russell Report was written for the research-intensive universities as a carrier of the network. This means that the terminology in the national context is clear. Because of the diversity of higher education systems in Europe, however, the

Table 1 Model overview of the third mission

	Russell report	Prime network	E3M
Scientific approach	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contextualization	No	Yes	No
Focus	National	International	International
Dimensions	5	8	3
Processes	No	No	Yes
Activities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indicators	34	21	54
Recommendation for actions	Yes	No	Yes

other two models have the problem of terminology. For example, the number of students is calculated differently in continuing education; their 'status' and thus the total number are dependent on the particular system of the higher education institution. In some European countries no formal part-time students exist, whereas in other countries this figure represents a separate category for continuing education. Models that have an international focus, therefore, fight with the national system-specific terminologies and conditions.

A particular advantage of the Prime Network model is the use of transverse dimensions. Considering them, it is possible to put universities in a particular context, and to define the third mission alongside the systemic conditions. Institutional integration remains open, since the model is only descriptive. E3M supplies with a "Green Paper" recommendation for policy makers and university administrators, and identifies relevant starting points of implementation. For this purpose, it describes key processes, and not only the activities of the third mission. The Russell Report also provides recommendations that can be used not only for research-intensive universities, but show a high validity for all types of universities.

All three concepts deal in detail with the indicators, and simultaneously show the limits of quantitative methods for the third mission, and the institutional problems of data collection and recording on. Anyway, it is a field that is gaining importance. Because the field of quality development and monitoring in the future will more likely take over the role of the so-called institutional researcher and continue to build analytical activities as support for the university management. This generally means an expansion of the data collection, and analysis and reports on the framework set out by the Ministry towards a strategic decision support. And in particular, the systematic collection and evaluation of data for the third mission.

All models show a portfolio of activities in the third mission that can be provided by a university. So it considers: What can a university do and what role it can offer? But it is also about: what role they should play?—Therefore, it is not about a new revolution, but an evolutionary development, taking account of the limited resources and capacities. At the same time, the university cannot close this development, but must actively participate in the design of the company order.

5 Third Mission Aspects in Rankings

In recent years, a number of publications have dealt with rankings and the methodology behind each of these (Federkeil 2004; Hazelkorn 2011; Mahrl and Pausits 2011). Different groups of rankings (such as the reputation-based rankings, the research-based rankings, the teaching-based rankings etc.) use different indicators. Based on the basic assumption and core focus of the rankings, they rely on different indicators, which reflect the basic methodology, as well as perspective of the rankings. Since the first rankings started, there have been a large number of different indicators in use. In fact, rankings are more than a list of indicators, but more a "weighted aggregation of indicators" (Usher and Savino 2007, p. 9). In order to

look at these indicators, it is necessary to group these indicators into different categories. Based on 26 rankings, Usher and Savino grouped these indicators into eight groups (Usher and Savino 2007): beginning characteristics, learning input (staff), learning input (resources), learning environment, learning output, final outcomes, research and reputation.

While numerous ranking concepts focus on the first and second missions, the third mission is not included as a core element into existing rankings (Mahrl and Pausits 2011). The generally recognised ranking systems—like Academic Ranking of World Universities, commonly known as The Shanghai Ranking, or The Times Higher Education World University Ranking—present indicators to assess excellence at universities mainly by research and teaching. While rankings can improve quality assurance by allowing the institutions to understand their own performance, develop best practices and provide effective and efficient value to society, it is important that the third mission activities—as components of the institutional performance—are also part of such rankings. Furthermore, Usher and Medow group existing indicators mainly dedicated to the first and second mission. However, there are no commonly agreed indicators or methodologies to assess quality in the third mission activities. The above mentioned initiatives (Russell Group, Prime Network, E3M) identify a set of indicators, which can be used to improve rankings and to integrate additional aspects of university activities and outputs. The following table shows such indicators to measure the third mission activities (Table 2).[5]

The third mission as one of the driving forces for HE development should receive more attention in rankings. The EUA second report (EUA 2013) on rankings highlights that there is a significant improvement on rankings. The report talks mainly about research and teaching and does not pay attention to additional quality elements of HEIs. Moreover, the focus of a discussion about rankings is methodology, weights and data. Existing rankings have clear focal points. In general, while global rankings have research in focus, regional and national rankings look at teaching.

Based on the introduced third mission frameworks and set of indicators, Table 3 shows the different focus of the rankings and the missing perspective on the third mission. In this table, third mission indicators are counted as indicators identified in the frameworks of E3M, The Russell Report or Prime Networks. The division between teaching/learning and research is based on the groups given by the dimensions of the rankings and group of indicators in the dimensions of the methodology descriptions elaborated and aggregated by Usher and Medow (2009, p. 10f).

All 11 rankings represent different groups of rankings like global ranking or national ranking; rankings with focus on research or teaching; and also different parts of the world. The last ranking is dedicated to measure entire HE systems and, therefore, slightly different in methodology and focus from the other rankings. But

[5]See the final report of the OEU project, go to www.enid-europe.org or www.prime-noe.org.

Table 2 The "radar" of the third mission elements proposed by The PRIME project (see www.prime-noe.org)

Issues	Focus, main indicators and descriptors
1. Human resources	Focus: transfer of embodied knowledge in PhD students and graduates Comment: this axis screens the transfer of "competences trained through research" to industry and "mission oriented" public services Indicators: the number and share of PhD diploma going to industry and public services (distinguishing between R&D and non R&D positions)
2. Intellectual property	Focus: codified knowledge produced by the university and its management (patents, copyright) Indicators concern not only patents owned by the university, but university "inventors" (whatever the grantee is). Patent numbers should be complemented by licences granted and fees received
3. Spin offs	Focus: knowledge transfer through entrepreneurship Indicators: simple counts are not enough, a typology of relationship between spin-off firms and labs has to be considered (staff that left, staff still involved, research contracts, licences granted…) Descriptors are needed to characterise university involvement and support: dedicated teams, incubator, funds provided (in whatever form, including shareholding)
4. Contracts with industry	Focus: knowledge co-production and circulation to industry. This is taken as the main marker of the attractiveness of universities for existing economic actors Indicators: number of contracts, amount as a share of total resources, type of partners (global, large firms, SME) are the key aspects. Level of concentration (sectorial and/or on a few partners), types of contract (research, consultancy, services) and duration are important complementary aspects Delineating in large labs the degree of concentration (thematic or on given teams) is also often of strategic interest Comment: this is often complemented by a "soft" dimension where account is taken of membership in professional associations (and role played in given professional networks), professional publications, activities in continuous training, consultancy activities (often not paid to the lab) and internships (master students accepted in "stages") Focus: the "public service" dimension of research activities
5. Contracts with public bodies	Indicators: similar aspects, as for contract with industry, apply, especially differentiating between co-research and services Comment: it is important to complement contracts by non-market relations which are often critical when labs focus on social and cultural dimensions (this has often important implications for identity building, but also for economic activities such as tourism). This is also very present in health research (with clinical trials for new therapeutic protocols…)

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Issues	Focus, main indicators and descriptors
6. Participation into policy making	Focus: involvement in the shaping and/or implementation of policies (at different levels). This is often captured under the wording of "expertise", including policy studies, participation in the formulation of long-term programmes or to 'formalised' debates on S&T&I policy, involvement into standard setting committees, into committees and work on safety rules Descriptors: the usual mode is to consider a description in the annual report in order to build an indicator of presence and 'relative importance' (number of different activities and entities, number of persons involved)
7. Involvement into social and cultural life	Focus: involvement of the university in "societal" (mostly "city") life Comments: • A number of universities have lasting "facilities" that participate to the social and cultural life of the city (museums, orchestra, sport facilities, facilities like libraries open to schools or citizens…). Some involve themselves opening "social services" (like law shops) • Besides these "structural" investments, a number of labs involve themselves in given social and cultural events (expos, concerts, urban development projects…) Descriptors: there is little accumulated knowledge on how to account for such activities. Two approaches are being experimented: accounting for relative importance in all university investments and/or activities, positioning these within their own environment (as can be done for museums)
8. Public understanding of science	Focus: interaction with society Comment: the choice has been to focus here only on "dissemination" and interaction with the "general public". All growing aspects upon involvement into public debates are considered to be part of dimension 6 (participation to policy making) Descriptors: follow sets of activities deployed (open days, involvement in scientific fairs and the like, involvement into general press and science journals for the public, involvement in the different media, construction of "dissemination" and "interactive" websites, involvement into activities directed towards children and secondary schools…). Differentiate between individual initiatives and proactive policies of labs and of the university (as a whole or through its departments)

also, here, the third mission plays a rather limited role. However, compared to the other "traditional" institutional rankings, the third mission got higher attention. Only two out of 10 rankings with league tables use indicators related to third mission. While at the system level (U21 Rankings), it seems that the third mission is a more relevant element.

If we look to other rankings without league tables like CHE, we find the same picture. 86 % of the CHE Ranking indicators are related to teaching and learning

Table 3 Indicator division of university missions in rankings (%)

	Teaching/learning	Research	Third mission
Shanghai Jiao Tong University Word Ranking	10	90	0
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	33.75	59.50	6.75
US News and World Report	98	2	0
QS World University Ranking	80	20	0
The Academic Ranking of World Universities	10	90	0
National Taiwan University Ranking	0	100	0
University Ranking by Academic Performance	0	100	0
Perspektywy	75	16	9
Maclean's University Rankings			
La Republica	80	20	
U21 Rankings of National Higher Education Systems	38.30	48.5	13.65

and 14 % to research. In the case of U-Multirank, there is a significant change in the dimensions of the ranking, and with this, the focus of the ranking (institutional part). U-Multirank—which has presented the first results in 2014—identifies five dimensions: teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement. If we take a closer look and aggregate the different indicators into the three missions, we see the following result: 22 % is dedicated to teaching and learning, 37 % is related to research, and finally 41 % is associated to third mission. U-Multirank is the first global ranking with a different perspective, introducing new indicators related to third mission.

6 Summary and Outlook

The greater competitiveness, the changing governance structures and financing framework are forcing the universities to a greater profile and differentiation. In addition to teaching and research, this can be done also through the third mission. This is not a question of faith, but a necessity of a modern university, as market and service orientation of universities can and will be even more intense over this area in the future.

A basic discussion of the topic, the third mission, is currently missing in many Bologna countries. Here, it is much more appealing to the autonomy of the universities and anchored this social responsibility rudimentary into the target and performance agreements. If the individual strategies of universities are put under the microscope, it is seen that, as an anchor, it is only in certain segments of the third

mission. This can, of course, mean taking a (partial) success. Probably for this reason, it would require recognition by policy making bodies, as well as more attention and more attention within the Bologna Process as well. The third mission is not a redefinition of the university. At the end, the third mission is a vehicle of further diversification and profile building.

However, getting there requires more consideration on the system, institutional, and individual level. It requires both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. Already what is happening at the universities is much of what the university does not know, because it is not recorded or documented. Often there are initiatives of university members who are active through an inner drive out. Here, it is necessary to further protect these forces and to motivate others, without it becoming a compulsion. Finally, there is an organic and cultural development that allows this area to be understood as an integral part of the duties of a university to design and use.

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Excellence and Diversification of Higher Education Institutions' Missions

Marco Porzionato and Federica De Marco

1 Introduction

Since forever colleges and universities have competed with each other for students, teachers, donors and social support. For a long time, the competition has been evaluated by implicit reputation without any data to back up perceptions.

With the heightened competition between universities since the 1990s and the dramatic growth of the international higher education market, survey have emerged in many country as a means of evaluating and ranking universities (Shin and Toutkoushian 2011).

Recently, the competition has been accelerated in many countries as governments develop initiatives to build world-class universities that can compete more effectively with other leading institutions across the globe. Although there are concerns with using rankings as tools for measuring the quality of a university, many institutional leaders and policymakers still often rely on rankings to inform their policymaking.

Global rankings have major impacts on higher education systems, higher education institutions, academics and consumers (students, parents, employers).

For this reason, university rankings should encourage universities around the world to carry out a self-assessment in relation to several quality issues, including sustainability (Hazelkorn 2011). None of the main global rankings have so far addressed the issue, both in terms of good practice assessments and as an important signal to society as a whole.

M. Porzionato · F. De Marco (✉)
Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy
e-mail: federica.demarco@unive.it

M. Porzionato
e-mail: sustainability@unive.it

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DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_19

The introduction of sustainability in global rankings could be an important addition to the existing metrics and a significant dimension of comparison with multiple and far reaching benefits, not only for single universities, but for the entire higher educational system as well.

It is important to introduce sustainability in global rankings not simply as a criterion for identifying the best universities, but as a general underlying best practice principle in university activities, in the same way they have been recognized in all other institutions, such as companies and households.

2 Suggestions from RIO+20

Beginning in 2012, within the RIO+20 initiative (http://goo.gl/NOGOOW), HEIs around the world—with support from UN Academic Impact, UNEP, UNESCO, UN Global Compact, UN-PRME and the UNU—committed to achieving the following important goals:

1. Teach sustainable development concepts, ensuring that they form a part of the core curriculum across all disciplines;
2. Encourage research on sustainable development issues to improve scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge;
3. Make their campuses greener by:
    I. reducing their environmental footprint;
    II. adopting sustainable procurement practices;
    III. providing sustainable mobility options for students and faculty;
    IV. adopting effective programmes for waste minimization, recycling and reuse;
    V. encouraging more sustainable lifestyles.
4. Support sustainability efforts in the communities where they reside (United Nations 2012b).

Whereas paragraph 243 of the UN resolution following Rio+20 quotes: "We resolve to promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. We strongly encourage educational institutions to consider adopting good practices in sustainability management on their campuses and in their communities with the active participation of, inter alia, students, teachers and local partners, and teaching sustainable development as an integrated component across disciplines." (United Nations 2012a).

In this paragraph the UN remarks that sustainability is not something people should adopt once in a while, but rather something we must integrate, not only into our organizations or our campuses, but also within our teaching, our studies and our research.

Sustainability is indeed a multifaceted issue including social, environmental, cultural and economical issues (UNESCO 2002).

3 The Potential of Rankings

Global rankings can lead to changes in the academic culture of institutions, and ranking systems can play a big role in the setting and sharing of best practices among organizations, but not only.

Through international rankings we have the opportunity to create awareness and a prominent mean of circulating knowledge that is promoted/encouraged in universities. It is not the only way, but certainly it can be expected to have a significant influence.

Rankings have several positive features and effects: for example they contribute to transparency which is called for because one assumes that many stakeholders yearn for good information and are in need of good information systems in order to be rational actors.

Rankings are also information systems serving the idea that the best achievers will be rewarded, and further they reinforce virtuous, healthy competition; the information on rankings has an overall stimulating effect of increasing efforts to improve (Shin and Toutkoushian 2011).

Rankings should be able to stimulate people into adopting good practices, not only in terms of research and teaching, but also in terms of the way in which they run HEIs. This, in turn, would also help in improving ranking methodological approaches.

Often critics mainly emphasize the methodological weakness of rankings, which are unavoidable limitations of indicators or could be redressed by future improvements.

This paper has the aim to answer to two main questions:

1. Which is the purpose of university rankings?
2. What about the measures used?

For answering the first question we need to discover the main scope of this important tool and understand its real role.

Therefore, it is important to analyze if rankings are used as internal or external tools because this entails various consequences.

If rankings are used as an internal tool, it will serve to set the objectives of improving the organization and to plan the future activities.

If rankings are used as an external tool this may serve to three purposes:

(a) to allocate resources/attract enrollments both at national and international level
(b) to push the competitors/other academies to follow best practices both on a general and single entity's level;

(c) to account for the resources given on a single entity's level. It must be considered not only the funds, but also those resources presented in the balance sheet of other entities or externalities (such as the transports and landscape).

Rankings have an important role in determining the reputation, and at the same time the reputation of an organization has a greater weight in rankings. Reputation is an intangible asset, hard to construct and, if lost, hard to recover. The empirical evidence on the subject indicates that organizations, including universities, are right to worry about their reputation and its attached benefits. The difficulty in higher education is that reputation is a resource that cannot be easily purchased or improved.

The reputation of institution as gained in the marketplace has always functioned partly in the US academic marketplace, but now it is broadly functioning across the world. As a result, ranking has increased its visibility and impact (Shin and Toutkoushian 2011).

Often, it is assumed that highly ranked institutions are more productive, have higher quality teaching and research and contribute more to society than lower-ranked institutions. However, the three main dimensions of institutions—teaching, research and service—can differ or even conflict with each other, and those institutions that are performing well in one area may perform poorly along another dimension.

We should also wonder if ranking measures are related to measures of quality or organizational effectiveness. When considering ranking as a way of measuring institutional effectiveness or performance, it should reflect dimensions of organizational effective or quality (Hazelkorn 2011).

We must pay attention to ranking and quality management system because these mechanisms contribute to institutional quality and organizational effectiveness. Ranking, however, does not guarantee that institutional quality is enhanced by moving toward a higher rank.

Ranking was designed to lead to competition among academics and to enhance institutional quality: if ranking does not contribute to institutional quality, but simply provides information for college choice, it may lose its legitimacy. But it is possible to affirm that rankings aim to measure the average quality of a higher education institution.

University rankings in general attempt to account for the capability of HEIs to perform and grant deliverables to their stakeholders: academic and employer reputation, the level of scientific research, the degree of internationalization, these are all proxies of the quality of the product that a university is able to deliver. Accountability refers to rendering an account about what an institution is doing in relation to goals that have been set, or legitimate expectations that others may have of one's services or processes, in terms that can be understood by those who have a need or right to understand the account.

However, there is still a clear gap between the picture provided by university rankings and a complete description of everyday life in the university community. At best, present university rankings can only provide a rather limited and partial

view of the reality, whereas there is an increasing awareness of the fact that rankings could reflect—and indeed they should reflect—different behaviours of universities, and in particular the different ability among universities to comply and to cope with sustainability issues.

This discrepancy originates from a twofold aspect: on the one hand, rankings use a necessarily limited set of indicators to evaluate multi-output organizations, as universities are not enterprises; on the other hand, particularly in Europe, university is a right, not just an opportunity. HEIs are therefore complex organizations, and rankings measure only what is measurable, and not only what matters.

In this perspective, we should not underestimate the fact that higher education systems should be increasingly more accountable to their stakeholders, who have a growing importance, both in the EU, as well as in the rest of the World.

The second question suggests analyzing measures and indicators used in ranking systems.

Given that "what you measure is what you get", the measurements cannot be limited only to what is easier to measure. Activities and countable phenomena are by sure easy to manage, but HEI should focus on education, which is definitely more difficult to capture (Mio 2013).

It is most important to understand how to measure the higher education and which are the more suitable indicators to this purpose, even if one should proceed by proxy.

The first point to assess is that it does not exist an absolute measure applicable to all organizations, but it is necessary to consider the context in which the university operates. For instance, the economic situation and the development rate of a country or region must be considered in the planning of a measurement system, particularly when measuring social impacts.

Ranking universities have a challenging task because each institution has its own particular mission, focus and can offer different academic programs. Institutions can also differ in size and have varying amounts of resources at their disposal.

Another important issue for university rankings is how to take into account the disciplinary differences across institutions. Some are more oriented toward the hard science, whereas others are more focused on liberal arts. Disciplines can differ in paradigms, preferred publication types, preferred research types (pure vs. applied), research methodology, time allocation between different types of academic activities.

In addition, each country has its own history and higher education system which can impact the structure of their colleges and universities and how they compare to others. It is very difficult to rank properly entire universities, especially across national borders, according to the single criterion of ranking indicators.

The next step is to develop a set of indicators appropriate to measure the higher education. To do this, it could be useful to see which are those already used in the on-going evaluation process of education system (elementary school, middle school and high school).

An important methodological issue for rating agencies concerns the proper weightings of indicators in overall rankings of institutions. Some indicators are

typically weighted more highly than others. The ambiguity of weights also leads to the development of new rankings which use different sets of indicators and weights.

For sure, the measurement system cannot be left to the market, because it could lead to misleading results. The enrol price is not equivalent to the value of outcome generated by an HEI.

Giving that the current university rankings represent a partial picture of what a university is and what a university does, it would not be hard to conceive the inclusion of an additional semi-quantitative set of indicators reflecting the sensibility of a university system toward the sustainability framework. Therefore, the real issue is not if sustainability indicators could be included in university rankings, but rather why they should be included. Several possible reasons can be mentioned here.

Firstly, ranking methodologies are not immutable and have been changed over the years to reflect a rapidly changing academic and research world, as already remarked. These methodological changes have always been favourably welcomed both by students and university decision makers, as a way to provide a more realistic representation of the university system. In no known cases, these modifications have jeopardized the original strengths of the ranking and in fact they have often addressed some of their weaknesses (Rauhvargers 2011, 2013). Referring to this consideration, rankings should account that the most important universities in the world have already decided to take part in the big challenge of changing the world for the future generation. Indeed, an increasingly number of universities are committing to developing and maintaining an environment that enhances human health and fosters a transition toward sustainability.

Secondly, whether we like it or not, university rankings are not simply a measure of existing performances, but they have a significant impact on public opinion and decision makers. As a proxy for quality, therefore, they should strive to be as comprehensive and objective as possible.

Last but not least, we all hope for a better world for future generations, and a good university system is definitely a building block for that. University needs to be visionary centres of sustainability, innovation and excellence and to promulgate values and health of society.

In the recent years, there have been developed some rankings specialized in the accounting of the environmental impact of universities.

One of the most famous examples is the UI GreenMetric—World University Ranking.

This is one of the main university rankings specialized in the rating of world universities from a “green” perspective. Universitas Indonesia developed this ranking in the 2010 and was first based on information provided by universities around the world on criteria that demonstrate commitment to going green and sustainable, such as space, energy efficiency, water use, and transport and so on.

Thanks to the feedback, comments and suggestions received from the participants, this ranking has been improved from then and it is now addressed to measure how much the universities are committed to reduce their impact on the environment, and to help promote awareness of the importance of sustainability.

GreenMetric analyses six areas: setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste, water, transportation, education.

Right from the beginning this ranking showed its limits.

The first problem that the GreenMetric team had to face was the differences due to the variety of contexts wherein universities are placed.

Indeed, considering some indicators, universities located in city centre or in historical cities could be disadvantaged because they have not a lot of leeway in making actions to reduce their environmental impacts through building works or enlarging green spaces. For instance, in some historical cities there are no possibilities to build new and green buildings or to install solar panels, because making this kind of interventions involves important structural works in buildings that are often protected by artistic restrictions.

Moreover, environmental impacts can be very different from a climate zone to another and this influences considerably the amount of KWH used. A similar consideration can be made also for the indicator "percentage of area covered in vegetation", that in some countries is inevitably bigger than other countries with a high population density per square kilometre, or even the presence of a forest inside the campus.

Another big limit of GreenMetric ranking is the lack of the social dimension of sustainability: there is no indicator that measures the social impacts of universities and social cohesion, although this dimension produces probably the most relevant and evident results for a community, also in the economic sphere.

4 Conclusion

It is possible to assert without a doubt that sustainability can be a criterion to measure the quality of a university. This explains why the introduction of sustainability in global rankings could be an important addition to the existing metrics and an important dimension of comparison.

The integration of sustainability in standard ranking certainly brings multiple benefits, not only for single universities, but at the same time for the entire higher educational system.

For introducing sustainability in global rankings, it is important to consider it not simply as a criterion for identifying the best universities, but as a general underlying best practice principle in university activities.

Therefore, it is fundamental to promote the integration of sustainability indicators into standard university rankings, not only for the assessment, but also for spreading a sustainable perspective into all academic institutions, and to do this we must involve key players of rating system and of sustainability processes (Mio 2013).

This mechanism would stimulate the participation of all universities and not only of those already committed in sustainability.

From an operative point of view, if the intention is to develop a ranking for measuring the commitment to sustainability of universities and taking into account all these considerations, there are two ways:

- developing indicators considering the different possible contexts;
- developing a set of indicators applicable for every context.

In the first case, it should be provided a great variety of indicators that deeply analyze different aspects with a high level of detail. This method implicates that the data collection may be more problematic for many institutions—that normally do not produce these kinds of data—and this would compromise the aim for spreading sustainable practices.

The second way suggests the developing of a limited set of indicators applicable for most of the institutions and this could be the right way of favouring the participation.

In this case, the indicators must give a right representation of the university commitment in sustainability, analyzing for example the weight of the research and teaching on sustainable topics and how much the management of sustainability is integrated in the processes of an organization.

Indeed, for considering a university as sustainable, this should not only have research and teaching on sustainable topics, but it must be sustainable itself, involving the whole organization and all processes.

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"New" Rankings on the Scene: The U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems and U-Multirank

Gergely Kováts

1 Introduction

Although the ranking of higher education institutions (HEIs) has a history of several decades in some countries (Salmi and Saroyan 2007), the global public awareness has been increasing since the appearance of the first truly global ranking, the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) in 2003. Since then there has been an explosion of national and international rankings combined with growing international interest about this phenomenon. A good example of it being foundation of International Ranking Expert Group (2002) and the formulation of the so-called Berlin Principles (2006).

But why do rankings become so popular in such a short time? One possible reason can be the rising information demand regarding institutions and the changing role of prestige in higher education.

The expansion of higher education resulted in an increasing number and diversity of students, institutions and study programmes leading to an increased complexity of the sector. This is especially true for Europe (and the European Higher Education Area), where each national higher education system evolved in a more or less unique way. Complexity is exacerbated by information asymmetry, because higher education provides so-called "experience goods", that is, one can evaluate (partially) the service of an institution if he/she tries it out. Once admitted to an institution, however, it is not easy to change to another one for example because of the sunk costs (even if initiatives such as the credit system aims to reduce this lock-in effect), as these costs increase the requirements of information before applying to an institution. Globalization and diminishing borders have made higher education institutions abroad available for mobile students, thus increasing information needs even further.

G. Kováts (✉)
Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: gergely.kovats@uni-corvinus.hu

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For employers, the expansion of higher education has made the evaluation of the quality of graduated students and institutional research performance more important. In addition, the needs of increased public and private funding draw governments' attention to the transparency and accountability of higher education institutions.

In sum, on one hand, there is a growing demand for information and transparency. On the other hand, however, the performance and quality of higher education institutions are more and more difficult to assess in a complex environment.

As a result, many transparency tools have been developed, such as recognition, ECTS credits system, qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes, three cycles system, diploma supplement, national admission websites, higher education institutions' websites, study guides, annual reports (Hazelkorn 2012; Vercruysse and Proteasa 2012). External assessment tools and procedures are part of transparency tools: in addition to program and institutional accreditations, audits of QA systems, reporting practices, regular statistical data provisions and financial monitoring etc., there are rankings, which offer simple and convenient methods to grab the essence of institutional performance and quality. Moreover, they also allow the comparison of institutions.

From the institutional point of view, however, the importance of rankings can be explained a bit differently. Because of performance assessment problems, the differentiation of institutions is difficult. It is not just the performance and quality of an institution that matters when one has to choose between institutions, but also the *appearance* of performance and quality, which is reflected in the prestige of an institution.

The prestige of a higher education institution expresses to what extent the organization meets and surpasses the expectations regarding higher education as a social institution. These expectations embody what higher education institutions should do and how they should do it, therefore they define the standards, as well as the frame of reference of institutional performance and quality. As prestige, which includes legitimacy, status and reputation of an organization, determines "an organization's capacity to achieve objectives by virtue of enjoying a favourable social evaluation" (Deephouse and Suchman 2006). Prestige has a huge impact on the capability of an organization to attract further (state or third-party) resources which can be used to enhance further its prestige, leading to a continuous "reputation race" (van Vught 2008) and to the emergence of a winner-take-all market (Eckel 2008).

2 The General Characteristics of Rankings

Current rankings have been playing a pivotal role in creating and conferring prestige to institutions. To sum up, demand from stakeholders, as well as from institutions, results in the proliferation of rankings.

Their impact could be illustrated by many examples (Hazelkorn 2011; Rauhvargers 2013; Sadlak 2014; Salmi and Saroyan 2007):

- institutional management treats the improvement in major rankings as a strategic goal, establishes offices to collect data and to track progress,
- boards bind bonuses or further employment of senior managers to improvement in rankings,
- policy initiatives, such as the Excellent Initiatives in Germany, Project 985 in China[1] or mergers (e.g. Aalto University or University of Manchester), explicitly aim to increase the number of world-class (that is, better ranked) universities or improving ranking position,
- immigration regulations and state scholarship programmes increasingly take into consideration the international ranking of institutions to determine the quality of institutions etc.

Many types of rankings exist. There are national, regional and international rankings. Rankings may focus on a special group of institutions (e.g. business schools, young institutions) or the higher education sector as a whole. Some of them rank institutions, while others rank faculties or educational programmes. Ranking may focus on one aspect of institutional activity (research mostly), or many different facets at the same time.

Although the number and type of rankings may be high, they have some common characteristics. Rankings

- are summative in nature (rather than formative), that is, they judge institutions by their past performance,
- focus on comparing entities (rather than enhancing and improving them),
- are produced by external assessors, even if institutional cooperation is required (e.g. data provision) and
- institutions in rankings are identifiable (not anonymous).

The most prominent global, institutional rankings—such as the ARWU, Quacquarelli Symonds's ranking (QS) and the ranking of the Times Higher Education (THE)—and several other (national) ones share the following additional characteristics:

- they are public, rather than open for only a narrow audience (e.g. the government, institutions themselves etc.),
- they are hierarchical, as they want to order institutions (rather than rate or categorize them, for example),
- they produce one overall ranking, even if they use many different indicators to grab different facets of institutional activities,
- they are competitive, that is, there is only one No. 1 institution,
- participation is voluntary (not obligatory) or does not require institutional cooperation.

[1]See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_985 (accessed: 25 Sept, 2014).

It is worth noting however, that most global ranking providers have more than one product. For example, QS has a non-competitive, external assessment service where institutions may earn stars (QS stars) based on their assessment etc. (for an overview, see Rauhvargers 2013). The main products, which draw most of the attention, are still global institutional rankings.

3 The Criticism of Rankings

Despite the growing demands, the proliferation of rankings and the beneficial effects (such as more conscious strategic management, development of reporting and data gathering procedures, dialogue about quality and performance, consumer guidance), criticism is also widespread. There are conceptual and methodological concerns.

One of the conceptual problems is that current rankings strengthen hierarchical stratification instead of acknowledging horizontal diversity (van Vught and Ziegele 2011). Rankings do not simply provide an overview of performance and quality according to current standards and expectations, they also create, shape and legitimize those expectations. Ranking providers have recently emphasised that they focus only on global research institutions rather than all institutions. However, the choice of names (e.g. "world university ranking" is usually included in their names) suggest differently, and in public discourses these global rankings are usually interpreted as rankings of institutions that matter (in general). As a result, institutions face expectations tailored to the international research universities, as most indicators favour this type of institution (e.g. indicators regarding internationalization, the amount and impact of research, number of academics with Nobel Prize etc.). Rankings, therefore, make international research universities a "single global status model" (van der Wende 2008) for everyone, suggesting there is only one way to be a good institution: to imitate the No. 1. university. As Hazelkorn wrote "institutions are essentially ranked according to how much they deviate from the 'best'; in other words, to what extent are universities at variance with Harvard?" (Hazelkorn 2011).

By implicitly setting global standards, rankings also contribute to the social construction of reputation race and winner-take-all-market, that is, to an increasing vertical stratification, where few highly prestigious ('world-class') institutions emerge and steadily increase their advantage, while others drop behind despite their efforts. It is easy to hypothesize that "academic drift" becomes more intense, because institutions with profiles different from the global model are forced to become similar to it or else they get stuck in a disadvantageous position. In both cases, the result is the weakening of the diversity of higher education.

In addition, global rankings are insensitive to contextual differences. In some countries research is concentrated on universities, in other countries it is divided between universities and a network of independent research institutions. Institutions

funded mostly by the state and institutions from developing countries (where funding of research is scarce) are also adversely effected.

Hazelkorn (2011) emphasises that current rankings favour the traditional, Mode 1 Knowledge Production (Gibbons et al. 1994) because the results of this type of research are manifested in articles and books (which can be easily counted). The output of Mode 2 Knowledge Production, where problems are defined in the "context of application", is the impact which is not necessarily generalized and published.[2]

Another conceptual problem is the search of "the best" university. In this endeavour current rankings produce an overall ranking by weighting indicators and creating a composite indicator. Different stakeholders, however, define "best" differently, and overall rankings make it impossible to enforce these differences. There are other methodological problems with composite indicators. The selection of weightings is arbitrary and depends solely on the preferences of the producer (Harvey 2008; van Vught and Ziegele 2011). Composite indicators also suggest the possibility of compensation, that is, bad results in one indicator can be counterbalanced by good performance in others. As a result, institutions with similar rank may have highly different profiles. Finally, the correlation between weighted indicators is usually strong, therefore some activities are taken into consideration more than once (Soh 2011).

Other frequently mentioned methodological problems are the following (Harvey 2008; Hazelkorn 2011; Rauhvargers 2011, 2013; van Vught and Ziegele 2011):

- the selection of indicators depends on what is measurable, and less on what is important. Important factors (such as indicators on teaching and learning experience) are omitted or included through proxy variable which causes distortion (e.g. measuring teaching quality with amount of resources per student or with student/staff ratio).
- bias of language/discipline: measuring research output in social sciences, humanities and arts is more difficult, because in these disciplines the role of book and book chapters is more important, but databases regarding these types of publications are incomplete. Therefore only those rankings are fair, where institutions with similar disciplines are compared. Another problem is the dominance of English language in research and in the international publication databases which affects favourably those countries where the native language is English. Rankings do not reflect on this distortion adequately (Rauhvargers 2013).
- data collection problems: some rankings (such as QS and THE) use the results of reputational surveys distributed among academics and employers. Low response rate, geographical dispersion of responses and halo effect gives rise to worry: the current prestige of an institution influences responses independently

[2]The Research Excellence Framework (REF), which is a regular rating procedure of institutional research productivity and capacity in the UK, has an interesting attempt to capture the Mode 2 research in some disciplines by requesting "impact case studies". Results of the predecessor of REF (called Research Assessment Exercise) were frequently included in UK national rankings.

of its real performance (there are anecdotal cases where institutions ranked highly on those fields where they do not offer teaching programs or pursuit research; Hazelkorn 2011; Rauhvargers 2011). It is also questionable whether an academic can truly assess whole institutions (van der Wende 2008). Regarding reputational rankings it is especially true that they not just simply measure, but also reinforce current status quo (Rauhvargers 2013).

- consistency of institutional data: some rankings require institutional data provision. The condition of valid and reliable comparison is the consistency of data, which is hard to maintain if the number of international participant is high. In addition to the intentional data manipulation attempts, the lack of shared and mutual understanding of required data threatens consistency.
- frequently changing methodology is a problem in rankings which use composite indicators, because trends might be misleading. Changes may stem from efforts to improve methodology, but if the ranking position of an institution changes, it is hard to separate the effect of changing methodology from the effect of institutional responses. Hazelkorn even raises the possibility that ranking providers sometime change methodology intentionally to create news about changing ranking position (Hazelkorn 2011; van Vught and Ziegele 2011).
- the problem of distances: rankings indicate statistically non-significant differences as real. Distorting distances also hide vertical stratification, because they hide the distance between different ranking positions.
- lack of clarity: transparency of methodology, handling of missing data (Harvey 2008), the selection of ranked institution, as well as the eligibility criteria to be included in the ranking are rarely described clearly.

Based on these criticisms, however, new rankings have been developed in the last couple of years: U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems (U21) and U-Multirank. In the following sections it will be explored in more details to what extent these new rankings are able to overcome the problems of previous rankings and what strengths and shortcomings they have on methodological and conceptual level.

4 U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems

Traditional rankings focus on institutions. It is a frequent mistake to project the results of these rankings on national higher education systems drawing the false conclusion that a country has a world class higher education system if it has world class universities. Bad results on ARWU and other global rankings inspired many politicians to intervene. They launch excellence programs and mergers in order to improve ranking position, creating tensions within their higher education system as other institutions feel to be neglected (cf. Aula and Tienari 2011 summarized reactions on the foundation and increased state support of Aalto University in Finland). This is the result of a steeper vertical stratification.

Robert Birnbaum also draws attention to the misunderstood relationship between world class universities and higher education systems when he states that "the United States doesn't have a world-class higher education system because it has many world-class universities; instead it has world-class universities because it has a world-class higher education system." (Hazelkorn 2011).

The misunderstanding stems from the lack of focus of current rankings. Looking for "the best" universities, they become insensitive for the different demands of different stakeholders. Lack of clarification deludes governments who should focus on the world class systems rather than world class universities. This shortcoming is addressed by U21, a global network of research-intensive universities, which first sponsored the ranking of national higher education systems in 2012.

4.1 General Characteristics

In the 2014 report (Williams et al. 2014) 50 countries are ranked by weighting 24 indicators in 4 dimensions. The dimension of "resources" (weight of 20 %) with 5 indicators represents expenditure on higher education or on research and development in relative terms (per capita bases or as a percentage of GDP). The dimension of "environment" (weight of 20 %) has 4 indicators, the most interesting of which is the qualitative measure of the policy and regulatory environment, which mostly refers to the diversity and autonomy of institutions. There are two indicators for proportion of female student and female academics, and one for "data quality". "Connectivity" (20 %) is a dimension with 6 indicators standing for the proportion of international students, number of co-authored publications with international collaborators or industry researchers, presence of institutions on the web and the rating of business executives regarding knowledge transfer between industry and universities. Finally, the dimension of "output" (40 %) has 9 indicators focusing on research performance and excellence, number of students and researchers, rate of graduate unemployment.

In the report of 2014, tables were also presented in which levels of economic development were taken into consideration. These tables show whether a country performs better or worse than is expected at their level of GDP. This addition makes the ranking more insightful.

The source of data for the majority of indicators is the database of one of the major international organizations (e.g. OECD, World Bank, UNESCO, ILO etc.) which is not just cost-efficient, as these data do not require additional efforts to collect, but with the exception of some cases,[3] it also guarantees high degree of validity and consistency. Results of other rankings, such as ARWU, SCImago, Webometrics and Leiden

[3]Results taken from The Global Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum) represents the opinion of business executives. It is a question whether these opinions are comparable on international level (Rauhvargers 2013).

Ranking are also incorporated. The indicator of "policy and regulatory environment" is calculated in a qualitative way by using expert opinions.

4.2 Evaluation of U21

The overall ranking of countries is the result of weighting of indicators. It is not surprising therefore that U21 faces similar methodological problems as those conventional institutional rankings which use composite indicators. Most notably,

- the selection of weightings is arbitrary.
- the correlation of indicators: Soh (2012) points at the fact that there is an underlying input-output model behind U21, where resources, environment and connectivity result in output. Thus, in the overall ranking output is counted twice: directly and indirectly.
- the selection of indicators is quite innovative, but it is guided by availability. For example teaching, teaching quality and learning are completely omitted from the ranking because there is no reliable international survey or ranking dealing with them. On the other hand, U21 might encourage countries and international data providers to collect more profound data. One reason for having only 50 countries included in the U21 ranking is the lack of data for the rest of the countries, which shed light on the quality of data in less developed countries.
- the methodology of U21 changed in every year: new indicators were introduced, weightings of dimensions and the handling of missing values were modified. The ranking position of few countries (Thailand, Taiwan-China) fluctuated, while others lost/gained considerable positions. For example, the weight of connectivity in the overall score rose from 10 to 20 % between 2012 and 2014, while resources and environment decreased by 5 % each. The position of Taiwan and Thailand improved dramatically in Connectivity from 2013 to 2014. To what extent can these changes be thanked to the changes of methods?
- the problem of distances: in many cases, the difference between overall results seems to be statistically insignificant. The difference between the score of Canada (3rd position in 2014) and the Netherlands (7th position) is 2.5 points on a scale of 100.
- Composite overall scores hide the differences between systems. Countries with different profiles are ranked similarly. For example, Finland and Denmark are very close to each other in the 2014 Ranking, but Finland has an advantage in Environment, while Denmark is much stronger in Connectivity and Resources (Table 1).

In my opinion, the impact of a system ranking is less direct as it has fewer direct consequences, so distortions caused by methodological problems are not as a dire problem as in the case of institutional rankings. No ministers will be relieved if a country falls back. The good brand and the high prestige of a system are hard to convert into monetary advantages.

Table 1 The change of position of selected countries between 2012 and 2014

	Ranking position in			Change between	
	2012	2013	2014	2012/2013	2013/2014
Norway	7	12	11	5	−1
Taiwan-China	21	26	22	5	−4
Spain	24	20	23	−4	3
Ukraine	25	36	43	11	7
Slovenia	28	23	25	−5	2
Bulgaria	31	38	40	7	2
Hungary	34	34	29	0	−5
Malaysia	36	27	28	−9	1
China	39	42	35	3	−7
Thailand	41	47	42	6	−5
Iran	42	48	49	6	1

That also means, however, that there are no real arguments for *ranking* systems, because rankings condense and therefore lose information. Thus, by providing only rankings, U21 fails to truly grab the diversity of higher education systems. Providing comparable indicators (rather than dimensions) and a *classification* of systems would be more useful and informative. U21 currently tells us which system is better (based on their calculation) but it provides only shallow information on why one system is considered better than the other.

This can be supported by Millot (2014), who argues that there is a strong correlation between the ranking of U21 and the density of institutions[4] according to ARWU. The repetition of his calculation on ranking data of 2014 (see Appendix 1) shows the result of 0.91. This is a strong correlation, that is, based on ARWU and population numbers, U21 ranking is highly predictable. This is not surprising, if we take into consideration that U21 uses 7 indicators (weighting around 30 % altogether) to assess research in addition to the direct incorporation of ARWU results (2 indicators with a weight of 6.5 %).

5 U-Multirank

5.1 The General Characteristics and Strengths of U-Multirank

U-Multirank is designed and led by a consortium and its foundation was funded by the European Union. The consortium includes the Centre for Higher Education (CHE) in Germany, which runs rankings similar to U-Multirank in

[4]The number of institutions listed in ARWU 500 divided by the population of the country.

German-language countries, the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) in the Netherlands, one of the most prominent European higher education research groups, the Centre for Science and Technology Studies from Leiden University, the producer of the Leiden Ranking, as well as other partners. Representatives of stakeholders (such as the European Student Union) were also involved. After a pilot phase, the first U-Multirank was officially published in 2014.

The U-Multirank ranks whole institutions as well as fields of education provided by institutions. Currently, business administration, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering physics are included, and in 2015 psychology, computer science and medicine will be involved.

U-Multirank differentiates itself from other rankings by defining itself as multi-dimensional and user-driven.

In U-Multirank 50 performance indicators in 5 dimensions (teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement) are defined. Being multi-dimensional means that U-Multirank does not create any composite score. There is no overall score for institutions, instead it is possible to create ranking for each of the performance indicators. The rationale behind this is that each user can select his/her own most important aspect making U-Multirank user-driven.

What is more, having selected an indicator, U-Multirank does not *rank* institutions, but *rate* them by grouping them into 5 broad categories, A to E, where A stands for very good, while E stands for weak. Some other rankings also categorize institutions, but the categorization is usually based on the ranking position itself. Here, in most cases categorization is based on to what extent a score of an institution differs from the group median. There is no ranking within the categories (institutions appear in alphabetical order).

That approach makes U-Multirank less hierarchical and less competitive, because half of the institutions with non-zero score will achieve A or B, and a lot of institutions can be rated A at the same time.[5] It also makes U-Multirank less sensitive for errors stemming from insignificant statistical differences and also for changing methodology, as new indicators can be introduced without disturbing the existing ones.

The less competitive nature of U-Multirank makes it possible for institutions to follow their own strategy. It is not the rankings which form the profile and strategy of institutions any more, because institutions do not need to be good in *all* indicators to be ranked well (as it is the case with traditional rankings). Institutions can select only those indicators which fit their own strategy. In a presentation, Frans van Vught[6] emphasised that U-Multirank made several institutions visible, who performed excellent in one or more indicators and who are not able to compete in

[5]A competition for collecting as many as possible may emerge. However, the more performance indicators are introduced, the more difficult to compete in each "event". In addition, there are indicators which mutually excludes each other (such as number of international students and the BA graduates working in region).

[6]Presentation held at the University of Twente, 15 May 2014.

traditional, one-dimensional and hierarchical rankings. Thus, U-Multirank truly gives space for diversity, and does not force institutions explicitly or implicitly to follow one predefined script.

This is enhanced even more by creating mapping indicators in addition to performance indicators (such as size, age, income from different sources, broad subject areas, etc.), which are used to describe the activity profile of each institution. That makes it possible to compare only those institutions which are similar.

5.2 Challenges

Several indicators defined by U-Multirank are rarely used in other rankings. For example, graduating on time, number of spin-offs or student mobility are hardly ever seen in the most popular global rankings. In general, U-Multirank indicators cover third mission activities much more than any other rankings.

Some of the newer indicators, however, depend only partially on institutions, and policy context has much influence on them. For example "graduation on time" depends on admission and selectivity rules. Thus, U-Multirank is not sensitive for different policy contexts, consequently the ranking could the improved further by including mapping indicators regarding the system level.

To produce indicator, U-Multirank collects data

- from existing databases, such as international publication database (Web of Science) or patent database (EPO Worldwide Patent Statistical Database),
- from students by student satisfaction surveys and
- from institutions through institutional self-reporting (institutional and field-based questionnaires).

Rauhvargers (2013) criticizes U-Multirank that it chose Web of Science alone. Scopus covers more journals and types of publications, which would have fit better in the more inclusive approach of U-Multirank.

Although U-Multirank does not use reputational surveys, indicators regarding the environment of teaching and learning are based on surveys among students. Comparison of the results of such surveys internationally or even among institutions is questionable because responses are based on previous *expectations* which are influenced by many factors. For example, the high prestige of an institution might create false expectations. Such an institution might do poorer in the survey than the less prestigious ones, even if the quality of the institution is better from an objective perspective.[7]

[7]For instance, the indicator of "quality of courses and teaching" includes responses to the question of "option to choose elective courses". With low level of expectations, students might be highly satisfied with few options, while high level of expectation results in low satisfaction even if the number of courses is higher. This is also true for the other components of the indicator, that is, for "the breadth of teaching offerings", "the didactic quality of teaching", "the quality of basic

Nevertheless, current students' satisfaction could be helpful for prospective students even if direct comparison is problematic. The length of the questionnaire (more than 100 items) and its limited language availability (it is translated only into English, French, German, Spanish, Polish, and Russian) might cause further distortions and the exclusion of less internationalized institutions and disciplines. It is worth noting, however, that the survey has a very low break up rate.[8]

In addition to student surveys and international databases, the majority of indicators require institutional self-reporting. In a case as large as U-Multirank, this can be a serious problem, not particularly because of data manipulation, but because of the lack of consistency, especially in the case of regional engagement and knowledge transfer indicators. Achieving a common understanding of "private sources" for calculating "Income from private sources" or "region" for "BA graduates working in region", for example, requires a lot of discussions. Even producing the raw data for some indicators can be a challenge for many institutions (e.g. Art related output). On the other hand, however, by defining new but relevant indicators, U-Multirank "educates" institutions and helps them to institutionalize data gathering processes and makes them capable of revealing less known aspects of their activity for the public.

The mission of U-Multirank is to provide such a transparency tool that does not constrain institutional diversity, but promotes benchmarking and competition. This mission can be fulfilled only if as many institutions participate in the ranking, as possible. Increasing the number of participants (and indicators), however, also increases difficulties in maintaining consistency. Therefore U-Multirank is an attempt to surpass what Stella and Woodhouse think hopeless: "since rankings also imply that the whole system has to be covered within a time frame, it would be futile to attempt in a large and complex system. At the most, it can be done only at a superficial level, akin to the methodology followed by the media. Consequently, lack of validation of self-reported data, inconsistency in terminologies, lack of peer review, inability to consider institutional diversities, etc. would become unavoidable, thus rendering the outcome of the whole process useless." (Harvey 2008).

Current practices followed by U-Multirank regarding consistency are less transparent. U-Multirank describes this process in the following way: "To ensure comparability of data across institutions, the questionnaires include guidelines and definitions of all data items requested. […] Data are then intensively checked by the U-Multirank team, applying both automated and manual checks for consistency, plausibility (including checks of outliers) and missing data."[9] This is followed by an

(Footnote 7 continued)

courses", etc. In sum, the indicator of "quality of courses and teaching" does not reflect on the quality per se (i.e. the number of optional courses), but on to what extent the institution meets students' expectations regarding teaching. We know nothing about these expectations, however, which makes comparison of institutions based on the "quality of courses and teaching" indicator dubious.

[8]Gero Federkeil, written communication.

[9]http://www.umultirank.org/#!/methodology?section=undefined (accessed 23 Sept 2014).

iterative process between U-Multirank team and institutional representatives aiming to clarify and to correct data.

It is obvious that the higher the number of participants is, the more resources are required to maintain consistency. Therefore financial sustainability of U-Multirank is an important question to be raised. The U-Multirank consortium explored several governance and funding options in the feasibility study (van Vught and Ziegele 2011), and they support the idea of an independent, non-profit provider funded by European Commission and other foundations with different market sources (extra services, advertisement, subscription fees).

Costs of maintaining consistency could be decreased by involving national statistical agencies. Taking into consideration the depth of required data, this could be carried out primarily on European level, the possibility of which was examined in another EU-project (called EUMIDA). A potential risk could be the isolation of non-European institutions. Charging fees for participation can also decrease the motivation of institutions to provide data. Additional income could come from extra services, such as data clearing activities, when U-Multirank collects special data from institutions and then reports them back for non-public benchmarking purposes.

The number of active participants determines the success of U-Multirank. Participation depends on what costs and benefits U-Multirank causes to institutions. On one hand, self-reporting generates high workload for institutions. On the other hand, U-Multirank provides some possibilities for benchmarking, which could be enhanced even further, if U-Multirank provides access to more personalised and more detailed comparative data for participating institutions. (That could be an additional source of income.)

From the institutional point of view, an additional benefit could be the possibility to increase recruitment and mobility. The first round of U-Multirank is quite European-focused. Although U-Multirank emphasises that the number of ranked institutions is more than 850, the number of active participants who actually provided data is much lower, it is around 500. Data for the rest of the institutions comes from international (mainly bibliographic) databases. The majority of active participants are located in the EU (382 institutions) or in the broader region of the European Higher Education Area (48 institutions). Only 74 institutions can be found in the other parts of the world. Some countries are significantly underrepresented in the ranking: there are only 9-9 institutions from the United States and UK respectively, China is represented by 4 institutions and Canada by 2. (For further details and the calculation of numbers, see Appendix 2) For the non-European institutions, the benefit of increased recruitment is viable only if U-Multirank becomes truly global, and a critical mass of non-European institutions is reached.

Those institutions that have no chance to appear near the top of the current global rankings (or on the rankings at all), might be interested in being present in U-Multirank, which is a more democratic ranking than the traditional global ones. On the other hand, it also generates less prestige for participants because there are a lot of winners. It also undermines the position of universities heading the current global

rankings. Therefore, neither the hostile reactions from League of European Research Universities (LERU) and Russell Group (consisting of UK-based research intensive universities), nor the absence of US universities among the active participants is surprising. In the long run, however, winning research intensive universities over, in order to participate in U-Multirank is inevitable. No rankings without them would be credible. Reaching critical mass might help to convince them.

The multidimensional way that U-Multirank follows has its potential risks. It is a question whether users, students are prepared enough for a ranking with several winners or they rather continue looking for "the best". U-Multirank requires users to have clear priorities and a certain level of maturity. Without that, the potential danger of crowding out effect might occur, that is, a simple ranking which requires less effort from the user crowds out the more sophisticated, better rankings which require more efforts. This can occur if users have no information about the quality of different rankings, thus he/she cannot make a difference between them. Informing and educating the public is therefore crucial for the success of U-Multirank.

Current rankings can easily copy some features of U-Multirank. The strengths of U-Multirank lies in its unique database, in the classification system, its approach of rating rather than ranking, and the interactive, user driven service which makes the creation of more personalized rankings possible. Providing field-based ranking in addition to institutional rankings is also an important, but less unique characteristic.

With the exception of the unique database, much of these can be copied or imitated obscuring the real differences. While maintaining their existing, authoritative "overall rankings", global ranking providers can create more interactive services, where users can set their own weightings, can rank according to specific indicators, etc. (Vercruysse and Proteasa 2012). Some of the providers have already started to develop simple classification systems. Rating can be introduced without losing much competitiveness provided high number of categories is defined. Field based rankings are easily replaced by currently existing subject rankings, etc.

It is worth noting, however, that if traditional ranking providers introduce all the changes above, it will change the market of rankings considerably. However, from the U-Multirank's point of view, the question is whether better data and more relevant indicators are important enough for the mass of users and institutions, so that maintaining U-Multirank would be worth in the future.

6 Conclusions: Rankings and the European Higher Education Area

The European Higher Education has some distinctive characteristics which made the penetration of rankings more difficult. In the US rankings spread in the 1980s, while in Europe it was the period of 1990s and 2000s when most national rankings appeared. Why?

One possible explanation could be that European higher education systems are less competitive, less hierarchical and more egalitarian. As the state plays a major role in maintaining institutions, quality differences between them are less tolerated and less obvious. In some countries there are predefined categories for institutions (i.e. universities and colleges), but within categories, there is less possibility (authority, resources) for institutions to make real differences.

Interestingly, national rankings rarely had an impact on policy making. The situation changed with the appearance of global rankings, particularly ARWU and THE-Thomson Reuters World University Rankings proved to be influential on the European Higher Education Area (Vercruysse and Proteasa 2012). Although their results are mostly distorted because of the ignorance of methodological concerns, they raised serious questions regarding the competitiveness of European higher education institutions, and encouraged governments to intervene.[10] These interventions, aiming to make world class universities, create tension within higher education systems.

Another important characteristic is the simultaneous presence of convergence and divergence. The former stems from such European initiatives like the Bologna process, while the latter is because of path dependency. Policy practices work differently in different contexts, and European countries have their own history and identity. That makes European higher education more complex and more diverse on one hand, and less transparent on the other.

It is imperative therefore to create more transparency to make differences in contexts as well as in performances more visible. The evidence-based approach of rankings is also necessary to provoke profound discussions on higher education systems and institutions. Another goal of creating transparency is to promote and provoke competition, but that should be done without enforcing predefined scripts. Institutions must have the possibility to choose their strategies and rankings (as well as other transparency tools) and it must be respected. Transparency should be supported by developing incentive structures which reward all aspects of institutional performance (including teaching and third mission activities) (Hazelkorn 2012).

U21 and U-Multirank are promising new tools wishing to meet these aims, even if they have their own challenges and weaknesses. Their success depends on whether the public understands and appreciates key differences between them and the more traditional global rankings.

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[10]As Vercruysse and Proteasa (2012) mention, it is interesting that national rankings rarely have an impact on policy making. International (global) rankings however seem to be more influential.

Appendix 1

Correlation between U21 and density of institutions according to ARWU 2014

	Rank in U21 2014	Number of institutions in ARWU 2014 (TOP 500)	Population in million (2013)[a]	Density of ARWU institutions (ARWU institution/population)	Rank according to ARWU density
Argentina	41	1	41.4	0.02	36
Australia	9	19	23.3	0.82	6
Austria	12	6	8.5	0.71	9
Belgium	13	7	11.1	0.63	11
Brazil	38	6	200.4	0.03	35
Bulgaria	40	0	7.2	0.00	43
Canada	3	21	35.2	0.60	14
Chile	33	2	17.6	0.11	28
China	35	44	1385.6	0.03	34
Croatia	44	0	4.3	0.00	47
Czech Republic	26	1	10.7	0.09	30
Denmark	4	5	5.6	0.89	3
Finland	5	5	5.4	0.93	2
France	18	21	64.3	0.33	20
Germany	14	39	82.7	0.47	16
Greece	32	2	11.1	0.18	25
Hungary	29	2	10	0.20	24
India	50	1	1252.1	0.00	41
Indonesia	48	0	249.9	0.00	48
Iran	49	1	77.4	0.01	39
Ireland	17	3	4.6	0.65	10
Israel	19	6	7.7	0.78	7
Italy	27	21	61	0.34	19
Japan	20	19	127.1	0.15	26
Korea	21	10	49.3	0.20	23
Malaysia	28	2	29.7	0.07	32
Mexico	46	1	122.3	0.01	40
Netherlands	7	13	16.8	0.77	8
New Zealand	16	4	4.5	0.89	4
Norway	11	3	5	0.60	13
Poland	31	2	38.2	0.05	33
Portugal	24	3	10.6	0.28	21
Romania	39	0	21.7	0.00	44
Russian Federation	36	2	142.8	0.01	37

(continued)

(continued)

	Rank in U21 2014	Number of institutions in ARWU 2014 (TOP 500)	Population in million (2013)[a]	Density of ARWU institutions (ARWU institution/population)	Rank according to ARWU density
Saudi Arabia	30	4	28.8	0.14	27
Serbia	34	1	9.5	0.11	29
Singapore	10	2	5.4	0.37	18
Slovakia	37	0	5.5	0.00	45
Slovenia	25	1	2.1	0.48	15
South Africa	45	4	52.8	0.08	31
Spain	23	12	46.9	0.26	22
Sweden	2	11	9.6	1.15	1
Switzerland	6	7	8.1	0.86	5
Thailand	42	0	67	0.00	46
Turkey	47	1	74.9	0.01	38
Ukraine	43	0	45.2	0.00	42
United Kingdom	8	38	63.1	0.60	12
USA	1	146	320.1	0.46	17

[a]*Source* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_%28United_Nations%29
For the sake of convenience, I left Taiwan and Hong Kong SAR out of calculation (there are no separate ARWU data regarding these countries)
Correlation of Rank in U21 (2014) and rank according to density of ARWU 2014 is 0.909169

Appendix 2

Currently, there are no country statistics available on umultirank.org. The number of active participants is calculated by counting institutions offering bachelor and master degrees, with relevant data in one of the following indicators: Bachelor graduation rate, Masters graduation rate, Graduating on time (bachelors), Graduating on time (masters), Income from private sources, Spin-offs, Student mobility, Bachelor graduates working in the region, Master graduates working in the region, Student internships in the region, Income from regional sources.

Number of active participants by country

Country	Number of institutions	Country	Number of institutions
Austria	13	Canada	2
Belgium	6	USA	9
Bulgaria	5	North-America	11

(continued)

(continued)

Country	Number of institutions	Country	Number of institutions
Croatia	2	Brazil	3
Cyprus	5	Chile	3
Czech Republic	14	Costa Rica	1
Denmark	9	Jamaica	1
Estonia	2	Mexico	2
Finland	16	Peru	1
France	57	Uruguay	1
Germany	37	South-America	12
Greece	9	Iran	1
Hungary	10	Israel	1
Ireland	8	Palestine	1
Italy	23	Saudi Arabia	2
Latvia	10	United Arab Emirates	1
Liechtenstein	1	Close-East	6
Lithuania	9	Bangladesh	1
Malta	1	China	4
Netherlands	15	Chinese Taipei	1
Poland	34	India	3
Portugal	20	Japan	6
Romania	10	Malaysia	1
Slovakia	6	South Korea	1
Slovenia	3	Thailand	1
Spain	39	Vietnam	1
Sweden	9	Far-East	19
United Kingdom	9	Australia	11
EU-members	382	New Zealand	1
Iceland	1	Oceania	12
Kazakhstan	3	Ghana	1
Macedonia (fYRoM)	2	Morocco	1
Norway	11	Namibia	1
Russia	9	Nigeria	2
Serbia	2	South Africa	6
Switzerland	6	Africa	11
Turkey	7	Azerbajdjan	1
Ukraine	7	Belorus	2
EHEA members without EU membership	48	Other countries	3

Source umultirank.org (accessed: 24 Sept 2014)

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Part IV
Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement

Teaching and Learning: An Overview of the Thematic Section [Overview Paper]

Manja Klemenčič and Paul Ashwin

Higher education institutions today operate in a rapidly changing environment and this is undoubtedly reflected in their core functions of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning in higher education are influenced by a well-rehearsed set of global trends such as the changing demography of student populations and higher participation of non-traditional students; growing global interconnectedness and the proliferation of digital media; and an increasing market orientation in higher education.

Other, perhaps more controversial, debates in contemporary higher education revolve around the question of standardization of assessment of institutional performance, including standardized evidence to demonstrate how much students are actually learning. STEM subjects are hailed for their service to innovative knowledge economies, leaving open the question of how to balance resources between the different disciplines and the relative prestige of different fields of study. There is concern among some educators that students are becoming too instrumental in their orientation to their degrees, preferring vocational and professional training over a more knowledge-focused higher education. The cost of higher education is rising everywhere and most of the countries and institutions are questioning the sustainability of higher education financing; many indeed are exploring on-line learning as possible way to cut costs (of teaching) or create revenue or both.

It is within this environment that we examine teaching and learning in higher education, in order to explore what we know and how to move forward. European cooperation to advance teaching and learning has been fragmented and lacked an

M. Klemenčič (✉)
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA
e-mail: manjaklemencic@fas.harvard.edu

P. Ashwin
Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK
e-mail: p.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk

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overarching strategy. At the level of national policy, there appears to be unevenness in teaching and learning initiatives among European governments. For example, there are only a few countries that have a national body devoted to advancement of basic and applied research related to teaching and learning (the Higher Education Academy in the UK and the new Higher Education Authority in Sweden are among the few such examples). Many countries have no national strategy on teaching and learning in higher education, and advancements in this area are left to individual institutions to formulate and fund. Some institutions have centres for advancement of teaching and learning, which support inter-institutional collaboration in development and assessment of innovative pedagogies, educational technologies, and curricula, and in research in the learning processes. In many institutions, teachers in higher education tend to be evaluated by their students, but are then left to their own devices to self-improve (or not). Given the rapidly changing environment for teaching and learning outlined above, we argue that a more coordinated and systematic approach is needed to support the development of teaching and learning in higher education in Europe.

1 Tensions in the Scholarship on Teaching and Learning and Emerging Research Agendas

In this section, we will consider the current scholarship on teaching and learning in higher education. Rather than providing a comprehensive review of the scholarly findings in this broad and multidisciplinary field of research, we will examine key tensions in this field. We take this approach because we see these tensions as highlighting important conflicts of what is valued, and we want to highlight the ways in which both sides of each tension have something important to tell us about teaching and learning in higher education. Rather than suggesting that these tensions can be resolved, this approach allows us to emphasise the importance of taking a multiplicity of perspectives to understand teaching and learning in higher education (see Ashwin 2009 for further discussion of this approach).

The scholarship of teaching and learning is conducted within and across several fields (e.g. psychology, sociology, educational sciences, public policy, etc.). The levels of analysis include individual and interpersonal, as well as institutional (classroom, study programme, entire higher education institutions or their subunits) and systemic (national higher education systems or international and comparative approaches). It is between these different approaches and levels of analysis that we can see key tensions arising that highlight important issues about teaching and learning in higher education. We examine three of these: the tension between a focus on individual student learning and the institutional contexts in which they learn; the tension between the assessment of standardized outcomes and the assessment of students' individual achievements; and the tension between institutional performance and institutional quality.

Understanding student learning and development has, for a long time, been a domain of psychological strand in educational research. A large body of research has examined the ways in which students learn and the factors that lead to high quality learning outcomes (Biggs and Tang 2011; Entwistle 2009; Kolb 1984; Tinto 1975). This research has also explored the connection between learning and self-regulation in higher education (Zimmerman and Campillo 2002), and motivation as an essential dimension of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman and Campillo 2002; Zimmerman and Schunk 2001). The basic proposition in this literature is that learning takes place in a system of reciprocal causal relations between students' unique personal characteristics, such as cognitive skills, and emotional dispositions, and environmental factors, which come directly from the educational environment, as well as from broader context including socio-economic background, former educational opportunities and achievements, various support systems (from parents, peers, school, etc.). Whilst the impact of the educational environment is recognized, the main focus is on the ways in which students take charge of their own learning processes. For example, the theoretical model by Zimmerman (2002) includes three distinct phases and their underlying self-regulatory processes which are then cyclically repeated as student approaches learning tasks. The forethought phase includes task analysis and self-motivation beliefs (such as outcome expectation, self-efficacy and goal-orientation). Performance phase includes self-control (including time management, help-seeking, etc.) and self-observation (metacognitive monitoring). The self-reflection phase contains self-judgment and self-reaction, both of which then feed again into the forethought phase of another or simultaneous learning process.

On the other side of this tension is the sociological literature which has over the last twenty years focused on the influence of the educational programs and extracurricular life along with the broader institutional characteristics on student learning and development (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991, 2005). This literature draws a causal link between student engagement in educationally-purposeful activities and student learning, retention and success in higher education (Astin 1993; Kuh 2001, 2003, 2005; Kuh et al. 2005, 2010). The argument goes that almost any type of student involvement in college positively affects student learning and development (Astin 1993). The sociological literature is based on the premise that higher education institutions shape student development, both in terms of knowledge and skills, but also their values and attitudes. Hence, specific institutional interventions are sought to improve the effects of institutions and programmes on student learning and development. Sociological literature on the effects of higher education on students unravels the contextual factors in student learning which go beyond the classroom or even campus environment. They try to capture students' socioeconomic background and the different capitals (cultural, social, and financial) students possess, as well as developments and norms in the broader socio-economic and cultural environment in which higher education is embedded. This research opens a way to the questions of what higher education is for, the desired learning outcomes, and how to prepare students not only for their future professions (and often multiple, highly diverse—in location and in discipline or sector—professions), but also

citizenship, creative, innovative and ethical agency within any given context of their professional and personal lives. The focus of this research is not only on individual students, and their educational experience in higher education institution, but also the broader society and the connection between higher education, student learning and development, and broader societal and economic development. The questions of student retention and learning of non-traditional students are some of the important areas of research here.

Clearly both sides of this tension are important. We both need to know how students can become active agents of their own learning and the ways in which their institutions structure their educational experiences. A focus on one side or other of this tension, either leads us to underplay the role of higher education institutions in shaping students' experiences or to portray students as passive consumers of their education, who simply follow the paths laid down by their institutions.

A similar tension is in evidence in broader discussions on curricular reforms including defining student learning outcomes and determining qualification frameworks (see Tremblay et al. 2012 for more information). This tension is around the extent to which student learning outcomes and the assessment of learning outcomes can be standardised across national and disciplinary boundaries and the extent to which they should reflect the particular and authentic achievements of individual students. There are strong pressures for standardisation in order to allow the measurement of the performance and efficiency of higher education institutions, and to ensure equitable higher education for all students regardless of which institution they study in. The legitimacy of these demands needs to be recognised as governments and increasingly students pay for higher education, and scholars interested in human capital development (in the sense of accumulated knowledge, skills, expertise by higher education graduates) have begun to explore the questions of the expected student learning outcomes in higher education. One key question here is how we can measure learning outcomes in higher education. Another question is how learning outcomes can be transposed into various economic and social benefits towards improving productivity in market activities, increase in economic growth, active citizenship, civilizational advancement through arts and culture and advancements in health, family welfare, safety, etc. The direct contribution of higher education to the knowledge economies and knowledge societies has been brought to the fore in policy, and consequently also shapes the research agenda.

On the other side of this tension, is the view that what is *higher* about higher education is the personal relationship that students develop with disciplinary and professional knowledge. It is this which provides the transformative aspects of higher education that is so highly valued by students, governments and societies. Thus if standardisation leads to a focus on identifying outcomes that are measurable across contexts rather than outcomes that reflect students' individual transformation, then the danger is that we lose more than we gain. Again, we are not suggesting a resolution to this tension, but highlighting the mutual importance of learning outcomes being meaningful to those outside higher education, whilst also reflecting the personal transformation that is emblematic of a higher education. Keeping this tension in mind is particularly important in the face of the rapidly

evolving teaching, learning and assessment context in higher education. The experimentation with teaching technologies, including the significant investment in massive open online courses (MOOCs), is rapidly changing the traditional approaches to teaching and learning, broadening the dissemination of teaching or widening access to learning, and also enabling research into teaching and learning. Inevitably, teaching technology will, in one way or another, mark the future of research in teaching and learning, but we need to consider how the tension between standardisation and individual transformation is played out through these technologies.

The discussion of what is measured brings us to the final tension we will examine, that between institutional performance and institutional quality. We have been witnessing evolution in governance of higher education institutions and in governmental steering. Research in public policy and organizational studies poses the question of mechanisms and instruments to develop teaching and learning at institutional and system levels. On one side of this tension we have the demand for reliable and valid data in order to measure the performance of higher education institutions. On the other side of this tension, we have a focus on the quality of educational processes within higher education institutions, beyond their performance on measures that can often reflect how well institutions play the 'quality game' as much as they reflect the quality of education provided. If a focus on institutional performance leads to the valuing of what is measurable rather than measuring what is valuable, then the danger is that there is a dislocation between the performance of institutions on national and international indicators and the quality of educational experience offered to students (see Ashwin et al. 2012 for one example of this). In the face of this tension it is important to bear in mind the usefulness of the information provided by performance measures but also to recognise that it offers only a partial picture of what is happening. Without such information we lose an insight into what is happening in universities, but if we engage with it uncritically then it will obscure more than it will reveal about students experiences of teaching and learning in higher education.

In summary, teaching and learning is a broad field and comprises a number of areas with fast evolving research agendas. We have argued that an awareness of the tensions inherent in this research is important in order to develop a critical understanding of what this research can tell us. This is particularly important because changes in the higher education environment are outpacing advances in scholarship, policy reforms and institutional practice.

2 Introducing the Chapters

The chapters in this section nicely illustrate the three tensions that we have outlined above. In her chapter, *Sin* examines the policy initiatives on teaching and learning that have been developed within the European Higher Education Area. Based on an analysis of Bologna Process policy documents and key reports from supra-national

actors, Sin examines how policy objectives relating to teaching and learning have moved from the margins to the core of the Bologna Process. Sin attributes this development to the explicit emphasis made in the policies on the higher education sector meeting its economic mission through the production of employable and entrepreneurial graduates. Sin charts the changing focus on teaching and learning within the Bologna Process from a concern with the structure of programmes, to a focus on the importance of student-centred learning, to a focus on curricular reform and finally to a focus on the importance of having university teachers who have been trained as teachers. What is obvious from Sin's chapter is that an overarching policy on modernisation of teaching and learning has not yet been developed, but that initial expert reports have been released by the European Union and OECD which point to such development and restate the need for international collaboration in this area. Furthermore, the predominant frame in the existing policies remains student-centred learning, which is not fully congruent with the growing scholarship on student engagement which advocates for more comprehensive approaches to student learning and development in higher education.

In several European countries, student engagement has already been introduced as a policy objective, and many other countries and institutions consider its use. Student engagement has tended to be embraced by a variety of stakeholders as unquestionably positive, which highlights the ways in which their meaning can shift according to who uses them and the contexts in which they are used. In their chapter, *Ashwin and McVitty* argue that student engagement indeed has many meanings. They suggest that by analyzing the focus and degree of student engagement, it is possible to address the problems associated with the apparent vagueness of the concept. By examining both what students are being engaged in forming and the degree of engagement that is being sought, we can come to a better understanding about what is intended and what are the likely effects of student engagement. Their approach brings a much needed clarity in the use of the concept both in scholarship and especially in policy; as it highlights both that more engagement is not necessarily better and that higher education is fundamentally about knowledge. They conclude by arguing that it is students and academics collective engagement with disciplinary and professional knowledge that is the basis on which students develop understanding, on which curricula are formed and on which higher education communities are developed.

Levels of student engagement have been increasingly examined through the use of student surveys. In their chapter *Klemenčič and Chirikov* examine the ways in which student surveys have been used as a primary data source for assessing the quality of learning and teaching in higher education. They examine the policy contexts in which student survey research has proliferated and offer an overview of the most influential student survey designs and their limitations. They argue that student surveys can serve as a helpful screening instrument to assess institutional practice, but there are a number of limitations which call for caution in their use. They argue that technological advances and student use of social media offer the opportunity to adapt qualitative methods of data collection to digital use, which will in turn yield more contextualized data on students in large volumes and at high

velocity. Such approaches, they suggest, would help to directly meet the needs of institutional decision makers and policy makers.

As well as offering new ways of eliciting student feedback, new technologies have the potential to have an even more fundamental effect on teaching and learning interactions in higher education. In their chapter, *Charlier, Cosnefroy, Jézégou and Lameul* examine the factors that shape the quality of learning in digital learning environments, and the further research that is needed in order to further develop our understanding of the ways in which students engage with these environments. They argue that in order to understand the quality of learning environments, we need to examine the individual characteristics of the students who are learning within them, how these relate to the characteristics of the digital learning environment, the ways in which the students and the digital environments interact with each other, and the learning outcomes that students achieve through their engagement with the environment.

The assessment of learning outcomes is the focus of the chapter by *Coates*. He argues that, despite the importance of assessment outcomes in providing essential information about what people have gained through their engagement with higher education, assessment practices have remained largely unchanged for a very long time. As such, Coates argues that assessment is the final frontier in higher education and examines the barriers to the transformation of assessment practices. These include the lack of training of academic staff in assessment and the lack of a professional assessment community. In order to transform assessment, Coates argues that there is a need to embrace new technologies and for changes to institutional management. He also argues that it is likely to require external intervention, either through policy instruments or the involvement of commercial enterprises in assessment practices. These are clearly radical and controversial proposals, which would fundamentally alter assessment's relationship with teaching and learning processes in higher education. Where one stands on these issues will be informed by one's position on the purposes of higher education, and the relative importance of the development of student understanding versus the certification of this understanding that we discussed earlier. Assessment of student learning is certainly an area where no easy solution exists and further research and policy discussions into the matter are needed.

An important purpose of higher education is the inclusion of non-traditional students in a university education. In their chapter, *Stănescu, Iorga, González Monteagudo and Freda* examine an approach to involving non-traditional students in higher education. They carefully define non-traditional students and argue that an approach focusing on the Narrative Mediation Path (NMP) can support these students in making their transition to higher education. They present an evaluative study of the NMP that, they argue, suggests that it supports students in developing their reflexive competence during a formative experience which enables them to better adjust to their university context. They argue that the changes in the meanings that students attached to their university life involved a closer sense of social connectedness and a reduced sense of alienation, isolation and vulnerability in the face of the academic challenges.

As a whole, these chapters highlight the rich complexity of teaching and learning interactions in higher education. The different chapters are based on differing views of the purposes of higher education and about what is central to offering students a high quality higher education. Whilst developing evidence-informed policies in relation to teaching and learning is of crucial importance, these differences show how evidence cannot remove the need for judgment that is based on particular values and priorities. This is the case whether it involves the judgment of policy makers in thinking about how to support national systems of higher education, university managers in developing institutional approaches to teaching and learning, university teachers in thinking about how to make particular forms of knowledge and practices accessible to particular groups of students, or students in examining how to make best use of the opportunities they are offered through their engagement in higher education. While the chapters here depict the advances in research into teaching and learning in higher education, they also are a powerful reminder of the potential, indeed a need, for further discoveries in research into higher education.

3 Recommendations to the Policy Makers

3.1 Findings

- Changes to the demography of student population and high participation of non-traditional students in mass higher education, growing global interconnectedness, development of educational technology and proliferation of digital media, and increasing competition in higher education, all have profound implications on teaching and learning. The changes in the higher education environment are outpacing advances in scholarship, policy reforms and institutional practice. Much of teaching and learning in European classrooms happens without taking into the account the latest scholarship in this area or the changes in the student body and the higher education environment.
- Teaching and learning is a broad field and comprises a number of areas with fast evolving research agendas. Some basic questions as to who are today's students, how do they learn, what motivates them, how do we know what they learn, etc. have still not been satisfactorily resolved.
- There is unevenness in policy initiatives and structural support for advancement of teaching and learning in higher education in Europe. Some countries have no policies and instruments to support teaching and learning.
- The differences between individual institutions are significant in terms of their structures and processes for excellence in teaching and learning. It is not uncommon that higher education teachers are left fully to their own devices to improve their teaching (or not).
- The European cooperation to modernise teaching and learning in higher education has so far been fragmented and in absence of an overarching strategy.

3.2 Recommendations

- Concerted effort is needed among European governments and higher education stakeholders, including higher education researchers, to advance excellence in teaching and learning in European higher education.
- Cross-country exchange of knowledge and collaborative projects for advancement of scholarship in teaching and learning is called for, especially in the following areas:
  - Instructional methods, tools and technologies and learning environments (active and effective learning; reflective learning and teaching; educational technology; digital learning environments and online education)
  - Authentic assessment of student learning and student experience (consequences of different grading and assessment practices on student learning; standardised versus individualised practices of assessment; student surveys and qualitative methods to investigate student learning and experience)
  - Student motivation, self-regulation and student engagement (self-regulated learning; sense of belonging and ownership; student learning outside academic tasks; student engagement in extracurricular activities; student social networks; challenges for non-traditional students)
- Joint initiatives within the EHEA are needed to help translate scholarship into policy and practice through joint policy development, policy learning, and support for capacity-building for research, education and training in the area of teaching and learning at European, national and institutional levels (teaching and learning institutes/agencies/research groups, and institutional units for excellence in teaching and learning).

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Teaching and Learning: A Journey from the Margins to the Core in European Higher Education Policy

Cristina Sin

1 Introduction

This chapter analyses how the topic of teaching and learning has evolved in the political discourse of the Bologna Process and of the policy actors who shape European higher education policy. This exercise is particularly stimulating because learning and teaching evolved from a topic of little significance to a forefront concern and a dimension presented as capable of making the difference for the success of the proposed reforms. It is the rise in prominence, the underlying rationales and the dimensions of teaching and learning that the chapter intends to disentangle. Based on an analysis of the central policy documents of the Bologna Process and key reports of other influential supra-national actors, a proposition is put forward that attention to teaching and learning became focal when this dimension began to be perceived as critical to ensure that higher education served the mission assigned to it by policy-makers, primarily of a utilitarian and economic nature. In making this claim, it is suggested that this evolution has been largely determined by the European Commission (EC) and the OECD as prominent supra-national agents and vectors of globalization. The chapter also cautions against the alienation of academics from policy-making which impacts on teaching and learning, an academic territory by excellence.

C. Sin (✉)
Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (CIPES), Matosinhos, Portugal
e-mail: csin@cipes.up.pt

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2 The Wider Policy Space and the Propagation of Policy Issues

Although dwelling mainly on teaching and learning as it evolved within the Bologna Process, the chapter acknowledges that the Process has unfolded in a wider context of policy development bearing the imprint of globalization (Amaral and Neave 2009; Grek 2010; Lawn and Lingard 2002; Lingard et al. 2005; Martens and Wolf 2009). Lawn and Lingard (2002) described the emergence of a European policy space in educational governance, while Lingard et al. (2005) argued that globalization and its effects on policy processes have led to the emergence of a global field in education policy, one consequence being that policy text production now reflects the diaspora of policy ideas which circulate rapidly across the globe. For Lawn and Lingard (2002), the construction of a common policy agenda occurs through a new kind of 'magistrature of influence' which assumed two forms: participation in the committees, task-force groups and similar working groups of supranational entities; and dissemination of research studies, reports, and statistics.

The influence of the wider policy context is especially pertinent in the case of the European Commission, given the role it plays in the Bologna Process. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) limits the Commission's legal competence in education. Covered by the principle of subsidiarity, education is firmly placed under the competence of member states. Their responsibility 'for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity' is acknowledged (Article 165 of the TFEU). The Union's contribution is limited to encouraging cooperation between these and to supporting and supplementing their action. Yet, the Commission has indirectly overcome its limited capacity of statutory intervention, exerting influence on European higher education policy by alternative means (see Neave (2005) for a detailed discussion). The Commission's integration in the formal structures of the Bologna Process has given it additional purchase over higher education. Following the invitation to join the Bologna Follow-Up Group in 2001, with equal standing to individual member states, it has greatly determined the direction and progress of the reform. Martens and Wolf argue that the Commission was perceived as a necessary infrastructure and support element, 'like a coat hanger…something to hang the reform on' (Martens and Wolf 2009), therefore instrumental in the promotion of the goals of the Process. Many of the Bologna initiatives have mainstreamed solutions previously developed by the European Commission (e.g. ECTS), while the EC has been providing financial incentives for HE cooperation and projects in line with the Bologna objectives and has been funding national Bologna promoters, information activities and the ministerial meetings (Keeling 2006). The Commission also funds key stakeholder organizations in the Bologna process (e.g. EUA, ENQA, ESU, etc.). From the standpoint of the Commission, the Bologna Process has been harnessed to serve the agenda of economic growth and international competitiveness outlined in the Lisbon strategy. Thus, despite its initial independence from the Commission, the Process has become increasingly tied into the former's ambitions

of European integration. For Martens and Wolf (2009), the EU now has more 'options and responsibilities in the field of education policy due to the Bologna Process', a paradoxical development when considered against its initial exclusion. Currently, the Bologna Process is strongly associated with the European Union although its signatory countries go far beyond its territory.

Keeling (2006) claims that the Commission developed an influential discourse on higher education in Europe. It considered higher education as 'purposeful' and 'economically beneficial' for both individuals and society and its activities had to respond to the needs of the labour market and industry. In the context of the Bologna Process, the Commission portrayed learning as an 'inherently productive activity' through which students accumulated and generated knowledge for personal and social benefit. It also promoted the idea that educational activities and outputs were 'measurable', e.g. educational achievements are measured at the level of the individual through ECTS credits (Keeling 2006). The Bologna reforms stood as mechanisms for increasing the employability of university graduates. In fact, as Bologna progressed it placed increased emphasis on the participation of employers in curricular design (Sin and Neave 2014). The utilitarian mission of higher education thus extended into the realm of teaching and learning. Indeed, the Commission's interpretation of higher education's mission as vocational goes back to the 1990s (Neave 2005). For Keeling (2006), the dominance of this interpretation limits alternative understandings of higher educational objectives, such as intellectual development, personal enrichment or the simple satisfaction of curiosity. The Bologna Declaration initially rejected an instrumental view of higher education by presenting it as a vehicle for upholding and promoting European culture. Later on, the London (2007) and Leuven (2009) Communiqués, too, referred to four missions of higher education: preparing students for life as active citizens in a democratic society; preparing students for their future careers and enabling their personal development; creating and maintaining a broad, advanced knowledge base and stimulating research and innovation. Yet, various scholars have noted that the Process has gradually moved from cultural and political rationales to economic ones (Huisman and van der Wende 2004; Tomusk 2004). For Martens and Wolf (2009) this can be attributed to the inclusion of the European Commission into the Process.

For the Commission, therefore, education represents an economic engine, a lynchpin in its strategy of international competitiveness. The advent of globalization saw higher education transformed into a key driver in the knowledge economy, 'the new star ship in the policy fleet for governments around the world' (Olssen and Peters 2005). Concerns with efficiency, results orientation and the achievement of outcomes have come to the fore. As Grek (2010) noted, since 2000 the EC's education policy-making tools have changed, with greater emphasis on indicators and benchmarking, to drive change and push the 'growth and jobs' agenda forward.

The OECD, too, has had considerable impact on the global stage of educational policy. Although its central focus has been 'steadfastly and unwaveringly within the imperium of economics' (Amaral and Neave 2009), education has been consolidating its position among the activities which attracted OECD's attention as an area of application within the overall driving imperative of economics. The effects of

globalization in education policy have largely been a consequence of the OECD's activities. Its powerful discourse began to influence education in the mid-nineties further to the increasing visibility and credibility of its work on cross-national, comparative educational indicators and statistics (Martens and Wolf 2009). Nowadays, the OECD appears as a trend-setter with an authoritative voice in education policy. In this respect, scholars (Amaral and Neave 2009; Martens and Wolf 2009) have referred to its mode of governance as 'opinion formation'. Grek (2010) claims that the OECD established their authority through the generation and management of sophisticated knowledge, ever more determinant for the orientation of education policy, giving birth to the so-called knowledge politics. She further argues that the policy agendas of the EU and the OECD have been converging, in a union cemented by knowledge and mutual policy learning. The result has been a growing alliance between these two influential actors operating in the European education space, constructing policy problems together, articulating and diffusing new norms and principles (Grek 2010).

Both the EU and the OECD's role in shaping education, its goals and its organization is already acknowledged in policy circles. Their role is mediated by a powerful discourse of globalization, more political than educational, which constructs solutions, produces new conceptual categories or redefines older ones (Lawn and Lingard 2002). The two organizations also coincide in their *modus operandi* (Amaral and Neave 2009; Grek 2010). In the absence of enforcement tools over member states, persuasion through discourse, networking, soft law and indirect approaches are employed to summon policy consensus and shape opinion favourable to policy-in-the-making when legislative action is not an option (Amaral and Neave 2009).

In the following, attention turns to the emergence and the construction of *teaching and learning* as a policy problem. An analysis of relevant policy documents has been undertaken in search for the contexts in which teaching and learning has been mentioned, its dimensions, the rationales invoked and the suggested recommendations. Teaching and learning has evolved from a topic of little significance in the early days of the Bologna Process to a forefront concern and a dimension deemed crucial for the success of the intended reforms. The chapter sets out to explore its ascendant trajectory and the likely reasons behind it. It argues that the evolution of this policy issue has increasingly reflected the discourse promoted by the European Commission and by the OECD, resulting in the subordination of teaching and learning to the imperatives of globalization and economy. Under a logic of utilitarianism, performance and efficiency teaching and learning is exhorted to align to market needs and to develop employability/entrepreneurship.

3 Method

Documents and reports issued by the main actors on the European educational policy stage represented the source for the analysis of learning and teaching as a policy issue since the inception of Bologna. In the case of the Bologna Process, the

ministerial communiqués published on the occasion of the biennial summits were perused for references to the topic of learning and teaching. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (the current and proposed versions) were also included in the analysis. For the other influential policy actors, the analysis concentrated on documents and reports whose main focus is higher education and/or particularly teaching and learning. For the European Commission, its communications were deemed relevant because they represent the main vehicle for setting out its vision for higher education as a driving force of the economic growth and international competitiveness pursued by the Lisbon strategy. Additionally, a recent report on improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions (High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education 2013) was a source for analysis. In the case of the OECD, attention rested on two publications concerned particularly with teaching and learning: *Fostering Quality Teaching in Higher Education: Policies and Practices* (2012) and *Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes* (2013). Finally, a European Science Foundation report on the professionalisation of academics as teachers (European Science Foundation 2012) has been subjected to scrutiny. Table 1 lists the texts analysed in this chapter.

Content analysis was performed on the above policy documents. When the texts did not deal exclusively with teaching and learning (e.g. Bologna communiqués or the Commission's communications) analysis sought to identify references to learning and teaching and conjoint terminology (teaching, learning, student-centred learning, learning outcomes, pedagogy, curriculum etc.). Consideration was paid to the context/associations in which these were mentioned and the specific aspects considered. In the case of documents dealing specifically with teaching and learning (or teaching, or learning) the following were considered: rationales for the significance of teaching and/or learning; the dimensions considered under teaching and learning; recommendations on ways of moving forward.

4 Teaching and Learning as a Policy Issue

4.1 Teaching and Learning Elements as Structural Descriptors

In the early days of the Bologna Process, the preoccupation with teaching and learning was hardly visible. The common degree structure and the tools for degree transparency and comparability (ECTS, diploma supplement, etc.) were the dominant political concern, rendered obvious by the absence of the terms 'teaching and learning' from the first two ministerial communiqués of 2001 and 2003. In both documents, although the term 'learning' appears, it is in relation to lifelong learning. Once in the latter document 'learning outcomes' are mentioned, but unrelated to pedagogy. That the emphasis lay initially on degree structure and its descriptors is especially evident in the textual contexts where 'learning outcomes'

Table 1 Source documents for the analysis of learning and teaching as a policy issue

Bologna Process	Bologna Declaration (1999)
	Prague Communiqué (2001)
	Berlin Communiqué (2003)
	Bergen Communiqué (2005)
	London Communiqué (2007)
	Leuven Communiqué (2009)
	Bucharest Communiqué (2012)
	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (2005)
	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Proposal for the revised version (2014)
European Commission	The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge (2003)
	Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy (2005)
	Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: Education, Research and Innovation (2006)
	Supporting growth and jobs—an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems (2011)
	Report to the European Commission on improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions (2013)
OECD	Fostering Quality Teaching in Higher Education: Policies and Practices (2012)
	Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes. Feasibility Study Report (2013)
European Science Foundation	The Professionalisation of Academics as Teachers in Higher Education (2012)

appear. Although since 2007 these have also been presented as the embodiment of a new pedagogic approach, in the early days the scarce mentions to learning outcomes came in association with the development of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (Bergen Communiqué 2005; Berlin Communiqué 2003). For example, the Berlin Communiqué (2003: 4) referred to 'a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences…'. In brief, at the beginning of the Bologna Process learning outcomes were only addressed as structural descriptors and elements of a common degree framework. A likely interpretation is that, with the realization that ECTS was not a good currency for measuring educational effort, it became necessary to encounter another tool, i.e. learning outcomes, to better define what each teaching module provided.

A brief passing reference to teaching and learning, this time related to pedagogic innovation, first appeared in the 2005 communiqué. Higher education ministers recognized that 'time is needed to optimize the impact of structural change on curricula and thus to ensure the introduction of innovative teaching and learning processes' (Bergen Communiqué 2005). The development of the European

Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance, adopted in 2005, addressed specifically teaching and learning. Beyond the document's self-explanatory purpose—ensuring and safeguarding the quality of educational programmes through a common European reference framework to build mutual trust, there is hardly any indication that a shift of pedagogic model was already envisaged at the time of its publication. Student-centred learning—as the new pedagogic model came to be conceptualized—is not mentioned at all throughout the document, while learning outcomes appear in three instances in relation to their inclusion in programme design, student assessment and public information of degree programmes. However, the absence of any reference to their pedagogic benefits supports the proposition that early on learning outcomes were merely a descriptor or structural element meant to improve the transparency of educational programmes. Although learning outcomes continued to be portrayed as qualification descriptors, the shifting attention from the structure to the substance of higher education (pedagogy and curriculum) became increasingly evident after 2005.

4.2 Teaching and Learning as Pedagogy

The turning point seemed to have been the 2007 London ministerial summit. From then on, communiqués placed growing emphasis on teaching and learning and advocated a new pedagogic approach—student-centred learning. The London ministerial communiqué testified 'an increasing awareness that a significant outcome of the process will be a move towards student-centred higher education and away from teacher driven provision'. Also, it is here that the relationship between learning outcomes and a new pedagogic approach was first conveyed through the phrase 'student-centred, outcome-based education'.

Student-centred learning kept climbing higher on the political agenda. The Leuven Communiqué (2009) declared student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education a priority for the decade to come. Student-centred learning was described as an approach which required 'empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner' (2009: 3). Finally, the 2012 Communiqué reiterated ministerial commitment to student-centred learning. By this time, aware of the problematic enactment of reforms on the shop-floor, ministers emphasized their consolidation and practical implementation, namely 'supporting institutions and stakeholders in their efforts to deliver meaningful changes' (Bucharest Communiqué 2012: 1). One such change regarded learning outcomes, by now viewed as essential to the success of the reforms: 'the development, understanding and practical use of learning outcomes is crucial to the success of ECTS, the Diploma Supplement, recognition, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance—all of which are interdependent' (Bucharest Communiqué 2012: 3). The publication of the report on the assessment of higher education learning outcomes by the OECD at about the same time (2013) is indicative of the

shared construction of policy problems (Lawn and Lingard 2002). The OECD's rationale was less educational and more concerned with performance, i.e. 'evaluation of instructional effectiveness'. Their report referred to a 'shift away from inputs towards outcome-based notions of higher education throughput' and to the need to 'develop better performance metrics in higher education' (OECD 2013: 3).

Growing acknowledgement of the significance of pedagogic change in parallel to the structural reforms has therefore marked the later part of the Bologna Process. The rise to prominence of pedagogic reform is also evident in the proposed revision of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance (ENQA et al. 2014). This now includes a standard on 'student-centred learning, teaching and assessment'. A transition is thus obvious from teaching and learning contextualized by structural reform (e.g. learning outcomes as structural descriptors) to teaching and learning in its own right as pedagogy. This transition may be explained by the realization that the key objectives of the Bologna Process and the EHEA could only be achieved if effectively transposed into the everyday practice of lay academics and institutions, into their core activities of teaching and learning. Studies have indeed revealed a mismatch between the remarkable progress at the level of political implementation through regulation on the one hand—whose abundance gave an impression of dynamism and success (Neave 2005)—and the lagging shop-floor enactment of reforms on the other hand (Sin 2012, 2014; Westerheijden et al. 2010):

> Attention in the second decade of the Bologna Process needs to turn to the achievement of the substantive, strategic goals more than to further refinement of the architecture. Greater involvement of staff within higher education institutions and other non-state actors may be a key factor for successfully embedding many Bologna action areas in the practice of education (Westerheijden et al. 2010: 9).

Summing up, pedagogic innovation—conceptualized as student-centred learning—made an arguably deferred and sideways entry onto an agenda from which it was initially excluded, concerned solely with the degree architecture and transparency and comparability tools. The curricular dimension emerges, therefore, as secondary, derivative, and instrumental to the achievement of the initial structural dimension (Antunes 2012). Antunes further argued that the so-called 'technical-political instruments' (qualification frameworks, learning outcomes, credits etc.) have been the vehicles to carry the translation of the change agenda from the level of structures to the field of curricular and pedagogic action. These have mediated between dimensions (central political decision-making versus institutional action and educational practice) and between domains (structures and frameworks versus curriculum and pedagogy) of educational action (Antunes 2012).

4.3 Curricular Review

As shown, the London Communiqué (2007) marked the shift of focus from structure to pedagogy. In this same document, ministers underlined 'the importance of curricular reform leading to qualifications better suited both to the needs of the

labour market and to further study' (2007: 2), while institutions were urged to 'further develop partnerships and cooperation with employers in the ongoing process of curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes' (2007: 6). Furthermore, it is in this same communiqué that globalization is mentioned for the first time. It might not be merely coincidental that pedagogic reform came to the foreground at the same time as employability became a priority, as cooperation with employers arose as a recommendation, and as 'the challenges of the globalized world' were acknowledged in the context of the Bologna Process. In fact, the growing proximity between the Bologna and Lisbon agendas, as well as the force of globalization as a driver for the reform of teaching and learning, emerge clearly from the espoused motivations for the establishment of quality assurance standards:

> All over the world there is an increasing interest in quality and standards, reflecting both the rapid growth of higher education and its cost to the public and the private purse. Accordingly, if Europe is to achieve its aspiration to be the most dynamic and knowledge-based economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy), then European higher education will need to demonstrate that it takes the quality of its programmes and awards seriously, and is willing to put into place the means of assuring and demonstrating that quality (ENQA 2005: 9).

From this perspective, curricular and pedagogic reform appear largely justified by an economic rationale, and pursued as a means of increasing higher education's ability to be responsive and contribute to the growth and jobs agenda. Additionally, one of the ESG's fundamental principles is the interests of students, as well as employers and the society more generally, in good quality higher education. This interpretation supports previously mentioned claims that the Bologna Process evolved from a cultural and political rationale in the early days to an economic one (Huisman and van der Wende 2004; Martens and Wolf 2009). However, the Leuven Communiqué (2009: 1) acknowledged the joint mission of teaching and learning, related not only to employability, but also to personal development and active citizenship: 'student-centred learning … will help students develop the competences they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens'.

As stated earlier, the integration of the European Commission (EC) as a full member in the Bologna Process is likely to have emphasized the economic rationale. The analysis of the topic of learning and teaching in the Commission's communications addressing higher education confirm the supposition that the teaching dimension of higher education is viewed through an economic lens. The mission of teaching is understood as developing graduate skills and competences necessary for a career in a globalized, knowledge-based society. As is the case of higher education as a whole, the teaching dimension is valued for its potential to drive economic development and jobs through an alignment with market demands and cooperation with economic actors. The other missions related to active citizenship education or personal development—present in Bologna's London and Leuven Communiqués—appear to be absent from the four analysed communications of the Commission. It is only in the 2013 report on the modernization of teaching that these values are finally invoked:

> Europe's graduates need the kind of education that enables them to engage articulately as committed, active, thinking, global citizens as well as economic actors in the ethical, sustainable development of our societies (High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education 2013: 13).

Teaching and learning as a theme develops gradually: from teaching mentioned in general terms, to teaching and learning in its curricular dimension, and finally to the development of teaching competence among academics.

In the 2003 communication, teaching was not approached as a topic of its own. *Excellence* in teaching and research were seen together as means of turning universities into powerhouses 'at the heart of the Europe of knowledge', driving forward economic growth and competitiveness. The economic mission of teaching is obvious in the statement that 'universities train an ever increasing number of students with increasingly higher qualifications, and thus contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of the European economy' (European Commission 2003: 5). In the 2005 communication, the discourse centred on the *modernisation* agenda, deemed necessary to enable universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon strategy. Teaching and learning was addressed in its curricular dimension, in one brief instance only. One of the pillars of the *modernisation* agenda was 'attractiveness to learners', achieved, among others, through 'openness to the world in teaching/learning'. For the EC, this entailed curricular revision capable of responding to the needs of the labour market:

> If universities are to become more attractive locally and globally, profound curricular revision is required—not just to ensure the highest level of academic content, but also to respond to the changing needs of labour markets. The integration of graduates into professional life, and hence into society, is a major social responsibility of higher education. Learning needs to encompass transversal skills (such as teamwork and entrepreneurship) in addition to specialist knowledge (European Commission 2005: 5).

It is worth remembering at this point that the principle of subsidiarity protects the content of teaching from the EC's intervention. The topic of curricular revision thus appeared rather audacious. Moreover, the tone got bolder and more specific, recommending that programmes should match the needs of the labour market (European Commission 2006: 3, 5–6), foster entrepreneurship and employability, and that curricula and teaching methods should be directed at the development of employment-related skills:

> In order to overcome persistent mismatches between graduate qualifications and the needs of the labour market, university programmes should be **structured to enhance directly the employability of graduates** and to offer broad support to the workforce more generally. Universities should offer innovative curricula, teaching methods and training/retraining programmes which include broader employment-related skills along with the more discipline-specific skills (European Commission 2006: 6, original emphasis).

The revision of pedagogy to serve the needs of the labour market and to foster employability—through development of transferable skills, involvement of employers or integration of practical experience in courses—was brought up again in 2011. The novelty in these latter communications resided in the recommended

use of performance indicators (e.g. graduate employment data) in evaluation and, more significantly, of performance-based rewards: 'labour market success should be used as one indicator (among others) of the quality of university performance, and acknowledged and rewarded in regulatory, funding and evaluation systems' (2006: 7) or 'adapting quality assurance and funding mechanisms to reward success in equipping students for the labour market' (European Commission 2011: 5). Justified by a discourse of quality and relevance, the emphasis on indicators, results, measurement and performance—so far mainly applicable to research—appears to have entered the teaching domain as well.

Two additional aspects which fall under teaching and learning were introduced at this point: first, flexible delivery through a variety of teaching modes and exploiting the benefits of ICT; second, the development of teaching competences and raising the status of teaching in higher education. The vision about the former has been recently outlined in a report on *New Modes of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education 2014). It is, however, the latter topic—teaching competences—that has forcefully come into the spotlight not only of the European Commission, but also other organizations. Such attention appears to single out teaching competences as the next dimension in the construction of teaching and learning as a policy problem and the latest burning issue on the political agenda. In fact, it has already been contemplated in the proposed revision of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

4.4 Pedagogic Competence and the Professionalisation of Teaching

Almost a decade ago, Keeling (2006) argued that teaching received little attention in comparison with research in the EC's policy. She claimed that 'the coaching and mentoring role of professors and lecturers, tutors, instructors and supervisors' was 'elided by the dominant discourse' (Keeling 2006: 214). Several years later, teaching competence and the recognition of teaching came under the attention not only of the EC, but also of the OECD and, rather surprisingly, of the European Science Foundation (ESF). It is worth highlighting the remarkable overlap in the dates of the three reports dealing with the topic, all in 2012–2013, which supports the proposition of the shared construction of the policy agenda in the European space (Grek 2010; Lawn and Lingard 2002). In the following, the reasons for its emergence, as well as the recommendations envisaged by policy actors, are explored.

All three reports—by the OECD, the EC and the ESF—approach the topic through the lens of quality. It is argued that quality teaching is 'a sine qua non of a quality learning culture' and that 'the teaching mission should appear as a resounding priority throughout every institution involved in the delivery of higher education' (High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education 2013: 13). Why this sudden preoccupation with teaching quality? A scrutiny of the

reasons/contexts invoked in support of this new priority area has revealed the following: massification and diversification of student body; capacity of response to economic challenges and better alignment with economic needs; increased competition and reputation-building; accountability and efficiency; individual development and transformation; and the student as a demanding consumer. Although personal growth and civic development still count among the reasons, albeit to a lesser degree and only in the EC and ESF reports, it is mainly economic and accountability rationales that prevail. The hallmarks of globalization are evident in the discourse: institutions now fare in a fast-paced market environment of growing competitiveness, where they must strive to become attractive for a larger and increasingly diverse student body, to satisfy students as fee-paying consumers, under increased pressures for accountability. Their responsiveness to economic challenges—understood mainly as employability and the development of a broad range of skills relevant to the labour market—emerges by far as the most pronounced reason:

> Graduates are entering a world of employment that is characterised by greater uncertainty, speed, risk, complexity and interdisciplinary working… University education, and the mode of learning whilst at university, will need to prepare students for entry to such an environment, and equip them with appropriate skills, knowledge, values and attributes to thrive in it (Hénard and Roseveare 2012: 8).

A less common but important point is made by the ESF in relation to the economic benefits of quality teaching. In its view, quality teaching is conducive to an optimal use of research for the benefits of the outside world. That is, equipping scientists with state-of-the-art insights on teaching will allow leveraging the knowledge embedded in their research, which can be expected to increase the return on investment in science (European Science Foundation 2012: 5).

Quality teaching is equated with student-centred approaches and the pursuit of student-centred learning, as was also the case in the Bologna Process discourse. According to the OECD report, the complexity and uncertainty of society and the economy and the need for continuous adaptation entail that 'higher education can no longer be owned by a community of disciplinary connoisseurs who transmit knowledge to students… In practice, institutions will have to learn how to best serve the student community. Students have become the focal point of the learning approach in many areas of the world' (Hénard and Roseveare 2012: 9). Yet, all documents unanimously lament the persistence of what they present as outdated teacher-centred pedagogic styles. For instance the ESF report states that:

> …in much of Europe, academics continue to rely on their own student experience when teaching. This reinforces subject- and teacher-centred approaches that do not stimulate desired high-quality learning experiences or the kinds of outcomes required by the new European social and economic context (European Science Foundation 2012: 8).

The three reports coincide to a great extent in the recommendations that they put forward to improve teaching quality, mainly around developing teaching competences and raising the status of teaching. The difference between them lies in the scope of recommendations. The OECD report targets specifically education

institutions and suggests measures which can be taken at this level, such as elaborating institutional strategies and frameworks for teaching quality, fostering leadership for teaching quality, adapting other institutional policies in this respect (e.g. human resources, student support etc.), encouraging innovation, etc. The other two reports have a wider scope, with recommendations for institutional, national and European levels. For instance, they both highlight the importance of dedicated funding to improve teaching and learning and of dedicated support for capacity-building (educational development) at all policy-making levels. Additionally, the report to the European Commission contemplates several measures beyond those related to the pedagogic development of teaching staff and the valorisation of teaching. These concern: the consideration of student feedback in order to improve teaching and learning; the curriculum, elaborated in partnership with students and employers; student counselling, guidance, mentoring and tracking; or cross- and trans-disciplinary teaching and learning.

Despite some differences, the bulk of recommendations in the three reports addresses the following:

- awareness-raising of teaching quality and celebration of teaching excellence through reward and recognition
- parity of esteem between teaching and research and valorisation of the scholarship of learning and teaching (ESF puts forward the concept of teacher-researcher)
- improvement of pedagogic competences for teaching staff through continuous professional development.

The utmost importance attributed to pedagogic competence is signalled by the ESF recommendation regarding the definition of professional standards for higher education teachers. This is echoed by the recommendation in the EC report that all staff teaching in higher education should have received certified pedagogic training by 2020 and that continuous professional development should be made a requirement.[1] The high priority assigned to teaching competence is also visible in the recommended establishment of a European Academy for Teaching and Learning by the EC report, or the European Forum for higher education teacher development proposed by the ESF. Moreover, according to the ESF, the success of the Bologna Process objectives and of the EHEA is conditioned by the pursuit of the above measures:

> Establishing professional standards for higher education teaching across Europe, the introduction of student-centred teaching, and the preparation of academics to fulfil these requirements are important steps to achieve these aims. So far, European policies have rarely affected the quality of teaching at the classroom level (European Science Foundation 2012: 9).

[1]Universities in the UK already require pedagogic qualifications and CPD as condition for employment. For more details see the UK Professional Standards Framework https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/professional-recognition/uk-professional-standards-framework-ukpsf.

This new emphasis on developing academics' teaching competences appears to have already made inroads in the Bologna Process developments. The proposed revision of the ESG for Quality Assurance (ENQA et al. 2014) marks a significant change of focus from the initial one: *quality assurance* of teaching staff has been replaced by *development* of teaching staff in the new version. The latter is reinforced as a duty for HEIs, as is the due recognition of teaching not only through development opportunities, but also teaching-based awards and promotion. Let us briefly remember the proposition of a shared European (and global) political space, in which the OECD and the EC increasingly connect their agendas in a mutual process of policy learning and joint construction of policy issues (Grek 2010). This, coupled with the fact that the Bologna Process has been harnessed in the pursuit of the Commission's Lisbon strategy, enable the supposition that teaching competence and the professionalisation of teaching staff will eventually make their way onto on the agenda of the Bologna Process.

5 Conclusions

The chapter has analysed the evolution of teaching and learning in the policy discourse of the Bologna Process and of other key policy actors shaping the European higher education policy agenda (the EC, the OECD and the ESF). It has shown that from a low-profile issue on an agenda dominated by structural reform at the turn of the century, teaching and learning started to be approached around 2007, conceptualized in a new pedagogic model: student-centred learning. It suggested that this occurred further to the realization that the achievement of the EHEA depended on shop-floor enactment and change in academic and institutional practices, ultimately of a pedagogic nature. In parallel to the promotion of student-centred learning, curricular reform came in the spotlight. The discourse centred on its tuning and responsiveness to labour market needs. The latest dimension of teaching and learning to have drawn policy-makers' attention has been the teaching competence of academic staff, deemed unsuitable for the kind of pedagogy required by the changed operational environment of institutions: global competition for students, massive and diversified student body, more demanding students assuming a consumer posture, concerns with efficiency, performance and accountability, etc.

Primarily economic rationales, driven by the imperatives of globalization, are argued to have underpinned the rise to prominence and evolution of teaching and learning on the political agenda. This suggests that, contrary to the Anglo-Saxon tradition in which improvement and innovation in teaching and learning have traditionally been pursued in the name of the student experience, the teaching and learning agenda promoted by supra-national European policies has been shaped less by educational concerns, and more by a utilitarian view of higher education as a key element in a strategy of economic growth and competitiveness, in the face of the challenges of globalization.

Scholars have claimed that Bologna has gradually downplayed cultural and political rationales, embracing economic ones instead (Huisman and van der Wende 2004; Martens and Wolf 2009). This chapter purports that the 'magistrature of influence' (Lawn and Lingard 2002) operated by prominent transnational actors obeying the logic of globalization has been decisive in this evolution of policy. The European Commission comes first to mind given its member status in the Bologna Process. But the OECD's authority is not to be discounted. It acts as a trend-setter, and it already shapes the European Commission's agenda through what (Grek 2010) referred to as knowledge politics and mutual policy learning. Rather surprisingly, these organizations' influence has now reached a domain of academic competence by excellence: teaching and learning. Thanks to the two organizations' ability of 'opinion formation' (Amaral and Neave 2009), the professionalisation of teaching staff—hot on the political agenda of both—is likely to climb high among the priorities of the Bologna Process.

By way of a final remark, we recall that already a decade ago, Neave (2005) noted in relation to Bologna that 'the ghost of academia' was 'largely absent from the feast'. The Bologna follow-up group (BFUG) currently includes all the signatory members of Bologna and the European Commission, as full members, and the Council of Europe, the EUA, EURASHE, ESU, UNESCO, Education International, ENQA and Business Europe, as consultative members. While the EUA represents the rectors of European universities, EURASHE the presidents of European polytechnics, ESU the European students, ENQA the European quality agencies and Business Europe the European entrepreneurial estate, the representation of academics has been delegated to Education International, a worldwide federation of unions representing teachers and education employees across the globe. Therefore, European academics have been conspicuously absent from the structure in charge of overseeing the Bologna process between ministerial meetings, their presence being mimicked by what is not even a European institution, whose participation is diluted by much larger numbers of other education professionals. Because teaching policies enter deep onto academic territory and competence, a word of caution against having academics as 'the great absent' from policy-making becomes pertinent once again. As research has already shown, there is in general a profound ignorance among academics about the implementation of Bologna and its intricate policy developments.

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The Meanings of Student Engagement: Implications for Policies and Practices

Paul Ashwin and Debbie McVitty

1 The Problems of Defining Student Engagement

Student engagement has come to be seen as a 'good thing' in higher education for researchers and policy makers alike. For example, the 2011 UK Higher Education White Paper 'Students at the Heart of the System' (BIS 2011) emphasises student engagement as a key element of the development of learning communities in higher education. However, as Geven and Attard (2012) noted in relation to 'student-centred learning', the fact that it would be very difficult to be against student engagement is testament to its vagueness.

The vagueness around student engagement means that it is currently used to refer to student engagement in learning activities, in the development of curricula, in quality assurance processes, and in institutional governance (for example see Coates and McCormick 2014; Kuh 2009; Trowler 2010). These many different meanings of student engagement have led some researchers to be very critical of its use as a term, with some arguing that it is used uncritically (Zepke 2014) and others arguing that its use is 'chaotic', with its very vagueness doing important work to mask inequalities by those who use it (Trowler 2014). What is interesting about these criticisms is that 'student engagement' was initially a term used by researchers, which has later been adopted by policy makers as it appears to do useful work.

The question at the heart of this chapter is whether the vagueness and confusion around the use of student engagement can be addressed in a way that helps us to ask

P. Ashwin (✉)
Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation,
Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK
e-mail: p.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk

D. McVitty
National Union of Students, London, UK
e-mail: debbie.mcvitty@nus.org.uk

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more critical questions about research and policies relating to student engagement. Our answer is 'to some extent'. This is because, whilst it is possible to be clearer about the focus and degree of student engagement as we outline below, even when these issues are addressed, the meaning of student engagement will be shaped by (i) the particular context in which it operates, as Vuori (2014) shows in her study of student engagement in three US universities, and (ii) by the meaning of 'non-engagement'. Thus student engagement means something slightly different when it is contrasted with 'passivity', where it is the active nature of engagement that is highlighted or with 'alienation' (for example see Case 2008; Mann 2001), where it is the sense of having a stake in the institution that is fore grounded. This highlights the ways in which the meaning of student engagement in particular contexts will always involve a process of shifting and change even when there is a shared sense of the focus and degree of student engagement that is at stake. This suggests that engagement has similar properties to those that Klemenčič (2015) ascribes to student 'agency'. These are that it develops over time; that it can be stronger or weaker; that it is embedded in particular places and times; and that it is shaped by the conditions in which it operates and by students' social relationships in higher education. In this way the meaning of student engagement will always shift over time, but we argue that it is possible to be clearer about what is at stake by analysing the focus and degree of student engagement at a particular moment in time.

2 The Focus of Student Engagement

One notable aspect of the student engagement literature is how often the 'object' or focus of student engagement is left undefined. For example, Kahu (2013) develops a model of student engagement without any explicit discussion of what it is that students are engaging with. This is crucial to know because the meaning of student engagement changes when the object of engagement changes.

Where work on student engagement *does* focus on the object of engagement (for example see Healey et al. 2014; The Student Engagement Partnership 2014; Trowler 2010), there are a confusing array of objects of engagement identified: student engagement in a wide range teaching and learning processes; in the scholarship of teaching and learning; in quality enhancement processes, in decision making processes; in learning communities. The confusion is increased by the different ways in which these objects are configured in different models. For example, Trowler (2010) includes students' engagement in curriculum design processes as a form of engagement in learning design, whereas Healey et al. (2014) include it as a form of engagement in quality enhancement processes. This problem is caused by the multiple meanings that can be attributed to learning and teaching (see Ashwin 2009 for a discussion of the problems with these terms). For example, 'students' engagement with learning' could refer to their engagement in particular learning activities (which is what the National Survey of Student Engagement

(NSSE) survey attempts to measure); it could refer to students' engagement with their courses (which is what the National Student Survey (NSS) in the UK and the University Experience Survey (UES) in Australia measure) or it could refer to students' engagement with the knowledge that they are learning on their programme (see Ashwin et al. 2014). Thus we argue that the focus of student engagement needs to be more clearly delineated in order to provide a useful sense of the meaning of engagement.

One way of more clearly delineating the objects of student engagement is by focusing on what is being 'formed' through student engagement. In thinking this way, we can analytically distinguish between three broad objects of engagement: engagement to form individual understanding; engagement to form curricula and engagement to form communities. This is an analytical distinction because all three formations can occur at once but generally one will be the primary focus of student engagement.

Engagement to form individual understanding focuses on the ways in which student engagement can help students to improve their learning outcomes. Engagement to form curricula focuses on the ways in which students can help to form the courses that they study in higher education, whilst engagement to form communities focuses on the ways in which students can be involved in helping to shape the institutions and societies of which they are part. These three foci of engagement can be seen to form a nested hierarchy illustrated in Fig. 1, with engagement to form communities including and building on notions of the development of curricula and understanding, and engagement to form curricula including

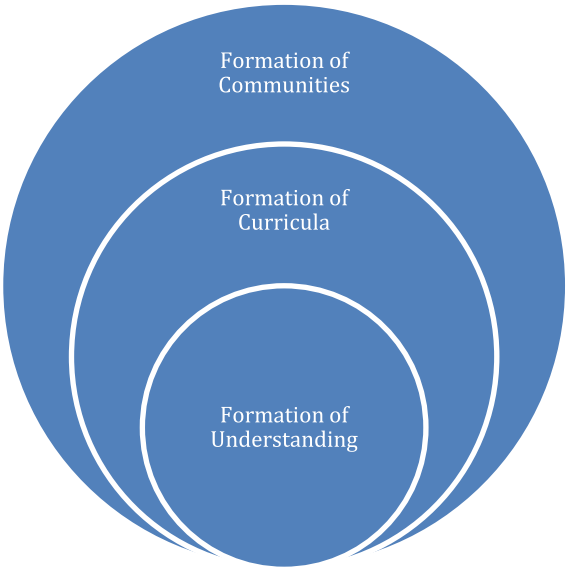

Fig. 1 Nested hierarchy of the objects of student engagement

and building on notions of engagement to form understanding. It should be noted that this positions student engagement as a knowledge-centred activity because students' engagement in the formation of communities and curricula are predicated on their engagement in the development of understanding. Thus for student participation in higher education to be considered 'engagement' under this framework, they need to be engaging with disciplinary or professional knowledge. This is deliberate and based on the view that "it is the critical relationships that students develop with knowledge that makes a university degree a higher form of education" Ashwin (2014, p. 123).

It can be noted that this way of distinguishing between the objects of engagement cuts across the division between student engagement that focuses on the engagement of student representatives, and those that focus on the engagement of everyday students. We see this as a strength of our proposed model that it brings together these forms of student engagement.

3 Three Degrees of Student Engagement

As well as the 'object' of student engagement, distinguishing between different degrees of student engagement can help to clarify the particular meaning of the term. The literature on student participation (Klemenčič 2012a) and partnership (Healey et al. 2014) can offer useful tools. Klemenčič (2012a) argues that participation ranges from its most basic form as access to information, to consultation and dialogue, and finally to partnership. Healey et al. (2014), drawing on Higher Education Academy and National Union of Students (2011), argue that partnership can range from consultation to involvement to participation and partnership. It is interesting to note that both of these frameworks seem to limit students to being engaged as partners. This limitation is consistent in the student engagement literature. Neither the basic terms of engagement nor the object(s) of engagement are in the hands of students to determine.

An alternative way of conceptualizing the degree of student engagement is to examine the ways in which the object of student engagement is affected by students' engagement with it. In doing so, this highlights three broad degrees of engagement: *consultation* in which students engage with a fixed object that is not changed through their engagement; *partnership* in which students participate in the transformation of a pre-existing object of engagement; and *leadership* in which students create new objects of engagement. Unlike the aforementioned models, which imply the value judgement that partnership is the desirable endpoint of student engagement practice, this model seeks only to describe the prospective degrees of engagement available to students and institutions.

In consultation, the idea is that students are asked for their views on a fixed process. Thus the object of engagement is not transformed by students' engagement, but rather small amendments might be made.

In partnership, the emphasis is on reciprocity in relationships between students and academics, along with a shared responsibility for what is happening in the learning environment, a shift that includes meaningful sharing of power (Cook-Sather et al. 2014). Here students engage with a pre-existing object of engagement, but there is the potential for this object to be transformed through the collaborative work of students, academics and their institutions.

In leadership, the emphasis is on the ways in which students can create new objects through their engagement. In this degree of engagement students set their own terms for what engagement entails and for the outcomes of engagement.

In the next three sections, we examine the three degrees of engagement in relation to student engagement as the formation of understanding, as the formation of curricula and the formation of communities. We then conclude the chapter by discussing what is highlighted by this classification and the implications for policy makers.

4 Student Engagement as the Formation of Understanding

Student engagement as the formation of understanding is what is normally referred to as 'student engagement' in the US, Australia, Ireland and the UK. The dominant form is derived from a substantial body of literature evidencing the importance of students' personal investment in a course of study for their learning to be successful (Trowler 2010). It is in this sense that van der Velden asserts that most academic practitioners view student engagement:

- Within the community of academic practitioners, engagement by students is most commonly interpreted in relation to the psychology of individual learning: the degree at which students engage with their studies in terms of motivation, the depth of their intellectual perception or simply studiousness. Engaged students are viewed as taking ownership for their own learning, working together with staff on ensuring academic success and accepting the role of engaged and willing apprentice to an academic master (Velden 2013, p. 78).

In this body of the literature the object of student in engagement is the development of their understanding of the knowledge they are engaging with in their degree programmes.

4.1 Student Engagement in the Formation of Understanding as Consultation

In this degree of engagement in the formation of understanding, students are seen as engaging with a fixed body of knowledge that does not undergo any change through their engagement with it. This notion of student engagement can be seen in the

mainstream research on student engagement related to the National Survey of Student Engagement in the US and its variants in Australasia, Canada, South Africa and the UK. For example, Coates and McCormick (2014, p. 155), argue that "Simplistically put, students must learn to do higher education in ways likely to promote high-quality learning outcomes". Here the sense is that the learning outcomes are fixed and that students need to learn the curriculum as set. Thus students are 'consulted' to the extent that their understanding is checked and material reviewed or presented in a different way in response to the degree of understanding students exhibit or report.

4.2 Student Engagement in the Formation of Understanding as Partnership

In this degree of student engagement in the formation of understanding, the focus is on the ways in which students transform the knowledge that they engage in as part of their courses, and how they are transformed by this knowledge. The focus is on the partnership between academics and students as they work together in teaching and learning interactions in order to co-construct knowledge (see Ashwin 2009). Examples of this kind of engagement include enquiry based learning (Healey and Jenkins 2009) and 'Student as Producers' (Neary and Winn 2009) in which students are engaged in authentic research projects in order to produce academic work. It is also reflected in Ashwin et al. (2014) exploration of undergraduate sociology students' changing relations to knowledge over the course of their degrees. The key focus here is on the way in which knowledge transforms students as they engage with it, and the ways students also transform knowledge as they make sense of it. Thus rather than seeing student engaging with a fixed object of knowledge, the focus is on how students and knowledge are transformed by this engagement.

4.3 Student Engagement in the Formation of Understanding as Leadership

In this degree of engagement in the formation of understanding, the focus is on the ways in which students create new objects of understanding. This kind of engagement is much rarer in higher education because the focus is on the ways in which students develop understandings that transcend the existing knowledge domains of higher education. One example is the independent studies degrees that used to exist in the UK in which students negotiated their own programmes of study in order to address a problem that they had identified that they wanted to solve (Robbins 1988). The rarity of this kind of engagement in the formation of understanding is unsurprising, as it challenges the nature of academic knowledge and the role of academics in making this accessible to students.

5 Student Engagement in the Formation of Curricula

In Engaging the Curriculum in Higher Education Barnett and Coate argue for greater public debate about curricula:

- Through curricula, ideas of higher education are put into action. Through curricula, too, values, beliefs and principles in relation to learning, understanding, knowledge, disciplines, individuality and society are realized. Yet these profoundly important matters are hardly ever raised. It is as if there is tacit agreement that these are not matters for polite company (Barnett and Coate 2005).

The definition of the curriculum ranges from the body of knowledge that constitutes an academic discipline or area of professional practice, to the creation of a structured course of study which tacitly articulates what knowledge is the most important and the ways that students might be expected to encounter it, to what students actually do and understand through their encounters with knowledge (Fraser and Bosanquet 2006). The creation of a curriculum in the sense of a structured course of study is a process that requires significant value judgements about both the evolution of the academic discipline, and the purpose and meaning of higher education (Peach 2010). The published curriculum formally legitimises certain forms of knowledge and learning activity, and delegitimises others. The hidden curriculum—the norms and values that are transmitted through established behaviours, language and practices, but that are not formally encoded anywhere—also sends tacit messages about what matters (Margolis 2001). Students, in encountering a course of study, also encounter and respond creatively to the value judgements and messages about their place and identity as learners embedded in the visible and hidden curricula. For some this encounter may be painful and lead to alienation—Clegg refers to 'the symbolic violence of the hidden curriculum' (Clegg 2011). As such the curriculum is widely perceived to be a powerful force for change: witness the various attempts to reform the curriculum in socially purposive directions, most recently the drive to embed Education for Sustainable Development in higher education curricula (for example Ryan and Tilbury 2013; Winter and Cotton 2012). That the cited examples both take the starting point of describing the inefficacy of attempts to change curricula suggests the power and resilience of established academic disciplinary cultures.

5.1 Student Engagement in Curricula Formation as Consultation

In student engagement in curriculum design as consultation, students are simply consulted about the content of their courses. Within this framework there is arguably limited room for active student agency in determining the nature of the

learning environment or the curriculum. The definition of an effective change in this context is academic-led revisions to curriculum or teaching approaches with a view to enhancing student engagement. In order to test the effectiveness of the intervention it is generally necessary to seek the views of students, but this may be confined to a post hoc opinion survey or similar (see Nixon and Williams 2014 for a recent example of this approach). This is not to say that such interventions are not useful, but to observe that the conventional distribution of power between academic and student remains undisturbed by this conception of student engagement, because it depends on a model of curriculum design that requires knowing about what is needed to be known, and this is the preserve of the academic.

Student engagement is a means by which institutions and academics can cope with the demands of a massified system and a diversified student body when 'engagement' can no longer be taken for granted. Consultation on curricula may be taken to include the efforts of institutional managers and policymakers to gauge student satisfaction with teaching approaches, learning resources, and other factors that shape their encounters with the curriculum. This has led some to perceive an alignment between student feedback practices and an emergent consumeristic culture in higher education in which students' judgements about their academic 'experience' are elevated to the degree of the sacred (Sabri 2011). It is notable that Sabri considers the consumeristic emphasis on student voice as a way in which students are systematically deprived of agency.

There are indicators that academic staff retain protected territory into which student voice is unwelcome; often the specific question of what knowledge students should be able to access in a given course of study is withheld as an object of engagement. As van der Velden notes:

- Academic staff who are content with student involvement in setting teaching policy appear less supportive when considering student representational involvement in the management of a department and its teaching (Velden 2013, p. 87).

Carey's exploration of an instance of student involvement in shaping curriculum, though hardly paradigmatic, is instructive in identifying the conventional power dynamic:

- [M]uch of students input in curriculum design meetings echoed of the passive voice of existing evaluation data…This is associated with tokenistic participation and it was clear from the data that some students recognised this (Carey 2013).

Carey explores the ways that encounters between students and academics, though putatively on equal terms, tend to reinforce existing power structures, through absence of a common language, failure to articulate the potential role of student as offering suggestions and recommendations rather than merely complaints, and the expectation that students participate in university-led processes—formal curriculum review meetings in which students were in the minority—rather than flexing the system to facilitate more student-led encounters (Carey 2013).

5.2 Student Engagement in Curricula Formation as Partnership

In student engagement in curricula formation as partnership, students take an active role in forming the courses they will study in partnership with members of academic staff. Why should students have the opportunity to influence the curriculum? If the claims that experiencing an in-depth encounter with disciplinary knowledge is not merely a process of acquisition but a process of identity formation and transformation—a 'becoming' not a 'having' is accurate (Ashwin et al. 2014; Barnett 2009; Molesworth et al. 2009), then the question of students exercising agency in their own learning becomes a profoundly moral one. There are valid communitarian and democratic-consequentialist cases for student involvement in decision-making relating to the strength and inclusivity of academic communities, and to the kinds of capabilities we might hope to see from an educated citizen in the twenty-first century (Luescher-Mamashela 2013), but there is also the proposition that people should be encouraged and enabled to elaborate their own 'intellectual selves' (Clegg 2011), and that higher education is one of the primary opportunities for this to occur. Hence radical approaches to curriculum design avoid the tendency of published course outlines to fix the curriculum, and instead create the conditions for the curriculum to be a constantly evolving entity, structured around students' developmental encounters with knowledge (Lambert 2009; Smith and Rust 2011).

One example of such an approach to curriculum formation is from the Centre for Sustainable Development (CEMUS) at Uppsala University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Science, in which students design and commission courses in partnership with academic staff and postgraduate students, (Hald 2011; Stoddard et al. 2012).

5.3 Student Engagement in Curricula Formation as Leadership

In student engagement in curricula formation as leadership, students take the lead in designing their own curricula. Use of independent study elements in courses and research-focused initiatives like the Student As Producer model at the University of Lincoln (Neary and Winn 2009) seek to introduce an element of student leadership through the practice of curriculum as research, though student leadership in these example is still framed by institutional process and guided by academics. Outright student leadership of the curriculum may be born of student frustration with the lack of relevance of university curricula. One example is the student-led Post-Crash Economics Society movement which calls for reform in the traditional economics curriculum to include new and emerging economic theories in light of the 2009 economic crash. In one large research-intensive UK University following an

extended campaign, students have successfully organised to protest through the National Student Survey leading to a significant drop in student satisfaction scores for the economics department, a serious blow for any institution seeking to maintain its position in national and international league tables. A more benign version may be seen in student academic societies or special interest groups who arrange reading groups, work-in-progress seminars and speakers, beyond the confines of the formal curriculum. Not enough is known about the extent of this kind of informal learning activity and how it aligns with (or challenges) more formalised encounters with knowledge.

6 Student Engagement in the Formation of Communities

In many ways the most long-standing object of student engagement in higher education is their work in forming higher education communities through student representation. Klemenčič (2012a) traces back representative student organizations to the medieval Bologna University where "students were organised into 'nations' which initially offered them mutual welfare, protection and collective security against the local authorities" (p.3), and argues that "the Bologna students created a type of university in which sovereign power resided in the student body, the student body associated in nations, and these effectively controlled the university." However, this form of student representation was short-lived and most subsequent forms of engagement-as-student-representation have not involved such intensity. However, as Klemenčič (2012a) argues, the role of student representation in HE policy making has been highlighted by European Ministers through the Bologna Process, and affirmed as a principle of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

In the UK, versions of students' unions and students' associations have existed for as long as there have been universities, and the National Union of Students was founded in 1922, although before the 1960s these were more like social clubs. Modern-day students' unions have their origins in the post-Robbins settlement in which the democratic principle that students should be represented in institutional decision-making bodies was widely accepted. Student representative bodies bring student community into being; they draw their existence from the premise that there is some element of shared experience that enables a level of solidarity among students and the prospect of being treated with by institutions as a collective or generality of interests. Student representation systems also position students as one group of stakeholders among a wider institutional community or corporation within which the interests of different groups are not always in alignment. Artefacts of community formation include institutional strategies and policies, including those that deal with the participation of students in institutional processes, institutional cultures and practices which may play out distinctly at the level of department or school, and the habits of interaction between various members of the community.

6.1 Student Engagement in the Formation of Communities as Consultation

In student engagement in the formation of communities as consultation, student engagement can be seen as being incorporated into the wider functions of the corporate university. This is usually as part of quality assurance mechanisms. An example of this form in the UK is the 2012 Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) 'Quality Code' that stipulates that higher education institutions should engage students individually and collectively in assuring and enhancing educational quality through, primarily, systems of student feedback and collective representation (QAA 2012). A subsequent QAA-commissioned report investigating student engagement practice cited a number of established engagement practices including production of student charters, student feedback questionnaires, student representation on committees, student participation in periodic review, and student affairs forums (Van der Velden 2013). It is usual for students' unions to have a significant role in supporting student feedback and representation systems, co-signing the student charter, holding student affairs forums and so on. However, it is noticeable that activities such as these mandate student participation in university-owned processes. For the most part institutional staff produce the surveys in line with institutionally-approved outcomes, and institutions set the committee and decision-making structures into which students are invited to express their views. Institutional staff have the choice as to whether to attend to those views or not, and to avoid seeking student opinion on matters which they consider students to have little to contribute.

This type of student engagement is situated as merely one of numerous systems by which students express opinions and raise issues, rather than a vehicle for critical dissent or challenge (Brooks et al. 2014). Through these formal feedback and representation systems students could, in principle, raise wider issues about the university community in those spaces, but while these are framed in terms of raising issues and feeding back on pre-defined categories, there is limited likelihood that they will do so spontaneously. Thus the possibility of students exercising some degree of agency over that process is carefully withheld, even as institutions publicly proclaim their commitment to listening to students. This can mean that students are increasingly disengaged at a time when they are most encouraged to engage (Baron and Corbin 2012).

6.2 Student Engagement in the Formation of Communities as Partnership

Student engagement in the formation of communities as partnership can be seen in the emerging literature on 'students as partners', most prominently that produced by the UK National Union of Students (NUS): 'At its roots partnership is about

investing students with the power to co-create, not just knowledge or learning, but the higher education institution itself' (National Union of Students 2012). The 'students as…' formulation signals an opposition to the perceived neoliberal paradigm in higher education that constructs the relationship between students and their institutions as one of consumer and provider.

In opposition to notions of consumer power are positioned ideas of democratic engagement and 'empowerment', as in increased independence, autonomy and critical thinking on the part of students (Bovill et al. 2011a, b). This idea of student engagement in the formation of communities as partnership also can be seen in Klemenčič's (2012b) notion of national student associations as 'interest groups'. Within this, student associations are seen as supplying important resources in the relationship with the state, including legitimizing policies and supporting policy implementation. Student charters, the documents that set out expectations of students, institutional staff and the students' union within a given institution, and that are signed by the head of the institution and the students' union President, are an example of this kind of community formation work. The key issue is that student representation takes place within established channels and is focused on the optimal outcomes for all of the parties.

6.3 *Student Engagement in the Formation of Communities as Leadership*

Klemenčič's (2012b) category of student association as 'social movements' is an example of student engagement in the formation of communities as leadership. There is more of a trend towards making claims outside of established channels, such as through protest and other forms of direct action, and the organizations tend to be oppositional to established power structures. Thus they tend to set their agendas rather than responding to requests for partnerships from universities or policy makers. There is also a sense that student interests cannot be separated from wider movements against global capitalism and the restructuring of higher education. There is debate within the student movement whether it is more appropriate for student representatives to construct a shared agenda with institutions to secure the best possible conditions for students, or whether to focus on securing institutional and social change, for example, challenging the salary level of the head of the institution or campaigning for free education, through these more oppositional means.

It is interesting to note that student engagement in the formation of communities as partnership involves greater formal recognition of student organizations and greater rights to represent students. However, as Klemenčič (2012b) notes, this should not be assumed to lead to greater influence.

7 Discussion

Our analysis of the different foci and degrees of student engagement highlights six important aspects of students' engagement with higher education. First, it highlights that it is the degree of student engagement that is crucial in determining students' role in transforming the object of engagement. Thus the extent to which engagement is about consultation, partnership or student leadership seems more important that the precise foci of engagement. This is not surprising because it reflects the nested nature of the different foci that we outlined earlier.

Second, it helps to bring together new student engagement practices and the traditional systems of student voice that they have been superimposed upon, such as representation in institutional decision-making bodies. Klemenčič (2015) captures these differences as different modes of agency: personal, proxy and collective. In terms of student engagement these refer to student engagement involving individual students, student engagement involving student representatives, and student engagement involving students coming together in their engagement. By focusing on what is being formed through student engagement and the degree of engagement, it moves away from focusing on who is doing the engaging to the focus of the engagement and the degree of engagement. This allows a consideration of the relations between different forms of student engagement, rather than separating out student representation and student participation in teaching and learning development.

Third, it helps to make explicit some of the work that is done by the 'chaotic conception' of student engagement (Trowler 2014). This is that the discourse of student engagement mediates the tensions in higher education between a neoliberal paradigm that places emphasis on free market competition, value for money and return on investment for individual students, and an emergent learning and teaching culture that recognises the psychosocial and affective dimensions of learning and is concerned with rejecting the notion of the student as consumer. It does this by showing the way in which student engagement at the level of consultation is presented as student engagement at the level of partnership. This misrepresentation of student engagement by institutions and governments risks doubly alienating students, firstly to the extent that as consumers of higher education they are encouraged to commodify their own process of intellectual and personal transformation, and secondly to the extent that the possibility of exercising some degree of agency over that process is carefully withheld, even as institutions publicly proclaim their commitment to listening to students.

Fourth, it highlights that there are three different elements that help to set the degree of student engagement. There is the ways in which student engagement is presented to students, the ways that this is enacted in institutional processes, and the ways that students engage in these processes. For example, whilst traditional forms of curricula formation might limit student involvement to consultation, students can exercise agency in their own learning, and they could exercise influence through the various channels available. Students already exercise choice in which teaching hours they attend, what they choose to read, and the effort they choose to put in. To

characterise these choices as inevitably unconscious, ill-informed or a consequence of immaturity is to ignore the many reasons why students may make strategic choices in being selective in their learning patterns, whatever frustrations and inefficiencies are generated by those choices.

Fifth, these three different elements of student engagement also highlight the importance of institutions and policy makers ensuring that there is alignment between their rhetoric about student engagement, and the ways in which they seek to engage students. Our analysis shows how student leadership tends to be born of frustration with the institutional processes that are offered to students, and seems to be more likely when student engagement as consultation is presented as if it is student engagement as partnership.

Finally, as we outlined earlier, our framework re-emphasises students' engagement in higher education as primarily about an engagement with knowledge by placing their development of an understanding of disciplinary and professional knowledge at the centre of their engagement with higher education. The nested hierarchy we set out in Fig. 1, highlights the ways in which students' engagement in curricula and community formation are predicated on their development of understanding. Thus under our model without engaging with disciplinary and professional knowledge students cannot engage with the formation of higher education curricula and communities.

8 Implications for Policy Makers

The implications of our arguments are that if institutions and/or governments are seeking to promote student engagement, then they need to consider two key questions about this engagement. The first question is what it is that students are being engaged in forming, and the second is what degree of engagement is being sought. It also highlights that more engagement is not necessarily better. Engagement as leadership appears most likely to occur when students feel that existing systems prevent them from having a significant impact on their current educational experience. This is more likely to occur when engagement as consultation is presented as if it is engagement with partnership.

The second implication for policy makers is that higher education is highlighted as fundamentally about knowledge. It is students and academics collective engagement with disciplinary and professional knowledge that is the basis on which students develop understanding, on which curricula are formed, and on which higher education communities are developed. It is the development and transformation of knowledge that higher education crucially offers to societies, and yet knowledge is barely mentioned in European policy documents related to teaching and learning in higher education (for example, see Ashwin et al. in press). Thus we end this chapter by reasserting the importance in thinking about knowledge when thinking about student engagement, and the development of teaching and learning in higher education more generally.

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How Do We Know How Students Experience Higher Education? On the Use of Student Surveys

Manja Klemenčič and Igor Chirikov

1 Introduction

We do not yet fully understand what is going on with students while they are enrolled in higher education. This is problematic. There are about 197 million students today globally, and UNESCO's prediction is that this number will rise to 262 million by 2025.[1] The opportunity costs—both for individual students and our economies and societies—are enormous if higher education institutions do not fulfill their promise of formative effects on students because they do not have sufficient information and knowledge of what, why and how students learn and develop in higher education context. These questions are of central importance for university officials, for prospective students and their families, and for the state as the main funder of higher education in Europe.

Quality educational provision and learning environment can render most rewarding learning experiences. Equally, poor educational conditions incur significant cost of missed learning opportunities and unsatisfactory student experience. Student experience has thus become a central tenet of the quality assurance in higher education. More recently, the attention has shifted from student experience to student engagement (Klemenčič 2015) which conceives students as active partners in educational process and as responsible for their own learning and formation. In this vein, higher education is understood as "a process of student self-formation": the activities students engage in are all in some way or another

[1]UNESCO Institute of Statistics: http://uis.unesco.org/.

M. Klemenčič (✉)
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA
e-mail: manjaklemencic@fas.harvard.edu

I. Chirikov
National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia
e-mail: igor.chirikov@gmail.com

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geared towards changing themselves and their life circumstances (Marginson 2014). Student self-formation is the basis for achieving the broader societal objectives concerned with human capital development for economic purposes: developing skills, improving productivity, increasing potential for innovation and economic growth. It also relates to the societal objectives towards secure, democratic, healthy societies. If, as defined by Hall and Lamont (2009, p. 2), a "successful society" is "one that enhances the capabilities of people to pursue the goals important to their own lives, whether through individual or collective action", then education which enables and strengthens student agency is both a condition of a successful society, and also one of the outcomes of it. Institutional decision makers and policy makers thus seek to understand student experiences and behaviors as to be able to develop interventions that will further enhance "student agency" towards self-formation (Klemenčič 2015).

Student surveys have become one of the largest and most frequently used data source for quality assessment in higher education (Williams 2014). Student survey data feed into evidence-based university decision-making and are part of the tasks of institutional research. Institutional researchers are asked by university officials to deliver more and better "intelligence" on students (Klemenčič and Brennan 2013; Klemenčič et al. 2015). Much of this data is acquired through student surveys. As noted by David Radwin in *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Radwin 2009) "…the use of surveys is one of the fastest-growing and most pervasive trends on campuses". Technology has made it increasingly possible to collect data from students: it is cheap, fast and easy to process. Indeed, students are perhaps among the most surveyed populations world-wide.

The widespread use of student survey data raises questions of reliability and validity of student survey data as evidence in decision-making. In this chapter we first discuss the policy context in which student survey research has proliferated. Then we offer an overview of the most influential student experience and engagement surveys; followed by a discussion of methodological limitations of survey research. The penultimate section addresses student surveys as part of the development of student data analytics, as the practices of collecting, synthesizing, and analyzing student data in the context of institutional research. We conclude with a set of recommendations on quality standards for survey design, and the use of student survey data as evidence in decision-making.

2 The Changing Policy Context and Demand for Data on Students

The range of data gathered on students has expanded significantly over the years (see Table 1 for the types of student surveys and examples). The basic statistical data on students has typically included data on student enrollments and student

Table 1 Most common student surveys

Types of surveys	Examples of most influential or international surveys
Student profiles	EUROSTUDENT[a]
Assessment of student learning outcomes	OECD's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO)[b]; United States Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) (Shavelson 2010), The Educational Testing Services' Proficiency Profile (ETS 2014; Coates and Lennon 2014)
Student course evaluations	Institution/study-program-based
Student approaches to learning and studying	ASSIST (Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students)[c]; The Study Process Questionnaire (Biggs 1987a); The Learning Process Questionnaire (Biggs 1987c)
Student experience (satisfaction) and engagement surveys	The North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)[d], which has been adapted into a number NSSE-based national surveys[e]; Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE)[f]; Student Experience in the Research University (SERU)[g]; National Student Survey in the UK (NSS)[h]; Dutch National Student Survey (NSE)[i]; Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)[j]
Student mobility surveys	International Student Barometer Survey[k]
Graduate employment surveys	Accenture College Graduate Employment Survey[l]

[a]http://www.eurostudent.eu/
[b]http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/testingstudentanduniversityperformancegloballyoecdsahelo.htm
[c]http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/questionnaires/ASSIST.pdf
[d]http://nsse.iub.edu/
[e]NSSE-based surveys were administered in Australia, China, South Africa, the UK, Ireland and several other countries (Coates and McCormick 2014)
[f]http://www.acer.edu.au/ausse
[g]http://www.cshe.berkeley.edu/SERU
[h]http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/
[i]http://www.uu.nl/EN/informationfor/students/facilities/NSE/Pages/default.aspx
[j]http://studentsurvey.ie/wordpress/
[k]http://www.i-graduate.org/
[l]http://www.accenture.com/us-en/Pages/insight-2014-accenture-college-graduate-employment-survey.aspx

profiles (gender, nationality, socio-economic background). Later, student course evaluations were introduced, followed by data on student approaches to learning, and assessment of student learning. Within European policy context, the EU support for the large international comparative survey on students' socio-economic background reflects the European Unions' concerns over educational equity. Surveys focusing specifically on the experience of international students also emerged following the internationalisation of higher education, and especially EU mobility schemes (Erasmus) and the efforts by institutions and government to attract foreign fee-paying students.

Within the European Higher Education Area, the emphasis on the student-centered approach paved the way for further and more extensive inquiries into how students learn (through surveys of student approaches to learning), what we expect them to learn (e.g. Tuning project defining learning outcomes and competences in specific study areas[2] and the European Qualifications Framework[3]), and how do we know that expected learning happened (Coates and Lennon 2014). As student learning and development became more closely associated with institutional quality, this boosted higher education research on student satisfaction, and student engagement in educationally purposeful activities.

The origins of student satisfaction surveys lie in student evaluations of course teaching (Ramsden 1991), which have a fairly long tradition in all higher education systems. These evaluations have been gradually extended to also include student perceptions on quality of institutional conditions supporting teaching and learning, such as libraries, student support services, etc. As Harvey (2003, p. 3) suggests, institutional decisions makers seek feedback from students. Harvey (2003, p. 3) defines "feedback" as the "expressed opinions of students about the service they receive as students", and this may include "perceptions about the learning and teaching, the learning support facilities (such as libraries, computing facilities), the learning environment, (lecture rooms, laboratories, social space and university buildings), support facilities (refectories, student accommodation, health facilities, student services) and external aspects of being a student (such as finance, transport infrastructure)". The levels of analysis have also extended from individual courses to modules, and study programs to institution-level satisfaction surveys of the entire study experience (see Harvey 2003 for recommendations for survey management at each level). Both student course and program evaluations, which are more focused on satisfaction with teaching and learning, and the surveys of overall study experience, have been integrated into—and are an essential ingredient of—internal institutional quality assurance systems. Indeed, the European University Association's study shows that student questionnaires "are the most common way for institutions to introduce quality assurance processes" (Loukolla and Zhang 2010, p. 27). Reports from the student satisfaction surveys are also required in external quality assurance processes and accreditation.

However, student satisfaction surveys have been criticized for conceiving students as passive recipients of educational services, rather than actively engaged in their learning and development. This criticism gave rise to developments of student engagement surveys. Unlike student satisfaction surveys, the assessment of student engagement measures the extent to which students participate in educationally-purposeful activities (i.e. those that are expected to enhance learning and development), and the support they receive from teachers and institutions to do so (Kuh 2009). Many have argued in favor of investigating student engagement for higher education quality assurance (Coates 2005), and the concept of student engagement

[2]http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/.

[3]http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page.

has become "central to most contemporary understandings of student experience and to debates regarding quality enhancement" (Callender et al. 2014, p. 31).

Quality enhancement, which has a predominant place among the policy priorities within the European Higher Education Area, has important implications for data collection on student experience and engagement. Student engagement and experience surveys have been hailed as a driver of institutional reforms towards improvement in students' experience, for example through improvements in student support services, student facilities, and in teaching and assessment (Richardson 2013). Student survey data is increasingly used also for external purposes. Governments use such data as part of accountability checks on institutional performance (Klemenčič et al. 2015). The existing measures of institutional performance have relied predominantly on the attainment levels (graduation rates, retention rates). The trend now is to evaluate the institutional performance also from the point of view of the added value that higher education brings to the students individually and collectively. One way to assess this is to ask students directly about their experiences. The other way is to assess student learning outcomes so as to establish if knowledge and skills are of expected standards, and meet the employers' expectations and the needs of knowledge societies. Data obtained directly from students as the primary users of the educational services is seen as more accurate estimate of the performance of the higher education institutions than when performance is measured only by student attainment (cf. Kim and Lalancette 2013).

The proliferation of student surveys is thus part of the growing trend towards evidence-based movement in higher education with focus on institutional performance. It is also a reflection of growing competition in higher education. Institutions also gather data from students to benchmark their performance against peer institutions. They use survey data in public relations and recruitment. Governments use student experience surveys as a "transparency tool" to inform students' choice in rising competition between higher education providers to attract fee-paying students (Harvey 2003). Notably, global ranking agencies so far do not put a lot of pressure on universities to collect and provide student-related data despite the fact that all of them declare they are created to inform students' choices in higher education.[4] An exception is the recent international ranking initiative U-Multirank which includes data both from universities and from these universities' students.[5] In sum, focus on quality for enhancement and accountability drive the

[4]Among the "Big Three" of international league tables—Academic Ranking of World Universities, Times Higher Education World University Rankings and QS World University Rankings—only the latter two actually include student data. At the moment it is only general information about student enrollments, the number of doctoral and international students.

[5]In U-Multirank, higher education institutions are asked to report data on students enrolled in degree programs, international students, new entrants of degree programs, students in internships, graduates and their employability. An important source of information for this ranking is a student survey, which is administered to 500 students in each field at participating institutions. The questionnaire is focused on student satisfaction and comprises questions aimed at evaluation of university services and quality of teaching.

use of student surveys. This trend is accelerated by the increased competition for students in market-driven higher education systems.

3 Overview of the Most Influential Student Experience and Engagement Surveys

In this section we will explore theoretical foundations, content, measurements, data collection, analysis and the use of the major student engagement and experience surveys. Our attention will be focused on several system-wide and international "flagship" projects that have attracted attention due to their widespread use. Those are the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in the US and Canada (which has been adapted into a number of NSSE-based national surveys), the Student Experience in the Research Universities (SERU) survey in the US and internationally (SERU-AAU and SERU-I, respectively), the National Student Survey in the UK (NSS) and the Dutch National Student Survey in the Netherlands (NSE).[6] The former two surveys were initiated by universities themselves over a decade ago with the purposes of inter-institutional comparison for institutional improvement. The latter two were introduced more recently by governmental agencies to increase higher education system's transparency, and to inform student choice of institutions and study programs. This reflects two different approaches to student surveys development (bottom-up vs. top-down) and affects their methodology and the uses of the data.

These four surveys have adjacent intellectual roots but base themselves upon different meaning of student experience. The underlying idea of NSSE and SERU is that student learning outcomes are affected by the characteristics of higher education institutions and their academic programs (Astin 1985; Pascarella and Terenzini 1991). Both put an emphasis on students' active engagement in educational practice as well as in extracurricular and civic activities, which they find equally important for student learning outcomes as the quality of institutional efforts to support student learning and development (Kuh 2001, 2003; McCormick et al. 2013). SERU survey specifically targets research universities (Kerr 2001). In its content SERU seeks to reflect the specific institutional characteristics of research universities by focusing on student engagement in three inter-related areas: teaching and learning, research and civic service. In contrast, NSS and NSE instruments are primarily concerned with the assessment of student course experience and seek to capture the various facets of the student learning process (Biggs 1987b; Prosser and Trigwell 1999; Ramsden 1979; Richardson 1983) by adapting instruments, such as the Ramsden's Course Experience Questionnaire (Ramsden 1991). They are focused

[6]Of course there are many more large scale student surveys worldwide (done by universities, ranking agencies and pollsters) but these projects are fairly representative of the cutting edge student engagement surveys in terms of their methodology, scope and data use.

on quality assessment and measure student satisfaction with other aspects of teaching and learning organisation, support, and environment,[7] and do not include measures of student engagement as students' own contribution to their learning and development.

Data collection and analysis procedures are similar for these four surveys, though target populations and response rates vary. All surveys are centrally administered (either by universities or independent companies) every year, and data is collected primarily through online platforms (NSSE and NSS additionally use paper-based questionnaires). All surveys are census-based.[8] SERU and NSE include all undergraduate students in their target populations, NSSE—first- and last-year students and NSS—final-year students only. NSS stands out among other surveys with the average response rate of more than 70 %, while SERU, NSSE and NSE demonstrate 25–35 % average response rate. Data is centrally managed and analyzed in case of NSSE, NSS and NSE: participating institutions have access only to aggregated results of students' responses. SERU utilizes decentralized approach in data analysis and provides for benchmarking as all members of consortium share reciprocally their databases with each other.

The uses of the data in these four surveys are affected by their origins and scope: NSSE and SERU data is used by universities more for internal quality enhancement, whereas NSS and NSE data is targeted in particular at external agencies and stakeholders. Since institutions voluntarily participate in NSSE and SERU, the data is used for institutional self-improvement and quality assurance efforts through benchmarking. NSSE examples include voluntary accreditation, increasing retention rates, informing reorganization of student services, diversity initiatives, etc. (see NSSE 2009, 2012 for more examples). SERU is more focused on informing academic department program reviews, though it is also used campus-wide for voluntary accreditation, assessment of campus climate, analysis of admission policies, etc. (see SERU 2014a). The major difference between NSSE and SERU in terms of data use is that the former provides more information on various types of institutions (four-year colleges, teaching universities), while the latter is focused on research university environment and allows to address narrow problems of various student sub-groups valuable for large research universities.[9] NSS and NSE data is used to inform prospective students' decision-making in higher education: the results are publicly available and are utilized in web-based platforms for comparing universities and academic programs. Universities also use this data to support internal discussions on teaching and learning, improve quality of student services as well as for marketing purposes. The major characteristics of these four surveys are summarized in Table 2.

[7]For a recent review of NSS methodology, see Callender et al. (2014).

[8]Few institutions administer NSSE to a random sample of their students.

[9]For example, SERU will be useful for understanding the low level of research engagement among female junior transfer students majoring in STEM, as there is usually enough data for the comparison of such minority groups between institutions.

Table 2 A comparison of major student engagement and experience survey designs

	NSSE	SERU-AAU/SERU-I	NSS	NSE
Goal	To assess student engagement in and exposure to proven educational practices that correspond to desirable learning outcomes (NSSE 2012)	To understand student experience in research-intensive universities and to promote culture of institutional self-improvement (SERU 2014b)	To measure students satisfaction with their courses and to help prospective students make study choices (NSS 2014)	To assess students' experience and satisfaction with the higher education course they pursue (NSS 2014)
Participation for universities	Voluntary	Voluntary	Obligatory for publicly funded universities in the UK	Obligatory for accredited Dutch higher education institutions
Theoretical foundations	Student engagement (Kuh 2001, 2003; Pascarella and Terenzini 2005)	Input-environment-output model (Astin 1985); Research university (Kerr 2001)	Approaches to learning (Biggs, 1987b; Prosser and Trigwell 1999; Ramsden 1979, 1991; Richardson 1983)	Multiple instruments on student engagement, satisfaction and learning outcomes
Survey content: topics	Participation in educationally purposeful activities, institutional requirements of coursework, perceptions of the college environment, educational and personal growth, etc.	Academic, research and civic engagement, time allocation, learning outcomes assessment, campus climate, plans and aspirations, satisfaction with academic program, global experiences, learning and technology, etc.	Satisfaction with teaching quality, assessment and feedback, academic support, organization and management, learning resources, personal development, overall experience, etc.	Content and organization of teaching, acquired skills, preparation for career, academic guidance, quality of assessment, contact hours, internships, quality of learning environment, etc.
Survey content validity and reliability studies	McCormick and McClenney (2012), Pascarella et al. (2008), Pike (2013)	Chatman (2009, 2011)	Callender et al. (2014), Richardson et al. (2007)	Brenders (2013)

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	NSSE	SERU-AAU/SERU-I	NSS	NSE
Data collection: sample	Census-based/random sample survey of first-year and senior students	Census-based survey of undergraduate students	Census-based survey of last year students	Census-based survey of undergraduate students
Data collection: method and frequency	Online and paper-based; once a year	Online; once a year	Online and paper-based; once a year	Online; once a year
Data collection: response rates	25–30 %	25–30 %	71 %	34 %
Data analysis	Centralized approach	Decentralized approach	Centralized approach	Centralized approach
	Engagement indicators (benchmarks) and item by item comparisons	Factor scores and item by item comparisons	Item by item comparisons	Item by item comparisons
Data use	Mostly internal: for benchmarking, voluntary accreditation, decision-making support	Mostly internal: for program review, voluntary accreditation, decision-making support	Mostly external: to inform prospective students' choice of the academic program, to create league tables, for marketing purposes	Mostly external: to inform prospective students' choice of the academic program, for marketing purposes

4 Methodological Limitations of Student Engagement and Experience Surveys

The widespread use of student experience and engagement survey data raises questions of reliability, validity and other quality characteristics of such data to be used as evidence in higher education decision-making. Validity concerns "whether the surveys measure what they are designed to measure and to provide evidence that supports inferences about the characteristics of individuals being tested" (OECD 2013, p. 12). The key aspect of validation of the survey instrument lies in assessing whether the assumptions which are included in the theory defining the construct (in this case student satisfaction/student experience and student engagement) are credible. Reliability concerns whether surveys "provide stable and consistent results over repeated measures allowing for results to be replicable across different testing situations?" (OECD 2013, pp. 12–14). Here the focus is much more on questions such as how respondents respond to the questions, i.e. if the interpretation of

questions is consistent among participants, but also the guidelines for administering the survey and scoring individual items. In this section we synthesise the key points of criticism and the defence of student surveys with specific focus on student engagement surveys. We believe that decision makers ought to be aware of these discussions as to be able to evaluate the rigorousness and appropriateness of the specific survey instruments at their hand.

Critics point to two major areas of contention in the student engagement surveys: (1) accuracy of student self-reported information on engagement and learning gains, and (2) the selection of the standards of educational practice and student behaviour implied in the questions (Campbell and Cabrera 2011; Gordon et al. 2008; Porter 2013; Porter et al. 2011). The proposition on the former is that cognitive abilities of students to comprehend the survey question and retrieve the information are often overestimated by survey designer. On this point Porter (2011, p. 56) illustratively suggests that the surveys are built with the view of students "as having computer hard drives in their head allowing them to scan the reference period of matching behaviour, process it and provide an answer of the frequency of the behaviour". Particular criticism of the student engagement surveys concerns students' ability to make an informed judgment of their self-reported learning gains, i.e. growth in knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes that they have gained during studentship. Porter et al. (2011) offer empirical evidence as to the inaccuracy of the self-reported learning gains. They argue that such types of questions are highly susceptible to social desirability bias (ibid.). When students wish to provide an answer in the survey, but cannot retrieve information, they resort to intelligent guessing, often based on what they think should be happening or to make them look favourable to others (Porter 2011).

Another criticism is in the selection of the standards of institutional practice and student behaviour, i.e. the factors that are expected to influence student learning and development, implied in the survey questions, and how these relate to other external measures. The important question here is what is measured and what is not. Standardised surveys imply an established (fixed) standard of process or outcome against which institutions are evaluated and need to demonstrate conformity (Ewell 2009). This raises a question of how these "standards" have been established: have they been derived from theory, from other empirical findings, or they reflect certain policy objectives. Survey research is prone to observational biases when researchers look "where they think they will find positive results, or where it is easy to record observations", i.e. the so-called 'streetlight effect' coined by Friedman (2010) after the joke of a drunken man who lost his key and is looking under the streetlight since that is where the light is. In this respect, surveys tend to give more attention to institutional factors that shape student experience and less to the other contextual and psycho-socioecological factors, which are much more difficult to measure, such as the role of broader socio-cultural context, university culture, family support, psycho-social influences (Kahu 2013), emotions (Beard et al. 2007; Kahu 2013), student and academic identities, and disciplinary knowledge practices (Ashwin 2009).

A problem specific to inter-institutional and system-wide surveys lies in the level of contextualisation. To allow for comparisons, these surveys are conceived in a generic and highly abstract way. This proves it difficult to adequately account for the organisational differences between institutions in terms of their specific missions and objectives, resources, profiles of student population, and various unique arrangements that give each and every institution certain distinct flavour. If the survey tool is generic enough as to allow for comparison of very different institutions in a national system or internationally, then their use by any of the intended users—institutions, students or governments—is fairly limited. In their generic form these surveys cannot discern the contextual dimensions and variables which could add most value to a formative use of such data. International comparisons or international adaptations of the instruments initially developed for a particular higher education system (such as the US or Australia or the UK) present a number of challenges associated with adequate translation and cultural localization of survey items. More contextualised variations of survey design are developed when very similar institutions are compared and the lower we go within institutional hierarchy, i.e. to the program level.

The rebuttals of the criticism are equally numerous. The key response to the criticism regarding the accuracy of self-reported learning gains is that surveys—such NSSE—never claimed to collect precise responses about either learning gains or behaviours, but are based on the principle of a reasoned and informed judgement, which allows the institutions to use the data to screen major occurrences and major trends over time and across institutions (Ewell 2009; McCormick and McClenney 2012; Pike 2013). The criticism regarding the selection of "benchmarks" has been refuted by pointing out that major surveys rely on interviews and focus groups both in formulating and in pilot-testing the questions. The key focus of these qualitative appraisals is precisely to test participants' understanding and the consistency of interpretation of the questions (McCormick and McClenney 2012; Pike 2013). Pike (2013) notes that the primary use of student surveys is often ignored by the critics and that major validation lies in these surveys' appropriateness for institution- and group-level decision-making. In the case of NSSE he offers empirical evidence that the NSSE benchmarks can be used to assess the extent to which an institution's students are engaged in educationally purposeful activities, and the extent to which colleges and universities are effective in facilitating student engagement (Pike 2013). Furthermore, several authors highlight that the survey benchmarks were designed so as to "represent clusters of good educational practices and to provide a starting point for examining specific aspects of student engagement" (Ewell et al. 2011; Kuh 2001; McCormick and McClenney 2012; Pike 2013, p. 163).

Furthermore, a welcome modification has been in longitudinal designs with repeated measure which allow for tracking changes in student behaviour and perceptions of student experience over time. Another helpful revision to the survey designs has been done by introducing the questions of student expectations and aspirations to surveys targeted at students at the beginning of their study. Importantly, longitudinal designs have also been extended into the labour market since the effects of educational provision on students may better reveal upon

completion of studies (cf. Kim and Lalancette 2013). Promising complementary research lies in student social network analyses which depict a complex web of relationships and interactions, both historic and present, both within and outside academic settings, both physical and virtual, that shape individual students' (perception of) learning and experience (Biancani and McFarland 2013).

One implication of the eagerness of institutional decision makers and policy makers to collect data directly from students is survey fatigue. Students are more and more tired of surveys, complete them carelessly or do not complete them at all. Institutional surveys compete with hundreds of other surveys (including those by business eager to understand the millennials' consumer habits) and students do not differentiate between them or do not care to respond. Low response rates accentuate possible biases in survey responses; the most common among them is underrepresentation of disengaged, non-traditional and minority students. Low response rate remain major challenge in the student survey methodology despite ample attempts devoted to find better ways to raise response rates (Porter 2004; Porter and Whitcomb 2004; Porter et al. 2004). Inevitably, we will need to look for new ways of collecting data from students on their behaviour, preferences and opinions.

In sum, there are convincing arguments on both sides. Obviously, researchers ought to continue to work towards improving student survey instruments, as such data is helpful for our better understanding of how students experience higher education and for devising interventions for improvements. While survey data is an important source of evidence, it is by no means sufficient. As mentioned by Alderman et al. (2012, p. 273), greater reliability of data is achieved when student survey data are used "in conjunction with information from other sources and robust links are established between the data and the institution's overall quality management system". For the purposes of formative decision-making oriented towards the institutional and program improvements, student data needs to come from several sources and be validated through cross verification of data from different sources (i.e. triangulated). At best student surveys are used as screening instruments to discover major deficiencies in educational environment and provision, and major discrepancies in student behavior from the expected. Such diagnostic results in turn guide the institutional managers to explore causes and consequences of various practices and processes. This is done through qualitative methods which can generate contextualized data—indeed richer, deeper and more authentic data—on student experience and behaviour albeit on smaller scale, by focusing on the 'particular'.

The advantage of qualitative methods is that they can generate richer, deeper and more authentic data on student experience and behaviour. However, their major drawback is in limited scope—they focus on particular case or phenomenon, which makes generalisations to large populations problematic. The intensive field-work (through in-depth interviews, focal groups, direct observation, etc.) makes it simply too time-consuming and too costly to reach large numbers of students. The question that arises is whether, with the use of new technology, the universal use of social media by students and the advances in big data science, these limitations could be overcome. Frontier research agendas lie in exploring digital adaptations of

qualitative research methods of data collection, such as digital ethnography and digital phenomenology, which give access to more contextualized data on human behavior and lived-experiences on a large scale (Klemenčič 2013). It is plausible to expect that, in the very near future, data on student experience will be collected from students not through invitations to answer on-line student surveys but rather—seamlessly and in great volumes—through social media platforms adapted to use by institutional researchers (Klemenčič 2013). Advancements in educational technology and students' near universal use of mobile technology present enabling conditions for such innovation. The major challenge to this promising method, however, lies in safeguarding of private or individually identifying information and other ethical concerns that arise from research using Internet.

Before we continue to describe the various approaches to student data analytics, one concession is in place. Student data analytics to generate evidence for decision-making is inevitably reductionist: it means capturing aspects of student experience which are general to most students, rather than particular to a few. There is no way that we can turn every idiosyncratic aspect of individual student experience into evidence that can inform institution-wide or system-wide decisions. Against, best what we can do as researchers and decision-makers who seek "intelligence" for their decisions, is to utilize data from several sources and obtained from both quantitative and qualitative methods.

5 Student Surveys as Part of the Development of Student Data Analytics in Institutional Research

This section focuses on the challenges and opportunities concerning student data analytics as part of the institutional research: the practices of collecting, synthesizing, and analyzing student data to serve as evidence in university decision-making and planning, and also to fulfill mandatory reporting requirements and external assessment (cf. Klemenčič and Brennan 2013; Klemenčič et al. 2015). The institutional research on students is part of the larger process of expanding the function of institutional research from the basic reporting approach for statistical purposes, funding and accreditation and record keeping towards a bigger role in quality assurance, assessment of institutional performance, and, ultimately, also in strategic planning and development (Klemenčič et al. 2015). The development of institutional approaches to student data analytics towards the strategic approach requires several changes in terms of types of data collected, sources of data and data management systems (see Fig. 1).

As we move from reporting approach towards quality and strategic approaches, the range of student data collected expands: from the basic records on enrollments, academic progress and student profile to student course evaluations, student approaches to studying and learning, student satisfaction with the learning environment (student services and facilities) as well as student learning outcomes and

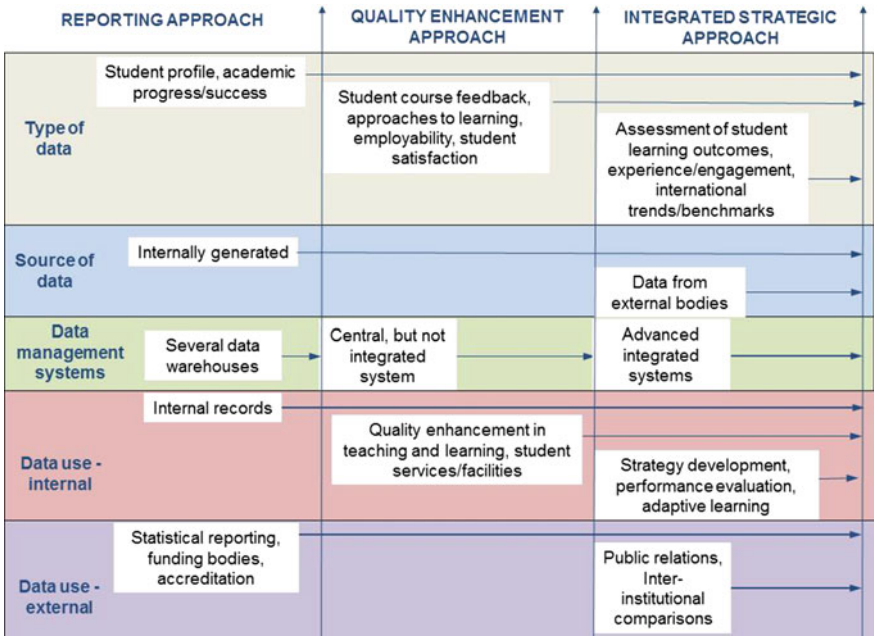

Fig. 1 Approaches to student data analytics

employability. In reporting approach, data tend to be generated only from the institutional records provided by students upon registration and from student academic records. In quality enhancement approach, data is also sought directly from students with surveys on opinions, satisfaction and behavior, and possibly also through qualitative methods, such as interviews, focal groups or direct observation. In strategic approach institutions also gather data from external data sources to develop intelligence on international trends in student recruitment, and compare themselves to other institutions. They use new technologies which allow for data mining and data scraping to extract information from public data sets, social media and public blog posts. Another new source of data on student behavior comes with web analytics which track students' usage of university webpages.

Data on and from students typically presents one of the sources of university intelligence, and it varies from one institution to another to which extent this data is integrated into a central data warehouse and translated into "business intelligence" to inform decision-making, or is kept within warehouses of student registrars or quality assurance centers of teaching and learning units. Methods of data management—collection, storage and analysis—differ in the reporting, quality and strategic approaches. In reporting approach, different types of data are kept in individual data warehouses units (e.g. student registrars, units for quality assurance, student affairs, teaching and learning, international office, etc.) and processes within that unit. Data is automated and processed with basic statistical tools. Standardized reports are prepared for internal or external use. In quality approach, data tends to

be managed within different units, but a central data management system is put into place to conduct quality checks and prepare institution-wide reports. In strategic approach, institutions connect student data from various sources into one integrated institutional data warehouse, where it is linked also to other data on university operations (e.g. academic staff, finance, etc.). The advantage of such integrated systems is that student data—and other key institutional data—is available across the institution and processed in a timely and reliable manner through common data management software. In this way data is accessible across the institution for performance evaluation and strategy planning. For such data managements systems to work, universities first of all need to build technical capacity, but—also and equally important—hire and train skilled analytic professionals who are able to turn data into evidence for decision-making (Klemenčič et al. 2015). Often in universities there already exist much reliable data and information, which is not put into use in decision-making, because it is not readily and easily accessible or because it is not sufficiently processed for use.

6 Recommendations to Policy Makers

Student survey data has been used to generate evidence on what works and what does not work in how higher education institutions conduct teaching and enable learning and development. This evidence is to serve several purposes and users: it is to inform policy and practice of institutions themselves, it is to inform policy of governments, and it is to inform the higher education stakeholders, first and foremost students and their families. Given the vast implications of the use of survey data as evidence and as information in decision processes, student survey data and methods to collect student data ought to be scrutinized for reliability and validity. There are several quality standards that can serve as guidance in designing student surveys and in evaluating quality of survey data (cf. Alderman et al. 2012; Harvey 2003; Porter 2004; Richardson 2005):

1. Surveys have an explicit stated purpose which leads to quality enhancement. They are tailored to that specific purpose (Alderman et al. 2012).
2. Student feedback is sought "at the level at which one is endeavouring to monitor quality", as soon as possible after the relevant educational activity (Richardson 2005, p. 409), and ideally repeatedly to monitor trends.
3. The survey instruments that aim at inter-institutional comparisons serve best as screening tools when two conditions are met: (i) the more alike the compared institutions are in their mission, purpose and resources, and (ii) the lower in the institutional hierarchy is the unit of analysis (surveys on the program level are the most desirable points of comparison).
4. Students and other stakeholders are involved in the entire process of survey design, implementation, analysis and reporting to aid relevance, clarity, and legitimacy of surveys.

5. Survey design is critically appraised as to the underlying ideological and policy frames: How different values are negotiated and balanced and reflected in the survey instruments? What value-signals the institution is sending through the questionnaires? Such critical reflexive processes can be more fruitful if different epistemic communities are involved in it; especially students who are directly affected by the policy interventions, and who have the first-hand experience of practice (cf. Klemenčič and Brennan 2013).
6. If there are several surveys administered by the institution, possibilities are explored to integrate them. The different surveys are checked for possible conflicts in timing of administration, duplication of questions, etc.
7. To raise response rates, several methods have been recorded to increase response rates: multiple contacts; incentives included with survey instrument (not conditional on completion); (statement of) high survey salience to students; and request for help in the cover letter (Porter 2004).
8. Participants in the survey are aware of how the data will be used, i.e. the feedback loop. This may raise survey salience, i.e. the importance or relevance that students attribute to the survey topic, which is shown to raise response rates (Porter 2004).

At best, student surveys are used as screening instruments to discover major deficiencies in educational environment and provision, and major discrepancies in student behavior from the expected. Such diagnostic results in turn guide the institutional managers to explore causes and consequences of various practices and processes. This is done through qualitative methods which can generate contextualized data—indeed richer, deeper and more authentic data—on student experience and behaviour albeit on smaller scale, by focusing on the 'particular'. With the advancement in new technology and the universal use of digital media by students (Gardner and Davis 2013), research is already underway seeking to adapt qualitative empirical methods to digital use, to canvass data on student experience on a large scale (such as digital ethnography and digital phenomenology by Klemenčič 2013); and more exploratory and innovative research in this area is called for.

The rise of big data on students will make institutional research more complex and challenging. Institutional researchers will need to learn how to leverage data resources effectively to support decision-making. From basic student records, which have become automatized, the attention is shifting to 'issue intelligence' and 'contextual intelligence' to aid policy and strategic planning, including forecasting and scenarios building (Klemenčič and Brennan 2013). Along with the questions of what constitutes sound evidence for policy-making, more attention is devoted to institutional capacities for institutional research and data analytics to support decision-making.

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Understanding Quality of Learning in Digital Learning Environments: State of the Art and Research Needed

Bernadette Charlier, Laurent Cosnefroy, Annie Jézégou and Geneviève Lameul

1 Introduction: Towards a Theoretical Framework to Understand Teaching and Learning in HE[1]

Over the last two years, the press, blogs and social networks have heralded a tsunami by Massive Open Online Courses[2] in Higher Education (Cisel and Bruillard 2013; Daniel 2012; Grover et al. 2013). Many universities and colleges in the United States, Europe and also in Switzerland are providing such courses. For a longer period, since the generalization of Learning Management Systems in most universities, teachers have progressively organized and taken into account distance activities alongside face-to-face activities, to the extent that traditional learning

[1]This framework has been developed for the submission of a research proposal submitted in April 2014 to the FNS (Swiss) and to ANR (France): the INTENS project.

[2]Today, policy makers have rapidly committed their institutions to new educational projects (since January 2014, 21 MOOCs have been offered in France by the major schools and universities under the banner of France Digital University. In Switzerland, 21 MOOCs are proposed by the EPFL, 3 by the University of Lausanne as of September 2014, and five by the University of Geneva. Data from March 2014.).

B. Charlier (✉)
University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland
e-mail: bernadette.charlier@unifr.ch

L. Cosnefroy
Ecole Normale Supérieure Lyon, Lyon, France
e-mail: laurent.cosnefroy@ens-lyon.fr

A. Jézégou
University of Lille 1 Science and Technology, Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France
e-mail: Annie.Jezegou@univ-lille1.fr

G. Lameul
University of Rennes 2, Rennes, France
e-mail: genevieve.lameul@education.gouv.fr

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courses are often called 'hybrid' or 'blended learning' courses (Charlier et al. 2006a).

Faced with these changes, actors can rarely call upon research that goes beyond feedback from experience, case studies or satisfaction surveys to guide their action (Deschryver 2008). However, existing research in educational technology, cognitive psychology, adult education and university education, if they are considered together, provide a potentially relevant theoretical and methodological framework to answer the two fundamental research questions:

- How do student characteristics and those of digital learning environments interact?
- What are the configurations emerging from these interactions that can lead to quality learning?

These research questions reflect a systemic perspective in which human learning is part of a circular causality system between three sets of characteristics (Fig. 1): (1) relating to individual students, (2) relating to the digital learning environment, and (3) resulting from the interaction between the two. These so-called 'process' features generate learning outcomes (4) that in turn influence individual and environmental characteristics.

This perspective reflects a circular (i.e. non-linear) systemic model of learning developed by social-cognitive learning theory (Bandura 1986); (Zimmerman 2002). This theory sets the act of learning in a system of reciprocal causality between personal characteristics (cognitive, emotional, and biological, i.e. unique to each learner) and environmental factors (organizational, human, cultural, material, etc.). Such circular causality models, now widely recognized in Adult Education (Cross 1981) and in higher education studies (Tinto 1975), (Biggs 2003), should necessarily guide research methods aimed at understanding the effects of digital learning environments (characterized and differentiated) on the learning of individuals. In what follows, we briefly summarize recent research results that could lay the foundations for this research.

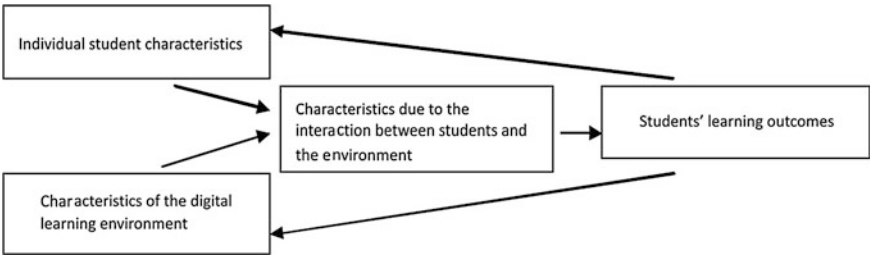

Fig. 1 Systemic perspective of circular causality as proposed by INTENS

2 Describing and Understanding the Role of Student Characteristics

Several studies have analysed the impact of student characteristics on success in higher education. The most studied variables are: (1) Cognitive skills, (2) Academic past, (3) Initial level of knowledge related to the domain that is the subject of learning, (4) Conceptions of knowledge and learning and (5) Personality characteristics.

(1) *Cognitive skills*. In France, (Morlaix and Suchaut 2012) studied the impact of information processing speed, working memory and inductive reasoning on the average score in the first year of studies, at the end of the first semester and at the end of the academic year. Noting that these variables do not have a direct impact, the authors concluded that their effect was probably felt earlier by contributing to the quality of prior schooling.

(2) *Academic past*. In the research conducted in the United States, the high school Grade Point Average (GPA) is an important predictor of success at university (Richardson et al. 2012). In the United Kingdom, A-level examinations are also predictors of success at university (Peers and Johnston 1994). In France, getting the baccalauréat and the marks obtained significantly predict success in the first year of university (Morlaix and Suchaut 2012). The same observation has been made in Switzerland (Atzamba and Petroff 2003).

(3) *Initial level of knowledge related to the domain that is the subject of learning* had an impact on the quality of learning achieved through both cognitive and motivational mechanisms. Cognitively, deep-learning strategies only proved effective if based on sufficiently robust knowledge (Bell and Kozlowski 2002). On a motivational level, (Hidi and Renninger 2006) and (Renninger et al. 2012) hypothesized that the development of structured knowledge in long-term memory, based on a given topic would promote further development of interest in the subject.

(4) *Conceptions of knowledge and learning* (4.1) *Conceptions of learning* must be distinguished from approaches to learning. The latter concern student activities in a situation, and as such are considered products of student-environment interactions (Entwistle and McCune 2004; Entwistle 2009). Conceptions of learning, in contrast, refer to different representations of what it means to learn. Marton et al. (1993) proposed a typology of these conceptions ranging from learning as acquiring knowledge to learning as self-transformation. Conceptions of learning influence learning approaches, that is to say, the strategies actually implemented in a situation, but consonance between the two levels is far from complete. Dissonant patterns appear frequently, especially a so-called positive dissonance combining a conception of learning as knowledge acquisition and the use of deep-learning strategies (Cano 2005). This positive dissonance is explained by characteristics of the learning environment that encourage students to develop a deep-learning approach. These research results, however, refer to traditional learning environments. They need to be verified in digital learning environments.

(4.2) *Conceptions of knowledge and knowing*. Hofer (2004), Hofer and Pintrich (1997) developed a model that organizes epistemic beliefs in four dimensions, each seen as a continuum between two poles: the certainty of knowledge, ranging from definitive to evolutionary; the simplicity of knowledge ranging from individual concepts added one to another, to concepts seen to be interrelated; the source of knowledge, ranging from it being transmitted by an external authority, to it being produced by the person him or herself; the justification of knowledge, ranging from it being due to an authority, to it resulting from proof via a rigorous procedure. Automatically activated, epistemic beliefs would influence the goals constructed by the learner, the metacognitive processes and the choice of learning strategies (Muis 2007). The learner not only makes judgments about learning (Do I know?), but also makes what could be called epistemic judgments: How do I know? (Hofer 2004). The importance of these judgments can be seen in the trivialization of internet search, where queries using Google are in most cases the first step of a literature search (Biddix et al. 2011). The learner is confronted with a multitude of information sources, the reliability of which needs to be assessed. In this regard, (Bråten et al. 2005: 154) note that "*in open and global information networks, anyone can publish anything, and the difficult task of checking the relevance and accuracy of information traditionally done by publishers, is now transferred to the students themselves*". Finally, the analysis in terms of structural equation modelling carried out by Cano (2005) in a survey of 1600 Spanish students confirmed the direct and indirect influence (via learning approaches) of epistemic beliefs on school performance.

(5) *Personality characteristics*. One of the most influential characterisations of personality is the 'Big Five' model (Costa and McCrae 1992), so called because it organises personality in five traits: extraversion (active, sociable versus silent, shy); pleasantness (nice, cooperating versus nasty); conscientiousness (meticulous, applied versus disordered, distracted); emotional stability or neuroticism (calm, relaxed versus anxious, irritable); openness to experience (openness, curiosity versus conformity, conventional). In a research in the UK with Bachelor students, (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham 2008) observed that conscientiousness, and to a lesser extent openness to experience, have a significant impact on academic success. The recent meta-analysis of the psychological correlates of academic achievement conducted by Richardson et al. (2012) confirms that conscientiousness is significantly associated with academic achievement. In contrast, openness to experience does not seem to exercise significant influence. However, to our knowledge these features have not been linked to learning outcomes such as "*the disposition to understand for oneself*" (Entwistle and McCune 2013). In conclusion, as far as characteristics of students are concerned, it seems necessary to consider a whole range of features related to previous training experience, and the level of knowledge acquired to enter the program. This level can be assessed in various ways on the basis of past academic experience or, more specifically, via an initial assessment of knowledge about the area to be learnt. In addition, the impact of epistemic beliefs and conceptions of learning on the learning process now seems sufficiently documented through research for us to include them. With regard to

personality characteristics, the results are more open to debate. What might appear as a personality characteristic influencing learning outcomes, namely conscientiousness, may turn out to be process variables. Being meticulous and focused on the goal could well be the effect of specific control strategies, called volitional strategies (or action control strategies) rather than the effect of personality characteristics. This is the conclusion reached by the recent meta-analysis of (Richardson et al. 2012). Eventually, two types of student population coexist in university programs: students coming directly from secondary education and adults returning to their studies. The previous learning experiences of the latter and the knowledge they have acquired, as well as their motives to engage in a new teaching program (Vertongen et al. 2009), are probably not without effect on their conceptions of learning and knowledge, as well as on their perceptions of the digital learning environment. These characteristics are likely to influence the learning outcomes. For quality management, a first question would be: how does HE and particularly new offers such as MOOCs do take into account students individual characteristics?

3 Describing and Understanding the Role of the Teaching and Learning Environment

The learning environment (seen as incorporating the learning objectives, the means and methods of instruction, the methods of assessment, the peers and teachers, the physical infrastructure), sometimes called the 'teaching context' (Biggs 2003) or 'teaching-learning environment' (Entwistle 2011), is found to affect how students—according to their individual characteristics—go about their studying and eventually explain quality learning outcomes. However, proposals by researchers for specific characteristics of these environments and how they should be structured to achieve such effects are fragmented, in that they are associated with particular features, or are hypothetical. This problem has been addressed in research on self-regulated learning. Several researchers, on both sides of the Atlantic, have been interested in existing interactions between the learning environment and self-regulated learning (Carré and Moisan 2002; Hiemstra 2000; Straka 2000). They have shown the influence of pedagogical control of the educational environment on the self-regulation of learners, while highlighting some personal characteristics that play a mediating role (characterizing the student-environment interaction), especially the feeling of self efficacy. The results of these studies, as well as research of the co-authors of this chapter (Cosnefroy and Jézégou) on the relationship between the environment and the learner will be considered. Furthermore, in the field of higher education, there is little research about specific forms of hybrid or digital learning environments in HE. When it comes to studying the role of the characteristics of these environments, the aspects most often selected refer to the technical and instructional design, content and methods of teaching and assessment, and less

frequently the learning activities proposed and the discussion or exploration in these environments (Ellis and Goodyear 2010). These research works did not attempt to represent specific configurations formed by the articulation of these characteristics, or to formalize the interactions between these environmental characteristics and those of the students, or the effects of these interactions on learning. However, the most significant work has been done in the ETL[3] project (Enhancing Teaching-Learning environments led by the University of Edinburgh). This project has highlighted many 'good practices' in relation to teaching specific disciplines or those that are common to several disciplines (Hounsell et al. 2005). It does not, however, propose a validated framework for describing specific configurations formed by the articulation of these dimensions and their effects on learning. In addition, it does not focus specifically on digital learning environments. HY-SUP[4] Project (describing hybrid learning environments and understanding their effects[5,6]) fills this gap by specifically studying digital learning environments (hybrid, blended or at a distance). As already mentioned, the vast majority of the scientific literature devoted to hybrid learning environments is made up of satisfaction surveys of learners. Prior to HY-SUP, some specific research: e.g. (Peraya and Campion 2007; Charlier et al. 2006b; Docq et al. 2008) led to the identification of several potential effects on learning experienced by participants, on their identity dynamics and social interactions, and on the emergence of communities of practice. However, no large-scale research had answered the central question as to the effect of such digital learning environments on the quality of student learning, in particular. To validly answer this question, it was first necessary to characterize these environments based on dimensions such as: the forms of mediation and mediatisation; the articulation of the educational phases both in face-to-face and distance activities; the nature of human support; or contextual aspects such as the type of training, the number of students or educational practices (Peraya et al. 2014). Researchers in the HY-SUP project carried out research adopting a mixed-method approach in several studies (pilot study questionnaire: 174 teachers; large-scale study questionnaire: 179

[3]http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk//docs/ETLfinalreport.pdf.

[4]The authors wish to thank the partners of the European HY-SUP project (DG. Education and Culture. Life Long Learning Programme) coordinated by the University Claude Bernard Lyon 1 (E. Bettler) and the University of Geneva (N. Deschryver). This project associated researchers and teachers from the universities of Fribourg (S. Borruat, B. Charlier, A. Rossier), Geneva (N. Deschryver, C. Peltier, D. Peraya, A. Ronchi et E. Villiot-Leclercq), Louvain-La-Neuve (F. Docq, M. Lebrun et C. Letor), Lyon (C. Batier et C. Douzet), Luxembourg (R. Burton et G. Mancuso) and Rennes 2 (G. Lameul, C. Morin).

[5]This synthesis is grounded on (Peraya et al. 2014).

[6]The French speaking reader will note that we have chosen, in all our publications, to translate the French expression 'dispositif' by the English term 'environment'. The term 'dispositif' does not have a satisfactory translation in English. We thank the informed reader for his or her understanding. A history of use of the two terms and their various interpretations would have been out of place here, given the limited number of pages. This presentation can be read in French in Charlier (2014, to be published).

teachers and 456 students, and 80 interviews with 60 teachers and with 20 institutional managers) around three central questions:

- What are the characteristics of the existing environments?
- Depending on the type of hybrid learning environment, are there perceived effects on student learning and on the professional development of teachers?
- To what extent can the development of certain environments be associated with organizational characteristics of the universities?

Concerning the first issue, the major empirical results are, on the one hand, the identification of fourteen components, derived from statistical analysis (Burton et al. 2014) to differentiate hybrid learning environments and, on the other hand, a typology of six types of environments described and illustrated by (Lebrun et al. 2014). Note that the descriptions produced, exploiting both quantitative and qualitative data from different studies, are an excellent illustration of the relevance of a mixed methodological approach. It should however be noted that the components describing the openness of learning environments, that proved particularly relevant, deserve to be explored in more depth using recent work by Jézégou. The main contribution of her work is to propose a theory of the openness of teaching as well as modelling presence, especially in e-learning. Research carried out on openness led to a theoretical basis for the concept and to its definition in terms of the learner's freedom of choice to organize his or her own learning situations (Jézégou 2005). It also led to the development of GEODE (Jézégou 2010), an instrument used to assess the degree of openness of a digital learning environment (including the degree of openness of the spatiotemporal, pedagogical and mediated communication components). This instrument has been validated empirically. As for presence, research shows it is the result of some form of collaborative social interaction between learners and between the teacher and learners within a digital communication space. Such a presence at a distance promotes the emergence and development of a learning community with the resulting individual and collective construction of knowledge. Work on the dynamic modelling of that presence helped characterize collaborative interactional processes at work in each of the three dimensions of presence at a distance (Jézégou 2012a): (1) socio-cognitive (2) socio-affective and (3) pedagogical. An instrument to assess the degree of presence in e-learning (GEPE) was recently developed and its internal validity verified. Empirical research conducted by Jézégou has identified the influence (independently or together) of two environmental dimensions—the degree of openness (as theorized) and the degree of presence (as modelled)—on the self-directed learning of adults in the context of e-learning, blended learning and MOOC. It has demonstrated the role of several personal characteristics of a motivational nature in the interplay of influence observed. These are the need for self-determination, structure, competence and social affiliation. These empirical studies have also shown that the learners' perception of openness or, in other words, their perception of the degree of freedom of choice offered by the established educational environment, has an influence on the self-regulation strategies implemented. They have also helped describe and understand the self-regulation

strategies implemented by learners to construct an optimal learning environment, incorporating established educational factors as well as psychosocial factors. The results of this research program were taken into account in developing a research proposal (INTENS), which offers an opportunity to pursue that work. Given this perspective, the proposed research will include a comparative understanding, in a model coupling 'degree of openness' and 'degree of presence', of the effects of these two environmental dimensions on student's self-regulated learning in both hybrid and distance learning, and the role played by learners' perception of these degrees of openness and presence. For policy makers, tools are now available to describe and understand digital learning environments, and to select and evaluate those which would have better effect on the development of autonomous students and deep learning.

4 Understanding Interactions Between Students and Their Environment

Constructs characterizing interactions between students and learning environments, both in terms of representations and behaviours, have been the subject of much research.

(1) *Self-efficacy* is a contextual judgment that anticipates one's ability to achieve a certain level of performance in a given situation (Bandura 1986). This is typically a product of the interaction between the subject and his or her environment. It has been identified as one of the variables that have the greatest impact on the learning process (Sitzmann and Ely 2011). It leads to the use of more efficient cognitive strategies, to improved assessment of performance, to undertaking more challenging activities, to an increase in the effort and time spent studying, to increased resilience confronted with difficulties, and to a diminution of anxiety, which all ultimately lead to improved performance (Schunk 1991; Schunk and Pajares 2005; Zimmerman 1989, 2000). Two main factors are involved in the construction of self-efficacy: the success experienced in previous academic experiences, and social persuasion, that is to say, the judgment of others (Schunk 1991; Schunk and Pajares 2005; Zimmerman 1989, 2000).

(2) *The orientation of goals*. Over the past 20 years, there has been a revival of the theory of achievement goals that could be translated more precisely by competence goals, as they reflect what competence means for the learner. Several studies have examined the relationship between academic performance and three achievement goals (see the recent meta-analysis of (Wirthwein et al. 2013): learning goals (or mastery); performance approach goals (goals seeking to prove competence by outperforming others); avoidance approach goals (goals seeking to avoid failure). More recently, the theory has been enriched by a fourth and a fifth goal (Elliot 1999; Elliot et al. 2011; Pintrich 2000). Research conducted with college students showed that learning goals have effects on the learning approaches chosen, but have

no tangible impact on academic performance. Of particular note is that longitudinal research conducted by Harackiewicz et al. (1997, 2000), Barron and Harackiewicz (2001), using self-reported questionnaires, shows the differentiating effects of learning goals and performance approach goals. The former are strongly correlated with the implementation of deep-learning strategies and the development of interest, but only the latter have a significant effect on performance. At first glance surprising, these results can be explained if one takes into account the nature of the assessment proposed to students, which is mostly multiple-choice. As for avoidance approach goals, they would have a moderate negative effect on academic performance. In drawing up the methodology for researches, but also for quality evaluation, these results underline the need to take into account the nature of the assessment proposed in the various courses to be analysed so as to ascertain the possible influence of the goals on learning outcomes.

(3) *Self-regulation strategies*. The control of learning activity takes place by means of self-regulation strategies, namely general rules of action that guide the activity in order to make it optimal with respect to the goals fixed. It is through the use of various self-regulation strategies that the learner takes control of his or her learning. If the learning strategies and metacognitive strategies have been the subject of numerous studies (Romainville 1993; Vermunt 1998; Weinstein et al. 2000), the same cannot be said of volitional strategies or strategies to control action, aimed at sustaining motivation and effort. The latter, unlike the former, are not intended to act directly on the cognitive processes implemented to perform the task. Their purpose is to maintain engagement in the task, to protect the intention of learning and the continuity of action. These strategies have been particularly studied in the framework of research on self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning refers to all processes by which subjects activate and maintain cognitions, affects and behaviours systematically oriented towards a goal (Schunk 1994). The aim of this research is twofold: to determine the psychological conditions of autonomy in learning, and to identify conditions that positively influence the development of autonomy. One of the basic assumptions shared by all researchers in this field is that the on-going state of autonomy is not to be taken for granted. Claiming that a learner is able to be independent does not mean he or she is autonomous in all circumstances. It depends on the conditions and the context in which learning takes place on the one hand, and the content to be learnt on the other. It is precisely this variability of the nature of self-regulation and the influence of context that must be examined by research on self-regulated learning (Boekaerts 1992, 1996; Pintrich 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Self-regulatory processes are considered as mediators between personal characteristics and those of the environment on the one hand, and learning outcomes on the other. Note, however, that the principle of contextualization of self-regulation has produced very little research about the genesis and implementation of self-regulatory strategies themselves. The gap is evident between the theoretical framework and research results (Cosnefroy 2009). Once engaged in a learning activity, effort is required to ensure continuity of action by preventing or combating distractions and difficulties. Setting a challenging goal is one thing, reaching it is another. Theoretically, two distinct sets of processes are considered:

motivation, which prepares decisions and promotes the intention to learn (goal setting); volition, which protects the implementation of these decisions (goal attainment) (Corno 2001). Motivation and volition are two components of a larger entity which, following (Reuchlin 1999), one might call conation, a term designating factors that govern the orientation of both behaviour and its control. Knowledge concerning the nature and use of volitional strategies and their conditions of validity remains incomplete. Some researchers have sought to account for self-regulation strategies used by learners, including (Corno 2001; Pintrich 2000; Wolters 2003; Zimmerman 1989, 2000; Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons 1986). Based on these partial syntheses, (Cosnefroy 2010, 2011, 2013), set up a new taxonomy of self-regulation strategies including volitional strategies. In this taxonomy volitional strategies are categorized by two sub-components: control of the inner states and control of the learning environment. The former refer to the control of motivation (by sustaining the learning-task value and learner's self-efficacy) and emotions, more specifically negative emotions such as shame, anger, helplessness and anxiety. Strategies devoted to the control of the learning context are threefold: (1) Environment structuring (e.g. arranging a quiet study area); (2) resources enhancement (e.g. seeking help); (3) time management (e.g. allocation of time and setting of priorities). Among the latter strategies, time management skills are probably paramount, insofar as research has shown they are lacking for most higher education students (Meer et al. 2010). This new taxonomy could be used to analyse the impact of these strategies on learning outcomes.

(4) *Approaches to learning*. Student approaches to learning are strongly related to students' conceptions of learning. However, they don't describe personal characteristics, but rather ways of learning that depend on interactions with the learning environment (Cano 2005; Entwistle 2009). Research on approaches to learning carried out in learning and teaching in Higher Education over the last 40 years have highlighted the relationships between student characteristics (age, gender, personal story, training, previous experience) and their conceptions of learning, approaches to learning and learning orientations, as well as the influence of contextual factors (influence of peers, teachers, learning environments and institutional strategy) and of student perceptions of this context (Biggs 2003; Entwistle 2003a, b; Pintrich 2003; Ramsden 2003; Richardson 2005; Saljö 1979a, b). Among the contextual factors, assessment deserves special consideration. Entwistle has introduced the strategic approach (i.e. using surface or deep strategies according to task requirements) because assessment strongly affects studying (Entwistle and McCune 2004). More recently, (Ellis and Goodyear 2010) have examined student experiences of learning through discussion and through inquiry in face-to-face and online situations. The authors have found correlations between elements of the experience of learning (conceptions, approaches, and perceptions of the environment) and performance outcomes. Their results confirm the relevance of our research programme: "*Students' experiences of e-learning, need to be understood in relation to the whole experience of learning, whether at course or whole degree level. Clearly e-learning is part of a broader experience of learning. Its association with other parts of the*

experience and the implications of these associations are only just beginning to be understood". (p. 71).

(5) *Perception of the environment*. Relationships between student's individual characteristics, such as their conceptions of learning and their perceptions of the learning environment, are represented in earlier studies (Meyer 1991) by the term 'study orchestration'. Such 'orchestration' could be either harmonious (i.e. combinations of deep approaches and positive perceptions of learning and teaching environment) or dissonant (Meyer and Vermunt 2000). For the same environment, the HY-SUP project (See. Supra) also showed the diversity of student perceptions, as well as a positive correlation between these perceptions, learning approaches and perceived effects on learning. The same goes for the work of Jézégou on student perception of openness and presence characterised by these environments. As a result, the perception of the digital learning environment will be considered. In conclusion, the interactions between the variables described above have rarely been studied systematically. This is not surprising since they correspond to different research paradigms. Thus, research on self-regulated learning emphasises that the learning processes cannot be understood if they are reduced to the cognitive dimension. They have therefore sought to document the motivational aspects of learning and volitional behaviour. Despite the fact that cognitive and metacognitive strategies are constantly cited as essential for successful self-regulation, research on approaches and conceptions of learning are rarely evoked in work on self-regulation strategies (Entwistle and McCune 2013). There's a need to bridge the gap between the two research traditions. The relationship between achievement goals and learning approaches has been extensively studied, however little work has been done on the impact of performance goals on volitional strategies. With the notable exception of (Pintrich 2000), the theory of achievement goals is not a major theoretical reference model for self-regulated learning (i.e. Corno, Boekaerts, Winne, Pintrich, Zimmerman). We suggest to systematically examining the interactions of these sets of variables in the context of a digital learning environment in the broad sense defined above. Finally, the evaluation methods affect the choice of learning approaches and the impact of these approaches on performance (deep strategies not necessarily leading to better performance). Taking this variable into consideration is particularly important, as forms of learning assessments often have different characteristics in distance learning and hybrid courses. For policy makers and quality management, learning assessment methods are good indicators of teaching quality.

5 Evaluating Learning Outcomes

Two types of data can be studied to assess learning outcomes: objective data and subjective data (perceptions).

Objective data. In addition to exam marks (Galand and Frenay 2005), several indicators have been investigated. For example, effective learning can be analysed in terms of quantity and quality according to the 'Structure of Observed Learning

Outcomes' (SOLO) taxonomy (Biggs and Tang 2007). Several learning levels are defined, ranging from a quantitative phase (integrated information) to a qualitative phase (level of linkages between concepts). In the ETL (Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments) project, another concept has been developed to represent the quality of learning in different disciplines: WTPs (ways of thinking and practising in the subject) (Entwistle 2003a). Finally, more recently, the OECD project, AHELO set out to develop a: "direct *evaluation of student performance at the global level and valid across diverse cultures, languages and different types of institutions*." The results of the feasibility study were published in three volumes (OECD 2013).

Subjective data. Stories of learning experiences are frequently used as well as the expression of the student's future learning projects. This approach derives from a representation of learning as essentially experiential (Bourgeois 2009). This interest in "*the experience of learning*" has led authors like (Saljö 1979a, b) and (Marton et al. 1993) to study approaches and conceptions of student learning. However, more recently, (Entwistle and McCune 2013) proposed a new concept, "*the disposition to understand for oneself*" as a potential product of student learning, particularly in relation to digital learning environments. The authors define this concept as consisting of four dimensions: "*The knowledge and ability required to develop and use understanding in adopting a reasoned stance to complex issues (ability); A continuing desire to adopt effortful, deep approaches across a wide range of contexts (willingness); A readiness to monitor and discuss the process of learning and developing understanding within the discipline (awareness of process); An alertness to opportunities to develop understanding further and to apply it in academic and professional contexts (sensitivity to context)*" (p. 305). In this regard, the authors emphasize the need for future research. "*Good evidence that the disposition to understand for oneself can be effectively developed would require studies that follow students throughout, and beyond, a programme of study, but such research has yet to be carried out*" (p. 306).

6 Conclusion

The state of the art and the co-authors of this chapter justify and demonstrate the feasibility of an ambitious research project to answer the following two questions: **1. How do student characteristics and those of digital learning environments interact? 2. What are the configurations emerging from these interactions that can lead to quality learning?** The conceptual framework that will support the investigation is presented in the Fig. 2.

Mixed methods longitudinal research realised with several HE Education programs will be necessary to answer to the research questions. We won't develop here in details the methodological design. This design innovates methodologically in that it integrates the collection and analyses of data of both student behaviour and representations as part of longitudinal research covering a large number of

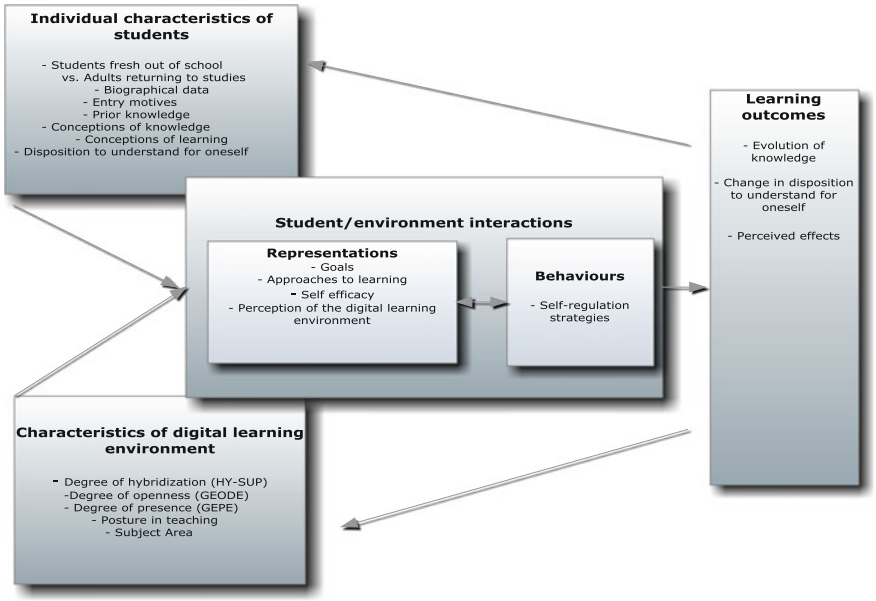

Fig. 2 INTENS: initial conceptual framework

programs. The work will enable the validation of data collection instruments and measurement protocols, while contributing to the production and validation of our conceptual framework and theoretically supported knowledge.

From a pragmatic point of view, as we have already done in earlier work, we aim to produce knowledge that can serve directly to inform action and aid decision-making in the field (program evaluation, designing environments, support, improvement of learning achieved, etc.). The analyses produced, the models developed could serve to decode the complexity of hybrid or remote, digitally-based learning environments in higher education.

The development of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), which has sparked so much scientific and educational debate, could be clarified by the results. One of the most important impacts for higher education will be the identification of conditions necessary to provide digital learning environments for students that involve them further in their training. For policymakers and teachers, the results will provide resources to improve methods of design and quality assessment for educational programs.

In advance, considering each part of our model, we could already suggest criteria to be considered for decision making and quality management:

1. Individual characteristics of students
   The quality of learning environments and of teaching programs cannot be assessed without considering individual characteristics of students. Thus neither unique, nor ideal solution, even if they are supported by the more recent

technologies, does exist. Thus, the first criterion would be the extent to which individual characteristics of the students are taken into account.

2. Characteristics of digital learning environment
   Digital learning environment can be described in their complexity. Recent research results provide tools that enable to describe, compare and examine their effects. Thus, a second criterion would be to examine how quality management systems integrate such tools.
3. Student Environment-Interaction
   More complex is to take into account the complex dynamic of learning appearing through the interactions between students and their learning environment. This plaid for formative quality management systems that offer tools to students, teachers and designers to express their goals, their own representations of learning environment, and to have an impact on it. Thus, a third criterion would be the extent to which actors are enabled to act on their own environment.
4. Learning outcomes
   Learning outcomes are often evaluated through the satisfaction of students or through the assessment results without taking into account Value Added Models. More sophisticated models, such as the one proposed by the project AHELO, could be used. Furthermore, new learning outcomes, such as the disposition to understand for oneself, could be considered. Thus, a fourth criterion would be the quality and complexity of quality learning assessment.

Eventually, even if researches provide more tools and integrated knowledge to make HE more intelligible for all, more efforts are still needed, and a last recommendation would be to support further researches that are based on rigorous state of the arts and conducted by interdisciplinary teams.

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Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Hamish Coates

1 Introduction

Through a strategic analysis of assessment in higher education, this chapter clarifies rationales for assessment reform, critically evaluates progress to date, reviews knots tangling progress, and highlights change opportunities. The analysis concludes by advancing the need for serious work on assessment redesign that funnels improvement investments in the most effective ways. Taking stock of research and framed for a specific policy purpose, this chapter is necessarily brief and lightly referenced. Readers are referred to Coates (2014) for a more comprehensive treatment of major topics.

The assessment of higher education student learning outcomes is very important. Assessment provides essential assurance to a wide variety of stakeholders that people have attained various knowledge and skills, and that they are ready for employment or further study. More broadly, assessment signposts, often in a highly distilled way, the character of an institution and its educational programs. Much assessment is expensive, making it an important focus for analysis. Assessment shapes education and how people learn in powerful direct and also indirect ways. Of course, assessment is highly relevant to individuals, often playing a major role in defining life chances and directions.

Given such significance it is surprising that much assessment in higher education has not changed materially for a very long time, and that economically and technically unsustainable practice is rife. While there are, of course, an enormous number of innovative and high-quality developments, including those associated with technology advances, everyday around the world students still write exams using pen and paper, sitting in large halls at small desks in rows without talking. It is possible that this reflects the pinnacle of assessment, but given the lack of

H. Coates (✉)
Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia
e-mail: hamishc@unimelb.edu.au

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reflective technological advance over an extended period, this seems unlikely. Rather, given the enormous changes reshaping core facets of higher education, and pressures and prospects surrounding assessment, it is more likely that the 'transformational moment' has yet to come. As this chapter portends, however, with the right investment and intellect the revolution may be closer than ever.

This chapter provides contemporary insights into the assessment of higher education learning outcomes, surveying recent progress and clarifying prospects for further transformational advance. It begins by recapping rationales for reforming this facet of higher education. It then takes stock of progress through an evaluative review of several prominent assessment initiatives. While far from exhaustive, this review highlights the broad scope and pretext for growth. Two subsequent sections help channel future energy. First, using risk-assessment logic, the chapter reviews what would appear to be the major change blockers. Second, a broad cost/benefit logic is deployed to identify specific options for development. With these analyses to hand, the chapter concludes by advancing a program of assessment redesign, and sketching initial tactics for its development.

Assessment is a broad area, and this analysis could be progressed in a variety of ways, so it is helpful to clarify scope and assumptions. The term 'assessment' is interpreted very broadly as involving the measurement, reporting and interpretation of student learning and development. The analysis embraces formative and summative assessment, and ranges from in-class to cross-national practice, but emphasis is placed on formal assessment that is relevant to establishing the quality of individual learning. The analysis is pitched to be policy relevant regardless of whether local or large-scale practice is being addressed. Attention is focused specifically on assessment, rather than on a host of surrounding activities such as curriculum design, quality assurance or funding, though these are undoubtedly relevant and must be factored into any extended analysis. As these introductory remarks convey, the chapter adopts a critical stance in which it is assumed that assessment must be improved. It is assumed that the continued use of proxy measures for outcomes like statistics on graduate employment or further graduate study, or the use of qualification/organisation-level accreditation in place of robust measures of individual competence, is unsatisfactory (for analysis see: Coates 2010). The analysis is driven by a general desire to improve both the quality and productivity of education. To strengthen higher education, it is assumed that assessment must be done better and more efficiently, and it is assumed transparency plays an important role in this.

Throughout this chapter, mention is made to 'routine', or 'conventional', or 'traditional' assessment practice. This refers to a vast range of activities which are helpful to clarify at the outset given that this chapter is framed as a critique. Broadly, such assessment can be caricatured as involving academics working alone, and within single institutions to produce technically non-validated assessment materials that map to arbitrary parts of the curriculum of a single subject. Such assessment might be delivered in formats and practices unchanged for many decades, scored normatively by different markers without rubrics or training, analysed using basic additive methods, adjusted to fit percentile distributions, then reported

using grades that offer thin feedback. It is assumed that together these attributes give rise to a syndrome which constricts the advance of higher education. Of course this is an accentuated and overly negative picture, and innovative and excellent practice abounds, but elements of such practice remain regrettably rife across all fields, including those which are subject to professional accreditation.

2 A Growing Imperative for Transforming Assessment

In most countries university education is in demand like never before. Yet many traditional approaches to higher education do not scale well, challenging the quality and productivity of supply. Meeting greater demand increasingly requires new and different ways of doing education. Also, as higher education expands and diversifies, more energy must be invested in ensuring that sufficient learning has been achieved to warrant the award of a qualification. Yet assessment would appear to be one of the final change frontiers in the contemporary reconfiguration of higher education. Much assessment has not changed for a century, yet other facets of education have transformed, and student learning is subjected to increasing scrutiny. To launch the discussion and frame subsequent analysis, it is helpful to explore imperatives for reforming the assessment of learning outcomes. The summary presented here draws on much more extensive analysis elsewhere (Coates 2014; Coates and Mahat 2013, 2014), and necessarily takes for granted broader changes taking place in many higher education systems.

First, there is value in advancing assessment in the spirit of continuous improvement. There are intrinsic grounds for ongoing improvement, but also more contextual rationales so that assessment keeps pace with changes in knowledge, curriculum, teaching, institutions, and learning. Christensen and Eyring (2011) document how higher education is undergoing radical change with disruptive innovation at its core. Despite substantial improvement in many parts of higher education, student knowledge and skill is still most commonly measured in the traditional ways characterised above. A narrative flowing across this chapter is that assessment has yet to have its game-changing moment. Whether change is transformational or incremental, however, there are intrinsic grounds for ongoing improvement.

Second, there are strategic institutional rationales for finding innovative ways to assess student learning. Assessment resources and processes signify in non-trivial ways what an institution delivers—variations in assessment imply variations in education and graduates. In an industry dominated by research metrics, assessment offers fresh territory for institutions to showcase education activity and performance (Coates and Richardson 2012).

Third, there is enormous value for institutions, faculty, students and governments in finding cheaper ways to assess student learning. While methods and contexts vary, assessment typically has high fixed and variable costs and limited economies of scale, as with many other facets of conventional higher education

teaching and learning (for a summary of relevant economics see Coates and Mahat 2014). Increasing cost- and revenue-constraints magnify pressure to develop more efficient forms of assessment without eroding quality. Through one lens, current assessment arrangements can be seen as standing in the path of broader productivity improvements in higher education.

Fourth, concerns about quality are prompting changes in assessment. Through projects such as OECD AHELO (Coates and Richardson 2012) governments signalled that conventional assessment approaches were not delivering required or sufficient information on what students know and can do. As well, more robust assessment would do much to address seemingly persistent employer concerns about graduate capability, if only by clarifying and advancing debate. Educators, too, have taken steps to advance or supplement work in their field (e.g. Edwards et al. 2012; MSC 2014). Quality pressures also provoke the need for more transparency regarding assessment, as in other academic functions.

Fifth, producing more cogent data on outcomes would help prove the returns from education. Currently, important economic debates about education proceed without reference to learning outcomes (DoE 2014; RAND 2014; Sullivan et al. 2012). The broad contribution of higher education is often measured through reference to the production of graduates, and the qualitative difference between graduates counted indirectly via differential employment, or further study outcomes (all else being equal, graduates with better transcripts from more reputable institutions in the field may be expected to secure better work or academic outcomes). The availability of better information on learning makes possible estimation based on the quality of outcomes, not just the quantity of outputs. Indeed, producing reasonable measures of productivity is extremely difficult without valid outcomes data, which carries obvious implications for institutional management and system steering.

Sixth, a further need to improve assessment flows from the limitations of prior quality-related initiatives. As discussed later, in the last few decades a suite of quality initiatives have attempted to address the paucity of information on education, but none have reaped promised change. Institution-level quality audits have failed to yield sufficient information on student learning (Dill 2014; Krzykowski and Kinser 2014). Rankings address partial performance in specific contexts, but focus on research (Federkeil et al. 2012; Van Vught 2012). Competency specification approaches, such as the Tuning Process (González and Wagenaar 2008), have considerable merit, but frame expected rather than actual outcomes. National qualification frameworks began as a move towards competency-based education, but have become policy instruments which often underemphasise specific contexts (McBride and Keevy 2010). Questionnaire-derived metrics (e.g. Coates and McCormick 2014) are valuable, but only deliver proxy information on student learning. Assessment projects have been initiated (Coates and Richardson 2012; Edwards et al. 2012; Canny and Coates 2014), but these have yet to yield required change.

Anyone working in or around higher education recognises that these reform pressures play out in varying ways at different moments, that assessment is only

part of a very much larger story, and that the above analysis is inevitably broad and incomplete. Yet taken together, these pressures explain more than a little of the need to reform assessment, and hence, spur the need to advance work on assessing learning outcomes.

3 Taking Stock of Existing Change Initiatives

The lack of modernisation of assessment is not a result of lack of imagination or effort. In the last few decades many endeavours have sought to unblock the development of assessment. It is helpful to take evaluative stock of the field to showcase recent work and ground the analyses that follow. Clearly, taking critical stock of a field as large and diverse as higher education assessment is a useful though challenging task—there are an enormous number of actors and initiatives, each at varying stages of maturity and diffusion. Rather than conduct an exhaustive review of specific assessment initiatives, therefore it is feasible to survey a series of broad developments which have sought to move beyond routine practice.

Important seeds of a fruitful evaluation lie in finding a helpful frame and appropriate level at which to pitch the analysis. The Assessment Transparency Model (ATM) (Coates and Mahat forthcoming) is deployed as a useful means for reflecting critically on the extent of formalisation and optimisation of assessment without assuming the maturation implies standardisation. Indeed, to avoid subsequent confusion it is helpful at this point to clarify a common misinterpretation of the term 'standards' and its various linguistic derivations. This chapter does indeed argue for the need to improve the standards of assessment design and practice. As in any area, it is contended that enhancing the standards of assessment will encourage diversification and excellence both in terms of education and outcomes. The chapter does not argue for the standardisation of assessment processes, resources or outcomes in everyday education contexts.

The ATM (Fig. 1) blends developmental and activity dimensions. The first dimension marks out a suite of academic phases, with these ordered according to a continuum of increasing transparency. At the foundation level there are 'anarchical' forms of truly collegial practice, reflecting what was characterised above as boutique or traditional forms of work. 'Appreciation' marks the next most transparent phase, reflecting awareness that new academic approaches are available. After this, the 'articulation' phase denotes the explicit documentation of new academic practices in a descriptive or normative sense. 'Application', the penultimate phase, signals that new practices have been actioned. 'Amalgamation' is the final phase, signalling the integration and sharing of academic processes and outcomes. The model charts the maturity of each of these five transparency phases along a second dimension. Each phase can be characterised as being at the formulation stage, the implementation stage, or the evaluation stage.

Building academics' assessment skills and capacity is arguably the most significant intervention. Such work might incorporate supplementary programs for

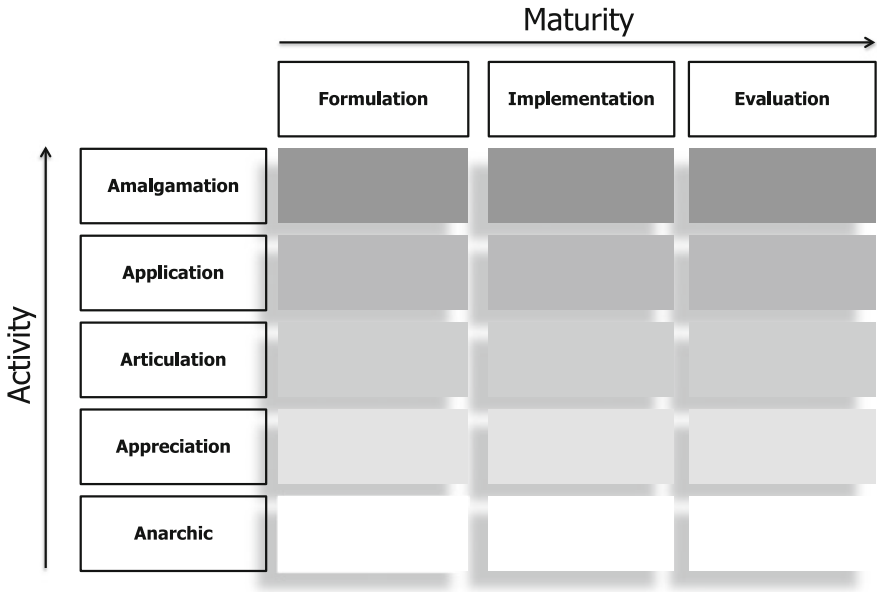

Fig. 1 Assessment transparency model (ATM)

doctoral students, academic professional development, advanced graduate study, or project activities. Even though education is a core pillar of higher education, it would be reasonable to describe the training of prospective or current academics in assessment as spasmodic. Such development has the potential to lift practice beyond anarchy, and build appreciation of student learning and assessing outcomes. With a focus on individual or organisational rather than resource development, such training can tend to fall short of creating clearer articulation of outcome or task specifications, though it may result in diverse forms of applied work, and possibly even instil a milieu for benchmarking and other shared interpretative activities.

One broad line of development has involved specifying qualification-level outcomes. Examples include the European Qualifications Framework, the United Kingdom Subject Benchmark Statements, the Australian Qualifications Framework, and the United States Degree Qualification Profile. As the titles convey, this work is developed and owned by systems, and such initiatives have served as important policy instruments for shifting beyond an anarchic plethora of qualifications, generating conversations about finding more coherence, and indeed articulating the general outcomes graduates should expect from a qualification (Chakroun 2010). These system-wide structures can suffer from unhelpful collisions with fruitfully divergent local practice, but their inherent constraint is that they go no further than articulating very general graduate outcomes. They offer little beyond broad guidelines for improving the assessment of student learning.

Going one step further, a further line of work has sought to specify learning outcomes at the discipline level. The Tuning Process (González and Wagenaar

2008) is a prominent example which has been initiated in many education systems, and across many diverse disciplines. Broadly, Tuning involves supporting collaboration among academics with the aim of generating convergence and common understanding of generic and discipline-specific learning outcomes. Canada adapted this work in innovative ways, focusing the collaborations around sector-oriented discipline clusters rather than education fields (Lennon et al. 2014), while in Australia a more policy-based and regulatory-focused approach was deployed (ALTC 2010). Such collaboration stimulates appreciation and articulation of learning outcomes, going several steps further than qualification frameworks by engaging and building academic capacity within disciplinary contexts. Like the qualification frameworks, however, the work usually stops short of advancing assessment resources, and tends to focus instead on advancing case studies or best practice guidelines. Hence while it may arise in particular fields, there is no emphasis on the application of common procedures or amalgamation of shared results. In short—there is no 'data on the table'. As well, it must be noted, while the Tuning Process has proliferated internationally there has been little if any summative evaluation, which would add to its traction.

A slightly deeper line of development involves the application of shared rubrics to moderate assessment tasks or student performance. Moderation in assessment can play out in many ways (Coates 2010) as indeed has been the case in recent higher education initiatives. The moderation of resources has involved rudimentary forms of peer review through to slightly more extensive forms of exchange. Mechanisms have also been developed to help moderate student performance. In the United States, for instance, the AAC&U (Rhodes and Finley 2013) has developed VALUE rubrics for helping faculty assess various general skills. The United Kingdom's external examiner system (QAA 2014) is a further example. Several such schemes have been launched in Australia, including a Quality Verification System and a Learning and Teaching Standards Project, both of which involve peer review and moderation across disciplines (Marshall et al. 2013). This work travels deeper than qualification- or discipline-level specifications, for it involves the collation and sharing of evidence on student performance, often in ways that engage faculty in useful assurance and development activities. Such moderation work is limited, however, in being applied in isolation from other assessment activities and materials. Hence it implies various unsystematic forms of application and amalgamation.

Collaborative assessments build from the developments discussed so far to advance more coherent and expansive approaches to shared assessment. As with other developments addressed here, such work plays out in myriad ways. For instance, medical progress testing in the Netherlands (Schuwirth and Van De Vleuten 2012) involves the formation of shared assessment materials, and administration of these in a longitudinal sense. Other assessment collaborations have focused on the development of shared tasks, analytical or reporting activities (e.g. Edwards et al. 2012; Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia et al. 2014). Such work is impressive as it tends to involve the most extensive forms of outcome specification, task production, assessment administration, analysis and reporting, and at the same time

develop faculty capacity. Typically it travels far beyond anarchical practice to include various forms of articulation, application and amalgamation. Work plays out in different ways, however, shaped by pertinent collegial, professional and academic factors. This can mean, for instance, that extensive work is done that leads to little if any benchmarking or transparent disclosure.

Standardised assessment is easily the most extensive form of development, and would appear to be growing in scope and scale. Licensing examinations are the most longstanding and pervasive forms of assessment, though their use is cultural and they tend to be far more common in the United States than Europe, for example. A series of graduate outcomes tests have also been trailed in recent years, such as the OECD's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) (Coates and Richardson 2012), the United States Collegiate Learning Assessment (Shavelson 2007) and the Proficiency Profile (ETS 2014). Standardised assessments are also promulgated via commercial textbooks (Pearson 2014). As the term 'standardised' implies, these assessments tend to tick many, if not all boxes in the top three rows of the assessment transparency model, though given the external sponsorship of such work, often at the expense of engaging with academics, and as part of the process shifting the workforce beyond anarchic to more sophisticated forms of practice. Though such exogenous intervention may in the longer run inject the shock required for reform, it also tends to balkanise internal from external interests and has little impact on learning or teaching practice.

4 Clearing Barriers to Progress

Clearly, there are myriad reasons why assessment has not been experienced its game-changing modernisation moment. While such reasons are invariably entwined in specific contexts and initiatives common themes can be isolated from review of several projects. These contextual challenges are considered with respect to the factors required to facilitate change. As with the preceding analysis, there is no claim that the list is exhaustive or the analysis universal. Thinking and practice in certain fields and institutions is more advanced than in others.

Obviously, people with vested interests in entrenched approaches are often significant obstacles to change. Today's higher education leaders and faculty have often made significant institutional and individual investments in conventional assessment resources and practices. At the same time, these are the very professionals who are bearing the brunt of quality and productivity pressures. Reshaping their perspective on assessment would open myriad fresh opportunities. This is a challenging point to make, yet remains a task that cannot be ignored.

Relevant professional capability and capacity is required to change assessment practice, which in the field of higher education is in short supply. Higher education itself lacks dedicated assessment professionals, and there appear to be too few assessment specialists with relevant industry experience (Coates and Richardson 2012). As picked up in the conclusion to this chapter, the lack of a professional

assessment community is an obvious impediment to change. Building a new profession of assessment experts or a community of faculty with interest in assessment requires investment by higher education institutions and stakeholders, yet can ultimately be addressed through training and development. This has already happened in certain contexts—the United States higher education and medical education are obvious examples—yet there is a need to broaden practice.

Academics require professional training and development to improve competence in assessment, yet such training has really only evolved over the last few decades, and as noted above, is spasmodic. It would be helpful to cite figures on the incidence of such training among academics, and while it affirms the point, it is regrettable that such figures do not exist. Most academics learn their trade via what could be characterised as an informal apprenticeship, and while competence in assessment is no exception, this does not discount the need for creating more systematic forms of professional development. Improving assessment capability among academics will do much to encourage diversification and excellence.

Inasmuch as academic autonomy, in its various encapsulations, provides faculty with a sense of private ownership over assessment it can be a significant impediment to change. Assessment by its nature is a very public and formal matter, and subject to any material constraints should be as transparent as any other academic activity. Research proposals and papers undergo peer review, and there is no reason why assessment tasks should not as well. Academic autonomy is invariably a contingent rather than absolute phenomenon, and it is likely that training and management could advance more sophisticated conceptualisations of professional practice.

Often the most profound shocks are exogenous to a system. The rise of online technology and policies impelling increasing marketization of higher education are two examples. By definition such shocks are highly significant to advancing education, yet are profoundly difficult to forecast or induce. Ultimately, as in many industries, new technologies and business processes are required to adapt.

Inherent security and confidentiality constraints play an obvious role in constraining assessment reform. The greater the stakes, the greater the security and confidentiality implications. In a host of ways such constraints hinder collaboration and drive-up costs, yet contribute to the value and impact of assessment. Engineering new technologies and assessment processes seems to be the most effective means of addressing such constraints.

As assessment like other facets of higher education becomes increasingly commercial in nature, various business considerations grow as greater obstacles to change. Non-trivial intellectual property considerations may be pertinent, for instance, by hindering the sharing and replication of materials. Working through such obstacles can be expensive and complex, yet in many instances is ultimately resolvable with appropriate negotiations and agreement.

It is likely the assessment of student learning doesn't change given its low priority to institutions (surprisingly). From many perspectives the current system seems 'good enough', and besides pressure from accreditation or employers there can appear to be little impetus to change. Data from assessments are not included in

international institutional rankings, for instance, and academic promotions practices typically favour research over education performance. As these remarks portend, sparking change on this front likely requires an external commercial or regulatory intervention.

Traditional higher education structures can hamper progress, creating confusion about who should own change. Individual faculty focus on assessing particular subjects, departments focus on majors, and students and institutions on qualifications. Fragmentation of curriculum and cohorts can further hinder the formation of coherent assessment schemes. This can create an ownership or agency problem, rendering change problematic. Changing this dynamic typically involves developing and managing more collaborative forms of academic practice.

Academics' belief in the success of current practice is likely to be a major change barrier. Indeed, current practice may well work locally, yet be unsustainable in broader or different contexts. An assessment task may be perfectly aligned with an academic's curriculum and teaching, for instance, yet fail to contribute to the qualification-level information required for external professional accreditation. Institutions have varying ways for leading change in academic practice, which ultimately must resonate with prevailing policies and norms.

In reviewing challenges in changing assessment practice in higher education it appears that change, in summary, hinges on further academic professional development, changed institutional management, ongoing technology and business process development, and external commercial or policy intervention. None of these facilitators are easy to plan or enact. Given the complexity and difficulty of the task to hand, there seems value in pushing on all fronts in synchrony, noting that even by passing through various tipping points, reform is likely to be haphazard and take time.

5 Making Progress that Counts

To yield the best outcomes it is essential to invest constrained time and resources in the most effective ways. What, then, are the major processes involved in assessment, and the benefits and challenges of changing each? In essence, what is the assessment supply and value chain, and how can it be improved? The emphasis on value chain (Porter 1985) as well as supply chain heralds the need to focus not just on technical and operational processes, but also on improving the quality and productivity of assessment for students, institutions and broader stakeholders.

Even the handful of very common forms of assessment play out in different ways, and rather than analyse academic activities such as exams or laboratory assignments, it is helpful to delve deeper to investigate more fundamental underpinnings. Key processes are organised into several phases in Table 1. As a way forward the following analysis estimates the quality and productivity benefits that would arise from change in each phase, and the challenge associated with such change.

Table 1 Generic assessment phases and activities

Planning	Development	Implementation	Analysis	Reporting
Governance	Mapping resources	Designing administration	Collation of results	Production of grades
Leadership	Specifying outcomes	Organising facilities	Marking	Analysis and commenting
Management	Selecting formats	Managing students	Data production	Reporting
	Drafting materials	Administering assessment	Cross-validation	Assessment review and improvement
	Qualitative review	Resolving problems		
	Quantitative review			
	Material production			

Assessment is underpinned by various forms of strategic and operational planning, which leads to specific governance, leadership, and management arrangements. Effective strategic planning is the key to improvement, of course, not least to build greater institutional rather than individual engagement in assessment to ensure higher-order capabilities are being assessed and more coordinated approaches to improvement. Operational planning is an area in which there would appear to be substantial grounds for development. Analysis reported elsewhere (Coates and Lennon 2014) suggests that collegial forms of governance appear most effective, though there is value in strengthening existing practice by adding further points of external reference. As earlier remarks convey, there would appear to be substantial benefit in adopting more advanced management of assessment, which appears to be instrumental in shifting practice beyond boutique forms of practice.

Assessment development hinges on a suite of technical, substantive and practical considerations, but fundamentally involves specification, development, validation of materials, as well as planning for their deployment. This is an area in which there are enormous quality and productivity advances to be made in re-engineering conventional practice. As discussed earlier, work is underway in particular fields and contexts on finding more collaborative and scalable approaches to specifying learning outcomes. This is important, for specifying learning outcomes is the work that links curriculum with assessment. Less advance has been made in improving the specification of concrete assessment tasks, however, with much practice still relying on convention rather than more scientific rationales. Similarly, there would appear to be substantial advance possible regarding assessment task production—feasibility has been demonstrated in large-scale initiatives, but diffusion of new techniques has been low. As well, research findings (see Coates 2014) affirm the need to improve the validation and production of materials. In short, beyond advances regarding definitional work, the development phase of assessment is almost entirely in need of reform.

Assessment implementation, like development, is an area in which reform would contribute significant value to higher education. As noted throughout this chapter, much assessment is delivered in highly dated ways which is particularly surprising given radical changes in other facets of higher education. This application of new technologies would appear to be instrumental for reform, as would better embrace of professional experts and organisations. Alignment with innovations in teaching may be fruitful. If specialist independent organisations can deliver assessment better and cheaper than higher education institutions, then expanding outsourcing will doubtless be seen by university executives as one among other feasible futures for this facet of higher education. As well, on transparency grounds there would appear to be value in moving beyond individual delivery to introduce more peer-reviewed or otherwise quality-assured forms of delivery. Obviously, the implications of such change for academic leadership, academic work and academic learning are in need of profound and imaginative reflection (Coates and Goedegebuure 2012). While such ideas may appear to collide with traditional beliefs about academic autonomy and more recent institutional competition and commerce, other facets of higher education have transformed in far more radical ways to the advantage of higher education.

The analysis and reporting phases involve significant administrative and technical work, and as with the development and implementation phases have the potential to benefit substantially from transformation. Faculty time is a major cost-driver in higher education, and particularly given the lack of specialist expertise regarding assessment, there is value in finding approaches that make the most prudent use of available resources. While various forms of peer review have been deployed via moderation systems that offer a form of cross-validation, for instance, other forms of verification exist that don't require additional faculty resources. Substantial value would be added in any effort that further aligns assessment feedback with teaching and learning practice.

6 Assessment Redesign—A Tactic for Reform

In summary, it is concluded in this chapter that the quality and productivity of higher education would be improved by reforming almost every facet of assessment. Much assessment may be excellent and efficient, but most is not. Clearly, by this analysis extensive change is required which may seem overwhelming to plan or initiate. Much small- and large-scale work has proven the feasibility of change, yet substantial obstacles hinder the diffusion of reform. As the chapter has asserted, this is a difficult and messy area of higher education in which there are no perfect solutions. All approaches have advantages and limitations.

Building a program of work on 'assessment redesign' offers a way forward. Such work could adapt relevant existing institutional and governmental work (Nicol 2014; O'Neill and Noonan 2011; Twigg 2003). To be effective it would need to work across multiple levels and engage faculty, institutional managers and leaders,

and relevant external stakeholders. Such work would need to dovetail with broader curriculum, workforce or other reform, though this is not essential and this chapter has asserted an independent need for assessment reform. To engender broad appeal and necessary faculty engagement assessment redesign must be easy to understand and implement, yet yield meaningful improvement.

Framed within the broader context of teaching and learning, a compelling research paper that resonates with both policy and practice is required to spark modernisation work on assessment redesign. Such work would in essence involve detailing:

- contexts and rationales driving the need for reform, elaborating those in this chapter;
- primary assessment activities such as those in Table 1;
- assessment support activities—typically infrastructure, human resources, technology and procurement;
- robust yet parsimonious processes for identifying cost drivers, and for reducing costs; and
- quality and value criteria, and mechanisms for assurance and differentiation.

To have impact it is essential to carefully articulate the audience for this formative contribution. Clearly, to gain initial traction, the research paper must resonate with policymakers and institution leaders. But it must also resonate with faculty and academic managers, for the discussion in this chapter has affirmed that reform will be muted unless faculty change. Importantly, it is likely that the research paper will need to create and speak to a new audience. Looking broadly across various recent initiatives, serious assessment-related work on learning outcomes has been conducted by government officials, university academics, or researchers working in not-for-profit or commercial firms. Such hybrid arrangements are inevitable in the early days of technological adoption, but in synch with the development of the field it is necessary to produce a new kind of higher education assessment expertise and workforce.

With relevant infrastructure in place it would be feasible to review the primary and support activities with reference to the likelihood of working through each of the obstacles sketched above, and for each activity to estimate the costs and benefits for quality and productivity. Improvement resources could then be channelled in the most effective ways—nominally into reforming those activities where change looks feasible, and is likely to yield greater quality or productivity returns. The context and focus of the review would of course shape the recommendations made, and while these would be highly specific, a suite of case studies and collaborative supports could help streamline designs and plans for change. Building this modernisation program, however, is a substantial undertaking in itself, but given its potential to advance assessment, hence higher education, appears to be a worthwhile investment to make.

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Giving Voice to Non-traditional Students "Walking" the Narative Mediation Path. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Dan Florin Stănescu, Elena-Mădălina Iorga, José González Monteagudo and Maria Francesca Freda

1 Introduction

We live in a knowledge society, where students have to face a series of challenges, such as: the advances in science and technology, the explosion of information available, greater competitiveness, more difficult employability, demographic changes, new forms of (il)literacy, new forms of exclusion, bigger pressures. In order to address these issues, new skills, new attitudes and new tools are required (Baptista et al. 2008).

The societal demand for new abilities, competences and knowledge led not only to a massification of higher education, but also to a need for constant update, nowadays coined as lifelong learning. Starting with the Dearing Report (The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education 1997), the importance of widening participation in higher education has been associated with social and economic benefits for individuals, communities and nations. Besides the instrumental benefits (earning more or getting a better job), participation in higher education was also proved to contribute to personal development, identity and social issues such as improvement of familial and community life (Archer et al. 2003).

D.F. Stănescu (✉) · E.-M. Iorga
National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: dan.stanescu@comunicare.ro

E.-M. Iorga
e-mail: iorgaem@yahoo.com

J.G. Monteagudo
Faculty of Education Sciences, University of Sevilla, Seville, Spain
e-mail: monteagu@hotmail.com

M.F. Freda
University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy
e-mail: fmfreda@unina.it

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The profile of the students entering higher education has changed, as their characteristics, their motives, their expectations and demands vary. In this regard, the category of non-traditional, disadvantaged, adult or mature students is experiencing a growth in numbers worldwide. Moving further, this particular group cannot be seen as homogeneous, since the criteria used in defining or describing non-traditional learners are wide and various. For instance, to Correia and Mesquita (2006), non-traditional students are adult people who: dropped out school, may not have academic qualifications, have been apart from the formal academic system for quite a while, do not have previous experience in higher education, and have a low economic and social background. Other studies portray adult learners as having several responsibilities and commitments at work and at home. Therefore, many of them enrol in low frequency courses, due to factors related to limited time for study or lack of flexibility concerning schedules. They are commonly financially independent (Chao et al. 2007; Conrad 1993; Crawford 2004; Rogers 2002; Shankar 2004).

Also referred to as re-entry students, returning students, mature-aged students or new students (Kenner and Weinerman 2011), non-traditional students are usually described as opposed to traditional or conventional ones. Thus, whereas a traditional student is defined as one that enrols immediately after graduating from high school and completes the degree by the age of 24 (Kimbrough and Weaver 1999; Philibert et al. 2008), the non-traditional one is an individual over the age of 24/25 (Ely 1997; Kenner and Weinerman 2011; Powell 2009).

Similarly, the conventional student can be described as one who is 18–24 years old, resides on university grounds, and attends school full time as a product of the support afforded by the parents, economic assistance from grants and scholarships or both (Kimbrough and Weaver 1999; Philibert et al. 2008). On the contrary, adult learners are identified by a number of specific characteristics, some of which include: age, employment, family (in many cases non-traditional students are parents and/or caregivers), and financial responsibilities associated with it (Kimbrough and Weaver 1999). Concurrently, some studies have included characteristics of inadequate representation in their definition of non-traditional students, seen thus as disadvantaged students: gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, education, religion, finances, language, and lack of information, disability, and socio-economic status (Schuetze and Slowey 2002; Taylor and House 2010).

Differences can be identified as well in terms of motivation and goals. From this point of view, if the majority of traditional-age college students enter higher education while being in Erikson's (1968 as cited in Hermon and Davis 2004) "identity versus role diffusion" stage, the non-traditional students (24 years and older) often seek higher education for personal fulfilment, as they are more focused, and have a self-defined goal prior to reentering academic life (Shankar 2004). However, the level of preparedness, which is the student's level of education or the academic background, is weaker in the case of non-traditional students. And the data regarding the completion rates are consistent with this tendency, since less than one in five non-traditional students complete a degree (Lewin 2011). Similar studies report that the drop-out rate in the case of adult learners is much higher than that of

the traditional student population, as compared to the enrolment rates (Doyle and Gorbunov 2010; Jones 2011). This trend is also common in the U.S., where the latest report of the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (ACSFA 2013) states that around 73 % of U.S. students enrolled in degree programs are considered non-traditional students. And the increase in enrolments in the case of this particular segment of student population is due to such factors as: the number of laid-off employees who return to college (Kenner and Weinerman 2011; Powell 2009) or the increased educational requirements in the job market (Jones 1996). Additionally, findings suggest that, on average, a person's higher education level is associated with a lower probability of unemployment and a higher earning potential (Doyle and Gorbunov 2010; United States Department of Labor 2012). Although the estimates regarding the exact number of non-traditional learners vary, data so far makes it possible to assume that 40–70 % of the current college/university student population is non-traditional and this population continues to grow, as reported by Powell (2009).

In our research we have adopted the definition offered by Johnston (2011), whereby by 'non-traditional', we mean "students who are under-represented in higher education and whose participation in HE is constrained by structural factors. This would include, for example, students whose family has not been to university before, students from low-income families, students from minority ethnic groups, living in what have traditionally been 'low participation areas', as well as mature age students and students with disabilities" (Johnston 2011, p. 5). For instance, in the RANLHE Project (Johnston 2011, pp. 41–47) five groups of non-traditional students were identified:

(a) Students from low income backgrounds—For these students there are likely to be issues about their cultural capital and habitus, and how they interact with the field of higher education, as well as material constraints on HE access and completion. In this group, transition to HE is still seen by low-income groups as an uncertain process which involved considerable material 'risk' and cost. In fact, financial problems are clearly major influences on retention and drop out for low-income students.
(b) First generation students—Recent research has been interested on 'first generation students', normally defined as students with neither parent having previously completed a degree. In this group of students it is emphasised the importance of 'social capital' and the way it interacts with cultural capital and habitus.
(c) Students from minority ethnic groups, immigrants and refugees—These students have more difficult adaptation to HE, as well as more constraint factors about funding studies. Also they can expect little support from her/his family in choice-making or funding higher education. The language is an important factor when the studies are done in a language different from the native context.
(d) Mature Age Students (including part-timers and students with work and family responsibilities)—Again such students often come from low income backgrounds and experience some of the problems already identified for people from low income backgrounds, and indeed first generation students. These

problems are often compounded by additional issues arising from work and family logistics and finance, as well as a lack of confidence in their overall academic, study and IT skills due to a prolonged absence from mainstream study.

(e) Students with disabilities—In response to student disability, some European universities are required to give students with a disability the same opportunities as students without a disability, as well as specific support to increase retention and completion rates in this target group.

Reportedly, up to 45 % of European students are non-traditional learners (Eurostudent IV 2008–11, Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in EU, Higher Education Information System). The 2010 joint progress report of the European Council and European Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training Work Programme calls for developing and implementing innovative approaches to teaching and learning (OJ/C 2010/C, 117/1), while highlighting the need for "more efforts to support the acquisition of key competences for those at risk of educational underachievement and social exclusion" (OJ/C 2010/C, 117/1). Specifically, the Council's conclusions from May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training, stress the necessity to promote "specific programs for […] non-traditional learners" (ibid.).

Among the factors identified as interfering with the non-traditional students level of preparedness are: family circumstances, financial and work responsibilities, lack of psychological preparedness for the higher education level work (O'Donnell and Tobbell 2007; Wyatt 2011). Further, degree utility (the value or utility of the degree for the student), goal commitment and career decision-making self-efficacy were linked to non-traditional students' behaviour in terms of persistence decisions (Brown 2002).

Despite the fact that the ratio between traditional and non-traditional students is being inverted, with the adult learners becoming a significant student population, higher education institutions are yet to accept the challenge of thinking beyond the traditional ways of teaching and developing educational programs. We have to admit the fact that some of the challenges are the same both for traditional and for non-traditional students —technological advances, student-centred approaches, active learning etc. It has been stressed that universities can play an important role as change agents in creating supportive learning environments for adult learners (Blair 2010).

However, research so far has mainly focused on academic attainment, considering differences between traditional and non-traditional students in terms of motivations and aptitudes (Kasworm 1990), learning processes (Smith and Pourchot 1998) or classroom instruction and learning styles (Justice and Dornan 2001). Nontraditional-age students are less confident in the effectiveness of their study strategies and their abilities to succeed in college than traditional-age students (Klein 1990). Older students may need assistance to accurately assess their cognitive and management abilities.

Nontraditional-age students reported more frequent use of two higher level cognitive study strategies: hyperprocessing and generation of constructive

information. Hyperprocessing and generation of constructive information represent relatively sophisticated strategies hypothesized to increase comprehension and integration of information (Christopoulos et al. 1987). In contrast to more passive strategies (e.g. duplicative processing), they require assessment of the cognitive task and active selection of a processing strategy. Such strategies are consistent with a comprehension-focused approach to learning in which adults seek to understand course material (Richardson and King 1998).

Although valuable, these findings do not provide sufficient insights related to the academic experiences of non-traditional students. In this respect, researchers have acknowledged the need for a qualitative approach in order to gain a better understanding of non-traditional students and their multiple roles across family, work and school (Luzzo 1993; Merrill and González-Monteagudo 2010).

Terms like "disadvantaged" or "non-traditional" students are increasingly being used to refer to the new, non-conventional populations coming into higher education who might experience some difficulties adapting to the institution or successfully graduating from university. The first problem in studying the academic performance of underachieving students concerns in the difficulty in defining what is meant by the term "underachieving student". Usually, underachievement is seen as a discrepancy between the level of students' performance and his or her academic potential. Reis and McCoach (2000, p. 157) proposed an operational definition of underachieving students: "students who exhibit a severe discrepancy between expected achievement (as measured by standardized achievement test scores or cognitive or intellectual ability assessments) and actual achievement (as measured by class grades and teacher evaluation)".

The definition of disadvantaged students often includes those belonging to a disadvantaged part of society; migrants, students from migrant households, women, working students and disabled students. It is common to include this category of students in the wider typology of those who are defined as "non-traditional learners" (OJ/C 2010/C, 135/02). These students, besides their disadvantage, may wrestle with several other issues such as, for example, starting their studies later than the average, or being first-generation students enrolled on a full-time basis (Miller and Lu 2003). Despite the differences, the two separate conditions of 'disadvantaged' and 'non-traditional' students share some similarities (Merrill and González-Monteagudo 2010). Moreover, in both categories, students are exposed to the risk of achieving their goals at a later stage in their university career, facing, as a consequence, the risk of dropping out (Choy 2002; Metzner and Bean 1987).

In this context, the INSTALL project promoted inclusive education, equity and social cohesion, while preventing university drop-out of disadvantaged students caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, who need support to fulfil their educational potential, in line with EU Parliament and Council on Key Competences for LL Recommendation (OJ L 394/10). In INSTALL project, disadvantaged factors were measured through academic delay regarding credits to be passed (and then, taking into account constrained factors related to different profiles of NTS, sometimes with students who had two or more constrained factors).

INSTALL project promoted the acquisition of the key competence of Learning to Learn (L2L) at university level, by developing and implementing an innovative methodology—the Narrative Mediation Path (NMP), targeted at the disadvantaged group of students. The Narrative Mediation Path is based on the psychological concept of mentalization (as the ability to understand oneself or someone else's mental state) to develop and enhance L2L. Mentalization enables individuals to become aware of theirs and others', mental states (thoughts, beliefs, emotions, wishes and motivations) and recognize, elaborate and modulate emotions throughout the learning process. Mentalization was conceptualized as essential to empowering individuals to strategically use cognitive actions related to mental states (interpret, reason, anticipate, remember, codify etc.), effectively communicate and interact with others. Prior research has already linked metacognition, which involves the ability to monitor and regulate the use of cognitive activities to academic performance (Donaldson and Graham 1999; Hofer et al. 1998). The reflexive process has the effect of suspending part of the actions of the person, to rethink the direction of the actions in contextual terms, and change perspective trough a repositioning. Similarly, INSTALL aims at opening "the prison" of continuity of experience, providing participants with the opportunity to look at themselves in the group through a mirror and a prism, so that they can reconstruct their identity as students. It offers a setting to suspend actions and to rethink one's positioning in the context, activating in such a way a reflexive (Freda and Picione 2012).

Although research so far in this area remains scarce, most studies are firstly aimed at conceptualizing the term, also known as mentalizing (which explicitly refers to the action as such) or reflective function, since there are a series of other constructs that it overlaps with. Allen (2003) distinguishes between mentalization and empathy, in that empathy is but one facet of mentalizing, whereas Gallese (2001) highlights that empathic responses, originated in the mirror neurons system, imply simulating not only actions, but also others' emotions and sensations. However, mentalizing also involves being "conscious of one's affects, while remaining in the affective state" (Fonagy et al. 2002, p. 96) and perceiving them as meaningful, thus being broader than empathy.

Moving further, mentalization was also associated with psychological mindedness which is "a trait, which has as its core the disposition to reflect upon the meaning and motivation of behaviour, thoughts, and feelings in oneself and others" (Farber 1985, p. 170). But in the case of mentalization, the emphasis is on process not on content, as the goal is to foster the skill in mentalizing and not particularly minding the mental content that results from exercising the skill explicitly (Allen 2003). While one can equally mentalize about past and future, mindfulness is strictly present-centred. Further, whereas mentalizing is a reflective process, mindfulness remains pre-reflective, in so far as it refers to experiencing reality in a perceptual and non-evaluative way (Lakoff and Johnson 2003). Nonetheless, mentalizing is equally a form of imaginative activity, since the mind is in itself imaginative (McGinn 2004; Sartre 2004). Mentalizing, either implicitly or explicitly, involves making sense of behaviour by begetting explanations within creative stories. But mentalizing creatively (Heal 2003) does not express itself exclusively

linguistically, as long as while trying to be aware of others' mental states, one imaginatively recalls visual and other sensory images as one strives to see, feel, and think from others' perspectives. All the same, effective mentalization requires a grounded imagination that is being imaginative without actually entering the imaginary, neither stimulus bond, nor completely losing touch with reality (Allen and Fonagy 2006). The most important contribution in studying mentalization is that of Fonagy and his colleagues (Bateman and Fonagy 2006; Fonagy 1995; Fonagy et al. 2002). They take a step further and define mentalizing taking into account two modes of experiencing: the psychic equivalence mode, which highlights the distinction between inner and outer, fantasy and reality, symbol and symbolized, broadly speaking between the mind and the world, respectively the pretend mode which cuts loose from reality. Conversely, the mentalizing mode is situated in between these two modes. It implicitly or explicitly entails awareness of the mind's intentionality or aboutness, since a mental state is a particular perspective or takes on a given reality. Shortly, while mentalizing, the mind is decoupled from reality while remaining anchored to it (Leslie 1987).

Of course, the most recurrent definition of mentalization has its roots in the philosophy of mind (as cited in Allen 2003; Dennett 1987) and sees it as "a form of mostly preconscious imaginative mental activity, namely, perceiving and interpreting human behaviour in terms of intentional mental states (e.g., needs, desires, feelings, beliefs, goals, purposes, and reasons)" (Allen and Fonagy 2006, p. 54). Likewise, mentalization involves both a self-reflective and an interpersonal component, as it implies seeing yourself from the outside and others from the inside (Allen 2008). Nevertheless, in order to consider others as mental agents (Allen and Fonagy 2006), adopting the intentional stance (Dennett 1987) or the interpersonal interpretative function, is not sufficient. A specific set of cognitive skills that convey the ability to accurately and efficiently attribute mental states to others is also required: perceiving, recognizing, describing, interpreting, inferring, imagining, simulating, remembering, reflecting, and anticipating (Allen 2003).

Scientific evidence demonstrates the key role of narrating as instrumental for the mentalization process, therefore INSTALL defined an innovative methodology based on narration (narrative methodology) to sustain the development of a reflexive/mentalization competence of disadvantaged, non-traditional students' learning experience. INSTALL aimed to developing/enhancing a transversal competence of learning to learn to allow students to build resources in their own environment and turn capacities, knowledge and skills into competences to self-empowerment. That is because, as previous research shows, "during their university career non-traditional students learn to develop and (re/) construct a learning identity in a learning environment, culture and structure which is largely geared towards meeting the needs of younger, 'traditional' undergraduates" (Merill and González-Monteagudo 2010, p. 1).

The current study aimed at gathering first-hand information related to the lived experience of students involved in a specific formative experience within the NMP —*Narrative Mediation Path* that employed different discursive modules to support

them in developing their reflexive competence in order to better adjust to the academic life.

The Narrative Mediation Path (NMP) consists in a group training process targeted to disadvantaged students, based on the psychological concept of mentalization, also known as reflexive competence. NMP combines into one methodology four discursive modules or codes: Metaphoric, Iconographic, Written and Bodily. The four codes are implemented in a cycle of six meetings conducted by Narrative Group Trainers (NGTs) who were trained to use this methodology with disadvantaged students.

Through the four codes, the students are presented with the possibility of mentalizing their own personal way of participating in university education and developing a reflexive competence that allows them to learn to learn in a way which is strategic and adaptive within the university context. Although the mentalization/reflexive competence is the final outcome of the training, in each code a reflexive register is activated about the educational experience of the student at different levels of analysis, in relation to different educational situations and according to the different narrative inputs presented to the group as part of the training.

Predominantly, the training is conceptualized as a circular, reflexive process of mentalization about one's own educational experience, starting from an initial synchronic representation of the educational experience (proposed in the first code), passing through a diachronic analysis of a specific university situation, and finally, returning to the synchronic level in which the same experience is reinvestigated in light of the reflexive and meta-reflexive processes previously activated.

2 Methodology

The data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is designed to enable the understanding of the lived experience of the participant, while providing a systematic approach to conducting qualitative research (Smith and Osborn 2003). Below, each case is examined in great detail as an entity before moving to more general claims. Data were collected through five semi-structured interviews, comprising 11 open questions (Table 1).

The participants—five female students enrolled in the INSTALL Narrative Mediation Path training (Romania in October–December 2012) constituted a reasonably homogenous, purposive sample (Smith and Osborn 2003), sufficient to depict a perspective, rather than represent a population. Participants were encouraged to talk as widely as possible about their experience during the NMP training program delivered within the INSTALL project.

The interviews were audio recorded and verbatim transcripts served as raw data for the subsequent analysis, which followed in detail the four-stage process proposed by Smith and Osborn (2003). The analysis began with a close interpretative reading of the first case, where initial responses to the text were annotated in one

Table 1 Semi-structured interview schedule

• How would you describe/comment on the Install training experience?
• In your opinion which are the strengths and weaknesses of this experience?
• Which modules have been of most use to you? Why?
• Has your participation in the Install course had any specific (±) effect?
• Do you think that your university performance has been affected by your participation in the Install course? How?
• Please tell us about an episode relating to your university life, which has occurred recently, when your behaviour, in your opinion, was influenced by what you have learnt during the Install training course
• How did you feel in that situation?
• What do you think that the other people present thought and felt in that situation?
• How did you face that situation?
• Why did you face it in that way?
• Do you think that your thoughts and emotions relating to that situation have changed? Why?

margin. These initial notes were converted into emergent themes at one higher level of abstraction and recorded in the other margin (Smith and Osborn 2003). The researchers then interrogated the themes to make connections between them, which resulted in a table of super-ordinate themes for the first case, including as well the subordinate themes with identifying information. The process was replicated for each of the five cases. Next, patterns were established cross-case and documented in a master table of themes. Finally, the themes were transformed into a narrative account, while the analytic account was supported by verbatim extracts from each participant.

3 Findings from the Evaluative Study of the NMP Training

The emerging themes, as identified through the IPA analysis undergone, refer to the relational context of the training (common/shared experiences with other colleagues), the change as such (awareness about changes), and the impact of the NMP both in terms of academic and personal life (post training/secondary effects). Concerning the common/shared experiences theme, participants relate about becoming aware of the fact that their stories are not isolated cases:

> "…we have realized that we have common experiences, common feelings and it was nice to talk about various issues related to school, to understand that it is not only me going through such issues… (An, 21)"; "… I have found out a bunch of new and interesting

things about my colleagues… some things that we have in common and we did not know before… (Al, 21)"

Similarly, this discovery is associated with a feeling of alleviation:

"…colleagues were in the room and they have written about the same experience… and for me, to see that someone shares the same feelings about something we did together and further shares it at group level was… very pleasant…(C, 21)"; "…in addition, I have seen my colleagues like that… I see that they have passed through the same situations as I did; therefore I am not a freak… as I used to see myself until then… (L, 21)"

Among the changes most frequently described by participants as made aware of (the second emergent theme), there was the management of exam pressure and a better organization of the learning process, as such:

"…management of emotions at exams. I don't know, suddenly I've become more relaxed… (An, 21)"; "…I knew how to distribute my learning time, how to learn. I've realized that if I don't like a matter a marking of 8 will suffice… (An, 21)"; "…I've organized a bit my learning style, but not only this, the life style itself… I've come to trust myself more in doing that… (L, 21)"

As opposed to those who could not specifically name the shifts taken, finding it "*difficult to put a finger on what actually changed*", some went even further and talked about higher order changes, taking into account the general functioning, irrespective of the context under discussion:

"…it helped me to open myself more… even to organize things… now I don't stress myself that much…(Al, 21)"; "…I've realized that life is beautiful and not so stressful… it helped me see that I am a normal person and I don't need to worry for everything… (Al, 21)"; "… we were able to share our feelings without being ashamed or afraid… I found myself making plans, setting objectives for the next week, next month, even for the next year…(L, 21)"; "…it helped me see myself in another way… to realize what I am doing and how I am doing it…(Lo, 21)"

Finally, when it came to listing the effects of the NMP training, accounts suggest that the intervention met its main goal, since improvements in academic results were reported:

"…this is the first year without any reexamination (C, 21)"; "this time I didn't have problems with exams (L, 21)"; "this semester I managed to get higher marks than before, especially for interim projects… I become keener to take part in those projects (La, 21)."

Further, the NMP meetings seem to have impacted the attending students on a more general level, improving their availability to take part of activities other than university related, doubled by a boost in motivation and self-confidence:

"…this year I was involved in a lot of activities… until the third year is like I did not exist at all, and now I realize that I want to do a lot of things (C, 21)"; "now I am involved in much more activities…I bring new ideas; I get involved in the decision making process (An, 21)"; "…it helped me find my intrinsic motivation… a wish to do things (L, 21)"; "…I feel more self-confident… that I can do things… that's all about… doing stuff (L, 21)"

4 Discussions and Conclusions

Interestingly for policy making, the participants' accounts described a beneficial change due to a relatively simple and gradually intrusive intervention (NMP). Although results cannot always be supported with specific behaviours, all participants reported felling different. The change in the meanings attached to their university life involved a closer sense of social connectedness and a reduced sense of an alienated, isolated, and vulnerable self in the face of the academic challenges faced. Both the participants' sense of self and sense of others were central to their accounts of the experience within the NMP training, as the discursive modules used during the meetings seemed to have touched deeper psychic energies:

> after an INSTALL meeting you arrive at home and you say to yourself - I have to think now…I have to reflect. Why am I here? What did I do with my life?… It makes you think at certain things related to your life, your decisions (An, 21).

As it was stated before, the evolution of society and the labour market has led to greater uncertainty for everyone, and for some there is the risk of intolerable situations of exclusion. To cope with these new scenarios, not only do individuals need large and flexible cognitive maps, but also the tools to develop these maps, to extend them and reorganise them continuously throughout their lifetime.

Therefore, *learning to learn*, defined as the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including the effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups, represent one of the most important competence recognised by the European Union as being crucial in facilitating adaptation to new contexts and promoting inclusion in the world of education and work. This competence includes awareness of one's learning processes and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. Learning to learn requires learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts, such as at home, at work, in education and training.

The proposed methodology (NMP) assumes that in order to develop such a competence in studying it is necessary for students to activate a process of mentalization of their own educative path (Allen and Fonagy 2006; Fonagy et al. 2002; Fonagy and Target 1997), that is, a process aimed at understanding the reasons for one's own and others behaviours in order to act in the university context in a way which is instrumental to achieving academic success. In other words, the mentalization/reflective function allows the learning individual to see and recognise him or herself while acting, and it combines the emotional, cognitive and social dimensions which go across the educational experience, in order to give them a strategically direction (Esposito and Freda 2014). Furthermore, mentalization allows a person to recognise, elaborate on, and regulate their mental states (e.g., emotions, intentions, desires, beliefs etc.) which underlie the learning process (Allen and Fonagy 2006; Fonagy and Target 1997). In this sense, the student can

activate a reflective process of mentalization about what and why he or she learns so that the student can gain a new and more functional direction to their academic performance.

Given the fact that the segment of disadvantaged non-traditional students is increasing, the NMP might represent a valuable method for developing the L2L competence by increasing the reflective function, although it is not suitable to reach larger segments of student cohort (the maximum number of students recommended for the NMP training is 20). This information could also serve as a framework for enriching the knowledge of those who are engaging in social inclusion and student integration program development.

Some key issues about policies and practice to increase retention and support non-traditional and disadvantaged students (Field and Kurantowicz 2014) include the following recommendations: it is necessary to design and implement specific programmes targeting non-traditional and disadvantaged students to minimize drop-out rates and increase completion; the presence of suitable support prior to entry, including information and guidance, preparatory programmes, and visits to universities and induction programmes to integrate new students are highly important; peer group support among students has high positive impact—peer support can benefit students, especially non-traditional students with low cultural capital and strange to university habitus; programmes aimed at staff and service workers to student integration need to be in place; practical support regarding financial support, counselling, child care, specialist study support, including ICT, libraries and learning resources is necessary; the first year of the student experience appears to be particularly important. At the same time, administrative systems can hinder academic success and retention, stressing formal rules and management that could exclude disadvantaged students.

Moreover, in the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 (Veugelers 2001) on the social dimension of education and training, the Council invited the Member States to:

(a) promote widened access by strengthening financial support schemes, such as student loans and means-tested grants
(b) improve completion rates, by strengthening individualized support, monitoring and mentoring
(c) provide adequate incentives for the mobility of students, particularly from disadvantages backgrounds
(d) promote specific programs for non-traditional entrants.

As it was presented, there is increasing policy attention towards addressing access to higher education, social inclusion, retention, non-traditional student support, with a variety of instruments being considered. Nevertheless, many times these instruments are often still deployed in isolation, not optimally combined in a truly systemic policy perspective. Therefore, policies and practices developed to promote and provide the opportunity to participate successfully in higher education —such as NMP—need to be more sensitive to the diversity of students and to the different structures of institutions.

Of course, that much more work still needs to be done in terms of fine tuning the measurements and filling data gaps. Nevertheless, current data provide first hand evidence that policies about non-traditional and disadvantaged students will have a better chance of working if they are listened, giving voice to their experiences, expectations and needs.

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Part V
Social Dimension and Equity of Higher Education

Equity and the Social Dimension: An Overview [Overview Paper]

Alex Usher

1 Introduction

> Ministers affirmed that students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions. Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process – Prague Ministerial Communique on the Bologna Process.

The 2001 Prague Communique is usually considered as the start of Europe's commitment to what has become known as the "social dimension". It was, as can be seen from the rather vague wording of the commitment, a fairly tepid endorsement of the goal of widening participation. It was not until four years later that the Bergen actually clarified that the social dimension involved a "commitment to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background" (Bergen Declaration 2005). Yet, even if the Prague Communique was more of a rhetorical nod to students than a commitment to an active multi-lateral agenda, it nevertheless hinted at a process which could be inclusive of students and their concerns rather than one which was simply state- or institution-focused.

The Social Dimension of education is often summed up as a commitment to "equity" in education. In general, the demand for equity in higher education means two things. First, a desire for the student body to, in some sense, "look like" (i.e. be broadly representative of) the overall population, and second, a desire for educational institutions to have practices and policies which allow non-traditional students (which in this case largely means older students) to enter universities, even if they are not transferring directly from secondary school. In this sense, the "equity" agenda has a good deal of overlap with the "lifelong learning agenda". Hence, this

A. Usher (✉)
Higher Education Strategy Associates, Toronto, Canada
e-mail: ausher@higheredstrategy.com

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excerpt from the 2007 London Communique which added substantially to the Prague and Bergen statements:

> We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations. We reaffirm the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background, while stressing the efforts […] to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity. – London Ministerial Communique on the Bologna Process, 2007.

And there, for the most part, the social dimension has stood for the past seven years. Apart from rhetorical nods here and there, not much has been done to develop this theme within Bologna. This should perhaps not come as a surprise. Nearly all of the policy tools available to policymakers to improve equity lie at the level of the nation-state and not in Brussels; moreover, few if any initiatives in equity require co-operation between nation-states in order to be effective. Under the principle of subsidiarity, there is very little reason to consider educational equity an issue which requires consideration at the European level. The best one can hope for, in effect, is that Europe arrives at a situation where countries are prepared to (a) publicly report on their progress in a regular fashion and (b) learn from one another's experiences in a systemic way.

For Europe, there are three interrelated sets of questions with respect to equity which need to be addressed.

1. What are the core indicators of equity and to what extent can/should they be common across all EU countries?
2. What strategies are likeliest to improve equity in higher education and to what extent are these policies translatable across national borders?
3. In what ways policies on Equity and the Social Dimension are advanced at the European level?

We will deal now with each of these issues in turn.

(i) Equity Indicators and How to Improve Them

The goal of the Social Dimension, as defined in the London Communique, is to ensure that higher education is "reflective of the diversity" of the population. In theory, this is simple enough; however, the lens through which diversity is measured can differ significantly from one country to another. Broadly speaking, though, we can think about equity as primarily being about four areas: socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender and disabilities. Other categories are also possible, but these are the four which are the most common across Europe.

Differential access to higher education by socio-economic background is one equity area which is conceptualized in relatively constant terms across all countries, even if there are differences in categorization and measurement. All European countries—indeed, all countries everywhere—see higher participation rates among students from higher socio-economic backgrounds than from lower one. Virtually all European countries make at least some kind of nod towards the need to be more

inclusive of youth from poorer families, even if they conceptualize the problem of differential access in completely different ways.

The United Kingdom has a series of very sophisticated ways of looking at socio-economic background; most notably, by family income based on postal code data. By virtue of having a centralized application system, the UK is also able to keep track of changes in rates of application and admissions on an annual basis. Few other countries in the European Union have admissions set-ups which are quite as well-adapted to capturing statistics on a national basis; to the extent most countries monitor socio-demographic measures they do so by looking at parental education or occupation through occasional surveys, such as those conducted by the EUROSTUDENT network. Occasionally, one has access to better quality data when large-scale labour force or household surveys happen to be exploited for these purposes. In Poland, for example, Herbst and Rok (2011) managed to construct a participation rate by family income quintile for the entire period 1990–2010 from household survey data. But this kind of project seems to be rather rare in Europe.

Multi-ethnic countries will tend to place a lot of emphasis on measuring participation rates by ethnicity (e.g. UK) unless of course the country has a policy of not asking questions and keeping statistics about race (e.g. France). Sometimes, concerns about equity boil down to a single under-privileged ethnic group (e.g. Roma in Romania). Some countries of course have few minority ethnic groups to speak of (e.g. Poland, Portugal) and so do not measure ethnicity at all. In other countries, central governments may be understandably reluctant to measure social outcomes based on ethnicity/language because of the link to separatism and irredentism (e.g. Spain, Latvia). As a result, there is nothing resembling a common indicator on minority participation in higher education and it is genuinely difficult to see how one could be constructed.

Gender equality is an area where reporting is relatively simple, but a more complicated area in which to discern what "equity" actually means. In nearly all OECD countries, women have over the last four decades predominated over men in higher education, at least as far as undergraduate enrolments are concerned. However, because men still tend to predominate in the management and operations of higher education and indeed in society as a whole, the equity concern tends not to revolve around the relative lack of men. Instead, the equity focus on gender tends to revolve around female participation in a few fields where their enrolment rates are particularly low (typically math, computer science and engineering). Yet, while it should be relatively easy to collect and compare data on women in (for instance) STEM fields, this does not appear to be done on a regular basis.

Finally, students with disabilities are also often on the list of "equity groups", but despite some attempts to put European definitions of "disability" to work, the manner in which this group is defined (and respondents' likelihood of self-identify as disabled) can vary enormously from one country to another. Martin Unger, in a paper presented at the 2014 Bologna Process researchers' Conference in Bucharest, noted that on the basis of Euro-student surveys, the percentage of students in Bologna-zone countries with self-described "study impairments" varied from about 2 to 21 %. This is unlikely to be a true like-to-like comparison; rather, it is a

reflection of differences in national cultures of perceptions of self-impairment. That is to say that what counts as a visual, auditory, mobility or learning difficulty in one country may not count as such in another, based on local custom and practice.

The trickiest aspect of having student bodies "reflect the diversity" of populations is with respect to age. Clearly, universities are not going to ever reflect societal demographics on an age-basis; even where they can and should be made more welcoming to mature learners, their primary focus will always be as youth-serving institutions, helping secondary-school leavers get the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in society and in the labour force. EU states do publish relatively consistent statistics about participation rates of students aged 25 and over; however, interpreting them is far from easy, given the patchwork way in which systems (a) offer part-time studies, (b) offer distance, blended or e-learning, (c) recognize prior learning. In addition, it needs to be recognized that very different national cultures have emerged with respect to employers' willingness to allow workers to return to school (in Scandinavia this is seen as quite natural; in south-eastern Europe much less so). All of this makes it difficult to know what represents a "good" rate of participation for mature students.

The creation of a set of core indicators to measure progress in all of these areas, as mandated by the Leuven Ministerial Communique, obviously poses a conundrum. Measures need to be not just implementable across countries with differing statistical capabilities and higher education data systems, but also be common across all countries. This creates practical difficulties because of the differences in statistical capacity and statistical concepts across member states. Participation rates by gender might be a trivially easy indicator to construct, but indicators such as ethnicity, socio-economic background and disability are all fraught with difficulties because of some quite natural differences in the way countries approach this issue.

However, it is fair to ask whether or not commonality of indicators is as important to the social dimension as it is sometimes made out to be. If the purpose of a core set of indicators is to compare one country with another as well as progress over time, then it is important to have indicators which are consistent across all jurisdictions. On the other hand, if all that is desired is to measure each country's progress over time—and in practice, this is likely all that individual national governments would ever want to measure—then the possibilities for the creation of indicators opens up enormously. Freed from the need to harmonize definitions across national borders, each country could simply pick whatever indicators make sense from its own statistical systems and report on them annually.

For instance, with respect to ethnic identity, the UK might want to measure the participation of Black and South Asian youth, Romania might wish to measure participation rates of Roma youth and ethnically homogeneous Poland might not want to measure ethnicity at all. With respect to disability, one country might measure participation rates only of youth with physical disabilities, another might measure physical and visual/aural disabilities, whereas a third might have a more all-encompassing definition which also includes various types of learning disabilities. On socio-economic strata, one country might wish to measure participation

rates by income quintile, another by parental occupation and a third by rural versus urban participation gaps.

Such an approach would have the advantage of allowing each nation to measure progress while at the same time not making overly-facile comparison across countries in very different positions. It also has the benefit that for the most part, it could be implemented relatively quickly and with little change in national statistical systems.

(ii) Strategies to Improve Equity and Their Translatability

Strategies to widen access to higher education can essentially be broken down into three types: those that are designed to eliminate barriers in the educational pipeline prior to tertiary education (broadly, what could be called "early interventions strategies"), strategies to reserve places for under-served groups, and strategies that are designed to ease financial barriers to higher education for students who have already been declared eligible for it.

Early Interventions Strategies. In Europe, the classic program of this type is the Aim higher program which existed in the UK between 2004 and 2011 and was designed to raise awareness, aspirations and attainment amongst young people from various under-represented groups. In America, there are hundreds of pre-college Outreach programs; many of these are local initiatives but there are also the very large nationally-funded programs which are collectively known under the rubric of TRIO.

Among the various tactics used in these programs are:

- Raising awareness of the benefits of higher education among youth from low-income families, especially those where no family members have previously attended higher education
- Helping young people clarify career goals and choose appropriate paths in upper secondary schools so that they have the necessary pre-requisites to attend a higher education institute of their choice
- Using of mentors to raise career aspirations and provide social and emotional support/encouragements
- Improving study skills and providing tutorial support to lower-income youth so that their academic achievement rises to the point where they can gain entrance to and succeed in higher education.
- Assisting students in choosing between higher education providers and in making applications both to institutions and to financial aid providers
- Promise of guaranteed financial assistance if/when student attends higher education.

What all of these strategies have in common is an understanding that educational inequality sets in long before tertiary education and that this inequality is caused largely by gaps in cultural and academic capital between middle-class and lower-income families. These gaps, as we know, are deeply entrenched and affect not only attitudes and habits towards schools, but also basic cognitive skills as well (most famously, Hart and Risley (2003) showed that children from high-income

families in the US heard nearly 30 million more words from their parents over the course of their first four years of life than children from lower-income families, with predictable effects on their relative readiness to learn once they arrived at primary school). What these early intervention programs therefore seek to do is in effect generate extra cultural and academic capital in a setting outside the home, so that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds can compete on a more equal basis with middle-class ones.

It should be noted that adoption of these kinds of strategies are dependent on their being a relatively clear and open academic path towards higher education throughout secondary school, as there is in the mostly Anglophone countries where these kinds of program are most common. Where secondary schools are more rigidly streamed from an early age (as they are for instance in Germany), these kinds of interventions are less effective because there is a structural barrier preventing lower-income students in more vocational streams from easily moving up into the Abitur stream.

A second strategy for increasing equity is the use of reserved places at university for specific societal groups. These have been deployed extensively in India (for scheduled castes) and in Brazil (for Blacks); in both cases, public and private institutions have been ordered to set aside a very large number of places for these underserved groups. Generally speaking, this approach has not been favoured in developing countries for two reasons. The first is that it is seen as politically divisive unless the number of places being set aside is very small (see Cismaru et al. 2015, which describes exactly such a program for Roma students in Romania). The second reason is that there are concerns about effectiveness; this approach more or less ignores all the insights about cultural and academic capital which underpin the early interventions strategy, and simply assumes that students from disadvantages backgrounds will be able to thrive if given a place. The result often is simply that students arrive underprepared and are hence at high risk of non-completion.

The third strategy relies on removing financial barriers to students who are admitted to higher education. Note that this strategy by definition cannot affect any educational inequality which has occurred earlier in the education pipeline. That is, it can only help those who have made it through to the point of entry. This fact is one of the key fault-lines in the debate on how to achieve the third strategy: if the student population is already skewed towards the better-off section of society because of educational inequality in primary/secondary school, to what extent do high subsidies to learners constitute a regressive use of resources?

Broadly speaking, there are two theories about the nature of financial barriers and how they act to prevent students from participating in higher education. The first is that various types of fees and costs *reduce the rate of return* below the point where students feel it is worth their while to go. In this situation, the only correct remedy would be to reduce net costs either through grants or lower tuition fees. The second is that various types of fees and costs *create liquidity problems* for students. That is, students feel that education remains a positive investment, but lack the cash-on-hand to meet the fees and costs. Here, the correct policy response would be to introduce loans in order to help students meet the short-term liquidity restraint.

Complicating this somewhat is the fact that not all students may perceive financial barriers in the same way. For some, a rise in costs (either in terms of fees or a change in the cost of living) might create a rate of return issue, while for others it might only cause a liquidity issue. In which case, does it make more sense for governments to offset rising costs with loans or grants? Clearly, there are some efficiency arguments which come into play here, and the proportion of students who view it each way is not irrelevant to determining the correct policy; unfortunately, few if any countries bother to investigate this kind of question before formulating policy.

Before examining what the evidence tells us about policy and equity, it is worthwhile reviewing some of the difficulties that exist in terms of being able to make definitive statements about "what works". There are four major problems when it comes to discovering "what works" in terms of equity in higher education. The first is the ability to collect adequate data, the second is the ability to properly attribute cause and effect, the third is the generalizability of particular results and the fourth is a tendency to re-define the term "equity" when results become inconvenient.

To begin with the problem of data: despite the rhetorical significance governments lay on equity in higher education, very few countries systematically collect data annually on any key equity criteria apart from gender. Not all countries in the European Union systematically collect data on the socio-economic backgrounds of students and when they do it is often simply to record parental occupation, which without corresponding information on occupational structure in the economy as a whole is not very useful in calculating participation rates. Data on ethnicity—at least in countries which have substantial minority ethnic populations—is also absent more often than not. Data on completion rates is available only in a minority of EU countries, and of these fewer than a half-dozen provide completion-rates data on sub-populations such as socio-economic backgrounds (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014). As a result, when policy changes are made which might affect equity, there is little evidentiary basis on which to evaluate reforms. Where high-quality policy evaluation has been done (e.g. the work of Nielsen or Baumgartner and Steiner), it has tended to come through datasets entirely unrelated to education.

This problem of good national data is, it should be noted, of significantly more importance in Europe than it is in other parts of the world. In North America, where there is considerably more policy variation within states (because of the federal nature of both Canada and the United States) and across institutions (because of wider limits on institutional autonomy), deficiencies of national datasets can be made up through local surveys. In Europe, where national policies tend to be more uniform and policy entrepreneurialism at the institutional level is rarer, the policy "experiments" which one might want to evaluate can often only be looked at through national-level data.

The issue of cause and effect is somewhat more difficult. Equity-affecting policy decisions are rarely taken in a vacuum, and isolating the effects of one particular policy can be difficult. A similar example would be where a government in dire

financial straits both cut public financing to universities and imposed a tuition fee increase (for example, in Canada during the latter half of the 1990s or Spain during the post-2008 austerity period). In such a situation, if one were to find a diminution of equity (e.g. a fall in the number of low-income students), it might be impossible to determine the cause. Did equity fall because tuition increased? Or did equity fall because cash-strapped institutions admitted fewer students and in so doing unwittingly push out more low-income students? Without direct access to application files—which in many places would be quite difficult to arrange—this would be a difficult question to answer. National-level indicators are very difficult to interpret in this respect; ample micro-data sets are also required in order to look at the policy effects in detail.

Occasionally, variations in policy within a state can provide valuable evidence about what works in equity. Data from the University and College Application Service in England shows that in that country, participation rates for students from lower-income backgrounds have been rising steadily for over a decade now and that the key years of 2006 (the year in which tuition rose from 1000 to 3000 GBP) and 2012 (when it rose again to 9000 GBP) do not show much deviation from this trend. On the surface, this might seem to be grounds for saying that rises in fees do not affect equity in participation; however, one might with reason argue that perhaps participation rates would have risen faster if tuition had not risen. This is a fair point; however, one could easily check this by looking at changes over time in low-income student participation rates in neighbouring Wales (where the English system of 2006 was adopted but not the 2012 system) and Scotland (where tuition remains free). These three countries share many educational data systems (including applications data), and share a great deal in common in terms of economics and educational structures; variations in policy between the three countries can therefore easily be exploited as a form of natural experiment. In this particular case, it turns out that participation by low-income students did not rise any faster in Scotland or Wales over this period than it did in England; moreover, the overall rate of low-income student participation is substantially higher in high-fee England than it is in no-fee Scotland.

Another possible strategy for trying to work out effects of equity policies is to compare international cases; for example: do countries with zero tuition do better at attracting low-income students than those with tuition? But this strategy is quite problematic. In our England/Scotland/Wales example, the countries shared a system with respect to measurement of participation by underserved groups; such a situation is rarely possible in other international comparisons. Also, when trying to make international comparisons all sorts of institutional differences make understanding the vectors by which equity might be affected by different sets of national policies very difficult.

Beyond the issue of identifying the effects of specific policies is the larger issue of determining whether or not such a policy would have similar effects in a different institutional setting. Many policies which look attractive and produce strong results in one place may not work very well elsewhere. For example, small, targeted programs of student grants programs might be more effective in countries where

they are complemented by a generous loan system (e.g., the UK) than in a country where loans are non-existent (e.g. Romania). This is of course to some degree a matter of trial and error, but it underlines the need for research to not only identify "what works", but "why it works".

A final point of note here is that the definition of "what works" is much less fixed than it seems. Superficially, one might think it simply meant any policy which is consistent with higher rates of participation or completion for students from under-represented groups. But when results are politically unwelcome, one frequently finds that the definition of "what works" changes. For instance, to take the example of minority ethnic groups in the UK, student campaigners tend not to applaud the fact that Black and Asian participation rates are up; rather, the fact that these students will begin their working life with considerable debt is evidence of inequity, as it may limit their choice of career or place of residence. Such restrictions on graduates are of course valid policy concerns, but they stretch the definition of equity considerably.

With those caveats out of the way, we can look specifically at the kinds of programs which have a positive track record in terms of improving equity. With respect to early intervention programs targeted on under-represented groups, at a very general level, observers have noted that the most successful programs are the ones which (among other things) are highly intrusive (i.e. require frequent contact with young people), set high academic expectations, and empower students and parents and help them believe that they can succeed (Swail et al. 2012). In general, the programs which are most successful seem to be the more intensive ones, which combine some elements of academic support, mentoring and promises of financial support. Interventions which only attack a single one of those areas are less likely to promote access, though it is possible they may be more cost effective. One widely-noted randomized field experiment (Bettinger et al. 2012) involved offering low-income parents a chance to have their child's financial aid form filled out by a tax professional and to receive information on both tuition at nearby schools and their children's likely aid package. The result was an 8 % increase in college enrolment rates among the treatment group compared to the control group.

With respect to reserving places for under-represented groups, the evidence from India and Brazil is that this system does increase access for under-represented groups in a brute-force kind of way (Carnoy et al. 2013), but there has been little follow-up with respect to subsequent success for these groups. However, as the example of the former socialist countries in Europe can attest, large-scale reservation of places for universities based on social background is a recipe for breeding cynicism about the quality of higher education.

With respect to financial interventions, there is a fair bit of research from the United States which looks at student price-response (Dynarski 2003; Heller 1997; McPherson and Schapiro 1991; Leslie and Brinkman 1987)—that is, at the overall elasticity of demand—some of which also looks specifically at student price-response among underserved groups (mainly lower-income students. Broadly speaking, the American research says that a change in net cost of $1000 increases enrolment by 3–5 % points and that elasticity of demand is greater among students

from lower-income backgrounds. In part because of the significant overlap between issues of class and race in the US, it is generally accepted that African American students (and to a lesser degree Latino ones) are likely to be more sensitive to changes in net price than the white students (St. John et al. 2005).

However, evidence from Europe has been more equivocal. Dearden et al. (2014), on the basis of a 2004 policy reform in the UK, calculates that a £1000 increase in maintenance grants results in a 3.95 % increase in participation rates among lower-income Britons (eligibility was restricted to those with under £22,500/p.a. in family income). Neilsen et al. (2008) use a Danish late-1980s student aid reform which mainly benefitted upper-income students to show that a $1000 change in aid increases participation rates by a little over 1 % (it was hypothesized that the smaller price response effect in Denmark was due to the fact that costs were lower to begin with). Baumgartner and Steiner (2006), applying similar techniques to a 2001 improvement in the German Bafog system, found insignificant effects of a change in costs.

Elsewhere in the world, regular rises in fees in Australia have not stopped the number of Aboriginal students in universities increasing tenfold; similarly, the introduction of fees in New Zealand in the early 1990s did not prevent a massive increase in Maori enrolment rates. Application and enrolment rates of Blacks and Asians in the UK actually rose after both the 2006 and 2012 fee hikes, and preliminary evidence after the 2012 fee hike showed that among traditional-aged students, the rise in fees of almost €7000 per year had no effect on participation rates from young people from the poorest income quintile. Where fee rises have tended to show some significant negative impacts—particularly in England and to a lesser extent Canada—is among older students (i.e. lifelong learners) (Orr et al. 2014). Wherever data is available that allows us to look at the effects of fee increases on older students, the results seem to be the ones predicted by Human Capital Theory (Becker 1964); namely, that older students tend to be more price-sensitive than younger students, both because they have less time in which to earn back their investment and because their opportunity costs tend to be higher than for 18–19 year-olds.

The role of student loans in promoting equity is a more complicated area to study. Most American studies actually do not deal with this question directly because (i) the fact that loans are at the base of the system makes it difficult to generate useful counterfactuals through natural experiments and (ii) multivariate analysis is difficult to conduct because the amount of loans a student has almost always correlates directly with other observable characteristics (e.g. family income), which means loan amounts can never be considered fully exogenous to a model (Day 2008). There are several European countries (e.g. Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands) where loans are delivered in a way where they are not necessarily co-variate with need, but no studies on the effects of loans have been conducted there.

Arguments are frequently made with respect to the fact that loans create debt, and debt dissuades students from attending through debt aversion; the argument is also frequently made that debt aversion is disproportionately high among

underserved youth (Orfield 1992). However, empirically this has proven difficult to sustain because it is difficult to determine for certain why students choose *not* to do something (in this case, borrowing). Only three studies exist which have proven the existence of debt aversion in experimental fashion. Two of these (Caetano et al. 2011; Field 2009) asked students to choose between two types of assistance which were identical in value but which were framed in such a way as to make one option seem more likely to lead to indebtedness (e.g. offering students a loan vs. offering them a "human capital contract") and found students somewhat more likely to prefer the "non-loan" option. In the third (Johnson and Montmarquette 2011), an economic lab experiment which offered binary choices (e.g. $400 education loan vs. cash now, $200 education grant vs. cash now) that were subsequently actually paid out to the student participants, respondents were found to only be very lightly biased towards grants over loans. Moreover, students from "underserved groups" (e.g. low-income, Aboriginal) were no more likely than average to display loan-aversion.

From a non-experimental perspective, there is the sheer weight of evidence from the 2012 UK fee hike. This, as has been pointed out elsewhere (Orr et al. 2014) was simply unprecedented in size—increases of an average £5000 (roughly €7000) per year. And yet, while this increase had significant effects on mature and part-time students, it had virtually no effect on traditional students, even among the lowest-income groups. The resilience of low-income students in the face of much higher prices was not because they suddenly had an extra £5000 in their pockets; rather, it was because under the national student loan program they were able to borrow this entire amount, with no questions asked.

Beyond simple issues of student costs and student debt, there are also larger system-design issues at play. Countries with larger student bodies also tend to have slightly more inclusive student bodies (Mateju 2004). This is presumably because smaller systems have filtering mechanisms, such as academic merit, which tend to systemically exclude underserved groups who—as we noted earlier—are often disadvantaged from very early on in the educational process, and so are disproportionately filtered out. But, in turn, increasing system size usually (outside Scandinavia, anyway) requires the introduction of new revenue sources such as tuition fees which of course are themselves thought to discourage participation. In some countries, though, it is clear that the introduction of tuition fees clearly *expanded* participation; in Poland and South Korea for instance, much of the vast wave of participation growth which occurred in the 1990s was only possible because of the existence of fully tuition-reliant private universities (Orr et al. 2014). Had there been no tuition, the hundreds of thousands of students who attended these schools would not have had the chance to attend higher education. Elsewhere, to the extent that participation may have been discouraged, it was a question of exchanging one form of discouragement (merit-based restrictions on access) for another (financial). And as systems grew, so too by and large did participation from underserved groups.

There is no easy summary from this analysis. It is important, obviously, to counter financial barriers. But doing so without first or simultaneously breaking

down systemic barriers which block the poor and underserved before they finish secondary school risks spending a lot of money to send an already-privileged group of youth to higher education. In Scandinavia, low levels of income inequality and high levels of spending on higher education have led to highly equitable outcomes. But other countries have managed similar outcomes more cheaply (to the taxpayer, if not the student) with a mix of tuition, loans and grants.

The correct mix of policies is unlikely to be the same everywhere. Student loans have been very successful at promoting wider access in some countries, but they are likely to be problematic in places where the time between graduation and starting a full-time job capable of supporting loan repayment is very long (e.g. Southern Europe). Student grants can be a force for equalizing participation if they are correctly targeted and appropriately funded; where they are badly targeted and poorly funded—as in Romania (see Alexe et al. 2015)—they are as likely to reinforce inequality as reduce it. To put it more simply: context matters. And so, from the perspective of the development of the Social Dimension agenda, what is required to improve equity is not simply policy borrowing, but policy learning. Not just an understanding of "what works", but "where it works" and "why it works". In turn, this requires the development of much more evidence-based and deliberative kinds of forums involving both researchers and policy makers than have yet been created under the Bologna process.

(iii) **How can Equity and the Social Dimension be advanced at the European level?**

As the article by Kaiser, Maoláin and Vikmane in this volume makes clear, it is easy enough to become frustrated with the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process. Early hopes that governments might commit themselves to specific targets have been dashed. But, to be frank, some of these hopes were always somewhat far-fetched. Education is a national responsibility and there is no sign that national governments are in any way interested in ceding power or responsibility in this area. Bologna is not the European Commission; there was never any real prospect that it would carry with it mandatory attainment goals of the sort that one sees embedded in the Ex-ante conditionalities contained in the European Union's Structural and investment Funds.

There may, as noted earlier in Sect. 1 of this paper, be room for progress on common reporting on progress on equity if a slightly more relaxed attitude towards indicators is taken. Allowing each country to design its own way to measure participation or completion for various equity groups (e.g. socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, disabilities, gender, and mature learners) would speed up the process of arriving at workable indicators; moreover, by creating a set of indicators which could be used to examine national trends over time but which could not be used (or at least not easily used) to make comparisons between states, it would lessen the apprehensions of those countries who fear that the main outcome of reporting would be that countries with weaker records would simply be abused for poor performance.

But at a deeper level, the likeliest route along which the Social Dimension may advance is to make it less about reporting and more about learning from peers. One possible way of doing this is the process of PL4SD country reviews, described ably in this volume by Orr and Mishra (this volume). The PL4SR process involves having an outside group of higher education experts look at how opportunities for students are structured at four key points (before entry to higher education, at entry, during studies, and exit/transition to the labour market) and produce a kind of formative evaluation about how current policies and structures might be adjusted in order to produce more favourable outcomes. More summative types of evaluations might be possible, but only after a sufficient number of such reviews have been done in order and clusters of countries in similar situations with similar opportunity structures had been identified, so that benchmarking and comparisons could be made only among countries in substantially similar circumstances. As with reporting on indicators, the fact that participation does not lead to invidious and politically damaging comparisons is key.

But PL4SR is not the only possible method of peer learning; as noted in the previous section, there is a crying need for more evidence-based and deliberative forums to understand what kinds of policies work in various circumstances. Europe is an enormous policy laboratory in which experiments are occurring all the time; it is a shame that this resource is currently not being exploited. Regular forums of national experts to discuss new initiatives in each country and their results could make an enormous contribution to our collective understanding of effective policies to promote equity. Continuation of support to Eurostudent, which provides probably the best snapshot of data on student life and the characteristics of the student body, would also be important. A modestly-funded European Observatory on Equity in Higher Education might be able to provide assistance to researchers in different countries who are working to quantify the effects of policy changes. Even providing seed funding for historical examinations of policy using existing household survey databases (for example, of the sort conducted by Herbst and Rok in Poland) would be massively beneficial. And once again, these are all examples of activities which can promote learning without necessarily inviting potentially embarrassing comparisons of national levels of achievement.

2 Conclusion

Over the past two Bologna Ministerial meetings, three commitments were made. The 2009 Leuven Communique promised that Ministers would "*set measureable targets to widen participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade*". That didn't happen. In the 2012 Bucharest Communique, ministers promised that they would "*adopt national measures for widening overall access to quality higher education*". Only nine member states chose to do so formally (Kaiser et al. 2015), though other ministers presumably took such action on equity as they would have done had the

Communique never been adopted. They also promised in the Bucharest Communique to undertake the development of a system of voluntary peer learning. That they have done in the form of the PL4SR process.

There is a lesson here for campaigners for the social dimension. To the extent that Ministerial commitments on the social dimension are seen as opportunities to hold governments to account for their actions (or lack thereof), ministerial action will not be forthcoming. This is not because governments are uninterested in equity; it is simply because governments which signed on to the Bologna process did not do so in the expectation that their educational policies would be held up to continual critique. The speed with which PL4SR was embraced is instructive: to the extent that the Social Dimension can be cast as a learning exercise, or even as a form of technical assistance from which all governments can benefit, it will be embraced by governments.

Admittedly, casting the Social Dimension in this way likely means that it will be of more relevance to countries with weaker economies and less-developed higher education systems than it would be to, say, the UK or France. But this would seem to be a small price to pay given the benefits of turning the Social Dimension into an actual implementable policy theme.

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No Future for the Social Dimension?

Florian Kaiser, Aengus Ó. Maoláin and Līva Vikmane

1 Introduction

The social dimension of the Bologna Process has come to a turning point. In the last fifteen years the social dimension has progressed little in comparison to every other headline area of the Bologna Process, and the member states of the European Higher Education Area (henceforth EHEA) have demonstrated less proactive commitment to developing it. Seven successive ministerial communiqués (2001–2012) have celebrated progress on many fronts, bemoaned uneven developments in others, and largely repeated with more or less nuanced rhetoric the Prague communiqué's distant goal to "take account of the social dimension of higher education." Anecdotally, ministers seem to loath to articulate measurable goals in the social dimension or to imply any super-national responsibility for the makeup of their student populations. This article addresses the question of what future there is for the social dimension in the EHEA at the historical development of the social dimension (the past), current implementation of the social dimension (the present), and how it might develop over the coming years (the future).

This article aims to provide a provocative input regarding the future development of the social dimension in the hope of stimulating debate. As a foundation to that, we hope to contribute to an understanding of the historical development and

F. Kaiser (✉)
University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
e-mail: florian.kaiser@liverpool.ac.uk

A.Ó. Maoláin
The National Union of Students in Norway, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: nso@student.no

L. Vikmane
The Student Union of Latvia (LSA), Riga, Latvia
e-mail: liva.vikmane@lsa.lv

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current state of the social dimension. The social dimension should be understood, in brief, as the strategies and measures taken to mirror the diversity of society at large within higher education (European Higher Education Area, EHEA 2007) Europe is facing considerable change: increasing mobility within Europe and a growing diversity, or even 'super-diversity' (Crul et al. 2013). At the same time, rising inequality (OECD 2014b), and increased risk of poverty and exclusion (European Commission 2013). The demand for a sustainable and efficient social dimension of higher education is still a given, though the motivation to focus on a social dimension might have changed over the years since the concept's introduction.

1.1 The Past: Historical Development of the Social Dimension

Some time before the Bologna Process began in earnest, the philosophy of the as yet to be named social dimension had already gained some currency in policy discussions. The Council of Europe's Recommendation on Access to Higher Education defined 'access' in the broader sense that the social dimension inherited, i.e. "widening […] participation in higher education to all sections of society, and […] ensuring that this participation is effective" (CoE 1998).

The first inclusion of the social dimension in the Bologna process (EHEA 1999) came in the Prague Communiqué (EHEA 2001). There the "Ministers […] reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process" (EHEA 2001). As stated in the Communiqué, the initial push to include the social dimension on the agenda of the Bologna process came from students (EHEA 2001). Consequently, it is important to analyse the intentions of student representatives involved in the process at that time.

Dr. Manja Klemenčič, Director/Secretary General (1999–2001) of the European Students' Information Bureau (ESIB), recalls ESIB's preparation for the Ministerial Summit in Prague where they were to be formally acknowledged as the only organisation representing students involved in Bologna process (Klemenčič 2012), having been excluded among other stakeholder organisations in the Bologna conference. ESIB's second European Students' Convention in Gothenburg addressed a wide range of policy concerning the implementation and future of the Bologna process, including the social implications of higher education, mobility, quality assurance and accreditation. The «Student Göteborg Declaration» (ESIB 2001) summarized the key findings of that meeting and was included in the annex of key reports submitted to Ministers alongside other inputs. The declaration highlighted in particular that "although the Bologna Declaration pointed out the basic aspects of the European dimension of higher education, it failed to address the social implications the process has on students […] and that education should be considered a public good, [… and there is a …] need to remove both academic and social, economic and political obstacles […]". The Prague Communiqué (EHEA 2001)

directly echoed the Göteborg declaration when it stated: "Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process."

The context of the time must be taken into consideration here, as ESIB (like many other actors in the education policy sphere) had become much occupied during the 1990s with attempting to contain the influence of the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) trade agreement of 1994 (World Trade Organisation, 1994), which marked the real beginning of the so-called commodification of higher education. GATS directly links education within a legally binding document to the labour market and economic interests. Goals such as the improved recognition of degrees harmonisation of the EHEA are in line with GATS targets: "Member may recognize the education or experience obtained… Such recognition which may be achieved through the harmonization" (GATS 1994). Even access to education has a relation to GATS as "A Member…shall afford adequate opportunity for other interested Members to negotiate their accession…Where a Member accords recognition autonomously, it shall afford adequate opportunity for any other Member…" (GATS 1994).

As GATS is an agreement with a focus solely on economics and trade, it can be seen to contradict the social dimension as social needs are not recognised on the same level as economical interest. The very fact that the ministers involved in the Prague communiqué made a clear statement that Higher Education «should be a public good and will remain a public responsibility» (EHEA 2001) is a clear signal, and the social dimension as an element of this non trade-oriented and holistic aspect of the EHEA is more understandable.

The Göteborg Declaration was explicit in asking: "…you, the ministers responsible for higher education, explicitly to write a social dimension into the implementation of the Bologna Declaration." In the Prague Communiqué it can be seen that this call was heard, though perhaps with an eye to the specifically European dimension of the process. At that point, mobility was the particular focus of the social dimension: "[…] Ministers encouraged the follow-up group to arrange seminars to explore the following areas: […] the social dimension, with specific attention to obstacles to mobility […]". The social dimension within the Prague Communiqué was not seen as an independent action line. Rather, it was much more an aspect which refers to the targets of creating a European dimension within higher education, and as well the competitiveness and attractiveness of the EHEA. The introduction of the social dimension within the Prague Communiqué can be understood as mean to achieve a "lasting employability" and therefore still follows the economic logic of GATS, although the students intended to counterbalance this logic.

The Berlin communiqué (EHEA 2003) made little new ground in relation to the social dimension, merely reasserting the ministers' commitment to it, while drawing particular attention to gender equality, and (in what will become a recurring theme) drawing attention to the need for more comparable data on the social and economic situation of students.

In a somewhat more declaratory tone, the social dimension was further developed in the Bergen Communiqué (EHEA 2005) where the ministers committed: "[…] to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background." This commitment is made more generally to the social dimension of higher education as a whole.

More notably, by delegating a responsibility to the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to collate data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries, the ministers had set an expectation that, at the following conference in London in 2007, they would be presented a report on the progress towards this goal: "We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data […] on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above." (EHEA 2007).

The follow-up group delegated the tasks specific to the monitoring and developing of the social dimension to a newly established working group on social dimension and data on mobility of staff and students. The terms of reference for the working group (at least those immediately relevant to the social dimension) were the following:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process;
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries;
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking (European Higher Education Area/Government Offices of Sweden 2007).

The working group's report to the London conference of 2007 presented several possible actions to foster the embedding of the social dimension in the systems of participating countries, including measures to promote equal opportunities and equal participation, widen access and participation in higher education. The requirement for national action plans for widening participation in higher education was also taken into consideration in the London meeting.

The follow-up group's own mandate to the working group in 2005 to distil a definition of the social dimension from the pre-existing ministerial communiqués to date finally reached the most widely cited definition we have for the EHEA's social dimension in the London communiqué: "We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations. We reaffirm the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background, while stressing the efforts […] to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity." (EHEA 2007).

Among the priorities for the following period until the ministerial conference in 2009, action plans and measures on the social dimension were introduced, as well as the intention (once again) to "[…] develop comparable and reliable indicators

and data to measure progress towards the overall objective for the social dimension and student and staff mobility in all Bologna countries."

The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communique (EHEA 2009), adopted in April 2009, emphasises equitable access and completion. A considerable step forward, rhetorically at least, was made in this communique, as each Bologna country is urged to: "[…] set **measurable targets** for widening overall participation and increasing participation of underrepresented groups in higher education […]." (authors' emphasis). Very few members of the EHEA had begun work on the plans by the time of the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve conference (European Students' Union ESU 2009).

Following the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve conference, the BFUG delegated its work on the social dimension to a more narrowly defined «social dimension working group» for the next three years. In contrast to the terms of reference of 'the working group of social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries' (EHEA 2005), the terms of reference for the newly established 'social dimension working group' were more specific. The mandate was aiming to provide (note, the mandate this time is directly to the working group) comparable information on practices and data on the implementation of the social dimension—identifying and analysing obstacles to HE, analysing actions taken to increase levels of equity, and analysing strategies of widening access to HE.

The Budapest-Vienna declaration (EHEA 2010) from the 2010 special conference of ministers to officially mark the launch of the EHEA was a very short, stock-taking document. The ministers acknowledged that the social dimension was a key element of the process, but committed to no more than increasing their "efforts on the social dimension in order to provide equal opportunities to quality education, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups." (EHEA 2010).

Perhaps unfortunately, and despite a considerable broadening of scope since the first mention of the social dimension, the Bucharest Communiqué's (EHEA 2012a) focus was much narrower, as it mainly focused on the relation between the social dimension and the needs of the labour market. Ministers agreed yet again to adopt national measures to widen participation in higher education, as well as reduce inequalities, ensure flexible learning paths (with a particular new focus on lifelong learning), counselling and guidance, as well as introducing voluntary peer learning in the social dimension, a measure aimed at improving the processes around the development and implementation of National Action Plans for the social dimension, lead in reality by the European Commission-funded PL4SD project (EHEA 2012a).

1.2 The Present: How Is the Social Dimension Being Implemented?

The 2015 Ministerial Conference and Policy Forum in Yerevan will be accompanied by the publication of new stakeholder and ministerial reports on the implementation of the Bologna process and the development of the EHEA. Although

unavailable to us at the time of writing, it is obvious that some challenges to the implementation of the social dimension remain and will be highlighted once again. In comparison with other working areas of the EHEA, e.g. the development of quality assurance, the social dimension is developing quite slowly. Or in the words of the Eurydice report of 2011 'the social dimension has not generally become a significant driver for higher education policy' (Eurydice 2011).

This does not imply that there were no achievements with regards to the social dimension; the peer learning initiative PL4SD (peer learning for the social dimension), for example, is a significant step. The social dimension seems to remain an intimidating concept—it was six years between the Prague Communiqué and the first arguably workable definition of the concept in the London Communiqué—and it is here that some barriers towards the increasing influence of the social dimension on EHEA policy may be rooted. Furthermore, the motivation for a social dimension to pan-European higher education policy may have changed over the years. In the beginning, the social dimension could have been understood as a process to counterbalance the consequences of the original Bologna Declaration (EHEA 1999), which mainly focused on structural unification and competitiveness, and to ensure that the social needs of the student population are recognised. However, this changed with the Bucharest Communiqué when the social dimension appeared to have been altered to serve macro-economic considerations and the demands of the labour market.

The EHEA is quite a diverse collection of countries, especially with regards to employment and social situations (e.g. European Commission 2013). This raises the question if there can be something called 'the' social dimension, as this would imply that a single social reality exists in the breadth of EHEA member countries. Here lies perhaps the cause of one of the major challenges of the implementation of the social dimension in the past years. The Bologna process could be hallmarked by a dedicated striving towards unity and structural interchangeability under every other headline of the process—local conditions, differences and needs were hardly recognised. This of course made it difficult to achieve comparable outcomes. In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (EHEA 2009) the ministers agreed to develop national action plans, which for the first time encouraged them to think about their own national and local demands and opportunities. However, this agreement was not taken up by all of the countries as an opportunity to define a social dimension in their own countries. To date, only nine countries have produced such strategies, though some concrete policy targets exist in supporting or related measures in other countries (European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice 2014).

Returning to the definition of the social dimension presented in the London Communiqué, some questions need to be raised:

- Who is entering higher education, but much more importantly who is *not* entering higher education?
- What does "the diversity of our populations" or, in other words Europe's diversity which should be reflected in higher education, look like?

- What are the barriers for successful completion of studies? And what are the factors playing a role to achieve graduation?
- Is the diversity really represented in all three cycles?

These are the most basic questions which can be raised on the basis of the definition of the social dimension. However, this is just the basis, and the target defined within the London Communiqué (EHEA 2007) is both ambitious and nebulous. Some of the questions, e.g. who is entering higher education, can be answered with the data regularly provided by Eurostudent and the Eurydice reports. Others are still tricky to answer and lead to the constant repetition (arguably postponement) of the target to collect more and/or improved data in the ministerial communiqués (EHEA 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012b).

The EHEA defines the social dimension as a pure aspect of higher education '… entering, participating in and completing higher education…' (EHEA 2007) while OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) publications like 'Education at a Glance' (OECD 2014a, b) and 'PISA 2012 Results: What Students Know and Can Do' (OECD 2012b) could be used to argue that the social dimension starts in early childhood education and not just with the admission to higher education. To really ensure that the 'student body …reflect the diversity of our populations' (EHEA 2007) it is therefore exactly this wider approach which is needed. Another question related to this is whether the social dimension stops after graduation. This question seems to have been answered definitively, though perhaps unintentionally in the negative, as after the last ministerial conference in Bucharest Lifelong Learning was added to the BFUG working group on social dimension. "Lifelong learning" itself, however, is yet another problematic term badly in need of at least a London-style definition.

The social dimension as it is currently defined goes beyond the competences of ministries responsible for higher education; it also overlaps with the competences of ministries responsible, for example, for finance, social affairs, work and primary-secondary education. However, these ministries were never included in the debates on the nature of the social dimension and how it can be successfully implemented. This is troublesome as many aspects of the social dimension so far elaborated overlap with other areas of competence within state bureaucracies (particularly social welfare). Core responsibilities of higher education ministries, like the design of curricula, learning and teaching environment, pedagogical approaches, as well as teacher education, have so far had a very minor role with regards to the social dimension.

Another barrier for the social dimension is the individual commitment of the countries. While it was relatively easy for northern and western European countries to present their "achievements", mostly pre-existing or entirely unrelated to requirements of the Bologna Process, it was relatively difficult for Southern and Eastern countries to catch-up with their peers. With certain exceptions—Slovenia and Croatia in particular—countries in the south and east often did and do not have the financial capacities to invest significantly into under-represented groups in higher education. Students and their representatives can be seen as the group with

the highest commitment towards the social dimension, a term which they not only invented (EHEA 2001), but also constantly asked for its further development (e.g. ESIB 2003, 2005, 2007; ESU 2009, 2012).

The often repeated demand for more data (EHEA 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012a) is ambivalent, as on the one hand an evidence-based policy making can be appreciated, but on the other hand demands for more thorough data-collection can be also used as an excuse to either implement new, unrelated, policies or to abdicate responsibility in this area altogether. Implementing new data-collection regulations does not in itself constitute progress on social dimension issues. What is needed to validate the claim for more and new data is a clear idea what this data should be used for and which questions need to be answered. This is not a new view on the data problem, as already prior to the 2012 ministerial conference in Bucharest the concept of an observatory for the social dimension was discussed, which then became the PL4SD initiative. More troubling than the lack of data from many countries is the mutual intelligibility of that data which is available. One easy example is the term "disability" which is defined in many widely varying ways across the EHEA, if at all (Eurydice 2011).

Although peer learning might be a good opportunity to help individual countries to develop national action plans and to re-assess their data, it alone does not solve the above mentioned problems.

1.3 The Future: How Might the Social Dimension Be Developed?

Despite the social dimension's present difficulties, there remain opportunities for it to be lifted out of its lowly situation. This section presents a considered and intentionally provocative wish-list of some opportunities which ought to be considered in a discussion on the social dimension's place in the Bologna process.

1.3.1 Re-definition of the Social Dimension

As noted earlier, the existing definition of the social dimension (EHEA 2007) is insufficiently concrete. A revised definition of the social dimension is required, one which is clearer in its focus, and what needs to be covered in the future. This kind of revised definition should also deal with the fact that the social dimension is both an underlying process linked to nearly all activities of the EHEA, and a separate thematic tract with its own specific activities. The EHEA should define a clear framework for the social dimension followed by an action plan how this should be achieved. It also needs to enable national states and local institutions to fit their own local needs and demands into a larger European framework.

Such a European framework for the social dimension would take a form reminiscent of, but subtly different from, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area. This is a non-binding set of ideals that all members of the EHEA commit to, with the contribution and expertise of the consultative organisations included to reach at least a lowest common denominator that all countries can agree to aim for. Over time, this floor can be slowly lifted, in much the same way as the ministers have increased their joint demands on each other over time. Simultaneously, a series of 'end-targets' for the members to aim towards should be agreed, ensuring that all member states have something to work on, and allowing those who are already well advanced to provide examples of peer learning to their colleagues slightly behind in the process, in much the same as the advisory group of the European qualifications framework operates. National access plans of each country (see below) would then be of interest to, and subject to a measure of scrutiny by every member of the EHEA.

1.4 National Actions Plans for Access and Widening Participation

Although this idea was already presented in the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué, the development of these plans still has potential. At first the process of designing such an action plan provides insight into what the social dimension in a certain context means. An evaluation of the status quo in each country should take place either prior to or in conjunction with the setting of targets. A by-product of such a process would be a clarification of which data is in fact already available, though perhaps not used for this purpose.

These plans are only sensible if they set clear targets. These targets need to be measurable and achievable in a reasonable amount of time. It does not improve the social dimension if these plans do not provide a self-critical assessment, clear political targeting, or are not evidence-based. Furthermore, it is crucial that these plans are regularly revised, taking into account the successes or failures of the targets in previous iterations of them in an honest and self-critical way.

1.5 Integration of Local Contexts

In addition to a re-definition of the social dimension on the European level, national ministries need to develop working definitions of the social dimension based on local needs and demands. These national definitions should still follow the European framework, but also set their own clear targets to ensure progress in the social dimension in the individual member states of the EHEA. A national definition should also reflect on the responsibility of higher education institutions.

Of course a definition of the social dimension alone does not lead to progress or change, which is why the definitions should be linked to action plans as described above.

1.6 Reform the Working Group on Social Dimension (and Lifelong Learning)

The Bologna Follow-up working group on the social dimension and lifelong learning for the years 2012–2015, or in short BFUG WG on SD and LLL, follows a similar structure to the BFUG and utilises the European Commission's Open Method of Coordination. This method's suitability to ensure progress is questionable as it includes only ministries and the E4 [European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Students' Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)]. Among the excluded groups are individual higher education institutions, networks created to improve access and social mobility (e.g. the European Access Network), as well as researchers. As the working group is responsible to the follow-up group itself, it might be sensible to elaborate on the opportunity to include more non-ministerial experts within the working group. This could be an alternative or accompanying concept for the idea described below of an observatory. This more diversified group might well be able to find new innovative approaches to implement the social dimension, while being inclusive towards all stakeholder groups and it would enable experts who have a daily relationship with the social dimension to participate.

1.7 Connecting the Social Dimension

As described above, the social dimension is also an underlying process which can be linked to all other working areas of the EHEA. But this inherent link is currently merely implicit. To make the connections more obvious and to ensure stronger contributions towards the social dimension, all working groups should be mandated by the follow-up group to set their own sub-targets and recommendations for the social implications of their area of competence.

1.8 Targets for Data Collection

A re-defined EHEA framework for the social dimension, national working definitions and strategies for how the implementation should take place would make it easier to set clear demands towards researchers for a more focused data collection.

As the overall aim of the social dimension is to reflect the diversity within the EHEA (2007), it is necessary to evaluate the diversity of the populations and not just to focus on those parts of the population which are entering higher education. Most of the so far presented data is solely from inside higher education, but not from outside where the potential for participation lies. In other words, it is hardly possible at the moment to say what the actual needs of underrepresented groups are, as long as they have not entered higher education. This might also lead to the necessity of analyzing the school population at multiple age-levels in order to determine who is underrepresented and what their needs are. Another data deficiency is evidence about what policies actually work and why. Although not all measurements which have succeeded elsewhere can be transferred successfully into other contexts, the sort of co-operation and knowledge sharing described above would still provide a basis for ideas and trials.

1.9 Monitoring, Advising and Peer Learning

To really achieve a successful implementation of the social dimension and generate equality as an outcome, monitoring, advising and peer learning among member states should be improved. So far the actual monitoring is primarily done by the member countries of the EHEA itself on themselves. Of course publications like Eurostudent and Eurydice reports play a useful role in summarising data; however these reports do not have the task of political monitoring, and it would not be suitable for them to acquire such a responsibility. Before the PL4SD initiative was finally agreed by the ministers in 2012, the idea of a European Observatory for the Social Dimension was discussed. This idea—to have a centralised organ, which collects and interprets data on the development of the social dimension, while at the same time providing countries with recommendations on what and how to improve, should not be left buried without consideration. The benefit of such a European organ—whatsoever its form—would be that the responsibility for data collection, recommendations and promotion of actions would no longer depend on the subjective interest of the EHEA members. This could significantly improve the objectivity and transparency of the social dimension within the EHEA. Such a coordinated tracking of the development of the social dimension might stimulate member countries to become more pro-active and to consider their current approaches. It also has the potential to simplify the work of improving the social dimension, as member states could be pointed to success stories of peers. Beyond the shared targets and aspirations, the EHEA is also facing shared challenges, so to have a more structured and unified approach might be a sensible way to go forward. Of course, external monitoring might face a certain resistance of states, but the opportunity to use the externally gathered information might be used to create EU funding and support lines and this might balance the resistance to a certain degree. However, the monitoring ideas show also that the EHEA is not independent from the general ideas how the EU and its associates will develop in the future. The

creation of a truly existing EHEA requires also the existence of shared bodies for implementation and monitoring.

1.10 Learning and Teaching

Pedagogical approaches towards a more inclusive teaching and learning environment and enabling higher education institutions to deal with a greater diversity have not yet played a prominent role. This is not to imply that there should or could be a "European Pedagogy", but pedagogical approaches are potentially an important tool to deal with diversity and the recognition of the potential and a debate about it could lead to a re-thinking of how learning and teaching takes place—even on institutional levels where this work is actually required. To the extent pedagogical approaches have at all played a role in the process to date, it has been through the concept of Student-Centred Learning (SCL) (e.g. EHEA 2012b). SCL is not a clear concept as it argues for focus on the learner, while the process of how the actual learning and teaching should take place and what kind of resources are needed are left entirely unexamined. The SCL approach is a step forward and on a European level a realistic target. However, for institutions and those who actually teach this policy, commitment needs to be supported by the development and dissemination of clearer and more structured pedagogical methods and approaches. A promising approach could be to have a look how other countries with a diverse population, e.g. the United States of America or Canada, are dealing with diversity in education. While they should not be copied without critique, some of these concepts, like inclusive excellence (Baumann et al. 2005; Milem et al. 2005) or inclusive pedagogy (Tuitt 2003) could be used as a basis to develop European pedagogical concepts in a more inclusive manner for a more diverse student population. Pedagogical approaches have the potential to play a larger role within the social dimension. They clearly belong to the competence of higher education, they provide an active opportunity to deal with, and not only identify diversity and its (assumed) needs and they are not necessarily related to higher financial commitments.

A learning and teaching agenda informed by the social dimension will not relate solely to pedagogical practice but also to curriculum design and teacher education. Neither of these areas is covered by the social dimension of the EHEA so far. The question for teacher education with regards to the Social Dimension is: "what knowledge do teachers and lecturers need in order to actively develop the potential in their classroom or lecture hall and to be inclusive towards a diverse group of learners?" The development of an inclusion component within the teachers' education could clearly be done on a European level to the benefit of all members of the European Higher Education Area. Inclusivity and diversity in the design of curricula, as well as the development of learning outcomes, can also be implemented as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

1.11 Social Infrastructure

The development of social infrastructure around higher education is a necessary pre-condition for a successful social dimension. Although it would seem obvious that housing and food are basic requirements for students to be able to focus on their studies, in reality the current social infrastructure is rather complex and inadequate. The member unions of the European Students' Union identify significant problems with the availability and quality of student services overall. To choose but one example, the 2012 edition of Bologna with Students' Eyes (ESU 2012), 22 out of 32 National Unions of Students report dissatisfaction with availability and/or quality of student housing (ESU 2012). With regards to the Communiqués (e.g. EHEA 2005 or 2007), a commitment to provide adequate living conditions for students is given. However, these did not lead to a unified action or setting of commonly agreed targets. One obvious issue here is the purely national competence to work in this area and the lack of any means to influence higher education social infrastructures at the European Level. Agreeing to action on a European level will be difficult. However, this debate provides also the opportunity to discuss how far bodies such as the European Social Fund might be able to provide support.

1.12 Widening Participation Through Early Inclusion in Higher Education

In the past decade, the concept of Science and Society activities and Children's Universities has grown all over Europe with an actual participation of 530,000 children per year (Gary and Iber 2014, May). So far, just 16 % of Children's Universities name widening participation and awareness-raising as a goal for their activities (Gary and Iber 2014, May). EU projects like 'SiS Catalyst: Children as change agents for science and society' and the European Children's University Network can be seen as drivers to increase the targeting towards social inclusion: 'Opportunities for systemic change leading to more inclusive higher education will be unleashed through Children's Universities and other new approaches' (SiS Catalyst 2014). This illustrates the potential that Children's Universities and other Science and Society activities could offer the social dimension. Early contacts with children before social segregation begins to impact or overwhelm children's ambitions might help improve access to higher education among groups which are missing or underrepresented in the current student population of the EHEA.

1.13 Engaging All Stakeholders

In the Berlin Communiqué (EHEA 2003) higher education ministers emphasized that 'they appreciate the co-operation and commitment of all partners— … and

other stakeholders…'. In the London Communiqué (EHEA 2007), they stated that 'Similarly, we will report on our national strategies and policies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness. We will invite all stakeholders to participate in, and support this work, at the national level.' Indeed the involvement of students, trades union, employers' federations and higher education institutions has developed considerably over the last few years. However, other governmental stakeholders, who were never present at the ministerial meetings of the EHEA, but nevertheless have a major impact on the implementation of the social dimension, remain outside the process. As argued above, the social dimension is a politically overlapping concept and it would be sensible to include other ministries responsible for social affairs, financing and employment, at least in the preparation of EHEA conferences or in the policy forums.

1.14 Bottom-Up Approach

The Bologna Process was in large parts a politically top-down process, which was not always appreciated by higher education institutions, higher education staff or students. Within the area of the social dimension, especially, it is important to include all relevant stakeholders so that they may provide their input and assist in defining their own responsibilities. Large parts of the social dimension do actually take place at the level of individual institutions or in the teacher/lecturer-student interaction. Therefore, their opinions, ideas and needs should be reflected to really ensure that a committed implementation takes place.

1.15 Avoiding Ongoing Risks to Students

Just as the social dimension begins prior to a student's admission to higher education, it also extends beyond graduation. The efforts of the EHEA to improve the employability of students (e.g. EHEA 2007, 2012b) are thus a step in the right direction. However, this does not mean that the purpose of higher education or education in general is to train solely for the labour market. Achieving social mobility through (higher) education is also related to the employability of a person. Acutely underrepresented groups have higher risk awareness (Callender and Jackson 2005) than their peers and need therefore a manageable risk and a maximum of security. Improved job prospects are a key part of that.

This links also to the affordability of higher education and its social responsibility. The EHEA should draw its conclusions from the developments in the United States, where the students' costs for higher education are growing to crisis levels, while the income situation of academics is stagnating or even decreasing (Kamenetz 2013). Although not all members of the EHEA charge tuition fees, already the daily

living costs for studying create financial risk for students. Higher education and higher education policy makers are not in the situation that they can set up financial demands towards students, as they are not able to predict the future employment development of, e.g. academics.

2 Discussion

Despite its large number of problems, the evolution of the social dimension has provided positive developments. The progress made with regards to the affordability and portability of loans and grants, identification of some underrepresented groups and the commitment to improve access to higher education and completion rates, as well as the collection of data can be seen as a success. It is not so much the Communiqués or the ministerial meetings which are problematic for the social dimension, but rather that political promises have often not been followed by political action back home in the ministers' own countries, in order to really achieve what was agreed during the meetings.

The social dimension is a rather complex area of work within the European Higher Education Area as it allows several interpretations of even the basic definition provided in the London Communiqué (2007). The real challenge for the future of the social dimension is the gap between the political promises made in the Communiqués and the actions actually taken to fulfil these promises. There are not many opportunities for stakeholders—excluding voting against or demonstrating against—to encourage legislators to be more active with regards to the social dimension. Investment in and commitment towards a social dimension will not provide short-term benefits and the retention of benefits might go well beyond legislative periods of government. In the long term, the commitment to a social dimension is a pre-condition to achieving the original intentions of the Bologna Process—competitiveness and attractiveness. The so-called European dimension (EHEA 1999) itself is innately linked with the social dimension; OECD data shows us a tight correlation between democratic participation, perceived (in-)equality, and educational status (OECD 2012a).

One step which we hope will be taken after the next ministerial conference is the development of lower-level targets towards overarching goal of mirroring the composition of society within higher education (EHEA 2007). Breaking down the end-goal to smaller increments would not only make it easier to begin to work on the implementation of the social dimension, but also make partial achievements more visible. Furthermore, it would provide ministries, higher education institutions, and all other relevant stakeholders the time to adjust to a more diverse student population and to learn to be able to serve this population. The time for adaptation is not infinite, as more and more areas of Europe will be diversified, or in some cases minorities will be the new majorities—as Crul et al. (2013) reports it is already the case for some cities like Amsterdam. The EHEA should urgently find strategies to adapt to this change.

Another decision which needs to be taken after the conference in 2015 is how the diversity of member countries within the EHEA can be reflected while at the same time providing a framework which ensures an ongoing improvement and development towards the successful mirroring. This is challenging because, as noted earlier, financial capacities with the EHEA are not equally distributed, which raises the question of what opportunities the European Union has to balance this differences in capacities.

Not everything with respect to the social dimension can be related to additional funding, like teachers' education or new pedagogical approaches. These are opportunities which should be reflected much more strongly as part of the social dimension. Here, the opportunities for innovation and new 'European' developments are considerable.

Looking beyond the traditional cohort of students will be helpful. The approach of linking children to higher education and research via children's universities might provide a potential to reach those who drop out of the education system before admission to higher education is even in question. Likewise, the existence of formal higher education as one of many elements within the continuum of lifelong learning—neither subservient to nor responsible for it—should be acknowledged by ministers, and the aspect of lifelong learning that is relevant to higher education should be defined.

Although we acknowledge the risk that the claim for more data is an excuse to stand still, we at the same time acknowledge that there is a demand for more and more comparable data. This is caused on the one hand by the fact that societies and societal needs change over time. But on the other hand, many interventions, like the impact of new pedagogical approaches or children's universities, are not or at least are insufficiently scientifically investigated. Data is a basis for policy making, but policy makers need to be clear on which data are required, and balance this collection with concrete, visible, actions.

This article asserts that the social dimension is linked to nearly every action line of the Bologna Process, and many outside of its scope both on the European and local levels. But the problem area that remains at the end of this discussion is far more philosophical: What is the society we want to live in in the future, and what does higher education need to provide in order to create this society? This is a question that requires more debate than it has received to date.

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A Comprehensive Approach to Investigating the Social Dimension in European Higher Education Systems—EUROSTUDENT and the PL4SD Country Reviews

Dominic Orr and Shweta Mishra

1 Bologna Process and Social Dimension

Reforms continue to embrace most higher education systems of the world and especially the 47 signatory states of the Bologna Declaration at the present. On average across the 28 OECD member countries for which data is available, spending in tertiary education in the period 1995–2011 has kept pace with the growth in student numbers—both showing a growth rate of around one quarter (Orr 2015). This impressive dynamic has been mirrored in many regions of the world and has turned the attention of policy-makers and higher education leaders to the questions of efficiency, effectiveness and equity of higher education provision. This means that they are interested in value for money, the impact of higher education and the question of impact on whom. Different countries have focused to a varying extent on these three issues, but they are evident in most policy documents and strategy papers. Starting with the Bologna Declaration in 1999, the Bologna Process has been a forum for common strategies. Greater harmonisation of degree structures, academic performance, quality assurance, and increased mobility for teachers and students have been central action lines (Dodds and Katz 2009, p. 4). Social dimension first entered the Bologna process in 2001 during the Prague communiqué and was further expanded and elaborated during the London communiqué (2007) and Leuven communiqué (2009). It has been defined as targeting 'participative equity' through a process of reform leading to the outcome that "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels [reflects] the diversity of (…) populations" in the European Higher Education Area

D. Orr (✉) · S. Mishra
Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung (DZHW), Hannover, Germany
e-mail: orr@dzhw.eu

S. Mishra
e-mail: mishra@dzhw.eu

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(London communiqué 2007). This is a long-standing goal of modern higher education systems, which aims to assure that educational success is detached from a person's origins. It is repeated in the most recent Bucharest communiqué of 2012 (p. 1). The aim can be morally argued from the standpoint of Rawls' (1971) argument for social justice. There is also an effectiveness argument for improving the participation and study conditions of certain groups of students, which was also made in the Leuven communiqué of 2009. It argues that available talent in Europe should be "maximised" to assure the realisation of a Europe of knowledge:

> In the decade up to 2020 European higher education has a vital contribution to make in realising a Europe of knowledge that is highly creative and innovative. Faced with the challenge of an ageing population Europe can only succeed in this endeavour if it maximises the talents and capacities of all its citizens and fully engages in lifelong learning as well as in widening participation in higher education.

This argument has been further emphasised in the Bucharest communiqué of 2012 with reference to the challenges leading on from the economic and financial crisis (p. 1). These two arguments—social justice and effectiveness for a Europe of knowledge—provide the basis for efforts on the part of policy-makers at national and regional level, and leaders and practitioners in educational institutions to improve the social dimension of higher education. Their work is founded on the recognition that a confluence of three factors tend to determine educational success: student ability, material and immaterial (e.g. social and cultural) resources and opportunity. In particular, non-academic factors such as social background and aspiration, and study framework conditions (e.g. balance between work and studies) affect participation and success in higher education. Indeed, visible student ability may have been affected by a person's material and immaterial resources at a previous (e.g. secondary) educational level.

However, whilst the social dimension has been a focal point for the Bologna Process, at least since it was expressly defined as objective for the European Higher Education Area in 2007, it has been difficult to translate it into a manageable policy agenda. As recently stated in an analysis of this policy: "the social dimension is a policy item that found a way into the Bologna Process agenda, but could not grow into an implementable policy" (Orr et al. 2014; Yagci 2014). This is largely because concrete definitions are needed for the social dimension, but these are national-context specific and evolving. Indeed, Holford (2014, p. 22) has concluded: "the [social] dimension's limited success (and more recent displacement from policy, if not rhetoric) can be put down in large part to the difficulties of encapsulating complex and contested social priorities in internationally acceptable indicators (…)."

2 Social Dimension—Unique Character

The social dimension has a unique character as a policy issue, because it is very general and non-specific until it is related to a specific context. For this reason, it might be surprising to see it given such attention on the European level. Unlike the

Bologna goals of system-level harmonisation or of promoting mobility between countries, social dimension is largely a national concern and improvements or otherwise in this area have effects on a national level. Even so, there are at least three reasons for the social dimension being seen as so central to European education policy:

European social model: This is seen as a distinguishing identifier of the European region in comparison to other geopolitical regions of the world (cf. European Commission 1994). It entails the goal of providing everyone an opportunity for educational betterment, who has the ability to profit from it. Although the EU does not have the mandate to actually enforce social policy, it aims to influence it through discussing policy frameworks and through using the Open Method of Coordination to enable policy learning between countries.
Direct competition with other regions of the world in a knowledge society: In a globalized world, the success of Europe is seen to depend on the maximum utilization of talent. One of the key factors for economic growth and successful competition with other regions is a well-educated population. The social dimension certainly has a role to play in promoting inclusive higher education, improving higher education attainment, and in reducing drop-out.
Education for keeping up with the pace of change in a global society: There is a recognition that increasingly skills and knowledge, once acquired, must be regularly refreshed (cf. EU 2006). This calls for more inclusion of older members of the population (often termed lifelong learning), which is also linked to the social dimension of higher education.

Despite being central to the European education policy, three specificities of this policy area create challenges for enabling policy learning. Firstly, any indicators related to social dimension of higher education call for data on students' (and potential students') character and biography, which are not frequently monitored e.g., migration and ethnicity, social background and educational pathway (European Commission 2014). Secondly, to ensure that higher education students represent the diversity in the student population, changes are needed at multiple levels—the school system, admission policies, entry routes, flexible study structures and provision for student support and counselling services. These involve working with multiple stakeholders and actors. Thirdly, it remains difficult to set clear overarching goals, which are appropriate for all countries and across topic areas. For instance, whilst the social dimension entails ensuring that there is equal representation of all social groups in all areas and fields of study, even this goal has to be somewhat nuanced. Some of the differences in fields of study, for instance, are common and may be largely based on personal choice (e.g. dominance of males in technical fields and women in linguistics), so that the goal of improvement for the social dimension would be to assure that nothing *aside* from personal preferences and ability was determining students' choice of field of study—but it is not to assure that half of all students in technical fields are women.

3 Comprehensive Evaluation Approaches—EUROSTUDENT and PL4SD

Although the social dimension has not been able to translate into an implementable policy item on the European level, the inclusion of social dimension in the Bologna Process has initiated discussions and debates on the underrepresentation of certain groups in higher education. Indeed, the social dimension could be reconceptualised, not as an implementation policy, but as an *evaluative perspective* on educational policy and practice.

Alongside the Bologna Process Implementation Report from 2012 and its forerunner from 2009 (Eurostat and Eurostudent 2009; Eurydice et al. 2012), a major source of data on aspects of studying related to the social dimension of higher education in international comparison has been the EUROSTUDENT project (Orr et al. 2011). The full set of EUROSTUDENT data covers the topics of demographics, including social background; access routes; study programs; accommodation, funding, and living costs; time use and employment during studies; and temporary mobility during studies. The data are drawn from harmonised national student surveys in more than 25 countries. In sum, the EUROSTUDENT data set provides a strong source of data on important aspects of student life in Europe within a comparative framework (Clancy 2010, p. 93). In this, EUROSTUDENT attempts to deal with the first problem of the social dimension mentioned above, i.e. provision of data suitable for indicators.

An alternative approach is to look closer not at the students, but at the whole education system and how it works for different student groups. This approach has been taken by the project Peer Learning for the Social Dimension (PL4SD). PL4SD is a three-year project (2012–2015) funded by the European Commission through the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus Multilateral projects).[1] The objective of the project is to provide policy-makers and practitioners with resources to develop effective measures for improving the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area. The instruments used to fulfil these goals are a database of policy measures and three national country reviews, which look at the combination of measures and processes in an education system and assess their appropriateness for improving the social dimension of higher education. Three Country Reviews were carried out in 2014. The approach of PL4SD recognises the second problem of the social dimension mentioned above, i.e. understanding how various levels of an education system and various stakeholders work together to influence learning opportunities and choice.

[1] www.pl4sd.eu.

4 Looking at the Way Learning Opportunities Are Allocated Within an Education System

The EUROSTUDENT data set has shown that education systems work differently in the way they support and select students throughout their educational pathway. This becomes visible when looking at differences between student groups instead of focussing on the average student. In the 2008 publication from EUROSTUDENT, four "moments" of participative equity were highlighted (Orr et al. 2008). They are: before entry to higher education, at entry to higher education, study framework, and graduation and transition.

Each of the four moments contribute to the social dimension goals of raising aspirations, widening access, ensuring learning progress and improving retention and success, and lastly transitioning successfully into the labour market or to the next stage of higher education. These four moments are common to all education systems across Europe and we will now use data from EUROSTUDENT[2] (Hauschildt et al. 2015) and insights from the project Peer Learning for the Social Dimension (PL4SD) to highlight their relevance to the social dimension. The PL4SD project collates initiatives used in European countries to support inclusion in higher education in an online databank.[3] Additionally, it has carried out three Country Reviews to look in-depth at the four moments in the respective education systems and to investigate how the social dimension is being and could be further supported.[4] The Country Reviews took place in two new EU member states and one non-member state—Croatia, Lithuania, and Armenia—each of which has been influenced by the work of the Bologna Process in recent reforms.[5] At the same time, they are in the process of transitioning from an educational system, which particularly focuses on students' individual merit at school and university level, and much less on addressing students' collective needs.

5 Before Entry to Higher Education

This stage can generally be characterized as a qualifying and decision-making stage for students. EUROSTUDENT data highlights that students obtain access to higher education with different levels of qualifications. These include up to lower secondary, upper secondary academic track, upper secondary dual track, upper secondary vocational track and other national and foreign qualifications. Holders of the various pre-tertiary qualifications vary by personal and social characteristics.

[2]The full data set is available at http://www.database.eurostudent.eu.

[3]http://www.pl4sd.eu/index.php/database/about-the-database.

[4]http://www.pl4sd.eu/index.php/country-reviews/about-the-country-reviews.

[5]Country Reviews will be published summer 2015.

While in most countries, the majority of students (63 %) hold an upper secondary academic track qualification, the share of students with higher education background, i.e. whose parents attained higher education themselves, leaving school via the 'golden route' of upper secondary academic track is particularly high compared to first generation students, whose parents did not attain higher education background (68 % vs. 59 %). Conversely, many more students without higher education background hold an upper secondary vocational track qualification than students with higher education background (12 % vs. 8 %). Whilst the pre-tertiary level of the education system presents certain routes through the system that facilitate entry to higher education for prospective students, completion of a lower level of education leads to exiting this level and therefore entails a decision on the part of the learner as to whether they want to, aspire to or can enter higher education.

Even if graduates from both academic and vocational tracks have the chance to enter higher education, they still have to make a choice on whether to enter or not. In many cases, research has shown that students from underrepresented groups and their parents are less knowledgeable and in some cases more pessimistic about the options regarding participating in higher education. For this reason, one of the main goals for improving the equality of opportunities and the inclusivity of higher education is to make special efforts to prepare prospective students beforehand, providing them with information about the available options and raising their aspirations (Moore et al. 2013, p. 15). The PL4SD project has the role of seeking such interventions, which could be of interest to other countries looking into this issue. An example of such an initiative is from Newcastle University in Australia. The AIM High initiative focuses on supporting educational aspiration, attainment and access for students and families from low socio-economic backgrounds. This initiative is supported by the government programme "Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP)" (OECD 2014, p. 5). A similar example is from Scotland funded by the Scottish Funding Council. The programme "Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools" focuses on changing the culture in schools with low progression to higher education as a way of increasing social mobility (Lerpiniere 2013). In both of these cases, a national programme funded local initiatives—in a university in Australia or in a region of Scotland.

6 At Entry to Higher Education

This stage is characterised as the 'selection' stage of the higher education system. The entrance stage should ideally provide equal access opportunities to all prospective students. In order to understand this stage and its impacts it is therefore important to look at the general entry requirements for all groups of students. Regular entrance routes include upper secondary qualification or central higher education entrance examination. In the case of all three countries studied in the PL4SD Country Reviews, central entrance examinations have been introduced. The aim of these was to increase the transparency of the conditions of entry. At the same

time, they lead to a very strict entrance route, especially as high scores in the examinations also provide access to state-funded study places.

Second chance routes are of particular interest, as these routes include remedial support to help prospective students including mature learners, who have not followed the typical path to higher education entry (Orr and Hovdhaugen 2014). EUROSTUDENT data collects information on the types of access routes to higher education in different countries and enables examination of the characteristics of the student body entering higher education through these access routes. The EUROSTUDENT project collects information mainly on four different types of alternative access routes. They are: upper secondary academic qualification through adult learning, special exam, special access courses, and accreditation/recognition of prior learning. At least 18 of the 29 countries in the EUROSTUDENT V data set offer one or a combination of different alternative access routes. Although the share of students utilising alternative access routes is small (on an average 3–8 %, varies by type of alternative access route), an examination of their characteristics is relevant to the social dimension. Students from previously underrepresented groups in higher education, such as those who delay their entry into higher education by more than 24 months after leaving school for the first time (delayed transition), mature, and first generation students tend to enter higher education via alternative routes more often than their counterparts.

7 Study Framework

This stage is characterised by progression towards the successful completion of studies within the higher education system. A central goal for the social dimension must be to ensure the retention and the learning progress of students regardless of their social and economic background. This ultimately means on one hand providing qualitative student support services, academic and career counselling, enabling a certain flexibility of study progress, and on the other hand ensuring direct support in the form of grants to achieving this objective.

Going to university or college involves costs for students—both general living and study costs. Therefore, the affordability of studies is an important issue. It is the question of how students can cover these costs and focus on their studies at the same time. Students tend to have rather different income levels, and these are made up from the central income sources, family contributions, own income and state support (Haaristo et al. 2011). State support is provided as a student grant or loan and is often envisaged as offering those students who need it the same financial circumstances as those who receive financial support from their parents. The EUROSTUDENT V data show that, on average, 42 % of a student population can be assumed to be dependent on income from their parents, i.e. it makes up more than 50 % of their monthly income. In contrast, only an average of 8 % are dependent on state support, whilst 19 % are dependent on earning their own income. These averages hide very large differences between countries, but they

show that state support is usually highly targeted and that own income is an important source of funding for many students. In some countries including Finland and Estonia, but also Poland and Lithuania, the share of students dependent on this source of income is over one in five. This means that these systems are particularly likely to require more flexible study programmes in order for students to progress successfully through their studies, whilst balancing their work obligations. Whilst Finland does have such flexible programmes, Poland and Lithuania only have them for students, who are classified as part-time, often study in colleges rather than universities and are often required to pay fees. The new Universities Law from 2014 in Estonia now also regulates that students studying less than 75 % of the set workload are classified as part-time and do not benefit from free study places, in contrast to full-time students.[6] This may become a problem in a higher education system, where one third of students are financially dependent on their own earnings and around two-thirds assess their own situation during their studies as "I study alongside working". The discussions during the PL4SD Country Reviews also highlighted that many actors in higher education systems still envisage all students as young people fully focussed on their studies and nothing else.

Besides the questions of financial means and flexibility of programmes, which are rather concrete and easily understood, there is the issue of student support, to keep students on track during their studies and perhaps to help them better balance the demands of working and studying at the same time. During the PL4SD Country Review in Croatia, two of the big national universities presented their current initiatives to support students (Universities of Zagreb and Reika). In discussions, they highlighted one of the main problems was that this task was seen by academics at faculty level as not important—not an academic issue—and therefore externalised to the central level. What would be necessary would be a more integrated strategy, such as the one initiated in Finland by the National Students' Union (SYL 2013). In some countries, HEIs have adopted initiatives to help students by encouraging peer-to-peer support from other students, thereby cutting through any administrative or structural boundaries. An example is the Ludwig Maximillian University's peer-to-peer mentoring initiative,[7] which is part-funded by a government programme in Germany. Each year around 800 first year students are assisted through this initiative.

8 Graduation and Transition

The graduation and transition stage is characterised as the move into the labour market or further educational training. Successfully offering a more inclusive higher education system necessitates consideration of what happens after completion of a

[6] https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/517062014007/consolide.

[7] http://www.p2pmentoring.peoplemanagement.uni-muenchen.de/index.html.

course of study. Particularly in the context of higher youth unemployment in many countries affected by the financial crisis, there has been renewed interest in making sure that higher education assigns sufficient importance to the employability of students. In many countries, HEIs have introduced career centres in order to advise students on their opportunities after studying. At the same time, quality assurance regulations require labour market opportunities to be considered in the design of new study programmes.

The EUROSTUDENT V data set contains a comparative student assessment of chances on the labour market following a student's studies. It shows that around half of students currently assess their chances are good to very good, and around one fifth as poor to very poor. Whilst this is positive, it is noticeable that characteristics of students also affect these assessments—females are more pessimistic about their chances on the labour market than males, and first generation students more pessimistic than students whose parents attained higher education themselves (high educational background). Neither the PL4SD database nor the PL4SD Country Reviews showed any targeting of career centre measures by student group. However, the data suggest that this would also be necessary.

9 Formative Evaluations of the Social Dimension as Possible Way Forward

But what of the third problem mentioned above—i.e. defining clear overarching goals, which are appropriate for all countries and across topic areas. The final section on transition highlighted anew that a view of students as a diversified group, which has diverse needs for support, must continue throughout the higher education process. That is to say that it should not stop, for instance, at widening access to higher education. Since the diversity of students will be different and students will be studying within a different study framework in each country, and within a country in each type of higher education institution, it is very hard to conceive a supranational policy drive to support this.

Developing indicators on the social dimension of higher education would entail a thorough assessment of the students participating in the higher education system with regard to their abilities and characteristics. As discussed earlier, both quantitative expansion and efforts to create inclusive higher education systems have led to a more diversified student population, who are in many cases balancing work, studies, and other life duties. These changes are also driven by demographic change in many countries, where the typical age group of 18–24 years old is declining in the general population (Orr 2010). While the characteristics of the students body participating in higher education is changing, at the same it must be noted that the nature and extent of these changes differ between countries and also by higher education institutions. These differences demand a clear definition of different student groups for each country, and a distinction between 'regular' and 'new' student groups entering and participating in higher education. The students

participating in higher education can be described on two main dimensions—their characteristics and abilities, and their study framework conditions.

Personal characteristics and abilities of the students can be described based on their age, gender, socio-economic conditions, race, ethnicity, migration background. Basically, these include a description of traits inherent to a student. On the other hand, study framework conditions include a description of external circumstances and settings that can facilitate or hinder students' higher education participation and completion. An example would be employment alongside studies. Employment is not something that a student is born with, but this can have a significant influence on their higher education attainment.

In addition to understanding the characteristics of the students, it is important to also evaluate the higher education systems that these students are part of. This is critical to understanding how higher education systems and their processes create mechanisms to widen participation and ensure completion of studies. This requires considering two key aspects—creating study conditions or remedial measures that facilitate participation and successful completion of education, and introducing system level and structural changes.

Remedial measures or study conditions often (but not always) facilitate higher education participation by taking into account students' personal characteristics and abilities and, for instance, provision of student support and counselling services, and increased funding opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The second approach consists of introducing system level changes and structural level alterations. For instance, introducing alternative access routes to higher education, provision of flexible study programmes or short cycle programmes to enable certain student groups balance their work, personal, and educational life.

An inclusive and effective approach to the social dimension calls for a holistic focus encompassing students and the higher education system they study in. The scheme in Fig. 1 brings the students and higher education system together and emphasises the interaction between these two components. Very often the focus tends to be much more on the abilities and characteristics of the students and not so much on the interaction between students and various processes.

The definition of participative equity used since the London communiqué in 2007 has led to a focus on underrepresented groups, i.e. on persons, and only in a secondary step on processes. In other words, first the underrepresented group is defined and then the barriers for this group sought. This approach neglects the fact that diversity in terms of student groups, but also in terms of higher education provision has led to different ways of studying for *both* "underrepresented" and "well represented" groups of students. For instance, the EUROSTUDENT V data above showed that around one fifth of students have own earnings as a main source of income. Many of these students may be "new" students (e.g. older, from low social background etc.), but in some cases this is just a new way of studying.

Recognising this fact, the scheme above shows an overlap between the categories 'students' abilities and characteristics', on the one hand, and 'study framework', on the other. Indeed, the scheme highlights interactions between these and remedial and differentiation processes, whereby remedial and differentiation

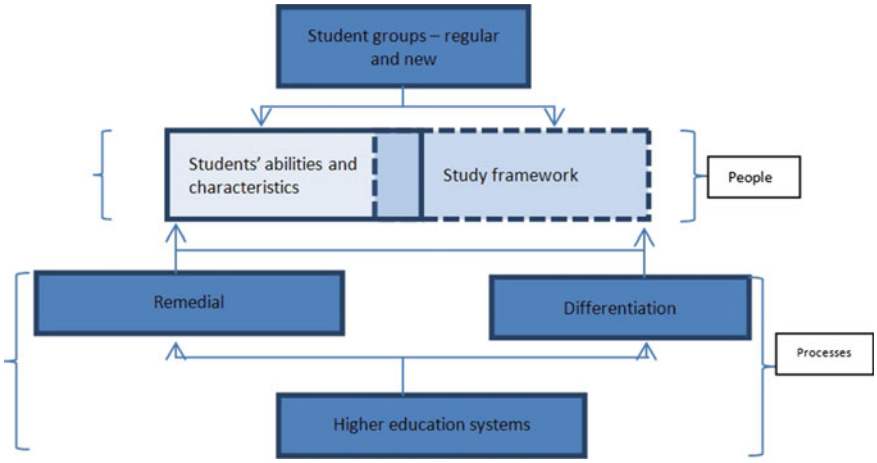

Fig. 1 A scheme for looking at the whole of higher education from a social dimension perspective. *Source* Authors

processes improve or worsen students' access or success by changing the interactions between students' abilities and characteristics and framework conditions.

This paper argues, therefore, against naïve summative evaluations based on oversimplified criteria, which are not helpful for policy learning. Instead, the task of a formative evaluation is to describe and analyse these remedial and differential processes. The Country Reviews from PL4SD are an early attempt to do this. If this could be done for multiple countries, the analyses could be used to identify clusters of national systems, which are organised in the same way and use the same supporting processes. Comparing survey data (e.g. from EUROSTUDENT) on a higher education system's student body and study framework within such a country cluster could provide insights into what is effective in a certain type of higher education system. That is to say that summative evaluation is possible but only when describing similar systems, i.e. following a kind of benchmarking approach made possible through formative evaluations.

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How Did the Latest Increase in Fees in England Affect Student Enrolment and Inequality?

Koen Geven

1 Introduction

The progressive introduction of markets in higher education seems to lead to ever-higher prices for students and their families, at least in the industrialised world. Between 2000 and 2011, the share of private investments in higher education has increased in more than 75 % of OECD countries (OECD 2014). In the United States, for instance, tuition fees for in-state students have risen by 42 % over 10 years, and have more than doubled over the last 20 years to just over €7000 (US $ 9139) per year (College Board 2014). Historical data is harder to obtain for Europe, but fees now exist in a majority of countries, with universities usually charging between €1000 and €5000 per year (Eurydice 2014). Many countries are considering to introduce fees or to raise existing fees, although there are some notable exceptions.[1] As tuition fees continue to rise, there is much public anxiety about how these may affect enrolment and inequality. Yet, there is little empirical evidence of how recent fee increases affect student choices, at least in Europe.

Commentators widely agree that higher prices may affect student enrolment and inequality, but opinions differ about the direction of the effect. The debate is divided between what I will call—in simplified terms—'pessimists' and 'optimists'. 'Pessimists' typically argue that fees may be a risky investment in the students' future. Referring to empirical work on student price responsiveness (Dearden et al. 2011; Heller 1997; Leslie and Brinkman 1987), they expect that higher price could push a substantial group of students off the market. They point out that students from lower social backgrounds can be particularly affected, since the price is higher for them in relative terms. 'Optimists' argue that higher fees (especially in

[1]For instance, all states in Germany have now abolished tuition fees for undergraduate students.

K. Geven (✉)
European University Institute, Florence, Italy
e-mail: koen.geven@eui.eu

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combination with student support) may have a (marginally) positive effect on enrolment and inequality (Carneiro and Heckman 2002; Shavit et al. 2007). The higher fee may not be a barrier for access, since the returns to a university degree would still be higher than the new price, and demand far outstrips supply (Becker 1993).

This paper aims to contribute to this debate by analysing the fee increase in English higher education in 2012. A number of papers have investigated the effects of increases in tuition fees in earlier years (Boliver 2011; Dearden et al. 2008) and there have been a few reports on what happened after the 2012 reforms (Orr et al. 2011; UCAS 2012). Until now, however, no article has yet investigated the effects of the most recent changes using a semi-experimental research design, at least to my knowledge. This paper presents a first such analysis by exploiting differences in rules for different groups of students in the United Kingdom. Indeed, only English and students from other European Union countries were faced with the price increase, while all other students (Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, International non-EU) were not affected. The research question is "***How did the 2012 reforms of university funding affect university enrolments and inequality in England?***" This question will be subdivided in four sub-questions,[2] namely:

1. What is the effect of the 2012 reforms on enrolment in general?
2. What is the effect of the 2012 reforms on enrolment of students in different age groups?
3. What is the effect of the 2012 reforms on enrolment of students from different socio-economic backgrounds?
4. What is the effect of the 2012 reforms on enrolment of students from different ethnic groups?

Beyond the empirical case, this paper contributes to the tradition in the literature on the elasticity of demand for higher education (for an overview, cf. Heller 1997; Kane 2004). Increasingly, researchers are using semi-experimental designs to identify the causal effect of price changes on student enrolment (Dynarski 2003; Hübner 2012). This study aims to make two contributions to this literature: (1) it studies a major price change for a large group of students, whereas previous studies usually analyse small price changes for small groups. (2) it analyses how the price increase has affected inequality, a relation which remains little understood (Kane 2004).

[2]It should be noted here, already, that these questions only address one dimension of inequality, namely inequality in access to university, something sociologists refer to as 'vertical inequality' (Gerber and Cheung 2008). The effects on 'horizontal inequality' will be analysed in a separate paper employing a similar research design. The question is then whether students who are studying in a market environment make substantively different choices (for different universities or different subject fields).

2 The 2012 Reforms

The 2012 reform involved more than just a hike in tuition fees. The main elements of the reform are (1) universities charge higher tuition fees, (2) public subsidies were redirected to students rather than universities, and (3) regulation on student enrolments was loosened. These reforms happened in parallel, leading to the establishment of a pseudo-market for higher education in England (Ansell 2010; Brown 2013). As a former vice-chancellor of a British university recently stated, "*[h]igher education has been privatised right under our noses. And no one is taking any notice*".[3] Each of these aspects will be dealt with here in turn. Table 1 also gives a short summary of the policy changes. As good overviews exist of the 2012 reforms (Brown 2013; Chowdry et al. 2012; McGettigan 2013) I will give only the briefest summary of the changes here.

First, the costs of higher education have been steadily passed on from the government to students and their families.[4] Whereas English students in the late 1990s paid nothing for an entire undergraduate degree, they now pay just over €11,000 (£9000) per year or close to €34,000 (£27,000) for a typical undergraduate degree. Figure 1 gives an overview of the evolution of the annual costs of studying at university for different groups over the last 10 years.

This figure shows two important variations in fee levels. (a) Fees for English and EU students[5] have risen in two sharp jumps, namely in 2006/07 and 2012/13. These fee increases were part of two major reforms in English higher education, namely the 2004 Higher Education Act, and the "Browne review" of student finance in 2010. Each of these reforms raised the maximum amount (or 'cap') of money that a university could ask from an undergraduate student. (b) The figure also makes clear that the increases in fees were not spread equally across the regions. In Scotland, fees were gradually abolished, whereas students from Wales and Northern Ireland remain subsidised to keep their tuition fee level at pre-2012 prices. Meanwhile, international (non-EU) students face—more or less—stable prices since 2010.

Secondly, the funding from the government has changed fundamentally. Direct funding for higher education has almost completely dried up. Whereas British universities received 80 % of its funding from the state in 1995, this was reduced to 30 % by 2011, the biggest change in any of the OECD countries[6] (OECD 2014).

[3]Roger Brown, Quoted in The Observer, Sunday 12 October 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/oct/12/have-universities-been-privatised-by-stealth.

[4]In the higher education literature, this phenomenon is often referred to as 'cost-sharing'.

[5]Due to European Union legislation, universities cannot discriminate their prices between students from different EU member states. They can, however, discriminate prices between members of the same country. This awkward glitch in legislation have led to the paradoxical situation that allows for the difference-in-differences design.

[6]The OECD average was 69 % in 2011 (i.e. in 2011 the average university in OECD countries received 69 % of its funding from public sources).

Table 1 Overview of policy changes affecting new undergraduate enrolments from the academic year 2012/2013

Policy area	Pre 2012/13	Post 2012/13
Tuition fees	Capped at £3000	Capped at £9000
Funding to universities	'Cost sharing' philosophy—mix of public and private funding (from tuition fees and other private sources)	Mostly private, after cuts to subsidies to higher education institutions
Student support	Grants for poor students, and separate loans for tuition fees and living costs	More generous grants for poor students, higher loans to compensate for higher fees, similar loans for living costs
Student number controls	Each university is allocated a maximum number of students to recruit	Basic number of students is still fixed, but universities are free to compete for 85,000 student places

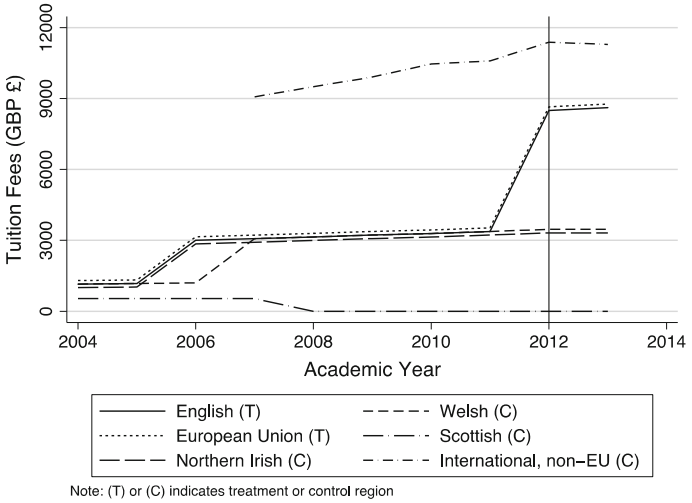

Fig. 1 Evolution of fees in nominal prices (i.e. not corrected for inflation). *Note* Prices for international students are averages for classroom-based subjects. *Sources* OFFA, BBC, The Guardian, Reddin survey of tuition fees

In 2012, universities only received 23 % of total income from the government.[7] The budget for teaching was indeed reduced strongly; the Institute for Fiscal Studies estimated that the reduction was −86 % (Chowdry et al. 2012, p. 232) leaving little

[7]See https://www.hesa.ac.uk/pr201 for the figures on different sources of income of universities in England.

of what was left. Much of this funding has been redirected to the students' loans system, thereby only indirectly providing support to the universities.

Rather than subsidising universities directly, the English government now supports students through a programme of loans and grants. Students can take out a 'tuition fee loan' to pay for their fees. They can also take a 'maintenance loan' to pay for their living costs. These loans have to be repaid to the state after the student stops studying and reaches a certain level of income (currently students pay back 9 % on a yearly income earned above €26,000—or £21,000). Students from low-income families are eligible for maintenance grants and scholarships to support their living costs. The Student Loans Company estimates that 87 % of students in England take out a tuition fee loan, and a large majority (84 % of all students taking out loans) take out both a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan.[8]

Thirdly, the government relaxed the so-called 'student numbers controls' on universities. To allow some sort of control over how much money goes around in the student loans' system, the funding council imposed a maximum number of students that universities could enrol. From 2012/13 universities were allowed to freely recruit students that had a minimum level of demonstrated ability (i.e. grades or qualifications). Universities were completely free to recruit part-time students, whatever their demonstrated ability. Although the number of students for which free recruitment was possible was initially small (estimated at 85,000 students),[9] this change allowed universities to mount recruitment campaigns in order to catch a larger market share.

In sum, the main elements of the new market in higher education are a (1) a price mechanism, (2) universities are dependent on the student market for their financial survival (through a reduction of public subsidies), and (3) a mechanism linking supply and demand (through relaxing student number controls). Importantly, since each of these elements changed in parallel, there is little sense in estimating the effect of only one of these changes on student enrolment. The next section will ask what theoretical expectations are about the effect of the policy changes on student choices.

3 Competing Expectations About the Effects of the Reforms

Earlier theoretical and empirical work holds competing expectations about how the reforms may affect enrolment and inequality. I will outline below why some may expect the reforms to lead to reduced student numbers and to increased inequality (the pessimist view), and why others will expect marketisation to increase student

[8]See Statistical First Release 05/2013, published in November 2013. http://www.slc.co.uk/media/694170/slcsfr052013.pdf.

[9]Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2011). White Paper: Students at the Heart of the System. London: TSO.

enrolments and to maintain or even decrease inequality (the optimist view). While I will give a simplified account of the complex literature on tuition fees, my goal here is only to show that we may have competing expectations about how fees affect student enrolment.

3.1 The Pessimists' View: Lower Enrolment and Higher Inequality

As discussed above, the main element of the 2012 reform is perhaps the change in prices. From the perspective of both classical human capital theory (Becker 1993) and sociological rational action theory (Breen and Goldthorpe 1997) we may expect that higher costs may decrease enrolment and increase inequality. If prices go up, this may present a barrier for the marginal student who may not consider higher education a worthy investment. Everything else being equal, then, we may expect higher prices to lead to lower demand, and thus lower enrolment levels for those affected by higher prices.[10]

There exists a rich body of empirical work on these phenomena, primarily from the United States. Early reviews, such as Leslie and Brinkman's (1987), showed that a substantial increase in prices usually led to a reduction in demand. On average, they found that a price increase of $100 led to a reduction in demand of about 0.7 %. Subsequent reviews have found slightly smaller price effects, and typically use a $1000 price change to estimate demand effects (cf. Dynarski 2003; Kane 1995). A recent study in Canada has found for instance, that an increase in prices of $1000 led to a decrease in enrolment between 2.5 and 5 %. In the United Kingdom, a price increase of £1000 has found to reduce enrolment by 3.9 % (Dearden et al. 2011).

With regards to inequality, quite a few studies argue that tuition fee hikes disproportionally affect students from lower social backgrounds. An update to Leslie and Brinkman's study (Heller 1997) argues that students from poor families have a different demand curve. This finding is confirmed in several studies. McPherson and Schapiro (1991) found that low-income white students were more responsive to price changes. Similarly, Coelli (2009) found this to be the case in Canada.

While some credit constraints may be offset by the English student support system, certain students may still be 'risk averse' (Pratt 1964). From the perspective of Rational Action Theory (Breen and Goldthorpe 1997), one can expect that students from lower social classes are more risk averse than students from higher

[10]As always, the question is to what extent everything else is really equal. As returns to higher education remain, on average, higher than the costs, it is by no means guaranteed that higher prices will reduce enrolment from this perspective.

status families. This argument has been used to explain why students from lower social classes are diverted away from university in Germany (Hillmert and Jacobs 2003). For higher social strata, the monetary costs of attending university may be offset by the social costs of *not* attending higher education. In other words, there are many reasons to expect a stronger decrease in enrolment for students from lower social classes.

3.2 The Optimists' View: Higher Enrolment and Lower Inequality

There are several serious counter-arguments to be given against the pessimist view. Firstly, how to square ever higher-prices with ever-higher enrolment rates? Time-series data at the macro-level that show an ever increasing rise in college attendance over the last century (cf. Schofer and Meyer 2005). Secondly, why do systems with higher fees also have overall higher enrolment rates than those without fees, and why are such systems typically more inclusive (Shavit et al. 2007)? Finally, why were several empirical studies not able to confirm a higher price responsiveness of students from poor families (prominent examples include Carneiro and James 2002; Ellwood and Kane 2000).

Leslie and Brinkman (1987, p. 200ff), already offered a wide variety of explanations for this phenomenon. Two of these issues may be particularly important for the English case. One important issue seems to be selectivity. Cameron and Heckman (1998) argue that pupils who face the choice of going to university are already positively selected based on (typically unobserved) ability and motivation. Students from low income family (those who "make it against the odds") may be most strongly selected on these traits (Shavit and Blossfeld 1993). Price therefore plays only a marginal role in deciding whether to go to college or not. Students from lower social classes in particular may decide that the price of college is only a minor deterrent.

Indeed, if price plays a role at all, it may be offset with policy measures such as subsidies and loans. Again, Carneiro and Heckman (2002) argue that only very few students face serious liquidity constraints when trying to decide about going to college. These liquidity constrains can easily be addressed by subsidising student loans or providing other forms of state aid to poor families. And indeed, rising tuition is usually accompanied by various policy measures to compensate for higher prices. Governments and universities provide subsidies, fee discounts, loans and other types of students' support to target students from lower social strata. In the United Kingdom, a comprehensive students' loan programme was implemented alongside the tuition fees. For all these reasons, we may not know a priori how the 2012 reforms would affect students. The next sections will try to draw up an answer to this question.

4 Research Design

The 'causal effect' of the marketisation reforms will be presented through a 'difference-in-differences' design. This is a pseudo-experimental research design that has become popular in policy studies following pioneering work by Card and Krueger (1994) in the field of labour economics. The intuition behind these designs is that it is possible to identify a causal effect by comparing trends before and after a policy has been implemented, using another region where that policy has not been implemented as a control group.

The marketisation of universities in the United Kingdom follows just such a pattern. As mentioned earlier, only students from England faced the increase in tuition fees (see Fig. 1), whereas the situation remained unchanged for students from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and for overseas students (non-EU). This situation thus allows for a pseudo-experimental setting, dividing these groups into 'treatment' and 'control' groups, as in Table 2.

Any (semi-) experimental design requires some similarity between treatment and control groups. While comparability is assured in terms of both observable and unobservable characteristics of these groups in randomised trials, this is very

Table 2 Division of regions into 12 treatment and 10 control groups

Academic year domicile	Group	Used for research questions
North East England	Treatment	All
North West England	Treatment	All
Yorkshire and the Humber	Treatment	All
East Midlands	Treatment	All
West Midlands	Treatment	All
East of England	Treatment	All
London	Treatment	All
South East England	Treatment	All
South West England	Treatment	All
Wales	Control	All
Northern Ireland	Control	All
Scotland	Control	All
Africa	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
Asia	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
Australasia	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
Middle East	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
North America	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
Other Europe	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
South America	Control	Only for enrolment, not inequality
Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man	Treatment	Only for enrolment, not inequality
England Unknown	Treatment	Only for enrolment, not inequality
Other European Union	Treatment	Only for enrolment, not inequality

Table 3 A descriptive overview of the data, pre- and post-treatment

	Treatment (English and EU-students)		Control (Welsh, Northern Irish, Scottish, International students)	
	Pre (2010/11)	Post (2013/14)	Pre (2010/11)	Post (2013/14)
Students (mean per region)	54,385	45,590	16,075	15,310
Age (mean and standard deviation)	24.52	22.78	25.49	24.26
	9.97	8.50	12.27	11.40
Parental social class (UK only)				
Service Class	43 %	43 %	41 %	41 %
Middle Class	16 %	16 %	17 %	17 %
Working Class	18 %	20 %	17 %	18 %
Unemployed	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Unknown/not classified	23 %	19 %	24 %	23 %
Ethnicity (UK only)				
White	75 %	73 %	92 %	90 %
Black or Black British	8 %	9 %	1 %	2 %
Asian or Asian British (Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi)	7 %	8 %	1 %	1 %
Mixed	3 %	4 %	1 %	1 %
Other	4 %	4 %	1 %	1 %
Unknown	2 %	2 %	3 %	5 %

Note Counts rounded to the nearest five to prevent individual identification, percentages rounded to integers. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data

unlikely to occur in non-randomised allocation to treatment and control groups. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the observable characteristics of the treatment and control groups in this study. Students are broken down by 'domicile', which is a variable measuring the address of the student before they enrolled at university (i.e. most likely their parental home), and hence defines the eligibility for a certain fee regime. While the table makes clear that the groups are comparable in some respects (particularly, class composition), they are different in other respects (size, age).

The situation presented in Table 3 is quite a typical problem for non-randomised experiments (Angrist and Pishke 2008), and it indicates that it is impossible to identify a 'causal effect' by comparing the post-treatment situation between treatment and control regions. There may be unobserved characteristics for either the treatment or the control regions that influence the choices of students. The solution for this problem is a 'difference-in-differences' design that eliminates this problem of unobserved heterogeneity. Provided that the differences between treatment and control groups are time-invariant, this research design identifies the causal effect (i.e. there are no factors that influence only the treated or only the control groups in the time period that is observed). Below, I will discuss whether it is likely that any time-variant changes affect either the treatment or control groups.

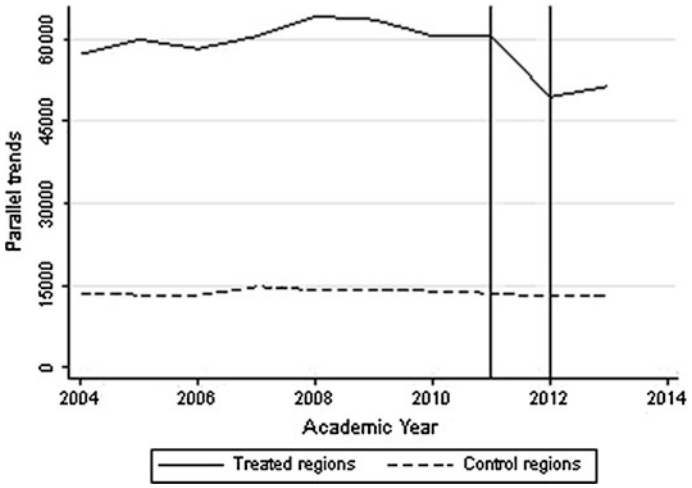

Fig. 2 Parallel trends for undergraduate enrolments in control and treatment regions. The English line represents an average of all English regions. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data

The simple idea behind the 'difference-in-differences' strategy is that it takes the difference between the treatment and control groups, before and after the treatment. More formally, the quantity of interest (the causal effect) looks as follows:

$$\mathrm{E}[Y_1|D=1] - \mathrm{E}[Y_1|D=0] - \mathrm{E}[Y_0|D=1] - \mathrm{E}[Y_0|D=0] \tag{1}$$

where $\mathrm{E}[Y_1|D=1]$ is the expected value for the treated group *after* the treatment, $\mathrm{E}[Y_1|D=0]$ is the expected value for the non-treated group *after* the treatment, $\mathrm{E}[Y_0|D=1]$ is the expected value for the treated group *before* treatment, and $\mathrm{E}[Y_0|D=0]$ is the expected value for the non-treated group after the treatment.

4.1 Pre-treatment Trends

Figure 2 shows the pre- and post-trend treatments in undergraduate enrolments in the United Kingdom from the academic year 2004/05 until 2013/14. While it is clear that the total amount of students from England is much higher than those from the control groups, the lines do not take a fundamentally different shape before the reform.

4.2 Stability in Composition

Secondly, it is hard for students to escape the fee-regime. Figure 3 shows the amount of students who are studying in the UK, but are studying outside their

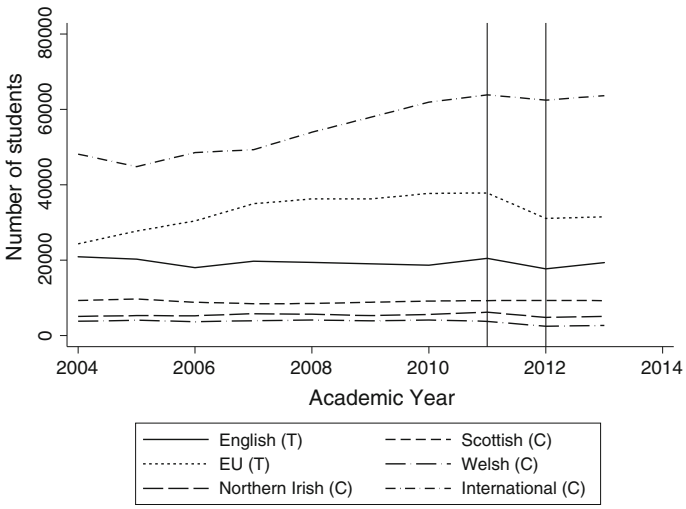

Fig. 3 Total amount of students studying outside their domicile region. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data

domicile region (e.g. English students studying in Wales). Naturally, the figure for international students is the highest (since none of these are studying at home), but for the other groups, we see more or less continuous lines. This is understandable from the perspective of policy, since students cannot easily change the fee-regime by moving to another country of the United Kingdom. In order to qualify for lower fees, students would have to move out of England 3 years *before* applying to university. This is rather unlikely to happen in large numbers, since the cost of moving an entire family will probably be higher than the costs of fees.[11]

4.3 Anticipation Effects in Enrolment Decisions

It is a typical problem in the public policy literature that people may anticipate policy changes and change their behaviour. The problem in this case is that the student cohort of 2011/12 may have already foreseen that tuition fees would be raised by the academic year 2012/13. Some students that would have normally enrolled in academic year 2012/13 could have enrolled in the previous academic year to 'escape' the higher fees. The Browne review that announced an increase in fees was indeed published a few months before the enrolment deadlines of the

[11]There have been stories of 'fee-refugees', however, the cost of moving to a foreign country may also be higher than paying the fees. http://www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2012/aug/24/fee-refugees-disappointed.

2011/12 academic year. Students who would otherwise defer their enrolment to the next year, or older students could therefore decide to enrol in the academic year 2011/12. Any analysis of the discontinuity between academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13 may therefore overestimate the causal effect of the fees. In the empirical section, therefore, I will systematically compare enrolment in the academic year 2010/11 with enrolment in academic year 2013/14.

5 Data and Results

Research on social inequality in education is usually based on general population surveys (Breen et al. 2009; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993) also in the context of privatisation reforms (Torche 2005). Such data allow researchers to compare the social background of students and graduates to the social background in the general population. Ideally, I would use a longitudinal survey of the general population to assess whether enrolments in higher education changed before and after the marketisation. For the research questions asked here, such data either is not available (yet), does not provide enough detail on the social background of the students, or suffers from both of these problems.[12]

Instead, data on student enrolments are drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA),[13] which collects register data[14] about students in nearly all universities in the United Kingdom.[15] This data is collected at the individual level, and contains information about the students' age, year of study, and social background and ethnicity. Information on social class is only collected here for students younger than 21 years old, following the 8-class National Statistics Social Economic Classification (in turn, this is based on the EGP class scheme). Data in these classes have been collapsed into 4 classes (Service class, Middle Class, Working Class and Unemployed), allowing for a hierarchical comparison.

In each of the models presented below, the dependent variable is the '*number of new enrolments*' (Y for region *i* and time-period *j*), while the independent variables are '*Treatment*', which is a dummy indicating whether the region is treated or

[12]The 'Understanding Society' survey comes closest, with a sample of 40,000 households who are followed over time. The number of university enrolments is very limited (typically around 200 per wave), implying that years of enrolment would have to be collapsed together to get enough individuals in each cell. Moreover, data for 2012/13 are not yet available at the time of writing.

[13]HESA does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties.

[14]Standard errors and t-statistics lose their usual meaning in this context, since this is not a random sample. These will be provided below, in any case, to give an idea of the variance of the effect. Moreover, these may be relevant if we think of a 'super-population' of higher education systems in which marketisation may occur in the future.

[15]Data is provided here for 158 universities, out of a total of approximately 162 universities in the United Kingdom.

control, and '*Post-period*', which is a dummy indicating the time pre- or post-treatment as well as the '*interaction between treatment and post-period*' as the difference-in-differences estimator. This model looks as follows, and is the same for each analysis below:

$$Y_{ij} = b_1 Treatment + b_2 Postperiod + b_3 Treatment * Postperiod + e_{ij} \quad (2)$$

Results are presented below in four sections, namely (1) general effects on enrolments in universities, (2) effects on enrolments of students from different age groups, (3) effects on enrolments of students from different social classes, and (4) effects on different ethnic groups.

It should be noted here already that the major disadvantage of using only student data is that they do not allow me to compare the social background of the students to the social background of the general population. The consequence is that I have to restrict my dependent variable to the number of first-year enrolments in each group of interest before and after the policy change. The assumption that this analysis makes is that the social composition of the population did not change in the observed time-period (between academic year 2010/11 and 2013/14). This analysis cannot be done at the individual level, but at the regional level at which policies are made (all individuals are enrolled at university, so there is no variation in enrolment propensity). Thus, while the data are collected at the individual level, they have been collapsed at the domicile region level (the treatment and control groups discussed above). For each analysis, I have carried out three main robustness checks: using more years for the pre- and post-period, using 'new enrolments as a percentage of the population' as a dependent variable, and using Poisson regression models.

Another disadvantage is that 'enrolments' do not take into account the differences between applicants and enrolments (assuming that the former are higher than the latter). Enrolment data thus provide an incomplete picture of student demand. On the other hand, enrolment figures may better represent actual demand for higher education, since applications may come from people who might not have the necessary qualifications to study at university. I will come back to this point in the discussion of the results.

5.1 First Year Enrolment

Table 4 shows the effects of the marketisation on general enrolment trends (coefficients in column 1—M1). The causal effect is highlighted in bold (the interaction between treated region and post-period). For the average treatment region, the number of students declined by just over 8000 students after the reforms. This is equivalent to a 15 % decrease of student numbers compared to the pre-treatment period. From a counterfactual perspective, this means that there were around 72,000 students who would have enrolled in England if the reforms had not been introduced. Figure 4 presents a graph of observed and counterfactual trends in the treatment and control regions.

Table 4 Coefficients for general models where dependent variable is count of first year enrolments, and the unit of analysis is the region of domicile

	M1	M2	M3	M4
Dependent variable	New enrolments	New enrolments (all years)	New enrolments as % of 18–24 year old population	New enrolments (Poisson regression)
Treatment group	38,310**	39,550***	−0.01	1.219***
	(10,305)	(10,115)	(0.009)	0.003
Post-period	−770	−295	−0.006	−0.049***
	(720)	(1150)	(0.005)	0.003
Treated in post-period (causal effect)	−8030***	−9915***	−0.012	−0.127***
	(1510)	(2090)	(0.006)	0.004
Constant	16,075*	15,460*	0.121***	9.685***
	(5755)	(5515)	(0.007)	0.002
r2	0.396	0.415	0.377	
bic	1018	5057	−125.996	738580.368
N	44	220	24	44

Note Standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level. Estimates and standard errors in model 1 and 2 are rounded to nearest 5 to preserve anonymity. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data. *Significance levels* $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$

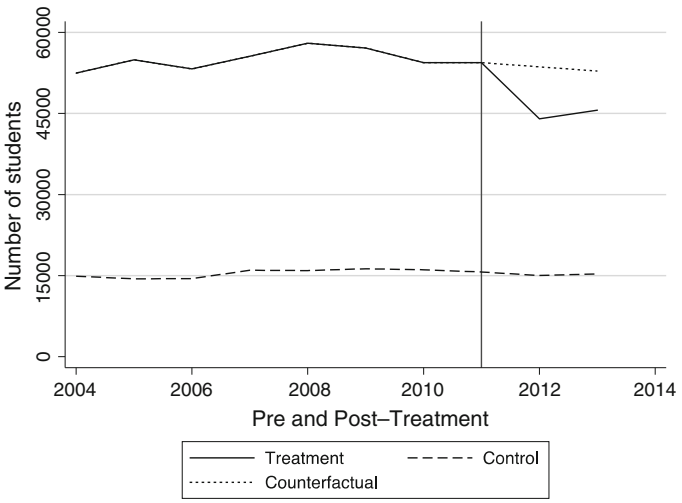

Fig. 4 Observed and counterfactual trends in university enrolments in treatment and control regions. Predicted effects (based on predicted probabilities) for counterfactual after treatment. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data

It is clear from Fig. 3 that there has been a substantial drop in enrolment following marketisation, which may prove costly for English society on the long run. This figure may surprise some, since earlier releases (UCAS 2012) reported the reduction in acceptances to be substantially smaller (around 5.5 %). There could be two potential explanations for this divergence. First, UCAS does not record enrolments as such, meaning that students may still have decided not to enrol after being accepted. Secondly, UCAS seems to report new enrolments in general, while the estimation here is based on new enrolments in undergraduate programmes (i.e. those for which fees were raised). Another point is that the finding here is in line with many earlier findings on the price-responsiveness of students mentioned earlier.

The three columns to the right (M2–M4) provide various robustness checks on these results. The second column (M2) shows that the results also hold when all previous years for which I have data are used as controls (2004–2011). The effect is now bigger in terms of the point estimate (−9915) as well as in percentage terms (18 %). The third column of coefficients (M3) shows that the decline in student numbers holds when checking for changes in the population of young people. This specification uses the number of new enrolments as a proportion of the total 18–24 year old population (based on yearly population estimates from the Office for National Statistics).[16] The effect size is obviously much smaller, but comparable to the other effect sizes in terms of percentage change, namely −16 %. The fourth column (M4) shows a Poisson regression with the same specification. Poisson models are developed to analyse count-data (such as in this case, the number of students). This model yields the same size and direction of the effect (−18 % in terms of marginal effect), and is also statistically significant.

5.2 *Enrolment for Different Age Groups*

As outlined in the section on expectations, different groups of students may face different costs and benefits from attending higher education. Table 5 shows the effects broken down for different age groups (full regression results in Appendix 1). While school-leavers (16/18 years old) are almost unaffected by the reforms, all older students are strongly affected.

The results indicate that students from these different age groups have reacted differently to the marketisation process. While younger students seem not to have reacted at all, the picture is quite different for older students. By far the biggest effect is visible for students who are older than 30, for which we observe a decrease by about 1/3 in enrolments.

[16]This has become the standardized base population used in studies of student demand. In effect, the 18–24 year old population is seen as the population that is most likely to enroll. See Leslie and Brinkman (1987) in the references for a discussion of this base.

Table 5 Effect sizes for different age groups

Age group	Absolute change in treated regions	Percentage change (%)
16 to 18 years	−135 students	−1
19/21 years	−1995 students	−12
22/30 years old	−2070 students	−23
30 and older	−3805 students	−34

Note The unit of analysis is the region of domicile (standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level). Estimates and standard errors in model 1 and 2 are rounded to nearest 5 to preserve anonymity. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data. Full regression output in Appendix 1

Table 6 Effect sizes for different social classes

Parental social class	Absolute change in treated regions	Percentage change (%)
Service class	−535	−3
Middle class	−125	−2
Working class	+520	+7
Unemployed	+10	+19

Note Parental social class is recorded only for students under 22 years of age, domiciled in the United Kingdom. The unit of analysis is the region of domicile (standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level). Estimates and standard errors in model 1 and 2 are rounded to nearest 5 to preserve anonymity. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data. Full regression output in Appendix 1

5.3 *Enrolment for Different Social Classes*

As argued above, one of the main questions in the debate was whether inequality between students would increase. Table 6 presents a summary of the results for the different social classes (full regression tables in Appendix 1). Since it is likely that older students are more prominently from working class backgrounds, it should be noted here already that these results are probably biased (I will come back to this point in the discussion). The estimates indicate a heterogeneous effect of the tuition fees.

While there is a small decline for upper and middle class students, there is an increase in students with parents in the working class or among the unemployed. Further investigation of the data showed that the results also hold if we compare the class background of 18 year olds versus 21 year olds (results not presented here due to space limitations). The results hold when using all years as a control. Using proportions of students in each social class as a proportion of total population in the same social class (using census data from 2011) does not change the estimates. When using Poisson regression, however, the effect size becomes statistically non-significant. This means that some caution is warranted in interpreting these changes as a decrease in inequality (note, however, that these are register data, and thus statistical significance does not carry its conventional meaning).

Table 7 Effect sizes for different ethnic groups

Ethnicity	Absolute change in treated regions	Percentage change (%)
White	−4895 students	−10
Black or Black British	−380 students	−8
Asian or Asian British	−130 students	−3
Mixed	−75 students	−4
Other	−190 students	−8

Note Ethnic group is recorded only for students domiciled in the United Kingdom. The unit of analysis is the region of domicile (standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level). Estimates and standard errors in model 1 and 2 are rounded to nearest 5 to preserve anonymity. *Source* Own calculations based on HESA data. Full regression output in Appendix 1

5.4 Enrolment for Different Ethnic Groups

One less investigated area of inequality in British higher education is ethnicity. Table 7 presents the results of the analysis for the largest ethnic groups (full regression results in Appendix 1). The table makes clear that all ethnic groups are negatively affected by the 2012 reforms, although to different extents. Whites, blacks and others face the strongest decreases (ranging between 8 and 10 %). Asians (including Indian British, Pakistaki British and Bangladeshi British) and mixed groups face a smaller decline (between 3 and 4 %).

While some may interpret these effects as a slight decrease in inequality between whites and other ethnic groups, caution is warranted. As Table 3 showed, whites make up more than 70 % of all students in English universities, and over 90 % of students in the control regions. Even after the reforms, whites are still by far the dominant group in all British universities. Rather, we can conclude from this the 2012 reforms did not exacerbate the existing inequalities between ethnic groups in English universities.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has provided a first analysis of how the 2012/13 reforms of the English higher education system have affected student enrolments. It has investigated four main effects, namely, on general enrolment patterns, on enrolment patterns of specific age groups, on different social classes and different ethnic groups. It has found that enrolments have declined substantially after the marketisation, particularly for older students and those from the middle and service class.

In terms of enrolment trends, the results are on the side of the pessimists. There has been a serious drop in enrolments following the marketisation reforms. The results indicate also that young and older students respond differently to marketisation. Whereas young people's decisions to go to university are almost unaffected, the decisions of older people are negatively affected. This may be a representation

of different incentive structures facing younger and older students. The higher price may be driving older students off the market. If lifelong learning remains a policy goal, then this may require a policy response. Little is still known about the characteristics of older students, and more research would be needed to fill this gap.

In terms of social inequality, however, the evidence seems to point towards the optimist view. But we have to interpret this finding with some caution. There has been a drop in enrolments from the service class and middle class, while we can observe a small increase from working class or unemployed backgrounds. Moreover, white students were slightly more affected than other ethnic groups. This could point to the success of policies to shield lower income students from the higher prices (i.e. the extensive loans and grants programme). However, it may also be that students from lower social classes and non-whites are more strongly selected on unobserved traits (ability, motivation). As mentioned earlier, it is also quite likely that there are more working class students in the older age groups. Since the drop in enrolment for these older groups is much higher than for younger students, it is still possible that social inequality has remained stable (or has increased). Moreover, service class students are still strongly over-represented.

The question remains why different groups respond differently to marketisation. While this paper has not investigated the decision-making mechanisms of students, a number of candidate explanations are offered by the theory. Older students may perceive that they face both higher costs and lower benefits. While the financial cost is the same, older students may perceive the costs as higher due to added social costs (giving up a job, family life, etc.). They may also more negatively assess their chances of reaping benefits from studying in terms of labour market returns. This makes their overall assessment of risks higher, and therefore lower older students' propensity to enrol at university. Future research on the micro-mechanisms of student choices could clarify these questions.

These results may be sobering for both optimistic and pessimistic sides of the debate. As many countries are considering to increase fees or to introduce other market mechanisms, they may realise that this may come at a cost. Higher fees may deter substantial numbers of students, and particularly affect older students. On the other hand, the results make clear that the marketisation—particularly if combined with student support mechanisms—will not necessarily affect class inequality or inequality between ethnic groups. While future research may shed further light on these questions, these findings will hopefully lead to a more informed reflection on the role of tuition fees and student support in (higher) education.

Appendix 1: Full Regression Results for Age Groups, Parental Social Classes and Ethnic Groups

Age Groups. Coefficients for models for specific age-groups where dependent variable is count of first year enrolments, and the unit of analysis is the region of domicile (standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level). Estimates and standard errors rounded to the nearest 5 to preserve anonymity.

	16 to 18 years	19/21 years	22/30 years old	30 and older
Dependent variable	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments
Treatment group	9730**	9280**	5380**	7830***
	(2630)	(2620)	(1580)	(2040)
Post-period	250*	−10	−365**	−305
	(120)	(110)	(125)	(200)
Treated in post-period (causal effect)	−330	−2480***	−2005***	−3420***
	(200)	(480)	(390)	(660)
Constant	4000*	3840*	2655**	2515
	(1515)	(1400)	(930)	(1215)
r2	0.4	0.361	0.354	0.404
bic	903	898	849	871
N	44	44	44	44

Source Own calculations based on HESA data. *Significance levels* $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$

Social Classes. Coefficients for models for specific social classes where dependent variable is count of first year enrolments, and the unit of analysis is the region of domicile (standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level).

	Service class	Middle class	Working class	Unemployed
Dependent variable	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments
Treatment group	7810*	2520*	3210*	20
	(3380)	(1030)	(1065)	(20)
Post-period	−60	−95	20	60
	(170)	(50)	(80)	(40)
Treated in post-period (causal effect)	−535	−130	520*	10
	(275)	(115)	(215)	(50)
Constant	8890**	3700***	3860***	35*
	(2285)	440	(505)	(15)

(continued)

(continued)

	Service class	Middle class	Working class	Unemployed
r2	0.237	0.196	0.292	0.204
bic	497	449	454	284
N	24	24	24	24

Source Own calculations based on HESA data. *Significance levels* $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$

Ethnic Groups. Coefficients for models for specific social classes where dependent variable is count of first year enrolments, and the unit of analysis is the region of domicile (standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the domicile level).

	Whites	Blacks	Asian (British)	Mixed	Other
Dependent variable	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments	New enrolments
Treatment group	11,390	4595	4075*	1670*	1840
	(9135)	(2985)	(1445)	(695)	(1220)
Post-period	−3630	14**	−5	35*	−75
	(2005)	(4)	(20)	(15)	(55)
Treated in post-period (causal effect)	−4895	−380	−130	−75	−190
	(2260)	(335)	(165)	(55)	(205)
Constant	35,280***	334*	574*	427*	540*
	(7805)	(145)	(225)	(140)	(185)
r2	0.18	0.079	0.226	0.175	0.08
bic	530	503	468	433	458
N	24	24	24	24	24

Source Own calculations based on HESA data. *Significance levels* $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$

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Struggling with Social Polarization. Student Financial Support in Romania in the Framework of the Bologna Process

Daniela Alexe, Cezar Mihai Hâj and Bogdan Murgescu

1 Introduction

Social polarization can put at risk both economic development and the democratic cohesion of societies. Its relation to education is twofold. Economic and social inequalities determine inequalities in terms of access to various education levels, while differences in educational attainment generally help to entrench social divides. Global empirical analyses emphasize the strong negative relationship between inequality and human development: "Inequality in health, education and income is negatively related to the Human Development Indicator (HDI), with the relationship much stronger for education and income" (HDR 2010, p. 58). The consequences of inequality are pervasive for the whole economic and social fabric, and do not spare any society. Discussing the current situation of the United States, Joseph Stiglitz argues that: "we are paying a high price for our inequality, an economic system that is less stable and less efficient, with less growth, and a democracy that has been put into peril" (Stiglitz 2012, p. 9). The risks entailed by inequality are even higher for comparatively smaller and less economically developed societies like Romania.

The education system has a great impact on the social structure, mainly due to its private benefits which accrue to its beneficiaries, particularly at the level of higher education. These benefits have been analyzed and argued by many authors. Thus, in

D. Alexe (✉) · C.M. Hâj
Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research,
Development and Innovation Funding, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: daniela.alexe@uefiscdi.ro

C.M. Hâj
e-mail: cezar.haj@uefiscdi.ro

B. Murgescu
University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: bmurgescu@gmail.com

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general, employees with a graduate diploma earn more than those without one (Johnstone 2010). Also, education is associated with better health and higher life expectancy. Both researchers (Link and Phelan 1995) and international organizations (OECD 2012) that have investigated the link between education and health have indicated that more educated people tend to live longer, healthier lives. The data also shows that better educated people are more civically active in terms of voting, volunteering, political interest and interpersonal trust (OECD 2012). Other benefits identified by researchers include higher levels of living satisfaction (+18 %) and so-called non-monetary benefits (Vila 2000), meaning that people with higher education attainment are better parents, support their communities by donations, find a job easier and closer to their expectations, with shorter periods of unemployment.

In central and Eastern Europe, increasing social polarization has been a significant feature of the post-communist transition (Bohle and Greskovits 2012; Romano 2014). Access to higher education has been influenced by social inequalities, as well as the overall system liberalization and the demographics of secondary education graduates. In the first two decades of transition, Romania, as well as almost all post-communist societies, made tertiary education available for all. It also started the process of the massification of higher education which had started some decades earlier in the West. During this phase of rapid quantitative growth, few seemed to pay attention to the disproportionate access to higher education of higher socio-economic groups. However, with the stabilizing or even decrease in student numbers and the subsequent setback of massification, students became a scarce resource for the universities. Thus, it is expected that there will be a growing political interest to increase access to higher education for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and other groups which have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education.

The main goal of this article is to assess whether the existing student support schemes, as one of the main tools to improve access and participation to higher education, are **relevant in terms of public efforts to meet the social need of specific under-represented groups** in Romania. Therefore, the article will briefly describe the role of the Bologna Process in promoting the need for national policies aimed at reducing educational inequities and look at ways in which equity in higher education (including access and participation of under-represented groups) can reduce social polarization. We will focus on how different types of scholarships influence young people's decision to enrol in higher education institutions, overcome difficulties during their studies and finally graduate. In this endeavour, besides analyzing the existing literature, the available statistical information and official documents adopted by public institutions, we will also ground our analysis on two original data sources. The first is a quantitative survey of a representative group of 1093 students at 21 Romanian state universities; the second is data collected by the authors from eight universities within the European funded project "Internationalization, equity and university management for a more qualitative Higher Education system (IEMU)", implemented by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI). This latter project aimed to analyze the impact of national equity policies in the

Romanian higher education and included a number of eight study visits during which university management, members of decision making bodies, academic staff and students were interviewed. The university sample was representative, as the authors targeted different types of institutions (comprehensive universities, as well as higher education institutions specialized in technical, economic, agricultural and medical studies) from different geographical areas.

2 The Role of the Bologna Process, Equity and Student Support Schemes in Reducing Social Polarization

The "Social dimension" is one of the main action lines of the Bologna Process. Starting in 2001 with the adoption of the Prague Ministerial Communiqué, ministers committed towards reducing inequities in their respective higher education systems. In Prague, the ministers reaffirmed "the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna Process" (Prague 2001). In the 2005 Bergen Ministerial Communiqué, the social dimension of education was undertaken as a priority for the implementation within the Bologna Process, with the Ministers committing themselves to taking measures for an increased access to higher education. The Bergen document defined the social dimension as including "measures taken by governments to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects" (Bergen 2005); the 2007 London Ministerial Communiqué elaborated on this, specifying that the social dimension of higher education in the context of the Bologna Process was a commitment to the notion that "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" London 2007).

In the most recent Ministerial Communiqué, the priorities set by Ministers include improving national policies to increase the access and attainment of higher education, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented groups with high-risk exclusion. To quote the communiqué: "at the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, we will: strengthen policies of widening overall access and raising completion rates, including measures targeting the increased participation of underrepresented groups." (Bucharest 2012).

As Schwarzenberger noted: in the absence of policies aimed at reducing the social differences in society, the current trend of higher education is to increase the differences among individuals and not to reduce them (Schwarzenberger 2008). Precisely in order to counteract this trend, ministerial commitments on student support systems have been taken within the Bologna Process in order to better develop the social dimension of higher education (Bucharest 2012). The major aim is to integrate students from underrepresented groups in order to reduce social disparities within the higher education system and, more generally, in society. The ministerial commitments have thus created an international policy environment which perceives student support systems as a pillar for equity in higher education.

Access, participation and completion of studies by certain categories of students are influenced by poverty, rural isolation, parents' low education levels, disabilities or an ethnic minority status. In those places where universities charge tuition fees, limited family income can also be a barrier to access higher education. In this regard, one of the most important tools impacting on the behaviour of higher education institutions in terms of national equity policies implementation is the funding mechanism.

Funding of higher education is generally covered by some mixture of public and private (students, alumni, donors, etc.) sources. State higher education funding translates either into direct support to universities or indirect support in the form of resource transfer to students or their families (Salmi and Hauptman 2006). Moreover, public funding can be directed to cover two main types of costs: those related to institutional provision (academic staff salaries, administrative costs, etc.) and students' living costs.

Living costs (in addition to tuition fees) represent other types of expenses for accessing, progressing and completing a study program and are generated mainly by the need for accommodation throughout the study period, meals, books, equipment, and other personal expenses/other administrative fees charged by the university (registration fees, final exams and re-examination fees, library access etc.). Generally, they are not covered by the tuition fees. Many of these living costs exist for all levels of education (from kindergarten to higher education). For young people coming from low-income families, the effort to progress within the education system for a long period of time (it takes 15 years or more of formal education to graduate from university) is considerably higher than it is for other social categories. Basically, even if children are motivated to continue their studies, the poorer families' financial situation acts as a barrier in terms of access to higher education.

There exists a variety of ways in which national policies and institutional instruments can be designed to offset these barriers. Usually, the choice of instrument says something about the different ways in which the State views the role of students in society. Schwarz and Rehburg identify four such view of students: students as investors (in the UK), as dependent family members (Italy), as teenagers in training (France) or as citizens with their own responsibilities (Norway) (Schwarz and Reheburg 2004). Although these categories are not mutually exclusive, different financing support systems for students were designed to promote social equity in higher education, such as study loans, study vouchers—directly related to the decision of the student, bursaries and scholarships and tax benefits for families with students.

Bursaries and scholarships as non-repayable forms of aid, are equity policy instruments aimed at providing financial support to cover the living costs associated with the educational process, other than tuition fees, i.e. expenses related to accommodation, meals, transportation, teaching materials and others. The student financial support systems have different names used in different higher education systems and countries. For example, the term "scholarship" is used in some higher education systems to define solely the money given to students on merit criteria,

while other countries use this term for all types of public aids, including need based aid. The same applies for other terms such as "bursary", "aid", "grant" a.s.o. In the present article on the Romania case study, the term "scholarship" will be used to express the public money distributed to students with the distinction of "merit scholarships" for money given on academic performance criteria and "need based aid" for money given on social criteria.

In Europe, scholarships can be provided directly by the government, through a specialized agency, as it happens in France and in most Francophone countries, or by transferring the management responsibility for scholarship funding to the higher education institutions (i.e. Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal). Salmi and Hauptman note that the trend for centralized regulation of scholarships increases with higher public contribution. The criteria for scholarships allocation are determined either by an assessment of social needs (in this case being policy instruments of equity) or by students' academic merit. While the latter are mainly policy instruments to encourage performance, the scholarships awarded on the basis of social need aim to widen participation in higher education for social groups that traditionally do not have access to such education.

3 Equity in the Romanian Higher Education System

As per the Bologna Process commitments (London 2007), the equitability of a higher education system needs to be measured not only in terms of its ability to provide access to under-represented groups, but also in its ability to allow them to participate in the system and graduate from it.

To a large extent, access to higher education is determined by the structure and number of graduates in secondary education. Thus, equity in higher education is a product of influences on young students much earlier in the educational pipeline. Access to higher education is not only determined by pupils' intellectual abilities and efforts, but also by other factors such as: access to good primary and secondary schools, competent teachers, family support and motivation for a continued educational path or financial ability to afford tutoring. Consequently, universities' overreliance on student achievement for admission to higher education (or for providing financial support) may raise a number of issues regarding equity.

Data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) and the Institute of Education Sciences report on the state of education (ISE 2011) show that in Romania the degree of inclusion in education for all age categories increased until 2008. From then onwards, the degree of inclusion begins to decrease, in other words, a higher number of pupils dropped out of school or were no longer found in the formal education system (Table 1).

Moreover, results for Romania in the 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (IEA 2012b) show important performance differences on the basis of pupils' living background (rural/urban) or economic status. For example, 65 % of PIRLS-tested

Table 1 Degree of inclusion of the school age population (%), NIS, 2014

Age	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
3–6 years	79.65	78.84	79.2	79.8	81.0	81.8	82.0	86.1
7–10 years	92.56	93.25	94.5	97.1	97.3	95.7	93.6	93.1
11–14 years	78.86	79.41	81.1	89.4	94.3	94.3	93.1	91.7
15–18 years	81.56	81.67	83.0	88.5	88.8	86.2	84.2	81.9
Over 19 years	51.77	59.59	72.5	78.3	76.4	70.1	59.7	53.7

students come from cities with 15,000 inhabitants or less, and their average performance is 33 points ***below*** the international average (IEA 2012a). For 21 % from PIRLS-tested students from cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants, the average performance is 31 points ***above*** the international average. The performance differences are also correlated with the pupils' access to resources at home. For example, in Mathematics, the 10 % tested pupils designated as having better "home resources" (10 %) scored 27 points above the international average, while the 19 % of pupils with fewer "home resources" performed 25 points below the international average. These figures underline that equity in higher education is strongly influenced by equity in primary and secondary education, and policies addressing these issues should take into consideration the wider picture.

Given that graduating from high school and passing the baccalaureate exam is mandatory for accessing higher education, it is extremely important to analyze the characteristics of the high school graduate population. Figure 1 shows that the number of students finishing secondary school and taking the Baccalaureate exam

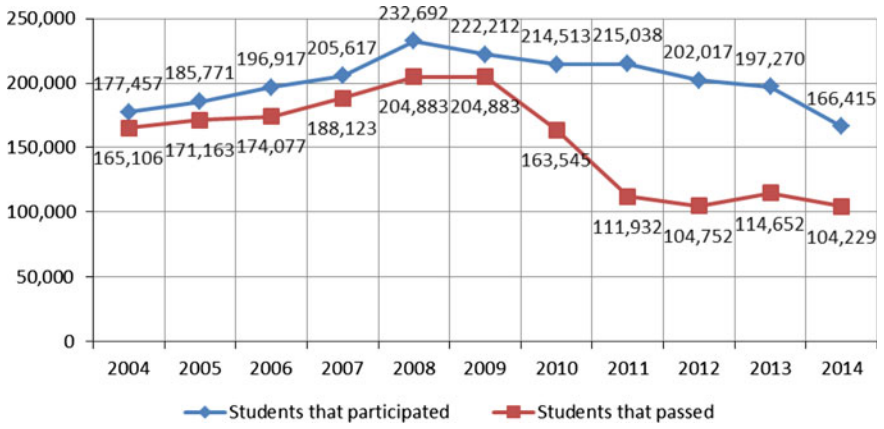

Fig. 1 Evolution of the number of candidates enrolled in the baccalaureate exam and the number of candidates who passed the baccalaureate exam after both sessions, Ministry of National Education (MNE), 2014

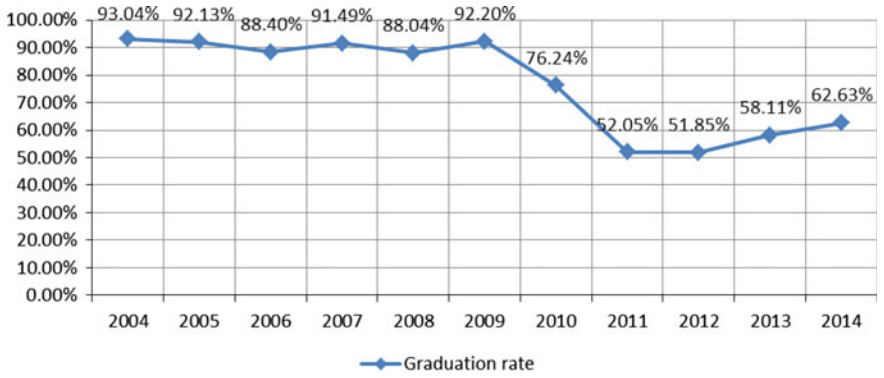

Fig. 2 Evolution of the baccalaureate exam success rate, MNE, 2014

decreased by nearly 29 % between 2008 and 2014. This is mainly a demographic change, due to the fall in the national birth rate during the transition from communism. In addition to this, there was a precipitous drop in the pass rate on the baccalaureate after 2009, after the introduction of both a more difficult exam and stricter invigilation procedures. However, as Fig. 2 shows, since 2012 this trend has reversed and exam pass rates have begun rising again; however, this increase is not enough to offset the continuing declines in student numbers due to demographics.

Both the demographic trend and the baccalaureate pass-rate trends have combined to significantly shrink decreasing overall student numbers at the tertiary level. Figure 3 shows the evolution of the student population in recent years. Overall, student numbers are now at less than half where they were in 2007, but this drop has not been spread equally across sectors. Among private institutions, enrolment has fallen by slightly more than 80 % while among public institutions it has been a less drastic (but still enormously significant) 32 %.

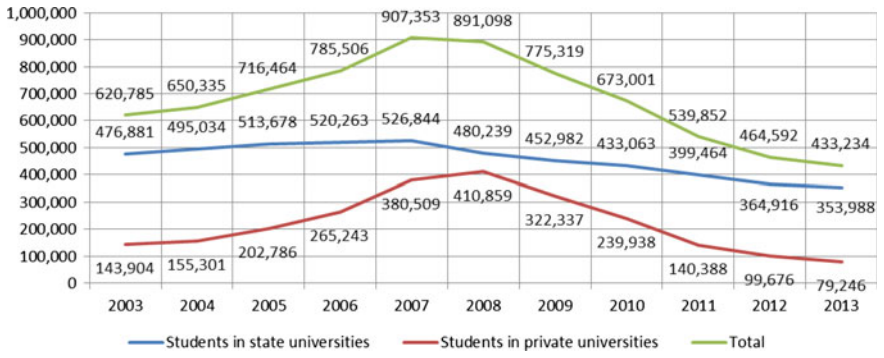

Fig. 3 The number of undergraduate students from state and private universities, NIS, 2013

3.1 Social Disparities Among Students

While the Bologna Process commitments (Louvain 2009) require clear targets and plans for the access of **underrepresented/disadvantaged groups** in higher education, Romania does not currently have a strategy with explicit targets or implementation measures. That being said, several official documents identify those groups considered under-represented. The 2012 national Bologna Process implementation report lists a number of such groups, including Roma youth, orphans, youth from low-income families, youth from rural backgrounds, students with high socio-economic risk or socially marginalized, ethnic Romanians living abroad (Romanian Government 2012). In addition to these categories, the Education Law also mentions students with disabilities, and the National Reform Plan mentions children whose parents work abroad.

As in most countries worldwide, there is a strong correlation in Romania between socio-economic background on the one hand, and higher education participation/completion on the other. However, there are very few national studies which examine the distribution of students according to family income on an empirical basis. One dataset provided by the Romanian universities[1] in 2011 indicates that the percentage of **students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds** (groups defined by the Education Law no. 1/2011, Art. 205, letter 6) was about 10–11 % of total student population over the period 2005–2010. Also, a World Bank study points out that of the 20 % (quintile) of young people from the richest households (aged 25–29 years) in Romania, over 50 % hold a tertiary degree, compared with only 5 % of the 20 % (quintile) of young people from the poorest households in Romania (World Bank 2011). These data show that participation rates of students from low-income families are still low compared to those of students from high-income families.

Another underrepresented group in higher education is that of the **students coming from rural areas**. Often, this group overlaps with the students from low-income families; NIS shows that the average income per household in rural areas was 29.3 % lower than in urban households in 2014. This, naturally, leads to disparities at the secondary level. Failure rates on the baccalaureate exam, for instance, are significantly higher in rural areas (47.4 %) than they are in urban ones (33 %). This disparity then grows at the post-secondary level. According to NIS data for 2011, 55 % of the Romanian population resided in urban areas and 44 % in rural areas; yet, at the beginning of the academic year 2011–2012, the distribution of students by residence area was 75.68 % in urban areas and 24.32 % in rural areas (National Institute of Statistic—Tempo-online database, 2014).

[1]Data provided by universities in the process of university classification and study program ranking, 2011.

The lack of effective integration policies for rural youth in higher education generates social inequities in the distribution of academic qualifications. Thus, in 2009, 7.1 % of young people aged 25–29 years residing in rural areas graduated from a higher education institution, compared to 33.4 % residing in urban areas (World Bank 2011). Another World Bank report indicates that: "The difference observed in the rate of urban-rural denotes significant differences in education and hides the lack of access of vulnerable groups. Differences in performance can be attributed to inequity and inefficiency of resource allocation." (World Bank 2007). In this regard, we also need to take into account the particularities of the Romanian education system, where educational establishments (schools, universities) are concentrated in urban areas, thus generating additional costs for rural areas families (Voicu and Vasile 2010). The discrepancy between rural and urban families is even more visible if we consider that the category "rural families" also includes a small number of affluent sub-urban rural communities, which often have higher revenues than the urban population, thus contrasting heavily with the majority of the rural population. Romanian statistics do not break down the student population according to the type of originating rural background, but the authors of this paper postulate that in fact about half of the higher education students with rural background come from affluent sub-urban communities (which represent less than 10 % of the total rural communities in Romania), leaving thus the majority of the rural population even more underrepresented in the student population than the national statistics would suggest.

Young people with disabilities are considered a disadvantaged group both internationally and in Romania. At the end of 2012, the percentage of people with disabilities in the total Romanian population was 3.66 %, according to NIS. In 2011, from the total population with disabilities, only 6669 people were registered as students with disabilities in high schools and universities, although 2.6 % were of school age (15–24 years).

According to official data provided by the General Directorate for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, the population with disabilities is over 679,765 people, out of which over 17,000 are institutionalized. However, because the definition of disability is a contested and inconsistent one, the data on the participation of disabled students varies considerably by source. According to the EUROSTUDENT data for Romania, the percentage of students with physical disabilities and chronic illnesses out of the overall student population is 1.10 % (Eurostudent 2008), while the data provided by universities in the classification process of 2011 indicated that only 0.07 % of all students are included in this category (Fig. 4).

Beside the above analyzed underrepresented groups in higher education, there are other vulnerable groups as well, but no in depth analysis could be performed due to the lack of reliable data (for example, Roma students).

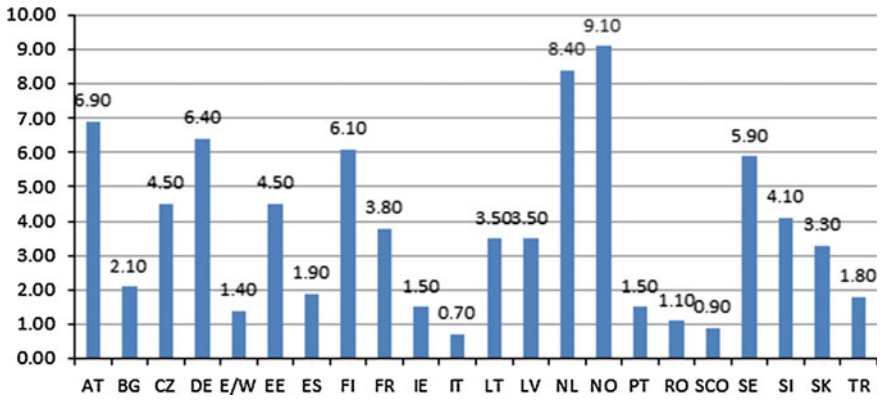

Fig. 4 Students with physical disabilities and chronic illnesses out of the overall student population, for EU countries (Eurostudent 2008)

4 Do Student Support Systems (E.G. Student Scholarships) Increase the Level of Equity in Higher Education?

There are a number of national policies in place to increase the access and participation of under-represented groups in higher education. However, before examining these, it is worth summarizing how access to public universities is regulated.

The first legal condition for all candidates is to pass the national examination (baccalaureate). Afterwards, they can choose to either enrol in a private university and pay tuition fees, or in a public university, where they can benefit from a free (state-financed) place or pay tuition fees, based on their entrance grade. At university level, the state-financed study places are distributed to the top students at the end of the admission examinations organized by universities according to a general framework, approved by the Minister of Education. When calculating the general admission grade, the universities can also use as criteria the baccalaureate exam grades or grades from university-organized admission exams which some institutions run independently of the state exam (for testing knowledge and cognitive capacities). Several groups of students can obtain specially-financed free study places: Roma students, students from foster homes or ethnic Romanians from abroad. In all cases, the distribution of public funds to cover the students' educational costs is merit-based.

Regarding the participation of under-represented groups, the main policies in place for their financial support and/or integration, outside the need based aid, are: subsidies for student dorms and canteens, subsidies for local and national transportation and free medical and psychological assistance.

4.1 The Romanian Student Support System: The Case of Student Scholarships

The Romanian student aid system was first regulated in the late 1990s[2] and its provisions were confirmed with some minor changes by the more recent Education Law (1/2011).[3] There are two main types of student scholarships, one merit-based and the other one based on social criteria, i.e. need-based aid. While the general criteria for awarding scholarships are regulated nationally, the system allows each university to define and implement their own additional criteria. All legal documents concerning the student aid system (National Education Law, secondary legislation) reiterate the following major objectives:

- for merit-based scholarships, to encourage learning, academic performance, and excellence;
- for need-based aid, to secure financial support for students from low income families.

According to the Education Law, the same student may receive both types of scholarships, if they meet the eligibility criteria. These scholarships are awarded for an entire academic year and, with a few exceptions, that includes the entire calendar year where medical aid, academic performance scholarships and aid for orphans are concerned.

The monthly lump sum provided by the government to universities for the purpose of scholarships is calculated by multiplying the fixed amount granted by the government per budgeted student place (currently 69 lei, i.e. approx. 16 Euro) by the number of budgeted places allocated for that university. Universities can supplement the scholarship fund from their own income. At national level, the scholarship fund is not divided into separate funds for need-based aid and merit scholarships; rather the universities themselves decide how the funds are divided between these categories, as well as the amounts and the number of available scholarships. Institutional behaviour in allocating these funds between merit and need-based awards may therefore be seen as a proxy for the importance given to equity by Romanian universities.

Before discussing how Romanian universities allocate the scholarship fund for different policy objectives, some comments about the perceived hierarchy between the need-based aid and the merit scholarships are perhaps in order. Firstly, one of the most common misconceptions recorded during our interviews with key stakeholders at universities is that the need-based awards are somehow second-rate scholarships and should be of lower value than the merit scholarships. This is

[2]Order no. 558/1998 on amendments to Annexes 1 and 2 of Order no. 455/1997 establishing general criteria for scholarships and other forms of support for pupils, students and trainees in public education, day courses. For the general context of setting up this system, see Proteasa and Miroiu (2013, pp. 177–180).

[3]Education Law 1/2011, art. 12, paragraphs (2) and (4), art. 223, paragraphs (9), (10), (11).

despite the fact that the Education Law 1/2011 clearly states that the social scholarship should cover minimum subsistence costs, i.e. for housing in a dormitory and for three basic meals daily. In consequence, though the CNFIS[4] annually calculates a national monthly standard for need-based aid (the latest calculation is 575 lei or about 130 Euro per month), in fact universities provide much smaller awards varying between 25 and 60 % of the national standard. Their argument for keeping the awards value low is that to provide higher sums would imply that the awards were of greater importance and prestige than merit scholarships. To raise need awards to the required level would require them to also increase the size of merit awards which, considering the limited amount of money received from the state, would only allow for a very small number of students to receive merit scholarships.

Although there is a trend at the level of national student federations towards an increased social sensitivity (Proteasa and Miroiu 2013), the hierarchy between need- and merit-based aid has not yet changed significantly, and the pattern established in the late 1990s has remained relatively constant over time. So, while meritocracy and social support are not necessarily dichotomous (Haj 2014), the current scholarship system forces universities to choose between rewarding academic performance and supporting the low-income students. The issue of prioritizing equity on the public agenda was analyzed by Koen Geven, who links this attitude of academics to communist reminiscences: "it is either a non-issue or a communist issue" (Geven 2012), an attitude which creates a difficult political environment in which to promote need-based aid.

4.2 Does the Needs-Based Aid Fulfil the Equity Aim?

In 2013, the 44 public universities that reported data to the CNFIS allocated, on average, 15 % of their scholarship funds for need based aid, with the rest being allocated to merit scholarships. This suggests that although there is a concern for students with special needs, the desire to boost academic performance and reward merit students remains institutions' top priority. Furthermore, the data reveal the desire of academic communities to distribute the available public funds based on student abilities at the expense of their social needs.

At the eight institutions where site visits had been conducted as part of the IEMU project, the national trend and percentages were mirrored. With respect to the evolution of the distribution between the two types of scholarships, one could observe a small shift in allocations in favour of need-based aid in recent years. Interviews with university representatives indicated that one of the main reasons for this shift is the growing number of student requests for social aid. Nevertheless, universities manage need-based student aid very carefully for fear of abuse; a

[4]Further in the article we will use CNFIS for the National Council for Higher Education Funding.

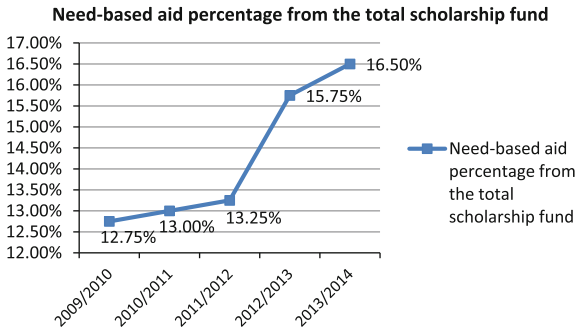

Fig. 5 Evolution of the percentage allocated for need based aid from the overall scholarship fund for the visited universities, bachelor level (the authors)

particular concern is that students whose parents work abroad may declare no official income in Romania in order to access aid regardless, while in fact receiving substantial parental assistance. This concern was embraced by all university representatives, including students and student representatives at local and national level (Fig. 5).

4.3 How Many Students Are Supported by the Scholarship System?

The data show that in 2013 there were 389,037 students at bachelor and master level in public universities, which implies that the national budget for scholarships is approximately 6 million Euro per month. Taking into consideration that, on average, 15 % of the scholarship budget is allocated for need based aid, and knowing the calculated average amount of a need based scholarship (50.33 Euro), it means that, at national level, approximately 17,975 students benefit annually from this type of financial support. This makes it one of the largest and most expensive student support policies implemented in Romania, covering almost 4.62 % of the state subsidized students.

At our eight case-study institutions, the percentage of students who received need based aid in 2013 was 4.23 % of the total number of subsidized students, which more or less confirms the national estimate with respect to need-based aid. Moreover, the existing data also showed that this percentage increased in the last years at most institutions. However, among the case-study institutions, there were two where the percentage decreased considerably, proving that behaviour varies from one university to another.

Mere knowledge of how these funds are allocated between the two types of scholarships is not enough to evaluate the impact of this policy. Since scholarship amounts are established at university level, each institution faces a choice between

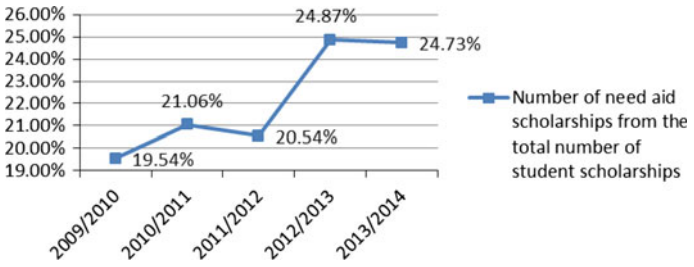

Fig. 6 Need-based awards as a percentage of total awards, 2009–10 to 2013–14 at eight case-study universities

offering a large number of small scholarships and a small number of big scholarships. The impact of these two approaches can differ greatly, as in one case the amount of money allocated can be insufficient to cover student costs, and in the other the number of allocated scholarships might be too small to help an under-represented group as a whole.

At our smaller sample of eight universities, the ratio of need-based vs merit-based awards has increased from less than 1:4 in 2009/2010 to almost 1:3 in 2013/2014 (Fig. 6).

At national level, according to the National Council for Higher Education Funding (CNFIS 2013), the 2013 average value of need-based awards was around 225 lei (56 euro), while the merit scholarships varied between 271 lei (61 Euro) and 486 lei (109 Euro), depending on the type of merit scholarship. In 2014, CNFIS recommended 575 lei as the average value for need-based aid.

At the level of individual universities, one can see that these amounts have increased in almost all universities over the last few years, but at the same time the university representatives confirm the CNFIS argument that need-based aid does not cover the minimum expenses for meals and accommodation: "Unfortunately, scholarships are calculated based on the money the universities receive, not on the real cost for meals or accommodation" (University representative).

Table 2 shows that, while universities have been increasing the size of the bursary, the increases have effectively only mirrored inflation.

Table 2 Evolution of the average amount of need based aid (euro)

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Average amount of need based aid as decided by universities	45.8	46.7	48.8	53.6	55.28
Value of 2009/2010 bursaries after inflation	45.8	48.59	51.41	53.16	54.86

4.4 Who Are the Students Receiving Need Based Aid?

According to the Education Law, the following student categories are eligible for need based aid: orphan students, orphanage students or foster care students who do not have income, students from low income families, and students with specific diseases. Also, according to the same Law, the minimum amount of a need based scholarship should be proposed annually by CNFIS, taking into account that a scholarship must cover the minimum costs for meals and accommodation.

Looking at the characteristics of the student population receiving need based aid, we can notice that, from our sample of 1093 students receiving scholarships, only 32 % have a rural background; of these, 45.36 % received need based aid (Table 3).

In terms of accommodation, most students receiving need-based aid live in student dormitories (56.7 %), which can be explained by the fact that more than half of them come from the first two poorest income quintiles (Tables 4, 5).

It is clear from this table that need-based aid does not cover adequately students' needs, as a large part of their income still comes from the family and/or partner. 60 % of the questioned students with a need based scholarship receive more than 50 % of their income from their families and partners. Thus, students benefiting from need based aid still pose a great financial burden on their families (Table 6).

4.5 Minimum Living Costs for Students

In order to graduate from a higher education program, socially-vulnerable students need financial support to cover living costs. Yet, as already mentioned, monthly living costs are much higher than the need-based aid provided by universities. On

Table 3 Living background of the students receiving scholarships

	Urban background (%)	Rural background (%)
Respondents	70	30
Students receiving need based aid	54.64	45.36
Students receiving merit based aid	70.37	29.63

Table 4 Living situation of the students receiving need based aid

Living situation	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Home	17	17.53
Rent	22	22.68
Student dorms	55	56.7
Other	3	3.09
Total	97	100

Table 5 Income situation of the students that receive need based aid

Income quintile	Respondents (%)	Students who received a merit scholarship (%)	Students who received a need based aid (%)
1	5.58	4.26	17.5
2	19.85	18.46	32.9
3	39.80	41.58	35
4	30.28	31.03	12.37
5	4.48	4.67	2
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 6 Proportion of need-based aid recipients' income received from families and partners

% of students income from family and partner	0–10 %	10–20 %	20–30 %	30–40 %	40–50 %	50–60 %	60–70 %	70–80 %	80–90 %	90–100 %	Total
% of students	4.49	7.86	4.49	4.49	19.10	7.86	4.49	13.48	11.23	22.47	100

average, minimum accommodation costs in student dormitories from 44 state universities amount to 126 lei (28 Euro), while the average daily cost for meals is 14.8 lei (3.3 Euro). In this context, a student needs approximately 575 lei (130 Euro) per month to cover the minimum living costs.

In theory, student dormitory fees should cover maintenance costs. One would therefore expect that these would vary from region to region, with cost rising in line with the level of economic development. However, this does not appear to be the case; in fact, in many cases, students' living costs are higher in the less developed regions of the country than they are even in Bucharest. This leads us to suspect that accommodation costs are rather more directly influenced by the managerial skills of the university administration and the universities' perceived importance for investments in student dormitory modernization and cost reduction strategies. In any case, since the monthly minimum financial need of students for meals and accommodation is 130 Euro, it is clear that there is no university where need-based aid covers the relevant costs.

5 Conclusions

The article starts from the assumption that economic and social inequalities in society determine inequalities in access to various levels of education and in turn, these discrepancies in participation to education lead to more social inequalities in

society at a later stage. At European level, the achievement of equity through fostering access, progress and success of young people from vulnerable groups is at the heart of the Bologna Process' "social dimension" theme. This is one of the few Bologna action lines where member states committed themselves to clear measures, such as developing plans and policy instruments, as well as establishing clear national targets. For higher education, student support systems are considered by the Bologna Process and EU policies alike as a key element to foster equity in higher education and social cohesion more broadly.

Obviously, a large part of the inequities of the student population at Romanian universities is determined by the significant discrepancies of eligible candidates to higher education, i.e. high school graduates who passed their baccalaureate exam. Because of this, a significant change in equity of access to higher education will be possible only after dealing with the shortcomings, and mitigating the social dividing trends in primary and secondary education, a measure which can bear fruits only in a 5–10 years' timeframe. For the near future, the main instruments to further social equity in higher education are need-based aid awards.

Due to the large degree of university autonomy in distributing national public funds for student support according to merit based and equity criteria, the authors considered institutional choices in the design of their scholarship disbursement policies as a proxy for the importance given to equity by Romanian universities. This is because under the current funding system the two-types of scholarships are funded jointly through the same funding line, thus creating a zero-sum game in which individual universities make the choice on how to distribute awards. On average, 85 % from the public budget allocated for scholarships is distributed on merit based criteria, while only 15 % aim at supporting the vulnerable groups.

In the Romanian context, the scholarship system is a relevant instrument for the purpose of enhancing participation of under-represented groups. Nationally, social disparities between students are not being diminished. On the contrary, large differences can be observed regarding access and success of students, based on their socio-economic background, residence area or disability status. Only 4.62 % from the state budgeted students are supported through the need based aid system, even though the demand for need based aid from low-income families is clearly much higher. In addition, at current rates such awards fall well short of the minimum amount required to cover meals and accommodation.

While it is true that there has been a slight trend towards allocating a larger share scholarship funds for need-based aid over the past five years, it is obvious that this change is too small to have a significant impact in improving equity in Romanian universities. At present, it is unrealistic to expect a bolder change of priorities in university behaviour. In order to allow for the scholarships system to become more effective in terms of helping the under-represented groups, the system would need either a significant increase of the total student scholarship fund, a national regulation regarding the allocation of a larger share for need based aid, or a combination of the two.

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Premises of Inclusive Access and Success of Roma People in the Romanian Higher Education

Diana-Maria Cismaru, Cristina Fiţ and Delia Gologan

1 National Context

The data used in this article derive from an impact study regarding the equity policy already put in place by the Romanian national institutions, in order to evaluate their real impact and the level of reaching their pre-set objectives. The study is part of the project coordinated by UEFISCDI and co-funded by the European Structural Funds (POSDRU) entitled "Internationalization, equity and university management for a more qualitative Higher Education system" (IEMU). The main objective of the project is to raise the quality of the Romanian Higher Education system by developing the public policies in the international and equity dimensions of education, as well as the management level for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

This first part of the article provides a national overview of the Roma population status, in terms of history, living conditions, forms of discrimination, as well as the specific positive measures undertaken by the Romanian Government or other public authorities aiming to improve their situation. All these constitute the framework for discussing the study findings and the impact of the public policies that were implemented so far.

D.-M. Cismaru (✉)
National University of Political Studies and Public Administration,
Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: diana.cismaru@comunicare.ro

C. Fiţ · D. Gologan
Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation
Funding (UEFISCDI), Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: cristina.fit@uefiscdi.ro

D. Gologan
e-mail: delia.gologan@uefiscdi.ro

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1.1 Roma People in Statistics

Roma people are an officially recognized ethnic minority in Romania. According to the population census of 2002 almost 2.5 % of Romania's population (535,140 people) is Roma; by 2011 this was estimated to have increased to approximatively 3.2 %.[1] This data however cover only to the citizens with an official ID declaring their ethnicity. Official data do not reveal the actual size of Roma population, since it is not mandatory to declare one's ethnicity. According to the EU Communication "An EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020" and based on the European Council data, the European Commission estimated the Roma population at 8.32 % from Romania's overall population.

The Roma people are of Indian origin and they arrived in Romania during the 14th century as slaves and treated ever since as having an inferior social status. They were granted freedom and the right to become land owners in 1864; however, they kept their nomadic characteristic, rarely settling down in fixed abodes. During World War II many of them were deported, but this oppression stopped during the communist period when, for the first time, they were allowed to hold jobs in the industry and the army. The long period of their marginalization is now visible and reflects in their poor living conditions. In 1997, 79 % of Roma were facing severe poverty, 44 % of Roma men and 59 % of Roma women were illiterate, while 9 % of them possessed neither an ID, nor a birth certificate.[2]

The general situation of Roma people is characterized by a low socio-economic status, poor living conditions, low levels of professional qualifications and a high level of unemployment. Only 53 % of Roma men and 23 % of Roma women are paid for their work in the formal economy, but about one third receive daily wages in the informal sector (also know as "the black market"). Thus, practically one third of Roma workers do not have a steady work place and revenue, due in part to low educational qualifications (Preda 2009, p. 228). Many Roma people live in insalubrious conditions, without access to running water or electricity: 15 % of Roma people do not have electricity in their households, compared with only 2 % of the rest of the Romanian population (*idem*).

According to official statistics, the counties with the greatest percentages of self-declared Roma people are: Mureş (7.0 %), Călăraşi (5.6 %), Bihor (5.0), Dolj (4.3 %), Sibiu (4.2 %) and Arad (3.9 %) (Bennett 2010, p. 2).

During the negotiation period preceding the adhesion of Romania to the EU, the Roma attracted the attention of European institutions due to the prospect of mass emigration into other EU states under the free movement of labour at European

[1]Data regarding the evolution of the ethnic communities are available online, in Romanian, at the following link: http://www.incont.ro/infografice/evolutia-comunitatilor-etnice-in-romania-judetul-unde-sunt-cei-mai-putini-romani-12-6-din-populatia-totala.html; last accessed: September 2014.

[2]Document available online in Romanian, full-version at the following link: http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/etnomobilitate/Intregul_volum.pdf; last accessed: September 2014.

level. As a result, these institutions began to pressure the Romanian Government to take action on the Roma situation. Therefore, in 1998 the National Office for Roma was founded and it started working on the first strategy addressing the needs of Roma people.

1.2 Discrimination of Roma People in Society and the Educational Environment

The status quo for Roma is difficult to change, largely because of the attitudes which other Romanians have towards them. In a study from 2005, 35.8 % of Romanians preferred that the Roma people should live isolated from the society, 65.8 % were against allowing them to go abroad and 47.3 % agreed with limiting their rights to reproduction (Andreescu 2005, pp. 81–82). Also, according to a 2009 study performed in seven recent EU countries (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009, p. 3), Roma people are the most often subjects of discrimination (81 % were victims of assault, threat or serious harassment in the previous year of study). Stereotypes about Roma include such things as an alleged proclivity towards crime and violence, as well as a lack of interest in school for their young. 72 % of respondents in the above mentioned study believed that Roma people habitually broke the law, and 20 % would forbid access of Roma to stores and restaurants. Although 34 % of respondents had no interaction with Roma people in the last six months, 64 % considered Roma people more violent than the rest of the population. 23 % of respondents associated the word Roma with "theft", "burglary" and "begging", while 10 % associated them with "filth" or "lack of education". Only 16 % of respondents considered Roma people as being normal people (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009, p. 2 after Bennett 2010). Moreover, 40 % of Romanians disapprove of mixed marriages between Romas and Romanians, and 25 % think that Roma children should not play with other Romanian children. 35 % think that Roma people and Romanians should not live in the same neighbourhoods (CNCD August 2009).

Discrimination is also a current issue in the Romanian schools. Academic staff often have a negative attitude towards Roma children. When asked, in a recent study on Romanian teachers, if they see differences between Roma children and Romanian children, a teacher from Maramures responded: "[…] they [Roma children] do not have the capacity for long term focus, they do not have respect towards the class or school rules. There are indeed Romanian children who have the same problems, but the number of Roma children is definitely higher". The same teacher added that "Roma students are students like any others" (Duminică and Ivasiuc 2010, p. 112). As the authors of this report noted, "although at discourse level the non-discrimination principle is "preached", this does not imply giving up on negative stereotypes or putting into place non-discrimination principles."

1.3 National and International Policies for Access to Education of Roma People

Recent history shows several government at initiatives for the social integration of Roma people. The first integration strategy for Roma people was launched in 2001 by the Ministry of Public Information, under the name "*The strategy of the Romanian Government for improving the situation of Roma people*".[3] Although issued by only one ministry and highlighting responsibilities of other ministries in some sections, the ten-year strategy set seven general objectives for preventing and eliminating discrimination, stimulating the implication of Roma people in the social life and providing equal opportunities for a better quality of life (Ministry of Public Information 2001, p. 4). A brief analysis of the strategy shows a lack of sociological or statistical research behind it, as well as vaguely/poorly defined instruments and objectives—(e.g. "providing special budgeted places for Roma people"—an instrument—was included in the education objectives) (Ministry of Public Information 2001, p. 8). Moreover, some of the proposed measures are general, without an overall vision for the support actions. Though education was one area for strategic implementation, the strategy contains ambiguous formulation especially in the education section, such as "analyzing the possibility to encourage units of primary and secondary school for Roma people" (*idem,* p.8), a measure that would encourage separation and segregation.

In the first national strategy adopted in 2001, the Romanian Government adopted a policy of allocating a specific budget for the Roma young people, to be used to cover the cost of "reserved places" at secondary schools and universities, and of developing appropriate instruments for their distribution. Only one progress report for the policy exists, from the first year of implementation of the Strategy. This noted the establishment of a department for education in a minority language within the Ministry of Education, along with the development of a number of programs aimed to facilitate access to education for Roma children. Since 2009 there has been no subsequent impact analysis of these study grants on the access to higher education of the young Roma people. However, several measures highlighted in the action plan have never been implemented, such as: providing a free meal per day for Roma children going to school; involving the Roma children parents in the educational process by two parent-teacher meetings per month; organizing complementary courses for Roma children to help them bridge the gaps in their education.

A subsequent national strategy for Roma people integration was elaborated ten years later, in 2012.[4] The strategy is mostly based on the "Risks and social

[3]Governmental Decision no. 430/2001 regarding the Strategy for improving the living standard for Roma people (available in Romanian at the following link: http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Legislatie/HOTARARI-DE-GUVERN/HG430-2001.pdf; last accessed: September 2014.

[4]Published in the Official Gazette no 6/12 January 2012.

inequities in Romania" research report (Preda 2009), which was produced by a social studies research team at the University of Bucharest. The 2012 strategy was an improvement on the 2001 strategy in several respects: it was issued jointly by several ministries rather than a single one, it was supported by several research reports published in the previous years, it defined negative social phenomena as exclusion and segregation as being barriers to the objective of Roma people social inclusion, and it differentiated more clearly between objectives, priorities and actions while introducing desirable clearer set of results and indicators.

2 Methodology

The methodology used for this study consists of document analysis and six case studies performed in six Romanian universities. Documents analysed included official government documents and strategies, sociological reports published in the previous years, as well as statistical data from Romanian universities. In order to explain the relationship between concepts and organize the existing data, the authors used a concept map that explains the conditions of access and success in education for Roma people. The case study data was collected during study visits at six public Romanian universities of various profiles and geographical positioning. Each study visit included meetings with students, the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans and Vice-Deans (group discussion), General Administrative Directors, secretaries, admission responsible, coordinator of Orientation Center and decision making university representatives.

A final source of data is the results of an online questionnaire applied in the same universities, aimed at identifying perceptions of how Roma people fit among senior faculty members (Deans and Vice-Deans). The online questionnaire included 16 questions, using ordinal, symmetrical five-point scales to gauge strength of opinions. The questions tested opinions and knowledge of respondents regarding the criteria for defining a vulnerable group, views on bariers to success for different disadvantaged categories in higher education and their views on the likely efficacy of different possible support measures for these groups. 52 vice-deans in the universities which were visited responded to the survey; of these 25 were male and 27 were female. The age distribution of the respondents was: 21 under the age of 45, 21 between 45 and 55 years of age and 10 over the age of 55. Over half the sample (33 respondents) had between 15–25 years of experience in higher education, seven respondents had over 25 years of experience, while only 12 respondents had less than 15 years of experience. Since the questionnaire did not address only the topic of reserved places for Roma people, only a part of data will be cited in this paper, in order to complete the results of the interviews.

3 Results

3.1 *Influence Factors on the Participation of Roma People to Education*

In a strategic document issued by a governmental body, (European Commission 2007, p. 52), exclusion is defined as the incapacity or failure of integration of a person or a group in society, on the labour market and at community level. In the same documents, "social integration" is described as the process by which a functional balance between individual and social environment is achieved, while "social inclusion" refers to the access of individuals from vulnerable groups to the subsystems accessed by the larger community (idem, p. 53). The Presidential Commission Report on the Analysis of Social and Demographic Risks (Preda 2009, p. 226) mentions two specific features of social exclusion in case of Roma people: discrimination (the social stigma together with the label of "gypsy") and the exclusion from mainstream societal activities.

3.1.1 Participation of Roma People in Education

Starting in 1990, the Ministry of National Education developed several policy measures in order to increase Roma access to secondary and tertiary education. One of the most important measures set in place by the Ministry was to provide special "reserved places" for Roma students for admission to secondary schools and universities. A World Bank and Ministry of Education, Research and Youth study (2008) indicates that less than 1 % of the Roma population graduates from higher education. According to the Ministry of National Education data for secondary education, the number of Roma students admitted in Romanian high schools increased by 44.2 % from 2009/2010 to 2011/2012. Despite this increase at secondary education level, Table 1 shows that the number of places reserved for Roma students at the secondary level is still quite far from being fully used, with only 41 % of such places having been used. (UEFISCDI 2013, p. 34).

The situation of Roma children in schools highlights a very complex and worrying picture. The access of Roma people to preschools is limited. Only 61 % were registered and finally, only 20 % had access to preschools in 2000–2001. Among 15–18 year olds, only 36 % of Roma were enrolled in school, compared to 79 % of the overall population (EUMAP 2007).

On average, Roma children spend only 6.8 years in formal education, compared to an average of 11.2 years for the general Romanian children population. Roma girls are overrepresented among children unenrolled in schools, (39 % vs. 29 % for boys) (Surdu et al. 2011, p. 29). This is because girls' enrollment in school is affected by early marriages: 10 % of Roma girls have their first child between 12–15 years, and 48 % between 16–18 years (Preda 2009, p. 228). Due to the homogenous nature of Roma communities, over half of Roma children learn in

Table 1 Roma participation in secondary education, Ministry of National Education 2012

Academic year	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012
Number of allocated "reserved places" for Roma students in highschools	7483	7675	7906
Number of Roma students admitted to high school	2246	2675	3239

schools with a predominant Roma population (Preda 2009, p. 229), and thus homogenity in practice looks a lot like segregation. Almost 60 % of preschool Roma children are enrolled in a preschool with more than 50 % of Roma children, while 11.7 % are enrolled in all-Roma children classes. In families with at least one case of school dropout, 56.5 % of children learn in segregated classes, while 9.1 % learn in all-Roma classes (Surdu et al. 2011, p. 10). According to a 2010 report, Roma community schools function with scarce resources due to social stigma and lack of human and material resources. The same study also noted that a school's likelihood of possessing specialized laboratories was inversely related to the percentage of Roma children attending the school. The number of qualified academic staff at a school and the number of books it possesses per student were similarly found to have an inverse relationship with Roma enrolment (Duminică and Ivasiuc 2010, p. 69). According to another research study, Roma children studying in predominantly Roma classes have a higher risk of repeating a year compared to the Roma children in mixed classes: approximately 15 % of pupils in predominantly Roma classes are illiterate, in comparison with only 4 % of Roma children in mixed classes (Florea and Rughiniş 2008, p. 159; Preda 2009, p. 229).

In short, the predicament of Roma students is rather complicated, since their lack of access to education and high dropout rates are influenced by numerous independent factors, such as their social background, poverty, lack of access to education (caused by faulty infrastructure, e.g. no access roads), parents' level of education, discrimination or, in a few cases, their cultural backgrounds (e.g. patriarchal communities).

3.1.2 The Dropout in Schools of Roma Children

According to the 2012–2020 Romanian Government Strategy for inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma minority, Roma people have the highest dropout rates compared to any ethnic groups. The 2002 census shows that only 21 % of the Roma youth in the 15–18 age group were still enrolled in schools, (18 % for women, 24 % for men). Also, approximately 80 % of all unenrolled children belong to the Roma population, out of which 38 % are functionally illiterate. In primary schools, the Roma enrolment rate is 64 %, compared to an average of 98.9 % for the rest of the country (Presidential Report 2007, p. 8).

According to Duminică and Ivasiuc's (2010) report, the annual dropout rate among Roma children is 6.7 %. However, this figure was arrived at based on self-reporting by Roma children (enrolled or not in compulsory education); the authors suggest that the real dropout rate among Roma children may be as high as

9 %. The most important reasons for dropout include poverty (mentioned by 44 % of the respondents) and repeated unsatisfactory school results such as repeating a year of school (mentioned by 16 % of respondents). According to the surveys of Roma children and their parents, the results contradict the stereotype according to which Roma children dropout rates are a result of early marriages which affected only 4 % of respondents. The same study—"School for everyone?"—contradicts another stereotype, namely that Roma parents are not interested in sending their children to school, this being noted in only 9 % of the responses. Thus, 90 % of the Roma parents have a positive attitude towards education, maintain constant contact with teachers and encourage their children to perform well in school (Duminică and Ivasiuc 2010, p. 10).

Additionally, it is worth mentioning Duminică and Ivasiuc's conclusion that "Roma children rarely go beyond secondary school education due to poverty reasons." This phenomenon is predominant in the rural area, where families do not benefit from adequate infrastructure or financial resources to send their children to an urban high school (at least 5–10 km away from their homes). The same poverty issue makes teenagers stay home and work, in order to financially support their families. However, this problem is not specific to Roma communities, but is common for the rural population in general.

One more reason why Roma children's education often ends at secondary school level is the parents' subjective balancing of the financial costs and benefits gained by having their children continue education (Duminică and Ivasiuc 2010, p. 11). Disadvantaged families find it difficult to maintain a long-term approach to education when they have difficulty meeting basic needs, making them more focused on a one day at a time approach.

Reasons behind school dropout. 57.6 % of Roma parents stated that at least one of their children abandoned school and 21.1 % had two children unenrolled or in situation of dropout (Surdu et al. 2011, p. 31). In the cited study (p. 32), 44.2 % of the 7–11 year children were not enrolled in any form of education, while 64.6 % of 12–16 year children abandoned school. The most frequent reasons for dropout are economic ones (41.8 %), absence of parents or parents' indifference to school (27 %), deficiencies of the educational system (mainly discrimination—12.5 %), illness or incapacity (9 %), early marriage (6.6 %—only girls in this category) (Surdu et al. 2011, p. 51). From the overall percentage of children who abandoned school, 47.6 % repeated the year once, 38 % repeated the year twice, while 12 % repeated the year three times—which is the maximum limit before being definitely expelled from school. In the 12–16 year category, household work is the dropout reason for a third of respondents. The perceived "uselessness of school" was cited as a reason for dropout in 21.1 % in the same age category; with this reason being more common among girls than among boys (Surdu et al. 2011, pp. 6–7).

Among reasons for school dropout cited by parents (Surdu et al. 2011, p. 59), the most common were family's economic status (49 %), household work (27 %), employment (20 %), family tradition—i.e. that parents did not go to school (23 %) and early marriage (14 %). This situation is compounded by their described social conditions, characterized by low and inconsistent income (since their main income

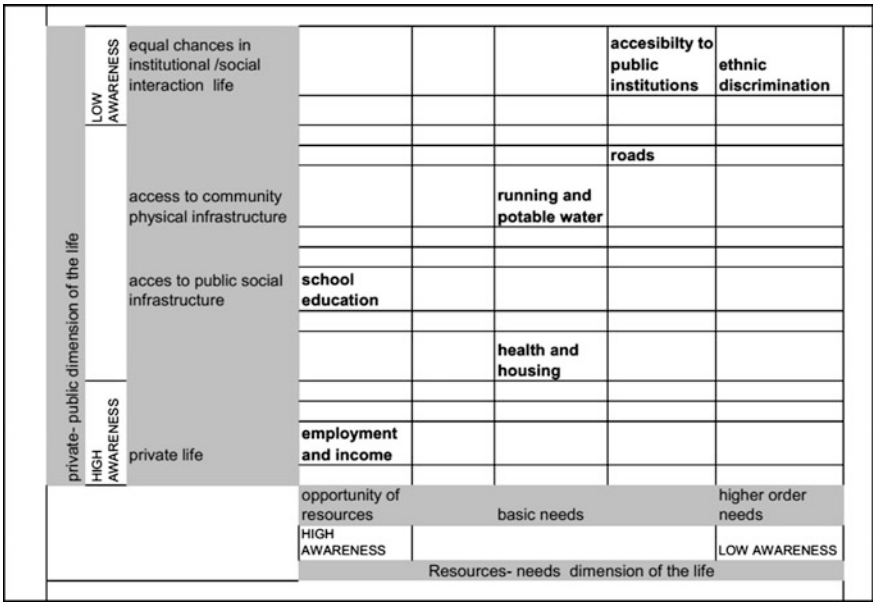

Fig. 1 The hierarchy of perceived social problems in Roma communities by resources-needs and private-public dimensions (*Source* Roma Social Mapping—Targeting by a Community Poverty Survey) (2005 World Bank report, available at: http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/statistici/Roma_Social_Mapping_187.pdf. Last accessed at 15 September 2014)

source are manufacturing, daily activities, agriculture and only rarely working in industries) and low access to educational resources. This is better reflected in Fig. 1.

The concept matrix built in Fig. 2 explains all the factors influencing the participation of Roma people in higher education, and which narrow the educational

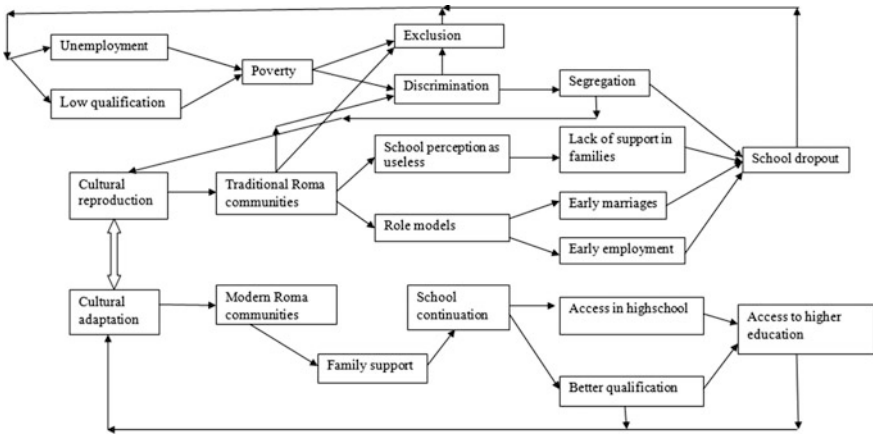

Fig. 2 Conceptual matrix of the complex factors influencing the access and success in education for Roma children

path for most members of this ethnic category. The upper part explains the systemic circles that increase exclusion, dropout, low qualifications and poverty, while the "cultural adaptation" route might increase the chances to success and the quality of the educational path for Roma children.

4 The Efficiency of Reserved Places for Roma People in Six Romanian Universities

The policy of reserving places for Roma people was designed as a pilot in 1992–1993, by the Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance, and was introduced as a public policy in the academic year 1999–2000. Using statistical data, focus groups and interviews with several key actors (including 175 students and graduates), Surdu and Szira (2009) inquired about the efficiency of the reserved places for Roma people in highschools and universities in the 2000–2006 period, as well as the characteristics of the educational process under these conditions. The data analysis we performed in the IEMU project will be interpreted with reference to the results of this study.

Regarding the participation of Roma students in higher education, according to the Government Decisions of 2010, 2011 and 2012, the number of stated financed places reserved for Roma evolved as shown in Table 2.

Unfortunately, no information is available regarding the percentage of these study places which were actually taken up. Also, there is no data available regarding the number of higher education Roma students who do not benefit from these reserved places. There are cases when Roma students do not apply for a reserved place, but go through admission procedures as the other students, refusing to declare their ethnicity. Our case study interviews showed that many of those Roma students did not apply for a reserved place for fear of stereotyping and discrimination against them.

Information and access procedures. Information about the reserved places, although usually not highlighted in the promotion events and materials designed and published by the universities, is usually published on their faculties' websites. Roma students indicate that the Internet, family members and friends are the most common sources of information about reserved places. Surdu and Szira (2009, p. 50) described the process of access and enrollment on a reserved place as difficult, mainly due to lack of information, bureaucracy, the last minute announcement of reserved places. The authors also concluded that ethnic NGOs played an important role in disseminating information and the decision-making

Table 2 Places for Roma students in higher education

Academic year	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
Number of places for Roma students (Bachelor)	555	611	555

Source UEFISCDI, Bucharest (2013)

process for choosing a reserved place for Roma candidates. However, our study showed a radically different situation: increased university flexibility and the places distribution procedure (although different between universities) lead to a better use of the reserved places. The Surdu and Szira study identifies no links between the university and the Roma NGOs, but our study noted an improved collaboration between these NGOs and the university administration, in some cases. On a last note, our findings did not show a direct influence of Roma NGOs over the candidates' decision, rather, this decision is usually influenced by family (who still plays a major role in supporting the student throughout his academic path).

Reasons behind accessing the reserved places. Surdu and Szira (2009, p. 82) identified the most frequently-cited reasons for accessing reserved places: the certainty of tuition free admission (41 %), easier admission procedures (26 %), guaranteed access to certain specializations (19 %), desire to further education (11 %) and the right to benefit from these places (9 %). Our qualitative results show that the certainty of tuition free admission (stated by beneficiaries) and guaranteed access to certain specializations (indicated by some admission officers) are the main rationales behind accessing reserved places. 78 % of the Roma students say they would have enrolled even in the absence of these measures (Surdu and Szira 2009, p. 82); presumably, this high percentage indicates an elevated capacity for support from their families. Our study reached the same conclusion, namely that most Roma beneficiaries of the reserved places would have enrolled in faculty even without this support form, as they benefited from good financial background and high support from their family regarding their education.

Specializations in which Roma people were enrolled on reserved places. According to Surdu and Szira (2009, p. 11), during the period 2000–2006, approximately 10,300 students enrolled in secondary and vocational education on specially reserved places for Roma people, and approximately 1420 students benefitted of similar places in universities. Between 2000 and 2006, the number of students admitted on the reserved places in secondary education increased fivefold, while in higher education institutions the increase was fourfold. The preferred fields of studies for Roma people accessing reserved places were Humanities (35 %), Arts (19 %), Economic Sciences (18 %) and Law/Administration (12 %), Engineering (9 %), Applied Sciences (4 %), and Medicine/Pharmacy (3 %). During the six years analysed, only two thirds of the reserved places for Roma students had been occupied (*idem*).

The policy perception. In the study by Surdu and Szira (2009, pp. 48–49) there is a clear distinction between the positive perception of the policy for the Roma NGOs and beneficiaries on one side, and the negative perception of the policy by secondary school officials (i.e. some of the key actors responsible for implementing the policy). Roma NGOs and beneficiaries perceived the policy as leading to admission advantages, support measures and an opportunity to change mentalities. School officials on the other hand perceived the reserved places as an inefficient and a discriminatory measure, one which was in just to non-Roma students. The policy as a whole was tolerated, rather than actively supported. Our study found a similar divergence of opinions. Additionally, our focus group work revealed that many

Romanian students considered the policy as being a discriminatory measure and unfair to the rest of students: "*I do not approve of this policy. It is unfair for the rest of the students. Inclusion policies should be applied in early education, not at university level.*" (President of the students' association, study visit no. 1). "*Roma people are not a vulnerable group. They should try to fit, enter in society by their own endeavours. A better definition of vulnerable groups is needed* (female student, study visit no. 1)". "*Roma people should have the same admission procedures as the rest of the candidates, there should not be differences*. (male student, study visit no 4)". "*Why do they enter with a 5.00 grade causing some Romanian students to lose the budgeted place with a 9.00 grade in the admission examt?*" (Vice-Rector, study visit no. 1). "*Do they know to speak Romanian correctly, at least?*" (Associate Professor, study visit no. 6).

Our interviews tended to show that Roma people are not perceived as poor, discriminated or marginalized within universities (see Fig. 3). While some students agree with the policy (study visit no. 5), they remain sceptical about the Roma students' interest in advanced studies and their capacity to meet the university requirements.

Our case-study site visits, revealed a number of common attitudes among secretaries and students: lack of knowledge and understanding of the notion of vulnerable groups, lack of acceptance that some problems could substantiate affirmative policies as reserved places, lack of support measures and, in regard to the investigated policy, either reluctancy or unbiased attitude. Reserved places were not always promoted by universities educational offer; rather, the information was accessed by NGOs and interested candidates, especially via internet or friends/family/acquittance who had access to correct information.

Support during academic studies. According to Surdu and Szira (2009, p. 89), 32 % of their respondents received a social allowance, 14 % a study allowance and

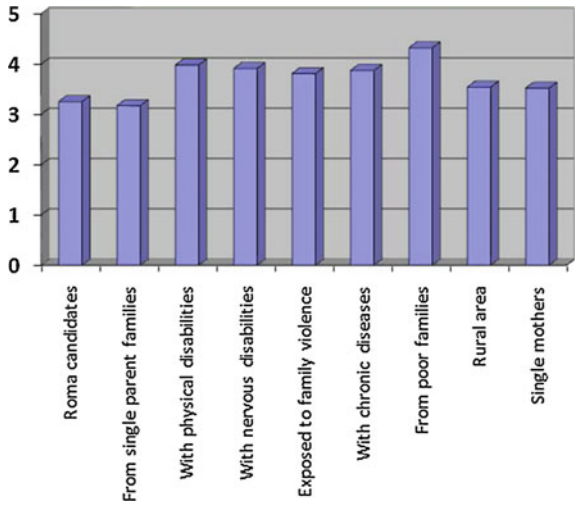

Fig. 3 Intensity of support measures required by different categories of candidates, on a scale from 1 to 5

5 % a merit allowance. In our study, the qualitative results do not provide information on this topic. Our interviews indicate that the beneficiaries are informed about the possibility to obtain a social allowance, but less informed by the possibility to obtain other types of support (such as psychological and orientation counseling). The availability of other support instruments, such as university campus accommodation or supplementary allowances varied from one university to another.

Performance in higher education. According to the study of Surdu and Szira (2009), 80 % of Roma students in reserved places assessed themselves as being in the top half of their class in term of academic achievements. The qualitative data in our study showed that Roma students have a normal attitude towards learning, have no records of lack of discipline, are not registered as sources of conflicts, and a majority of them observed faculty regulations.

Relationships with colleagues and teachers. In the Surdu and Szira study, 86 % of the Roma students had more Romanian friends than Roma friends, and 93 % reported a good relationship with colleagues (Surdu and Szira 2009, p. 99). However, they noted differences among universities in terms of making reserved places public knowledge. Our results indicate that most universities do not make public the names of candidates enrolled on reserved places, which makes integration of the Roma students easier. As far as the relationship with teachers is concerned, tensions between students and teachers have been reported at the high school level, not at university level.

Obstacles to completion. Surdu and Szira (2009, pp. 84–85) identified several obstacles in completing a cycle of education. The general factors referred to the perception of education in society (as bringing poor social and not many material benefits), preconceptions and poverty (poor family resources). The specific limitation factors referred to the lack of information about the reserved places, reluctancy in stating Roma origin, the lack of family support, the fear of losing community values. Other identified reasons for dropout (Surdu and Szira 2009, pp. 92–93) include: low access to scholarships (caused by either bureaucracy or lack of IDs), lack of moral support from teachers and counselors, pressure exerted by colleagues, early marriages. In our study, the results show better results with respect to candidates' information level, a lack of pressure by colleagues, and also a better access to information regarding allowances. The other factors are more or less the same, especially in terms of alternative occupation (marriage, employment), but in this respect Roma are a little different from other Romanian students. Our interviews with the university representatives also indicated the lack of perseverance as a perceived limitation (study visit no. 5).

Compared to the study by Surdu and Szira, the results of our six case-study sites revealed two other findings of note. The first one refers to the socio-economic level of the Roma students enrolled on reserved places: they belong to the middle and upper class of this ethnicity and fit into the "culturally adapted" Roma people category (there are no cultural and language differences from the Romanian majority). In only one case could an admission officer recall traditional Roma students coming to enroll on reserved places. Elsewhere, the Roma candidates and students have been described as people who are not different from the other

students, either in status or in behavior. In our interviews with the beneficiaries of the budgeted places (six interviews), the participants came from middle class or wealthy families, with a small number of children, and whose parents had completed at least secondary education. Only one of the six interviewed students encountered financial difficulties and dropped out of university due to being in a situation of working full-time in order to financially support his family. The others described their context as being the same as for Romanian children, and the cultural background of their family as having no connection with the Roma culture. Only one out of the six interviewed beneficiaries experienced discriminatory situations in highschool and felt neglected. The six interviewees considered the reluctance in declaring Roma origins and the fear of labelling as important reasons for Roma candidates not accessing the reserved places. This suggests that only the more educated and wealthy Roma people have real access to the reserved places. The majority are still not able to reach tertiary education level, given the multiple barriers described in the first part of the paper.

The second finding is with respect to the lack of understanding of the particular difficulties experienced by students from vulnerable groups during their evolution. Universities situated in less developed areas (two out of the six analyzed institutions) had put in place a set of institutional measures addressing students from poor families, but this was the only vulnerable group taken into consideration. Only one out of the six universities had a coherent policy for vulnerable groups as a whole (including, for example, students with disabilities). The other five universities can be described as having a reactive approach. Policies in line with the legislative national framework are recognized and respected, but responsible actors within universities are unwilling to develop internal instruments that go beyond these minimum standards and implement these policies in an unbiased manner. In the specific case of Roma people, both students and some university representatives were against the policy of reserved places and defined lack of discrimination as "treating all students equally" ("*we do not facilitate individual problems resolution, all students are being treated equally: if they have a problem, they should speak to the Dean*"—admission responsible, study visit no. 3). Thus, university representatives frequently ignore the potential complex difficulties of students coming from vulnerable groups (including Roma people). In five of six universities, problems are solved on a case-by-case basis, merely responding to particular requests instead of a coherent and integrated approach by means of internal regulations.

This finding was confirmed by the results of the online survey. Respondents on the whole did not perceive students from single-parent families or children with parents working abroad as being disadvantaged. The most frequently agreed-with categories in terms of vulnerability were foster children, people with disabilities and children from very poor families. Respondents also considered that some vulnerable categories would need support measures (see Fig. 3). From ten potentially vulnerable categories which could benefit from support measures in order to enroll to the university, Roma people were only listed at number nine, ahead only of students from single-parent families (which were not considered as a vulnerable group by most respondents).

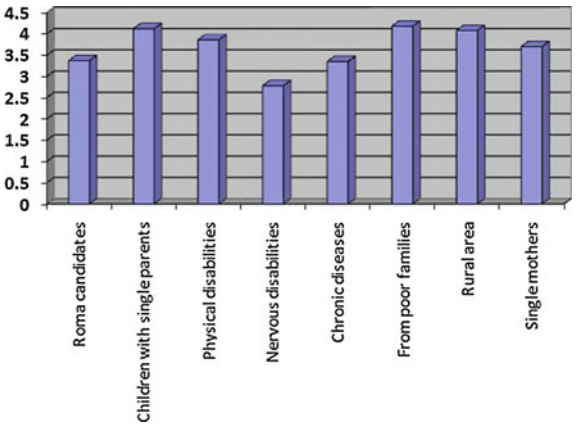

Fig. 4 Chances of successfully completing the academic formation, on a scale from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum)

According to the survey respondents, although support measures are necessary for several vulnerable categories, each of these groups is seen as having quite different chances of completing their academic formation and achieving success in their social and professional lives (Fig. 4). Roma students, students with chronic diseases and students with mental health problems are considered by respondents as having the least chance of completing studies and successfully integrate in the professional environment.

In the respondents' opinion, the first three factors that limit the access and success of Roma people to the academic environment are: early dropout, lack of family support and lack of good examples (see Fig. 5).

The answers to the question in Fig. 5 show some degree of stereotyping: the limitations for Roma are seen as being related to their cultural background, with poverty or discrimination being less-frequently mentioned.

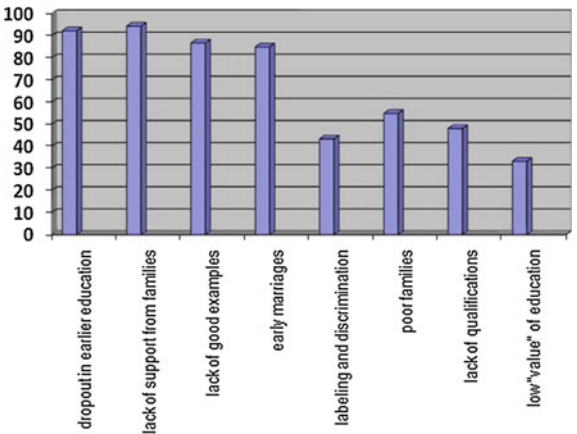

Fig. 5 Intensity of factors limiting access of Roma people to higher education

The integration of these quantitative and qualitative results highlights a lack of understanding of specific Roma people's problems at university representatives' level. An additional finding shows the formal acceptance of the reserved places policy, complemented by mistrust in its efficiency. Deeply rooted stereotypes of Roma persist among teachers and academic staff. Under these conditions, where potential partners and official actors are reluctant to implement the appropriate measures, it is difficult to ensure the implementation success of a policy.

5 Limitations of Research

The study visits covered six universities of different profiles and geographical positioning. Some universities did not facilitate face-to-face interviews with the beneficiaries of the reserved places, and the only data available came from teachers and administrative staff. In addition, the reserved places in the six universities represent only a small fraction of the total number of students, and universities were sometimes unable to provide us with individualized academic data pertinent to this group (rectors, vice-rectors, and members of the Senate mentioned that the administration does not specifically monitor these students in order to be able to provide statistical data about their integration and performance once admitted). Another limit is the potential bias of answers in interviews with various university actors, many of whom showed a clear desire to present their university in a positive light. Finally, there is the small number of responses to the online questionnaire (52 answers) which limit the generalizability of the findings.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Compared to earlier studies, our results show something of an improvement in the situation for Roma with respect to their general information level, the distribution flexibility of reserved places among specializations, as well as an increased transparency of admission procedures. Furthermore, data from our case-study site visits seemed to indicate an improved communication with the Roma NGOs, and a greater autonomy of individual candidates while making the decision to enroll in their preferred specialization. On the negative side, there are still reserved places unoccupied. Due to complex limitations, the reserved places in higher education are used by a small category of middle and upper Roma class, culturally homogeneous with the other Romanian students. Finally, teachers, administrative staff or Romanian students still manifest a lack of interest towards problems of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including Roma students.

On the long term, several recommendations can be formulated. The issue of Roma people access to higher education needs to be further investigated in light of the limitations of access at lower cycles (primary and secondary education).

Supplementary support mechanisms for Roma students coming from poor or traditional background need to be developed.

A secondary direction addresses the public acceptance for support mechanisms and policies designed for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. In order to raise awareness and improve public perception of specific problems encountered by these groups, coherent information and communication campaigns should be implemented. At university level, proactive adoption of best-practice examples should be rewarded in order to motivate a change in attitude towards support of vulnerable groups. In keeping with the spirit of the Bologna Process, universities need to eliminate the current reactive and passive attitude towards disadvantaged students' needs and begin addressing them in a more systematic fashion.

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Part VI
Education, Research and Innovation

Bridging Education, Research and Innovation: The Pivotal Role of Doctoral Training [Overview Paper]

Marzia Foroni

Given its pivotal position, Doctoral programmes have been looked at from two main angles: education and research. Depending on the historical development and the main features of the various academic communities in Europe, one of the two points of view might prevail.

In some context, what prevails is their integration in the educational path, where talented students prove themselves in the frontier of knowledge by creating innovative and original knowledge. In the process, they are expected to refine their competences in analyzing new knowledge and in critical thinking, in presenting it to different kinds of audiences, and can be expected to be able to promote technological, social and cultural advancement in a knowledge based society. They are expected to develop their generic skills and competences at the highest level in a formal education context by confronting themselves with researching new knowledge. It is also understood that, within the Bologna context, the principles, policies and tools that apply to the previous level of higher education should also apply to Doctoral programmes, while taking into account the specificities of its research-based approach. Both the Overarching Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and the European Qualification Framework include these programmes in their highest level, respectively level three and level eight.

In other context, Doctoral training is seen as more embedded in research: Doctoral graduates are trained in producing new knowledge, are fully autonomous in developing it further in the realm that suits them best, being it the academia or the non-academic world. They should be embedded in stimulating research environment and involved in major research projects, with international profile.

M. Foroni (✉)
Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, Rome, Italy
e-mail: marzia.foroni@gmail.com

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In recent years, partly induced by the European political strategies, mainly the Bologna Process and the construction of the European Research Area, and partly on the basis of national priorities, all European countries have revised their strategies on Doctoral education.[1] As efficiently summarized by EHEA Ministers in Bucharest, amongst the priorities for political initiative for the periods 2012–2015 in the Communiqué of 2012, the main aim of policies in Doctoral education was to "promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle".

Where the initiative has not been taken by politics, however, higher education Institutions have questioned and improved the quality of Doctoral education on their own initiative. The majority of Institutions have implemented part of the Salzburg Principles promoted by the European University Association or have joined other bottom-up initiatives like the Tuning recommendations on how to develop Doctoral programmes. Institutions begun to see differently the relationship between themselves and the doctoral candidate. The commitment of both parties, roles and expectations should be clarified and approved in advance in order to make the best use of all available competence and institutional assets.

Looking at the various reform initiatives, some common elements can be found:

- an increased attention on the quality of supervision;
- an increase in the international dimension of programmes, with more Doctoral candidates and supervisors mobility, and more international cooperation through joint programmes;
- an increase in interdisciplinarity;
- an increase in collaboration with the non-academic labour market, with more focus on industry, in all the forms that it might take place.

The role of supervisors for the successful completion of a Doctoral programme and of a research project is being recognized as increasingly important. They help candidates in the achievement of a broader set of competencies and in the development of their research careers. To accomplish this role, they should be adequately trained and supported by Institutions. In many cases, it can be seen a move from individual, one to one, supervision approach to a more team-based approach where one or a group of candidates interacts with a team of supervisors from different research backgrounds.

Concerning the increase in internationalization, in interdisciplinarity and in collaboration with the non-academic world, a mean to reach these ends has been the creation of Doctoral Schools and, more generally, a structured approach to Doctoral programmes. Structured doctoral training leads to clearer governance structures and policies at the institutional level concerning admission, quality assurance, assessment, supervision. In parallel, sometimes as interlinked strategy, institutions embedded training activities in the discipline or in transferable skills leading to

[1]Depending on the context, Doctoral programmes can be referred to as "Doctoral education" or as "Doctoral training", in one case underlining more the learning process beneath and in the other the research approach. For the purpose of the discussion, we interpret both terms as equivalent.

structured Doctoral programmes, composed by pre-defined training activities, classes, experiences in teaching to students from previous cycles or internships in enterprises.

The premise on which national and institutional strategies on Doctoral education are developed is that societal and economic innovation can be created only with the full realization of the potential of Doctoral graduates. This is even more relevant as all European countries are facing big challenges in the economy, like the emergence to recover from the economic crisis, in society, like the raise of increasingly old and diverse societies, in the environment, and so on. Consequently, Doctoral graduates should be trained adequately to achieve a variety of competencies that were not considered as focal before.

Solving the inefficiencies, improve processes and production, and encourage new generators of income depends on innovation of the labour market and on the fact that it benefits from the contribution of the new generation of Doctorate holders. Innovation, and inclusion of Doctoral graduates, is also needed in all sectors of public administration, where old structures are called upon to face fast evolving challenges and in academia.

While Doctoral graduates and higher Education Institutions are asked to ensure that newly developed knowledge is transferred to society, the surrounding world should ensure that they are fully welcome and integrated. Therefore, policy initiatives launched at the national level all include elements on transfer of innovation, support for start-ups and incentives to develop further university-business cooperation.

Indeed, if one would have to search for any innovative element in Doctoral training policy development in past years, that would be a steadily stronger attention to what Doctoral graduates know and are able to do and to what they should be empowered to do.

This is true not only for the design and delivery of programmes or for the development of a research project. Attention to the competences achieved is incentivized also by a renewal of the evaluation criteria used for programmes and for their research results. Doctoral candidates are often too narrowly evaluated and there are several unintended negative consequences of the use of present standards for assessing candidates. There is a need for internationally agreed standards to evaluate/compare the competences achieved by doctoral students, based on the expected outcomes of doctoral programmes, be they oriented more towards academic careers or careers outside the academia.

As European citizens and academics, we can say that the challenges mentioned have a European dimension and that solutions should be found at the European level. The construction of the European Higher Education Area and of the European Research Area are two tentative solutions on the table.

The successful achievement of these supra-national policy initiatives depends on the willingness of all parties involved to further insist on their synergies. In the European Higher Education Area, the connection between the realm of higher education and research has always been recognized, but never looked further than from the point of view of education. In the European Research Area, geographically

smaller and with a different governance structure, the field of higher education has never been taken into consideration and the issue of Doctoral training has been considered only as the first step into research.

Last but not the least, to mirror the knowledge triangle "Education, research and innovation", each of these fora should concentrate more on the "innovation" angle. Structural and policy reform in higher education should also conduct to new generations of graduates capable to bring innovation into society. The products of increased cooperation in research at the European level should also look at how we can face the grand challenges of modern societies. This concept of looking at what is beyond the reproduction of knowledge and the creation of new knowledge by taking into consideration what happens outside of academia and try to innovate it, is closely connected with the wider debate on the "third mission" of Institutions.

The papers selected for publication on the topic "Education, research and innovation" look deeper into some of these aspects.

Starting from the overview of what happens at the European level, **Nicola Vittorio** will discuss the implementation of European policies in different European countries, with a specific focus on the Italian case, and the main outcomes to improve quality, internationalization, transparency and employability in the Third cycle, of the ad hoc working group on the Third cycled established by the Bologna Follow up Group for the period 2012–2015. Following the complementarity approach of the Tuning initiative with the Bologna Process, **Ann Katherine Isaacs** will bring the voice of those in Institutions with hand-on knowledge in teaching and learning and present their recommendations to develop competence-based Doctoral programmes. Leaving aside the "structural" approach that characterizes European policy initiatives, **Linda Evans** will present a different reference model on how Doctoral programmes should be developed, starting from the nature of researcher development and its professional characteristics. **John Peacock** and **Filomena Parada**, thanks to the broad data collected by Eurodoc on Doctoral candidates and junior researchers, will present the views of candidates on how to best organize and structure Doctoral training and the perceptions of candidates on several aspects of Doctoral training, such as the type of supervision, training opportunities, skills and expectations for successful careers. Finally, **Alexandru Nicolin** and **Florin Buzatu** will discuss on the positive impact of exposing graduate students to forefront achievements in scientific research, to international experiences and to interdisciplinarity. In addition, they will discuss the impact of present practices in the evaluation of research as incentivizing (or, rather, not) internationalization and interdisciplinarity at the Doctoral level in Romania.

European Doctoral Programs in Light of EHEA and ERA

Nicola Vittorio

1 The European Area of Higher Education

When fifteen years ago, in 1998, on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the founding of the University of Paris, four European ministers of education—Claude Allegre (France), Luigi Berlinguer (Italy), Tessa Blackstone (UK) and Jurgen Ruttgers (Germany)—agreed on what is by now known as the Sorbonne Declaration, perhaps a few believed in the political impact that this statement would have had. It was that statement, however, that encouraged member states to adopt a common framework to facilitate diploma recognition and to incentivize student mobility, as well as their employability. In other words, it is the constitutive act of the European Higher Education Area—EHEA that today, 15 years later, sees the participation of 47 countries, obviously not all belonging to the European Union. This provides, by itself, independently of any considerations on the actual implementation of the reform, the measure of the success of the idea behind the Sorbonne declaration.

Almost in parallel, in the year 2000, the idea of a European Research Area—ERA started to have a formally definite framework with the European Commission's Communication COM (2006) "Toward a European Research Area",[1] even if a good part of the elements at the base of this idea can be found in the book "A European Area of Science" by the former Commissioner for research, Antonio Ruberti, written with Michel Andre in 1994. The idea of an ERA is by now

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/com2000-6-en.pdf.

N. Vittorio (✉)
Physics Department, University of "Tor Vergata", Rome, Italy
e-mail: nicola.vittorio@uniroma2.it

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formalized in the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union—TFEU.[2] In fact, the Article 179—first paragraph—of the TFEU reads as follows: "The Union shall have the objective of strengthening its scientific and technological bases by achieving a European research area in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely, and encouraging it to become more competitive, including in its industry, while promoting all the research activities deemed necessary by virtue of other Chapters of the Treaties."

Clearly, doctoral programs position themselves in the overlapping region of these two big European Areas, Higher Education and Research, as they complete the educational process of an individual with a *training to research through research* that opens the doors to a research career in the public and private sectors. In these years, both in the EHEA and in the ERA, ideas, proposals and documents on doctoral programs have been produced. In the meantime, other important stakeholders, as EUA[3] and LERU,[4] have worked on the issue from the side of higher education Institutions. Thus, the purpose of this paper is as follows. In Sect. 2 I will briefly review the European view on doctoral training. In Sect. 3 I will report the findings of the ad hoc working group on the III cycle constituted by the Bologna Follow-Up Group—BFUG[5] in view of the meeting in 2015 at Yerevan of the EHEA Ministers of Education. In Sect. 4, I will present a discussion on and the results of the recent Italian reform of doctoral programs. In Sect. 5, I will report on two initiatives dedicated to doctoral programs and promoted during the semester of Italian Presidency of the EU. Finally, in Sect. 6, I will summarize the main points of the current discussion.

2 The Third Cycle of Tertiary Education

Doctoral programs explicitly entered in the EHEA only in 2003. In fact, the so-called Berlin Communiqué[6] states the necessity to go beyond the two cycle structure suggested by the Sorbonne declaration and to include doctoral programs in a third cycle of tertiary education. This is an important point, even if it is not always shared, as it identifies doctoral programs as the more valuable segment of tertiary education, acknowledging at the same time its fundamental and indispensable characteristic: training to research through research.

[2] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/;ELX_SESSIONID=tkkvJV1GGG9vKwzFsx3nVtR4F9ZPTsPJMDSQt1VlVHpHQJQTybWw!-1279509169?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT.

[3] www.eua.be.

[4] www.leru.org.

[5] The working group on the III cycle was created in the framework of a wider working group on the structural reforms for the implementation of the Bologna Process.

[6] www.ehea.info/Uploads/about/Berlin_Communique1.pdf.

This attention to doctoral training and to its quality as a fundamental step to foster research and innovation—and, therefore, to aim to an economic development that must be sustainable, equitable and inclusive—is followed up by the Bergen Communiqué[7] of 2005. It is interesting to realize that most of the architectural elements for a deep and modern reform of doctoral programs where already in that Communiqué: (i) the alignment of the third cycle with the overarching Framework of Qualifications for the EHEA; (ii) the development of structured doctoral programs, fully transparent in their enrolment and supervision procedures; (iii) a duration of doctoral programs that corresponds to three, maximum four years for a full-time doctoral candidate; (iv) a specific focus by universities on the employability of their doctoral candidates, by providing interdisciplinary training and the acquisition of transferable skills, such as communication, ability to work in a group, project management, self-entrepreneurship, etc.; (v) the maintenance of a double legal status that, considering different country traditions and regulations, sees the doctoral candidate both as a student and as an early stage researcher; (vi) an increase in the number of doctoral candidates to involve them, ever more effectively, in careers related to research, both in the public and in the private sectors. This is an architectural design that assigns to the doctoral programs a central role for Europe to become a leading knowledge-based society.

After Bergen, there are at least three other important contributions from relevant stakeholders that it is worth to mention in this brief account.

EUA promoted with its Council for Doctoral Education an independent reflection on the role of doctoral programs and on their organization, suggesting ways to improve both the process—research training through research—and the product—"innovators" capable of transferring science and technology with their own legs from the universities to the productive world. The results of this reflection constitute the so-called Salzburg Principles[8] and, later on, the Salzburg II Recommendations.[9] Principles and Recommendations that help in configuring an innovative, European doctoral program, calling for a stronger institutional involvement in developing policies for recruitment, supervision and thesis evaluation, and emphasizing the vital role of the doctoral candidate mobility, in all its possible dimensions: geographical mobility, intra- or inter-disciplinary mobility and/or inter-sectorial mobility.

In 2005, the European Commission released two documents, the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers,[10] with recommendations that are aimed to render doctoral training really competitive by: (i) giving particular attention to the working conditions and the training of doctoral candidate; (ii) creating a system of recruitment and career development that is transparent, open, and internationally recognized;

[7] http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/Bergen_Communique1.pdf.

[8] http://www.eua.be/cde/publications.aspx.

[9] http://www.eua.be/cde/publications.aspx.

[10] http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/brochure.

(iii) overcoming every residual obstacle to the geographical and inter-sectorial mobility, as well as the mobility between different functions within the same institution; (iv) considering doctoral candidate as professionals that must be treated as such since the very initial phase of their career.

More recently, the ERA Steering Group on Human Resources and Mobility—SGHRM[11] developed and presented the Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training—PIDT[12]: (i) research excellence; (ii) attractive institutional environment; (iii) interdisciplinary research options; (iv) exposure to industry and other relevant employment sectors; (v) international networking; (vi) transferable skills training; (vii) quality assurance. In particular, the "triple I" approach was promoted: a doctoral program should be international, inter-disciplinary and inter-sectorial to be really innovative. It is worth mentioning here that the European Commission, DG Research and Innovation, has recently commissioned a study to explore the implementation of the Innovative Doctoral Training Principles, to monitor existing barriers and to provide recommendations to foster the PIDT implementation. According to the study, the main barriers are connected to the economical situation—low doctoral candidate salaries that force them to enrol as part-time candidate and/or prevent them from going abroad; the lack of knowledge-intensive industries around the institution, or industries that are not prepared to integrate doctoral candidates at an appropriate level—or to the political/legislation situation—in a few countries existing legislation and accreditation criteria that do not support interdisciplinary programs. In a more recent document,[13] not all the seven PIDT are regarded as equally important: research excellence, quality assurance and attractiveness of the research environment are considered as basic principles; the triple I approach and the transferable skills training are considered important, but only as a complement to the basic principles.

Finally the last Communiqué of EHEA Ministers of Education was released in Bucharest in 2012. The Bucharest Communiqué[14] reaffirms the need to reach automatic recognitions of academic degrees issued within the EHEA, acknowledges the EUA and the SGHRM documents, and sets as strategic goal for 2015 four specific aspects of doctoral programs: quality, transparency, employability and mobility. Ministers expect from experts and stakeholders recommendations to guide the design, the implementation and the evaluation of those doctoral programs that want to qualify themselves as Europeans and innovative.

[11]The SGHRM is the structure to support the implementation and monitoring of progress of the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative (IU) and the development of its ERA Framework in the areas related to researchers' career, training and mobility as well as the attractiveness of Europe to researchers in general.

[12]http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Principles_for_Innovative_Doctoral_Training.pdf.

[13]http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/SGHRM_IDTP_Report_Final.pdf.

[14]www.ehea.info/Uploads/(1)/Bucharest%20Communique%202012(2).pdf.

3 The BFUG Ad Hoc WG on the III Cycle

The Bologna Follow-Up Group decided to develop the policy recommendation set by Ministers in the Bucharest Communiqué by setting up, in August 2012, an ad hoc working group on the III cycle—$WG_{IIIcycle}$,[15] as a sub-structure of its Structural Reform Working Group—SRWG. The mandate of the $WG_{IIIcycle}$ was to map the current implementation of the third cycle in the EHEA and to formulate policy proposals: (i) to promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, taking into account the developments foreseen within the ERA by Horizon 2020 and other EU initiatives; (ii) to improve the transition between the second and the third cycle, with the aim to strengthen the link between education and research. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ was also required to make other policy proposals related to the third cycle, such as sustainable funding for third cycle education or candidate recruitment practices.

The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ has delivered its report to the SRWG in the summer 2014. The report contains the results of the mapping of the implementation of the Salzburg Recommendations and of the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, summarizing the main developments in Doctoral training, with a specific focus on institutional strategies for structured training, exposure to the private sector, employability, mobility and internationalization. The report also discusses, focusing on doctoral programs, the achievement in the introduction of qualifications frameworks, of transparency instruments and of quality assurance. The report finally discusses, proposing recommendations on further improvements, the achievements and the impact of the policies done at institutional, national and European levels on the innovation of doctoral programs, employability, internationalization and mobility. Upon recommendation of the Structural Reform working group, the report will be discussed by the Bologna Follow Up Group directly.

As already mentioned, at their Bucharest meeting, EHEA Ministers of Education asked for policy recommendation on how to improve quality, transparency, employability, internationalization and mobility in the third cycle. The discussion and the proposals of the $WG_{IIIcycle}$, that the BFUG is still in the process of evaluating, can be briefly summarized as follows.

[15]The $WG_{IIIcycle}$—co-chaired by representatives of Italy, Romania and Spain—has met five times (in Rome in December 2012, in Bucharest in May 2013, in Madrid in October 2013, in Bucharest in February 2014 and in Rome in May 2014). The membership of the group includes Armenia, Austria, Belgium/Flemish Community, Belgium/French Community, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, the Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Moldova, Poland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, the European Commission, the EUA, EI, and EURODOC.

3.1 Quality in Doctoral Training

The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ adopted the definition of a doctoral program as training to research through research. This is perfectly in line with the Berlin Communiqué where EHEA Ministers have commonly agreed that "The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research". This might sound obvious for most of the people working in the Academia, although different disciplines may have different understanding and different approaches. So, while it is important to push for innovative doctoral training, it must also acknowledge the long standing tradition of doctoral education in Europe. It is in this tradition the idea that a PhD graduate should be a competent and skilled researcher, qualified for a further career in, as well as outside, academia. Also, it is in this tradition a careful evaluation of the research production. So, traditional doctoral programs can be innovative as they introduce innovative features to both research training and research outputs. In this sense, it is generally believed that an expansion of the training dimension of the third cycle to interdisciplinary issues and the acquisition of transversal skills is very rewarding for both the quality of the research and the doctoral candidates' employability. Thus, all doctoral programs should provide: (i) a supportive and inclusive research environment based on good supervision; (ii) a direct involvement of doctoral candidates in improving the overall quality of the program; (iii) the use of independent and external peer review to assess outcomes such as originality, creativity and independence through the PhD thesis defence; (iv) the provision of internal quality assurance procedures about the supervision process and the candidates' training. Therefore, the $WG_{IIIcycle}$ proposed for Ministerial consideration several guidelines that should be included in the national quality assurance framework for the third cycle. In addition, at EHEA level, quality assurance frameworks for doctoral cycle should encourage the assessing agencies to take into account the European Standard Guidelines, the reference documents and the standpoints on doctoral training that the EHEA Ministers agreed upon in Bergen[8], in addition to any other relevant ministerial commitments. Furthermore, in order to enhance a meaningful link between the second and third cycle, the $WG_{IIIcycle}$ considered important sparking interest of students towards research already in the II cycle, by supporting those second cycle programs based on learning outcomes directly related to research. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ suggests the implementation of tools that facilitate the transition from the second to the third cycle for those students which are particularly talented and inclined towards research.

3.2 Development of Transparency Tools

The discussion on transparency tools for the third cycle focused on two issues, the Diploma Supplement—DS and the use of ECTS. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ concluded that a

DS—in the European format developed according to the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO guidelines—should be available also in a widely spoken European language and it should be issued automatically and free of charge to all Doctoral graduates across the EHEA. The DS is not a PhD holder CV, but rather it includes the doctoral program description, specific learning activities, thesis title and assessment, as well as mobility experiences, transferable skills, international cooperation activities and/or research projects the student has been involved in.

On ECTS, $WG_{IIIcycle}$ did not reach consensus because of the diversity of positions of the EHEA countries on this issue. The "contra" arguments focused on the use of ECTS in the III cycle as it could generate a 'race for credit', which is seen as detrimental to the main purpose of the third cycle—training to research through research. The other dissenting argument was that the 'intended learning outcomes' at doctorate level cannot be as specifically defined as they can be in the first and second cycles, given the dominance of the research activities. On the other hand, when applied, ECTS could facilitate assessment mechanisms, help in monitoring the distribution of the workload for the candidate and could contribute to enhancing mobility for the third cycle. Also, the use of ECTS should facilitate the issuing of a certification for those doctoral candidates that interrupt their studies or need valorisation outside of the academia of the skills acquired. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ finally agrees that the decision of using ECTS in the III cycle should be left to the national context and to the institutional preferences. This seems a sensible position, very respectful of the university autonomy.

3.3 Employability of Doctoral Graduates

The outcome of doctoral programs should always be a PhD holder with a high level of research competences and a broad set of skills that help to develop his/her potential inside and outside the academic sector. To reach these goals, the existing diversifications of doctoral programs should be further increased. Collaborations in Doctoral training between institutions and the non-academic sector, interdisciplinary programs, structured programs and promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship, must become the practice of higher education institutions. However, without a social awareness of the added value of a PhD holder for social progress and advancement in knowledge, innovation and productivity, we run the risk of returning to an old paradigm, doctoral programs suited only for the academia. Thus, Governments and both public and private institutions should provide more attractive, and socially recognized, career path for doctorate holders. This is the only way for promoting talents and spreading excellence.

3.4 Internationalization and Mobility

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of mobility for doctoral candidates. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ stresses the importance of the geographical, as well as of the inter-sectorial mobility. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ believes that Countries and the HEIs participating to the EHEA should fully implement existing and future recommendations on mobility, by adapting them to the research-based approach of Doctoral training. HEIs should be encouraged to develop programs with international partners. This is an opportunity to increase the number of scientific collaborations and, then, to further diversify and enrich the different academic environments. Last but not least, the $WG_{IIIcycle}$ believes that data collection on international mobility of doctoral candidates shall be improved. In order to further evidence-based policies on Doctoral training and mobility, the $WG_{IIIcycle}$ believes that Ministers and HEIs should make an effort to collect more information and address statistical offices to coordinate data collection at the European level. The data collection should refer to the offered Doctoral programs, to the number of candidates and their profile, to candidates' international mobility and to Doctorate holder's employment.

3.5 Funding

In order to ensure the sustainable development of the third cycle across EHEA countries, $WG_{IIIcycle}$ believes that Ministers should commit to guarantee sustainable funding for building the research capacity of universities. In this sense, the appropriate budget for research should be allocated primarily from public funds, while assuring transparent systems of funds' allocation. European level funding for doctoral programs should be awarded where a European added value can be demonstrated and should not be used to replace national public investments. The $WG_{IIIcycle}$ recommends the balance between strategic or targeted funding and independent funding (contributing to operational support), while raising the capacity to attract funds either from private or public source. Additional solutions rest on supporting and incentivizing collaborative, innovative doctoral programs with partnerships that contribute to the diversification of income. At the same time, it is important to promote and implement a legal framework that ensures the independence of institutions receiving the money and the preservation of academic principles in research activities, especially when a private partnership is concerned.

4 Doctoral Programs: What for?

It's interesting to note how in the last 10 years, the majority of OECD countries have invested in doctoral programs, in line with the idea that in a knowledge society the training of innovators will result in a greater competitiveness in research and

development. To reach this goal it is necessary to provide the best training and to ensure that the doctoral candidates are equipped with the most competitive skills. This is in line with the $WG_{IIIcycle}$ recommendations, as well as with most of the documents produced in recent years from the Commission and from other stakeholders. However, to really diffuse research and innovation at all levels in the society, it is necessary a coordinated and sustainable effort to attract talents and direct them toward all the careers related to the world of research, be it public or private.

It must be remembered that more than 50 % of PhD graduates find and will find jobs outside the university and public research bodies. Thus, there is a need, as already discussed in Sect. 3, for a diversification of the offer that could open, without distorting its essence, the training of doctoral candidate to the non-academic world. There are many examples in Europe of virtuous interaction between university and the labour market. For example in Denmark, there is a long tradition of the so-called industrial doctorates, that is doctoral programs that, under the control of quality of the universities, address research problems of interest for companies/industries. Obviously, this requires the existence of high-tech industries interested in promoting research and development in collaboration with the universities and research institutions. It also requires specific actions to promote this short circuit, not forgetting that this openness to non-academic sectors must apply not only to scientific-technological doctoral programs, but also to the ones in the field of humanities and social sciences.

Then, it is not surprising that the European Commission has promoted the European Industrial Doctorates under the Marie Sklodowska Curie actions, as well as the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)[16] to create a structured collaboration between High Education Institutions and the non-academic sector to improve the innovation process by passing from the laboratory to the market, from the idea to the product, from a student to an entrepreneur. All this reinforces the idea that the doctoral programs are not only oriented to the academic career, but also to employment opportunities outside the academia, where the acquired skills are properly used and recognized. This was already discussed in 2003 in the EC Communication "Researchers in the ERA: one profession, multiple careers", where there were analysed the different elements that characterize the researcher profession and defined the various factors that affect the development of the careers of researchers at the European level: the role and the nature of the research training; the differences in the methods of recruitment; the contractual and economic aspects; the evaluation mechanisms; the prospects for progress in academic careers. While the quality and transparency discussed in Sect. 3 are mostly under the responsibilities of Higher Education Institutions (HEI), mobility and employability require a better connection with other non-academic sectors, both public and private. In fact, the concept of mobility should also be interpreted as the inter-sectorial mobility from HEI's to the private sector, and vice versa. It is this

[16] http://eit.europa.eu/about-us/.

mobility that can reinforce a mutual trust between HEI's and R&D oriented enterprises, in order to implement a real technological transfer and increase the employability of doctorate holders in sectors of the job market different from the traditional academic ones.

The priorities of the Italian Presidency of EU in the second semester of 2014 were shaped in line with "Horizon 2020 Italia"—HIT2020, the first strategic document approved by a Member State that has aligned the national research program with the Horizon 2020 priorities. In particular, in the Program of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Research Area is mentioned in different sections, under Competitiveness,[17] under Research and Innovation[18] and under Migration.[19] So, it is not surprising that one of the Conferences organized during the Semester of Italian Presidency focuses on the "Empowerment of the Next Generation of Researchers: Promoting talents, spreading excellence".[20] This conference aimed to address a number of issues that are really at the heart of the ERA, such as the feasibility of a truly open European labour market for researchers or the training of the scientific workforce in dialogue with industry, at least in some specific disciplines. Clearly, to achieve the economic and societal goals of Europe 2020 requires unlocking the full potential of new researchers. This requires strong and competitive national research systems embedded into a truly integrated European Research Area, where empowered talented researchers—either early stage or experienced—can circulate freely in an open, transparent, equitable and merit-based single labour market, as suggested by the European Parliament initiative for *A Maastricht for Research*[21] of October 2013. In this Manifesto, seven priorities and key-actions were indicated; one of them was about "A European Research career". Regarding this point the document says: "The attractiveness of a research career, at every stage should be boosted. The mobility of researchers is essential for the realization of a future generation of

[17]"Competitiveness is also closely linked to innovation and knowledge. Supporting the implementation of Horizon 2020, removing the bottlenecks to a real mobility of researchers in the European Research Area and better aligning national research priorities will be at the core of the Presidency agenda to help maintain a competitive edge and economic growth."

[18]"Bearing in mind that the establishment of an authentic European Research Area is important for maintaining the European research systems on the leading edge of the advancement of knowledge, the Presidency will address this topic, taking into account the anticipated Second Annual ERA Progress Report by the Commission, with a view to adopting Council conclusions. Special emphasis will be given to boosting political commitment to joint EU research programming, with the aim of visibly reducing fragmentation and eliminating unnecessary duplication, as well as promoting the ERA's human resources component, and in particular the next generation of researchers."

[19]"In this context, the Presidency intends to continue, in particular, its efforts to define a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, study, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing."

[20]http://www.msca2014.eu/programme/.

[21]https://www.researchitaly.it/uploads/7892/Maastricht_ricerca.pdf.

European researchers. Consequently, it has to be facilitated through the implementation of a set of appropriate measures, such as portability of national grants, coordinated systems of social security, transparent publication of competitions, implementation of the Charter and Code of Conduct for researchers etc. All researchers, including early stage researchers/doctoral candidates, have to be recognised for the contribution they give and treated as professionals in every EU country. Member States should endeavour to create recruitment and employment conditions of researchers more and more comparable in order to achieve the long term goal of a single European system."

The implementation of the European Research Area has required and still requires a wide and strong partnership between European institutions (Commission, European Parliament), Member States (with their Ministries for Research, for Foreign Affairs and for Welfare, as well as Universities, research funding and performing Organizations and private sector) and research stakeholder organizations. Unfortunately, the progresses have been strongly uneven across the different ERA dimensions, particularly in knowledge dissemination practices and research career conditions and prospects, resulting in an overall brain drain rather than in a more equal brain circulation. In any case, it is crucial to move rapidly form the architectural design (the European Research Area) to the actual implementation phase (The European Researchers' Area).

5 The Italian Way to Doctoral Programs

Doctoral programs were introduced in Italy only 30 years ago, with the aim of introducing a new academic title useful in an academic context. In fact, this title was (and still is) awarded as a result of a post-lauream research activity that provided original contributions to knowledge in mono- or pluri-disciplinary sectors. Thus, before the implementation of the Bologna process, doctoral programs were producing very qualified PhD holders for an academic career, definitely overqualified for a career outside academia. Even after the implementation of the Bologna Process, doctoral programs aimed at cultivating young talents, with employment opportunities mostly in Universities and public Research Institutions. This is why doctoral programs were (are) very little known and acknowledged on the labour market. In other words, the doctoral programs have been, and unfortunately still are, considered as the first level of the academic career, rather than the third level of the tertiary training. As mentioned in the previous section, there is a lot to do to overcome the widespread mistrust of companies and industries and to convince the private sector that PhD holders are not only researchers able to implement that technology transfer that everybody is looking for, but also innovators that can be usefully coopted by the private sector, as well as in the framework of the public administration.

In Italy, the Bologna Process was implemented in 2001. Thus, "Bologna" students could enter in a doctoral program only in 2006 or afterwards. The number of

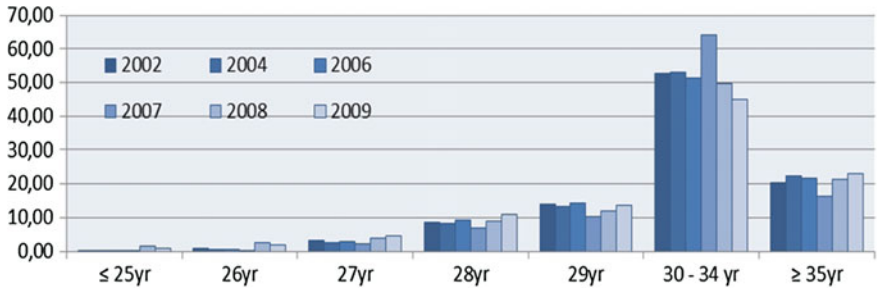

Fig. 1 Age distribution of PhD holders as a function of the year in which the title was awarded. Data from the statistical office of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research

enrolments to Italian doctoral programs has stabilized in the recent years, and now there are about 11,000–12,000 fellowships per year. In 2009, the Italian graduation rate[22] was almost at the 1.5 % level (with a growth by a factor of 3 with respect to the year 2000), but still less than in England (2 %), Germany (2.5 %) and Sweden (3 %). In 2007, the fraction of doctoral programs in Mathematics, Science and Technology were about 45 %, against 55 % in China and 60 % in France.

The age distribution of graduates awarded with the PhD title between 2002 and 2009 is shown in Fig. 1. Remember that people awarded with a PhD in 2006 were enrolled in the old system, before the implementation of the Bologna process. It is encouraging to see that in the recent years doctoral candidates graduate at a younger age.

The offer of Italian doctoral programs was quite fragmented in the past. In the academic year 2006/2007 there were about 2241 different titles of PhD courses, but only 30 titles collected more than 100 doctoral candidates at a national level. So, doctoral schools were born: (i) to ensure the necessary critical mass to the smooth functioning of the doctoral programs; (ii) to allow an easier coordination of inter-disciplinary and inter-sectorial activities; (iii) to offer greater job opportunities for doctoral candidates through close relationships with the economic/productive system. They had a quite good diffusion nationwide. Clearly, Doctoral schools have also been effective on the internationalization issue, by promoting international agreement, thereby facilitating the integration of doctoral students in broader and qualified environments. This requires a strong economic support. And Italy suffers, compared to other countries, of a low investment in Research and Development, both in the public and the private sector.

The need to overcome all these criticality has prompted a new Ministerial Decree for doctoral training which became operational in February 2013. The main points of the Decree are:

[22]The graduation rates in a given year are defined as the fraction of the population between 25 and 34 year old that has been awarded with the PhD title.

- the doctoral program duration is equal to three years;
- universities can activate industrial doctoral programs, dedicating a share of available positions to private sector employees engaged in research based activities;
- the scientific board of the doctoral program is responsible for the design and implementation of the program;
- doctoral programs can be organized in doctoral schools for the purpose of the coordination and management of common tasks;
- the call for enrolment in a doctoral program is written in Italian and in English and advertised, among other things, on Euraxess;
- admission to a doctoral program takes place on the basis of a selection of public evidence that must be completed by September 30 of each year;
- the title is awarded after the defence of the thesis in a public discussion of the findings of the research carried out during the program. The admission to this discussion takes place as a result of a positive assessment of the thesis by at least two highly qualified experts, belonging to institutions different from the one issuing the title;
- The scholarship lasts three year and shall be renewed provided that the student has completed the program of activities planned for the previous year. The fellowship amount is increased to a maximum of 50 %, for not more than 18 months, if the doctoral candidate is authorized to carry out research activities abroad. Moreover, in addition to the scholarship and from the second year, it is secured to each doctoral candidate a budget for its research activity in Italy and abroad to an amount not less than 10 % of the awarded fellowship;
- the doctoral program involves a unique, full-time commitment, but with the possibility of a specific discipline for public employees;
- doctoral students can provide—without an increase in scholarship—tutoring and teaching activities within the limit of 40 h for each academic year.

From Academic year 2014/2015, doctoral programs need to be accredited ex-ante by the National Agency for the Evaluation of University and Research—ANVUR. The accreditation criteria are as follows:

- Doctoral programs can be accredited for those institutions that develop specific, wide, original, qualified and continuous activity, both in teaching and in research, adequately recognized at international level in the areas of interest for the doctorate.
- The scientific board of the doctoral program consists of at least sixteen members.
- The members of the scientific board must be active researchers in the fields of interest for the doctoral program, with documented research results at international level achieved in the five years preceding the date of request for accreditation.
- The availability of an average number of at least six scholarships for the doctoral programs activated by a university, and in any case not less than four for any single program.

- The availability of adequate and stable funding for the sustainability of the programs, with specific reference to the availability of scholarships and the support to doctoral candidate research.
- The availability of specific and qualified operational and scientific structures for the research activity of the doctoral candidates.
- The planning of disciplinary and interdisciplinary training, the provision of foreign language and computer courses, as well as, courses in the field of management of research, knowledge of the European research systems, exploitation of research results and intellectual property.
- the presence of documented scientific activity of the doctoral students in the three years of their doctorate programs and, as PhD holders, in the following three years.

ANVUR has concluded the process of accreditation for the 2014/2015 doctoral programs. The number of doctoral programs submitted for accreditation was 903, 883 of which were accredited. Here below there are some statistical information about the Italian doctoral programs. Let's start from the distribution of the doctoral programs among the different scientific areas. The distribution of doctoral programs for scientific macro-areas is shown in Fig. 2, which shows a prevalence of programs in science and technology (65 %) with respect to the programs in humanities and social sciences (35 %).

The contraction from 2241 doctoral programs (2006/2007) to 913 (2013/2014) to 883 (2014/2015) goes in the direction of concentrating resources on programs that ensure critical mass and quality in the research environment. An evaluation ex-post is necessary to verify these statements and to complete the analysis. Such an evaluation is foreseen by ANVUR in three years time for the programs that started in 2014/15. The absolute number of declared international doctorates, industrial doctorates or doctorates in collaboration with foreign universities/enterprises is still small, although it represents about 13 % of the total number of doctoral programs (see Fig. 3).

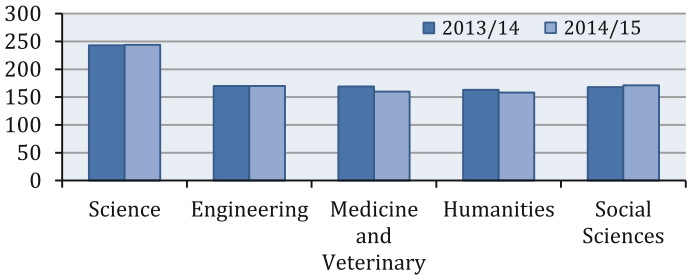

Fig. 2 Comparison of doctoral programs activated in the academic years 2013/14 and 2014/15 per scientific group. Data from the National Agency for Evaluation of the Universities and Research

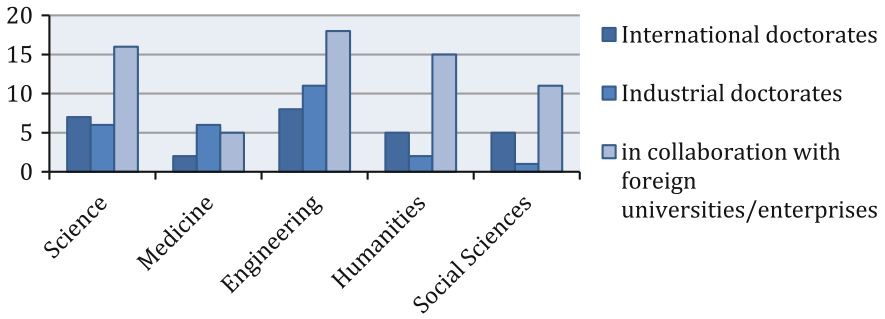

Fig. 3 Number of international and industrial doctoral programs together with those activated in collaboration with foreign universities/enterprises for the academic year 2014/15. Data from the National Agency for Evaluation of the Universities and Research

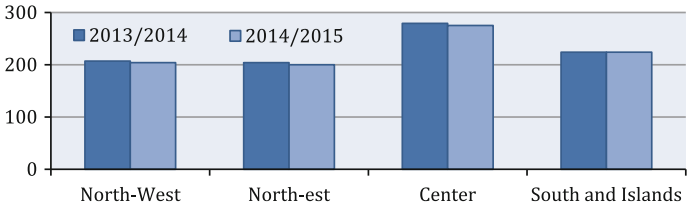

Fig. 4 Number of doctoral programs activated in the academic year 2014/15 in different regional macro-areas. Data from the National Agency for Evaluation of the universities and Research

The geographical distribution of the 2014/15 doctoral programs is shown in Fig. 4: 45 % of the doctoral programs are offered in the North of Italy, 30 % in the Centre and 25 % in the South and in the Islands.

It is finally worth mentioning the effort for incentivizing international mobility. Even in a period of very strong contraction of the financial resources, most of the universities have allocated specific resources for further doctoral candidates to spend an amount of their time abroad. Again, this will have to be monitored and actually constitutes one of the parameters ANVUR will use to evaluate doctoral programs.

6 Conclusion

A doctoral program is the more valuable segment of tertiary education, where doctoral candidates are trained to research through research. Increasing its dissemination means on the one hand improving human capital and, on the other hand, providing tangible investments in research, in line with the path taken by the Commission and the European Union, first with the Lisbon Agenda, then with

Europe 2020. The reflection that started in Europe more than a decade ago on the meaning of doctoral education has provided converging guidelines that consider quality, transparency, mobility and employability as indispensable elements of a modern and innovative doctoral program.

Doctoral programs are an integral part of the EHEA, as well as an integral part of the ERA. They function as connectors between the two European Areas—that of High Education and that of Research—and in this sense their role is—and will be—even more important than in the past. Decision makers in the EHEA and decision makers in ERA should consider the need of a more effective collaboration and of converging guidelines, developed together with High Education Institutions, to exploit the unique role that doctoral programs play between high education and research.

Doctoral programs must form human capital of high quality, of interest not only for the universities and the public research institutions, but, also for the public administration and the private-sector. In this line, the opportunities arising from a closer collaboration between the academic and non-academic sectors must be incentivized, if doctoral programs must act as a spur to research and innovation aimed to have a society which will be more and more knowledge-based.

Tuning Tools and Insights for Modern Competence-Based Third-Cycle Programs

Ann Katherine Isaacs

1 Introduction

The organization and delivery of quality doctoral studies is one of the major challenges facing European universities (as well as those in other parts of the world) today. PhDs are often considered to be a key unit of measure of the quality, the importance and the prestige of universities on a world scale. The percentage of PhDs in the academic staff, the number of doctoral degrees awarded, the number of doctoral students enrolled are often taken as objective measures of prestige, quality, and the ability to carry our high level research.

Strangely, doctoral degrees are taken as a common currency, much more so than Bachelor or Masters degrees have ever been, on what appears to be the unspoken assumption that they are basically equivalent, and that their value differs according to the ranking of the university that awards them.

In reality, the activities leading to the award of a PhD and the competences that those holding a doctoral degree can reasonably be expected to possess, are still quite different not only in different countries, but even in different institutions in the same country, including those belonging to the EHEA.

The need for greater transparency and a common approach to the third cycle was felt only after the initial phases of the Bologna Process. Indeed, although the 'third' or 'doctoral' cycle was not considered in the Sorbonne Declaration, nor in the first Bologna agreements, by the Berlin conference (2003) it had come to constitute the final sequential step in the overarching structure agreed upon for the formation of European citizens. As a result, countries in the EHEA have been called upon to change their approach to doctoral studies in a variety of directions. For example, those for whom the doctoral title constituted, if not the crowning point of a career, at least a mark of achievement of a mature scholar, have had to shorten their

A.K. Isaacs (✉)
University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy
e-mail: k.isaacs@unipi.it

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programs and simplify their degree structure, but nevertheless ensure the high level of formation necessary for research. Other countries have had to create new phases in their previous degree structure, creating the three cycles where they previously did not have them.

Very useful and important descriptors of the three cycles were published and began to guide the modernization of higher education in the early and central part of the 2000s. The Joint Quality Initiative, and the QF for the EHEA, made it clear that the doctoral cycle was closely related to the other two, as 'higher' in level, but not diverse in its nature: the third cycle could be defined in a general way as the crowning step of a single progressive path. The descriptors elaborated for the third cycle expressed, with respect to many of the existing systems, quite a revolutionary vision of the objectives of the doctoral cycle. Whereas doctoral studies had previously emphasized the formation of very specialized research abilities, the 'Bologna' doctorate underlined that, as the most highly educated members of society, those holding a third cycle degree also needed to be able to explain their research to other sectors of society, and to interact effectively with experts—including PhDs—from other disciplinary backgrounds. In other words, they needed new competences and important transversal skills of varied kinds.

It seemed clear that traditional models of third cycle study, in which the objective was the reproduction and hopefully the continuation and development of the often very specialized personal research interests of a single supervisor, were not adequate to the needs of present-day society. A 'learning society', such as Europe is or needs to become, requires highly educated people who also have broad understanding of several scientific domains, and who are creative and able to take the initiative in various contexts. The Dublin Descriptors and the QF for the EHEA made this clear; but how could this vision become reality?

The Tuning projects, now collectively described as the Tuning Process,[1] elaborated a very successful methodology and a number of important tools for increasing the quality and relevance of higher education. Many of these tools are designed specifically to assist in the planning, development and delivery of doctoral programs. Our purpose in this text is to present them and to discuss them.

2 Modern Third Cycle Studies and Tuning

The traditional model of doctoral studies was largely based on an academic version of the master-apprentice relationship. In many countries, a single supervisor accepted the doctoral candidate, and guided him or her through the research which would eventually be crowned by a publishable dissertation, a public defence and the

[1]The Tuning Academy publishes, on paper and on-line, the peer-reviewed *Tuning Journal of Higher Education* where further material on Tuning and related matters may be found: http://www.tuningjournal.org/.

award of the degree. This kind of relationship could be very fruitful; often it was not, and many realized that change was needed.

In the last ten or so years, however, many institutions have made significant structural changes in the organization of their doctoral programs. Particularly, in response to funding and organizational pressure, as well as to the new criteria that appeared because of the Bologna Process, there was a widespread movement towards 'doctoral schools'. What exactly was entailed in the 'schools' was not always clear: in theory, the school was to permit the grouping of formerly separate doctoral 'programs' in order to facilitate the formation of inter- and multi-disciplinary competences, as well as providing better support in terms of logistics and counselling. As to the substance of the training offered, the new doctoral 'schools' may not always have been able to meet the objectives posed by the new orientations and they may still not respond to present needs. The work completed in the Tuning Process has produced tools which can be of help in organizing a 'learning/research' environment conducive to the high level of achievement and the formation of the variety of competences expected today for those holding a third cycle degree.

3 The Tuning Process

The first Tuning project (TUNING Educational Structures in Europe) was born in parallel with the Bologna Process. Its initial inspiration came from the eleven years of collaboration of the key partners and the Tuning Joint Co-coordinators in the ECTS Pilot project, which began in 1989. The Co-coordinators were Julia Gonzalez Ferreras of the University of Deusto and Robert Wagenaar of the University of Groningen, active respectively as member and as central coordinator of the ECTS History Subject Area Group.

The Sorbonne Declaration, and after it, the Bologna Declaration, responded to the realization built over the previous decade that higher education programs were so different in the various countries of Europe that transparency and compatibility would not be possible goals without structural legal and normative change. Working in parallel with the Bologna Process, the first Tuning project was instead a product of the universities' realization that laws might be elaborated, approved and imposed, but without grass-roots knowledge of how to organize the learning experience in a better way, the powerful push towards greater cooperation in European HE would not give the expected fruits.

Tuning was (and is) based on the idea that the paradigm shift from input-based to out-based systems of higher education can only take place beneficially if the practitioners and stakeholders (students, academics and employers in the first place), are involved in elaborating learning strategies and outputs. Tuning also considers that the 'Subject Area' (corresponding to a disciplinary or thematic area in the academic map, and often to single Degree Programs) is the most useful dimension for understanding how degree programs can best be designed,

redesigned and delivered in order to achieve the highest possible degree of quality and relevance. In recent years, Tuning has also addressed the 'sectoral' dimension, creating useful tools for achieving quality in Learning, Teaching, and Assessment in broad domains such as Social Sciences or Humanities.

Tuning owes its success to the fact that it provides a carefully structured platform for expert and committed individuals, working together, to prepare tools for the planning, organization and delivery of quality programs, learner-centred and competence based. Tuning has created a number of important tools for the third cycle, as well as for the previous two. It has shown how to ensure that programs (including third cycle programs) are needed and how to design them in such a way that those receiving the doctoral degree in effect will possess competences of a level that corresponds to their future social and professional role and responsibilities.

The development of the Tuning methodology and of Tuning tools has been possible thanks to a series of large-scale projects, supported morally and financially by the European Commission, and coordinated by the Universities of Deusto and of Groningen. These have required the committed participation of hundreds of universities and several thousand academics, who have both worked together and consulted tens of thousands of students, graduates, employers and other key stakeholders around the world. Today Tuning has been carried out or is being carried out in Europe, Latin America, the United States, Canada, the Russian Federation, Georgia, Africa, Central Asia, China, Japan, India, North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. In these areas too, the central idea of Tuning had been that, alongside the normative changes needed to improve comparability, compatibility and transparency between HE systems, the hands-on knowledge of those who actually teach and learn in universities is essential. Although the Tuning project began in Europe, as a University-driven complement to the Bologna process, it has since been taken up with determination and enthusiasm by countries and continents in most of the other macro-regions of the world.[2]

4 Tuning Methodology

Here we present briefly the Tuning findings and tools, especially insofar as they are applicable to the doctoral cycle. Because not everyone may be acquainted with how the Tuning methodology has developed, we will begin by giving a brief explanation of its five "lines". Subsequently, we will investigate how the Tuning results and tools facilitate designing and delivering useful and relevant doctoral programs.

In order to coordinate and make productive the work of large numbers of people, Tuning began with a seemingly simple series of steps, each of which had to be

[2]For general information on the Tuning Process, in all its stages, see the Tuning Europe website, which contains links to publications and to Tuning projects in all other countries and continents www.unideusto.org/tuningeu.

taken in order to go on to the next one. The first so-called 'line' comprised the 'generic competences'. In some ways, at the beginning of Tuning in Europe, this was the most difficult for academics to palate, and only slowly did they come to realize its full potential. Academics were convinced that their job was to 'transfer knowledge', and they understood this to mean transferring knowledge of the subject matter peculiar to their field to new generations of students: obviously an essential part of their job, but, as Tuning began to make evident, not the only one. According to Tuning, 'generic' competences are as important as those specific to the subject area, and it is essential to provide for ways of forming or enhancing them through well designed study programs and learning/teaching strategies.

In Tuning, one of the most important key words is 'competence'. The concept of 'competence' is both central and pervasive. The definition of competence is very broad, insofar as it includes everything that the learner knows, understands and is able to do, as well as such intangibles as mind-set. Competences belong to the learner, and they are formed or enhanced during the learning process. Tuning recognizes of course that there are many other possible definitions of 'competence', but for clarity it uses the very broad definition given above.

What Tuning calls 'generic competences' are the competences useful in all disciplinary areas to a greater or lesser degree, often called 'transversal skills'. In the line one, academics investigated the importance and the degree of achievement of the generic competences among the graduates of their subject area through a large-scale 'consultation', representing another key step in Tuning. The generic competences constituted one part of the consultation, which involved also the subject specific competences elaborated in the Tuning 'line 2'. In fact, Subject Area Groups (formed usually of at least one academic from the area involved from each country participating in the specific Tuning project) had as their second major task that of formulating a list of about 30 competences deemed particularly important in their area. These lists formed the basis for the next step, organizing the 'consultation'.

The 'consultation' typically involves large numbers of students, graduates, academics and employers, distinguished in the resulting statistics as to stakeholder group and Subject Area Group. The consultations in Europe and other parts of the world have most often been made using on-line questionnaires, although, at times, focus groups or paper based consultations have been preferred. The respondents are asked to consider and give their judgment on a 1–4 scale of the importance of each competence (generic and subject specific) and of the degree to which it is formed during university study. The consultation is considered exactly that, a consulting with the stakeholder in order to understand better their needs and their perception of them: it is not a survey, or a 'popularity contest' among competences. Rather, analyzing the results of the consultation, the Subject Area Groups are able to come to considered conclusions about which competences are most important for learners at different degree levels, and to identify those already satisfactorily formed in present higher education programs, and those which, instead, require further effort.

The formulation of the key competences—generic and subject specific—for a subject area, in conjunction with the consultation, allows the elaboration of draft descriptors for the three cycles, which serve as a basis for the following steps.

Line 3 in Tuning is the calculation of student or learner workload, in time, and in the EHEA is normally associated with ECTS or compatible credit systems. In other parts of the world, work with other systems has led to or is leading to the formulation of 'credit reference systems' by which the various systems in existence can be related to each other and made understandable. The principle of ECTS, as is well known, is that all the time a student/learner normally requires to achieve the expected learning outcome is considered: whether spent in the classroom, in the library, in the lab or studying at home, the rule is 'one hour equals one hour'. In Tuning, the measure of student workload is considered to be one of the most important tools for planning and running higher education degree programs. Student time is considered not a valueless commodity, but rather the most valuable parameter with which we must work. From this point of view, teachers and educators are 'using' a very 'costly' resource, and must use it in the most efficient way possible in order to achieve the expected result.

Line 3 then is one of the bases for the all-essential Line 4, which consists in the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment methods and criteria with the desired competences. This step may seem obvious, but many higher education systems even today in practice are operated as traditional input systems, in which learners are 'taught' subject matter, and then tested on their knowledge using such systems as written exams or essays, without taking into account the duty of forming or enhancing more complex competences and assessing their achievement in an appropriate way. By taking the chosen competences one by one and looking at how each one can best be learned, taught and assessed (using the available time), the Subject Area Groups have been able to formulate very useful 'Guidelines and Reference Points' to share their knowledge with the academic community or communities. By now, many such 'Reference Points' have been elaborated and published, for a great variety of disciplinary or thematic areas; they are freely available on-line in pdf format.

The final Tuning 'line', Line 5, is Quality, and consists of the process of evaluating, designing or re-designing degree programs using the results of the previous lines, monitoring the results and adjusting them in a continuous fashion. The focus is on the quality of the process and on whether the declared learning outcomes are both appropriate and actually achieved.

4.1 Tuning Tools for the Third Cycle

At the very beginning of Tuning, during the first phase of the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project, the third or doctoral cycle was not included, as in fact it was not included in the Bologna Declaration. Subsequently, however, the Subject Area Groups and associated organizations extended their work to the third cycle (the Erasmus Thematic and Academic Networks also carried out the Tuning process for their own subject areas).

As emphasized above, in Tuning—as in the Bologna Process—the third cycle is not considered to be something quite different in nature from the preceding two cycles. The requirements for a doctoral degree in terms of competences, and the means for forming them to the necessary level, can be described using the same language and conceptual tools as for the other cycles. For Tuning, on the one hand, the need to form the key competences required to formulate and carry out meaningful research is not limited to the third cycle. Although at a different level, such a need is recognized and provided for in the first and second cycles as well. On the other hand, the need for broad understanding and important interpersonal and creative skills is not limited to the first two cycles, but is also taken into account for the third cycle, for the reasons indicated above.[3]

As a result, in the above mentioned 'Guidelines and Reference Points',[4] there is much useful material on doctoral programs, which can be most helpful for institutions wishing to improve the quality of their offer, in terms of its relevance for the young PhDs whose talents will be necessary for future society.

The Guidelines and Reference Points for the various subject areas include formulations of specific level descriptors for the third cycle, as well as discussions of how to form the key competences at doctoral level. According to subject area and competence, various 'learning methods' and environments are proposed, including the production of the classical dissertation. The elaboration and defence of the doctoral dissertation is seen as a powerful tool for acquiring research skills and assessing them—as it has always been—but in the Tuning perspective it is only one of the activities to be carried out and assessed.

As an example of the results, we may consider the work of the European Tuning History Subject Area Group, which resulted in a separate consultation with doctoral candidates in all or almost all European countries. That consultation gave a rich harvest of qualitative material as well as quantitative data, and amply confirmed the hypotheses of the Subject Area Group: doctoral students were dissatisfied with their current programs; they thought the programs were exclusively geared to preparation for an academic career which they would not in reality be able to access; they felt they needed to interact more strongly and in a more organized manner with researchers from other related and even non-related disciplines, and that they needed better language and interpersonal skills, project management skills and so forth.

This consultation was carried out in 2006; and after eight years we asked those that participated in the original consultation about their present career status and whether they would answer the questionnaire in the same way as they did originally. Interestingly, their careers turned out to have developed better than they

[3]For a note on the Tuning viewpoint on the third cycle: http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/tuning-3rd-cycle/introduction.html.

[4]For the forty-two Guidelines and Reference Points produced in European Tuning (many more are available for other world regions, all of them of interest): http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/subject-areas.html.

foresaw, a fact which they explain by their participation in the pan-European History Networks: however, at the same time they emphasize that if they were to do their doctoral studies again, they would ask for much more training in communication and interpersonal skills, including working in and leading teams.

4.2 Credits as a Planning Tool for the Third Cycle

Whether or not credits should be used for doctoral cycles is a topic so strongly debated that it has become nearly taboo. The difficulty of discussing credits would seem to be due to two factors: the doctoral 'mystique' (that is that the doctorate is something separate and of a different essence with respect to the rest of higher education), and some misunderstandings, or at least different understandings, about what credits are and how they can be used.

As doctoral programs have evolved, taking into account the requirement that they form a variety of competences alongside that of being able to do high level specialized research, many systems have introduced several or even many 'taught' components into their third cycle programs. In some countries it is usual practice to allocate ECTS credits at least to such components, if not to the entire cycle of doctoral studies. In others, as mentioned, this practice is considered inappropriate.

From a Tuning point of view, credits are a way of measuring the time the learner needs to achieve certain results. They can serve the same purpose for the 'early stage researchers' who are doctoral candidates. They are not earned automatically, simply by punching a time card: the credits are awarded when the learning outcome has been achieved and assessed. Credits—in addition to constituting the basis of the present 'credit transfer and accumulation system'—are very valuable as a planning tool, and they can help HEIs to organize their programs in a rational way. For the third, as for the first two cycles, the fear that students or young researchers will simply 'accumulate' credits in a chaotic manner and cash them in for a degree, is totally unfounded. HEIs are always in charge of what they require for the award of a qualification, and they are in no danger of being forced to award degrees if their conditions have not been met.

Tuning has suggested using credits or credit equivalents to help doctoral candidates and the organizers of doctoral programs to plan and carry out all the required components, including their research and writing of the dissertation in a reasonable time. In fact, in most systems, one concern of doctoral candidates and doctoral program organizers is the number of years, in almost all countries much greater than the legal length of doctoral studies, that candidates require to complete their work and receive their degree. By breaking down the various activities that lead to the final result and distributing them among the available semesters, using credits or 'credit equivalents' as a time and task planning tool, it should be possible to shorten and make more effective the period of years dedicated to the third cycle.

4.3 Enhancing the Quality of Doctoral Mobility

The recently released Erasmus Impact Study (EIS)[5] shows clearly what most people involved in promoting student mobility have known or believed for some time; that is that many key competences for learners are greatly enhanced by a period of study abroad. The EIS actually measures the effects of a mobility period in terms of competences and employability, showing results that are probably even greater than expected. Mobility during the third cycle is not the object of the study: however, it is obvious that many of the competences foreseen by the Tuning Subject Area Groups, and also requested by the doctoral candidates, can be enhanced by mobility. Erasmus+ is open to doctoral candidates; most doctoral programs foresee that possibility of mobility, at the very least to access libraries, archives or laboratories where research relative to their dissertations can be carried out.

As in doctoral studies in general, a careful formulation of the competences to be achieved during the third cycle should lead to higher quality mobility, in which interaction with the scientific culture and traditions of other countries can contribute to forming the high level social and communication competences needed by those holding a third cycle degree today. In order to make explicit these more complex objectives of mobility in an ongoing Erasmus Mundus doctoral program between Europe and Argentina carried out by Tuning partners, a modified Learning Agreement has been proposed and tested. This doctoral LA or 'Doctoral Training Agreement' uses elements of the existing Training Agreements developed for use in Erasmus mobility in order to clarify what activities, in addition to 'research', are to be carried out by doctoral candidate, and in view of the formation of which competences. This is in line with the idea that learners, including early stage researchers, will learn more effectively if they themselves understand and support to the objectives of the learning experience, or in this case the mobility experience.

4.4 Professional and Industrial Doctorates

Both the Bologna Process and Tuning consider that doctorates in any field can be approached using the same general tools. The QF for EHEA is formulated in such a way that the highest degree of expertise, whether in an academic or in a professional sphere, is included. Regulated professions, such as Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Civil Engineering, have been the object of Tuning, and have led to the careful consideration of how the third cycle relates to their subject area, and which competences and at what levels are required, as well as how they are developing or can be developed. As with respect to the other two cycles, Tuning methodology can be utilized to set up competence-based learner centred degree programs for the PhD.

[5]For the Erasmus Impact Study: http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf.

The European Industrial Doctorates (EIDs) which are now being promoted under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie action of Horizon 2020 ask HEIs to guarantee the application of the Salzburg principles and the Principles for innovative doctoral training which apply to all European doctorates. Their particular features derive from the partnership between 'industry' and higher education institutions. Tuning tools can be of great assistance in defining exactly how industry or enterprise and universities can collaborate in a meaningful way to form the required competences for EIDs.

4.5 Fine and Performing Arts Doctorates

The same can be said of doctorates in the fine and performing arts, or the Creative Arts and Sciences as their practitioners now wish to call them. In some countries third cycle studies in these fields do not yet exist, largely in cases in which they have not traditionally been included in Universities, but rather in a separate system of Academies and/or Conservatoires. In this sector too, however, Tuning methodology has allowed Thematic Networks such as inter}artes, Elia and Polifonia to carry out important work in formulating competence-learning-outcome based tools for delivering quality degree programmes. The third cycle has been included in their work, and specific publications have been produced to give guidance.

4.6 Tuning Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks

Tuning has also grouped together a certain number of Subject Area Groups into broad domains, in order to create 'Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks' or SQFs. These so far have been elaborated for the Social Sciences, and, thanks to the HUMART Project, for the Humanities and the Creative and Performing Arts and Sciences. The last two are both included in a publication entitled "Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks for the Creative and Performing Disciplines and for the Humanities".[6] Such sectoral qualifications frameworks include all three cycles. Because they comprise many subject areas in their 'sector', they can be useful in defining internationally referenced outcomes for other related specific fields as well.

[6]For the Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks: http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/tuning-sqf-social-sciences.html.
http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/SQF_for_the_Humanities.pdf.
http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/SQF_for_the_Creative_and_Performing_Discilpines.pdf [sic].
http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/SQFs_for_the_Creative_and_Performing_Disciplines_and_the_Humanities.pdf.

The Tuning SQFs in the Creative and Performing Disciplines and the Humanities have also developed a way of elaborating and presenting the level descriptors for the three cycles using a format compatible with the EQF, while introducing the concept of 'Dimensions', which allow the grouping of key competences in a meaningful and balanced manner.

4.7 Tuning Guide to Creating Degree Programme Profiles (CoRe2)

A further useful Tuning tool was created in collaboration with the ENIC-NARIC Network in order to give guidance to HEIs in formulating "Degree Program Profiles", allowing them to describe according to a commonly understood format the characteristics of a specific program. The work was carried out thanks to the CoRe2 ('Competences for Recognition') project coordinated by the Dutch NUFFIC. The agreed format developed in the project can be used to enrich and clarify the descriptions found in the Diploma Supplement, or for general purposes of communication and presentation of an HEI's offer. The work was carried out by Tuning experts and recognition specialists for three Subject Areas (History, Nursing, and Physics) in order to test the results for Humanities, Natural Science and for a regulated Health profession. The descriptions formulated using the common 'Template' include profiles of third cycle programs for all three pilot subject areas. The descriptions show clearly the roles of the key competences and key learning outcomes in formulating an outcome-based description of a particular program, and can be used by institutions for guidance in describing the specificities of the doctoral training they offer.[7]

5 Concluding Remarks

It is striking how difficult it has proved for various sectors of the academic community to accept that doctoral programs not only can, but must profit from the new viewpoints and understandings that have been built up in the era of the Bologna Process. It is striking that even in the context of international projects, discussions on communalities and differences between doctoral programs among academics still often centre on the technicalities of the defence of the thesis or dissertation, rather than on what leads up to it, and what the award of a doctoral degree actually guarantees. This no doubt is an aspect of what we have call the 'doctoral paradox' or the 'doctoral mystique': the idea that the doctoral defence is something apart, a

[7]For the Erasmus Impact Study: http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf.

kind of rite of initiation, and that it is not necessary to look under the carpet, so to speak, to know that a PhD is a PhD.

In effect, the PhD is still seen by a certain number of professors belonging to what may now be considered 'the old guard', as the bastion of the academic tradition, and as a guarantee of excellence, related to an idea, largely formed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, of what and who an advanced researcher should be. However, the relevance and the quality of third cycle studies—even more than those of the first and second cycle—stand to benefit greatly from a reconsideration and a reorganization based on a clearer idea of what doctoral studies should entail today: in the interests of society, of the economy, and of the persons themselves who are embarking on third cycle studies in whatever field.

The Tuning projects in all parts of the world, starting from Europe, have produced a number of useful results and tools for program design and delivery, for mobility and recognition, and for quality enhancement. These tools are based on a specific methodology which has allowed tens of thousands of people around the world to interact in order to elaborate a new way of approaching Higher Education. The findings of Tuning, and the materials published constitute an important resource for reorganizing doctoral training so that it can better form the competences required by today's world.

Online Resources

Core-project. CoRe2 Guide. http://www.core-project.eu/documents/Tuning_Guide_Publicada_CoRe.pdf.

For the 42 Guidelines and Reference Points produced in European Tuning (many more are available for other world regions, all of them of interest): http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/subject-areas.html.

For a note on the Tuning viewpoint on the third cycle: http://www.Unideusto.org/tuningeu/tuning-3rd-cycle/introduction.html.

For the Erasmus Impact Study: http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf.

For the Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks: http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/tuning-sqf-social-sciences.html, http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/SQF_for_the_Humanities.pdf, http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/SQF_for_the_Creative_and_Performing_Discilpines.pdf, [sic] http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/images/stories/HUMART/SQFs_for_the_Creative_and_Performing_Disciplines_and_the_Humanities.pdf.

The Tuning Academy publishes, on paper and on-line, the peer-reviewed *Tuning Journal of Higher Education* where further material on Tuning and related matters may be found: http://www.tuningjournal.org/.

TUNING Educational Structures in Europe. For Tuning, a good starting point is the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe website, which allows access to all the publications and provides links to the other Tuning Projects worldwide. http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/.

Enhancing the Quality of Research in Europe: Theoretical Perspectives on and Guiding Principles for Researcher Development

Linda Evans

1 Introduction

The observation that: 'Europe does not perform particularly well in terms of truly outstanding research' (European Commission Directorate General for Research 2005, p. 2) was the impetus behind the creation not only of the European Research Area (ERA) and, linked to this, the European higher education research area (EHEA), but also the European Research Council and its funding policy. Set in motion by the Bologna Process, the whole point of these initiatives is to transform Europe into a cohesive, world class powerhouse of the 21st century global knowledge economy. As observed by Maria Helena Nazaré, President of the European University Association:

> Europe needs well-trained researchers to meet the challenges that we are facing. In a time of crisis, it is essential that European universities have the capacity to train new researchers who can think innovatively and creatively; researchers who will form an essential element of overcoming our common challenges through new ideas and intellectual leadership (Byrne et al. 2013, p. 6).

A key objective is to rival the research 'super power' status and output enjoyed by the United States, along with more recently developed research-focused nations, notably China and India (European Commission 2007).

Perceived as a crucial link between the EHEA and the ERA, doctoral education is identified as the cornerstone upon which will be built Europe's future world class research excellence, and since 2003 it has been a key feature within the remit of the Bologna Process. Along with early career research training more generally, it was reprioritised at the Bergen and London ministerial conferences in 2005 and 2007 respectively, while the European University Association (EUA) convened a semi-

L. Evans (✉)
University of Leeds, Leeds, UK
e-mail: l.evans@education.leeds.ac.uk

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nar in Salzburg in 2005 for the purpose of discussing doctoral programmes within the Bologna process. In 2008 the EUA established a Council for Doctoral Education with the remit of contributing to the development, advancement and improvement of doctoral education and research training in Europe. More recently, a set of *Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training*, defined with the help of experts from university associations, industry and funding organisations, was endorsed by the Council in Brussels in November 2011.

The first of these principles reads:

> Striving for excellent research is fundamental to all doctoral education and from this all other elements flow. Academic standards set via peer review procedures and research environments representing a critical mass are required. The new academic generation should be trained to become creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research (European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011).

Yet there is something of a mismatch between the aspirations and vision expressed in this statement and consideration of how European doctoral education may be developed, for the remaining six principles largely ignore issues related to the quality of doctoral research. Indeed, the European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation (2011) emphasises that principle 7, quality assurance, 'is not about the quality assurance of the PhD itself'.

This paper focuses on that evident mismatch. Innovative doctoral training, I observe below, cannot be defined narrowly. With its focus on structures and systems, the Bologna discourse overlooks the vital issue of how we may directly enhance the quality of researchers and, by extension, of research. I argue that the *quality* of European research is crucial to raising its profile and ensuring that the ERA becomes a serious contender within the highly competitive international research community. Our best chances of ensuring that 'the new academic generation may be trained to become creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research' (European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011) lies in understanding how researchers develop, and applying that understanding to specific policy initiatives. Drawing upon my own research-informed theoretical perspectives, I propose a researcher development model aimed at improving the quality of European research, by enhancing the professionalism of future generations of European researchers. I begin by outlining what we know about researcher development.

1.1 Understanding Researcher Development

Researcher development is an embryonic field of research and scholarship. Whilst there is certainly a growing research-informed body of literature relating to research and researchers, and the interaction between the two (e.g. Åkerlind 2008; Coleridge et al. 2004; Drnach 2002; Fairweather 2002; Fox 1992; Fox and Mohapatra 2007;

Hemming et al. 2007; Manathunga et al. 2007; McGrail et al. 2006; Rath 2009; Wimsatt et al. 2009), we know relatively little about how researchers (particularly academics as researchers) conduct their work and what attitudes they hold towards it, and about the nature of their development and the process(es) whereby it occurs. Moreover, research emanating from Europe, and relating to European contexts, is under-represented. Notwithstanding the valuable contributions to the knowledge base made by some Europeans (e.g. Abramo et al. 2009; Deem and Lucas 2007; Gordon 2005; Rees et al. 2007; Vekkaila et al. 2012), the bulk of the literature seems to be supplied by American and Australasian authors.

Tight (2008, p. 596) identifies higher education research, as 'a developing field of study', which 'could be conceived of as a partially explored territory through which a variety of tribes traverse'. We may think of the narrower, more recently emerged and hence more 'developing', researcher development as one such tribe—or, to be more precise, the *territory* of the 'tribe' of researchers for whom it represents a shared interest. Conceptually, it remains unchartered terrain, for the question of what is meant by 'researcher development' has scarcely been scrutinised in a scholarly manner; there is an acute shortage of proposed definitions of researcher development from which to draw consensus or debate differences. Having found no explicit stipulative definition, I have formulated my own conceptual analysis of researcher development (presented in Evans 2011a, 2012, 2014a). Outlining its key elements below, I draw upon my conceptualisation in presenting my argument for how the European research community may better prepare, support and develop its early career—and indeed, experienced—researchers to become, in the words of the European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation (2011): 'creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research'.

1.1.1 Conceptualising Researcher Development

I define researcher development very broadly and succinctly, as: *the process whereby people's capacity and willingness to carry out the research components of their work or studies may be considered to be enhanced, with a degree of permanence that exceeds transitoriness* (Evans 2012). The words 'may be considered to be' are intended to convey my interpretation of any form of development as subjectively determined, in accordance with different needs, interests and agendas; what a university's strategic management team, for example, may consider to be researcher development may be quite different from interpretations of it held by individual academics, or academic development professionals.

My use of the word 'people' rather than 'researchers' is intended to convey inclusiveness: researcher development is not only about making researchers better at researching, it is also about transforming into researchers people representing other constituencies. I choose the word 'capacity' rather than alternatives such as 'skills', 'knowledge', 'attitudes', 'understanding', 'competence' or 'procedures' not only because it encompasses all of these—and more (McIntyre and McIntyre 1999)—but

also because it implies the incorporation of consideration of externally-imposed or externally-derived factors, such as resources or academic freedom or (professional) status, whose improvement or enhancement contributes to defining the contextual dimension of researcher development. My reference to people's 'willingness' to undertake research is perhaps superfluous, given that I interpret capacity as including this, but I include it explicitly to factor in the importance of motivation and attitudinal preparedness.

Researcher development constitutes a specific form of professional development—it involves people's development of the research-related elements of their professionalism and professional lives. It is therefore a sub-category of professional development, so to understand it we need to understand professional development, or human development, more broadly. The complex ecologies of people's lives are becoming increasingly recognised as the fusion of work and personal life; development that occurs in a professional or work context, and that enhances one's capacity to undertake one's work, must inevitably impinge upon or influence the attitudes, viewpoints, knowledge, understanding, and skills that may be applied to one's life as a whole, and vice versa: a point that is implicitly incorporated into Eraut's (2004) thesis on workplace learning. My conceptualisation of researcher development—my understanding of what it is—incorporates this more holistic interpretation of development. Yet, ironically, in order to reveal its component parts, I illustrate this holism through deconstruction.

Deconstructing Researcher Development: A Conceptual Model

My conceptualisation is illustrated in Fig. 1, as a model of my interpretation of the componential structure of researcher development. Essentially it represents a basic deconstruction of researcher development into three main components or elements: *behavioural development, attitudinal development* and *intellectual development*. I define each of these as, respectively: *the process whereby people's behaviour or performance are modified*; *the process whereby people's attitudes are modified*; and *the process whereby people's knowledge, understanding or reflective or comprehensive capacity or competence are modified*. I emphasise that each is

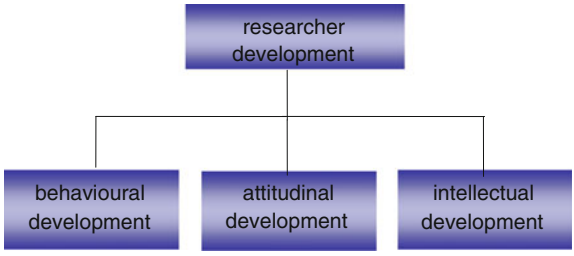

Fig. 1 The componential structure of researcher development: 1st tier components

intended to be located under (or subsumed within) my overarching 'umbrella' definition of researcher development, presented above, and therefore must comply with the conditions implied by it. This means that the term 'modified' should be understood as ameliorative modification—change for the better, which constitutes what may be considered the enhancement of researcher capacity. It also means that the modificatory activity referred to in the three subsidiary definitions must be specifically research-capacity-enhancement-focussed.

The behaviour- or performance-modification that constitutes the *behavioural component* (see Fig. 1) of researcher development refers to the full range of physical activity that forms part of what may be categorised as research activity or performance. This component is about 'doing' research, in all its forms, and at all of its stages. It includes both independent and interpersonal activity. *Attitudinal development* and *intellectual development*, in contrast, involve mental activity.

To better explain each of these three components I identify *their* components, of which I currently identify eleven, in total. These may be thought of as being foci of change, or change dimensions. How these foci of change—these sub-components, or second tier dimensions—relate to the three 'first level' or 'first tier' components is illustrated in Fig. 2. My labels for the second tier components are intended to be generic labels rather than narrowly stipulative. Their vertically-sequenced arrangement is necessitated by space restrictions and does not imply any hierarchical positioning.

Processual change (see Fig. 2) is about change in relation to the processes that constitute people's research practice—how they 'do' or 'go about' the various elements of research-related activity. It is likely to account for a large proportion of

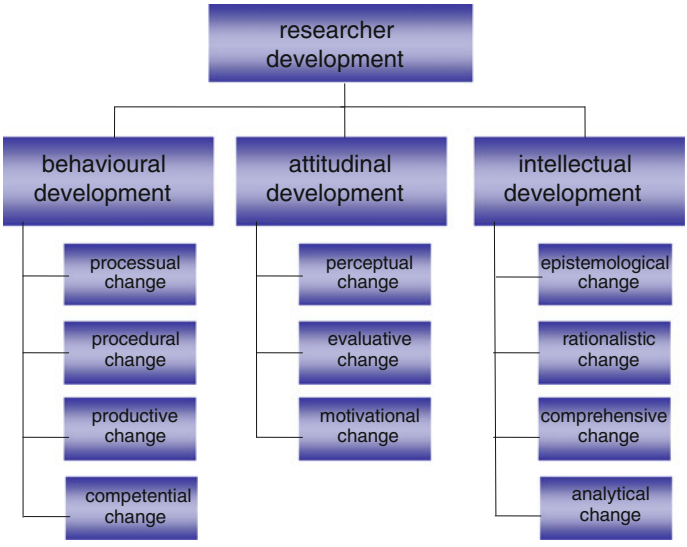

Fig. 2 The componential structure of researcher development: 1st and 2nd tier components

research-related activity, which may be described using rather generic labels (e.g. networking and collegial interaction, writing, reading, speaking, data collection, data display, data reduction) or labels that are, to varying degrees, more specific and that represent more—and different—micro levels of description or categorisation (e.g. testing, observing, comparing, contrasting). *Procedural change* relates to changes to people's capacity to deal with or manage procedures within research-related practice. Often such procedures will be imposed at institutional level or within the wider discipline—such as research bids' applications procedures. Sometimes they may be self-imposed strategic procedures. *Competential change* involves the increase or enhancement of research-related skills and competences, such as the development or refinement of writing, analytical or presentation skills. *Productive change* refers to change to people's research output: to how much they achieve, produce or 'do', such as an increase in published output or research grant applications or increased involvement in conferences, seminars and research networks.

Perceptual change refers to change in relation to people's perceptions, viewpoints, beliefs and mindsets—views about whether, for example, research should have relevance and usefulness and impact upon policy and practice: whether it should be 'applied' or 'pure'; or about whether it may—and should—be done by inexperienced and untrained amateurs/practitioners. Perceptual change relates, too, to perceptions of research as a component of one's work, or a constituent of one's professional identity; as such it incorporates *self*-perception. Drawing upon the etymological derivative of the word 'evaluation', by *evaluative change* I do not mean people's capacity to evaluate, as a research process; rather, the term refers to changes to people's research-related *values*, including not only 'grand' values (such as equality and social justice), but also the day-to-day minutiae of what they consider important: that is, what matters to them, and what they like about, research and researching. *Motivational change* refers to increases in people's motivation and levels of morale and (job) satisfaction in relation to their research activity.

By *epistemological change* I mean change to the bases of what people know or understand in relation to research and researching, and to their research-related knowledge structures, as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks within which they locate and undertake their research activity. *Rationalistic change* is about change to the extent of, and the nature of, the reasoning that people apply to their research practice. *Analytical change* refers not specifically to *data* analysis (which is a research process and therefore falls within the processual dimension), but to change to the degree or nature of the analyticism applied to research-related activity. Finally, *comprehensive change* involves the enhancement or increase of people's research-related knowledge and understanding.

Deconstructed in this way, we see researcher development as a multi-dimensional process or agency, for its constituent parts—its dimensions—become much more apparent. Knowing and understanding the complex ways in which these may fuse together and interact to effect the process whereby people develop as or into researchers is—or ought to be—invaluable to those responsible for promoting this process. We may in fact conceptualise researcher development as

the enhancement of researchers' *professionalism* (just as professional development more broadly may be thought of as the enhancement of people's professionalism Evans 2014b). Researcher professionalism would then be represented as having the same basic componential structure as researcher development, for it is change (for the better) in relation to one or more of its components or dimensions that constitutes researcher development. Researcher professionalism may accordingly be represented as in Fig. 3. This representation differs from that in Fig. 2 only in relation to subtle distinctions in the labels used: researcher professionalism is deconstructed into 'components' and 'dimensions' and researcher development into 'development' and 'change'.

It is important to emphasise—as I demonstrate elsewhere, with examples (Evans 2011a, 2012)—that what constitutes researcher development is not dependent upon change in relation to *all* of the eleven identified dimensions of researcher professionalism shown in Fig. 3. Yet whilst it is conceivable that some identifiable 'units' of individuals' development as or into researchers may involve change in relation to only one dimension, most are likely to involve the interaction of multiple dimensions. Developing European researchers into 'creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers' who are inclined to push 'the boundaries of frontier research'—to repeat once again the vision articulated by the European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation (2011)—may, for example, first involve changing a researcher's *perceptions* of what constitutes frontier research, which may then lead to a change in relation to her or his *values*, as s/he begins to appreciate the merits of undertaking such research, despite its risks. This may then lead to changes in relation to her/his *motivation* to undertake such research and,

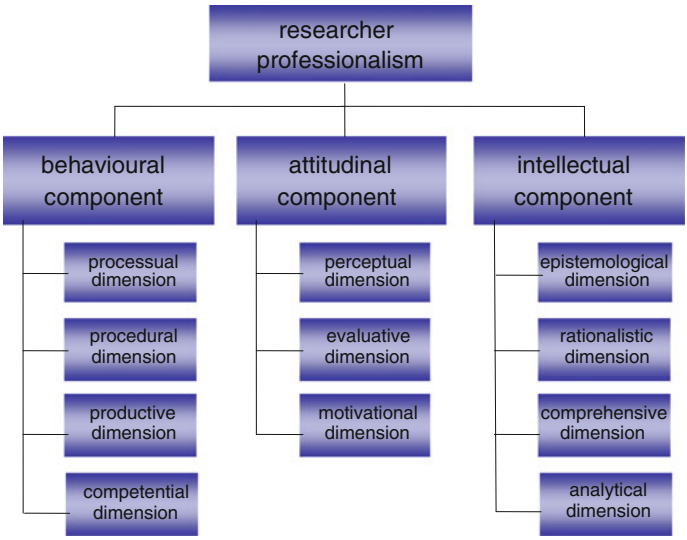

Fig. 3 The componential structure of researcher professionalism

motivated to embrace such changes to her or his research practice, s/he may increase her or his *knowledge and understanding* of what such research involves, which may then lead to her/his enhancing his or her research *skills*, as a result of which s/he is able to change the *processes* within her or his research practice, and/or the *epistemological* basis of her/his research. This hypothetical example illustrates the *kinds of* sequences of change in relation to the dimensions of researcher development that typically occur in each individual 'developee', whereby, as a kind of chain reaction, change in relation to one dimension may kick-start change in relation to another, and then another, and then another, and so on. I do not imply that the example presented above—of perceptual change leading to evaluative change, which then leads to motivational change, which leads to comprehensive change, which leads to competential change, which leads to processual and/or epistemological change—represents the most commonly-occurring change sequence; I simply present it as a heuristic illustration of the multi-dimensionality of researcher development, as indicated in the model (Fig. 2).

My model may be challenged by those who contest the specific form it takes, or whose conceptualisations of researcher development are not aligned with mine. I welcome such criticism and potential divergence; I neither seek nor advocate unanimity, for it is through dialogue and debate that we will enhance our understanding of researcher development and how it occurs, and augment the researcher development-related knowledge base, which, by extension, will advance the field. Such knowledge and understanding should inform the agenda, and any frameworks underpinning programmes, for the education and training of European doctoral—and other early career—researchers. Yet in the absence of critiques or challenges to my work, or of competing conceptual models, I locate my argument below within the framework delineated by my own conceptualisation of researcher development and its implications for developing European researchers. I outline those implications in the next section.

2 Training the "New Academic Generation": Implications of Understanding Researcher Development and How It Occurs

Incorporating consideration of this conceptualisation of researcher development, how then should we tackle the development of European researchers in alignment with the 'striving for excellent research' agenda that promotes 'creative, critical and autonomous' risk-taking in 'pushing the boundaries of frontier research' (European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011)?

We should tackle it not simply and solely by formulating guiding principles to which the European research community is expected to sign up, for whilst they represent a laudable attempt to promote European research excellence, the *Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training* are too vague and general to impact

meaningfully on research quality. Their emphasis on the form and structure of doctoral programmes and development provision for doctoral students, at the expense of consideration of what makes for excellent, frontier research, and how early career researchers may be encouraged to pursue it, represents a short-sighted and somewhat unambitious strategy that reflects simplistic and inadequate understanding of how research cultures are enhanced and strengthened and how researchers develop. Byrne et al. (2013, p. 25) remind us that '[t]he goal of doctoral education is to bring the doctoral candidate from the level of a talented Master's student capable of understanding and reproducing knowledge to a researcher capable of producing knowledge independently'. This kind of development will not be assured simply by agreed structures, procedures and guiding principles.

A key point that I reiterate throughout this paper is that researcher development is multidimensional. As such, it is shot through with complexity, represented by the countless permutations of sequences of dimensions of change that constitute single 'episodes' of individuals' development. A researcher's development throughout her or his entire career is made up of countless such 'episodes', which are generally experienced unconsciously, as fleeting moments that merge and coalesce to the extent of becoming imperceptible. Ask a researcher to recall and trace the stages of her development, and her response will focus on broad-brush, easily identifiable—and quantifiable—events, milestones or achievements; she may observe that she is much better at designing questionnaires than she once was, or better at formulating research questions, and that she has increased her annual output of journal articles. But she is most unlikely—without being prompted and questioned—to identify the minute perceptual, cognitive, rationalistic or competential changes that, collectively and cumulatively, formed the bases of and precipitated the multiple development episodes that, collectively and cumulatively, constituted the development that she is able to recognise in herself.

Yet, irrespective of whether they recognise my specific ideas or accept every detail of my model, those who have an interest in, or are responsible for developing, researchers need to understand something of the process that I call the 'micro-level development' cognitive process of professional—or, more specifically, researcher—development: 'what occurs inside an individual's head in order for her/him to experience a single professional development "episode"' (Evans 2014b, p. 183); '[b]y "micro-level" professional development I mean the individual, singular "episodes" that constitute, as far as they are discernible, the unitary components of "bigger picture", or wider scale, professional development' (Evans 2014b, p. 186). I have identified as a key element of this micro-level development process the individual's —the developee's–recognition of something as a 'better way' of 'doing' things (applying a broad interpretation of 'doing' to include mental as well as physical activity). What I mean by 'better' is: better than what preceded, and than what is superseded by, the newly-accepted and adopted practice: in the context of this paper, research-related practice. By my definition, this represents the manifestation of professional development (Evans 2014b) or, more specifically, researcher development (Evans 2012). Whilst this recognition on the part of the 'developee' of a 'better way' is essential if *attitudinal* or *intellectual* change is to occur, *behavioural*

change is possible to impose upon people, without their recognising it as a 'better way'. Such imposition is evident, for example, in many aspects of academic working life in research-intensive universities in developed countries, such as where neo-liberal policies create pressure on academics to relentlessly pursue research funding. Whilst they may disapprove of such institutional policies, academics may comply with them to the extent of changing their behaviour by applying for more grants. Based on my definition of it, this behavioural change (representing *productive* change—see Fig. 2) is likely to be categorised by university senior management as researcher development. Yet for those academics who do not recognise increased activity on funding applications as a 'better way', it would be categorised not as development, but as deleterious to their research-related practice. So, whilst strategic compliance may represent changed practice that may be considered by some stakeholders to represent change for the better—and hence development—it does not represent the most *effective* researcher development. The latter (effective researcher development) occurs when hearts and minds are won over, and the 'developee', recognising it as potentially a 'better way' for her or him, buys into an initiative. The most effective policies for developing the European researcher—including training initiatives—will therefore be those that s/he is likely to buy into.

2.1 Promoting Recognition of a 'Better Way'

How may those charged with, or responsible for, developing them encourage or promote amongst researchers recognition that something represents a 'better way'? Such recognition relates to various different levels and dimensions of researchers' consciousness, for 'better' is a relative descriptor; it may feasibly address any or all of a range of issues that relate to, *inter alia*, processes, choices and standards in doing research and that address, respectively, researchers' *how?*, *which?* and *to what level?*-focused questions (Evans 2014a).

First, developing as a researcher includes acquiring knowledge and understanding of how things operate in the world of research, and how to 'do' research—including specific processes, such as grant application writing, research design and method, analysis, writing for publication, and becoming acculturated within the disciplinary research community. Illustrating the importance in the researcher development process of recognising what represents a 'better way', and applying this recognition to increasing one's competence as a researcher, is a quote from an interviewee in one of my recent research projects.[1] He reminisces on how, in his earliest days as a junior researcher, he had been supported and mentored by a professor:

[1]The project, *Leading professors: professorial academic leadership as it is perceived by 'the led'* was funded by the UK's Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and was carried out 2012–2013. Its preliminary findings are presented in Evans et al. (2013).

> He [the professorial colleague] taught me to write. …The first thing I ever wrote for him, he came into my room when I'd finished the first draft and – I'm exaggerating when I say, 'He threw it at me'; he didn't – but he gave it me back and said, 'When are you going to learn to write about one thing?' And I was a bit disappointed about that.
>
> …And when he took it away and gave it back to me – rewritten – I could see why. It was *so* much better. I mean, I just had to accept *this was so much better than what I did*. And I guess for, maybe six months, he slowly – I mean, I guess, basically, I improved – but he slowly did less and less in terms of redrafting my stuff, until, after a year or so, he never touched it; he just left it to me (Evans 2014a, pp. 51–52, emphasis added).

Second, an important aspect of development as a researcher involves making choices about a wide range of issues and tasks, such as: which funders to apply to; which calls for tender to pursue and which to let go; which journals to submit to; which conferences to attend; whom to network with; which tasks to prioritise and which to place on the back-burner. Some choices will obviously represent a 'better way' than others for the researcher, as is evident in the comments of an early career academic (an interviewee in one of my research projects (see footnote 1)) who regretted making the choices he had made in relation to what writing projects to focus on, and recognised retrospectively what, for him, might have been better choices or decisions:

> I've found that, as a junior lecturer, I've been offered things that for various reasons I thought I should say 'Yes' to…and that they've probably spread me a bit more thinly than I would've liked to have been. I could probably have said, 'No' to a few articles and chapters…and ended up with four really strong items for the REF[2] (Evans 2014a, p. 53).

Third, in order to determine what, for them, constitutes 'better' research practice, researchers need to know to what level they ought to be working; they need to know what is considered good, and what is considered unsatisfactory practice. A standards or quality yardstick is therefore necessary. This yardstick may take many forms, but its key feature or property is that it illustrates a standard against which individuals may judge their own performance; it facilitates the kind of comparison and introspection that prompts one researcher to contemplate or consider the quality of his or her own research output and recognise that there is room for improvement. Nicolin et al. (2015) illustrate how junior physicists (doctoral students), working alongside senior academics within the interdisciplinary and international European research community within CERN, become acculturated into academic life and, learning what expectations prevail, and what kinds and volume of scientific output constitute the norm, become productive themselves. The CERN community constitutes one

[2]This is a reference to the UK's research Excellence Framework (REF), which is the nationally applied mechanism for allocating government funding to higher educational institutions based upon the quality of their research activity. It occurs every few (5–7) years. For each of a range of subjects in which it engages in research, each university is invited to submit as a key part of its REF entry a profile of research output represented by academics' selected publications (up to four per academic). The quality of this output is judged by peer review subject panels.

form of yardstick for those working within it, but a yardstick may also take the form of knowledge and experience of the norms and standards that prevail in research communities or cultures that are unfamiliar, representing a stark contrast to the cultures within which one has spent one's formative years. An early career Slovak researcher, for example, describes his exposure to such a 'new' (to him) culture during a prolonged visit to the USA—'My time in the USA was in many respects an eye-opener for me' (Beňuš 2015)—and, drawing upon his observations and experiences in a different continent, is able to discern weaknesses in, and to critique, the research and academic cultures and communities in his native Slovakia.

Intellectual or academic leadership may also serve as a yardstick; individuals manifesting such leadership will often be professors and other senior academics and luminaries (Evans 2013, 2014a; Macfarlane 2012) whose work is considered to exemplify high quality research and scholarship. But a yardstick may also be more explicit, taking the form of clearly expressed standards of research performance and researcher professionalism to aim for (rather like professional standards used in other contexts, such as those applied to teachers in England Evans 2011b). It is the latter that I propose as a framework for researcher development in Europe.

3 A "Better Way" for the European Researcher: A Framework for Career-Long Development

'The new academic generation' (European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011) in Europe needs to be aware of the kinds of standards that they should be striving for in relation to the different dimensions of their research activity. On its own, a common agreed set of principles underpinning, and structures aimed at ensuring consistency in, doctoral education across Europe will not generate such awareness. To return to the example of early career academic, Štefan Beňuš, despite such structures and principles being in place in his native Slovakia, without a yardstick against which he was able to evaluate the Slovak system and environment, he would have been much less aware of what he now identifies as their weaknesses and much less equipped to fashion his own development as an academic and researcher in line with internationally recognised standards of good research. He writes (Beňuš 2015):

> According to the Academic Ranking and Rating Agency of Slovakia (ARRA), there were 6144 doctoral students (or early career researchers) registered at state universities funded by public funds, but their output is weak, which is mainly attributed by ARRA to doctoral supervisors' low publication and citation outputs
>
> … . Academic identities in Slovakia must inevitably reflect the weak research cultures that prevail and that yield unimpressively low research by the standards of many other European and Anglo-Saxon research communities … prioritisation of research and academics' research identities go hand-in-hand; where the first is low, the second is likely to be weak.

> … The goalposts that help define the nature of academic work, by indicating direction and focus, are unclearly visible to those academics in Slovak who want to participate in the kinds of activities that academics in other European countries perform with skill and understanding of what is required to succeed. Without such direction and focus, academic identities remain confused and unclear, and their development and expansion are stifled.

As is implied by Beňuš's (2015) perspective, if we are to achieve more consistent development of early career researchers across Europe, and to encourage and promote their 'striving for excellent research' (European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011) and their production of pioneering research, doctoral supervisors—those academics with whom early career researchers interact, who are responsible for guiding and mentoring them, and whose standards of scholarship they are most likely to emulate—need to be aware of, or be capable of achieving, what the rest of the developed world considers good research. There is a need then to indicate clearly to European researchers—not only to the next generation, but also to those responsible for developing this generation—these 'goalposts' to which Beňuš (2015) refers. It is therefore on these that we should be focusing, by working towards agreeing and delineating the features of excellent research and, by extension, the characteristics and qualities of excellent European researchers. In the next section I show how this may be approached.

3.1 Delineating the Characteristics of Excellent European Researchers: 'Extended' and 'Restricted' Professionality

In the 1970s Eric Hoyle published his heuristic models of what he identified as two categories of English schoolteachers: 'restricted' and 'extended' professionals (Hoyle 1975)—terms that have endured through the work of several researchers, along with the basic perception underpinning them: that professional or practitioner groups are heterogeneous in relation to the professionalism they manifest and the quality of their practice. Much of my work has been influenced by Hoyle; I have adapted, extended and applied his models to my work on teacher morale and job satisfaction (Evans 1997, 1998) and professional development, and to my more recent work on researcher development (Evans 2009, 2010, 2013). I draw upon them here to indicate how the European academic community may develop yardsticks against which researchers of all levels of seniority and experience—not only early career researchers—may measure their own achievements and progress towards excellence.

3.1.1 The 'Extended' European Researcher

What defines 'excellent research'? What are the characteristics of researchers who are likely to excel: to go on to become 'creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research' (European

Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011)? What does such a person 'look like', professionally, academically and intellectually? Adopting Hoyle's (1975) terminology, I have labelled such a person the 'extended' professional or the 'extended' researcher (Evans 2009, 2010, 2013). Such a researcher working within the social sciences, I have argued, would typically, *inter alia*:

- conduct highly rigorous research;
- draw upon basic and advanced research skills;
- strive constantly to develop and extend her/his methodological competence;
- adapt established research methods and develop methodology;
- generate and develop theory from research findings;
- perceive research methodology as a field of study in itself;
- strive constantly to apply deep levels of analysis to research data;
- recognise the value of, and utilise, comparative analysis, meta-analysis, synthesis, replication, etc.;
- constantly reflect upon, and frequently revisit and refine, his/her own studies;
- have developed the skill of effective criticism and apply this to the formulation of his/her own arguments;
- publish frequently in 'high ranking', peer reviewed academic journals;
- disseminate ground-breaking theoretical issues and contribute to, and take a lead in developing, discourse on theory;
- recognise the applicability to a range of contexts (including, in particular work contexts) of generic skills developed within and alongside research activity.

Expressed in this form, as a list of typical indicators of what may be considered excellent or exemplary practice (in which respect it parallels the typical form, used in Anglo-Saxon contexts, of presentation of professional standards for specific workforces, such as teaching, e.g. AITSL 2011; DfES 2004; Scottish Executive 2005; Welsh Government 2011), this model of the 'extended' researcher may serve as an aspirational guide and, by extension, as a potential motivator, for researchers at any stage of their careers.

I do not propose this *precise* model, with the specific researcher characteristics or 'standards' listed above, as the one that the European research community should adopt; rather, I present it as indicative of *the kind of* yardstick of researcher excellence that could be formulated and promoted. The detail of the content must be discussed and agreed, so that as many stakeholders as possible will have ownership of it. This could be done at European level, with the aim of agreeing a model of the characteristics of excellent European researchers generally, or it could be specific to disciplines, or to national contexts, or even to institutions. Yet it is also important to present developing researchers with both ends of the yardstick against which they should be evaluating their own practice, indicating not only standards of practice that are considered to represent, but also those considered to fall far short of, excellence. The latter help elucidate the former and encourage introspection on the part of the researcher.

After Hoyle (1975), I therefore present two models, in order to counterbalance an indicative model of the 'extended' European researcher with one of the 'restricted' European researcher (see Fig. 4). It is important to emphasise that the models should be thought of as two extremes of a continuum, rather than as detached and dichotomised, 'either-or', categories. The characteristics are intended to be indicative, rather than exhaustive, lists of what I identify elsewhere as the three components of professionalism and, by extension, of professional development (Evans 2011b) and, more specifically, of researcher development (Evans 2011a). They indicate the behaviour, attitudes and intellectual capacity that any research community (e.g.

The researcher located at the 'restricted' extreme of the professionality continuum typically:	**The researcher located at the 'extended' extreme of the professionality continuum typically:**
conducts research that lacks rigour;	conducts highly rigorous research;
draws upon basic research skills;	draws upon basic and advanced research skills;
fails to develop or extend her/his methodological competence;	strives constantly to develop and extend her/his methodological competence;
utilises only established research methods;	adapts established research methods and develops methodology;
fails to develop basic research findings;	generates and develops theory from research findings;
perceives research methods as tools and methodology as a task-directed, utilitarian process;	perceives research methodology as a field of study in itself;
applies low level analysis to research data;	strives constantly to apply deep levels of analysis to research data;
perceives individual research studies as independent and free-standing;	recognises the value of, and utilises, comparative analysis, meta-analysis, synthesis, replication, etc.;
perceives individual research studies as finite and complete;	constantly reflects upon, and frequently revisits and refines, his/her own studies;
struggles to criticise literature and others' research effectively;	has developed the skill of effective criticism and applies this to the formulation of his/her own arguments;
publishes mainly in 'lower grade' academic journals and in professional journals/magazines;	publishes frequently in 'high ranking' academic journals;
is associated mainly with research findings that fall into the 'tips for practitioners' category of output;	disseminates ground-breaking theoretical issues and contributes to, and takes a lead in developing, discourse on theory;
perceives research activity as separate and detached from wider contexts requiring interpersonal, organisational and cognitive skills.	recognises the applicability to a range of contexts (including, in particular work contexts) of generic skills developed within and alongside research activity.

Fig. 4 Indicative characteristics illustrating the extremes of the 'restricted'-'extended' professionality continuum in relation to research

disciplinary; institutional) may reasonably be expected to manifest. Members of that community will inevitably be spread widely along the length of the continuum. It would be reasonable to expect—with some exceptions—distinguished professors to be located towards the 'extended' end and early career researchers/academics to tend to cluster around the 'restricted' end. Yet the characteristics are intended to represent and reflect individuals' stances and attitudes towards research(ing), rather than simply knowledge that correlates with length of experience or career status, so early career researchers may feasibly be located towards the 'extended' end of the continuum—particularly in relation to attitudinal and intellectual characteristics—while many veteran researchers may remain relatively 'restricted' throughout their careers.

Implicitly echoing my concern that structures and systems alone will not make for enhanced research quality, Byrne et al. (2013, p. 13) argue that 'universities should support quality culture rather than simply develop quality assurance processes'. My argument in this paper underpins and reflects my support for the development of a very specific form of quality culture: a research-focused developmentalist culture. Such a culture within the European research community would militate against inertia or complacency. It would incorporate recognition of the fact that developing as or into an excellent researcher involves continually and relentlessly progressing, in relation to as many characteristics as possible—however these may be defined or expressed—towards the 'extended' end of the continuum. This may occur unconsciously, through what Eraut (2004) calls 'implicit' (workplace) learning. It may also be instigated deliberately, as researchers recognise and accept that where they currently find themselves on the 'restricted'-'extended' continuum does not represent the best they can strive for in terms of achieving their full potential, so they take steps to rectify that. Such is the awareness that a developmentalist research culture in Europe would foster: that *all* European researchers have development needs throughout the entire length of their careers. Our best chance of promoting and achieving what the European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation (2011) calls 'excellent' and 'frontier' research is to foster such a culture within and across the ERA and the EHEA and to acculturate early career researchers into it.

As I imply above, the specific characteristics that constitute the models of 'restricted' and 'extended' educational researchers shown in Fig. 4 are not set in stone; they may be formulated with a particular European research community in mind—tailored to match specific needs or goals—and revised to correlate with current contextual demands. Above all, an explicit model of the 'extended' educational researcher, defined by an agreed set of characteristics and disseminated widely, has the capacity both to present the European research community with an articulated vision of what is currently perceived as researcher excellence—thus signalling the 'right' direction with which it should align itself—and, in doing so, to motivate researchers of all career stages to embrace developmentalism, and embed it within their mindsets, to the extent that it becomes part and parcel of their practice.

Providing the 'unity in diversity' that Bitusikova (2009, p. 23) calls for, such models of 'extended' and 'restricted' researcher professionality could easily serve as a common European model for doctoral education that is truly developmental—a model that is aimed at unifying provision and standards by the application of a common delineation of quality that would be the focus of researcher development. It would help combat problems, such as those identified by Beňuš (2015) above, and those identified by Krasniewski (2008) of a dilution of the quality of doctoral study applicants in Poland resulting from rapid expansion of higher education, and, in particular, of doctoral programmes. The analyticism and reflectivity that the models promote are intrinsically development-focused, whilst being directed towards improving quality and raising standards. Yet the generic nature of the research-related skills and competences intended to be developed transcends specific epistemological and methodological traditions, stances and allegiances. 'Extended' professionality is primarily quality-related, rather than substantively-determined.

Only by developing and promoting a yardstick for researcher excellence will Europe have any chance of success in enhancing the quality of its research and in its attempts 'to harness more of the world's best minds to motor the European economy' (Robertson 2008, p. 10). Only by such a focus on research quality will we foster a European community of 'researchers who can think innovatively and creatively; researchers who will form an essential element of overcoming our common challenges through new ideas and intellectual leadership' (Maria Helena Nazaré, cited in Byrne et al. 2013, p. 6) and of researchers who are 'creative, critical and autonomous intellectual risk takers, pushing the boundaries of frontier research' (European Commission Directorate General for Research & Innovation 2011).

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The Quality of Doctoral Training and Employability of Doctorate Holders: The Views of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers

Filomena Parada and John Peacock

1 Introduction

In the past decade, a number of issues, such as the growth in the number of doctorate holders, and the inclusion of the 'third cycle' in the Bologna process, contributed to transforming doctoral education in Europe (AAUP 2009; Sursock and Smidt 2010). The number of permanent academic or research staff has not kept pace with the growth in doctoral candidates. The doctorate can no longer be regarded as training for an academic career, and ever more doctoral candidates have to seek alternative careers.

The question then arises as to whether or not the process of completing a doctoral degree is, or can be, valuable to the non-academic sector, to society or to the individual doctorate holder (LERU 2010, 2014). Doctoral training must ensure that doctorate holders are better equipped to pursue non-academic careers, that those considering pursuing a doctorate are aware of the situation and the realities of the academic career path, and that the non-academic sector understands the purpose and value of the doctorate.

These are issues of pressing concern to EURODOC, The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, which advocates for an improvement

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F. Parada (✉) · J. Peacock
EURODOC, The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: filomenaparada@gmail.com

J. Peacock
e-mail: vicepresident@eurodoc.net

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in the quality of development opportunities available to researchers. EURODOC represents both doctoral candidates (DCs), those researchers who are working towards a doctoral degree, and junior researchers (JRs), the larger group that includes all researchers who are not yet fully independent (European Commission 2011). EURODOC works to inform policy makers and other stakeholders of the situation facing early career researchers (ECRs).

In order to fulfil its role, EURODOC annually surveys its members to learn about the situation in different countries across Europe, and gathers other input on various issues from its members on a regular basis. In 2011, EURODOC published the results of EURODOC Survey I, a major survey of 8900 doctoral candidates across Europe (Ates et al. 2011). The survey shed light on a number of the issues mentioned above.

In this paper we will review the results of the survey, and EURODOC's other internal surveys and policy statements, with respect to these topics. We will discuss the issues this raises and make suggestions concerning:

1. The promotion of quality and the improvement of quality assurance in doctoral training and supervision;
2. How to ensure a successful transition from being a doctoral candidate to a doctorate holder. Specifically, the need to ensure that doctoral training programmes enhance the competencies necessary to succeed outside academia, and that employers, especially in the non-academic sector, understand and recognise the value of the doctorate.

2 EURODOC Survey I: Background

According to recent EUROSTAT data, in 2011 there were nearly 750,000 doctoral candidates in the EU-27 (EUROSTAT 2014). The number of new doctoral graduates during the last decade increased almost 60 % (Doherty and Chasége 2013). In OECD countries, the number of doctoral degrees being awarded rose by 38 % between 2000 and 2009 (Auriol et al. 2013). Between 2005 and 2010, the total number of R&D personnel measured as full-time equivalent (FTE) grew on average 2.6 % a year in the EU-27 (EUROSTAT 2013).

These numbers not only show the recent expansion of higher education systems, but also make more visible the situation of DCs and doctoral holders, especially in what concerns the structure, purpose, relevance, and cost of the doctorate. Additionally, the growth in doctoral training raises numerous questions concerning ECRs employment.

In 2008, EURODOC in cooperation with INCHER launched an online Europe-wide survey focusing on the situation of DCs and JRs (Ates et al. 2011). For EURODOC, the survey constituted the perfect means for identifying the main issues affecting ECRs across Europe, and for collecting evidence-based information capable of influencing political decision-making.

With the survey, EURODOC intended to develop a database of information on the exact circumstances of DCs and JRs working in Europe, specifically concerning (1) their real situation when it comes to employment circumstances, social benefits and overall working conditions, and (2) the differences between European countries, cultures and models of doctoral training, and what can one learn from such differences.

2.1 Sampling and Procedures

Survey participants comprised all kinds of researchers working in Europe that were in the process of acquiring, or had recently acquired, their doctoral degree. Participants conducted their research in universities, public research centres, industry, or the private research sector. DCs from more than 30 countries answered the survey. However, only data from 12 countries could be declared statistically significant: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

2.1.1 Sample

The final sample comprised 7561 participants. Respondents held the status of students enrolled in doctoral programmes or of academic and research assistants working on their doctoral degree (or equivalent). Efforts were made to match respondents with the general population, in terms of variables such as gender, field of study and academic status.

70–90 % of the respondents reported being between 26 and 35 years of age, although in some countries 23–31 % declared being older than 36. Most survey participants had no work experience prior to their doctoral training, some had work experience in the academic sector, and others in the private or public non-research sector. Sciences (e.g., physics, biology) were the most common fields in which participants were conducting their research, while social sciences, business and law were the second most common.

Most respondents lived in civil partnership, regardless of the official nature of that arrangement. The lowest rates of single respondents came from Belgium, while France had the highest rates. The majority of the respondents had no children.

2.1.2 Data Collection and Data Treatment Procedures

Procedures were chosen in order to guarantee data comparability, and their potential generalisation. A cross-sectional design using an internet-based survey was used, which ensured a quick delivery by simultaneously contacting a large number of respondents, and covering a wide geographical area. Online data collection took place from December 2008 to May 2009.

The questionnaire included 77 questions and took about 30 min to complete. It included questions about qualification requirements, career paths, funding schemes, models of training and supervision, working conditions, mobility, and the outcomes of scientific work.

Some trends in participants' answering patterns can be seen as an indicator of ECRs employment situation, work conditions and access to social benefits. However, caution is required in order to avoid an over-interpretation of results. Analyses were directed towards description, and not towards interpretation.

3 EURODOC Survey I: Findings

Only survey findings pertaining to the topics addressed by the present work will be taken into consideration. Therefore, we selected rather specific results, and focused on overall results instead of country or gender specific comparisons. Additional information coming from other (internal) sources of information (e.g., EURODOC's annual questionnaire, policy papers) will be used to complement and reinforce survey findings and conclusions.

3.1 Type of Supervision and Training Opportunities: The Perceptions of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers

Chapter D of the survey report focused on training and supervision, and its findings shed light on two critical questions: Do doctoral researchers have access to training opportunities when they need or require them? and Do they consider the supervision they receive adequate? Training opportunities were defined in the broadest possible sense. They may refer to, for example, taking courses on specific subjects focusing on the theories or methods required to do the research, as well as on research ethics. They could also refer to the acquisition or development of diverse skills such as transferable skills, and language or ICT skills. Information from chapter E concerning degree structure and DCs rights is also included.

3.1.1 Access to Training

Respondents usually reported having received training during their doctoral degree. However, the proportion of 'no' answers wasn't negligible, reaching 20–30 % or higher (Fig. 1). No information was collected on respondents' assessment of the quality or the type of training received.

One of the most remarkable things the data revealed concerned the diversity in the level of information respondents had about time frames for thesis completion.

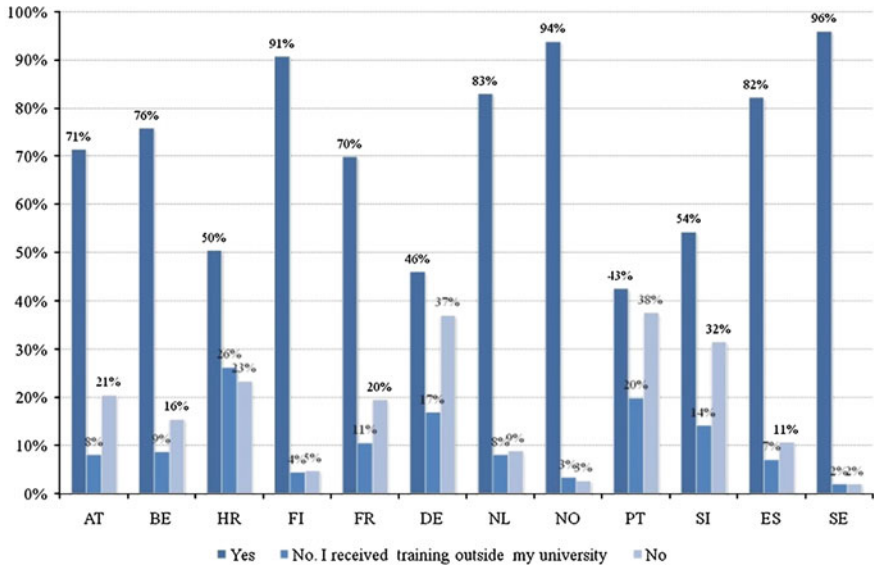

Fig. 1 Did you receive any kind of training (e.g. courses) at your university during your doctorate? (By country). *N = 6611, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

Although most countries appeared to have regulations establishing minimum and maximum completion times, some exceptions were found. For example, while a high percentage of respondents in Slovenia revealed that deadlines exist, 23 % said that a maximum time does not exist, so long as the situation is authorised by the supervisor.

In some countries, the large majority of respondents mentioned not knowing if such minimum time requirements existed (Fig. 2). Similar results were obtained when asking participants if they were aware of the existence of a maximum time frame for thesis completion and, if such a time frame existed, what it would be.

No information was collected allowing to better understand differences in time frames for doctorate completion. The diversity characterising the ways in which doctoral degrees are operationalised (e.g., institutional types, legal frameworks, disciplines, academic and scientific cultures) helps to account for these findings. The same applies to data collected through EURODOC's annual questionnaire. There is a huge variability in situations depending on country, region, university or type of doctoral programme. For example, some DCs are expected to teach, and, depending on the type of programme, they are expected to take courses, while for others these are not requirements. More information is needed to better understand this variability and how it impacts time frames given by institutions.

Consequently, there is no such thing as a typical DC, doctoral holder or doctoral programme (Halse and Mowbray 2011). This situation, although having the advantage of leading to convergence without standardisation within the European

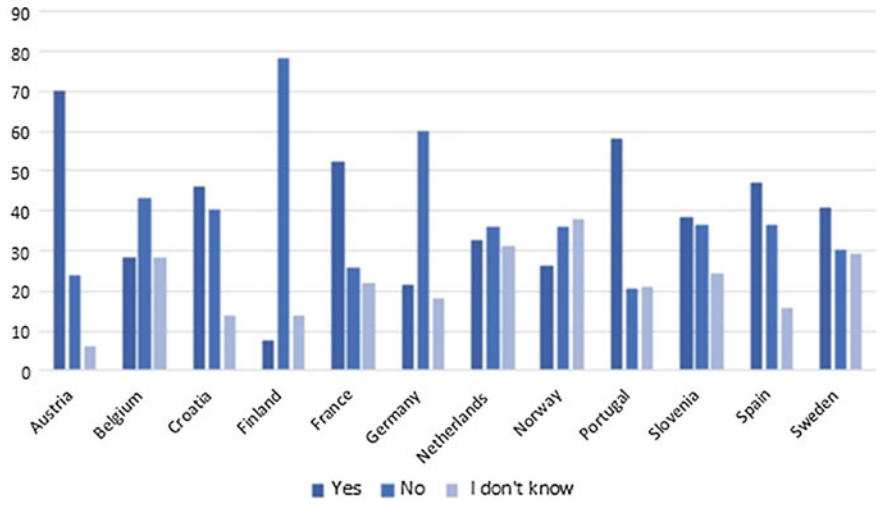

Fig. 2 Is there a minimum required time for completing your doctorate? (By country). *N = 5865, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), challenges stakeholders' ability to differentiate between programmes, degrees specificities or DCs profiles. The same seems to apply to DCs' ability to know and read the system.

Further information is required (i) to better understand why so many DCs seem to be unaware of the structure of their degree, and (ii) concerning the proportion of DCs that complete their doctorate within the allocated time frame. According to information provided by EURODOC's member organisations, there is either no statistical data available, or the resources they have point to somewhat low completion rates. A clearer understanding of why this happens and how it relates to DCs' knowledge about their responsibilities and rights would also be interesting.

3.1.2 Access to Training: General Recommendations

Understanding the structure and the value of the doctorate, in particular the benefits to the doctorate holder, gets complicated when the doctoral degree is such a diverse thing. This is true not only for DCs starting their doctoral training, but also for employers outside academia looking to understand how they should consider the DC's experience. Of course, diversity may itself be useful and no one proposes a one size fits all approach. Making strict rules dictating the structure of all doctorates is not always reasonable.

Even if doctorates differ, it is still important that a clear knowledge of its structure exists. What to expect from one's training, and what career paths to pursue as a doctorate holder are not always clear. Many DCs start a doctorate hoping to pursue an academic career, and many JRs seem to persist in that same hope. Thus,

in order to better prepare prospective DCs for the realities of a research career, clearer and more complete information on what the job involves should be provided. This includes such basic information as the time frames for completing the degree.

Not knowing time frames and activities attached to the completion of a doctorate is indicative of a larger problem of a lack of information. We recommend that full and complete information should be available from the beginning. Where doctoral positions are advertised there should be clear information on the content, duration and other conditions of the job. New DCs can be provided with further information, making the full conditions of their relationship with the university and the requirements to complete the doctorate transparent. This could be done through personal meetings, mentorship, and other initiatives such as welcome days for new DCs.

3.1.3 Training Opportunities

Across Europe, educational systems and training practices at the doctoral level tend to be diverse. The nature of the programmes varies considerably, with some being mandatory, some being voluntary and some being a mixture of both. This varies even within institutions as individual programmes are often constructed differently. The same applies to the type of training programmes offered. For example, while training on 'theories of my subject' was predominantly mandatory, training in 'methods of my subject' and 'transferable skills' was predominantly voluntary.

Overall, survey respondents considered that their training contributed to the improvement of their skills in six of the seven domains assessed: theories/methods of my subject, transferable and language skills, research ethics, and information technology. For theories and methods of my subject, a clear increase in perceived level of competency was identified. Responses changed from a majority at the average level to a majority at a high to very high level.

Teaching skills were the exception. Although some increase in participants' sense of competency could be noticed, responses tended to remain at average. This appears particularly relevant when considering that some universities routinely require DCs to teach.

Satisfaction with the training received varies across countries and types of skills. Although some exceptions were observed, most respondents felt satisfied or moderately satisfied with their training. However, for 'transferable skills' the picture is more diverse: some participants are satisfied, while others feel only moderately satisfied. In other cases (e.g., Croatia, Spain) participants responses were scattered, being difficult to clearly identify a response pattern.

Again, EURODOC's annual questionnaire points to a large diversity of situations, and to the impact such diversity has on the types of doctoral programmes offered. However, following the Bologna process, a number of reforms began to be introduced, aimed at reviewing the structure of doctoral degrees and the quality of training (e.g., holding a Masters degree as a prerequisite for a doctoral program;

establishing a more structured or standardised approach to doctoral training by creating doctoral schools; listing skills or learning outcomes DCs are expected to develop; connecting national education systems with the European Qualifications Framework; implementing monitoring mechanisms).

Previous findings and EURODOC's internal data document not only doctoral programmes' variability, but also DCs and JRs own recognition that they need a thorough and broad set of skills. This agrees with LERU's (2010) recommendations that researchers' training should be directed towards the development of a unique set of high level skills, and determined by the interplay between professional research experience and personal development.

However, access to training opportunities and satisfaction with training appear to be areas in need of improvement. Training, either formal (through organised programmes) or informal (done on the job), is of importance for ECRs, allowing them to develop the skills they need for their careers (LERU 2014). Thus, the quality and breadth of the training should not be neglected.

3.1.4 Training Opportunities: General Recommendations

Our data indicates that a diverse range of training opportunities are available to DCs, but this varies between countries and institutions. To improve the overall standard of doctoral training, more work needs to be done to assess the effectiveness of individual training programmes. Survey responses indicate varying levels of quality. For some types of training this varies by country, while for others there appears to be no pattern.

Results suggested that where training was provided, the mandatory component was more focussed on developing knowledge needed to successfully conduct research (such as 'theories of the subject'), while other skills that might promote personal development or be more useful outside of academia were more often voluntary. There is thus a need to ensure that doctoral training is not exclusively focussed on research training, but takes a broader view. Doctoral training adjusted to today's knowledge society should provide ECRs with a context for the development of their research that is international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral.

More information is needed about which institutions promote DCs training, what is the structure of the programme (e.g., courses to be taken, duration of training) and DCs perception of the quality and usefulness of the training. The same applies to understanding the types of programmes and courses DCs consider most relevant to their career development, within or outside academia. In particular, the types of skills they consider most useful and would like to see improved.

3.1.5 Supervision Agreement, Quality and Feedback

In the early stages of their training, DCs often benefit from a more structured relationship with their supervisors, which can be established by means of a formal

agreement, where the roles of each party are defined. Most survey respondents indicated having some form of agreement. The only country in which this was not the norm was Germany, while in Austria almost the same amount of participants responded positively and negatively (Fig. 3).

However, in many countries up to 20 % of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the possibility to have such a contract. Different explanations can be provided for the previous results: perhaps participants' inexperience or lack of knowledge about university regulations accounts for the percentage of 'I don't knows'. The same applies to the possibility of no such normative regulations being foreseen at the regional or national level. Nonetheless, it appears that recommendations included in the European Charter of Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (European Commission 2005) are not being followed.

Responses indicated that the majority find their supervisors supportive or very supportive when planning or reviewing their training. All DCs regarded the feedback they got from supervisors as useful or very useful. This usefulness in feedback indicates the importance of providing good supervision, and of having a supervisor who is available to offer advice. If taken together with answers to previous topic (supervision agreement), these findings point to the importance of building positive, constructive relationships between supervisors and supervisees. However, as a rule, supervisors don't seem to offer (appropriate) career guidance to their supervisees (Puljak and Sharif 2009). Also, we need to know more about ongoing debates concerning the (dis)advantages of team supervision (instead of individual one) as a

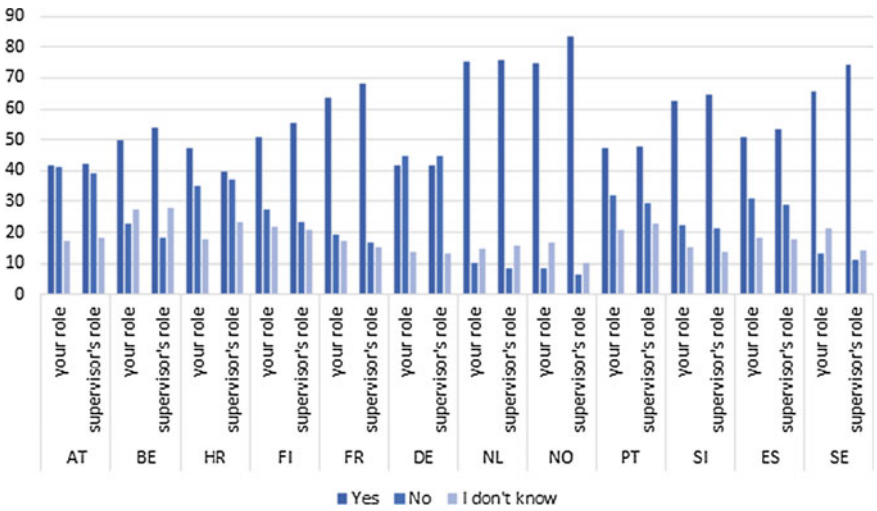

Fig. 3 Does any kind of formal, binding agreement exist between you and your supervisor (such as a contract or university regulations) that defines your role/the role of your supervisor? (By country). *N = 6241 (your role)/6223 (supervisor's role), valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

preferable option, and of supervisors having an international profile, and how it affects ECRs.

The notion of improving support for early career faculty is not always well received by senior faculty (Foote 2010). To some extent, it is possible to consider that survey responses reflect a similar understanding. While participants appeared to be satisfied with supervisors' level of expertise in their field of research, a mixed pattern of answers was identified for the degree in which supervisors were able to provide regular guidance and advice (Fig. 4).

One thing that may help explain these results is variability in the ratio of supervisors to supervisees (Fig. 5). Some countries reported an average of 1–2 supervisees to supervisors, while others reported an average of 8–9. A small percentage of respondents said that their supervisor supervised 20 or more supervisees. These findings support Foote's (2010) assertion that factors such as the department in which ECRs work or had their first job, and the advisor picked can have a substantial impact on ECRs career, either enhancing or hindering their access to (learning, employment) opportunities.

Supervision agreement, quality and feedback: General recommendations

Recognising the relevance of supervision for ECRs, EURODOC published a charter for supervision and training (EURODOC 2004). Many of the recommendations here can be traced to that document.

Supervision is an important component of a successful doctorate, but the quality of supervision varies greatly. Although respondents generally reported average to excellent supervision, a sizeable percentage reported their situation as poor. Supervisors were generally rated most highly in terms of their ability to help DCs implement their research, but much more poorly for the general support and guidance in, for example, helping to develop a career plan.

In order to improve the overall quality of supervision, more focus should be placed on training supervisors on the needs of ECRs. We recommend continuous,

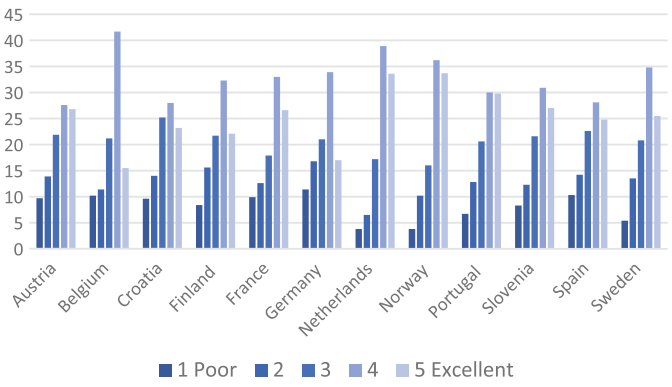

Fig. 4 How do you feel your supervisor is fulfilling his/her role in providing regular guidance? (By country). *N = 6149, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

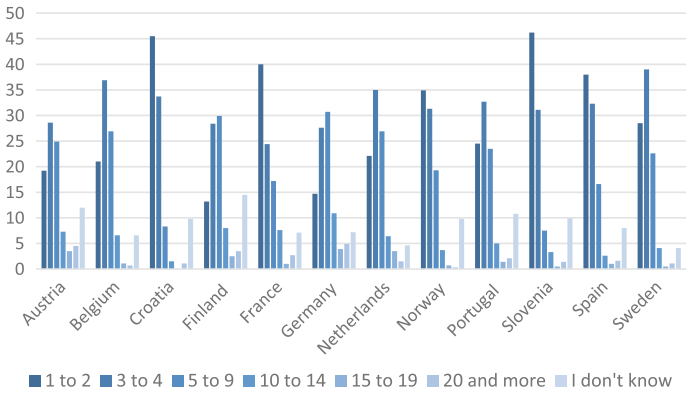

Fig. 5 How many DCs does your supervisor supervise in total? (By country). *N = 6323, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

mandatory training be provided for supervisors, and mentoring for new supervisors. Having such regular training will help to ensure that standards are maintained.

One other important consideration is the number of supervisees each supervisor is expected to supervise. More supervisees will affect the supervisors' ability to understand the individual needs of each supervisee and the specifics of their work. The workload of supervisors needs to be monitored, and should allow sufficient time to regularly meet with each person they supervise, discuss their individual situation, and provide feedback and guidance.

A plan for supervision and monitoring of supervision can be built into research funding where employment of a DC or JR is envisaged. We recommend that a formal written agreement is drawn up, which spells out the relationship between supervisor and supervisee, and the expectations of each party. An agreement should also be reached on a feasible plan for the project, one that details a timetable and key (research, future career) objectives to be achieved. Such a plan should take into account all other (teaching, administrative) obligations the ECR may have.

3.2 Current Research Framework and Future Career Paths: Assessments Made by Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers

Chapter F of the survey report aimed to understand the outputs DCs and JRs were expected to produce as a result of their research, and the different types of activities they engaged in during their training. Information from other chapters (e.g., chapter B on career paths) will be included and complemented with data collected from EURODOC's questionnaire. This will provide us with additional insights into participants' assessments of their current framework as researchers, and expectations towards their future careers.

3.2.1 DCs and JRs Status and Funding

At least two thirds of the respondents declared having a full-time student status. However, in several countries participants also declared being in paid employment, often with a fixed-term employment contract (Figs. 6 and 7). No information was provided on the type of employment, only on current employment status. Also, a large proportion of respondents said some of the work they were doing was not part of their contract.

From EURODOC's annual questionnaire, it is possible to conclude that a huge variety of situations and funding schemes exist across Europe. DCs and JRs can access funding by applying to many different sources (e.g., funding schemes promoted by universities or other research promoters, funding schemes promoted by funding organisations or agencies, fellowships, self-funding through an employment contract within or outside academia). Additional information is required to better understand the specifics of each of these funding sources, as well as their benefits and disadvantages for DCs and JRs, especially concerning their current living and family situation and their careers.

Respondents' answers suggest that it is not clear for them if they are allowed to use findings from their research or how this would be possible, regardless of being in a collaborative research project or not. Nonetheless, about one third of the respondents engaging in collaborative research projects referred not being able to use their findings (Fig. 8). Not only does this goes against what the Charter and Code recommends, but it also may have some negative impact on DCs and JRs career prospects. Being able to disseminate one's research results is a crucial means of gaining visibility inside and outside academia.

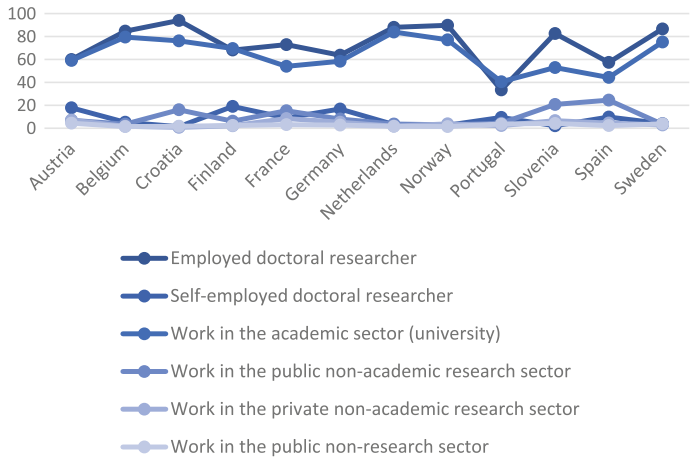

Fig. 6 What is your current employment situation as a doctoral researcher? (By country; multiple response—Part I). *N = 7031, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

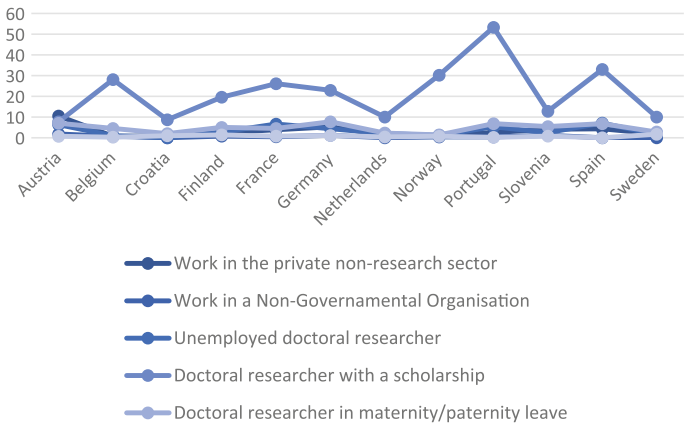

Fig. 7 What is your current employment situation as a doctoral researcher? (By country; multiple response—Part II). *N = 7031, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

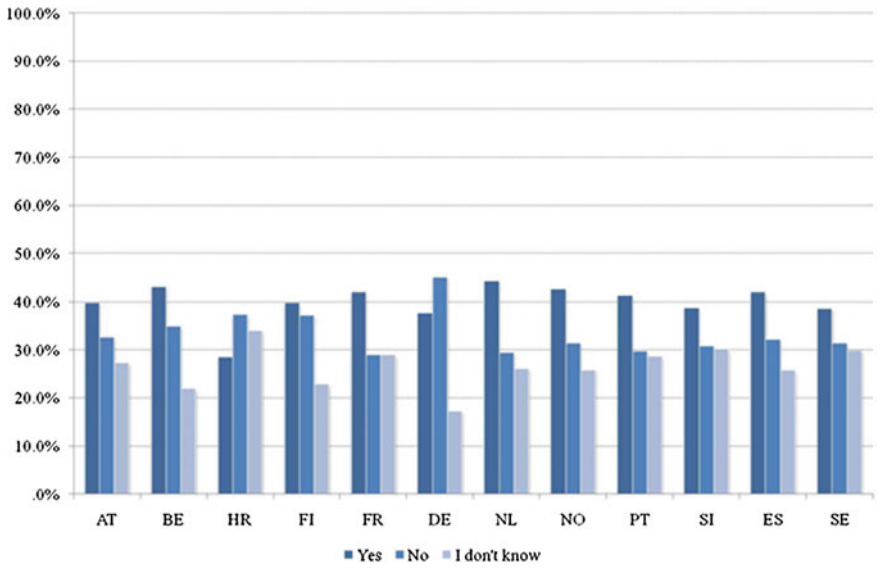

Fig. 8 If you are in a collaborative project, are there clear agreements on using the project findings? (By country). *N = 3470 valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

The high rates of survey participants declaring no awareness of the Charter and Code (Fig. 9) may help to better understand these findings, which are largely corroborated by answers to EURODOC's annual questionnaire. Data collected through the questionnaire portrays a mix of situations when it comes to our member

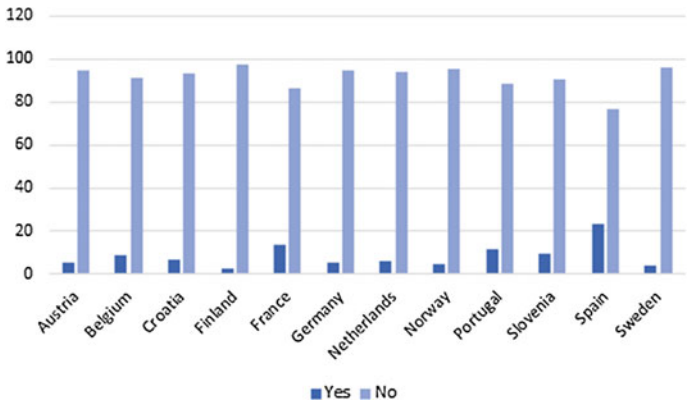

Fig. 9 Are you aware of the European charter for researches/code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers? (By country). *N = 7024, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

organisations' knowledge or actions taken towards its dissemination, and assessment of the steps given by their countries' institutions concerning its implementation. Lack of resources (human or otherwise) is one of the explanations provided.

3.2.2 DCs and JRs Status and Funding: General Recommendations

We recommend that more be done to raise awareness of the Charter and Code among researchers themselves. The Charter and Code has previously been endorsed by EURODOC and its implementation is one of the organisation's stated goals. The actual implementation of these widely agreed upon principles would go some way to help improving the general conditions of researchers. Raising awareness of the principles in the Charter and Code among researchers would work to empower them to seek their implementation in their own institutions, and so contribute to a more effective construction of ERA and of the EHEA.

The high numbers of doctorate holders produced by the system can lead to a situation where ECRs are seen as an expendable resource. Within academia there are not enough jobs for everyone, and renovation is taking place at a slow pace. Thus, of vital concern is the need to recognise DCs as full staff members of universities and research organisations, full members of the academic community, and have their rights recognised accordingly. In other words, DCs should be acknowledged as researchers and as professional workers, with a clear employment contract offered to all. The work DCs and JRs are expected to do should be made clear, and should be agreed upon, at the beginning.

The increase in doctoral graduates and programmes has made it necessary for doctorate holders to consider other, non-academic, employment pathways. This can

be challenging for employers, who often find it difficult to differentiate between different programmes, doctoral degrees and candidates. Thus, to have their experience as researchers formalised as work could be highly beneficial.

3.2.3 Activities and Academic Work Outputs

The survey indicated that DCs were engaged in many different activities, from doing research, to teaching, to administrative work. The amount of time spent on each activity varied greatly among respondents. For example, some participants reported spending more than 21 h per week on teaching, while others reported doing no teaching at all. Data also indicate much diversity in the conditions of each of these activities, including whether or not DCs were entitled to pay for teaching.

Taking courses is another activity that usually occupies respondents' time. Like for teaching, there are participants reporting more than 21 h per week of courses to attend, and others that don't have to attend courses. The same response pattern was observed for administrative tasks. Often, these activities have no relation to the doctoral research.

Engaging in other tasks or activities (planning new research projects, choosing collaborators, writing grants, determining authorship, organising panel/conferences, deciding about institutional policy) may also take a considerable part of participants weekly work hours (more than 21 h per week). Nonetheless, except for planning new research projects, most participants declared not being involved in this type of activity. As for writing grants, although a mixed pattern of responses prevails, the number of participants answering 'no' outweighs the 'yeses'.

The pattern of activity engagement just described was cross-sectional to the whole sample. In other words, most DCs are required or expected to perform a wide variety of activities while doing their training. The nature, quantity, and type of engagement required also vary significantly, not only across countries but also between specific research contexts. Their non-engagement in activities such as writing grants, organising panels/conferences, or deciding about institutional policy may be understood either as a good practice example (so that DCs may commit entirely to their thesis), or as a lost opportunity (for networking, for acquiring skills and experience).

The majority of respondents declared allocating either an average or a substantial amount of time to writing their thesis; the same applies to research relating to their thesis. However, when it comes to publications a large majority of respondents report not having yet delivered a single output (e.g., articles in national/international journals with or without peer review, articles in proceedings, scientific monographs, reviews, online articles, patent applications). It would be interesting to understand why participants' overall productivity was so low. Perhaps the amount of time required by all the other activities prevents them from devoting more time to publishing. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that at the time of data collection many of our respondents were at the early stages of their doctorate, not having yet

enough material or expertise to produce a publication. More information is required in order to answer these and other questions our findings highlight.

Overall, the findings described above seem to portray a rather encouraging picture of the type of experience DCs have during their doctorate. DCs appear to have the opportunity to acquire expertise in several domains directly related to their future careers, while combining it with the work on their research or thesis/dissertation. However, no information was provided on the degree of autonomy DCs and JRs were given for determining the scope, direction and progress of their research. In addition, differences seem to exist between DCs in terms of the amount of time devoted to each of the activities, with some having access to a variety of experiences and opportunities, while others don't. The same applies to several other aspects determining their general working conditions (e.g., pay, access to resources and facilities, opportunities for networking and career advancement, access to funding).

3.2.4 Activities and Academic Work Outputs: General Recommendations

General agreement exists around the idea that the system is complex and heterogeneity (of situations across countries, universities, fields of research, funding schemes) prevails, so before starting to take any specific measures a more comprehensive understanding of its functioning and organisation is needed. As mentioned, there are several topics in which more information is needed (e.g., DCs and JRs autonomy; total amount of weekly work hours by country, field of research, university/department; the way in which these findings relate to previous findings, such as quality of supervision or knowledge about/existence of a formal agreement with supervisor).

However, available information also allows us to make several recommendations, much in line with what we have suggested elsewhere. For example, the crucial role of the supervisor and of the quality of supervision ECRs have access to. Not only is it important to provide DCs and JRs with a variety of experiences to expand and diversify their skills, but it is also necessary to ensure that the amount of time allocated to these other activities does not jeopardise ECR's ability to be productive. Thus, it is important to establish clear, explicit agreements (or contracts) at the onset of the doctorate or of the post-doctorate, which would allow DCs and JRs to know precisely what they are expected to do. These agreements should also ensure that the activities and outputs DCs and JRs are expected to produce are relevant not only to their supervisor or department, but also to their own career.

More relevance should be given to aspects such as opportunities for advancement, level of responsibility and the degree of independence offered to ECRs. To a large extent, such aspects determine DCs and JRs satisfaction with their jobs. As our findings seem to indicate, DCs and JRs are often expected to put in long working hours. At the same time, it is not uncommon for them to experience limited autonomy in carrying out research projects and some difficulties in accessing

resources (e.g., accommodation and access to facilities, training budgets, conference funding and related occupational extras; representation on email networks, websites and publicity materials; opportunities for (internal) promotion and progression, including pay). Taken together, all of these aspects contribute to a lack of attractiveness of research careers in Europe. In order to improve the attractiveness of research careers, these issues need to be addressed.

3.2.5 Expectations Towards the Doctorate

The survey asked participants to choose which sector of the labour market they wished to work in after finishing their doctorate, with multiple choices being allowed. The most popular option in all countries was to work in the academic research sector, followed by the non-academic public research sector, and the private research sector. Far fewer respondents were interested in the non-research sector, with careers in the military being the least appealing. In most countries at least 50 % of respondents suggested they would consider a non-academic research career.

A majority of respondents believed that their doctorate would increase their employment opportunities in the academic sector 'to a very high extent'. However, respondents were more modest when asked whether or not they believed the doctorate would help their employment prospects outside of academia (Fig. 10).

The sizeable minority of respondents (Fig. 11) reported that they had chosen to pursue a doctorate after turning down a higher paid job. This might be explained by how respondents answered questions on the advantages they expected from completing a doctoral degree. Survey participants were asked this question in a number of different contexts, and asked to rate their perception on a scale ranging from 'to a

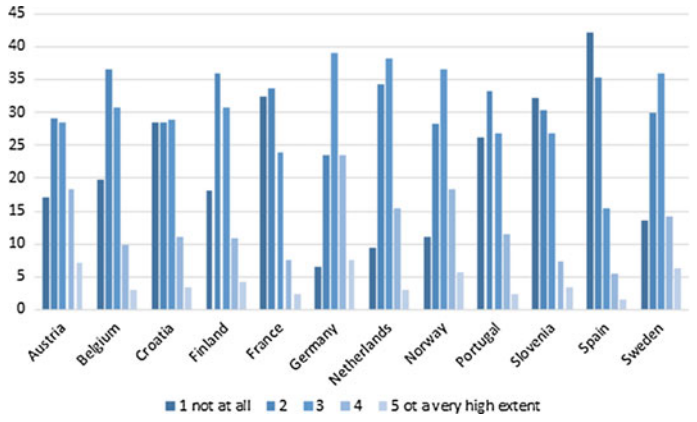

Fig. 10 The doctorate increases my job opportunities in the private non-research sector (By country). *N = 6563, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC data set (December 2010)

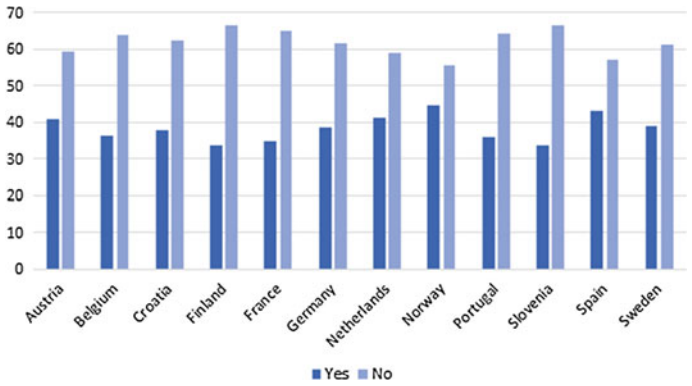

Fig. 11 Did you choose to do a doctorate while turning away better paid job opportunities? (By country). *N = 6786, valid percentages, valid n. *Source* EURODOC date set (December 2010)

very high extent', to 'not at all'. When asked whether or not 'largely independent of the disposition of the work…' was perceived as an advantage, very few respondents (at most 5.3 % in Spain) responded not at all. Most respondents suggested they thought the doctorate would provide them with some advantage, particularly concerning the 'opportunity to pursue research.

To pursue research inside academia appears to be respondents' preferred career option. However, when looking into their answers to other questions of the survey, it is possible to conclude that, to some extent they are open to other career paths, including the pursuit of a non-academic research career. Perhaps this is an indication of some pragmatism on their part, especially if considering the precariousness of working conditions offered to ECRs, in particular inside academia, and the overall lack of employment opportunities recent doctorate holders are confronted with. Nonetheless, it is somewhat surprising how many of our participants directed their career expectations towards a research career within academia, which may point to their lack of knowledge and unrealistic expectations towards the doctorate, including its protective value against unemployment.

3.2.6 Expectations Towards the Doctorate: General Recommendations

It seems clear that the doctorate is largely viewed as a positive thing for an individual's career, and this seems true for most possible careers. However, the realities of that career might not be so obvious to many ECRs. The percentage of researchers expressing an interest in an academic career varies from 68.4 % in Germany to 83.2 % in Croatia. These high levels may indicate that information on the difficulties in pursuing an academic career are not being made clear to DCs. These findings could be said to show that the doctorate is still largely being 'mis-sold' and

that more needs to be done to change people's perceptions of what a doctorate is, and what being awarded one means.

We recommend more effort be made to provide career guidance to DCs and to JRs, to have them think about their future plans during the course of their doctorate. Most universities will already have some form of career service for undergraduate students, which can also be made to work for ECRs. These services would likely benefit from a clearer understanding of the needs/wants of doctoral candidates, and the realities of the labour market for doctorate holders. The same could be said about some of the senior staff working in academia and academia itself. Academia and the labour market ECRs are confronted with today are very different from that faced by senior researchers in their time. However, it doesn't always seem that academic structures and culture have managed to adjust to today's realities.

4 Conclusions

Using data from EURODOC's survey and other internal sources, the previous paragraphs have described some aspects of the general situation in which ECRs find themselves. They point to a number of aspects concerning DCs' and JRs' general situation that should be improved in each one of the topics we covered: (i) perceptions and overall satisfaction with access to training, training opportunities, supervision agreement, quality and feedback; (ii) assessments of own status and funding, activities and academic work outputs, as well as expectations towards the doctorate (e.g., type of employment, employment prospects).

The recommendations made in this paper are general ones, and further development is necessary. However they already point to a number of issues policy makers and other relevant stakeholders should take into consideration when implementing reforms aimed at promoting quality and improving quality assurance in doctoral training, as well as ensuring a successful transition from being a doctoral candidate to a doctorate holder.

What is clear in many instances is that more data on the conditions ECRs are working in, and their general perceptions of their work, working conditions and future careers, is needed. EURODOC Survey I also focussed almost entirely on DCs, and did not survey JRs. Thus, it is necessary to also assess their perceptions of the situation they are in. This is what EURODOC intends to do with a future survey. We believe that a follow up survey examining some of these issues in more depth, including the situation of JRs, would prove very valuable.

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The Romanian PhD Students at CERN: The Bologna Process and Beyond

Alexandru Nicolin and Florin Buzatu

1 Introduction

The modifications to the Romanian higher-education education system that followed the national implementation of the Bologna process have had a domain-specific impact within the large Romanian academic community. While the legislative changes affected equally all disciplines (for example, the transition to the three-cycle structure Bachelor-Master-PhD), the efficiency of the quality assurance policies and mechanisms depended strongly on the maturity of the academic community in charge of their implementation. The Romanian physics community, in particular, is among the most internationalized ones, with long-standing scientific collaborations both at European level and worldwide, and a research output of the highest quality (Popescu 2000). This, in turn, ensured the quality of the physics higher-education system which, for the past six decades, has been competitive worldwide, independent of political changes. The Magurele Physics Platform which emerged in early 1950s has played a paramount role in consolidating the aforementioned international stature of the Romanian physics community through continuous forefront scientific research. To give just two examples, one year after Theodore Maiman invented the first working laser in 1960, Ion Agarbiceanu created the first gas laser in Romania, while the Extreme Light Interaction-Nuclear Physics (ELI-NP) experimental facility, which is currently under construction in Magurele, will provide "magnificent new opportunities to study the fundamental processes unfolded during light-matter interaction" using the most intense lasers world-wide, and will foster an unprecedented interdisciplinary research plan which

A. Nicolin (✉)
Horia Hulubei National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Măgurele, Romania
e-mail: alexandru.nicolin@nipne.ro

F. Buzatu
Institute for Atomic Physics, Măgurele, Romania
e-mail: f.buzatu@ifa-mg.ro

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addresses "frontier fundamental physics, new nuclear physics and astrophysics as well as applications in nuclear materials, radioactive waste management, material science and life sciences" (see Habs et al. 2011 for a detailed discussion). To put it in a nutshell, the ELI-NP reflects the philosophy of the H2020 programme that "excellence needs interdisciplinarity and relevance" (as summarized by the Science Europe Position Statement on H2020, December 2012), which received less emphasis in the previous Framework Programmes.

The Magurele Physics Platform now hosts the Faculty of Physics of University of Bucharest, the Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, the National Institute for Laser, Plasma and Radiation Physics, the National Institute of Material Physics, the National Institute for Earth Physics, the National Research and Development Institute for Optoelectronics and, finally, the Institute of Space Sciences. According to the current regulations all PhD students are enrolled in the Doctoral School of a University, but they are free to carry out their research plan in a university or in a research institute under a PhD Coordinator who is affiliated to a Physics Doctoral School. In this contribution, we show that the PhD students who worked at CERN have experienced firsthand the values of two distinct academic cultures, and discuss in some detail the means through which we can foster a research environment that is closer to the values of the Horizon2020 (H2020) programme and thereby increase the quality of doctoral programmes.

2 The RO-CERN Programme

The history of CERN is well known so we will not cover it here (see, for instance, Kowarski 1961). We state, however, that roughly half of the particle physicists worldwide are working at CERN, and that they represent more than 500 institutions (universities and research institutes) and 80 nationalities. Romania's participation in CERN activities started in 1991, but the Law that effectively established the cooperation dates from 2010 (see *Monitor Oficial al Romaniei* number 728, November 2010). During the period 2010–2013, Romania participated in seven of the programs running at CERN, namely ALICE (*A* *L*arge *I*on *C*ollider *E*xperiment), ATLAS (*A* *T*oroidal *L*arge Hadron Collider *A*pparatu*s*), LHCb (*L*arge *H*adron *C*ollider *b*eauty), WLCG (*W*orldwide *L*arge Hadron Collider *C*omputing *G*rid), DIRAC (*DI*meson *R*elativistic *A*tom *C*omplex), n_TOF (*n*eutron *t*ime-*o*f-*f*light), and ISOLDE (Isotope Separator on Line). The participation takes place through the Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering (IFIN-HH—http://www.nipne.ro) and the Institute of Space Sciences (ISS—http://www.spacescience.ro). The collaboration was later extended to include the POLITEHNICA University of Bucharest, the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, the West University of Timisoara, and the National Institute for Research and Development of Isotopic and Molecular Technologies, Cluj-Napoca.

Romania's contribution amounted to more than 70 physicists and engineers working on the previously mentioned projects. The team consisted of both

Table 1 Scientific output of the Romanian team working at CERN

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Granted patents	0	2	0	0
Access at technologies, equipment, databases, etc.	13	13	13	13
Publications	38	105	231	220
Communications at conferences	108	166	183	126

experienced scientists and graduate students, 10 of which have defended their PhD theses and 4 their MSc theses during that period. Moreover, the RO-CERN programme has supported 3 PhD students whose main fields of research are not connected to CERN, who were, however, involved in the support activities for the grid computing infrastructure. The research activities of the graduate students took place both at CERN and at the premises of IFIN-HH and ISS, with research stages at CERN ranging from a couple of weeks to a few months.

The scientific output of the Romanian team working at CERN during 2010–2013 is summarized in Table 1, where one immediately notices the large number of publications and conference communications. While the two patents obtained in 2011 (one of which is focused on *Detectors for time-of-flight measurements for charged particles* and another one on *Detectors for measuring transition radiation*) have no graduate students as co-authors, due to the advanced engineering nature of the patents, almost all papers produced within the CERN projects have graduate students as co-authors. The list of journals is impressive and contains prestigious physics journals such as *Physical Review Letters*, *Physical Review D*, etc. Moreover, graduate students have contributed significantly to the creation of new computing centres within the Romanian Tier-2 Federation, the most important one being that of the scientists of IFIN-HH who work at ALICE, which amounts to approximately 5000 computer cores and a 4 PB of storage. The efficiency of the computing centres is reflected by the fact that the Romanian Tier-2 national centre ranked in the first 10 of the 34 states that participated at WLCG.

2.1 Interdisciplinary Research Teams

The scientific exposure of the graduate students working in the RO-CERN programme covers a wide set of disciplines which includes experimental, computational and theoretical physics, applied mathematics, computer science, scientific engineering, as well as digital and analogue electronics. Buzatu (2011) discusses in detail the contribution of the Romanian scientists at CERN, experiment by experiment, and shows that it spans a wide range of topics which includes: operating the experiments (in shifts, jointly with the other scientists), theoretical high-energy physics calculations, designing and constructing particle detectors, algorithm analysis and comparison, comparing theoretical results obtained by numerical means and

experimental data, software development for the analysis and interpretation of data, optimizing software implementation (to reduce the computational load), day-to-day running and periodic upgrading of Data and Computing Centres, etc. This broad scientific exposure reflects the complexity of the research activities in which the Romanian groups at CERN are involved, and conveys to the graduate students the clear message that forefront scientific physics research transcends the traditional domanial boundaries and relies heavily on interdisciplinary exchanges. Interdisciplinarity is a key feature of all Romanian groups working at CERN which consist both of scientists with solid physics backgrounds, as well as research and development engineers, computer scientists (both hardware and software oriented), electronic engineers, and various types of technicians (see Buzatu 2011) for a detailed discussion on the contributions of the Romanian teams). This broad scientific milieu should be contrasted with that commonly seen in the Physics Doctoral Schools of Romanian universities which consist mainly of physicists, with considerably fewer scientists of different backgrounds. This difference in the structure of the research groups reflects, on one hand, the mission of the institutions in which the graduate students are active (IFIN-HH, to give just one example, is an institute dedicated to "physics and nuclear *engineering*" [our italics]), while on the other hand, it reflects how the actual research is performed. To put it simple (and thereby leave out many details), university research relies on a number of small research groups whose interests cover a wide set of topics, while the Romanian national research and development institutes focus on a single research field (such as nuclear physics, laser physics, material sciences, etc.) and address coherently a series of related theoretical, computational and experimental problems, as to significantly increase our understanding of the research field in focus. While research in theoretical physics usually excludes interdisciplinary exchanges, with the possible exception of scientific programming and applied mathematics, the computational and the experimental research require considerable expertise in numerous scientific and engineering braches.

The differences between the research landscapes of the two types of institutions discussed above (i.e., national research and development institutes and universities) are also reflected by the competence-based research funding mechanisms used to finance their graduate students. University-based graduate students were supported either through individual research grants (most of them funded using the Structural Funds in the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development), or through small-scale projects, usually involving less than a dozen scientists, funded by the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI). In addition to these financing mechanisms, the physics graduate students employed at the research institutes which are involved in the RO-CERN programme were also supported through the research projects financed by the Institute of Atomic Physics (IFA). These projects were considerably larger than those coordinated by UEFISCDI and were subject to less significant budgetary cuts which, in turn, offered PhD students working at CERN greater stability.

2.2 Multiculturalism and Internationalization

Multiculturalism is usually irrelevant in discussions concerning the training of physics graduate students in Romania, but this is not the case for the students working at CERN. CERN is widely considered the first European Institution and among the documents which preceded its foundation is the communication of Louis de Broglie at the 1949 European Cultural Conference in Lausanne (read by Raoul Dautry) in which he spoke of "the creation of a laboratory or institution where it would be possible to do scientific work, but somehow beyond the framework of the different participating States", such that this new laboratory or institution can "undertake tasks, which, by virtue of their size and cost, were beyond the scope of individual countries" [the original French version of the letter appears in Kowarski (1961)]. The final paragraph of the letter emphasizes that "this form of collaboration has to be one of the most immediate objectives of those who take upon themselves to bring together the European nations and to ensure the collaboration of the underlying set of values for the progress of civilization." Decades later, the research output of the Romanian scientists working at CERN (see Table 1) as well as the numerous CERN events organized in Romania (such as summer schools, info days for high-school students, etc.) show that these ideas were embraced not only in Western but also in Eastern Europe. In Romania's case, which joined CERN in 2010, the active agents of this European kinship were the graduate students who participated actively in the local experiments. At this point it is worth mentioning that the same vision which led to the creation of CERN was shared, though at a small scale, by the scientists and political figures in Eastern Europe and the states of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics who formed in 1956 the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna.

While most discussions in Romania about the Bologna Process are focused on insuring similar quality standards and an increased coherence of the national higher education systems, the principles and the spirit of the Bologna Process are best embodied in the graduate students working at CERN. The research plans of these students are congruous with those of their peers, their research philosophy is very similar, they benefit from the same type of courses and training seminars, the working conditions are identical, with no differences between students from different nations, and the same quality and ethical standards are followed by everybody. The long lists of authors of the papers coming out of CERN (in which the contributors are arranged alphabetically) reflect this unique scientific melting-pot, while the recent experiments which proved the existence of the Higgs boson that led to 2013 Physics Nobel Prize show unequivocally that the research is of the highest international level. Moreover, Romania's substantial involvement at CERN shows that the physics higher education system is compatible with its European siblings, and that Romanian graduate students can integrate in the most challenging research environments. The key ingredient responsible for the aforementioned compatibility is the substantial internalization of the Romanian physics community, which is reflected in numerous large-scale international collaborations (see Buzatu 2011)

and, most importantly, an uninterrupted intellectual tradition (Frangopol 2012). This tradition goes back to Horia Hulubei, an outstanding atomic scientist who worked with Jean Perrin at the Sorbonne for his PhD thesis and the founding father of the Magurele Physics Platform, and is largely responsible for the strict adherence to the academic customs, norms and criteria widely accepted internationally (see Frangopol 2012). It is noteworthy to add that physics research was never influenced directly by political changes and reached a level of stability which, in turn, allowed Romanian physicists to follow their research interests with a higher degree of freedom than that of their colleagues working, for instance, in social sciences and humanities. Naturally, the general decisions concerning the access to scientific literature, attendance at international meetings and alike affected the physics community during the communist period just as they affected any other professional community, but no decision detrimental to the development of the physics community was directly targeted at it.

2.3 Personal Research Contributions

One of the most delicate aspects concerning the research plans of Romanian PhD students working at CERN refers to the actual personal contribution to the numerous publications. The paternity of scientific results is always problematic in the case of large collaborations, and this is why the Romanian PhD regulations for awarding PhD diplomas in physics emphasize the importance of the articles in which the PhD student is the first author (provided, of course, the listing of author is not done alphabetically). One tradition in the physics community is that (with the notable exception of large collaborations mentioned explicitly in the text) the order in which the authors appear reflects the contribution to the article, with the first author having the most important contribution, and the last one usually ensuring the coordination of the team. The supporters of this tradition usually advocate the idea that for the papers coming out of the CERN collaboration authorship should be viewed more as a form of credit for scientific service, rather than a clear indication of specific contributions. While this tradition is not widely accepted, with prestigious journals such as the *Physical Review* series stating explicitly that "the names of authors may be listed in any order in the byline between the title and abstract" and other journals, such as Nature, requiring a short description of the contribution of each author, its inclusion in the Romanian PhD regulations catalyzed the production of papers outside the main flux of the CERN collaboration. These papers (usually in the form of articles in local peer-reviewed journals and conference proceeding) ensured that the PhD theses of the Romanian graduate students at CERN also contain research results which can be clearly attributed to their authors.

In fact, this problem is quite general, as many national-level regulations concerning the eligibility to become Associate Professor, Full Professor, and PhD Coordinator, as well as the eligibility criteria for coordinating national research projects, and many internal criteria used by Romanian universities and institutes to

assess scientific output are very sensitive on the number and order of authors. All these regulations draw from the Minimal Criteria for Associate Professor, Full Professor, and PhD Coordinator established as part of the by-laws which followed the 2011 National Education Law. Small details aside, the criteria currently in place assess the quality of the research output using the Article Impact Score as the main indicator, unlike the older ones which relied on the Impact Factor. The assessment focuses both on the bulk of the scientific output (using a normalization that accounts for the number of authors of each paper) and, more importantly, on those papers for which a given scientist is first (or corresponding) author. This last component of the assessment is problematic for scientists working in high-energy physics where such personal contributions are not particularly important, and is detrimental to the development of the high-energy physics community.

In the context of the previous remarks we would like to emphasize the following aspect: the criteria used to evaluate the scientific output of PhD students (both with respect to quality and with respect to quantity) can generate considerable imbalances between the various branches of physics if the peculiarities of each particular branch are not properly reflected in the criteria. As the Bologna Process standardized the three- or four-years doctoral programmes, while the particularities of the current physics research areas are vastly different, it is important that the final assessment process of the scientific achievements accounts correctly the specificities of each research area. Moreover, wherever possible, it is desirable to complement scientometrics indicators with expert peer-review, such that the relatively short PhD stage is best used to maximize the scientific output relevant for that specific research area, and not for the mechanical fulfilment of scientific criteria of disputable relevance. In other words, the PhD students should fulfil the specific requirements of their projects and pay lesser attention to generic national criteria (currently based on scientometrics) which do not capture the specificities of all fields. After all, scientometrics assessments are always precise, but not always relevant, as "not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts" (Albert Einstein). This is particularly relevant for graduate students, such as the Romanian PhD students working at CERN, who perform their actual research in an academic culture which values diversity and interdisciplinarity, but are finally assessed outside that academic culture using a more stringent (actually narrower) set of rules. In fact, the tendency to always quantify the output of PhD students can be detrimental to the creativity that leads to major scientific breakthroughs, and induces a level of uniformity that does not foster scientific excellence and innovation. Moreover, the regulations on the eligibility criteria for Associate Professor which do not consider the particularities of the research carried out at CERN can reduce the appeal of a future academic carrier for the PhD students working at CERN. It is, of course, desirable to have stable criteria for awarding PhD diplomas and being eligible to Associate Professor, such that all scientists have the same professional opportunities and the dynamics of the community is not perturbed by arbitrary factors.

One section of the 1999 Bologna declaration states that "we must in particular look at the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European

system of higher education. The vitality and efficiency of any civilisation can be measured by the appeal that its culture has for other countries. We need to ensure that the European higher education system acquires a world-wide degree of attraction equal to our extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions." The appeal and the attraction mentioned above can only be achieved in a stable academic system which welcomes diversity, and acknowledges that forefront research is usually interdisciplinary and cannot be assessed using the classical evaluation methods. The aforementioned stability implies that the dynamics of an academic community is governed from within the community without disruptive external factors (such as massive budgetary cuts and constant changes of the criteria used to evaluate the quality and the impact of the scientific output), while interdisciplinarity implies a broad view of the research landscape. To give just one example, the computer codes used to analyze the experimental data obtained at CERN are a crucial ingredient of the research plan, but are not acknowledged by any of the current criteria. These codes require a thorough understanding of the underlying physics, as well as substantial knowledge of numerical analysis, applied mathematics, parallel programming, etc., and usually amount to many months (sometimes years) of collaborative hard work. Assessing such a scientific endeavour within the classical paradigm that physicists produce mainly books, articles and patents is clearly impossible, and one has to rely on expert peer review.

The previous discussion is also pertinent for the world-class ELI-NP experimental facility which is currently built on the Magurele Physics Platform. As most of the experiments envisaged to take place at ELI-NP rely on interdisciplinary research teams which will deal with numerous difficult technical and scientific problems, some (if not most) of which have not yet been identified, it is important that the graduate students employed at the facility will receive proper recognition for their work. We emphasize that in early operational stages of the facility, the classical research output (i.e., papers) will be minimal and that most of the efforts will be focused on dealing with the inevitable experimental bottlenecks, therefore the scientific profile of the first series of graduate students at ELI-NP will be substantially different than that of their peers working, for instance, in theoretical or computational physics.

Let us also mention that this broadening of our understanding of the research landscape is crucial for the success of the H2020 programme, and that the fresh impetus on increasing the transfer of knowledge to the industry will not reach its full impact without a modification of the assessment framework (both for PhD students and Professors), such that experimental and functional models, prototypes and demonstrative models, innovative services, etc., are properly acknowledged as significant forms of scientific output. In the context of the Bologna Process it is very important to convey to the students the proper importance of all forms of scientific output and prepare them for the challenges ahead. The philosophy of H2020 is that of accelerating the social impact of discoveries and innovation by taking great scientific ideas from lab to market quicker than before, and the perspective on research that we pass on to the graduate students should follow this closer connection between research, innovation and industrial development. To put it

otherwise, as part of the graduates of the third cycle of the Bologna Process will become active in the H2020 research programmes as junior scientists, it is extremely important that their education prepares them for the challenges ahead. Finally, in light of these changes, it is obvious that the education of the PhD students should be complemented with elements of entrepreneurship and intellectual property. The entrepreneurial spirit of the future generation of scientists plays a key role in short-circuiting the distance between scientific discovery and industrial applications, while a good understanding of the intellectual property rights ensures a level of recognition that goes outside the realm of purely academic merits.

3 Conclusions

The Romanian participation at CERN has provided unique opportunities for physics graduate students and has strengthened the scientific output of the doctoral schools, both qualitatively and quantitatively. By exposing graduate students to forefront achievements in engineering, technology and physics, these international collaborations fostered an unparalleled multidisciplinary environment that is conducive to innovative solutions to the most challenging scientific problems, as evidenced, for instance, by the two patents obtained by the ALICE Romanian team in 2011. One of the problems faced by the Romanian PhD students working at CERN concerns the criteria used to evaluate their work. These assessment criteria do not reflect the research philosophy of large-scale experimental facilities where the collaborative nature of the research is prominent, and emphasize the significance of personal contributions as seen from the number and ordering of authors on a given paper. Moreover, as most assessment criteria concerning PhD students refer solely to the number of published articles, part of their work at CERN remains un-acknowledged. Given the goal of the H2020 programme, to shorten the distance between scientific research and industrial application as to ensure the transition to a more innovative and competitive Europe, we should broaden our assessment framework such that we properly account for all forms of scientific output, and try to complement, where possible, the current scientometrics evaluations with expert peer-review. It is our experience that the prescriptive application of strict assessment standards is not fully compatible with supporting the specificities of each research field and does not catalyze creativity and innovation. To foster a creative and innovative environment, we should encourage interdisciplinarity and diversity, and always keep in mind that the core component of the doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research, not for original research, an aspect which seems of second importance in the current discussion on the Bologna process. In other words, the inclusion of the PhD students in research activities is done to build solid research competences and clear transferable skills that are the basis for the future career of the PhD students outside of the academic sector.

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Part VII
Quality Assurance

European Quality Assurance—A European Higher Education Area Success Story [Overview Paper]

Hanne Smidt

1 Introduction

> The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area (Berlin Communiqué 2003)

The development and implementation of a Europe of knowledge or the European Higher Education Area has led at institutional, regional, national and European level to a wave or a tsunami of changes to policies, strategies and legal frameworks in a strive for balancing European collaboration and global competition. In 1999, ministers, stakeholder organisations and higher education institutions signed up to the aims and the action lines of the Bologna Process,[1] and have since "adapted and adopted" the Bologna architecture to their cultural, political, social and economic contexts (Sursock and Smidt 2010). Research has shown that adaptations—not least when it comes to quality assurance policies and practices—at national and institutional level have led to both convergence and increased diversity, as higher education is closely intertwined with regional and national cultures (Sursock and Smidt 2010). Governments and European higher education institutions have been caught in a conundrum between adapting to joint European policies and frameworks and maintaining and highlighting their national/institutional and cultural uniqueness. One area where European and national and institutional implementation policies and practices is converging and diverging is in quality assurance, nevertheless it is a policy area that has emerged as one of the cornerstones of the Bologna architecture (Loukkola 2012).

[1]For the members of EU, several layers of reform agendas have been added by Europe 2020, the Modernisation Agenda and the High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education.

H. Smidt (✉)
European University Association, Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: hanne.smidt@telia.com

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Over the past twenty years, the history and the development of quality assurance prior to and within the Bologna Process have been tracked in a plethora of policy reports and research articles.[2] The reports and the research indicate there were a number of drivers for the development of European quality assurance outside the Bologna Process e.g. massification, new public management, the development of private higher education institutions that occurred after the fall of the iron curtain,[3] and the increased focus on creating a competitive European Higher Education system. For universities in Central and Eastern Europe, the post-iron curtain era meant radical changes and challenges that were far more profound than the in some countries controversial reforms introduced in the name of Bologna. Adapting to political change processes like the post-communist era, the Bologna Process—and for the member states of the European Union—the Modernisation Agenda has meant that European higher education institutions have had to navigate between tradition and renewal, and increasingly to respond to a growing demand for accountability and transparency in an ever more difficult funding environment. These pressures have in turn led to a need to develop a quality culture, while addressing the challenges of globalised higher education. A pressure that the sessions on quality assurance at the Future of Higher Education Conference in Bucharest in 2014 showed has to be *work in continuous progress*. The presentations and discussions also indicated that the perception of quality assurance is very multi-dimensional and contextual and that a gap exists in the view between professionals in quality assurance and academic staff and students. The presentations at the conference showed that quality assurance is applied very differently in Europe, as is reflected in the policies and practices in the European countries. Practices vary between accreditation driven systems and quality enhancements driven systems, and in some systems, the distinction between external and internal quality assurance is not evident for academics and administrative staff.

The conference confirmed that European quality assurance framework is key to the transformative European change agenda (Sursock 2012, pp. 247–265), and has a clear impact on the "European dimension". It also pointed out that in the institutional context quality assurance often is inward looking, and not all stakeholders perceive a clear difference between external and internal quality assurance. While transformation takes time (Smidt 2012, in Curaj et al.) Sursock points out that:

> Too often, changes to external quality assurance are made with little consideration of other higher education policy developments or requirements or by focusing on a narrow set of education policy developments or requirements or by focusing on a narrow set of changes (e.g. evaluating whether institutions are developing a learning-outcome approach to

[2]The articles presented at the Future of Higher Education Researcher conference in Bucharest 2012 tracked and mapped the development and growth of quality assurance agencies, frameworks and practices at institutional, national and European level and interpreted quality assurance from a variety of stakeholder points of view (Curaj et al.). The present chapter will build on these.

[3]The fall of the Iron Wall led to a sharp rise in the provision of private higher education that led to the development of accreditation procedures to ensure quality, but not necessarily within QA agencies.

> teaching). And the changes to external QA, in turn, affect the way institutions carry out their internal QA processes. (Sursock 2012, p. 263 in Curaj et al.).

The evolving nature of the EHEA policy agenda has meant that the links between the different Bologna action lines have not necessarily been clear to the institutional actors (Sursock and Smidt 2010). The present introduction to the chapter on quality assurance will therefore discuss the following question. Why European quality assurance should be considered a success story? How does the revised ESG reflect recent developments in European higher education and support a much more integrated approach? What are the emerging challenges for European quality assurance, and which areas, based on the research presented at the conference, require further developments or progress?

2 European Universities Consider Quality Assurance an Important Strategic Reform

There was early agreement within the Bologna Process that European higher education institutions are responsible for the quality of European higher education as stated in the Berlin Communiqué (2003). The EUA Trends 2010 report that has tracked the first decade of implementation of the European Higher Education Area showed that European higher education institutions find quality assurance one of the most important reforms. European higher education institutions (HEIs) and European national rectors' conferences both considered that, alongside the Bologna structural reforms, quality assurance and quality assurance reforms/policies were *the* key policy change in the first Bologna decade. 60 % of the responding higher education institutions in 2010 found that over the past ten years enhanced internal quality assurance processes had been the most important change, followed by enhanced cooperation with other HEIs (53 %) and more autonomy 43 % (Sursock and Smidt 2010, p. 18). Furthermore, the HEIs answered that after strategic institutional development (78 %), quality assurance (63 %) was considered the most important development followed closely by internationalisation (61 %). The forthcoming Trends 2015 report suggests that the importance of quality assurance and internationalisation seen from a strategic institutional point of view has increased even further over the past five years. The overall European results, however, cover large differences between countries. Countries that felt that internal quality assurance was not important in 2010 have made great progress by 2015.

This raises the question as to why European universities consider quality assurance to be one of the most important Bologna reform, when there has been critique on the implementation of other Bologna action lines. Why do institutions approach quality assurance from a European perspective? There are a number of reasons for this.

First, the quality assurance agenda has been driven by the collaboration and continuous engagement of the four European stakeholder organisations: the

European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Student Union (ESU—formerly ESIB) and the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA). These four organisations established almost from the beginning of the Bologna Process a working relationship through the E4 group. Together—despite sometimes diverging opinions—they have developed a common platform for quality assurance: the European Standard and Guidelines (ESG) created and managed the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and organised the European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF). The combination of these initiatives created a pan-European stage for continuous discussion and exchanges of good practice between European, national and institutional policy makers and stakeholders like no other Bologna action line has.

Second, the four stakeholder organisations also have "walked the talk" by developing projects that have tracked and promoted the development and implementation of both external and internal quality assurance practices. The European stakeholder organisations have created fora where members have been able to discuss and develop recommendations with peers via individual or joint QA projects. The discussions and exchange of experience in these projects and their reports have helped to promote and inform the development of a quality culture in European higher education institutions, and simultaneously helped to track the development and helped to engage in communication with and between stakeholders at European, national and institutional level on the progress.

Third, the annual European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) has been a cornerstone in the communication within the European quality assurance community since 2006. It has been a major contribution to QA in higher education, and a flagship activity in this field (Loukkola 2012). EQAF provides a platform and an opportunity for the higher education and QA communities to follow, discuss, shape and anticipate developments in the area. The conferences have traditionally brought all the key actors in the field together: higher education institutions (leadership, QA responsible/practitioners and academics), staff from quality assurance agencies, students and European policy makers. EQAF keeps attracting all stakeholder groups and the theme of the 2014 forum indicates a shift in the view on quality assurance. The title: "*Changing education – QA and the shift from teaching to learning*" point to a move in focus from quality assurance policies and practices to an increased focus on the development of the core of the European Higher Education Area reforms: teaching and learning and the provision of student-centred learning. A move from *form towards content*.

Fourth, the training that thousands of academics are receiving as national and international evaluators and the staff engaged in quality assurance who work at institutional and national level on the development of policies and practices serve to promote quality assurance and spread good practices. Only one other action-line: internationalisation has created such transnational "educational" structures and communities through EAIE.

Other external change drivers that have promoted quality assurance include the impact of the rapidly expanding student numbers that in many European countries

has brought a more utilitarian view of higher education than in previous generations of students, and has created a greater demand for accountability and transparency. The utilitarian point of view is also reflected in the increased focus on skills and employability in the EC. In many countries, this debate is progressively becoming interlinked with the debate on quality and quality assurance (e.g. the Danish committee on quality and relevance of higher education). While there is clearly a link between quality of education and employability, there is also a great danger in establishing a simplistic and linear connection between the two. There is a real danger that the essential "bildung" and the civic development aspects of higher education is overlooked if a purely utilitarian approach is adopted. If a simple and linear correlation is introduced, the process of diversification of higher education, providing access to education to students from all backgrounds throughout a student's life is often disregarded. If the goals of permeability, diversification and flexibility are ignored, then quality assurance can create conformity rather than innovation, and the overriding aim of creating a Europe of Knowledge for an increasingly diverse student population might be lost.

3 Emerging Challenges for External Quality Assurance

A whole new higher education profession and "industry" has grown around the development of external and internal quality assurance. Prior to 2000, only four European countries had quality assurance agencies (Loukkola 2012); today, ENQA has 39 members in 23 countries (ENQA 2014).

The rapid growth has been well-documented, and the literature on quality assurance shows that external or agency based quality assurance methodologies vary greatly. In many countries, external quality assurance has moved between a focus on programmes or institutions and between supporting quality enhancement (supporting the development of institutional quality cultures) or an accreditation approach that stresses compliance (Stensaker 2011; Sursock 2012; Loukkola and Sursock[4] 2014). The literature indicates that a dichotomy or a binary system with pendulum swings between accreditation and quality enhancement seems to have developed, but it also points to the fact that stakeholders tend to consider neither approach entirely successful over time. As the pendulum is ever moving, it is difficult to get an overview of the development of the constantly changing national external quality assurance systems or policies, and Stensaker and Sursock both indicate that external quality assurance is considered very much a national practice despite the large European community of practitioners and ENQA and EQAR. It appears that the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) guide national and institutional practices for quality assurance, but the research presented at the

[4]In EUA, European University Association (2014). *A Twenty-Year Contribution to Institutional Change*.

conference that the ESG is not commonly referenced or known outside the quality assurance community in many Bologna countries.

The four presentations at the conference indicated that quality assurance is applied very differently in Europe and that it is still work in progress. It was argued that (external) quality assurance easily promotes compliance, and that it is therefore a requirement for quality assurance constantly to re-address this through changing the methodology, thus supporting the pendulum swings. The articles in the present chapter support the observation that developments in both external and internal quality assurance (EQA and IQA) are in an almost permanent state of flux. Furthermore, the study presented by Szabo on the use of transnational or cross-border quality assurance (and where quality assurance meets internationalization) by a number of European higher education institutions shows that a variety of EQA is in use, but also indicates that cross-border quality assurance is so far not a common practice.

A key challenge both for external and internal quality assurance is to engage staff and students. Two of the articles (Geven and Maricuţ, Logermann and Leisyte, this volume) in this chapter show new research in an institutional context that suggest that many European HEIs yet have to comprehensively engage students and academics in ensuring high quality learning and teaching. The articles introduce new research on the perceptions and the involvement of staff and students in internal quality assurance and their research indicate that these groups tend to be largely unaware of the European or external dimension of quality assurance. The Logermann and Leisyte article suggests that more attention needs to be paid to the role of students in institutional quality assurance and further development of practices for the use of course evaluations.

Geven and Maricuţ show that evaluation overload in the Romanian context seriously undermines the benefits of quality assurance and that staff can become disengaged and fail to distinguish the difference between external and internal quality assurance. In fact, the opposite of a quality culture, a culture of disengagement is developing.

The Rutherford and Pickup article reflects the important role institutional research plays and the essential role quality assurance plays in all parts of a successful student experience. It provides an important reflection on achieving a balance between supporting students as they progress and developing processes for enhancing the experience of all students groups.

4 European Quality Assurance "Work in Progress"—The Revised European Standards and Guidelines

The Berlin Communiqué recognised that quality assurance:

> should include: a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved; evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review,

> participation of students and the publication of results; a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, and international participation, cooperation and networking. (Berlin Communiqué 2003)

The core elements—defined responsibilities for the involved stakeholders, procedures for evaluation and accreditation, external/international reviews, student participation and networking, etc.—were quickly and successfully translated by the E4 group into the "European Standards and Guidelines" (ESG), EQAR and EQAF. The ministers adopted the ESG in 2005 in Bergen; the annual networking forum, EQAF, held its first meeting in 2006; and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) was established by the E4 group in 2008.

Once adopted, the implementation or rather the interpretation of the ESG in different contexts has been an on-going process, and there has been great variations in how and how clearly the ESG has been adhered and referred to both in an institutional context and national context (See the Examining Quality Culture reports, EUA 2009–2012). However, the 2011 E4 study: "Mapping the Implementation and Application of the ESG" (ENQA 2011)—concluded that the ESG had proved to be a major achievement of the Bologna Process. They were found to be applicable in different contexts and have had an impact on both the institutional and national QA processes and on the work carried out by quality assurance agencies (ENQA 2011, p. 6). The study found that the ESG have become the language or reference point that all stakeholders refer to, but also emphasized that the purpose and scope of the ESG had an in-built tension between being identified either as a reference document or as a compliance tool. This was one of the underlying reasons for the revision of the ESG; a further reason was to integrate quality assurance with the Bologna architecture and the development of learning and teaching. The FOHE researcher conference in 2012 supported the proposal for a revision.

The E4 group had from the outset intended the ESG to be "work in progress" (ENQA 2005) and there was an early understanding that the ESG would need to be analysed and reviewed as the European quality assurance landscape developed and changed. Given this context, the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué invited the E4 Group (ENQA, ESU, EUA, and EURASHE) in cooperation with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) to prepare an initial proposal for a revised ESG "to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness, including their scope". The revision process has included several consultation rounds involving both the key stakeholder organisations and ministries. The proposal reflects a consensus among all the organisations involved on how to take forward quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. It thus supports the principle that the basis of development in quality assurance is a close collaboration and discussions within and between all stakeholder groups. The proposal for the revised EGS has maintained its structure and the three sections on internal and external quality assurance and on the quality assurance of external agencies (2014).

A revised version of the ESG is proposed to the next ministerial conference in Yerevan in May 2015. The main discussions and revisions have essentially been introduced to Part 1 that presents the ESG for internal quality assurance, and now have a much clearly defined link to the whole Bologna framework:

> The ESG are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented, but they provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education. The ESG should be considered in a broader context that also includes qualifications frameworks, ECTS and diploma supplement that also contribute to promoting the transparency and mutual trust in higher education in the EHEA. (Revised ESG p 3, 2014)

The ESG for internal quality assurance have changed from seven to ten and presently suggests more explicitly support for an integration with student-centred learning, the development of pedagogics (teaching and learning), and a cyclical approach to both internal and external quality assurance.[5] Another change is a more specific approach for monitoring of students' progression path and future careers.

The revised ESG reflect a development towards a more student-centred focus of quality assurance and higher education. The now ten ESG for internal quality assurance are both inclusive and responsive, and have been formulated in a way that IQA ESG can be applied to diversified higher education, i.e. supporting widening access and participation, and tracking the progression path of student to improve not only the student experience, but learning and teaching. The revised ESG support a paradigm shift towards developing higher education systems and institutions that are "fit for purpose" for students and stakeholders and assist the creation quality assurance policies and practice that are able to reflect the diversity of courses, programmes and institutions that provide education in different modes and media.

5 Changes and Challenges for the European Higher Education Landscape Have Implications for Quality Assurance

There is no common definition for quality assurance (Williams 2011), or the closely related concepts of quality enhancement, quality culture, evaluation, accreditation, accountability, transparency (ENQA 2014) and transparency tools (Hazelkorn et al. 2014)—and perhaps the lack of definition is a strength as this supports adaptability rather than conformity. Diversity in approach and understanding is not surprising, as there are over four thousand higher education institutions in the 48 countries that are part of the European Higher Education Area[6] All are operating within legal and administrative frameworks of their national or regional higher education systems

[5]New ESG 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes, and 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance.

[6]The European Union's High-Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (2014).

and they vary in size and mission. The implementation of the Bologna Process was designed to create a competitive and flexible European Higher Education Area through e.g. introducing three cycle systems, curriculum development, learning outcomes linked to qualification frameworks, ECTS for transfer and accumulation and the diploma supplement, all to increase transparency and flexibility. These very ambitious goals may not have been achieved in all 48 countries, but they have supported and highlighted the importance of higher education for the future of Europe in all countries. The Bologna Process has created a common European language or terminology—albeit with national or institutional interpretations (Trends 2010). A considerable diversity remains in European higher education, "*between systems, which retain their own characteristics, between institutions, which vary in size, mission and profile and even, within institutions.*" (Reichert 2009). Challenges remain, as the economic crisis, globalisation, demographic changes and technological developments have an impact on the national higher education systems. The European language is the ESG among the growing number of quality assurance professionals, but the articles in this chapter indicate that not all stakeholders are fluent in it. The proposal for the revised ESG can be seen as addressing the growing diversity by creating, on the one hand, a joint understanding and, on the other hand, supporting a diversity of approach to quality assurance in European higher education.

It is difficult to consider the quality and the quality assurance of European higher education without reflecting on not only the changing global reality for higher education systems, but also the complexity of its three missions: education, research and service to society. The repeatedly quoted challenges of massification, technological changes/digital learning environments, globalisation, financial crisis, changing demography, high youth unemployment rates and whole employment sectors that are under deconstruction present a complex set of challenges for all European HEIs. For quality assurance to support the continuous development of higher education institutions, their educational offer and the higher education systems in an ever changing global higher education landscape, it seems essential that it is built on trust, flexibility, and adaptability, and that the ESG form the common "language".

New approaches to learning and teaching have almost exploded in this decade, e.g. flipped classrooms, blended learning, MOOC, and OER (European Commission JRC Report 2014)—practices that are seen by some as opening up higher education. Other developments are in the area of transnational education, where two policy areas of quality assurance and internationalisation intersect. The increased focus on learning and teaching and student-centred learning raise a key question on the potential requirement to develop specific quality assurance for specific higher education offers such as open and distance learning, provision of international or transnational education (joint programmes and degrees), continuing education including LLL provision, bridging courses, etc. Do new forms of learning and teaching delivery to a diversified student population (full-time, part-time, national/international or non-traditional students) in the mode of traditional campus education, distance or e-learning, MOOCs, SPOCs or in a flipped classroom

together with many new transnational/joint/cross-border initiatives pose challenges for quality assurance? In recent years, a great number of European projects and initiatives have looked at developing specific quality assurance activities (e.g. E-xcellence, EFQUEL, EQUAL, EQUIPE, SEQUENT, and the ARDE project on quality in Doctoral Education) for specific types of provision of higher education. It raises the issue if a diversified European higher education landscape also demands diverse and targeted quality assurance processes, thus making it very complex to develop a common understanding of quality assurance, and how HEIs can manage a great number of different practices. Are modes of teaching or types of students more important? Are the challenges diversification pose for the qualitative development of higher education not reflected sufficiently in the revision of the ESG? Would it not be better to focus on principles of quality assurance rather than on the mode of delivery or the specificities of different student populations or institutions?

The Bologna Process was initially a collection of separate developments initiated in earlier decades that together have been developed over time to support the qualitative development of learning and teaching and student-centred learning by creating a framework as mentioned above. The framework has been developed to promote transparency, accountability, and the quality of European higher education, but discussions at the Future of Higher Education Conference, 2014 show that this vision is not a reality, yet. The understanding of this long-term vision may easily be lost with the arrival of new generations of ministers, students, academics, and policy makers, and a much more utilitarian approach to the development of higher education emerges, as other challenges seem to overshadow the European vision.

European higher education is in the middle of a paradigm shift (EUA 2014), and looking back at fifteen years of higher education reforms, it is clear that much has been done at European, national and institutional level to address and support Bologna inspired changes not least in quality assurance. The name Bologna Process has perhaps lost part of its meaning for the vast majority of students in European higher education who now study within Bologna structures. The collective memory is often short and it would therefore be important to reinforce the visionary aspect for each new generation.

Many European funded higher education projects, and in particular the different rounds of EUA's quality assurance projects have concluded that leadership is an essential success factor for the development and implementation of European strategies and policies. Successful implementation of policies and activities like quality assurance interlinks strategic development[7] and engaged leadership, and is another potential explanation for the perceived success of the European quality assurance development. Renewed visions and engagement are needed as research indicate that the original visions for quality assurance is not yet a reality everywhere, despite the well-documented progress.

[7]EUA Examining Quality Culture (2009–2012).

6 Conclusion

The 2014 FOHE Researchers' Conference indicates that behind the European quality assurance success story a much more complex picture of quality assurance is emerging. An image emerges that points to both convergence and divergence in approach and to remaining challenges—and this is perhaps not surprising given the diversity of the European Higher Education Area and the global challenges.

In the past decade, much research and a great number of projects and studies have been carried out to track the development of quality assurance, quality culture and the use of transparency tools. The sheer volume of activities and projects indicate that there is great engagement and many European stakeholders who "practice as they preach". These projects show that development of quality assurance is based on a number of different tools in order to triangulate information collected through formal and informal tools and ex ante and ex post approaches. There is agreement that evaluation results have to be used, results published, and quality assurance must include feedback loops and be based on a clear understanding of responsibilities. However, these tools and practices do not have a great impact, nor do they create a quality culture if academics and students are not engaged in self-reflection.

Transnational quality assurance has both benefits and challenges for higher education institutions, and its use is often related to the implementation of an internationalisation strategy, thus linking two important parts of the Bologna Process. In many countries, however, the national legislative framework is inhibiting such reviews, but the Szabo article indicates that this does not prevent higher education institutions from engaging.

All the papers in the quality assurance sessions clearly show the importance of engaging students and staff at institutional level, but also a need for flexibility and transparency in policies and practices.

The FOHE 2012 Researchers' Conference recommended a revision of the ESG, a revision that will be presented at the Yerevan Ministerial meeting. The revision is an example of how quality assurance is "work in progress" that requires the continuous development and evaluation of established policies and practices in order to make it an integral part of the higher education framework. The revised ESG indicate a shift towards addressing the need to have a diversity of higher education provision. Regardless whether it is provided for traditional full-time or part-time students, or for national or international students at the bachelor- master or doctoral level, or the provision of lifelong learning or continuing education; whether the teaching mode is campus or non-campus based or jointly provided at institutional level or transnationally. Quality assurance is therefore an integrated part of the dialogue on the progress of creating a European Higher Education Area that other continents will continue to look at with interest. Quality assurance is an on-going process where the interaction between the internal and external processes is essential and where a multifaceted and transparent approach seems essential and where the constant dialogue ensures that the stakes do not encourage a compliance

culture. Nevertheless, it can be expected that both external and internal, national and institutional quality assurance also in the coming decade will continue on its winding road:

> full of twists and turns, that took them – variously – from evaluation to accreditation; from assigning ratings to subjects or study programmes to abandoning such a process; from the evaluation of subjects or programmes to the evaluation of institutions, and back to subjects or programmes (Sursock 2011).

It can be hoped that the engagement of the different quality assurance communities will continue to grow, and that in the next decade focus will move from *form to content* and that a continuous dialogue will continue on how best to achieve that. This discussion should engage ever-larger numbers of academics and students in quality enhancing discussions on such aspects as learning and teaching, student-centred learning, curriculum development, learning outcomes, recognition, ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. It is to be hoped that the dialogue will engage or re-engage ever larger circles of higher education stakeholders and that the positive organizational experiences from the European quality assurance community can contribute to the next phase of development of the European Higher Education Area.

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International Quality Reviews with an EQAR-Registered Agency

Melinda Szabo

1 Introduction

Quality assurance of higher education is arguably the most successful "action line" set out by ministers within the Bologna Process. One reason for its successful development is that it was put at the heart of the efforts to build a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Bologna Process Stocktaking, 2005, p. 16). An extra drive was given even before the Bologna Declaration by the European Council's recommendation from 1998, and then followed by a joint recommendation with the European Parliament in 2006 (European Parliament and Council Recommendation 2006). The support received from European Commission, but also from association of higher education institutions, from a number of national governments, students and quality assurance agencies have further strengthened the development of a European dimension in quality assurance (Sursock 2012, p. 247).

The adoption of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (commonly referred to as ESG) in 2005 following the proposal of the E4 Group[1] was the result of a major commitment of Bologna countries to quality assurance. This has provided the basis for European QA developments and discussions and has paved the way for the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR 2011).

EQAR is the first organisation with legal entity to have emerged directly from the Bologna Process. It was set in place with the main purpose of allowing stakeholders and the general public open access to trustworthy quality assurance agencies (list of registered agencies) working in line with the European Standards

[1]See glossary for "E4 Group".

M. Szabo (✉)
European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education, Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: melinda.szabo@eqar.eu

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and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG).[2] Six years after its establishment, the Register includes 32[3] quality assurance agencies from 16 different EHEA member countries.

Since its' founding in 2008, EQAR has developed and gained credibility among governments, stakeholders and the general public as shown in its external review in 2011 (EQAR External Evaluation Report, p. 9) and by the interest of agencies seeking registration. Moreover, with the Bucharest Communiqué (2012), EHEA ministers committed further to 'allow EQAR-registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements' and to 'recognise quality assurance decisions of EQAR-registered agencies on joint and double degree programmes.' This commitment would provide higher education institutions with the possibility to choose among registered accreditation or quality assurance agencies that fit their needs and profile for their external quality assurance review. Using the Register as a proxy for cross-border external quality assurance was supported by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in 2006 to enhance European cooperation, and emphasized again in the European Commission's Report on Progress in Quality Assurance of Higher Education (2009, p. 21).

The Bologna developments in quality assurance have recorded a fast progress when it comes to the external QA dimension, e.g. 22 QA agencies established between 2000 and 2010 (Eurydice 2010, p. 25). At grass-root level, the QA developments have followed a slower pace, encouraged however by the setup of national QA frameworks and QA agencies. EUA's Examining Quality Culture survey (Loukkola and Thérèse 2010, p. 22) and EURASHE's study (Voldánová et al. 2012, p. 30) indicate that most institutions developed or changed their internal QA under the influence of Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs) and national regulations. The differences in focus and philosophy of QAAs have shaped the internal processes of institutions differently and they have not always been linked to the introduction of the ESG (Sursock and Smidt 2010, pp. 21–22). It becomes apparent that the maturing QA "Bologna infrastructure" has not followed a similar script across national systems, and the implementation of the ESG (particularly when referring to internal QA) has often lacked consistency or congruence with the European agenda.

The Bucharest commitment aimed at supporting higher education institutions in choosing among any EQAR-registered agency for assessing their internal quality or for accrediting their programmes. These external quality assurance (EQA) reviews would foster both the implementation of the ESG and the development of institutional QA frameworks in line with the ESG. To understand the extent to which this aim has transpired within the diverse landscape of EHEA national systems, it is important to gauge into the institutional frameworks that ensure the quality of degrees across Europe. So far, the knowledge on the institutional experience with a

[2]General aim set out by the of E4 Group Report to the London Conference of Ministers on a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (2007).

[3]As of 15 September 2014.

cross-border quality assurance agency is rudimentary, mostly exemplified in the form of single case study description (see EQAF 2012 paper on VDTK & evalag).[4] To widen the understanding of the dimension of cross-border external QA and the institutional experience with a cross border quality assurance agency, EQAR has designed and carried out a research project.[5] The current paper extends on the analysis carried out as part of this project, addressing the higher education institutional experience with a cross-border quality review (evaluation/audit/accreditation, at programme or institutional level).

1.1 National Quality Assurance Infrastructure

Before undertaking the case study interviews, desk research was carried out to map national legal frameworks and their openness to external QA. This mapping enabled the selection of institutions from countries where the cross-border EQA of an EQAR-listed agency is recognised as part of the periodic external review and where this can only be done on a voluntary basis (in addition to the periodic review). The resulting analysis[6] showed that there are different levels to which a higher education institution is able to discharge their obligatory external quality assurance through review by any EQAR-registered QA agency. Some countries allow all HEIs to choose a registered agency for all types of external quality assurance obligations they are subject to. In other countries, the ability to choose a quality assurance agency is limited to a certain group of HEIs (e.g. full universities in Austria) or to certain types of external QA (e.g. only for programme accreditation, but not for institutional accreditation; or not for initial accreditation). Certain countries recognise reviews by foreign QA agencies only for joint degrees, transnational provision or other specific circumstances, while others use different requirements than EQAR registration for allowing QA agencies from other countries to carry out reviews (Fig. 1).

1.2 Case Study Methodology

To understand the dynamics of internal quality assurance in a pan-European setting, a multiple-case study research was developed. This research method facilitates the

[4]European Quality Assurance Forum paper (2012) retrieved from: https://www.evalag.de/dedievl/projekt01/media/pdf/vortraege/2012/7thEQAF%20Submission%20Form%20Paper_121109.pdf.

[5]The research project on "Recognising International Quality Assurance Activity in the European Higher Education Area (RIQAA)" carried out between 2013 and 2104 and co-finance by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union.

[6]Further information about the results of the desk research is available on the project's website at: http://eqar.eu/projects/map.html.

Fig. 1 Mapping the openness to EQAR-registered QA agencies within EHEA (as of September 2014). *Dark blue* Countries recognising EQAR-registered agencies as part of the national requirements for external QA (Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium: Flemish Community, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Poland, Romania). *Light blue* Countries recognising foreign agencies as part of the national requirements for external QA. *Gray* Countries not open to external QA evaluation by a foreign QA agency (colour figure online)

exploration of similarities and contrasting results when looking at different institutional environments.

By "institutional experience" this paper refers to the perspective from inside a higher education institution (as opposed to the perspective of a quality assurance agency or an outside stakeholder), and the term is used irrespective of whether the review was carried out at the level of the entire higher education institution, a faculty or at the programme level.

1.3 Sampling Countries and Higher Education Institutions

In selecting the case studies the diversity of the external quality assurance (EQA) frameworks and approaches was taken into account.

The countries (in the case of Flanders: community) were selected with the aim to represent a geographically balanced sample and to provide a relevant mix of quality assurance frameworks across the EHEA.[7] To achieve this heterogeneity, national

[7]Due to funding eligibility criteria set out under the Erasmus Networks, accompanying measures project, only countries belonging to the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) of the European Union have been selected. See full list of LLP Countries here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/llp-national-agencies_en.pdf.

higher education frameworks were selected based on the differing characteristics of their QA systems (openness to cross-border reviews, stage of development of the external QA system, diversity in terms of outcomes of QA reviews) and geographical balance.

Two groups of countries differing in one main characteristic of their national higher education setting were selected as follows:

- 8 case-study interviews in four countries that recognise EQAR-registered QA agencies as eligible to satisfy the official requirements for external QA and
- 4 case-study interviews in four countries where cross-border external QA (EQA) is being carried out on a voluntary basis, in addition to the periodic obligatory external review.

Similarly, the selection of HEIs was made taking into account the diversity of EQA experience with a cross-border review (i.e. programme and institutional reviews, as well as joint or double degree programmes) and the representativeness of the HEI within the national QA system (whenever possible). The case study interviews were conducted at institutions where EQA has been carried out with an EQAR listed agency. There were two distinct exceptions: EFMD's institutional accreditation under the EQUIS label carried out in 2014 at the University of Lund (Sweden) and the IEP review carried out in 2007 at the University of Aveiro (Portugal). IEP was later included in the Register but at the time of the review, EQAR was not operational. The EFMD review was chosen to provide a different perspective for carrying out a review across borders with an EQAR-registered agency.

The final results of the selection are presented below[8]:

1. Higher education institutions from 4 countries that recognise reviews of foreign EQAR-registered agencies as part of the national requirements for external QA (National setting **I**):
   Austria: University of Vienna (OAQ, quality audit 2013), University of Graz (FINHEEC, institutional audit, 2013)
   Belgium: *Flemish Community* (BE-NL): Ghent University (AQAS, joint degree accreditation 2012/2013), *Belgium:* Royal Military School (CTI & NVAO joint review, 2011)
   Lithuania: VTDK University (evalag, programme accreditation 2011); Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius (AHPGS, programme accreditation 2011)
   Romania: University of Bucharest (IEP, institutional evaluation 2012) & Dimitrie Cantemir University from Targu Mures (AHPGS, programme accreditation 2012);
2. Higher Education institutions from 4 countries that do not recognise (or are in progress of recognising) cross-border EQA reviews (National setting II):

[8]See Annex "Selection of countries for the study case" for further information regarding the criteria for the selected countries.

Croatia: University of Zagreb (ASIIN, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, accreditation 2013 and Faculty of Civil Engineering, programme accreditation 2013);
France: Centre d'Etudes Supérieures Européennes (CESEM) at NEOMA Business School (FIBAA, accreditation of a double degree 2011);
Sweden: University of Lund (Lund School of Economics and Management—LUSEM, EFMD accreditation 2014);
Portugal: University of Aveiro (IEP, institutional evaluation 2007).

1.4 Design of the Study and Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework was designed to guide the case-study research questions on the institutional experience with a cross-border EQA (Fig. 2). The research questions focus on the rationale for a cross border review, the specificities of the

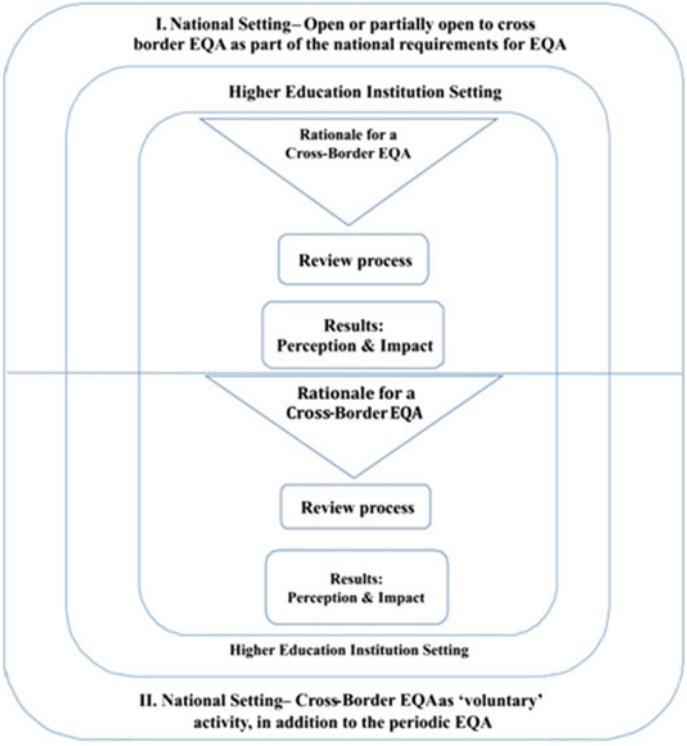

Fig. 2 Case-study conceptual framework

review process, the institution's experience and the impact of the review. The same general line of questioning was used in both national settings, to gather a comparative perspective.

1.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Semi-structured interviews have been carried out with key representatives and stakeholders of each higher education institution (i.e. leadership, coordinator of the institutional/programme EQA, representative of the QA department, QA council, student representatives, management). Following the interview, a report summarising the main findings for each case study was prepared. The reports of the review were checked for factual inaccuracy or possible misinterpretation by each of the interviewed institutions.

The confidentiality of the specific information provided was ensured to interviewees so as to allow disclosure of possible critiques and to increase openness.

1.6 Case-Study Research Questions

In order to facilitate a systematic comparison of cases, a common set of research questions was developed. The interviews are nevertheless contextualised within their different national settings (NS1 & NS2). In addition, specific questions have been added according to the particularity of the review (e.g. double/joint degree programmes, joint QA review etc.).

The main research questions for the case studies are presented in Table 1. The questions are not intended to be a pre-set checklist but, rather, a set of thematic guidelines. To some extent the sections might overlap due to the similarities among the researched elements.

1.7 Overview of Case-Studies

The analysis of institutional experiences with a cross-border external quality assurance (EQA) (evaluation/accreditation/audit at institutional level or programme level) has been portrayed in the cross-case synthesis presented below. The contacted institutions have been asked whether they have carried out any additional cross-border EQA activities with an EQAR or non-EQAR registered agency. The additional cross-border reviews have been considered within the initial analysis as they complement the general findings and provide a more comprehensive overview

Table 1 Case-study research questions

Research dimension	General questions	Specific questions
Description of the institutional/programme review	When was the QA review carried out? What type of QA review was carried out?	
The rationale for the review	Why has the HEI turned to a non-national QAA? Is this the first experience with a cross-border EQA review? Was the institution responsible for selecting the QAA? If so, how was the selection process organised? If not, how was this decision made?	NS1: Has the institution also carried out an external review with a national QA? Joint/double degree: Was a consultation process set up with the partnering institution (s) for selecting the QAA?
The review process	What were the main criteria for the selection process for the QAA? (e.g. International profile, expertise in a specific field/discipline, affordability, reputation, better recognition of degrees abroad, methodology approach (best support in enhancing our QA), country of origin, working language, other)	NS1: Why didn't the HEI select a national QAA for the review?
Results: perception and impact	What did the HEI find noteworthy (and different from what it is used to) in terms of how the agency worked? (e.g. composition of panels, drafting/style of reports, conduct of interviews, sort of people to be interviewed) What were the main impressions regarding the external QA review? What were the main challenges encountered? At what level? How were they overcome? What were the main benefits of the evaluation?/Did the HEI get what it had hoped for from this process?/Would the institution be interested in contacting the QAA for another review?	NS2: Would the HEIs choose a cross-border QAA to fulfil the official requirements for external QA if the possibility existed?

of the cross-border experience within the institution. A Table 2 with the overview of all cross-border EQA activities reported upon by the 12 interviewed institutions are presented below.

Table 2 Overview of cross-border EQA activities within the selected case-studies

Level	QAA & type of review	HEIs discharging the national requirements for EQA with a cross-border QAA	HEIs carrying out a 'voluntary' EQA with a cross-border QAA
Programme or faculty level	ASIIN (programme accreditation) EUR-ACE® seal Euro-Inf® seal		University of Zagreb (Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing & Faculty of Civil Engineering)
	ACQUIN (programme accreditation)		University of Graz
	AHPGS (programme accreditation)	VTDK University Mykolas Romeris University Dimitrie Cantemir University	
	AQAS (joint degree accreditation)	University of Ghent (EMBC)	
	CTI & NVAO (joint review)		Royal Military Academy
	EEALS (joint degree accreditation)	University of Ghent (IMRD-ATLANTIS)	
	EAEVE (programme accreditation)	University of Ghent (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine)	
	EAPAA (programme accreditation)		University of Bucharest
	EFMD (Faculty accreditation Equis label)		University of Lund (LUSEM)
	Evalag (programme accreditation)	VTDK University	University of Graz & Graz University of Technology (joint degree)
	FIBAA (joint degree accreditation)		(CESEM) at NEOMA Business School

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Level	QAA & type of review	HEIs discharging the national requirements for EQA with a cross-border QAA	HEIs carrying out a 'voluntary' EQA with a cross-border QAA
At institutional level	FINEEC (audit)	University of Graz	
	IEP (institutional evaluation)		University of Aveiro University of Bucharest
	OAQ (audit)	University of Vienna (ongoing)	

1.8 The National Context for the Selected Case Studies

The reviews were carried out with the purpose of a programme accreditation (Romania, Lithuania), an institutional audit (Austria) or as part of a joint programme[9] accreditation (Belgium). The following reviews were all recognised as part of the initial or periodic EQA requirements,[10] Higher education institutions in the ***Flemish Community of Belgium*** can have the review for their programme accreditation carried out by foreign agencies. This review will be the basis for accreditation of the study programmes by the NVAO. All EQAR-registered agencies are entitled to carry out the assessment reviews, but have to agree to the Terms of Reference with NVAO beforehand.

To carry out a review with a foreign QA agency in ***Lithuania***, the institution must launch a public call for tender, in conformity with the "Procedure for the external evaluation and accreditation of study programmes", issued by the Minister of Education and Science. The call includes a short description of the study programme(s) to be accredited (e.g. cycle, study area, field), the requirements and criteria for the external evaluation (i.e. evaluation scale), the time frame of the review process, as well as some specific requirements from experts (e.g. qualified specialists in the area of study). The law specifies that the external evaluation may be performed by a foreign agency included in EQAR, while the national QA agency will take an accreditation decision on the reviewed study programme. The two universities selected as case studies are the only two Lithuanian institutions that had programmes reviewed by a foreign agency.

In ***Austria***, there is no requirement for a public procurement procedure, unless the cost of the review process would exceed EUR 50 000. Public universities have to undergo an audit of their internal quality assurance system periodically every

[9]A programme offered jointly by different higher education institutions irrespective of the degree (joint, multiple and double) awarded.

[10]To discharge their obligatory external quality assurance through review by any EQAR-registered QA agency.

seven years and can choose to have that audit carried out by the national agency (AQ Austria), a suitable EQAR-registered agency or another agency recognised by the ministry responsible for higher education. The universities of Graz and Vienna are two of the other public universities that opted for a review by a foreign agency (Uni Wien, Uni Graz, WU Wien, VetMed Wien, Innsbruck, Leoben).

Romanian higher education institutions can choose for their programme accreditation and periodic institutional evaluations the national agency (ARACIS) or another suitable EQAR-registered agency. The external review body must however comply with the national regulation and other international field related standards.[11] Although the procedure for a cross-border EQA with an EQAR-registered agency seems straightforward, there has been some uncertainty as to the practical application of that legal provision and there is currently only one example of such a review carried out in Romania.

In the following countries, reviews were undertaken "voluntarily", i.e. in addition to the obligatory national QA reviews. However, having access to specific funding streams to cover the cost of an international accreditation, the institution was more likely to choose an EQAR-registered agency (i.e. VDTK, Lithuania) or by a QA agency with considerable international experience (IEP, EFMD). The "voluntary" type of reviews carried out in both national settings (NS1 & NS2) is most often improvement-led as it has no consequence for the public funding or accreditation of a study programme.

Croatian higher education institutions are subject to different types of external quality assurance organised by the national Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE, Croatian acronym: AZVO). Public universities are self-accrediting as regards their study programmes, but subject to an institutional audit and reaccreditation. Even though called "re-accreditation of higher education institutions", these actually refer to separate faculties. Evaluations, accreditations and audits carried out by foreign quality assurance agencies are done in addition to the obligatory national reviews, but are not recognised to replace or form part of the national external quality assurance framework.

In ***France,*** the authority to confer degrees is granted and renewed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. The certification ("habilitation") is offered after reviewing the application presented by the institute in question. The review is usually done by the national quality assurance body, AERES which is in charge of institutional evaluation, research unit evaluation and bachelor, master and doctoral programme evaluation. However, when it comes to evaluating engineering programmes, the review is carried out by CTI (Commission des Titres d'Ingénieurs).

The quality assurance system for higher education in ***Portugal*** was set up by the Rectors' Council in 1990 and comprised different coordination councils who assessed the quality of the public, private and polytechnic sectors. After the system was reformed in 2007, the national Assessment and Accreditation agency, A3ES

[11]Law no. 87/2006 for the endorsement of the Government's Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 concerning quality assurance in education.

was assigned to accredit study programmes in a five-year cycle. In addition, since 2012 A3ES has started quality audit procedures as a pilot exercise. The institutional audit is to be fully implemented in 2016, after the first accreditation cycle is completed. The results of the assessment or accreditation procedures requested by Portuguese higher education institutions from other national or foreign quality assurance bodies may be recognised depending on the protocols of agreement and decision of the Executive Board of A3ES.

In ***Sweden,*** the authorisation for public institutions to carry out programmes leading to a degree-level award is provided by the national agency (with the authority of the Ministry) following a review. The national agency (HSV) also carries out the periodic evaluations of programmes. For a positive programme accreditation, the decision is valid for four years. Reviews carried out by foreign quality assurance agencies (QAAs) cannot replace the periodic reviews of HSV and are carried out on a voluntary basis.

2 Case-Study Analysis

2.1 The Rationale Behind a Cross-Border EQA

Higher education institutions turn to an agency active across borders not only to fulfil their periodic EQA requirements, but also to enhance their reputation, increase the employability of their graduate or to develop their own internal quality culture (Fig. 3).

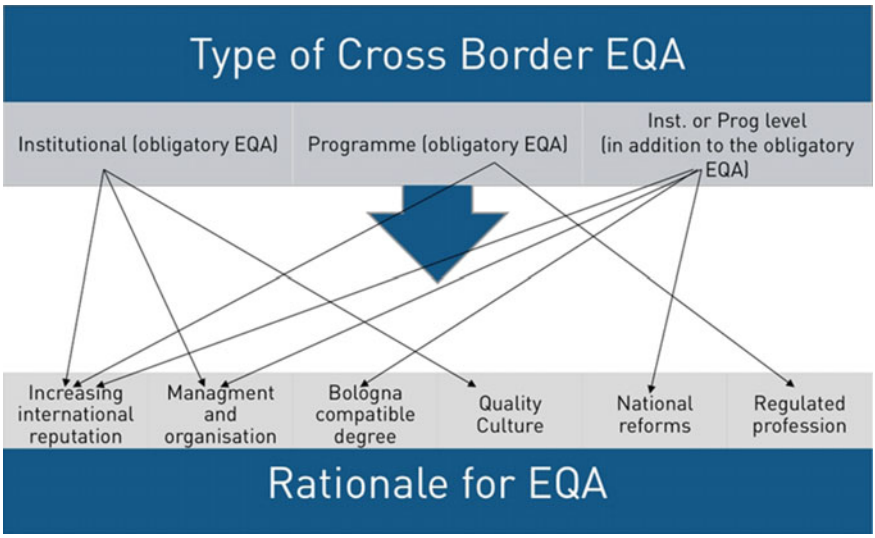

Fig. 3 Rationale for EQA considering the type of cross-border EQA

Institutions referred to the following main reasons when asked about their rationale for a cross-border review:

2.1.1 Increasing the International Visibility and Reputation

Considering the international profile of business schools and research-oriented institutions, the decision to carry out a review is to enhance the institution's profile internationally and, as a result, extend its partnerships and collaborations within the network. A high number of international partnerships (e.g. bilateral agreements, educational and research programmes, networks and research collaboration) are supported with this type of accreditation.

Small and regionally established higher education institutions consider the recognition provided by an international accreditation body as a way of attracting more students not only from the national pool, but also from outside the country.

2.1.2 Achieving "Bologna-Compatible" Degrees

The decision to carry out the review was set in the context of the Bologna Process reforms. A few of the interviewed institutions saw the international accreditation agency as a way to make their studies more attractive for the labour market by having their programmes and qualifications recognised/certified as "Bologna-compatible" and in line with European standards. This was mainly the case where the national QAAs were not yet established or had not yet been reviewed against the ESG.

2.1.3 Quality Culture

More than half of the selected institutions have carried out at least two external reviews with a QAA active in cross-border QA, either at the programme or institutional level. The interviewees saw these external evaluations/audits as contributing to the development of their internal quality culture. Building upon the experience of previous reviews, the institutions found that they had improved their internal quality arrangements (better developed structures and processes) and approach to internal quality.

2.1.4 Development of Institution's Management and Organisation

One institution sought external expertise to develop the strategic goals of the institution (e.g. assess less developed areas of the university, enhance its research infrastructure, regional development etc.). This institution placed a high emphasis on the recommendations of the external review panel, as essential in consolidating the institutional development goals.

2.1.5 In the Context of National Reforms

EQA activities were at times commissioned by ministries to implement a larger higher education reform agenda. One of the selected case studies was reviewed as part of a national EQA exercise (2012–2014), co-financed by the European Union's structural funds and implemented by UEFISCDI[12] and EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP). Within the framework of the project, IEP carried out 70 reviews of public higher education institutions during three rounds of evaluations (between 2011 and 2014). The project was set to improve the management and quality assurance within the Romanian higher education system by strengthening the strategic capacity and autonomy of universities. Additionally, the project sought to provide the Ministry with an independent international opinion on which to base its future strategic decisions regarding institutional development.

2.1.6 Regulated Professions

Although these cases were not the focus of the case studies, some institutions reported that some of their programmes had undergone an international accreditation to fulfil the required educational standards for specific EU regulated professions. For instance, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (University of Gent) reported that it has to comply with a number of standards in the preparation of veterinary surgeons since the profession is regulated by the European Union (Directive 2013/55/EU). The EAEVE review provides recognition for veterinary education establishments if they have achieved the EU minimum compulsory requirements for this profession.

2.1.7 A Second Opinion

Some institutions may decide to commission a non-national QA review to try out a different approach or methodology that the one provided by the national QA agency. This might be due to the institution's belief that that agency that carried out the review(s) in the past did not understood the institution and its work sufficiently well.

2.2 Selection of a Suitable QAA

Institutions considered a number of criteria that played a role in the final selection decision (international reputation, country of origin, expertise in a particular field,

[12]Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding.

affordability etc.). In some cases, no initial decision was taken to choose a foreign or a national QA agency, and both options were considered equally.

The choice of a suitable agency usually involves considerable desk research for higher education institutions, for which they use information provided on the EQAR website and on the agencies' own websites (e.g. expertise in different methodologies of external quality assurance, countries where agencies have worked). Institutions often find themselves in the situation that only a small number of the (currently) 32 EQAR-registered agencies would at all be suitable to undertake the review that is needed.

2.2.1 Fulfilling the Legal Requirements

A pre-condition for choosing a QAA in the case of higher education institutions seeking to discharge their external QA obligations was to only consider QAAs that fulfilled the national legal provisions. QAAs active in cross borders QA were required to have expertise in a certain type of EQA (audit/accreditation/evaluation). In many cases, agencies are also required to use a set of national criteria. This gave an advantage to those agencies with prior experience in the country or those that could articulate clearly how they would carry out the review in the specific country.

2.2.2 Language

Among the selected institutions the common language of the international QA review was English. In a few cases, institutions requested German, French and Dutch as the main language of the QA review process. The requirement of carrying out the EQA in the official language of the country was either an internal decision (in case of bilingual institutions), or it was requested to ensure a more efficient review process, i.e. to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation in the use of technical terms and to increase acceptance of the review among internal or external stakeholders.

2.2.3 International Experience and Expertise

Due to the international dimension of the degree programmes, in particular in the case of Erasmus Mundus and other joint and double degrees programmes, institutions were considering QAAs that could have an international-led approach in reviewing the quality of the programme. Institutions also mentioned they looked at the portfolios of international activities and at the presentation of QAAs' procedures and cross-border review policies.

2.2.4 Peers

The interviewees mentioned they preferred QAAs with a wider pool of experts and had asked for panel members with expertise in a given field. In two cases, the institutions requested the cross-border QAA not to include experts from within their country. Due to a limited pool of national reviewers, the higher education institutions feared the biased view of experts coming from one of the 'competing' higher education institutions.

One of the institutions mentioned they were dissatisfied with the lack of training requirements for specialists used by one of the reviewing agencies (a non-EQAR registered agency).

2.2.5 Costs

For some of the interviewed institutions (large and mature HEIs) costs did not play a major role, even though the institution relied on its own budget to cover the review costs.

These institutions noted that the internal costs (preparation, self-evaluation, etc.) were anyway significantly higher than the cost of the review as such. The situation was different for those institutions that had to launch a public call for tender.

Most institutions recognised that the costs of a cross border review were higher than the costs of a review by the national QA agency, which might deter institutions in seeking a cross-border EQA. The choice of a cross border EQA is taken because the (long term) benefits are considered to outweigh the higher costs of such a review.

2.3 Benefits of a Cross Border EQA

2.3.1 Internationalisation and Recognition of Degrees

Institutions felt that a review by a foreign international agency was a more genuine international experience, even if the national QA agency would include international peers on its panels. This is mainly based on the perception that the chosen agency has a broad pool of international peers and would be clearly seen as international by their stakeholders. Also, international review teams are considered to have a more developed understanding of the programme complexities and the institution's experience with international students.

The most widely acknowledged impact of a cross-border EQA review was the strengthening of internationalisation policies and development of institutions collaboration with other foreign institutions. The internationalisation effect also extended to the academic formation practices (teaching and learning) of the institution and the development of mobility programmes.

The cross-border EQA reviews seem to also support the implementation of Bologna tools. For instance, to meet the requirements of a programme accreditation, the reviewed institution reported to have aligned its study programmes to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), making the transition to the national qualification framework (which was later established) more easily.

In comparison with the national reviews, some of the interviewees from small higher education systems considered the international/foreign panel of experts to be more balanced in its judgments and review of their programmes.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

In preparing the review process, the institutions engaged in a wide consultation with their academic communities. This has enhanced the participation of stakeholders in the development plans of the institution and reviewed programmes. The cross-border EQA review is sometimes seen to have enhanced the voice of students within the institution as well, increasing the recognition of their input. One of the institutions reported that it decided to include a student representative within the self-evaluation committee for the first time.

Interviewees also reported an increased external acknowledgement of the institutions' efforts to improve from the local community and enhanced collaborations with their alumni and social partners.

2.3.3 Development of QA Practices and Procedures

Following these reviews, institutions stated that they also developed or enhanced their internal QA system. This usually included development of the internal quality management system, integrated information system, quality system for curricular units, development of procedures for the monitoring of the quality and teaching, the launch of the first alumni survey, enhancement of the student feedback system, increased the number of regional partnerships etc.

The institutions appreciated the reviewers approach to quality as development and not punishment, setting a positive incentive in taking in the outcomes of the review and allowing the institution to take forward ideas/plans for change.

2.3.4 Strengthening the Institution's Own Responsibility for Quality

Some of the institutions stated that they valued the opportunity to choose an agency that can promote more autonomy and underscore the responsibility of the institution for its own internal quality assurance processes.

The preparations have also fostered the self-reflection process, allowing the institution to identify possible problems (e.g. areas where universities' internal processes were uncoordinated) and providing an impetus to challenge the

status-quo (e.g. review out-dated procedures and practices). This has often helped the top-management to reconsider its current working methods but it has also provided a stronger basis or an external pressure to follow-up on the external recommendations.

2.3.5 A Positive Add-on to the Regular EQA

Cross-border EQA is also considered by one of the institutions as a positive add-on to the regular, obligatory external quality assurance exercise carried out by the national QAA. In cases where both the national and cross-border QAAs followed the European Standards and Guidelines, the review process was not significantly different. However, when it comes to differences, the standards and criteria used by the international/foreign reviewers are perceived to be less rigid, more wide-ranging and also more outcome-oriented. If the international review was done in addition to the obligatory EQA, it was often considered helpful in the preparation for the national accreditation.

2.4 Challenges of a Cross-Border EQA

2.4.1 Extensive Preparation Phase

Considering the novelty of these reviews for some institutions, the preparation phase was very demanding. The biggest challenge was the extensive documentation. The preparation for the review entailed a long and laborious work for the institutions, and in particular for the self-evaluation steering groups (weekly meetings, several months of collecting data, consulting stakeholders, writing and redrafting chapters etc.). The length of the preparation depended on the type and complexity of the review. Single programme accreditation required a few months up to half a year, while institutional evaluations or institutional audit extended to a whole year. The documentation sometimes entailed extra effort in the case of joint and double degree programmes due to the need to coordinate the review process with partnering countries.

2.4.2 Understanding of the National Educational System

Since most QAAs were carrying out a cross-border EQA for the first time in the reviewed country, the institution was tasked not only with the self-evaluation report, but also with providing additional materials and explanation about the national context, background and specificities. The institutions invested considerable time and effort in supporting these preparations (e.g. translating documents,

clarifying different understandings related to the national QA terminology for domain specific area).

To ensure an efficient and accurate review within the higher education system, institutions stated that they found the foreign QAA's preparation to be particularly helpful in improving the quality of the review (e.g. one QAA sent a list of open questions before the on-site visit inquiring about the specificities of the national legislation with regards to the reviewed programme). In some cases, a technical preparation meeting was set up with the QAA before the site visit to assist with the preparation process.

2.4.3 Legislative Context

The set up and coordination of the EQA of joint programmes presented particular challenges, as it entailed overcoming national legislative barriers, national quality assurance frameworks and specific institutional regulations (e.g. taking into account expiry of programme accreditation, equivalence for grading systems etc.).

The recommendations were in some cases difficult to follow due to the legislative framework (e.g. the development of new specialisations required a royal decree).

A changing legislative context also created difficulty for the institution and the reviewers, altering the focus of the external review from the status of the current governance to the potential changes that would take place in the governance structure.

2.4.4 Language Barriers

One additional challenge encountered by most institutions was related to the lack of available documentation in English (legislation, university strategy and documents etc.). The translation of the required documentation presented a number of difficulties due to the specific national terminology used in higher education and quality-related matters.

However, for some of the interviewed institutions, the need to translate documents into English was not a specific challenge, as they were anyway required for reviews by the national QA agency involving international experts.

In preparing for the site-visit interviews, some institutions stated that they found it difficult for some of their staff to meet and discuss with the international review panel in English. To overcome this challenge, an interpreter was often provided.

2.4.5 Complexity of the Review

The institutions sometimes experienced two different approaches to quality assurance that meant being assessed on similar standards that were differently defined

and had a different weight for each of the reviewing agency. Internalising the recommendations while taking into account two different perspectives on the results of the EQA, was considered rather confusing.

The bilingual approach of some reviews entailed double sets of self evaluation reports. The interviewees admitted that a lengthier preparation was required due to this approach.

Quality assurance of joint programmes (leading to joint, double or multiple degrees) often involves a number of complexities. Whereas institutions that are subject to external quality assurance only at the institutional level (e.g. in a regular audit) tend to have fewer difficulties, institutions from countries with obligatory accreditation or evaluation at the level of study programmes often find themselves unable to have one joint programme evaluated/accredited in one joint procedure, due to different (and sometimes even conflicting) formal requirements in the countries involved.

3 Discussion on Findings

3.1 Why Turn to a Cross-Border EQA?

Generally, a review by a foreign QA agency requires more time and effort than a review by the national QA agency. In terms of challenges, higher education institutions consider the extra effort invested in explaining "their" system and context to a foreign agency and peers. The issue of costs can be an inhibiting factor where a review by the national QA agency is free of charge, while a review by another EQAR-registered agency might be at the higher education institution's own expense.

The choice of a suitable agency usually involves considerable desk research undertaken by higher education institutions, for which they have used information provided on the EQAR website (e.g. expertise in different methodologies of external quality assurance, countries where agencies have worked) and on the agencies' own websites. Institutions often find themselves in the situation that only a small number of the (currently) 32 EQAR-registered agencies[13] would at all be suitable to undertake the review that is needed.

Nevertheless, institutions that choose to be reviewed by a foreign quality assurance agency see important advantages and opportunities that justify the extra effort required: receiving the best feedback, a review best suited to their own needs, or improved recognition of their qualifications.

[13]As of 15 September 2014.

3.2 Internationalisation as a Driver for EQA

Most often, higher education institutions turn to a cross-border EQA (at institutional or programme level) to increase their international reputation. Institutions felt that a review by a foreign/international agency was a more genuine international experience, even if the national QA agency would include international peers on its panels. The impact of such an international accreditation is recognized as having a stronger connection with the labour market, benefiting students when they graduate, in terms of finding employment or continuing their academic career abroad more easily.

Institutions (especially small or regional ones) consider the review to strengthen their international profile and international partnerships. Related to this, the reputation and image of the agency chosen plays a certain role in the selection process.

Internationalisation of higher education institution has become a driver for cross-border quality assurance processes. The current developments suggest a new approach in the role and purposes fulfilled by quality assurance, a role that might be part of the discourse on the "modernisation" of quality assurance in Europe.

3.3 ESG as a Proxy for Trust Within EHEA

HEIs interest towards cross-border EQA might also prompt the traditional QA establishments to reconsider their current trust arrangements, where the national seal of an accreditation guarantees funding of the higher education and the recognition of qualifications for the labour market. Stensaker and Maasen[14] observe that the bilateral trust relationship between state authorities and higher education institutions has been shifting towards a multilateral type of trust relationship. With the implementation of the ESGs, a foundation was created for increased trust in the quality assurance of higher education in each of the EHEA countries. Similarly, according to the Map ESG project, the ESGs are perceived to be a useful instrument that should maintain generic standards to respond to the many purposes of higher education.

Confidence in external QA across the continent is not an end in itself, but it can serve as a proxy to increase mutual trust in higher education institution and their study programmes.

However, the examples of country openness to cross-border external quality assurance seem to be few and far between. The desk research of the project showed that most countries are reluctant to devolve any type of responsibility (and thus trust) on external QA, while the responses to the QAA survey carried out by EQAR show that cross-border EQA is taking place almost in all EHEA member countries

[14]Stensajer and Maasen (2013).

(39 out of 47).[15] In these closed system, the cross-border EQA leads to a duplication of efforts. It remains to see whether the recognition of higher education institutions commitment to be responsible for their own quality assurance and the use of ESGs as a "common denominator" for quality assurance agencies (whereas EQAR is used as a proxy for ESG compliance) would provide a cross-country foundation for the development of trust within EHEA.

4 Acronyms and Glossary

"E4 Group"	The E4 group refers to four European stakeholders in higher education: The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
European Higher Education Area (EHEA)	Launched along with the Bologna Process' decade anniversary during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference in March 2010 by 47 states, together with the European Commission, and the consultative members, namely the Council of Europe, UNESCO, EUA, ESU, EURASHE, ENQA, Education International and BUSINESSEUROPE. EHEA was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe
European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)	The Register aims at increasing transparency of quality assurance in higher education across Europe. It has been founded in 2008 by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). EQAR publishes and manages a list of quality assurance agencies that substantially comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) to provide clear and reliable information on quality assurance agencies operating in EHEA

(continued)

[15]RIQAA Preliminary Project Results (2014).

(continued)

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) are an agreed set of standards and guidelines for quality assurance in European higher education. They were developed by the "E4 Group" and adopted by the ministers in Bergen in (2005)
External Quality Assurance (EQA)	External quality assurance refers to the process of evaluation or audit of a higher education programme or institution undertaken by a specialised body outside the institution. Typically, the body may be a quality assurance or accreditation agency, or an ad hoc panel of experts and peers constituted by the responsible Ministry. The evaluation will involve the collection of data, information and evidence for assessment against agreed standards
Higher education institution (HEI)	Officially recognised public and private higher education institutions that offer programmes at ISCED levels 5 and 6 and are provided for under the legislation of the country concerned
Joint programmes	Programmes that are developed and implemented jointly by several institutions in different countries
Joint degree	A higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies
Quality assurance (QA)	An all-embracing term referring to processes of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institution or programme
Quality assurance agency (QAA)	A body established by public authorities with responsibility for external quality assurance. Agencies are intended to play a strong role in ensuring accountability of higher education institutions and may have specific objectives and developmental roles regarding enhancing quality
Quality culture	Quality culture is a set of group values that guide how improvements are made to everyday working practices and consequent outputs
National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)	National qualifications frameworks describe qualifications in terms of level, workload,

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	learning outcomes and profile. They relate qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education coherently and are internationally understood
Polytechnic institute	A technical higher education establishment offering instruction in many industrial arts and applied sciences
Regulation	A law, decree or any other officially binding document, issued by the top-level education authorities

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A Merry-Go-Round of Evaluations Moving from Administrative Burden to Reflection on Education and Research in Romania

Koen Geven and Adina Maricuţ

1 Introduction

The Romanian two-part film 'Tales from the Golden Age' (2009) portrays several legends from the 'golden age' of communism. One of these tales recounts an inspection of a village in preparation of a visit of state officials the next day. The whole village is nervous about the preparations and receives detailed instructions from two inspectors. In a comical sequence of events, the inspectors end up getting drunk with the villagers, and finally both inspectors and villagers find themselves stuck in a merry-go-round for the night. It is said that they were still spinning when the state officials passed by in the morning.

While folk-tale should not be confused for reality, it is easy to draw a parallel between this dark comedy and current debates about 'quality' in Romanian universities. Concerns about quality are clearly connected to expectations of state officials (both domestic and foreign), while it is hard to untangle the inspectors, academics and other actors involved in the merry-go-round of evaluations. These evaluations were initiated between 2005 and 2011, a period in which Romania joined the European Union and played an important role in the Bologna Process. The broad header of 'evaluations' comprise, inter alia, *quality assurance reviews* by the quality assurance agency ARACIS, a *classification of universities and departments* by the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Sports, *university*

K. Geven (✉)
European University Institute, Florence, Italy
e-mail: koen.geven@eui.eu

A. Maricuţ
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
e-mail: maricut_adina@ceu-budapest.edu

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evaluations organised by the European University Association,[1] as well as various other audits mandated by official legislation.

Many perceive the amount of regulation to be a problem (see other chapters in this volume), but so far little has been done to correct the situation (Geven et al. 2014; Păunescu et al. 2011, 2012; Sursock 2014). This paper[2] aims to present some suggestions on how this merry-go-round can be stopped, hopefully to the benefit of higher education and scientific research in Romania. The guiding question of the paper is "*How can evaluations in Romanian universities become more meaningful?*" Answers will be provided by analysing a set of interviews of 310 university leaders, faculty and students in five Romanian universities.

We present five recommendations to the government, the ministry of education, science, youth and sports and the various agencies tasked with evaluation (primarily UEFISCDI, ARACIS, CNCS, CNFIS, and CNATDCU[3]). We also present four recommendations to the universities, and interested faculty, students and other stakeholders. While the primary audience of the paper is Romanian, international organisations or individual observers of debates on quality assurance in Romania may also take an interest. The core of our message is that (1) evaluation procedures should be simplified, (2) students and professors should receive more control over the evaluations and (3) agencies and university leaders should use a more open definition of what 'quality' means for different people.

2 Evaluation in Romanian Universities

For-profit education was booming in Romania all through the 1990s and early 2000s. Many were afraid that standards were dropping, and thought that regulation was necessary. In 2004, the government appointed a new minister, Mircea Miclea,

[1]The European University Association has published its own synthesis report on Romanian universities. Many of the recommendations overlap with the analysis presented here. See Sursock in the references.

[2]The paper is an outcome of a research project carried out in 2012/13, comprising of field visits to five Romanian universities. During these visits, 186 in-depth interviews were conducted with the management of the universities, members of quality assurance bodies, professors, administrators and students. While the research project initially addressed quality assurance in Romanian universities, this paper extends the recommendations to other fields of higher education governance as well. The research underlying the paper was conducted in the context of the project "Higher Education Evidence Based Policy Making: a necessary premise for progress in Romania", run by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) between 2012 and 2014.

[3]'UEFISCDI' is the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding. 'ARACIS' is the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 'CNCS' is the National Research Council, CNFIS is the National Council for Higher Education Funding, and 'CNATDCU' is the National Council for the Recognition of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates.

with plans to improve the quality of higher education. His main obstacle to do so was the Romanian parliament. Many parliamentarians had connections with low quality universities, and some had much to lose from tougher quality controls.[4]

In May 2005, the new minister went to the Ministerial meeting of the Bologna Process in Bergen, Norway. At the summit, ministers adopted the 'European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. This came at a very convenient time for Minister Miclea, who now had an argument to establish higher standards in Romania. Upon return from the ministerial conference, he agreed with the government to pass an emergency ordinance to adopt these new standards in Romania. While the parliament reeled, they could do little against an 'emergency' measure, and were practically unable to amend the proposals from 'Europe'.

The ordinance established a quality assurance agency, ARACIS, which was mandated to evaluate all degree programmes and universities in the country. The idea behind the new agency was that it would shut down low quality universities and degree programmes, while helping to improve the better universities. While these aims were underlined as important in several external evaluations of ARACIS,[5] many questions remained about whether this was being done effectively (Păunescu et al. 2011, 2012). Policy-makers therefore started making new proposals to improve the quality of teaching and research in Romanian universities.

Around late 2010, there was another chance to reform the system. In 2007, Romania had joined the European Union, and subsequently Romania was elected to host the secretariat of the Bologna Process. The European ministers were now pushing for new initiatives to improve the quality of higher education, mostly under the header of 'transparency instruments'. The government had just appointed an ambitious new minister for education, Daniel Funeriu, who promised to modernize the Romanian education system along European lines. The new minister sought to develop an integrated reform package, culminating in a new law on education, passed in January 2011.

Rather than replacing the quality assurance system, minister Funeriu developed an additional set of policy instruments to modernize the universities. Each of these instruments had a new element of evaluation. Perhaps the most important of these was an instrument to classify universities in three categories: (A) research universities, (B) research and teaching universities, and (C) teaching universities. Whereas universities previously received comparable amounts of public funding, the classification exercise sought to differentiate funding streams to the three kinds of

[4]One good example is that the current prime minister of Romania has been convicted by the University of Bucharest of plagiarizing his PhD degree, and has subsequently been forced to give back his degree. This is far from unique for Romanian politicians, of which many have doctorates that have not been scrutinized. If tougher controls would be imposed on plagiarism, some major politicians would probably lose their degree.

[5]First by the European University Association (EUA), then by the European Students Union (ESU), and then also by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA), as well as the European Register for Quality Assurance (EQAR).

universities. Additionally, the new law also introduced a number of alternative audits and evaluations, including a ranking of departments by scientific discipline, and an evaluation of doctoral schools.

The following table breaks down the different policy instruments that have been introduced over the years. Table 1 shows six categories of policies, broken down into ten different policy instruments that evaluate (aspects of) universities. Some of these instruments are not (yet?) implemented, since policy-makers could not (yet) agree upon the method of implementation. For instance, the methodology of the classification was never fully published, leading to a lengthy court battle over whether it was a valid tool to fund the universities.

Many commentators have criticized the emerging 'evaluation culture' in universities, including in Romania (for an overview of this literature, see Geven and Maricuţ 2015). While critique is important, it begs the question what should be done about this problem. We decided to analyse the suggestions made by people who interact with these policy instruments on a daily basis, namely university leaders, faculty and students. The next section will lay out how we went about our research.

Table 1 Different instruments of evaluation in Romanian universities

Category	Evaluation instruments	Introduced in:
Quality assurance	Institutional evaluation and accreditation	2006 Law on Education Quality Assurance
	Programme evaluation and accreditation	1993, changed in 2006 Law on Education Quality Assurance
	Evaluation of doctoral schools	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 158)
Classification and ranking	Institutional classification	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 193)
	Programme ranking	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 193)
	Institutional evaluation	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 193.6)
Research assessment exercise	Research evaluation	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 195)
Standards for promotion	Legal standards for promotion	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 295)
	Habilitation standards	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 300)
Audits by various national agencies	Audits of various managerial practices like ethics, financing, promotions, etc.	2011 Law on National Education (Art. 218–219)

Note Based on an analysis of policy documents and legal texts

Sources Law 87/2006 on the approval of the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 75/2005 regarding the education quality assurance, Law 01/2011 on National Education, Art 295–297 and subsequently Ministerial Ordinance OMECTS no. 6560/2012 and draft amendments to OMECTS no. 6560/16.07.2013

3 Methodological Considerations

Researchers can use many methods to evaluate policies, such as impact analyses, cost-benefit studies, policy process studies or implementation studies; each of these based on qualitative and/or quantitative methods (for an overview, see Moran et al. 2006). Since we are trying to answer a question of meaning in this paper, we have opted for an implementation study, based on interviews and documentary analysis. Indeed, we thought that the most straightforward way to answer questions about the 'meaning' of policies was to interview the people who deal with this policy on a daily basis. These people can tell us how policy instruments relate to their professional practice, and what the boundaries of the policies are. Thus, we used a tradition of 'interpretive policy research' that treats discourse of people and policy documents as sources of 'data' (cf. Schatz 2009; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012).

There are two main implications of using 'discourse' as a source of information. The first implication is that conceptual boundaries that are clear in theory may not be so clear in practice. For instance, a document such as the 'European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance' makes a distinction between 'internal' and 'external' quality assurance (Dill and Beerkens 2010). 'Internal' quality assurance refers to the evaluations initiated by people inside the universities; 'external' quality assurance, on the other hand, refers to evaluations undertaken by the government or other actors 'external' to the university. For our interviewees, however, both 'internal' and 'external' evaluations are seen as imposed by 'others' (Geven et al. 2014), thus rendering this conceptualisation inadequate to understand the experiences of our interviewees.

In order to avoid getting stuck in this conceptual swamp, we use one general term, 'evaluation', to denote the various assessments that take place in the universities. These include accreditation, quality assurance (both internal and external), research assessments, audits, and various other forms of assessing work in universities. In this sense, we follow the literature about the 'audit culture' in universities (Power 1997; Shore and Wright 1999). While this conceptual lumping may be confusing for those working in different fields of evaluation, we think that our approach stays close to how people inside universities think about all these forms of evaluations. Indeed, we were cautious about imposing our theoretical preconceptions onto our interviewees.

A second implication is that our results cannot be considered 'objective'. All our recommendations have been developed from a qualitative interaction between the researchers and the interviewees. Interviewees may confuse certain policy instruments with each other, or talk about seemingly unrelated issues. They may be experts on the subject, or it may be the first time that they are thinking about evaluations. Perhaps this is the closest we can come to an overview of the policy implementation, since these are the very people dealing with implementation.[6]

[6]Some scholars may have questions about whether our interpretations are the 'right' ones. In order to increase the validity of our findings, we allow others to replicate our findings (see next note).

Table 2 An overview over the universities in which we carried out fieldwork

University	Geographic location	Type	Size
University of West Timisoara	Timisoara (South-West Romania)	Comprehensive public university	Medium (>10,000 students)
Babes-Bolyai University	Cluj-Napoca (central Romania)	Comprehensive public university	Large (>30,000 students)
Gheorghe Asachi University	Iasi (North-East Romania)	Specialised (technical) public university	Medium (>10,000 students)
Romanian American University	Bucharest (South Romania)	Comprehensive private university	Small (<10,000 students)
Lucian Blaga University	Sibiu (central Romania)	Comprehensive public university	Medium (>10,000 students)

Note Based on correspondence with administrators at the universities

We carried out fieldwork in 5 Romanian universities, representing different institutional types, and different geographical regions of Romania. The universities were selected because these are considered to be good performing universities, who take the evaluations seriously. In addition, we made sure to include four different regions (South West, Centre, North East, South) and to include at least one private university (Romanian American University). Table 2 gives a broad overview over these universities.

Field-visits took place between December 2012 and June 2013, gathering the views of 310 interviewees in 186 conversations (some interviews had multiple participants). Interview participants were selected according to their professional roles as decision-makers (i.e. rectors, vice-rectors, deans), faculty (professors), administrators (i.e. secretaries), students, and QA-personnel (see Fig. 1 for the distribution of interviewees). Interviews were carried out in the English or Romanian language, following the preference of the interviewee. Notes were taken in English and analysed using qualitative data analysis software. We developed a coding scheme to identify main themes and problems, as well as possible suggestions.[7]

In order to better understand what kind of policies we are talking about, we also carried out an analysis of policy documents (primarily legal texts, policy papers, quality assurance and evaluation guidelines). These were coded along similar lines as the interview notes, allowing us to map the concerns of interviewees onto the specific policies and procedures. We will present the results of this analysis in the following sections.

[7]The interview transcripts and coding scheme are available upon written request to the authors. Interviewee names are anonymised here, but can be fully traced if more information is required. Each interviewee signed a consent form detailing this procedure.

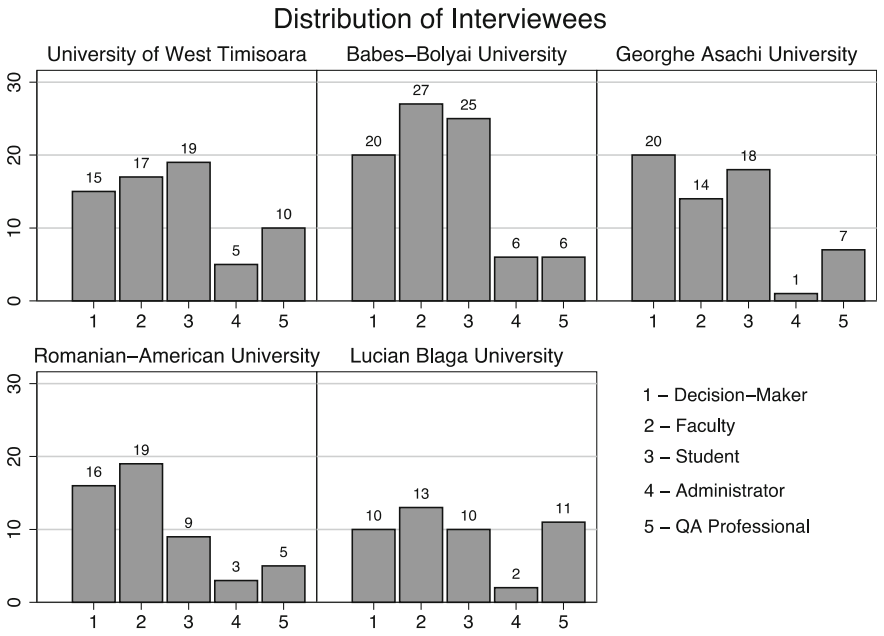

Fig. 1 Interviewees' role, broken down by university

4 The Policy Problem

The interviewees recognize that there are good reasons why policy-makers have imposed evaluations on Romanian universities. To name just a few prominent issues: there are many universities who provide questionable education to the students; teaching methods are usually out-dated; Romanian scientists publish few articles in international journals; plagiarism is still not battled effectively, and so on. While many interviewees recognize these problems, they question whether 'evaluations' are the right tool to address these problems.

Indeed, the interviewees consistently pointed out that evaluations *fail* to achieve substantial reflection on higher education and scientific research (see Geven et al. 2014 for an analysis why this may be so). Three main problems were most dominant: Evaluations are perceived (1) as bureaucracy that is often changed; (2) as failing to create ownership; and (3) to be based on inconsistent evaluation criteria that lead to gaming and compliance behaviour.

Table 3 gives a summary of the problem in a so-called 'policy-tree' that breaks down the general problem into specific problems. Below, we will outline each of the abovementioned problems in more detail.

Table 3 An overview of the problem regarding evaluation in Romanian universities in a policy-tree, breaking down the general problem into more specific problems

General problem	Evaluations fail to achieve substantial reflection on higher education and scientific research		
Specific problem	1. The current evaluation practices are too bureaucratic	2. Academics and students do not feel ownership over evaluations	3. Evaluation standards are inconsistent
Problem at National Level	The evaluation practices cost a lot of time and money	The evaluations have been designed for needs of policy-makers, rather than those of academics and students	Evaluations present an inconsistent picture of what 'quality' means, how it should be assessed and improved
	The evaluation practices change too frequently		
	Evaluations are not always the best method to achieve the policy objective		
Problem at University Level	Too much weight is put on formal evaluations	There is not enough flexibility to deal with disciplinary differences and innovations	There has been little systematic reflection within faculties and departments on what 'quality' means in education and research

4.1 Evaluations Are Perceived as Too Bureaucratic

The first problem with the national legislation is that it creates a bureaucratic workload. Evaluations require documents, meetings, specialised staff, and working structures that are seen to distract from academic work. This bureaucracy dominates current evaluation practices; professionals see such practices as being disconnected from their daily activities of teaching and research. This results in a sort of resignation and task avoidance, which is seen as a major reason why evaluations cannot be internalised (see also Păunescu et al. 2012).

This bureaucracy costs both time and money. Many of our interviewees, particularly those we see as decision-makers (rectors, vice-rectors, deans, vice-deans, senate members) are faced with an enormous amount of papers each day. In the words of some of them:

> [We need] to stop working twice for the same thing. Why do I need to have a faculty report and a QA report? Are they not the same thing? Why do we need two different reports and formats? (Decision-Maker, Professor, Male, 50503).
>
> Time management needs to become better. We are wasting a lot of time on useless things (Decision-Maker, Lecturer, Male, 20705).
>
> The QA process is characterized by huge quantities of bureaucratic requirements. We are lucky that the Vice-Dean for Quality Management takes care of these documents (Decision-Maker, Professor, Male, 50604).

In terms of financial costs, we estimated for a large university that the costs for undergoing quality assurance evaluations amount to around RON 1,160,900 (approx. €258,000) per year.[8] This is a conservative estimate, since it only includes direct costs of the external agencies and the costs of maintaining the quality assurance unit in the university. It does not include the costs of the involvement of faculty, university administrators, meeting rooms, European projects, evaluations by foreign experts, research evaluations or any other evaluations undertaken by the university. While some may argue that these are legitimate costs for improving the quality of education and scientific research, we have our doubts that these costs can be justified as such, since these reports are often unrelated to improvements.

To give another example of the bureaucracy, we present an overview of the minimal activities by each university that we have found in Table 4. In the Table, we find the various structures inside each individual university, faculty and department that we visited. The law prescribes universities to establish each of these structures and activities, and we indeed could find people involved in each of these structures, as well as trails of documents and reports elaborated by each of them.

One of the main reasons why many of these evaluations are seen as meaningless bureaucracy is that they are too often changed. One interviewee described the situation as such:

> Regulations are constantly changing and it is hard to follow up on them. Some of the regulations are not coherent. We are constantly on stand-by. This creates confusion and we cannot plan for the future. (Decision-Maker, Professor, Female, NS0302).

Since many of the governmental decrees mention some form of evaluation, the word 'regulation' has become a synonym for 'evaluation'. Consider a few major legislative changes. The law on quality assurance has remained more or less in place since 2005. The 2011 law on education, the classification exercise and associated legislation related to the evaluation of research centres added several new layers of evaluation (see Table 1). In turn, the current government amended these regulations several times. Because these regulations are changing so often, universities cannot develop a consistent strategy for evaluation (see also problem 3 below). This creates confusion (since it is difficult to keep up-to-date with the latest legislative modifications) and prevents them from engaging in long-term planning. Each of these changes has led to a build-up of frustrations about evaluations procedures and their supposed remedies among many academics.

Another reason why these procedures are perceived as bureaucratic is that they overshadow more informal practices to improve. Yet, discussions at the coffee machine or a simple personal exchange between colleagues are often the most efficient ways to solve a problem. One of our interviewees said that:

[8]This is based on a calculation of costs of all the programme evaluations and the institutional evaluation (official costs ARACIS), as well as information provided to us by the university. While the university faced a discount through a European Union funded project on quality assurance (ACADEMIS project), these are included in the total price, since they provide a cost to the public.

Table 4 The various evaluation structures and practices in all Romanian universities in which fieldwork was obtained. All these structures are prescribed by national legislation and policy documents

University level	Faculty and department level
Administrative structures, such as vice-rector positions for academic quality and scientific research, a department on teaching quality, a department on scientific research, a commission on quality and evaluation (CEAC) and various senate commissions on quality	Administrative structures, such as a faculty commission on quality and evaluation, specific positions for vice-deans
Internal reviews, such as institutional reviews, internal programme reviews, research reviews and financial audits	Evaluations of faculty, such as peer reviews, self-evaluations and managerial evaluations.
Documents, such as a quality policy, quality reports and an internal research strategy	Documents, such as a faculty-level quality policy, quality reports, publication lists, etc.
Surveys, such as alumni questionnaires or student questionnaires	Formal deliberation, such as discussions on curricula and research
	Informal deliberation, such as discussions at the coffee machine or in class

Note Based on fieldwork in the five universities

> The contact with people is most important. Collegial visits could help, but please do not try to quantify quality. (Associate Professor, Female, 20602).

When it comes to students, it may be much easier to hear their problems through informal channels. As one student told us:

> Face-to-face conversations are better if something needs to be improved. Professors shouldn't give up on this feature. (Student, Female, 30702).

Taken as a whole, we can perhaps say that these policy instruments try to achieve too many things at the same time: applying minimum standards for curricula, matching curricula to labour market needs, introducing pedagogic innovations, improving the management of the universities and faculties, and lifting Romania's scientific production up to Western European standards. And if this is not enough, they also intend to rid the universities of plagiarism and corruption. The combined effect is that these policy instruments achieve very few specific intended results; instead they crowd out informal initiatives to improve quality as we aim to show in the next section.

4.2 Academics and Students Do Not Feel Ownership Over Evaluations

A problem closely related to the frustration over the evaluation procedures is that actors in the university feel little ownership over the criteria on which evaluations are based and how this is being done. The faculty in the universities express it as such:

> The QA system was only created in response to the law and ARACIS requirements - there is no point to hide this fact (Decision-Maker, Associate Professor, Male, 11201).
>
> We are forced by all these different institutions, ARACIS, EUA, to do such evaluations (Decision-Maker, Professor, Male, 10202).

The invocation of authorities like the 'law' and the 'external agencies' underlines that evaluation procedures do not exist because faculty and students think they are 'ideal'. Evaluations are viewed as something imposed from the outside, through procedures meant to artificially create a 'quality culture'.

While students participating in administrative structures typically felt slightly more involved than academic staff, not all students feel that they are being listened to, even if they are being heard. Indeed, in practice, many barriers exist that hinder students' active participation in these evaluations.

> There is not a lot of freedom of speech. The problem is mostly in our mind, but also we are not asked to speak our mind, not allowed to say what we really think (Student, Postgraduate, Female, 10603).
>
> A big problem is the laziness of the students. About 50 % of the students do not even read their e-mails. Students are also not very involved in the university (Student, Postgraduate, Male, 10802).

While it is hard to give any 'objective' measure of this lack of ownership, the end-result does present some unintended consequences. Since the evaluation process is not seen as legitimate, people display strategic behaviour towards the evaluations. This problem is often referred to in the literature as 'gaming' the system (cf. Hood 2006). This seems to range from trying to avoid consequences from evaluations (especially with regard to the ranking exercise) to outright plagiarism in order to meet research requirements (or indeed improve one's status). The irony is that the evaluations may reinforce the very gaming behaviour they are meant to address. The following quote from a faculty member is instructive:

> [In order to fulfil the publication criteria,] "I take information from students' diploma projects. I give them some research to do, and maybe I get some papers from the research. It is maybe not so good, but both the student and I gain from this (Associate Professor, Male 20503)."

Indeed, another unintended consequence is visible in scientific research. Many interviewees mention that the current assessment framework for scientific research is heavily biased towards the sciences for which international journals exist (that have an interest for Romanian science). Although most interviewees think that it is pointless to reward research in the humanities or legal research in the same way as theoretical physics, this is precisely what is being done. The assessment framework does not acknowledge that publication practices differ widely between disciplines in terms of how often one can publish, whether one has access to international journals and with whom one collaborates. The unintended consequence is that only a few scientific fields are seen as 'serious' sciences that are worthy of funding and public attention.

4.3 Evaluations Are Perceived to Be Based on Inconsistent Criteria

This gaming behaviour is reinforced by the fact that the evaluations are based on different standards and performance indicators. Table 5 is the same as Table 1, now displaying the different indicators used in each instrument. In the programme evaluation and accreditation organised by ARACIS introduced in 2006/7, there are 43 different performance indicators. In the programme ranking introduced in 2011, on the other hand, there are no less than 80 variables on which the programmes are evaluated. If we consider these standards as additive, then there are close to 300 formal standards to which the universities have to comply.[9] These indicators do not so much complement each other, but are quite different indeed. Whereas the quality assurance and accreditation scheme focuses on education and training, as well as the internal quality assurance procedures of the university, the classification emphasises research productivity (scientometrics) and 'external relations'. This makes it quite hard for academics to figure out what the standards really are.

If we take a more detailed look, we can see that the instruments are based on different underlying ideas of 'quality'. The quality assurance scheme is based on minimum standards for all universities, whereas the classification is based on nominal categories for universities. In other words, the quality assurance and accreditation is based on the idea that there are common (minimum) features to all universities, whereas the classification is based on the idea that there are different kinds of universities. The ranking, on the other hand, is based on the idea that universities are inherently 'better' or 'worse' than each other. Indeed, the ranking instrument places these universities and programmes on an ordinal scale.

What is important about these inconsistent criteria is that they lead to a confusing picture for the academics, let alone for students and the general public. A university can receive, in principle, high trust in the accreditation process, but categorised as a 'C' university (i.e. teaching only) in the classification, and its departments may be ranked in the middle of the distribution. To achieve a higher ranking, it may have to shift resources away from education to scientific production, which may in turn lower its status in the accreditation system. In other words, these different instruments send confusing messages to the universities about what is required from them, and do not help the wider Romanian society to understand what is going on in the field of higher education and research.

At the level of the universities, there is much complaining, but little reflection about these standards. While a few universities have defined their own standards for

[9]The total that we count is 294: Added together are the 43 standards from quality assurance, 65 performance indicators from doctoral schools evaluation, 91 variables from the institutional evaluation, 80 variables for the departmental ranking, 4 central questions from the university evaluation, 11 indicators from the research evaluation. While this may be nitpicking, this number is likely to underestimate the actual amount of standards universities have to comply to, since evaluation panels often introduce new standards (i.e. subject specific standards).

Table 5 The different criteria used in each policy instrument (see Table 1 for more information about each instrument)

Category	Instruments	Quality standards defined in:
Quality assurance	Institutional evaluation and accreditation	3 areas, 14 criteria, 16 standards, 43 performance indicators[a]
	Programme evaluation and accreditation	3 areas, 14 criteria, 16 standards, 43 performance indicators as well as 'specific standards of specialist committees'[b]
	Evaluation of doctoral schools	Unclear, draft mentions 3 areas, 14 criteria, 65 performance indicators[c]
Classification and ranking	Institutional classification	4 criteria, 11 standards, 91 variables[d]
	Programme ranking	4 criteria, 10 standards, 80 variables[e]
	Institutional evaluation	4 central questions[f]
Research assessment and evaluation	Research evaluation	4 criteria, 11 indicators[g]
Standards for promotion	Legal standards for promotion	Unclear, standards to evaluate personal scientific work[h]
	Habilitation standards	Unclear, standards to evaluate personal scientific work[i]
Audits by various national agencies	Audits by various national agencies	Unclear

Note Based on an analysis of policy documents and legal texts

[a]ARACIS. 2006. Methodology

[b]Ibid, ARACIS. 2006. Specific standards of specialist committees. Available at http://www.aracis.ro/uploads/media/Standarde_specifice_ale_comisiilor_de_specialitate.zip

[c]The methodology for the evaluation of doctoral schools exists only in draft form and has, until now, only been piloted. The draft is available at http://administraresite.edu.ro/index.php/articles/16691

[d]Ministerial Ordinance OMECTS no. 4174/13.05.2011

[e]ibid

[f]EUA. 2012. Institutional Evaluation Programme: Guidelines for Institutions. Project "Ready to innovate, ready to better address the local needs. Quality and diversity of Romanian Universities". Brussels: EUA

[g]UEFISCDI. 2010. Romanian Research Assessment Exercise (RRAE) General Assessment Methodology. Bucharest: UEFISCDI

[h]Law 01/2011 on National Education, Art 295–297 and subsequently Ministerial Ordinance OMECTS no. 6560/2012 and draft amendments to OMECTS no. 6560/16.07.2013

[i]Ministerial Order. OMECTS 5691/27.10.2011 on the CNATDCU Habilitation Thesis

evaluation, this has not yet trickled down to the faculties and departments. We have not found a single faculty where there exists a systematic plan to improve teaching and learning practices or to experiment with pedagogic innovations.[10] Similarly, we

[10]We have found one department that was engaged in pedagogical innovation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was a department of pedagogy.

have found very few instances of faculty-level attempts to improve scientific research production. Indeed, there are many individual initiatives to achieve this, but this is not done very systematically. Can these instruments lead to a reflection on education and scientific research?

Perhaps it is important to reiterate that evaluations do not replace action. Evaluations are diagnostic instruments; they are not the medicine to cure the patient. In fact, we (and our interviewees) found it quite hard to attribute follow-up activities to each of the evaluations carried out. We cannot put it better than one of our interviewees:

> I do not believe that even 100 laws will increase quality in the system. Most people respond with maximum attention to forms, but the best way to learn on how to have a quality education system is by learning from [other] teachers. That is how we learned before (Decision-Maker, Professor, Male, RS0903).

In line with this statement, we think that the government and the universities should strengthen the common-sense discussions about quality of education and scientific research. We will present our recommendations to achieve this in the next sections.

5 Recommendations for National Policy-Makers

To address the previously outlined general problem and its causes, many interviewees plea for systematic reflection on key dimensions of education and research. Table 6 gives an overview over the recommendations that we drew from the interviews. In this section, we will elaborate on the recommendations at national level, recognising that these will address the 'external' evaluations.

Objective 1: Simplify the procedures

Recommendation 1.1: Reduce the number of evaluation instruments and reports.

At the moment, several evaluations are being undertaken across universities in Romania, that absorb too much time and money. Therefore, we suggest that policy-makers integrate the existing evaluation instruments (see Tables 1 and 5) into a single, comprehensive evaluation scheme that will satisfy the need for quality assurance, quality improvements, and comparative quality analysis across institutions. A single evaluation system will reduce the amount of administrative and paperwork conducted at the moment by universities, and will make the standards and their assessments more transparent for professionals. Failing to do so—or worse, increasing the number of evaluations—is likely to further increase the bureaucracy that universities deal with on a daily basis.

Table 6 An overview over the recommendation to address the policy problem

Policy objective	1. Simplify the evaluation procedures	2. Allow professors and students to decide on quality standards	3. Apply a more consistent and open concept of 'quality'
Recommendations at national level	1.1 Reduce the number of evaluation instruments and reports	2.1. Focus on organising the evaluations without pre-defining all the standards	3.1. Reduce the number of standards on which evaluations are to be carried out
	1.2. Evaluate the evaluation procedures as a whole every 5 years		
	1.3 Create new policy instruments to deal with gross misconduct		
Recommendations at university and departmental level	1.4. Foster informal evaluation practices as well as formal practices	2.2 Enable a more flexible approach to evaluations within departments	3.2. Organise structured discussions about the meaning of quality in faculties and departments
			3.3. Develop professional networks between people working on evaluations

Recommendation 1.2: Evaluate the evaluation procedures as a whole every five years.

Evaluation procedures can never be perfect instruments to assess all aspects of the quality of higher education. However, that doesn't imply that they cannot be improved. As new priorities for higher education emerge, countries should invent new ways to evaluate universities. Consequently, we suggest the holistic assessment of the evaluation practice(s) on national level every 5 years. Current external evaluations clearly do not do so: they only review the quality assurance agency ARACIS, but hardly ever address other forms of evaluation. This time interval would give enough stability for the evaluation practices to be understood and effectively carried out by institutions, but also provide an opportunity for national level stakeholders to make small improvement where needed. Moreover, involving university leaders, faculty and students in this process is crucial, since they are the ones who deal with quality assurance regularly.

Recommendation 1.3: Take misconduct out of the evaluations.

Misconduct (i.e. bribery, plagiarism, etc.) is recognised as a major problem, but interviewees question whether evaluation instruments are the right tools to address it. The problem is one of effectiveness: evaluation instruments do not respond quickly or directly with individual cases of misconduct. Instruments that would be more effective in dealing with misconduct should aim at distributing power within the university and increasing transparency (after all, academic misconduct is abuse of power). Moreover, some innovative tools are now available such as anti-plagiarism software to review previously published and new scientific publications. Cases of bribery in relation to exams can be dealt with more effectively by providing external reviews of students' (dissertation) work or using standardized tests carried out by external examiners.

Objective 2: Allow professors and students to influence the standards for evaluation

Recommendation 2.1: Focus on organising the evaluations without pre-defining all the standards.

The quality assurance agency ARACIS sets two types of standards for universities: a list of minimum standards, and a set of 'reference standards'. Other evaluation practices prescribe similar—or even higher—levels of performance based on which institutions and people are assessed. While these standards are often meant as 'minimum quality', they in fact crowd initiatives of universities, departments and faculty to define quality according to their own terms and standards. It would be more effective if professors and students set many of the standards on which they want to be assessed themselves; it would encourage organisational actors to conceptualize quality and engage in a search for relevant benchmarks. This is also the direction taken in the revised European Standards and Guidelines that are to be adopted in the Bologna Process. Failing to allow professors and students to define more of the standards themselves will continue to create perverse incentives where individuals trick the system, as is currently the case.

Objective 3: Apply a more consistent and open concept of 'quality'

Recommendation 3.1: Reduce the number of criteria on which evaluations are to be carried out.

We have shown above that there are 10 evaluation instruments, with a combined load of close to 300 standards on which the universities have to comply. Every evaluation is based on an implicit (or explicit) idea of what quality is. This preconception is reflected in the criteria or standards set by the external agency that is in charge of carrying out the activity. The criteria vary across the evaluation procedures applied in Romania, which results in an unwanted level of confusion among universities and individuals. The more criteria are predefined, the more limited the possibility of universities to supplement the assessment of quality with

additional aspects, tailored to their own needs Hence, the reduction of criteria on which evaluations are carried out can reduce the existing formal inconsistencies, while simultaneously broadening up the discussion on the meaning of quality.

6 Recommendations for the Universities

For many in the universities, changes at the national level are uncertain and it may take much time before they are realised. In light of the uncertainty of parliamentary processes, it is important to enact changes in the universities as well. These changes can be enacted even if politicians are slow in responding to the problems identified here. The following changes can improve the 'internal' evaluations.

Objective 1: Simplify the procedures

Recommendation 1.4: Foster informal evaluation practices as well as formal practices.

Current evaluation practices put too much weight on formal assessment methods, such as questionnaires and reports. However, often quality is debated in a less formal environment, without explicit planning or measurement behind it. Such informal practices have been present in universities for a long time, and in some cases continue to be the most important evaluation method. Therefore, we suggest, that informal assessments should be also accounted for, by encouraging individuals to constantly assess the quality of their own work and that of their institution, and providing formal ways to share this knowledge between professors and students.

Objective 2: Allow professors and students to influence the standards

Recommendation 2.2: Enable a more flexible approach to evaluations within departments.

It is extremely difficult to assess national standards across departments and scientific disciplines. Many fields of knowledge are so specific that the meaning of the criteria gets distorted (a problem of scientific validity). We therefore recommend a more flexible approach at the institutional level. Particularities of the teaching and research traditions of each department should be allowed to influence and change the outcome of the assessment.

Objective 3: Apply a more consistent and open concept of 'quality'

Recommendation 3.2: Organise structured discussions about the meaning of quality in faculties and departments

Individuals tend to define the quality of academic practice differently. Nevertheless, without structured discussions on this topic among academics, the existing practices will likely remain superficial or technical. These discussions can be used to adopt

professional standards for faculty and students. Promoting organized deliberation on the quality of work at the university, the quality of teaching and research, the quality of administration and management, and so forth, is essential for developing a shared understanding on what quality is in the context of a particular institution. These events should be initiated on a regular basis by the top-management of the institution, and be open to professors, students, employers, and representatives of the wider community.

Recommendation 3.3: Develop professional networks between people working on evaluations.

Professors and administrative staff carry out evaluation exercises in most of the universities. Over time, these individuals build up extensive experience in carrying out evaluations, and some develop manuals, reflexive literature, or other new ideas. Organizing professional networks between people working on evaluations will help the institution to make good ideas travel from one organizational unit to the other, or to help the involved individuals to overcome some of the emerging challenges more easily. Certainly, the more isolated the involved stakeholders remain from each other, the harder it becomes to organize evaluations across the university.

7 Concluding Remarks

In the last few years, Romanian policymakers have done a lot to improve the universities in their country. They used evaluations to achieve this goal. The idea was that people in the universities would follow the guidance of external inspectors, in the form of state officials, foreign evaluators or colleagues from other universities. But do professors change because inspectors tell them to? In the Romanian case, this is clearly not the case. Nearly everyone in the system is constantly engaged in one form of evaluation or another. And once one round of evaluation has finished, a new one begins immediately. Instead of having the time to change, the academic community is stuck on a 'merry-go-round' of evaluations.

Many people in Romanian universities find it difficult to imagine that the evaluation system will be reformed. Some may even be sceptical of any new change of the legislative environment. But perhaps it is important to remember that evaluations are still a relatively new instrument in Romanian higher education. The quality assurance agency ARACIS was created in 2006, while the classification, rankings and other evaluations were introduced only in 2011. Put differently, these instruments are not old enough to have become institutionalized, but they exist for long enough to be judged on their effectiveness. And we can be optimistic: many national level policy-makers indicate that they are willing to change the system, and recognize the problems mentioned in this paper.

The recommendations in this chapter are based on the views of people who are stuck on this merry-go-round. The advantage of this type of analysis is that we are fairly certain that the people who are supposed to implement these

recommendations already support them. The interviewees recognize that no single set of recommendations could solve all problems in Romanian higher education; there is no 'silver bullet'. Thus, we tried to break the problem down into smaller sub-problems that can be productively addressed by policy. We also gave recommendations to different actors: recommendations at national level imply the alteration of the legal framework and national evaluation instruments; those for universities imply changes at the management and departmental levels. The latter changes can be made immediately, without lengthy parliamentary debates.

Our recommendations may be perceived as going in the direction of a completely decentralised evaluation system. While we think that more responsibility should be placed in the hands of faculty, we do not discount the importance of either national legislation, or leadership of the universities. The key here is dosage. Medicine should not be so strong that it kills the patient. Nor should it be so diluted that it doesn't work at all. Careful recalibration could achieve a lot.

Our main message is that policy-makers should shift focus from the current obsession about process to achieving substantive results in learning and scientific research. They should envisage a bigger role for faculty and students inside the university, and a smaller role for themselves, for external inspectors and university management. While accountability will continue to be important, it should be based on demonstrated achievement, rather than on process. Put otherwise, Romanian policymakers should try to mobilise the brainpower of faculty and students in the universities. Inspectors and inspected should step off the merry-go-round of evaluations and start reflecting on the purpose and scope of existent practices. Only then can we engage in more meaningful evaluations.

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Students as Stakeholders in the Policy Context of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions

Frauke Logermann and Liudvika Leišytė

1 Introduction

Since the early 1990s, the importance of quality assurance in higher education (HE) has steadily increased on the European higher education policy agenda (ESU 2010). Especially the Bologna Process, launched in 1999, supported the development of common European quality principles in higher education, as the introduction of a common three-cycle degree structure urged the need for greater comparability in quality standards amongst European higher education institutions (HEIs) (Corbett 2003). Moreover, in order to become the most competitive knowledge economy in the world (Lisbon Strategy 2009), Europe had to assure the high quality of its HE systems (Keeling 2006). The adoption of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in 2005 was a landmark for the establishment of the European wide higher education quality standards by pan European bodies, including EUA, ESU, EURASHE and ENQA.

The ESG have drawn attention to the role of various stakeholders in ensuring the quality of higher education. Interestingly, the role of students as stakeholders in higher education institutions' HEIs internal quality assurance processes is substantially highlighted (Leisyte et al. 2013). According to the ESG (2005), a greater involvement of students in internal quality assurance will be beneficial for enhancing quality in European HE (Klemenic 2012; Murray 1997). This is in line with the studies pointing out the effects of student involvement in quality assurance of higher education (HE) (Hounsell 2007).

F. Logermann · L. Leišytė (✉)
Zentrum für HochschulBildung, TU Dortmund, Germany
e-mail: liudvika.leisyte@tu-dortmund.de

F. Logermann
e-mail: f.logermann@student.utwente.nl

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Although student's role in HEIs' internal quality processes has been increasingly highlighted to achieve the Bologna objectives, up to date few studies have been conducted to understand how HEIs' perceive the role of students in internal quality assurance procedures (Kohoutek et al. 2013). Thus, little is known about students' real position in internal quality assurance processes in European HEIs' and the contribution of their views to improving the quality in higher education. The aim of this article is to address this gap by studying the role of students in internal quality assurance in two institutions across two different national contexts.

We do so by posing the question: "To what extent are students perceived as stakeholders in internal quality processes at different higher education institutions within the framework of the European Standards and Guidelines of Quality Assurance?" Specifically, we are interested how national and internal policies, documents or platforms promote the involvement of students in internal quality assurance processes and how are students involved and influence internal quality assurance procedures at higher education institutions.

In this article we will focus on three of the ESG guidelines[1] from 2005[2] to study the role of students in internal higher education quality assurance processes:

I. Policy and procedures for quality assurance,
II. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes,
III. Quality assurance of teaching staff.

To answer our research question we draw on the stakeholder typology developed by Mitchell et al. (1997). Our study comprises a comparison of the role of students in internal quality assurance systems (IQA) in two higher education institutions in two countries, Germany and the Netherlands. The article is structured as follows. After the introduction we introduce the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study. Further, we present the findings and a comparison of the two case studies. We conclude with a discussion of our propositions and propose further avenues for research.

2 Theoretical Framework: Students as Stakeholders in Internal Quality Assurance

Over the last decades, higher education institutions have undergone a significant transformation towards the managerial model due to an increasing international competition between higher education institutions and the so-called marketization

[1]This paper specifically focuses on the investigation of the European Standards and Guidelines for internal quality assurance by neglecting the ESG for external quality assurance and the guidelines for external accreditation agencies.

[2]In this paper we focus on the investigation of the ESG from 2005, despite the latest revision of the (2005) during the ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process in Bucharest (2012), as the impact of the newly revised ESG can hardly be ascertained at this point in time.

of higher education (De Boer and File 2009). This implies that, bit by bit, higher education institutions are being turned into corporate organizations which take into account the opinion of external stakeholders in their strife to compete on higher education quasi-markets (Beerkens 2006; Krücken and Meier 2006; Leisyte and Dee 2012). However, we have limited tools to understand the role of stakeholders, including academics, administrative staff and students in internal decision making processes in such organizations. Therefore, we turn to the stakeholder theory which helps us understand the role of stakeholders in higher education (Beerkens 2006; Jongbloed et al. 2008; Mc Dowell and Sambell 1999). According to Jongbloed et al. (2008) today's higher education institutions have to respond to a number of groups of individuals, with students being the most important stakeholder group at universities. As stated by Haug (2003), in times of growing global higher education competition, the integration of students in institutional decision making and safeguarding their interests have become a necessity to stabilize the influx of new students. Consequently, due to the growing importance of stakeholders for HEIs, it is increasingly expected that HEIs engage with relevant stakeholder groups, as they become accountable, effective and efficient organizations which aim to provide quality higher education (Jongbloed et al. 2008).

We propose that Mitchell et al. (1997) typology of stakeholders' roles in organizations is a useful perspective to understand the complexity of the roles students may play in HEIs internal quality assurance (Leisyte and Westerheijden 2013; Logermann 2014).

Mitchell et al. (1997) use a dynamic identification typology which explains why corporate managers[3] prioritize certain stakeholder relationships. This typology uses three criteria to create a stakeholder hierarchy: **power, legitimacy and urgency**. Hereby, power is defined as a party's potential to influence "to the extent that it can gain access to coercive, utilitarian or normative means" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 856) to impose its will on the company. Secondly, legitimacy is described as "socially accepted and expected behaviour" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 866) which is often coupled with the power to establish actor's authority, but may as well develop independently. Moreover, it describes a party's involvement in important decision making at all levels. Urgency, which adds the dynamic component to the authors' theoretical model, is defined as "the degree to which a stakeholder claims call for immediate attention" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 867). Time sensitivity here plays an important role as task related managerial delay is unacceptable to the stakeholder. Urgency also points to the need for stakeholder satisfaction with a specific organizational outcome.

Based on the three criteria of power, legitimacy & urgency, the authors aim to explain stakeholder salience, whereby salience is defined as "The degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 868). The degree of salience depends on the cumulative addition of the three

[3]In the HEI context, managers can be directors of universities, deans of faculties, senate members or directors of institutes.

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency
Latent Stakeholder			
Dormant Stakeholder	x		
Discretionary Stakeholder		x	
Demanding Stakeholder			x
Salient/Expectant stakeholder			
Dominant Stakeholder	x	x	
Dependent Stakeholder		x	x
Dangerous Stakeholder	x		x
Definitive stakeholder			
Definitive Stakeholder	x	x	x

Fig. 1 Stakeholder categories by Mitchell et al. (1997). *Source* Own illustration based on Mitchell et al. (1997)

criteria (attributes). Based on the presence or absence of certain attributes, (Mitchell et al. 1997) distinguish between three major stakeholder types which have a number of sub-types. Figure 1 provides an overview of these types which depend on which combination of the attributes they possess if any.

When applying Mitchell et al.'s (1997) stakeholder typology to our research context, we specifically turn to the degree of students' salience as stakeholders in HEIs' internal quality assurance processes. Formally, students can be assigned to any of the sub types, such as, Dormant, Discretionary, Demanding, Dominant, Dependent, Dangerous and Definitive Stakeholders based on how much power, legitimacy and urgency they have as students in the organizational matters regarding internal quality assurance.

Students' power may be manifested in their potential to ask for changes in study programmes, courses or HEIs' internal quality assurance processes. Their power potential then may be manifested in the change of the structure or content of a course or programme.

Students' legitimacy can be observed through their representation in internal quality assurance bodies and the transparency of IQA procedures to students. The ESG specifically highlight students' legitimate involvement in IQA processes, so we find this attribute especially important for the current study, (ENQA 2009). Finally, students' urgency is operationalized as students' claims for higher quality of courses and study materials. This attribute is again present in the ESG guidelines as students should be able to demand quality higher education (ENQA 2008, 2009, 2011).

Based on the above (Mitchell et al. 1997) typology, we put forward three propositions regarding students' salience as stakeholders:

- "If students are perceived as Definitive[4] Stakeholders, students have an influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution".
- "If students are perceived as Salient/Expectant[5] Stakeholders, students have a limited influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution".
- "If students are perceived as Latent[6] Stakeholders, students have no influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution".

Following the ESG, students are perceived as Definitive stakeholders in HEIs' internal quality assurance processes, including all steps of the internal quality assurance cycle. This implies their active involvement in course evaluations, programme reviews or the participation in and contribution to internal QA boards and committees.

3 Research Design and Methodology

A comparative case study was conducted to answer the main research question (Schnell et al. 2011). The units of analysis of this study are European higher education institutions in different Bologna countries, while the units of observation are departments of European higher education institutions. To select the units of analysis we chose for the non-probability sampling approach of extreme case sampling, as "concepts are often defined by their extremes, that is, their ideal types (Gerring 2004, p. 101)". Specifically, we selected one German and one Dutch HEI, as these countries have adopted the ESG to a different degree, with the Netherlands being perceived as a forerunner, "fully matching the ESG model (ESU 2009, p. 57)", while German HEIs are seen having less focus on the ESG in the HEIs as "Student unions expressed their concerns regarding the internal quality assurance systems in Germany (ESU 2009, p. 57)".

The units of observation were chosen purposively focusing on the smallest entity to which internal quality assurance process is delegated at both studied HEIs. Hereby, we selected two units in similar academic disciplines which have similar number of students. For the Dutch case study, a Faculty offering Economic, Political and Social Sciences, with a student population of around 2200 students, was selected. For the German case study, a German Faculty Institute offering similar degrees to around 1600 students was selected. The German Institute belongs

[4]Definitive Stakeholders direct over all three attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency and thus enjoy highest salience, meaning that ultimate priority is given to the interests of such stakeholders.

[5]Stakeholders of this group decree over two of the three relevant attributes and thus enjoy a medium degree of salience (see Fig. 1).

[6]Stakeholders from this class are only in the possession of one of the three fundamental attributes. From the management perspective, influence and salience of this stakeholder group is rather low.

to the Faculty of Educational and Social Sciences and is the smallest entity to which the responsibility for internal quality assurance is delegated at the HEI.

3.1 Data Collection

The data collection consisted of desk research, analysing national and institutional policy documents on internal quality assurance. Moreover eight semi-structured interviews (four at each institution) with academic staff, quality assurance officers and the student association were conducted. To better depict the student opinion on the institutions' internal quality assurance systems, a student survey with 93 respondents from the Dutch Institute and 83 respondents from the German Institute was undertaken (see Table 1).

Different data sets were used to depict the institutional and student views regarding the students' role in internal quality assurance processes. By comparing and triangulating this data we aimed to interpret to what extent students were participating in the internal quality assurance processes as stakeholders and how salient they were.

3.2 Data Analysis

To operationalize the ESG guidelines pertaining to student involvement in the internal quality assurance process, we focus on the participation of students as equal partners in major internal quality assurance bodies and procedures in HEIs (ESG, Policy and Procedures for quality assurance). To understand if students participate in **approval, monitoring and periodic review of study programmes**, we focus on the voice of students in HEIs. Concerning the guidelines for the quality assurance of teaching staff, we will study what role do students' evaluations of academic staff teaching play, what instruments are used for this purpose and how they are used.

For the **data analysis of desk research**, qualitative content analysis was employed (Babbie 2006). **For the analysis of semi-structured interviews**, a deductive coding scheme was used, following the qualitative content analysis approach by Mayring (2010). We coded the interviews looking for the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell et al. 1997) which are aligned to the three studied ESG guidelines.

For the analysis of the survey data, questions were grouped into sections which contributed to understand power, legitimacy and urgency of students as stakeholders in the studied institutions. The survey questions were constructed based on the NSS survey.[7]

[7]The National Student Survey is yearly launched in the UK to investigate students' satisfaction with their study programmes and teaching quality.

Table 1 Instruments of data collection

Desk research	Semi-structured interviews	Student survey
• National and institutional documents on internal quality assurances (national HE legacy, central HEI management documents or institutional quality statutes) Webpages, books, scientific articles	6 face to face interviews with internal quality assurance staff at both HE institutions (3 at the Dutch Faculty and 3 at the German Institute) Interviewees: Internal quality assurance officer, Internal Quality Assurance Staff, Professors 2 face to face interviews with student associations at both studied HE institutions	176 students of all disciplines at both studied HE institutions 93 students from the Dutch and 83 of the German Institute Dutch Faculty: 50 % of respondent were female, 30 male and 20 % are unknown. The average age of respondents was 23 and respondents were enrolled in 19 different study programmes German Institute: 66 % of respondents were female and 34 were male. The average age of respondents was 22 and respondents were enrolled in 14 different study programmes

4 Students' Role in the Studied Dutch Faculty

In the following, students' stakeholder position at the investigated Dutch Faculty is determined following the stakeholder typology of Mitchell et al. (1997) and by triangulating the collected data from the institutional documents and semi-structured interviews, and the student survey (see Table 2). Findings from the collected data show that in the Dutch Faculty students are regarded as weak Definitive stakeholders within the Faculty's IQA processes.

When combining the insights coming from different sources on students' salience as stakeholders we observed that students had a rather sceptical estimation of their power and influence potential on the Faculty's IQA processes. Nevertheless, despite such self-perception of students, their power was asserted as noted in the interviews with academic and administrative staff and as noted in the institutional documents. They have asserted that students' feedback leads to frequent changes in the curricula of study programmes and courses.

In terms of urgency, students and academics jointly confirmed that students have urgent claims to safeguard the quality of higher education. Regarding legitimacy, both parties acknowledge that students are vital and legitimacy partners in internal quality assurance process (Faculty Regulation 2010). In addition, the non-transparency of internal quality measures and the non-communication of implemented measures to students are jointly criticized by students and academic staff. This limits students' ability to follow up if their feedback is taken into

Table 2 Students as stakeholder in the Dutch faculty

	Desk research (institutional view)	Semi-structured interviews (institutional view)	Survey (student opinion and student association)
Power	Programme Director has to react on student feedback Internal check-up system Institution wants to meet students' needs to retain number of enrolled students	Students have power: Frequent changes to courses and study programme based on student feedback Influence on teachers' promotion potential	• Limited power (Students do not know if their feedback has an influence on the quality of education or have a low estimation of their power potential)
Legitimacy	• Integration of students in all major internal quality assurance bodies (Faculty Regulation 2010)	• Students legitimate partners in all major internal quality assurance bodies—lack of transparency regarding feedback implementation	• Legitimate partners in all major internal quality assurance bodies • Lack of transparency regarding feedback implementation
Urgency	• Possibility of complaints via Student Association and Examination Committee	• Students have urgent claims (fast participation in quality evaluation instruments)	• Safeguarding of the quality of education and teaching is important

Source Desk research, semi-structured interviews and student survey (2013)

account. This points to weaker stakeholder position. We thus conclude that in this regard student's legitimacy position is limited (see Fig. 2). Overall, it can be concluded that students are **weak Definitive Stakeholders** in the Dutch Faculty's **IQA** processes (see Fig. 2).

In this case study we have seen that students have power and their claims have urgency. At the same time students' legitimacy is limited as even though the student feedback is taken into consideration, this is not evident to students and is not made transparent. This lack of transparency, which is confirmed by both parties, leads to a limitation of students' legitimacy position within the internal quality assurance system. At the same time, given their representation in all major internal quality assurance committees they have strong power and urgency. Still their limited legitimacy points out that they are not perceived as Definitive Stakeholders in the Dutch case study context.

4.1 Students' Role in the Studied German Institute

In the following, students' stakeholder position at the investigated German Institute is determined according to the stakeholder typology of Mitchell et al. (1997).

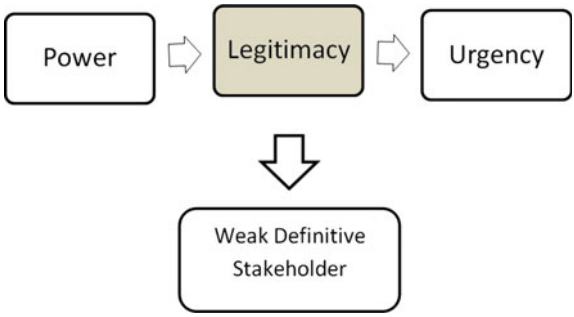

Fig. 2 Students as stakeholders in the Dutch Faculty. *Source* Desk Research, Semi-Structured Interviews and Student Survey (2013)

Findings from the collected data (Table 3) show that students are perceived as weak Dependent Stakeholders in the German Faculty's IQA processes.

When combining the insights from different data sources we observe that both students and interviewed staff confirm that students' power potential within the IQA system is rather limited. Both parties note that the consideration of students' feedback heavily dependents on the voluntary cooperation of each individual lecturer as there are no sanctioning mechanisms for poor performance in the Institute's IQA procedures. The feedback from students is not necessarily taken into account. Thus, students have a low power potential within the Institute's IQA processes.

Concerning legitimacy, both students and staff assert that student association representatives are well integrated in all major internal quality assurance bodies, though their legitimacy status is limited as their numbers in these committees are low. This implies that students' claims can be easily neglected, if not supported by other committee members. Students also criticized the non-transparency of the current internal quality procedures, which prevent a sophisticated dissemination of evaluation results to students. Thus, students' limited legitimacy is underscored. Concerning urgency, students are reported to have a strong interest in the safeguarding of quality of their courses.

To summarize, students at the German Institute can be characterized as weak **Dependent Stakeholders**. Although they have urgency, they are not equally represented in IQA procedures, they have limited legitimacy and have limited power potential. This implies that students are not able to pursue their interests within the Institute's IQA settings in a major way (see Fig. 3).

Table 3 Students as stakeholders in the German Institute

	Desk research (institutional view)	Semi-structured interviews (institutional view)	Survey (student opinion and students association)
Power	• Results of student evaluation should be considered by teachers and used for quality improvements (Evaluation statute, 2005)	• Limited power: Student feedback may lead to changes but only if voluntarily considered by teachers • Missing sanctioning system to follow-up on implementation of students' feedback	• Low power estimation • Students do not know if/how feedback is implemented • Students' claims are often neglected
Legitimacy	• One representative of student association integrated in all major internal quality assurance bodies	• Legitimate due to integration of members of student association • Limited Legitimacy: High dependency due to underrepresentation	• Perceive themselves as underrepresented in internal quality assurance procedures • Criticize non transparency of IQA measures
Urgency	• Institute offers students channels to communicate their needs	• Students have urgent claims (curricula or counselling situation)	• Safeguarding of the quality of education and teaching is important

Source Desk research, semi-structured interviews and student survey (2013)

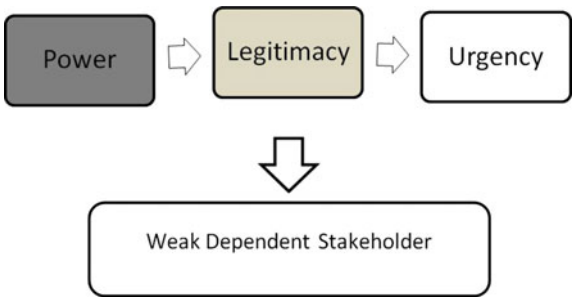

Fig. 3 Students as Stakeholder in the German Institute. *Source* Desk research, semi-structured interviews and student survey (2013)

5 Discussion

Both case studies demonstrated that students are regarded as stakeholders in studied HEIs in the Dutch and in the German contexts. At the same time, the extent of their salience as stakeholders differs between the two studied HE institutions to a large extent.

Overall, students at the Dutch Faculty enjoy a significantly higher degree of stakeholder salience than students in the German Institute. Table 4 provides below shows what categories of student stakeholders we found in our two case studies. In the Dutch case we mainly found students to be weak Definitive Stakeholder, while students in the German Institute could be categorized as weak Dependent Stakeholders.

As shown in Chapter "Redefining Internationalization at Home", students at the Dutch Faculty have a quite substantial influence on internal quality assurance processes and they can be defined as weak Definitive Stakeholders, which confirms our first proposition.

In line with Mitchell et al. (1997), students' influence the Dutch Faculty's internal quality assurance processes as manifested in students' power position, limited legitimacy status and urgency of their claims (see Table 7). Though students at the Dutch Faculty were not well aware of their power potential, their participation in course evaluations and contribution to panel talks acted as strong sources of students' power. Results of semi-structured interviews and document analysis showed that academics are under pressure to consider student course evaluations and address the raised issues by the students (I2(a); I3(a) 2013). Thus, students' feedback influences the quality of teaching at the Faculty, though students' are not aware of this and their influence potential. These findings are also in line with the findings of Leisyte et al. (2013), stating that students at Dutch HEIs have power in internal quality assurance processes.

In the Dutch case study, students' power is strongly fostered by the Dutch Faculty's internal monitoring and sanctioning tools for quality assurance. Students' power is supported by students' urgent claims and by demanding the constant improvement of quality of teaching. Concerning students' representation in the Dutch Faculty's internal quality assurance processes, students are represented in equal number in all internal quality assurance bodies. This fosters students' legitimacy status and strengthens their influence on internal quality assurance. Nevertheless, the limited transparency of the IQA procedures limits students' legitimacy status, as students are not aware if their feedback is implemented by the Faculty. As according to Leisyte et al. (2013): "*The student … misses feedback about follow-up, although clear procedures for course evaluation via student surveys are in place*" (Leisyte et al. 2013, p. 5). This shortcoming limits students' legitimacy position and thus, their influence potential (Leisyte et al. 2013).

Table 4 Students' Stakeholder Positions

Institution	Latent stakeholder	Expectant stakeholder	Definitive stakeholder
Dutch faculty			Power, Urgency, (Weak Legitimacy)
German Institute		Urgency, (Weak Legitimacy) Dependent Stakeholders →	

Source Desk research, Semi-structured interviews and student survey (2013)

Students' limited legitimacy position allows us to characterise them as weak Definitive Stakeholders, despite students' formal power position and their ability to put forward urgent claims.

In contrast to the Dutch case study, students in the German Institute have limited influence on IQA processes, which also results in their lower stakeholders' position as weak Dependent Stakeholders (Table 4), which confirms our second proposition.

In line with Mitchell et al. (1997), the studied German students' are Dependent stakeholders because of their low power potential, their limited legitimacy status and students' strong urgent claims (see Table 4). All data sources from the German case study confirm students' rather low influence potential, as students' feedback solely serves as an additional source of information on which basis the academics may voluntarily improve the quality of a particular course. Thus, students' influence on quality improvement in the German case is lower than in the Dutch case study, as there is no follow-up system, which would oblige academics to consider students' feedback. Overall, the German Institute's IQA set-up weakens students' influence potential, while the Dutch IQA strengthened students' power.

Further, the high student numbers at the German Institute also limited their power, as the Institute is not under great pressure to meet students' urgent claims. Their limited influence potential in the German case study comes from their limited legitimacy. Though student representatives are formally involved in all internal quality assurance bodies, they are mostly underrepresented in all committees. Thus, students' input regarding the IQA can be described as tokenistic, which means that despite students' formal representation they are not able to put forward significant changes in internal quality assurance in the institution. Moreover, as in the Dutch case, students also criticize the great non-transparency of the IQA procedures, which do not foresee a follow-up on course evaluation results and thereby limit their legitimacy status. Due to all these factors, we observe students' limited legitimacy position in the IQA procedures in the German case and characterize them as weak Dependent Stakeholders.

When comparing the findings of both case studies it can be concluded that each of the two investigated HE institutions predominantly complies with the ESG guidelines, even though we can find variability in the role of students in internal quality assurance in the two studies HEIs. Still, some differences regarding HEIs' consideration of the ESG can be noted. In the following, the Dutch Faculty's and the German Institute's consideration of the three investigated ESG guidelines is depicted (see Table 5).

As shown in Table 5, regarding the ESG guideline of **policy and procedures for quality assurance**, both HE institutions follow central or internal quality assurance policies, which urge the regular quality evaluation of teaching in HEIs. The studied Dutch Faculty mainly follows its own internal Faculty evaluations provisions, which are in line with general University quality assurance policies and national HE legacies, while the German Institute predominately implements central IQA assurance guidelines, set by the central University management. In both cases, documents and provisions demand the active involvement of students in IQA processes and their integration in internal quality assurance bodies which, according

Table 5 HEIs' conformity with the ESG

Institution	Policy and procedures for quality assurance	Approval, monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes	Quality assurance of teaching staff
Dutch faculty	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
German Institute	Minor shortcomings	Shortcomings	Fulfilled

Source Desk research, semi-structured interviews and student survey (2013)

to Leisyte et al. (2013), ascertains students' important positioning as stakeholders in quality assurance. In the Dutch case study, internal provisions regarding student involvement are quite precise, which leads to a predominantly equal representation of students within internal quality assurance committees. In contrast, the regulations of the German Institute are rather vague when it comes to student representation, which leads to a frequent underrepresentation of students within IQA bodies. Thus, concerning student involvement, the Dutch Faculty complies with this ESG guideline to a higher extent.

Concerning the ESG guideline for **the approval, monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes**, it can be concluded that studied HE institutions employ comprehensive quality assurance instruments to assure the regular evaluation of quality standards, by integrating students in such processes. Hereby, student course evaluations constitute the main instruments of internal quality assurance at both studied HE institutions. Still, the Dutch Faculty's IQA is marked by a stricter monitoring procedure, which strengthens students' influence potential (I2(b) 2013; I3(b) 2013). On the contrary, the German Institute's ambiguity in regulation weakens students' influence potential. The Institute's soft approach might strive from Germany's general HE culture, in which academic freedom and academic autonomy are predominant values (Westerheijden and Kohoutek 2013). Thus, in line with Westerheijden and Kohoutek (2013), in the German case, the local culture and regulation seem to hamper the full consideration of the ESG. Again, the Dutch Faculty's involvement of students is more in line with the ESG criteria regarding this particular guideline.

Relating to the ESG criteria of **quality assurance for teaching staff**, both studied HE institutions evaluate the teaching abilities of lecturers via student evaluations. Thus, both HE institutions involve students in these processes as recommended by the ESG guidelines. Still, the influence of Dutch students on the quality of teaching seems to be higher than that of students in the German Institute.

To conclude, both studied HE institutions are largely in line with the investigated ESG guidelines regarding the role of students in internal quality assurance in HEIs, although the studied units consider the ESG rather unconsciously. At both HE institutions, the ESG were rather unknown, as seen from interviews with academic staff and noted from the document analysis. HEI's rather unconscious compliance with the ESG standards has also already been considered in previous studies, such

as by the IBAR project (2013) and Rattray et al. (2013), stating that compliance with the ESG is rather "process-led", with the institutional logics and organizational dynamics serving as key requirement for a HE institution's fulfilment of the ESG. Thus, students' stakeholder position does not seem to be related to HE institutions' consideration of the ESG, but seem to rather depend on national or institutional internal quality assurance policies and culture.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to understand students' role within HEIs' internal quality assurance processes.

Findings of the comparative case study show that both investigated European HE institutions use internal quality assurance documents which promote the active integration of students in internal quality assurance processes. Thus, at both studied institutions, the involvement of students in internal quality assurance processes is required by internal policies and documents, though provisions are more specific for the Dutch Faculty, than for the German Institute.

Regarding students' active involvement in HEIs' internal quality assurance processes, both case studies demonstrated that student course evaluations constitute the main instrument of student engagement in internal quality assurance. However, the influence of student course evaluations differs between the two investigated institutions, as at the Dutch Faculty evaluation results are taken more seriously (I2 (a) 2013; I3(a) 2013). The German Institute's soft policy approach, in which lecturers may consider evaluation results on a voluntary basis, weakens students' influence potential. Moreover, in both cases, student associations play a big role in representing students' quality claims in internal quality procedures and internal quality assurance committees. One shortcoming regarding students' involvement in the IQA procedures was ascertained in both cases studies, namely, the missing re-communication of quality improvements to students. This implies that even though students are actively integrated in internal quality procedures, they are not informed about their influence on internal quality assurance and the implementation of their feedback.

The findings of the document analysis and interviews with academic staff also showed that national policy documents may also have an influence on the involvement of students in internal quality assurance processes at higher education institutions. The design and governance of national quality assurance system in Europe can differ. Hereby, the Netherlands show a more managerially driven tradition in HE quality assurance, while the l German system seems to have a decentralized approach towards quality assurance practices.

In both case studies, national legislation promotes active engagement of students in internal quality assurance procedures. Still, findings show that the main responsibility of student engagement is delegated to each individual higher education institution. Thus, in line with (Ursin et al. 2008) the role of students highly

depends on the active engagement of students at each individual HE institution (Leisyte et al. 2013).

The findings of the two cases also showed that both case studies involved students in policy and procedures for quality assurance At the same time students and academic staff were not aware of the ESG. Direct links to the ESG are seldom found in internal quality assurance documents. Thus, in line with Westerheijden et al. (2013), the visible influence of the ESG on HEIs' internal quality procedures and student involvement therein are rather absent. The consideration of the ESG and student involvement seem to strive foremost from an institution's general organizational setting and the established quality culture, which implies that "the local implementation and translation" is crucial for the consideration of the ESG criteria (Westerheijden and Kohoutek 2013). This also indicates that, due the soft policy character of the ESG, a successful application of the ESG principles to a large extent depends on HEIs' voluntary consideration of ESG.

Thus, the ESG cannot be defined as a policy framework for fostering students' stakeholder roles in IQA, as the ESG of 2005 more or less codify "what had already become practice through earlier quality assurance schemes" at the institutions (Schwarz and Westerheijden 2004). Thus, students' integration as stakeholders in IQA does not dependent on HEI's consideration of the ESG, but seems to depend on an institution's quality assurance polices and the prevailing quality assurance culture. Still in this study, an institution's greater conformity with the ESG also comes with a stronger role of students in IQA. In this study, the Dutch Faculty's internal quality assurance system was more in line with the ESG guidelines, and students enjoy a rather strong stakeholder position as weak Definitive Stakeholders. The German Institute's conformity to the ESG provisions was lower, with students playing a less stronger role in IQA and therefore defined as weak Dependent Stakeholders, whose power potential is low and whose legitimacy status is limited by students' high dependency on academic staff to realize their claims.

Overall, the study showed that students are involved as stakeholders in HEIs' internal quality assurance processes, though their actual power and influence potential in their role as stakeholders differs from institution to institution. This implies that the ESG's influence on students' position in institutional IQA processes is rather absent. Therefore, this study recommends the establishment of follow-up measures in HE institutions' internal quality assurance processes to ensure that students' feedback is taken into account when improving courses and study programmes. Moreover, in order to secure student participation in IQA, HEIs have to inform students' more thoroughly about what happens with their course evaluations and what changes will be made as a result. Otherwise, students could lose their interest in participating in internal quality assurance procedures as "students' participation in quality assurance processes requires transparent procedures and visible results for students" (Popović 2001, p. 6).

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Negotiating Liminality in Higher Education: Formal and Informal Dimensions of the Student Experience as Facilitators of Quality

Vanessa Rutherford and Ian Pickup

1 Introduction and Institutional Background

A belief in the importance of higher education in the new knowledge society has led to a massification of higher education globally (Loukkola and Zhang 2010) and an associated rise of professional administration and management processes. These include an increase in demand for quality assurance (QA) processes, such as those contained within the European Standards and Guidelines (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education 2009). Concurrently, the student population across Europe is becoming increasingly diverse (Finnegan et al. 2014) creating a key challenge for higher education institutions: how best to serve the twin aim of supporting all students to succeed, whilst fostering a high quality and inclusive higher education experience.

In this paper, we examine research that feeds into policy making at University College Cork, Ireland (UCC). We examine micro level human experiences and interactions that impact learning. We are less concerned with compliance, assessment regulations, reporting and performance indicators. Rather, we focus on the research into solutions and innovations in learning and student development. The University has placed a high priority on developing comprehensive programmes and structures to support student transition and success. Active student participation in the full breadth of student life is a key component of the 'aspired to' high quality experience at UCC.

UCC was established in 1845. There are currently approximately 18,000 full-time students—14,000 follow undergraduate programmes, while 4,000 are

V. Rutherford (✉) · I. Pickup
National University of Ireland, Cork, Ireland
e-mail: v.rutherford@ucc.ie

I. Pickup
e-mail: i.pickup@ucc.ie

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engaged in postgraduate study and research. The student body includes 3000 international students presenting 100-plus countries worldwide. The University's Centre for Adult Continuing Education serves an additional 2200 part-time students. The 165-year history of UCC is 'hallmarked by an ethos of excellence' (UCC Strategic Plan 2013–2017, p. 6).

UCC developed a Strategic Plan (2013–2017) through extensive consultation with students, staff, alumni, external agencies and other key stakeholders. The Strategic Plan is aligned with the 'objects' of the University under the Universities Act, 1997 and it is informed by international trends, national policy and by the University's quality improvement and risk management processes. The key strategic mission at UCC: "inspires creativity and independent thinking in a research-led teaching and learning environment. Our students are our highest priority. Through our research excellence we create and communicate knowledge to enhance the intellectual, social, cultural and economic life regionally, nationally and internationally" (UCC Strategic Plan 2013–2017: 13).

Strategic planning at UCC emphasises the development and implementation of organization-wide accountability, leadership, excellence and collaboration in the name of quality. The Strategic Plan acknowledges the day-to-day importance of the student experience. Students are perceived as key stakeholders within the institution. They are identified in the exchange process and there is cognisance that meaningful relationships ultimately provide positive results for all stakeholders. There is an explicit institutional commitment to:

Sustain the current high satisfaction levels in the "…student experience by delivering strong student focused support services and activities which address the physical, psychological, spiritual, social, and cultural and welfare needs of students and by embedding a regular review of the student feedback process to ensure that recommendations for quality improvement are implemented …." (UCC, Strategic Plan 2013–2017).

The manifestation of espoused strategy at UCC is evidenced through significant initiatives that offer students supplementary admission routes and a variety of academic, personal and social services while studying at third level. These include the National Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)[1] and The National Higher Education Access Route (HEAR).[2] Both DARE and HEAR offer reduced points places, whilst some students applying through these national systems are also afforded places on merit.[3] The Strategic Plan (2013–2017) emphasises the commitment to enhancing accessibility for all students and widening participation

[1]DARE is a college and university admissions scheme that may offer places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities.

[2]The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university admissions scheme which may offer places on reduced points and extra college support to school leavers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

[3]In Ireland applicants are ranked in order of merit of performance at school leaving examinations and this is called the points system. Each applicant's score is calculated by allocating points for grades achieved in one sitting of the Leaving Certificate examination.

through an inclusive environment that embraces diversity and equality. The focus on equity of access to higher education is a macro national priority and has been clearly articulated as such in the Irish Department of Education and Skills Higher Education System Performance Framework (2014)–(2016). This Performance Framework also sets out a range of high level system indicators to assess and measure the higher education system's performance in this priority area (Higher Education Authority 2014). The proposed vision for the future of higher education in Ireland is clearly set out in a recent consultation document:

Over the period of this National Access Plan (2014–2017), in partnership with other stakeholders, Irish higher education will become a more fully inclusive system that enables more citizens, irrespective of age, socioeconomic background, disability or other factors to access in, participate in, and complete higher education and achieve their full potential, as part of the overall social and economic development of Irish society. Access to higher education will be intrinsic to what a higher education institution does, interlinked with teaching and learning, research and civic engagement (HEA 2014).

At UCC, strategies are formulated amid dense interplay between macro global and national challenges, an individual strategic agenda and organisational identity and history (Kegan 1994, p. 34). The strategy-as-practice approach which emphasises practical, everyday student life actively shapes UCC's university plan and seeks to understand and address stakeholder demands. Cultivating this 'stakeholder friendly culture' (Leap and Loughry 2004) offers the potential to construct positive experiences and smooth transitions.

This paper explores liminality in the higher education student experience and the ways in which student experience theory has the potential to further advance into policy and practice at an institutional level, facilitating improved student empowerment in learning. In this paper, we focus on epistemological and ontological shifts in identity and relationships over the course of a student's university journey. Student identities are thought to evolve, as participation and engagement in higher education are experienced over time (Wortham 2006). Student experience incorporates critical thinking, independent learning, fossilization of identity, development of relationships, valuing of diversity and inclusion, consideration of multiple perspectives and collaboration. We see a need to establish and further develop innovative support structures, and equip students with 'threshold capital' that helps them to negotiate challenging and sometimes troublesome learning and development situations, to open up and move along the spectrum of liminality—to transition their learning (Land 2012).

2 Student Experience and the European Context—A Literature Review

Literature concerning the student experience is varied and rich. We summarise the key findings of our literature review in Table 1. We identified high level themes and sub themes of the student experience drawn from the literature .

The vast literature exposes specific aspects of the student experience, yet the threshold concept approach and liminality remain underdeveloped in understanding the holistic higher education student experience. The Threshold Concepts (TC) framework was developed by Meyer and Land (2003) and has features that are transformative, irreversible, integrative, bounded, potentially troublesome, discursive and reconstitutive. It emphasises acquisition of knowledge. Liminality is identified as a core TC and refers to the period or space of transformation that students undergo or are challenged by. Liminality is the transition from old to new being and understanding (Meyer and Land 2005). The British Cultural Anthropologist, Victor Turner (1920–1983) defined liminality as the in-between time and place in the process of transformation (Turner 1969). Such ways of framing specific aspects of the student experience emphasise the epistemological and leave little room for the study of complex and often invisible social and cultural phenomena, such as events and actions, over time. Our research deals specifically with a threshold concept approach in the broader sense, coupled with liminality, and we explore the processes and implications, the enactment, the performance, and the doing that are not discipline specific, but which characterize every student's experiences. It sheds light on the need for further partnership and meaningful collaboration between all stakeholders. A better understanding of the student experience offers the potential to contribute to the development of methods used to support the student experience by aligning theory with the lived student experience and the practice of university staff.

3 The Student, 'Threshold Concepts' and Liminality

In this paper, we specifically reflect on how students navigate today's complex world of higher education, and use 'threshold concepts' as a lens for analysis (Meyer and Land 2003). Student-hood, we argue, is a specific and provisional identity. Students are assigned official status as university students once they fulfil institutional and programme requirements. Often, the most significant parts of student-hood lie in imagined becomings and measured outcomes such as exam results, certificate, degree, graduation and career. As one student noted in our study, the most significant outcome was perceived as 'being able to get my degree in a well recognised establishment' (Second year female undergraduate student 2013). Here, we focus on the processes, and periods of greatest personal and academic

Table 1 Select literature review

High level themes	Sub themes	Select references
Bologna Process mobility	Student experience	Altbach (2002, 2004, 2007)
	Student qualifications	Bekhradnia et al. (2006)
Student experience	Academic ability	Booth (2009)
	Overall judgement	Bordonaro and Richardson (2004)
Institutional commitment to student learning	Student aspirations/expectations	Bent (2008)
		Biggs and Tang (2011)
Student engagement	Adjustments: school-university	Brinkworth et al. (2009)
		Christie et al. (2008)
Widening participation	Academic adjustments	Cook and Leckey (1999)
		Colvin (2007)
Student transition	Academic orientation	Roberts and Tyler (2007)
'Learning to learn'	Academic application	Harvey et al. (2006)
	Student engagement with learning	Huet et al. (2009)
Students' critical engagement	Identified need for early support from universities'	Hultberg et al. (2008)
Becoming 'co producers of meaning'	Intellectual stimulation	Hussey and Smith (2010)
Scaffolding students into autonomous learning	Sense of belonging	Kember (2001)
University proactive management	Student departure	Leese (2010)
Treatment of curriculum as an academic milieu	Student satisfaction with teaching, learning and course	Lumsden et al. (2010)
First year experience and retention	Feedback	Mayhew et al. (2010)
	Peers and peer mentoring	Reason et al. (2006)
Student success and methods of learning	ICT, library resources	Bordonaro and Richardson (2004)
	Gender	Rivza and Teichler (2007)
University resources	Social class	Storrs et al. (2008)
University monitoring of achievement		Trotter and Roberts (2006)
Academic leadership	Demography	Walters (2003)
	Nationality and age	Wingate (2007)

growth that lie in the unnamed and often ill-defined periods of change that characterise a student's university journey (Cross 1999).

When students commence their university education, they experience ontological shifts and identity transformations that may be akin to 'passing through a portal' and an 'opening up of a new and inaccessible way of thinking about something' (Meyer and Land 2005). Threshold Concepts, as defined by Meyer and Land (2003) are 'threshold' because they have features that are transformative, irreversible, integrative, bounded, potentially troublesome, discursive and reconstitutive. We acknowledge that there are many threshold concepts that come into play when becoming a student, including those relating to language, knowledge creation, theories, frameworks, writing, creativity and many more. We focus specifically here on aspects of the liminal space experienced by those who are learning to be a student, rather than identifying the specific threshold concepts themselves. Once a student registers at a university and begins a specific programme of study, there are multiple thresholds and transitions that students must negotiate in order to successfully complete their university journey within the particular programme. We consider what happens when students at all levels, across all programmes, are positioned in a higher education transitional space that requires the crossing of interwoven and multilayered thresholds.

For us, the theory of Threshold Concepts and Liminality (Meyer and Land 2003) captures the processes of a university journey, the pivotal stage-like trajectories[4] of a university experience. Liminality reflects the transitions (positive and negative, smooth and choppy) that transform old to new being and learning along the student journey. Liminality helps us better comprehend the complex and multi layered nature of a university experience; it helps to understand and support transitions or 'transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape … [and] world view' (Meyer and Land 2003, p. 1). In this paper, we aim to capture and qualify the transitional process characterised by liminality and explore its potential to influence practice for all stakeholders within higher education. This area of study has previously received little attention in a European student experience context. We draw on empirical data collected through an institution-wide student experience survey (SES) conducted at University College, Cork (UCC). The UCC SES aims to capture 'close-up' expectations, perceptions, hopes and aspirations of students at all stages and at all levels of the student journey.

4 Research Design and Methodology

The facilitation of a high quality student experience has been a focus of strategic planning and operational delivery at UCC for a number of years. This became visible within the earlier UCC Strategic Plan 2008–2012 where one of the strategic

[4]Akin to 'rites of passage'.

goals was 'Improving the Student Experience'. As part of this activity, a Technical Working Group was tasked with describing and measuring the UCC Student Experience through the design and implementation of the UCC SES. To this end, under- and post-graduates, recruited from broad but non-exclusive categories, were randomly selected and invited to attend a focus group discussion. The focus group research served as the basis for the development of a survey instrument designed to measure the student experience (Kitzinger 1995; Millward 2006). A student experience survey of all registered students of UCC was developed under the direction of the then Vice-President for the Student Experience and the Vice-President for Teaching and Learning. A series of focus groups elicited student views and aided the technical working group to construct a University-wide questionnaire. The UCC Student Experience Survey (UCC SES) was first administered in 2009 and biennially thereafter. This paper is a discourse analysis of unique and previously undocumented primary questionnaire material harvested from the university Student Experience Survey (SES) (UCC, SES 2009, 2011, 2013). In addition, we examine and analyse recent interview data generated from a new study on student experience, 'Facilitating a High Quality Student Experience: finessing approaches (FHQSE)' which aims to capture 'close-up' expectations, perceptions, hopes and aspirations of a small group of incoming students at UCC. Throughout this paper, we draw on quotes from the survey material.

An inductive approach for analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data was adopted, beginning with open coding of the raw textual data into themes and categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Complex themes and categories then emerged and formed the initial framework of analysis. Clear links between the underlying structure of student experiences and the findings derived from the analysis and re-analysis of raw data were established. Finally, aspects of the Threshold Concept/Liminality framework that are evident and grounded in the raw data were explored. Like others, we found this a relevant and highly applicable model (Backett and Davison 1995; Meyer and Land 2006; Stolee et al. 1999; Turner 1969). The approach provides a lens through which to further explore and develop institutional approaches and sector-wide best practice that facilitates and supports a high quality student experience. At the heart of the approach is a desire to link and further develop theoretical frameworks to practice in today's universities. The objectives of this paper are to generate perspectives on how students deal with the subjective university experience: the enactment, the expectations, transitions, turning points, change and challenges. We analyze the notion of moving towards and through liminal or 'stuck' places. Whilst we acknowledge the unsettling nature of liminality for some students, we also appreciate the transformative and emergent nature of the liminal space. Our discussion is followed by an examination of the ways in which research has informed policy making at an institutional level, as evidenced by the implementation of strategies to facilitate student progression through what could be described as 'stuck' spaces.

5 Results and Discussion

In the context of research on student experience, many of the findings are not unique to UCC or to Universities in Ireland, but reflect perennial issues in the university student experience. Empirical findings yielded three main themes that specifically frame this paper and each theme will be considered in turn.

(i) Liminality, Threshold Concepts and Student Experience
Liminal space or *liminality* refers to the period of transformation that students undergo or are challenged by. Liminality is the transition from old to new being (Meyer and Land 2005). The British Cultural Anthropologist, Victor Turner [1920–1983] defined liminality as the in-between time and place in the process of transformation (Turner 1969). Here we explore liminality in the student experience within a threshold concept framework that transcends disciplinary boundaries.
Liminality represents a core threshold concept. Meyer and Land discuss threshold concepts as portals, or ways of understanding. We concur with Meyer and Land (2005) that liminal portals have six distinctive yet fluid characteristics and constitute the overall student experience. They appear to be:

- *Irreversible*, unlikely to be unlearned (Meyer and Land 2005).
  Stimulating learning environment, resources to allow effective academic practice (First year male student, CAO Entry, College of Medicine and Health, 2013).
- *Bounded and potentially troublesome* (Meyer and Land 2005; Cartensen and Bernhard 2007).
  Having to do it for yourself (UG, 2009).
- *Discursive,* drawing on new and empowering forms of expression (Meyer and Land 2005).
  The UCC campus is state of the art, the library facilities and the gym are state of the art and a pleasure to be in (First year female student, CAO Entry, College of Medicine and Health, 2013).
- *Integrative*, exposing the previously hidden, inter-relatedness of something (Meyer and Land 2005).
  The many free facilities it provides, that are of excellent qualities
  (First year female, Non EU Entry, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, 2013).
- *Reconstitutive,* a required and new understanding (Meyer and Land 2005).
  The best thing about UCC is the Brookfield campus for health science, very well equipped for lectures, tutorials and clinical skills and also the Mardyke arena facilities, free classes, lots of equipment; it really encourages you to avail of the services and live a healthier life
  (First year female student, Graduate Entry to Medicine, College of Medicine and Health, 2013).

- Transformative, 'occasioning a significant shift in the perception of the subject' (Meyer and Land 2005).
  Learn a lot here, both in academic and life (Fourth year male student, CAO Entry, College of Business and Law, 2014).

The theory of threshold concepts and liminality applies to real life student experience. We see examples of students moving towards and through liminal spaces in terms of challenge, negotiation, growth, learning and re-authorship. The student journey does not represent a 'simple passage in learning from 'easy' to 'difficult', rather it 'often involves messy journeys back, forth…' (Cousin 2008). We therefore focus here on the multidimensional nature of threshold concepts in a student journey, and illustrate that threshold concepts are more than mastery of conceptual concepts. These offer a means of understanding the challenges and interventions required for successfully passing toward and through liminal spaces, and provide a new lens through which those charged with facilitating a high quality student experience can frame their work.

(ii) Student Transitions: getting stuck and opening up
Getting Stuck

'Getting stuck' occurs across all disciplinary contexts. The university journey is *both* cognitive and deeply embodied. The very physical experience of walking into a lecture theatre and embodying student identity for the first time is powerful. Our experience working with and speaking to students about their first days at university (September 2014) attests to their acutely felt embodied experience of taking on and trying out the 'self-as-university-student' identity. Emotion in this context is used 'to refer to an interpretive experience of how one feels, as this experience is embedded in a particular cultural context and its social codes' (Zembylas 2007). Emotion is a social, rather than a psychological construct. Embodiment is 'a linked, hybrid field of flesh and accompanying objects, rather than a series of individual bodies, intersubjectively linked … [providing] new means of linkage … (Thrift 2008: 276).
Students are thought to acquire 'a new status and identity' (Meyer and Land 2005, p. 376).
The students in our study spoke about particular transitional realities of university life, *'freedom and flexibility'* (UG, Int., 2009) and '*Moving out of home and gaining independence*' (First year female student, CAO Entry, College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, UCC, 2013).

In such cases, the rapid movement toward the particular realities of student identity are irreversible and unlikely to be unlearned. A previous identity within the secondary school community and previous ways of being and knowing are unreachable. For some, the loss of the old experience is deeply affective.

In comparison to secondary school I feel lost. Lecturers don't know you; you are simply a number (2013)

The 'betwixt and between' spaces, where the student 'is naked of self—neither fully in one category or another' (Meyer and Land 2005), is characteristic of this particular state of liminality. The liminal space is powerfully affective. Affect 'is not simply emotion, nor is it reducible to the affections or perceptions of an individual subject' (Thrift 2008: 116). The liminal space discharges intensities, sensations and energies that are beyond 'the inner world or interiority of the human subject' (Zembylas 2007).

The unsettling nature of liminality shapes the individual student experience and the ability or inability to form the practice of university communities. Potential troublesome and bounded features of the student experience at UCC are implicit in the following comments:

- *Lecturers sometimes feel distant from the students (2013).*
- *I have been disappointed by some of the lecturers (2013).*
- *My department does not focus on the work of the students, but rather their personal research (2013).*
- *Some lecturers seem uninterested in students' progress (2013).*
- *The gaps between lectures during the day. I would rather all my lectures were in the morning from 9 til 2 or 3 or in the afternoons all together (2013).*
- *A lot of the schools/departments are quite spread out from each other, which means students may miss out on part of their lecture while travelling from a building on one side of campus to a building on the other side of campus where their next lecture is held (2013).*
- *The isolation of satellite campuses (2013).*
- *Haven't really met a lot of new people since going to college (2013).*
- *I'm doing arts and I found it hard to integrate socially in such large groups (2013).*

The troublesome and bounded nature of the student experience is rooted within a specific community of practice (Wenger 1998). Aspects of student experiences align with Wenger's notion of bounded 'communities of practice' (1998) and the perception that the lecturer or other students are more *expert* than themselves (2014 interview data). The commencing students need to find their voice and confidence in the academic setting. Liminality for these students represents portals on legitimate peripheral participation, rather than full participation in a safe cultural environment (Lave and Wenger 1991). The potential for students to experience fear and concern regarding risk of academic failure and disappointment in commencing students is a clear 'take out message' for academics. It offers the potential to maximise positive impact on stakeholder issues, concerns and anxieties at an early stage of the student journey.

In other instances, the troublesomeness is linked to language and lecture delivery. Specific discourses have developed within disciplines to represent particular ways of seeing and thinking.

The First Year group felt that having lecture notes posted on Blackboard before lectures were delivered would be beneficial (First Years, Mature Students, 2009)

They felt some of the theory they covered in their courses was not relevant to the world of work. It was also felt by the International group that it was not positive that international law students often had to take modules on the Irish legal system (Intermediate Years, International Students, 2009)

These discourses distinguish specific communities of practice and practices that are less familiar to students who are peripheral to them.

Emotion is an intricate part of the university experience of transfiguration and often there is a fear of losing part of a previously comfortable self. Our task as university educators is to acknowledge such powerful and affective liminal states, and help students respond and transverse dissatisfaction to stimulate transfiguration and acceptance of extended discourses. In this way, challenge and discomfort has the potential to become a positive learning and developmental experience.

According to William Perry: "Each of the upheavals of cognitive growth threatens the balance between vitality and depression, hope and despair. It may be a great joy to discover a new and more complex way of thinking and seeing; but yesterday one thought in simpler ways… it appears that it takes a little time for the guts to catch up with such leaps of the mind" (Perry 1981, p. 108).

It takes time and support for 'emotions to catch up with mind' (Meyer et al. 2010: 7). Similarly, Ellsworth (1989) has warned against tendencies in pedagogy towards the disembodiment and neglect of social and affective dimensions of the learning experience.

Ellsworth advises educators to cultivate: "… a third ear that listens not for what a student knows (discrete packages of knowledge) but for the terms that shape a student's knowledge, her not knowing, her forgetting, her circles of stuck places and resistances" (Ellsworth 1997: 71).

Deconstruction of emotional student experiences could be used to foreground the 'limits, the misfiring of [university] pedagogy' (Lather and Ellsworth 1996, p. 1). The 'privileging of containment over excess, thought over affect, structure over speed, linear causality over complexity, and intention over aggregate capacities' (Lather 1998: 497) obscures recognition of 'stuck places'. In 2011, *33 % of* [UCC] *research postgraduate students found their research experience to be moderately to very much lonely, 40 % found it to be slightly to somewhat lonely and 27 % found it not to be lonely* (UCC, SES 2011).

38 % of [UCC] *research postgraduate students found their research experience to be moderately to very much frustrating, 51 % found it to be slightly to somewhat frustrating and 3 % found it not to be frustrating* (UCC, SES 2011).

And in 2013, *28 % of* [UCC] *research postgraduate students found their research experience to be moderately to very much lonely, 42 % found it to be slightly to somewhat lonely and 30 % found it not to be lonely* (UCC, SES 2013).

37 % of [UCC] *research postgraduate students found their research experience to be moderately to very much frustrating, 52 % found it to be slightly to somewhat frustrating and 11 % found it not to be frustrating* (UCC, SES 2013).

The above data illustrate that some PG research students at UCC (as is the case elsewhere) experienced 'stuck places' of loneliness and frustration in 2011 and

2013 (see also Enríquez 2014). Additional 'stuck places' were noted in 2013 data for a small number of UG and PG students: "*It's difficult to manage the workload and family life …*" *(2013)*;"*…some of the staff can be dismissive at times…*" *(2013)*; "*It is quite confusing, and sometimes I feel like there is not enough support for visiting students…*" *(2013)*; "*Incredibly heavy workload that makes it impossible to fully engage with the subjects and to do independent learning*" *(2013)*.

These students find difficulty in playing 'the underlying game' (Perkins 1997). They may not appreciate the ever-increasing complexity of university challenges. The result of 'getting stuck' may be enabling or disabling in terms of its impact on learning and experience (see Savin-Baden 2008; Savin-Baden and Tombs 2010). Getting stuck powerfully 'registers on the body' and 'affects' bodies' (Zembylas 2007).

5.1 Opening Up and Jumping Off a Cliff

Our analysis suggests that the university experience is shaped by multiple layers of interacting context (Palmer and Marra 2008). Within UCC's setting, it would appear that, on the part of the student, there may be obstacles to happily achieving a new student identity, occasioning entry into 'stuck places'. There may also be a form of 'mimicry' where thinking and acting are tacit or ritualised. In all cases, discursive, integrative and reconstitutive transitions or 'change of skins' characterise the learning process (Nin 1971, p. 26).

The university experience is shifting, affective, embodied and emotional. Transforming student epistemologies, liberating students from that in which they were embedded, 'making what was subject into object' so that they can 'have it', rather than 'be had' by it, is according to Kegan 'the most powerful way I know to conceptualise the growth of mind' (Kegan 1994). Undergraduate and post graduate students in our study acknowledged that their university experience was discursive, integrative and reconstitutive: "*Great learning experience*"; "*Opened your mind*"; "*Allowed them to make more informed decisions about the future*"; "*Different person at the end of college*"; "*Increased overall confidence*"; "*Preparation for the future*"; "*Always stand to you*" (UCC Student 2009).

Here, education is recognised as representing more than academic and professional outcomes. There is an openness to the nature of the student experience and the potential meaning making which weaves epistemological, intrapersonal and interpersonal threads.

Further, learning is about 'entrance into …a community of people who share that way of thinking and practising' (Davies, 2006 in Meyer and Land 2006, p. 71). A fourth year female student told us: "*There is a large community of academic people in this university all with the common interest of furthering our learning in our chosen field. It is a very reassuring notion that you are surrounded by many like minded people with the same objective as you.*"

Grasping the university experience is never purely a cognitive shift; it also involves a repositioning of subjectivity. Learner identity is increasingly complex and inter related with thinking, acting and language. University culture is shaped and shaping: 'It is through and by language and discursive practices [that] selfhoods are constructed, identities are forged, and social processes are enacted' (Gonzalez 1999, p. 433).

University reality is a constant process of negotiation and transitions. Entering a transitional space, according to Kegan, feels 'much like going off a cliff' (1994, p. 11). Transitions characterise every university student experience. Students who are open to the possibility of transformation and willing to accommodate alternative expressions of meaning and extended discourses may experience: "… a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world" (O'Sullivan 2003).

'Opening up' within a liminal space represents a rite of passage or a point "… a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world" (O'Sullivan 2003; van Gennep 1960). Opening up reflects a dawning, an 'Aha' moment, which unexpectedly lights up the way (Meyer and Land 2003). The experience of crossing liminal terrains can range from turbulent to smooth. Varied experiences of liminality suggest that conceptual and ontological dimensions characterise the liminal space (Land 2012).

Threshold concepts define powerful transformative stages along an 'excursive' student journey—a journey that will commence with an intended outcome but may have a revised passage and ultimate destination. Threshold concepts align with a student focused and 'participative' approach to learning (Sfard 1998). A lack of understanding of threshold concepts confines learners to liminal and peripheral spheres (Lave and Wenger 1991). When students pass through the portals seamlessly, they advance learning and engage 'authentically' in the practices of the community (Meyer and Land 2003; Sfard 1998). The role of university staff (including academics and professional service staff) in supporting a smooth passage through a number of portals merits further exploration.

(iii) University Transitions: leaps of change in the name of quality

The innovations that have been instigated at UCC to date are conceived as helping facilitate a high quality student experience and, centre on cultivating relationships and benefits for all stakeholders involved in the educational journey. The approach developed to help students negotiate the higher educational terrain is a holistic one, with the personal and professional development of students throughout the student journey at its core. Innovations include.

Table 2 SES 2013 overall student satisfaction scores

Undergraduates		Postgraduate taught	Postgraduate research
Satisfaction with Overall Experience 2013	Almost nine in 10 satisfied with overall experience	Four in five satisfied with their overall experience	Four in five satisfied with their overall experience

Student stakeholders specifically noted their level of satisfaction with the overall university student experience in 2009, 2011 and 2013, across four broad areas (UCC, SES 2013)

5.2 *Developing Approaches to Hearing the Student Voice*

The student experience survey which has generated the data set for the research reported in this paper was introduced and has been developed further, in order to listen to the student voice. The biennial Student Experience Survey (SES), with a focus on a broad concept of the student experience, has provided feedback relevant to a number of strategically important areas since its inception in 2009. In the 2009 survey there was a 73 % satisfaction with university life, increasing to 78 % for Broad Satisfaction.[5] The outcomes of the most recent (UCC, SES 2013) SES open to all registered students, and which incorporated a number of validated scales, were very positive, whilst leaving room for continued improvement (Table 2):

- Supporting success

High standard of learning, excellent lecturers who put in time and effort (Second Year Female, 2013).

- Health and Well-Being

The atmosphere is really great. Campus is refreshing and full of nice people. The lecturers are always willing to give helps (sic) ns (sic) advice and for the most part are very understanding of any personal problems you may be having (Female, 2nd Year, 2013).

- Employability and Further Study

Learn a lot here, both in academic and life (Fourth Year Male, 2014).
The opportunity to access a level of education that you desire and the hope that it will result in a prosperous career (Third Year, Female Student, 2013).

- Student Life: facilitating engagement with student life

Feeling as if you're part of a community of people who are all motivated to get the best out (sic) their time at Uni, in both academic and social aspect. We work hard, party harder and then struggle through labs the next day (UCC Student, 2013)

[5]Total number of respondents, 3015.

The SES is not the only survey relating to the student experience. A sub-group of the UCC Academic Council Teaching and Learning Committee prepares and conducts the university module survey. In addition, the new Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) runs in February/March of each year, having been piloted in 2013. Exchange and interaction of ideas via student surveys ensures student/stakeholder engagement around emerging issues. The results provide for assessment of progress and highlight areas that require further improvement. The challenge is the presence of conflicting stakeholder demands and concerns. In UCC, the ongoing development of the Student Experience Office is one example of an organizational, functional and visible response to stakeholder issues and needs.

A leading action for achievement for 2017 is to pursue excellence in teaching and learning by listening to the student voice,

High-quality research led teaching is at the core of our mission …We will continually improve the quality of the student experience by acting on student feedback and on recommendations for quality improvement. Improved supports for student learning, personal and employability skills development will be provided through the development of our state-of-the-art 'hub' building. (Strategic Plan for the student experience 2013–2017: 15).

5.3 Creating a Student Experience Office

A core innovation at UCC has been the creation of a Student Experience Office (SEO) in 2007/8. The SEO leads and coordinates the strategic development and direction of policy and practice related to the Student Experience in a range of functions and activities. It strives to facilitate a world class student experience through which all students are empowered and supported to achieve their goals.

The SEO aims to ensure that every student develops not only academically, but also personally within an attractive and supportive environment with an increasingly diverse and international student population. In line with strategic aims of the University and of the SEO, thematic strategies have been implemented that hold the potential to facilitate progression through liminal spaces encountered on a student journey. The areas of focus include

- Office wide/service wide developments
- Contributing to Outreach and Transition into University
- Supporting Student Retention, Progression and Success
- Supporting Student Health and Wellbeing
- Facilitating Engagement in Student Life
- Supporting Transition to Work and Further Study.

5.4 Promoting a Holistic Student Experience

The current Strategic Plan (UCC, 2013–2017) for Student Experience aims to deliver "… strong student focused support services and activities …based on the three phases of the student lifecycle – transition… time in …and support for the transition out of UCC…." (UCC, Strategic Plan 2013–2017: 17).

The unique focus on successful transition into the university has seen the development of a wide-ranging orientation programme by the First Year Experience Coordinator (this post was introduced in 2007), supported by a comprehensive peer support programme (established in 2009) and through well-coordinated cross university efforts within all academic and professional service units. A student's time in university is supported in multiple ways, with a key focus on supporting retention, progression and success. This includes specific post entry support for particular cohorts of students linked to access (namely disabled students, mature students and socio economically disadvantage students), academic tutorials linked to, for example, the development of writing skills and referencing; the provision of online support; dedicated support for international students and the on-going interaction of peer support leaders in a variety of ways. The university proactively adopts a philosophy of continuous improvement; for example, plans are currently being finalised to co-locate a number of professional services with teaching and learning and student led initiatives within one 'student hub', and the university has recently increased support for 'talented' students. The transition out of university to work and/or further study is equally significant. The careers service provides traditional one to one advice and guidance, and has also developed comprehensive work experience, volunteering and internship opportunities for all undergraduate students. As with many universities, the first employment destination of graduates is tracked 6 months from graduation, and academic programmes are supported to include employability related content within their curricula.

The University has placed a high priority on developing comprehensive programmes and structures in the areas of health and wellbeing and engagement in student life, linked to the interwoven objectives of supporting student success and employability. The university is currently working towards health promoting university status, is in the vanguard of developing actions to reduce harmful alcohol consumption amongst students and has produced ground breaking training materials that highlight the role of front line staff in supporting students in distress. Student involvement in sports clubs, student led societies, community volunteering and leadership activities is also encouraged and facilitated by university administrative staff. Whilst increasing student participation in the full breadth of student life is challenging in the face of increased diversification of the student body and a parallel increase in student financial pressure, such dimensions of the student experience remain a key component of the aspired-to high quality experience.

5.5 *Developing New Strategies to Facilitate Improved Student Progression Through Liminal Spaces*

Following a quality review (QR) in 2014, the SEO at UCC continues to develop and refine its approach to facilitating a world class student experience.[6] The QR process helped to identify a number of thematic and cross service opportunities and projects which are being designed to improved outcomes for students in a number of areas. Projects to be developed will include:

- Increase opportunities for the student voice to inform development of policy and practice
- Establish opportunities for student experience staff to attend relevant College/School-level committees and groups
- Develop research and evaluation projects and disseminate outcomes nationally and internationally
- Develop systems and databases to support the student experience across all services
- Support students to set and reflect on personal and professional development goals throughout the student experience
- Develop clearer messages to students at different points in the student journey.

A shift towards the adoption of project methodology across thematic areas of the student experience is taking place to account for the crossing, by students, of interwoven and multilayered thresholds. Within this context, the delivery of support within somewhat isolated and vertical service units is problematic, and it is thought that further value can be added by working in cross cutting ways. In this way, our theoretical understanding is supporting on-going practical application within student support and professional service structures.

6 Conclusions

To date, the majority of research into threshold concepts and liminality has focused on their identification in various disciplines and their characteristics in relation to expert discourse (see Burchmore et al. 2007). The characteristics of threshold concepts and liminality adopted here help us to define critical points in the broader student experience—that of passing through a new threshold. We challenge academics and administrators to put in place and further develop more innovative and nuanced support structures, and equip students with ‘threshold capital’ that responds to such changes and that helps them become unstuck, to open up and

[6]The internal QR was conducted by a peer review panel composed of internal and external reviewers, in line with a quality framework for all departments at UCC.

move along the spectrum of liminality (Land 2012). There are many ways in which this is and can be best achieved.

We suggest that threshold concepts and liminality may provide a framework for developing understanding of how best to initiate innovative pathways for students throughout their university journey. These concepts provide a novel frame to enable explanatory insight into the student experience within liminal spaces, and renders the space (and the student experience within) more open to analysis. Rather than thinking purely about the outcomes of a university journey, for example through degree classifications and graduate employment rates, threshold concepts and liminality provide a point of focus for innovations in learning across and within subjects and discipline boundaries. The threshold concepts/liminality framework offer the potential to be both epistemological *and* ontological—to be part of the macro university framework to stimulate activities, reflection and transitions that could generate 'high quality' (Elliott 2007).

Threshold concepts and liminality provide a lens through which to further explore and develop institutional and sector wide approaches to quality within the student experience. Research is required to better understand the experiences of specific cohorts at a micro level. We will continue to endeavour to capture 'close-up' expectations, perceptions, hopes and aspirations of a small group of university students. Most importantly, in support of professional colleagues working to support the student experience, we aim to explore specifically the liminal stages that students in higher education pass through, and the effect of specific structures or interventions that may smooth transitions. For example, we will enhance understanding by further administering the use of exit surveys for all students who withdraw from higher education and identify other points of transition where data can be collected.

Our research will add richness to the existing data, extending it to examine student negotiation of liminality and to reflect on innovative practices that enable transformative progression through liminal spaces. Our research deals specifically with the threshold concepts and liminality that form part of the university experience. We contest that this approach holds significant potential for informing practice through which the student experience can be enriched and through which institutions can best organise resources to achieve strategic aims.

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Part VIII
The Impacts of the Bologna Process on the EHEA and Beyond

The EHEA at the Cross-Roads. The Bologna Process and the Future of Higher Education [Overview Paper]

Sjur Bergan

1 Introduction

The papers in this section address the future orientation of the European Higher Education Area—perhaps by implication also of higher education more broadly. The immediate background is an initiative by several members and consultative members of the BFUG to launch a discussion of the future of the EHEA in preparation of the 2015 Ministerial meeting (Bologna Process 2014a). The debate was launched at the BFUG meeting in Athens in April 2014 (Bologna Process 2014b), was the main issue at the meeting of the BFUG in Roma on September 18–19, 2014 (Bologna Process 2014c) and will also feed into the drafting of the Yerevan Communiqué and the preparation of the Ministerial meeting in May 2015.

The substantial reasons for the debate are more complex. A large majority of EHEA member countries participated in ministerial conferences at political level up to and including 2010,[1] when the EHEA was formally declared. The Bologna Process helped put higher education reform firmly on the political agenda in Europe as well as in individual countries. Nevertheless, political interest now seems to be waning and at the ministerial conference in Bucureşti in 2012[2] more countries were represented at senior official than at political level. Is this because there is a feeling that the EHEA has achieved all it was intended to achieve, because the initial goals are now seen as too ambitious and nobody wants to be associated with failure, because the EHEA is seen to lose focus and become everything to all people,

[1] An overview of the Ministerial meetings, the Declarations and Communiques adopted and the respective conference web sites will be found at http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=5, accessed January 6, 2015.
[2] http://bologna-bucharest2012.ehea.info/, accessed January 6, 2015.

S. Bergan (✉)
Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France
e-mail: sjur.bergan@coe.int

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because an increasing focus on implementation implies that the EHEA is now seen as an administrative—some would say bureaucratic—rather than as a political challenge, or simply because as "Bologna" ceases to be new it is also perceived to cease to be innovative and politically interesting?

The perception that the EHEA is seen as being of less political pertinence now that the Area has formally been established is underlined by the relative lack of involvement by a number of countries in the BFUG—by absence or by relatively passive participation where the representatives of several countries only very rarely take the floor in debates—as well as by statements by political decision makers and senior officials and by the education priorities of many participating countries.

The Bologna Process responded to the political agenda of decision makers in the mid- to late 1990s, (see e.g. Attali 1998). In positive terms, it offered a forum for devising common solutions to common challenges, even if these solutions had to be implemented within national frameworks which each had its own traditions and peculiarities. In more negative terms, Ministers may have felt it was easier to undertake difficult reforms challenging set ways and strong interest groups if these could be placed in a European framework, where others had to take similarly strong medicine.

The debate in the EHEA has focused on three questions outlined in the note by the BFUG members and consultative members who launched the debate (Bologna Process 2014a):

1. What are the goals to which Ministers have committed on which work still remains so that commitments will be met?
2. What should be the main goals and issues of the EHEA in the near to medium term?
3. How should the EHEA be organized to achieve these goals?

We might perhaps phrase this in terms of a discussion focusing and what needs to be wrapped up, what needs to be launched, and how the EHEA should be governed and organized.

2 Unfinished Business

The first decade of the EHEA—the Bologna Process in the narrow, formal sense of the term—was characterized by strong concentration on structural reforms. Qualifications frameworks, quality assurance, the recognition of qualifications, and transparency instruments remain important elements of both the EHEA and national policy, and were the subject of one of four working groups in the 2012–2015 EHEA work program (Bologna Process 2014d). As Robert Harmsen points out in his contribution (Harmsen 2015), especially in the early years, the goals were clear and the ways in which they would be achieved were considered to be reasonably straightforward.

However, the formal education structures have largely been reformed, or at least so many public authorities would say. A number of countries have yet to establish and self-certify their national qualifications frameworks or set up quality assurance agencies that comply with the European Standards and Guidelines (Bologna Process 2012). All but Greece have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention, but far from all have implemented the provisions of the Convention in their own legislation and practice. The notion that one should look for how a foreign qualification may be recognized rather than how recognition may be denied has still not been universally absorbed. Almost ten years after the deadline by which Ministers pledged to issue the Diploma Supplement automatically, free of charge, and in a widely spoken language, the pledge is still conjugated in the future tense. In its report to the 2015 Ministerial meeting, the Structural Reforms Working Group draws together proposals concerning four policy areas—quality assurance, qualifications frameworks, recognition of qualifications, transparency instruments—to launch the concept of a European infrastructure for transparency and recognition (Bologna Process 2014d).

Nevertheless, the emphasis in structural reforms will shift from developing the structures to implementing them. Learning outcomes need to be put at the center of institutional and individual practice as well as of qualifications frameworks; countries and institutions need to adapt their practice to the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention; and institutions must issue the Diploma Supplements as Ministers promised that institutions would do by 2005. At their 2015 conference, Ministers also seem likely to follow the suggestion by the Structural Reforms Working Group and ask the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO to review and revise the Diploma Supplement.

Implementation is a much more challenging task than setting goals. Goals can be set at European level by Ministers. Implementation, on the other hand, relies not only on the public authorities of the 47 member countries of the EHEA, but even more on the adherence and action of higher education institutions, students, and faculty. A shifting emphasis from developing structures to ensuring that they work in practice implies shifting the focus from the European to the national and institutional level, with the attendant risk that uneven national and institutional implementation of what look like compatible structures on paper or, more elegantly, de jure, may mean that these structures will in the end not be compatible de facto.

Focusing on implementation also means that unless something goes drastically wrong, and this is perceived to be either a huge problem or something that can usefully be blamed on political opponents in a national context, a shift from defining policy objectives to implementing them will probably mean reducing the political relevance and—to use one of the catch words of today's *new speak*—the visibility of the European Higher Education Area.

One important question for the future of the EHEA, then, is how different levels of policy and implementation interact. This has a governance aspect, as Robert Harmsen points out, but governance can best be dealt with as an issue of its own. Armağan Erdoğan (Erdoğan 2015) explores the implementation of Bologna policies in Turkey and demonstrates how the policy goals of the EHEA have guided

the development of the Turkish higher education system. At the same time, she also shows that the Turkish system responded to many challenges that would have arisen even if the Bologna Process had not been launched. The challenges would perhaps to a large extent have been the same and they arise from demographic as well as societal, international, and technological developments. The solutions devised would, however, not have been flavored *à la bolognaise*, and developing a higher education system with a considerable degree of compatibility with those of other European countries would possibly not have been an objective. The choice of Turkey for the case study is significant: Turkey is a large European country with an extensive system that has become considerably larger since Turkey joined the Bologna Process in 2001. It is not an EU member but has—or has at least had—EU membership as an important political goal and is, regardless of whether EU membership will materialize, strongly influenced by economic and political developments both within the European Union and in other parts of Europe.

3 Between Wrapping Up and Launching New Policies: Bologna and the Rest of the World

Turkey is, as Erdoğan points out in her article, by its geography, its history, and its cultural traditions, an important link between Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Turkey is a country standing on the inside looking out and, perhaps more than most other EHEA countries, in a position to relate to a group of countries standing on the outside looking in.

During its first few years of life, the Bologna Process was essentially inward looking. That was perhaps understandable since the journey toward the European Higher Education Area was an innovative venture into largely unchartered territory, but isolation is rarely a recipe for success. In the classical French tragedy, the ideal is to be loved, but it is better to be hated than to be ignored. At least, as seen by much of the world outside Europe, the Bologna Process was in this enviable ideal situation, even if voices inside Europe were a mix of those ardently in favor and those equally ardently against "Bologna"—but "Bologna" rarely suffered the indignity of being ignored. Avoiding this misfortune in the future is, however, one of the challenges facing the EHEA as it reaches adolescence.

The charge of Eurocentrism may, however, not have been entirely unjustified also beyond the first few years. When the EHEA explicitly opened up to the world with that classical instrument of bureaucracy, a policy strategy (Bologna Process 2007), this was labeled as addressing the global dimension only after a longish and quite ardent discussion on doing away with the term "external dimension". One could perhaps not have blamed those who felt that it connoted too crass a distinction between those on the inside reluctantly looking out, and those on the outside eagerly looking in, possibly with the added message of "stay where you are".

The interest from other parts of the world was real, and to its credit, the EHEA rose to it, even if it took some time, and the "external" dimension evolved into the global dimension. In my view, the early years of the Bologna Process were more inspired by US higher education than many European policy makers care to admit, and it is significant that the US is also where some of the early interest in "Bologna developments" arose. Attitudes in the US span from Cliff Adelman's enthusiastic assertion that "it is not so much when Bologna will arrive in the US as how" (Adelman 2009),[3] through Paul Gaston's description of the "Challenge of Bologna" (Gaston 2010), to quite hesitant reactions by several higher education leaders to the Lumina Foundation's attempt at introducing the concept of qualifications frameworks in the US.[4]

Another set of non-EHEA countries interested by the EHEA is discussed by QueAnh Dang (2015). Dang describes how Asia addresses the "challenge of Bologna". Again, the choice of continent is significant. Asia is very likely the continent that European policy makers see as the most significant to their own future, and more often for economic than academic reasons. Europeans, however, often fail to appreciate the diversity of Asia, with countries ranging in population from China and India to the Maldives and Bhutan, and with great diversity of higher education traditions, social inclusion (or the lack thereof), political, social, and religious traditions, and economic performance. Europe is, in my view, a unique balance of what we have in common and what is particular to each country, culture, and tradition. Asia and other continents also blend common and distinct heritages and traditions but, with the possible exception of Latin America and certainly of North America, the balance is more toward diversity.

As Dang clearly describes, to the extent we can refer to a common Asian policy toward the EHEA, it is one of adaptation rather than wholesale importation and copying. This is, in my view, a wise choice. The EHEA may serve as inspiration and can provide a wide array of lessons about measures that have worked and other measures that have worked less well, and EHEA countries can provide important contextual information: what worked and failed in what contexts and circumstances?

QueAnh Dang's article links to the ongoing discussion about how cooperation between the EHEA and the rest of the world should be organized. In 2009, the first Bologna Policy Forum was held end-on with that year's Ministerial conference. The intention was to provide a forum for identifying common issues and possible cooperation between the EHEA and non-EHEA countries. The Bologna Policy Forum was high level, with the participation of most of the ministers who participated in the EHEA Ministerial meeting as well as Ministers and/or high ranking

[3]The quote is taken form a presentation Cliff Adelman delivered to the ECTN4 Final Conference "Chemistry and the Bologna Process" on September 9–10, 2009 in Dresden, available at http://ectn-assoc.cpe.fr/network/ECTN4_FinalConf_Dresden2009/ECTN4FC009_03_Adelman.pdf, accessed January 6, 2015.

[4]At a conference organized by the Lumina Foundation in Washington, DC in July 2009 in which the author participated, attitudes to qualifications frameworks ranged from quite enthusiastic to skeptical.

civil servants from the non-EHEA countries invited. Incidentally, one of these—Kazakhstan—joined the European Higher Education Area a year later.

The Bologna Policy Forum was intended as a start, and in 2010 and 2012 similar Fora were held end-on with the Ministerial conferences. However, there is an increasing feeling—in my view justified—that, while the Policy Forum may have made a promising start, this start has not been followed up and that cooperation between the EHEA and other regions has not advanced.

Most likely, there are several reasons for this lack of follow up. One is that many EHEA countries see their cooperation with other countries partly as cooperation and partly as marketing. The two are not always easy to distinguish, and at least for the marketing part, the countries with well-established foreign contacts and that host a large number of students from outside of the EHEA prefer to market their systems as national rather than as part of the EHEA. In the case of EU countries, it matters a great deal whether students come from outside of the EU or not because this will determine the kind of study fees they may be charged. The EHEA has so far not succeeded in developing a common label with which to present itself to the rest of the world and it is unlikely that all members would want it to do so.

Secondly, the politically focused Bologna Policy Fora have not been complemented by more focused cooperation between policy makers and practitioners focused on specific policy areas. This is a statement that immediately needs to be qualified. As Dang points out, the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM) is a forum for political as well as practical cooperation, and organizations like the European University Association (EUA), EURASHE, the European Students Union (ESU) and ENQA are engaged in cooperation well beyond Europe on topics that are highly relevant to the EHEA. Individual institutions and countries within the EHEA are similarly engaged, and some organizations without formal links to the EHEA have organized EHEA-themed activities. However, while the EHEA is an important reference in many—probably most—of these initiatives, there is no EHEA agenda, coordination, or for that matter financing of such cooperation initiatives.

The relative lack of direction and the tension between cooperation and marketing come to the fore also in the BFUG discussion about how to organize the Bologna Policy Fora. In the view of some members, the format followed so far should be continued, as it allows to gather high ranking representatives of countries from all parts of the world for a policy discussion every two or three years. However, this format has so far not proved a resounding success, and both the level of representation and the participation in the plenary discussions by non-EHEA delegations at the 2012 edition of the Policy Forum indicate that if this is to be the format of future Policy Fora, ways need to be found to make them more attractive and these ways have yet to be identified.

Other BFUG members argue that a new format should be tried, focusing on either a narrow set of policy areas or a narrower set of participating countries—preferably from only one region—or both. In the course of a cycle of Policy Fora, one could potentially cover most regions and a range of policy issues. Neither option is entirely satisfactory and the second is so far untested. In fall 2014, the Bologna Follow Up Group had quite intense discussion on the format of the 2015

Policy Forum, with members quite divided between those who wanted to keep the current format, and those who considered it necessary to try a new format focusing on a single region at a time and possibly also on a limited number of issues. The compromise solution was a variety of the second, a kind of "single region +" or "single region, but" approach.

4 Future Priorities

Even if structural reform have been paramount in the development of the EHEA, other policy areas have also been important. Institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and student participation are underlying values of the EHEA. Even if the degree to which they are present in the debate varies, they were a factor in the negative assessment of Belarus' application to join the EHEA in 2012, as well as in the informal discussions that led to Belarus' refraining from applying for accession in 2005. There are admittedly also concerns about the extent to which these values are reflected in the policies of some current EHEA members. The social dimension has been on the EHEA agenda for at least a decade—it could reasonably be argued that it was introduced at the Praha ministerial meeting in 2001—but there are still somewhat different interpretations of what the social dimension actually comprises and the BFUG has faced problems in defining clear and measurable commitments in this area.

A discussion about future priorities cannot, therefore, be entirely divorced from a consideration of what has been achieved so far and what issues need to be wrapped up. The discussion about the future orientation of the EHEA at and leading up to the 2015 Ministerial conference will be an important milestone, but it will not be a complete hiatus. It will be a reorientation, but not a turnaround.

Structural reforms have been discussed in some detail above. It seems very likely that whatever else will be on the "Bologna agenda", structural reforms will be in a prominent position. How can the EHEA prevent uneven implementation of EHEA policies from undermining the idea of a European Higher Education Area with coherent structures? Broad coordination of both national policies, including legislation, and the practice of higher education institutions will be needed, but it is unclear how this could be achieved and financed, all the more so as countries that are less advanced in their development of national qualifications frameworks and quality assurance provision will not all be able or willing to finance broad participation in activities like policy seminars and peer learning projects.

It is also unclear whether countries are willing to undertake extensive new obligations in this area. For example, the Structural Reforms Working Group (SRWG) proposes that countries review their legislation to ensure that it be compatible with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (Bologna Process 2014d, pp. 70–71). This is an important proposal and it should be straightforward since one can reasonably assume that when countries ratify an international treaty they intend to adjust their national legislation within reasonable time. Nevertheless, experience suggests that his may be

too rosy a view of reality, as borne out by the analysis of the national action plans submitted by Ministers prior to the 2007 Ministerial conference (Rauhvargers and Rusakova 2010). The SRWG also proposes that the Diploma Supplement be reviewed (Bologna Process 2014d, p. 74). This makes sense because the current Supplement antedates the EHEA and was developed by the Council of Europe, the European Commission, and UNESCO in the mid- to late 1990s. Since the Diploma Supplement belongs to three international institutions and two different frameworks—the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Europass—reviewing it will be a complex undertaking, and this is further underlined by the fact that it has acquired legal status in some countries. That the process will be complex is, however, not a reason not to launch it.

On the other hand, positions do evolve. In 2005 Ministers rejected a proposal that short cycle qualifications be included in the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA), and watered the text of the Bergen Communiqué (Bologna Process 2005) down to say these qualifications could be included within the first cycle in national frameworks. Ten years later, the Structural Reforms Working Group proposes that short cycle qualification at long last be recognized explicitly in the QF-EHEA (Bologna Process 2014d, p. 63) and this proposal was accepted by the BFUG without objections.

Structural reforms have been prominent in the "Bologna agenda" because they were high on the agenda of many Ministers in the late 1990s, when the Bologna Process was launched. This alone was insufficient: structural reforms fulfilled two additional criteria: it was possible to define relatively clear objectives (a point also made by Harmsen 2015), and they lent themselves to the relatively loose kind of international cooperation that has been a hallmark of the EHEA, more about which when we turn to governance. The challenge will be to find policy areas that fulfill all three criteria. The financing of higher education is high on the agenda of all ministers but it is unclear to what extent clear goals can be defined that are seen as relevant by all—or at least the great majority of—the 47 EHEA countries, which have vastly different financial capacities, very different views on the proper balance between public and private funding, and a very broad range of financial support systems for students, ranging from reasonably generous to almost absent. In Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve (Bologna Process 2009) the Ministers agreed to aim for 20 % mobility by 2020. That this goal is among the pending issues of the EHEA is mainly due to the fact that mobility has increased far less than had been expected when the Bologna Process was launched, but it may also become an issue of defining what the seemingly straightforward "20 %" actually means when the time comes to assess whether the goal has been reached.

5 Governance

It would be difficult to imagine an international cooperation arrangement that is much more loosely organized than the EHEA. In the early years, what is now the Bologna Follow Up Group was chaired by the country holding the EU presidency,

and this country also provided the secretariat. At the Praha Ministerial meeting, Ministers established what is now the Bologna Board (then called a preparatory group) and also established a group of consultative members—at least that is how the text[5] was interpreted (Bologna Process 2001). At the Berlin meeting, Ministers decided that the Bologna Secretariat should be provided by the country hosting the following ministerial conference for the entire period between the two conferences (Bologna Process 2003) and in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve they decided that the BFUG should be co-chaired by the country holding the EU Presidency as well as by a non-EU country (Bologna Process 2009).

That is, in a nutshell, the formal organization of the EHEA. The organization has been so informal that the BFUG has at times managed to adopt different voting rules for different issues. At one point, the rules said that countries offering to host a ministerial conference were not allowed to vote on the proposal, whereas countries running for the Bologna Board at the time when a part of the membership was elected were allowed to vote, albeit with the provision that they not vote for themselves. The rules did, however, not specify how this particular provision was to be enforced in a vote by secret ballot.

There is strong attachment within the BFUG to this loose organizational structure and any suggestion that a stronger structure might be needed has been met with resistance. This applies to the possibility of establishing the European Higher Education Area through an international convention, discussed in the run-up to the Bergen Ministerial conference in 2005, as well as an initiative by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly to have the Bologna Secretariat established in the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 2009). This initiative did not have the support of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research or of the Secretariat, since we were convinced the Council of Europe would serve the EHEA better as a consultative member, and also because we were well aware that the proposal did not have support among EHEA members.

The European Higher Education Area has two important functions: it is a formal framework within which members establish coherent and compatible higher education policies and it is a set of good practices. In the former sense, the EHEA is a framework of which a country is a member or it is not, and it is a framework relying on certain structures. These include the Bologna Follow Up Group and Board, working groups and the Bologna Secretariat. Individual higher education institutions are not members of the EHEA, whose members are governments. Higher education institutions belong to the higher education system of a country that is a member of the EHEA or they do not. These are fairly loose and informal structures but they are clearly established and the membership is clear.

In the second sense, the EHEA is a community of practice and the examples of good practice are available to everyone. Public authorities, higher education

[5]"The European University Association, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe and the Council of Europe should be consulted in the follow-up work."

institutions, and individual faculty and students may be inspired by good examples developed within the EHEA regardless of whether they work in an EHEA country or not—that is an important point raised in QueAnh Dang's article. As Robert Harmsen points out, policy learning is an important aspect of the EHEA also for EHEA members.

What kind of governance arrangements the EHEA will need in the future depends to a large extent on what vision members have for its future. The more that vision tilts toward mutual learning and exchange of good practice, the less formal the governance model needs to be. The more the EHEA is seen as a framework within which students and faculty can move as freely as possible thanks to common or at least compatible structures, such as qualifications frameworks and standards for quality assurance, and the more EHEA members are seen as undertaking obligations toward each other, the stronger will be the need for a governance model that can ensure that structures remain compatible and that mutual obligations be honored.

So far there is a sense that the governance structures should be as informal as possible, but there is no discernible consensus on exactly what this means. The stock taking exercises that were launched in 2003, with the first stock taking report presented to the Bergen meeting in 2005, originally relied on self-reporting by members. Since then, the reporting has been strengthened by the important contribution of Eurydice and others so that the current Implementation reports are seen as considerably more objective and reliable than the first reports. There is, however, no consensus on what consequences, if any, the Implementation Reports should have in relation to countries that are far from implementing specific policy goals. This is illustrated by the fact that the only issue on which the SRWG delivered a split recommendation to the BFUG meeting of November 27–28, 2014 was a recommendation to the effect that the BFUG co-chairs and the Bologna Secretariat be mandated to contact the competent authorities of EHEA members with an unsatisfactory implementation of structural reforms in the 2015 EHEA Implementation Report with offers of assistance. After some debate, the BFUG accepted the thrust of this recommendation but softened the wording to emphasize offers of policy dialogue (Bologna Process 2014d, p. 24).

One issue, then, is the degree to which the EHEA may or may not need a BFUG with a stronger mandate than it currently has. Another is the relationship between BFUG members and the political leadership of their Ministries. Today, this varies considerably. In some cases, the BFUG members have close contacts with their political leadership and are known—or at least widely assumed—to speak with authority on behalf of their countries. In other cases, it is much less clear whether BFUG members effectively speak on behalf of the political leadership or merely on their own behalf. BFUG members are of course unlikely to announce that they do not consult with or do not have the ear of their political decision makers, but a formal announcement is not always needed for the impression to develop. A stronger governance of the EHEA would therefore also require that BFUG members have stronger and more explicit mandates from their own political decision makers.

The third element of the governance model is the Bologna Secretariat. As we have seen, the Secretariat structure has already evolved from one provided by the Chairmanship country of the BFUG, and therefore changing every six months, to one based in and provided by the host country of the following ministerial conference. The Secretariat therefore serves for two or three years, depending on the timing of the Ministerial conferences, and this has meant a better back up for the BFUG than what was provided in the early years, even though several of the rotating secretariats linked to the BFUG Chairmanships did a very good job under the circumstances, possibly with the Greek chairmanship and secretariat in spring 2003 as the outstanding example.

When the current Secretariat arrangements were launched in fall 2003, there was a discussion of whether countries could be invited to second officials to the Secretariat and Norway, which hosted the first Secretariat of this kind, stated that it would have welcomed secondments. However, none materialized and possible practical arrangements, e.g. with a view to offsetting the high cost of living in Norway for officials seconded from countries with lower salaries, were never explored. The discussion of whether to divorce the Secretariat from the hosting of the next Ministerial conference has now been relaunched but the consequences have so far not been spelled out in any great detail. With the exception of the Secretariat serving between 2007 and 2010, which was provided jointly by Belgium (both communities), Luxembourg, and the Netherlands and based in Bruxelles/Brussel under Belgian legislation, all Secretariats since 2003 have been made up of residents of the host country of the Secretariat and hired under the labor legislation of that country.

If this model were to be changed, there seem to be three broad options. In the first option, the Secretariat could be attached to or become a part of an existing international organization, in which case the framework of operation would be clear, but as we have seen, any suggestions in this sense have met with considerable resistance, and no organization has actually offered to provide or host the Bologna Secretariat. The second option would be to establish the Secretariat as an independent entity, but this would require that many complex legal issues be clarified, including the legislation under which the Secretariat would operate and its staff be hired and—in the worst of cases—fired, what the social security arrangements for staff members would be, and who would bear ultimate financial and legal responsibility for the Secretariat and its staff. The third option would be to establish the Secretariat as part of an existing national structure and encourage and make arrangements for secondments from other EHEA members, as France has now done in its invitation to host the Secretariat in 2015–18 and the ministerial conference in 2018. This would be legally less complex, but arrangements for secondments would need to be established, possible top up salaries secured, and there would need to be agreement on, as well as acceptance by the host country of, the period for which the Secretariat would be established. Since the purpose of divorcing the Secretariat from the hosting of the following Ministerial conference would be to provide greater continuity, it would presumably need to be established for a period that would span at least two Ministerial conferences, preferably longer.

The fourth element of governance is financing. Rather, it is listed here as the fourth element because it has not been very prominent in the BFUG discussion of the "future of Bologna", but it may well be argued that financing is the first element in order of importance. The fact that the EHEA has no independent budget might be seen as both a reason for and consequence of its loosely organized governance. For a process in which policy goals are agreed at European level but implemented nationally and within higher education institutions, not having an "EHEA budget" may not seem an unnatural option. It does, however, mean that no EHEA body can decide to allocate resources to assist countries or institutions with implementing policies or develop projects that could have particular relevance to the future development of the EHEA or to launch research on a particular issue of policy or implementation, nor does the EHEA have the resources to bring together practitioners for peer learning activities or promote and develop the global dimension of the EHEA.

Individual countries, of course, do have resources and so does the European Commission. To put it bluntly, the EHEA would not have been possible had the Commission not provided massive financial support for various initiatives and also had the Commission not extended such support to almost all EHEA countries, rather than just those that are either EU members or participating in given EU programs.[6] However welcome financial support by the European Commission and individual countries is, these are for obvious reasons hesitant to delegate authority over their own budgets to the BFUG and there is therefore no EHEA budget in the real sense of the term. It is difficult to see how the governance of the EHEA could be significantly strengthened without some kind of EHEA budget over which the BFUG would have decision making authority. At the same time, it is difficult to see how an EHEA budget in this sense could be established today, when most EHEA members suffer cuts in public budgets coupled with increasing demands for accountability.

6 Toward a Conclusion

Drawing a conclusion concerning the future is by definition a Sisyphean task. At the time of writing, the BFUG has not made final recommendation to ministers and ministers have not adopted their Yerevan Communiqué, which will be the policy

[6]This was, incidentally, the framework for membership of the Bologna Process until 2003, when it was decided that "Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education." (Bologna Process 2003). By way of contrast, the Prague Communiqué noted that "Ministers welcomed new members to join the Bologna process after applications from Ministers representing countries for which the European Community programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci or Tempus-Cards are open." (Bologna Process 2001).

instruments through which they may reorient the EHEA. There are therefore still opportunities for higher education practitioners and policy makers at different levels to make their voices heard. This section of the books arising from the Bologna Researchers Conference provides a valuable contribution to this debate through three reasoned and well-researched contributions as well as, it is hoped, through this essay brining the section together. Rather than seeking to draw an overriding conclusion from three contributions that all stand on their own and that approach the "future of Bologna" from different angles, I would like to offer a final thought from yet another angle.

With the possible exception of "employability", there is hardly a word that occurs as frequently in current education debate as "quality". However, quality is more often than not presented as an established entity, something that is "out there" and all we have to do is strive for it and preferably achieve it. However, it makes little sense to assess whether we do something well unless we know what we are trying to do in the first place. The quality debate may be rich in describing ways of reaching and not least measuring quality, but it is surprisingly divorced from considerations of what purposes education should serve (Bergan 2005; Council of Europe 2007, 2012).

Consideration of the link between higher education reform and the broader purposes of higher education has also been subdued in the development of the EHEA. This is not to say it has been absent. The EHEA builds on a set of values that comprise academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and student participation, and several communiqués refer to the multiple purpose of higher education.

Nevertheless, a relaunch of the European Higher Education Area, intended to give higher education policy the place it deserves in European debate, but equally to give European societies the kind of higher education they deserve and that they need for their future developments, will require a much more sustained debate on the kind of Europe we would like to have and the kind of education we will need to achieve our goal. This debate will need to be philosophical and practical at the same time, since it will need to establish a clear connection between principles, policy, and practice. That will hopefully (re)motivate the higher education community, the policy making community, and our community *tout court*. It is the kind of debate to which the present author has sought to contribute (Bergan 2011) and to which the following quote from the Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul is highly relevant:

> And so I find our education is increasingly one aimed at training loyal employees, even though the state and the corporations are increasingly disloyal. What we should be doing is quite different. It turns on our ability to rethink our education and our public expectations so that we create a non-employee, non-loyal space for citizenship. After all, a citizen is by definition loyal to the state because the state belongs to her or him. That is what frees the citizen to be boisterous, outspoken, cantankerous and, all in all, by corporatist standards, disloyal. This is the key to the success of our democracy (Saul 2009).

I would argue that the development of the European Higher Education Area has so far seen four distinct phases. The first phase, encompassing the ministerial conferences at Sorbonne in 1998, in Bologna in 1999, and Praha in 2001, was one

of launching the march toward the EHEA. It was an exciting phase but also a relatively easy one, since ministers could focus their attention on setting goals that would be achieved a decade hence.

The second phase, marked by the ministerial conferences in Berlin in 2003 and Bergan in 2005, was one of development, and it was in this phase that two key EHEA instruments—the ESG and the QF-EHEA were first launched (Berlin) and then adopted (Bergen). At the same time, this phase was also marked by the sobering realization that, if the EHEA was to be based on its members achieving their stated goals by 2010, one also had to assess the progress members made toward those goals. This was the origin of the stocktaking reports, launched in 2003 and submitted for the first time in 2005. This was also the phase in which the EHEA became truly European with the broadening of the access criteria and an increase of the number of member states from 33 in 2001 through 40 in 2003 to 45 in 2005.

The third phase, from London in 2007 through Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009 to Budapest and Wien in 2001—was one of consolidation. Some new initiatives were launched, including the Global Dimension Strategy (Bologna Process 2007), the Bologna Policy Forum and the "20 % by 2020" mobility goal, but as 2010 drew nearer, attention focused on fulfilling commitments already undertaken rather than defining new objectives.

The fourth phase comes with the establishment of the EHEA in 2010 and is marked by the Bucureşti conference in 2012. In this phase, the EHEA continues to develop, but at the same time there is diminishing political interest in the EHEA, higher education is affected by the financial crises—which admittedly began already in 2008—and there is considerable uncertainty as to how the EHEA should develop further.

Whether the discussions that these uncertainties have given rise to and that form the backdrop of this section of the books will lead to the Yerevan conference in May 2015 being considered as a fifth phase of the EHEA and a new start is one of the great challenges of the EHEA as it will hopefully develop from adolescence to full maturity.

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Current and Future Prospects for the Bologna Process in the Turkish Higher Education System

Armağan Erdoğan

1 Introduction

The fundamental questions of "what a university is" and "what kind of graduate it will produce" have persisted since the birth of universities. In the 21st century, these questions have become more significant for different reasons and under different conditions (Scott 2006). The interaction between trends in globalization and higher education have brought new conditions, opportunities and challenges to higher education systems, which then needed new policies and structures (Altbach and Peterson 1999; Cortese 2003; Enders 2004; Scott 2005; Altbach et al. 2009; OECD 2009). This change has influenced national approaches of the countries and has also been the outcome of global trends in social, cultural, political, economic, and technological developments (Bloom 2005; Altbach et al. 2011; Stromquist and Monkman 2014). More specifically, global economic competition required human resources qualified for the requirements of the age, and higher education systems faced the need for both structural and content reforms (Gibbons 1998). In other words, the realities and requirements of our age directed higher education systems to pursue reforms in teaching, research, and public responsibility functions (Arnove et al. 2012). Common experiences, common challenges and common targets created regional partnerships in order to form new policies, mechanisms, and tools (Sursock and Smidt 2010). In this sense, the Bologna Process (BP) arises as a unique international and regional cooperation to respond to the needs of transparency, comparability and recognition in European higher education (Eurydice 2009).

The Bologna Process has reached a critical threshold in its 15th year. Its geographical scope has been enlarged and its substance diversified since its beginning in 1999. The national, international and institutional experiences within this period

A. Erdoğan (✉)
Social Sciences University of Ankara, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: armagan.erdogan@asbu.edu.tr

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have created valuable common understanding and knowledge (EHEA 2012; Gaston 2010). The Bologna Process succeeded in establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with 47 countries, international organizations and stakeholders as consultative members, eight Ministerial Conferences, six Communiques, and two Declarations. The stocktaking reports, based on the self-evaluated national reports by each country, seem to be an innovative feature to follow up the implementation levels in each tool. Bologna Follow up Group (BFUG) meetings and a huge amount of work in different topics are other powerful aspects continued on a voluntary base. Moreover, the BP has attained a more global vision since (Bologna Process 2009), as the *Bologna Policy Forum* was established to extend regional cooperation to the rest of the world. Now, it is in the critical stage to evaluate the outcomes and challenges in order to suggest a roadmap for 2020 and beyond.

This article aims to contribute to the future prospects of the BP by examining Turkey's experiences. It is significant because Turkey's experience of the BP is not discussed very often in either its national or international dimension (Erdoğan 2013). Therefore, in the first section of the article, the experiences of Turkey will be examined through its commitments, regulations, and implementations so far. Another reason for which Turkey's experience might be significant, both for the other countries and for the future of the EHEA as a whole, is that it is a dynamic system which has been enlarged dramatically in the past decade. Challenges and policies to overcome the challenges might inspire other countries. For this reason, in the second section, in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions, conducted with 20 key actors, including policy makers, rectors, ex-rectors, vice rectors, Bologna experts, academic staff, and student representatives, will be analyzed in order to examine the reflections of the implementations on national and institutional basis. The participants were chosen for their knowledge and experience during the implementation of Bologna tools, from various higher education institutions, namely public and foundation, old and new, big and small ones from different parts of the country. Their answers, therefore, will represent an overall approach to the implementation experience. The participants' names and their institutions were kept confidential, their answers were categorized according to salience, and important points were stated in the text. Based on the experiences of Turkey in the BP, the article will offer some recommendations for the future of the EHEA.

2 The Bologna Process in Turkey: Implementation, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Common trends in global higher education, such as internationalization, mobility, cooperation with the stakeholders etc., are reflected in the current developments in Turkish higher education. In the meantime, Turkey, as a country, and its higher education system have some peculiarities which may be of relevance to other countries. At the same time, it has significant unique experiences that are particular to Turkey. Therefore, the aim of this paper is twofold. The first one is that this paper

believes that analysing the Turkish case may contribute to the new road map in the future of the EHEA. The second is that it calls for a more concrete contribution of the BP in reforming the Turkish higher education.

Perhaps the first distinctive peculiarity is the geopolitical uniqueness of Turkey. Its rich historical and cultural background places Turkey in a special position between Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean. Moreover, politically, because of its longstanding candidacy for EU membership, Turkey has a unique position. It benefits from some of the European Commission's education and research programs, but remains outside of the EU decision making processes.

The second significance of the Turkish higher education is that, following the demographic needs, Turkey has been, perhaps, the most rapidly growing higher education system in the EHEA. Access to higher education has been one of the crucial challenges that Turkey has faced over the decades. In order to decrease the gap between supply and demand, new universities have been established and extended enrolment capacity for programs has been applied (Erdoğan and Toprak 2012). These increased the enrolment rate, equal opportunity in access to some extent, enlargement and diversity of higher education institutions. With these developments, higher education has been massified in Turkey from 2000 onwards.

The current higher education system was created in 1981 and mentioned in the Constitution. The Council of Higher Education (YÖK 2007) was established as a corporate body responsible for planning, organizing, and supervising the teaching activities of higher education institutions. However, this structure, planned to coordinate around 27 universities in 1981, is not able to keep up with the numbers of higher education institutions in 2014 and the speed with which new institutions have been established. Economic and political developments in the last decade as well as the country's demographic trends have led to quantitative changes in higher education (Tuzcu 2006). Turkey became a member of the BP in 2001, and since then the number of higher education institutions has increased from 76 to 184, students from 1.6 to 5.5 million (including distance education), and academic staff from 68 thousand to 140 thousand in 2014. Moreover, population projections show that the demand for higher education will continue to increase for decades in Turkey, therefore an important and challenging topic of the current agenda is the need for some structural reforms (Tenth Development Plan 2014–2018 2013). Out of this need evolved different drafts for a new higher education act; nevertheless, no result has been achieved thus far. Increasing the number of universities and enrolment rates is very positive in terms of equal opportunities for socio-economic reasons, but the quality, particularly in newly established universities, remains a big challenge (Erdoğan 2014).

Examining the recent developments of the system, they have been done not to systematically revolutionize the system, but have rather been needs-based revisions. Quantitative developments require further structural and contextual reforms on national and institutional levels. On one hand, the rapid growth Turkey experienced in the last decade highlights the dynamism of the system, which, on the other hand, brings its own challenges. Following the recent developments, the key priority of the system lies on quality. In a report by the former president of YÖK, three

strategic priorities for Turkish higher education were defined as transition from quantity to quality development; developing human resources in academia; and internationalization of higher education (Çetinsaya 2014: 174). Similar objectives were noted and announced by a decision of the General Board of YÖK in 2011. They are in line with the priorities for the coming decades stated in the *Bucharest Communique* in 2012 (Bologna Process 2012) as investing in higher education for the future; providing quality education for all; enhancing employability to serve Europe's needs; strengthening mobility for better learning; and improvement of data collection. Although the priorities for the coming decades are in common, the BP has not been adopted in the new policy developments in Turkey. The BP was regarded as a mechanism to increase quality and to help internationalization of higher education, but it is not easy to say that the targets or the tools have been fully internalized. It is not always involved systematically with the new reforms in the system, and not related with the core functions of the higher education. Here comes the second aim of this article that is to underline that for the systematical restructuring of the higher education, the Bologna Process provides useful mechanisms for Turkey. Therefore, policy makers need to be aware of the common targets with the Bologna Process.

2.1 What Has Been Achieved? What Are the Challenges Ahead?

YÖK is the national authority in Turkey for coordinating the BP implementation; therefore, the implementation has been done in a more top-down process, depending on the requirements by YÖK nationally and the rectors institutionally (Elmas 2012). The top-down implementation process, which can be observed in some other countries as well, has both positive and negative effects. In the Turkish case, it is positive because, following the timetable and format of the commitments, it becomes possible; it is negative since some institutions resist the top-down approach, and implementation becomes artificial if the institutions and academic staff do not internalize them. As a positive example, in 2009 YÖK defined principles and guidelines and asked each higher education institution to set up a Bologna Coordination Committee (BEK) in order to coordinate, lead, and report on the implementation process. These Committees played an important role not only for institutional implementation and monitoring, but also for collecting reliable data nationwide. This positive national experience can be shared by other EHEA countries.

Examining the scorecard records, it is clear that of the three basic tools, the degree systems have been the most comfortable one for Turkey, as it had already been adopted in 1981. In this sense, Turkey has been in front of "the Humboldtian systems", as well as the post-communist systems, as they had to struggle with establishing the three cycle degree system. Work on preparing the national qualifications framework for higher education, however, was not focused until 2008. As stated in the 2012 national report, YÖK adopted the National Qualification Framework

(NQF) for higher education in 2011. Pilot universities were chosen for implementation, and all institutions were asked to complete their implementation processes by 2012. In the meantime, the Professional Qualifications Authority (MYK) worked on the umbrella qualifications framework for all levels comparable with EQF, and this is about to be approved by the Cabinet. After the approval and the self-certification of the Turkish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, it will be possible for higher education institutions to prepare more realistic program qualifications and curriculum design linked with learning outcomes and ECTS of the courses.

Perhaps the least developed tool of the Bologna Process in Turkey is a national Quality Assurance Agency, which has still not been established. According to the higher education law, faculties and universities are opened by Parliament upon the suggestion of YÖK and the Ministry of Education; and all higher education institutions and programs are opened and accredited by YÖK, which evaluated the initial quality assurance when universities applied for new programs. Nevertheless, for the outcomes of the higher education programs no systematic steps were taken for external quality assurance. After the Bergen Conference, a national Commission of Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in higher education institutions (YÖDEK) was established to coordinate quality assurance regulation compatible with the ESG. Academic Evaluation Committees (ADEK) were established in each higher education institution as an internal quality assurance mechanism. The secretary was provided by YÖK, however the Inter-University Board, where rectors from each university have the right to vote, chose the YÖDEK members. The capacity of YÖDEK was insufficient to function as a national body for a rapidly developing system. Some alternatives for a national quality assurance agency have been discussed, one of which is to convert YÖK into a national QA body. It becomes almost a deadlock. Without making a decision about the future role of YÖK, it is difficult to decide on any form of the QA agency. YÖK is a body established by the constitution and cannot be transformed only by law. As a result, in 2014 a new commission (YÖKAK) on quality assurance was formed to replace YÖDEK covering qualifications, as well as recognition issues nationwide. YÖKAK is now working on regulations for a quality assurance system in Turkey; after a consultation process, the regulation will come into force.

Mobility is the most visible effect of the globalization of higher education and many mechanisms have been created to address the need for mobility. EU Mobility programs not only contributed to the system's internationalization, but also inspired some new nationally provided exchange programs. In 2009 the *Farabi* mobility program was implemented in the system for student and staff exchange within the country and it helped many newly established universities experience mobility tools and culture. In 2012 the *Mevlana* exchange program—the international counterpart of *Farabi*—began for countries outside the Erasmus programs and totally provided for by national financial resources. In 2010, YÖK removed the central exam for foreign students to enter Turkish universities. Since then, foreign students started to be enrolled according to the criteria of each university. As another mechanism, a new institution called Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) united the grants for international students who wished to study in Turkey under the name of

"Turkey Scholarship". Nevertheless, there is no mobility and/or internationalization strategy on a national scale. Because of the high numbers of student population, although there is great effort, the mobility numbers are still low compared to the total student population.

The most outstanding development about the BP is the amendment of an article (44) in the Higher Education Act (HE Act 2011 No: 2547) in 2011. The article is a long paragraph about taking courses, evaluating the credits, student rights, and exams. It summarizes the basic tools of the BP and gives responsibility of running programs efficiently, calculating course credits in accordance with credits range and student work load, providing the minimum qualifications defined by the NQF in consultation with the stakeholders in order to increase the employability of graduates. In other words, this article embodies, for the first time, the key terms of the BP and conceptualizes learning outcomes, qualifications framework, credits based on student work load, internal and external quality assurance, recognition of prior learning, stakeholders, and employability in the law. It enforces credits based on student work load, without mentioning the ECTS.

Nevertheless, sustainability remains a critical issue since the agendas of the decision-makers, higher education institutions, academic staff, and students are not focused on the BP. The commitments or regulations have been done in a more top-down process, depending on the requirements by YÖK nationally and the rectors institutionally. Mainly because of the attractiveness of mobility, ECTS and DS are seen as key tools for Turkish higher education institutions in the short-term. In practice, the main challenge is that universities are still reluctant to make the shift from face-to-face credits, which is based on the total hours spent for the course in the classroom, to ECTS credits. In the cases where ECTS credits are implemented, credits are not necessarily defined and realized though student surveys. In reality, students, employers, and even university management do not regard them as beneficial for the quality of the degrees. There is either a lack of interest or criticism by certain groups, primarily based on political orientation to see the whole process as an imposition of the EU. Key actors and policymakers are not yet fully convinced of the necessity of the implementation, although quality assurance, mobility and internationalization have been popular terms in the higher education agenda in recent years. Internationalization is regarded as equal to mobility and particularly to attracting international students to the system. Therefore, implementation level differs according to institutions and is affected by the change of the top leaders.

3 Perceptions of Key Actors Toward the Implementation of the Bologna Process

In this section, the results of the focus group interviews, conducted with 20 different key actors—rectors, vice rectors, Bologna experts, academic staff, and students—will be analyzed in relation to the national implementation level examined in the first section. In order to mirror the situation in Turkey, participants were chosen

from different types of higher education institutions, such as public, foundation[1]; old, new; big, small; in big cities or in small cities. The interview list was composed of ten rectors, three vice-rectors who are leading Bologna Coordination Committees in their institutions, two Bologna experts, three student representatives, one representative from Ministry of National Education, and the President of YÖK. Their common ground is that they are or were actively involved in implementing the Bologna tools in Turkey. Their answers, therefore, will sum up the current issues and discussions of the Bologna Process in Turkey and will give insights and suggestions for the future of EHEA.

Each participant was asked five questions. The questions ranged from a general perception of the Bologna Process to more specific details on implementation experiences and recommendations for the future. The participants were asked open-ended questions, and further questions were included if needed to investigate their perceptions on the added value of the BP. The open-ended questions posed to the participants are as follows:

- What did the Bologna Process achieve in general?
- What kind of impact (positive/negative) has it had on Turkish higher education?
- What kind of experience did you have during implementation at your university?
- Based on your experiences, which priorities should EHEA have for the coming decade? Should structural reforms continue or should there be new priorities?

The first question, "What did the Bologna Process change in general?", attempted to understand the perceptions of the participants of the added value of Bologna Process in higher education systems (Table 1).

To list their comments on the added value of the BP, most of them, significantly, mentioned quality issues. The second most cited topic is that the BP brought comparability and transparency, because during the revision of the program outcomes the faculties and programs noticed some overlapping or unrealistic outcomes or courses in many of the big universities. Having seen similar learning outcomes in different courses in the same program, some courses were either combined or totally removed. Another significant comment is that it pushed higher education from a national to an international dimension. Turkish higher education became more self-confident about international partnerships after having been involved with the BP. The other most frequently mentioned change is that it brought new tools to the systems. Indeed in Turkey, the BP created a common vocabulary, such as qualifications framework, program/learning outcomes, student workload, social dimension, and lifelong learning in higher education. Mobility, employability, reform around common sense and discussion atmosphere are the other topics that participants mentioned. As a whole, the general perception of the added value of the BP is positive.

[1]According to the Turkish Higher Education Act 2547 foundations can establish non-profit higher education institutions. There are 74 foundation higher education institutions out of 184 total number that is % 40.

Table 1 What did Bologna process achieve in general?

	Frequency Out of 20 participants[a]
It brought quality issues to the foreground	16
It allowed comparability and transparency	14
It transferred HE from a national to an international dimension	12
It brought new instruments to HE systems	12
It brought a discussion environment for HE needs	10
It brought a chance for countries to revise their systems	10
It increased the mobility of not only young people, but also academic staff	7
It brought the idea of being united as in the USA	6
It brought standards but also decreased diversity	4
It is about the employability and profile of the graduates	3
It is an effort to create a regional vision and reform around common sense	3

[a]Each participant may emphasize more than one proposition for each question; the table classifies their answers focusing on the same propositions. The same methodology has been followed for the subsequent tables

The second question was "what kind of impact (positive/negative) has it had on Turkish Higher Education?" The aim of this question was to see the comments of the participants, specifically the positive and negative impacts they have observed or perceived in Turkey (Table 2).

Of the positive effects, a majority of the participants agreed that it started a reform process in Turkish higher education, which highlights the positive impact of the BP on the system. Again, the majority thinks that it integrated Turkish higher education more with the international world. In the implementation process, the BP has been evaluated as a mechanism for internationalizing the system, and the answers of the participants support this approach. Similarly, it was commented that the BP also created a common ground for national discussions, and encouraged a common discourse on the shared challenges nationwide. One rector particularly stated that the idea of being a united Europe in higher education is an advantage, as in the case of the USA. With the BP, representations of the students at different decision making levels and in program developments, as well as relations with the employers and with the stakeholders are introduced to the system in a systematic and consistent way with the BP. These awareness raising topics and discourse of the BP also brought rationality to the programs and to the curricula; perhaps in the long term its utility will be visible.

On the other hand, the most cited negative impacts are the resistance of academic staff for different reasons and proforma implementation. Academic staff did not want to lose their "freedom" in defining (or not defining at all) the curriculum and the learning outcomes. Past habits of interpreting the role of the lecturer/professor as having a flexible curriculum troubled the more experienced staff members in

Table 2 What kind of impacts has it had on Turkish higher education?

	Frequency Out of 20 participants
Positive	
It started an important reform process for Turkish universities	16
It helped to create a culture in harmony with the international environment/Integration with the international world	15
It helped a common discourse nation-wide	13
It created awareness on the inadequacies of the system as a whole	12
It helped revising program outcomes, learning outcomes and credits based on student workload	11
It focused on rationality and reduced arbitrariness	8
New terms, such as qualifications framework, student workload, learning outcomes were introduced to the discussions	8
Stakeholders were noticed and became important	7
Student centredness and students became noticed	6
Relations with the employers started	5
Teaching methods and materials were revised	5
It focussed on quality assurance and accreditation	5
Negative	
Resistance of the academics/past habits clash with the new requirements of the BP	16
Formal procedures and proforma implementation are implemented, rather than the real contents	15
Too much bureaucracy	13
Different types of universities were expected to have the same standards	12
Stakeholders cannot see it as a whole system	12
Standardization versus diversity	9
Implementation is done top-down, which sometimes confuses the real logic behind each tool	9
No effect on the three-cycle system, we already had	5
It extended the study period of some students because of the ECTS	3
It reduced the trainings in technical programs because of the ECTS	2

particular. They thought they knew the subject well and taught it for many years. In some other cases, particularly in the newly established universities, teaching hours of the staff members are high due to the insufficient numbers of academic staff. They resisted revising the learning outcomes or revising their curriculum, claiming the lack of time. As a result, they tend either to copy the learning outcomes from other programs, or ask a junior fellow to do it without considering the logic. They fulfilled the basic requirements and paperwork asked by the upper bodies without internalizing the implementation. Creating bureaucracy is also a widely shared impact, depending on their experience with defining learning outcomes, program

outcomes, ECTS credits based on student workload and all paperwork during this process. Academic staff, in particular, are not motivated to revise the credits and contents of their courses for the sake of some new paperwork, especially without a pay raise for this new workload. There are two other comments that require further explanation. One is that the BP is not seen as a unified and interrelated system. The other comment is that the BP brought standardization to programs, and there is no longer any room for diversity. These two comments are interrelated and in fact are the outcomes of the longstanding problems in the system itself. Higher education institutions used to work in their closed circles and they are learning to open up their systems to the outside. Standardization versus diversity is also discussed in other topics of the system. The numbers of higher education institutions increased in a short time and, in order to maintain quality of the services, either recruitment, admissions, program requirements or governance and finance, YÖK imposes certain standards on the higher education institutions. This is one of the urgent problems that need to be solved; and, in each draft of the new law, it is mentioned somehow. Higher education institutions are diverse and their conditions and needs are different, but the system as it stands puts them all in the same category. In addition to this standardization, some top-down requirements of YÖK in relation to the Bologna tools are, therefore, regarded as standardization. For example, the student representatives stated that the study periods were extended because of the ECTS and some training programs were removed in the technical programs.

For question three, the participants were asked "what kind of experience did you have during implementation at your university?" to see the challenges of implementation in each individual institution. This question was not asked to the President of YÖK and the representative of the MoNE, as it is inapplicable to them (Table 3).

It is unsurprising that mobility and transparency are at the top of the list of the positive impacts of the BP in the participants' institutions. Particularly credit mobility is the concrete and short-term outcome of the BP in Turkey. Turkish higher education institutions and students are eager to benefit from the mobility programs. Although Turkey is among the top five countries in terms of Erasmus budget, it is insufficient for all students who wish to participate in the program. As an outcome of transparency, awareness about the university's resources, programs, human capacity, and teaching practices was increased. Another comment by the participants calls attention to monitoring, evaluation, and revision of the programs. The BP provided the groundwork and motivation for the programs and higher education institutions that want to compete with national and international counterparts. Bologna Coordination Committees in each higher education institution in faculties and departments facilitated the coordination and knowledge transfer. Furthermore, students, as the central actor of higher education, started to be involved in curriculum developments, internal quality assurance mechanisms, and calculating workload. Students' interests in the BP is, however, not as high as it should be. Implementation touched their lives only when they wanted to be exchange students.

Table 3 What kind of experience did you have during the implementation at your university?

	Frequency Out of 18 participants
Positive	
Mobility is increased	14
Transparency is increased	12
Program revisions and evaluation for the courses started	12
More coordination between different programs within the university	11
Students became more visible in curriculum developments	10
Awareness was increased about the university's resources, programs, human capacity, teaching practices	7
Negative	
Resistance by the senior staff members to the reforms	15
Mainly formal implementation has not affected the bottom	14
Bureaucracy increased	12
Unwillingness to cooperate within the university/Reaction to top-down process	12
No clear outcomes for quality and content	6
Not enough sustainable and consistent steps for monitoring	5
University governance used it as a legitimation for their decisions to the students	3

The negative issues are almost identical with the previous question, such as resistance, proforma and top-down implementation, and increased bureaucracy. Resistance comes mainly from the senior academic staff who do not want to get involved with new paperwork. Lack of academic staff, both in terms of quality and quantity in small cities where higher education institutions were recently established, puts pressure on current academic staff who need to give many courses. They are reluctant about a heavier workload. Even if they prepare the required documents, such as learning outcomes, they tend to be pro forma, not representing the reality. Participants who mentioned these issues point out that negative implication mainly resulted from the false mechanisms developed for the implementation within the institution. Without understanding the logic and the necessity of the tools, both leaders and academic staff see them as requirements asked by their chairs or directors.

The final question was "based on your experiences, which priorities should EHEA have for the coming decade? Should the structural reforms continue or should there be new priorities?" (Table 4).

The final question is the main one to discover the priority areas for the future of the BP. Answers are unsurprising. The participants mention more focus on mobility, quality and cooperation with the rest of the world. Mobility is both inevitable and a demand for a more inclusive, quality assured and qualified higher education. After the massification of higher education in the 2000s in Turkey, higher education institutions started to enjoy increasing numbers of both outgoing

Table 4 Should the structural reforms continue or should there be some new priorities?

	Frequency Out of 20 participants
Mobility should be supported more	17
Quality assurance should be mentioned with more concrete tools	16
Practical, simple, easy to implement tools must be introduced	16
Cooperation with the rest of the world (more efficient policy forum mechanisms) should be established	13
Impact analysis of the implementations in each member state/control mechanisms for the impacts	13
More concrete terms and targets, rather than artificial ones	13
Dichotomy between the standards or diversity should be handled	11
Best practices and more experience sharing programs should be planned	10
Joint degrees must be encouraged as a significant tool	10
Quality of doctoral education should be secured	9
More and concrete coordination with the business world	9
More cooperation with the US system, as its less complicated	9
New mechanisms for countries according to their implementation levels	8
More exchange of information about implementation experiences	7
Clear targets and tools for EHEA-ERA cooperation	5
More data and info about the graduates	5
Internationalisation should be defined clearly as a new tool	5
More cooperation between national student councils	3

and incoming students. It is considered an indication of prestige to have more international students. There is, however, a drawback in this approach, because for some leaders internationalization is equal to mobility. Therefore, to receive more international students is considered enough and no need is seen to endeavour for qualifications, learning outcomes, quality assurance, etc. It is, however, clear that without providing quality assurance of the qualifications, mobility will be unsustainable. The participants in my interviews, however, know the essence of the BP tools and recommend mobility, quality and cooperation with the world outside Europe as the priorities for the future. In order to increase the implementation level, they recommend easy-to-implement tools, more concrete terms, systematic targets and other monitoring methods in addition to stocktaking reports. Some participants suggested impact analysis to see implementation levels of the BP more realistically, as they regarded the self-evaluation feature of the stocktaking reports a shortcoming. Another suggestion is encouraging and rewarding the best practice examples, such as the DS labels, best mobility practice or best learning outcome definitions. In relation to this, new mechanisms are suggested for countries according to their implementation levels, or bilateral cooperations between the countries that share the similar experiences. More information exchange regarding

implementation steps is another topic called for by the interviewees. In Turkey, the BFUG structure is not interactive with the stakeholders, and key actors mention the need for an exchange of experiences. Lastly, a suggested priority is a more intense cooperation between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA). One of the interviewed vice-rectors in particular stated that accelerating the joint degree programs would be the best and the most concrete solution, both to combine higher education and research activities, and also to promote the true implementation of the structural Bologna reforms.

4 Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

This article started with the aim that the Turkish experience of implementing the BP might set an example for the future planning of the EHEA. From the implementation experience and the interviews with key Turkish higher education actors, the following points come to the fore.

The BP had positive impacts on the higher education system and on higher education institutions, even if pro forma or artificial implementation was also seen in some cases. It maintained a common discourse both within the institutions and the countries, as well as internationally. Mobility is the visible outcome and reason for the motivation. The major contribution of the BP to Turkish higher education was to increase the awareness and level of internationalization. Although Turkey has had the three-cycle system since 1981 and did not need to adjust its degree structure, the BP helped in reforming the curricula, defining the learning outcomes, and restructuring the programs with clear outcomes; and designing the national qualifications framework for higher education, which is not self-certified yet.

Negative reflection, however, is mainly due to the pro forma, artificial implementations or structural reform needs of the system. Another reason for the negative impact is the lack of interest in the BP among policymakers, academic staff and students. If the BP is not seen as a unified system, a patchwork approach does not make any sense for concrete outcomes. Another reason is that the internal agenda of each higher education institution does not prioritize proper implementation. Regulations are being forwarded by YÖK top down, and if the higher education institution does not have a strategy for quality or for the qualifications of its graduates, the regulations only become a formal, bureaucratic issue to follow. Policymakers in a national context are not yet fully convinced of the necessity of the BP, although quality assurance, mobility and internationalization have been popular terms on the higher education agenda. The system has longstanding and crucial issues to be solved, such as reforming the governing structure of higher education, including the related law and the position of the YÖK. Therefore, sustainability remains a critical issue since the agendas of decision-makers, higher education institutions, academic staff and students are not focused on the content of the BP.

4.1 Recommendations for the Future

Examining the Turkish experience of the Bologna implementations some recommends come to the fore for the future of the EHEA.

1. New tools and mechanisms should be introduced to increase mobility: It is already a priority for the EHEA as the 20 % by 2020 target was accepted in Leuven\Louvain-la-Neuve and a mobility strategy was recommended in Bucharest. 17 out of 20 of the interviewees in my study mentioned the importance of mobility for the future of higher education. The reason might be the limited budget of Erasmus programs for outgoing students compared to student population in Turkey; and for incoming students, although higher education institutions show great interest and numbers are again low compared to the total student population. Therefore, from a Turkish perspective, mechanisms for bilateral agreements and joint degree programs can be simplified and accelerated. The mobility of young researchers can be focused on to provide longer and sustainable mobility based on mutual research partnerships. The new and nationally financed mobility programs such as *Mevlana* can be examples for exporting the Bologna tools for a more qualified, transparent and comparable higher education systems.
2. The majority of the key actors interviewed supported more practical, simple, easy-to-implement tools. Some higher education institutions, even if they try to implement the BP tools wholeheartedly, tend to follow the American system, which has easier steps. It is particularly stated that the previous version of the ESG was too complicated; some programs use ABET accreditation and find it more practical. Another item is that ECTS credits do not help with program curriculum flexibility. For example, some participants mentioned that training programs cannot be included because of 60 ECTS limits per year.
3. The higher education institutions, culture and the history of higher education in the 47 EHEA countries are diverse; therefore implementation levels and needs are also diverse. In the future, communication tools between countries and other members, and also public authorities and related institutions within each country should be further developed and diversified. For example, in addition to BFUG meetings, other interactions between national authorities and also institutions should be created. The participation levels of different national authorities in the BP need to be increased. More bilateral dialogues between countries should be encouraged. Other mechanisms for information exchange regarding implementation experiences at an institutional level would be useful, since it would give the opportunity for higher education institutions to establish concrete cooperation and identify problem areas in implementation. In a similar way to the ENIC and NARIC networks, individual institutions could exchange experiences in EHEA networks.
4. Best practices and other rewards like labels encourage institutions, as is the case for DS and ECTS labels. They were highly motivating for Turkish higher education institutions. Institutional experiences and targets created a dynamism

among the related units within and between the higher education institutions. Similar mechanisms will help higher education institutions adopt more experience sharing and dialogue for the motivation and sustainability of the common tools in the coming decade. Mechanisms such as peer-learning activities, direct contacts and cooperation between countries and institutions on different topics, and more networking between higher education institutions on a national and international scale within and out of EHEA can be planned. Projects for establishing peer-learning activities can be promoted by the official EHEA website where individual institutions can have direct contacts and start joint projects on their preferred topics.

5. As a priority area, joint degree programs between higher education institutions can be focused and promoted in the coming years. They will accelerate EHEA and ERA cooperation and as a concrete sign of the proper implementation. The European Commission's 2020 targets include priorities directly related to higher education, such as increasing employment rates and tertiary education levels. Joint degree programs can be used as a tool, which includes major Bologna mechanisms like easily recognizable and comparable qualifications, mobility of students and staff and quality assurance agreed by both institutions. In addition, joint degree programs maintain internationalization of the curriculum. Therefore, joint degree programs should be encouraged as a significant tool and higher education institutions can be incentivized by certain rewards for their proper implementations.
6. The Bologna Process has stimulated international interest in regional cooperation and tools in the higher education area. The Bologna Policy Forum can be more intensely used in order to extend relations to the rest of the world. Both within the EHEA, as 19 countries are not members of the EU, and beyond the EHEA, inclusion and diversity must be more clearly targeted. Within the EHEA, the current chairing system is a positive step toward this inclusion. At lower levels, participative mechanisms, such as co-chairing of the working groups, or hosting a working group meeting can be extended to each level. Clearer, concrete tools and cooperation methods with the rest of the world should be established. The related working groups can design regional reports or projects for different parts of the world, or a memorandum of understanding can be signed with different countries to share experiences.

To conclude, the Bologna Process is a unique format, based on voluntary engagement and commitment of the countries. At this stage, whether or not it is sustainable to continue with implementation based on the assumption that each country is responsible for its own implementation and for reporting on its results, or if there is a need for more enforcement mechanisms to achieve a comparable, transparent and competitive EHEA, needs to be discussed. Moreover, it has to be emphasized that the EHEA is not limited to the EU. 19 out of the 47 EHEA countries are non-EU, therefore the domination of the EU perspective does not promote the inclusion of all countries. In policy making processes and in decision making this crucial detail should not be ignored. The motivation and the interrelations of the

Table 5 Summary of Bologna process implementations in Turkey

	Degree systems	Quality assurance	Recognition	Social dimension	Mobility	Lifelong learning
2001	3 cycle system already exists since 1981					
2003	3 cycle system already exists					
2005	3 cycle system already exists	Regulation in line with ESG and establishment of theYÖDEK/ADEKs	Starting the implementation of DS and ECTS with a regulation by YÖK	Setting up the National Student Council	Starting to benefit from EU Youth and Education Programs (Socrates, Ersamus, Leonardo etc.)	
2007	Starting to work on the NQF	Collecting the annual ADEK reports from the HEIs	Lisbon Recognition Convention, signed in 2004, came into force			
2009	Work on the NQF is intensified, national commission and working group established	Bologna Coordination Committees in each HEI established and principles and guidelines prepared nationally	Encouraging HEIs to apply for ECTS and DS labels	Enrolment rates increased with new universities and places in each program	To increase long term mobility encouraging HEIs for bilateral agreements. Nationwide mobility program Farabi started	LLL Strategy Paper was prepared 2009-2013 by the Ministry of Education
	Degree Systems	Quality Assurance	Recognition	Social Dimension	Mobility	Lifelong Learning
2010	NQF prepared, Field Qualifications Prepared, Pilot HEIs chosen to implement NQF	Quality Assurance Agencies (MUDEK, FEDEK, and for a few other programs were approved by YÖDEK	Encouraging HEIs to apply for ECTS and DS labels	Asking HEIs to design more flexible programs allowing 25 % elective courses		

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

	Degree systems	Quality assurance	Recognition	Social dimension	Mobility	Lifelong learning
2011	Amendment in HE Act to include Bologna tools such as credits compatible with ECTS, and based on Learning Outcomes				A new exchange program Mevlana for students and academic staff covering the countries out of the EU region was started	
2013			The number of HEIs receiving DS and ECTS labels increased			
2014		YÖKAK established and started to prepare a new regulation for QA				

Table 6 Profile of the participants

President, YÖK	Public
MoNE	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Public
Rector	Foundation
Rector	Foundation
Ex-rector	Public
Vice-rector	Public
Vice-rector	Public
Vice-rector	Foundation
Bologna expert	Public
Bologna expert	Public
Student	Public
Student	Public
Student	Public

non-EU countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazhakstan, Russia, and Ukraine can be provided by inclusive approaches, programs and procedures. The prospects, structure, and targets of the EHEA need to be pursued through a more inclusive and participative approach after the experiences of the past fifteen years and given its 47 members. Turkey remains as a unique member of the EHEA for historical, cultural and structural reasons. Its ties with different regions such as Central Asia, the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East give potential for further cooperation to improve the attractiveness of the EHEA (Tables 5 and 6).

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The Bologna Process Goes East? from "Third Countries" to Prioritizing Inter-regional Cooperation Between the ASEAN and EU

Que Anh Dang

1 Introduction

Over the past 15 years, the Bologna Process (BP) has evolved from being a pan-European project to a significant regional reform of higher education which exerts its influence beyond the borders of Europe. Initially other regions, such as North America, observed this re-organization of Europe's higher education structure with some scepticism (Clark 2014), but more recently, the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and a European Research Area (ERA) has increased the interest across the world, especially Asia. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) have been observing the development of the Bologna Process and viewing the Bologna Process, EHEA and ERA as a useful model for their regional higher education reforms. Japan and China have participated in all three Bologna Policy Forums since 2009. These countries also fear that the 'attractive' European higher education region will expand its links to ASEAN to the detriment of their position in ASEAN and in the international marketplace (Kamibeppu 2013).

The Bologna Process has inspired the ASEAN ministers to set an ambitious plan in 2008 with an aim to achieve greater regional harmonization involving 6500 higher education institutions and 12 million post-secondary students (ICEF 2014)—about the same size as the EHEA. The region began a process of building a 'Common Space for Higher Education' contributing to the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community. The European Union (EU) has been supporting the ASEAN regional integration process and education is one of the top priorities in the interregional EU-ASEAN dialogues. These developments raise important questions: Through which mechanisms do the Bologna ideas and policy instru-

Q.A. Dang (✉)
University of Bristol, Bristol, UK
e-mail: qa.dang@bristol.ac.uk

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ments become a model for the regionalization of ASEAN higher education? Why does ASEAN regional higher education matter to the EHEA and vice versa? What are the differences of the 'ASEAN common space for higher education' and the EHEA?

Most regional studies on ASEAN and the EU favour the theory of policy diffusion, which describes the EU-style institutions as a putative paradigm for ASEAN regional integration (Allison 2013; Jetschke and Lenz 2013; Jetschke and Murray 2012). Some scholars in educational sociology also claim that regionalization of higher education in Asia aspires to replicate the Bologna Process (Chao 2014a; Vögtle and Martens 2014). These scholars tend to see Asian countries as passive recipients of ideas and norms, and somewhat downplay the role of the agency of local policy actors. This paper draws on both policy diffusion literature in political science and social constructivist work in critical policy studies to posit that policies are not merely transferred through diffusion over space or across policymaking sites, but their form and effect are also transformed through ongoing mutation processes (Peck 2011; Peck and Theodore 2010, 2012). The paper also highlights the role of contexts and of the policy actors—'localizers' who reconstruct external policy ideas and transform them into their local 'cognitive priors' (Acharya 2009).

Tracing the evolution of the ASEAN regional cooperation in higher education over the last decade through an empirical study of ASEAN policy makers, this paper argues that ASEAN actively constructs a nascent 'ASEANess' higher education region and can potentially change the nature of engagement with the European counterpart. From being a collection of 'third countries' in Brussels' language, ASEAN becomes a strategic partner in inter-regional cooperation with the Bologna countries that are also members of the EU.

In line with the EU's external policies and with a growing emphasis on "internationalization" in many European national education policy contexts, the Bologna Process increasingly prioritizes its dialogues and negotiations with regions over individual countries, thus expands its outreach to a larger scale. Since the European Commission joined the Bologna Process, Bologna cooperation with other regions seems to create a political space for the Commission to act on behalf of its member states in higher education. The 40-year regional ties between ASEAN and the EU also serve as a foundation for higher education, science and technology to become a priority area of cooperation between the two regions. This point was explicitly mentioned in the plan of action to strengthen ASEAN-EU partnership for the period 2013–2017.[1] For all these reasons, this essay will focus only on the regional dialogues between the EU and the ASEAN+3, given the extensive memberships of the Bologna Process.

The paper is organized in five sections. Following the introduction, the second section lays out the regional architecture of ASEAN higher education landscape. The third section recaps the history of the Bologna external dimension and draws on the theoretical literature on policy diffusion, policy mobility, and constitutive

[1] http://eeas.europa.eu/asean/docs/plan_of_action_en.pdf (accessed on 23 December 2014).

localisation to analyze how, by whom and to what extent the Bologna Process has become a model of regionalization of the ASEAN higher education. The fourth section presents the empirical cases and qualitative data collected by the author at regional forums in order to depict the distinctive features, the emergence and developments of regional projects in ASEAN. The last section summarizes the main arguments and draws some concluding remarks on the possible changing nature of EU-ASEAN interregional cooperation in higher education.

2 Regionalism and Higher Education in ASEAN

2.1 Regionalism in ASEAN

ASEAN was established in August 1967 in Bangkok by five founding members—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei joined in 1984, whereas Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia joined in the 1990s. There are multiple theoretical perspectives on the ASEAN regionalism. Realists see the establishment of ASEAN as an act of power seeking (Rüland and Jetschke 2008). The ASEAN regional aspirations were understood by realists as a group of small, weak states, which do not possess the economic or military resources to be a dominant regional power, who formed themselves in a regional grouping as the only way to increase its collective bargaining power and exercise its political influence (Narine 1998). The principles of 'non-interference into the internal affairs of the members' and 'consensual decision-making' remain crucial norms (Jetschke and Murray 2012). This informal and non-binding regional institution has been known as the 'ASEAN way' for over forty years which has also been, rightly or wrongly, criticized for its ineffectiveness from a Western liberal perspective (Wong 2012).

Constructivists see regions as social, economic and political constructions based on material transactions and a degree of interdependence (Dent 2012; Rüland 2010), with its shared norms, identities, practices and institutions facilitating 'regioness' (Hettne 2005). Acharya (2009, p. 21) names these factors as 'cognitive priors' which determine and condition an individual or social group's receptivity to new norms. He also points out that the cognitive priors of nations or regions in international relations could be built around traditional culture, historical memory, practices of statecraft and diplomatic interaction patterns (ibid). In other words, the colonialism and decolonialism periods, the vagaries of the Cold War and the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s has profoundly influenced the ASEAN regionalism as Stubbs (2008) argues. Seizing the opportunity of the ambiguity created by the ending of the Cold War, ASEAN not only enlarged its membership, but also established and institutionalized other multilateral dialogues, such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 1996, ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3) in 1997 and the East Asia Summit in 2005. In the first instance, the ASEAN+3 cooperation

was a reaction to the ASEAN financial crisis and to strengthen the East Asia Economic Caucus by keeping the United States out (Doidge 2011), then it quickly led to a further series of dialogues between the leaders, ministers and seniors officials (Dent 2012; Yeo 2010). Cooperation also extended from economic and financial areas to many other areas, including education. Noticeably, from around 2005 when the Bologna Process increasingly exerted its influence on global higher education beyond Europe, the agenda of ASEAN+3 has included higher education at government level.

2.2 ASEAN Regional Higher Education

The ASEAN regional higher education architecture consists of two main institutions. The first is the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) established before ASEAN in 1965 to promote cooperation in education, science and culture in the region. The second is the emerging or re-emerging ASEAN framework for educational cooperation. After a long interval from the first ASEAN education ministers' meeting (ASED) in 1977 which called for a comparative study of the education systems of member countries to set up effective collaboration, and exchanged views on the concept of an ASEAN university (ASED 1977), the ASEAN education ministers have resumed their meetings on a regular basis since 2006. In the first six years, ASED meetings were held back-to-back with the annual SEAMEO Council conference.

The turning point was the 15th ASEAN Summit in 2009 in Thailand, which gave new momentum to the regional education cooperation for "promoting understanding among ASEAN people and ensuring the competitiveness of ASEAN Community in the global market" (ASEAN 2009). The focus has shifted from intra-regional solidarity through education to enhancing the identity of 'ASEAN people' and increasing the role and power of education in the political and economic arena. Moreover, the 5th ASED meeting in 2010 also emphasized the necessity of 'strengthening, deepening and widening educational cooperation within ASEAN and outside the region" (ASED 2010), namely the ASEAN+3 under the work plan (2010–2017) and the East Asia Summit countries, including China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, India, New Zealand, with the United States and Russia joining in 2011. Since 2012, the ASEAN education ministers have organized their own meetings biennially, separate from those of SEAMEO, and invited the ASEAN+3 and East Asia Summit education ministers to join. There was no announced reason for this separation, but my observations support arguments that the ASEAN identity was diluted when ASED was only a 'side-event' of the SEAMEO, and the agendas and the memberships of ASED and SEAMEO became increasingly different. Furthermore, as the ASEM education process gathered pace, ASEAN+3 education cooperation aspires to consolidate itself to become a more cohesive region to act effectively at the Asia-Europe interface. Last but not least, the Plus Three countries support the ASEAN regional integration in all spheres

including higher education, but their national interests in this endeavour are not concealed. With their ageing populations, Japan, China and Korea are increasingly interested in the brainpower of the ASEAN's young talented students and scholars for their knowledge economy missions. Therefore, while the agenda of ASED centres mainly around the ASEAN countries' commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Education for All by 2015 (ASED 2014), the discussion on higher education dominates the meetings of ASEAN+3 and it was also fuelled with the range of initiatives and projects proposed by the countries, such as students mobility, quality assurance, university networks, ASEAN research clusters and citation index, rectors' conference, and the ASEAN cyber university (APT 2014).

The history and development of the ASEAN regional education cooperation over 40 years and the ASEAN+3 cooperation in the last decade have consolidated the region's own model of integration, which is based on inter-governmental dialogues, voluntary commitments, regular meetings and statements. It would be implausible to claim that the 15-year old Bologna Process is the template for regional policy coordination, as Vogtle and Martens (2014) concluded in their recent research. Although the substance of the Bologna action lines may be seen resembled in the recent ASEAN regional talks, this new development occurs due to the mutual interests from the EU seeking to diffuse the Bologna policy and from the ASEAN looking to learn from it. Notably, the EU has shown an interest in what is happening in ASEAN and Germany inaugurated the Asia-Europe Education Ministers' biennial forum on higher education in 2008. ASEAN has also acknowledged that the Bologna Process serves as an inspiration and reference for ASEAN's own higher education harmonization. ASEAN officials often indicated that they studied the EU regional education policies in order to avoid the same mistakes and pitfalls (Dang 2013).

3 The Bologna Process Goes East: From Policy Diffusion to Policy Mutation

3.1 The Bologna Goes East

Three years after the Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999 by 29 European countries, the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) drafted a report on "attractiveness, openness and cooperation" as the three main entities of the Bologna Process 'external dimension', which then became a point on the agenda of the Bologna Ministers from their Berlin meeting in 2003 onwards. In the Bologna language, 'Attractiveness' referred to quality, transparency, diversity and visibility, 'Openness' called for joint effort to make European higher education open to students from all over the world. And 'Cooperation' was to promote the 'Bologna idea' of regional cooperation and integration through dissemination of experiences

with other regions, although the goal was not to directly associate non-European countries to the process (BFUG 2002). From an unintentional idea of making the Bologna Process a model for regional reform of higher education (Zgaga 2006), the Bologna countries became proactive in promoting the Bologna philosophy by "opening their seminars and conferences to representatives of other regions" (Berlin Communique 2003) and seeing "the need to *identify partner regions* and intensify the exchange of ideas and experiences with those regions" (Bergen Communique 2005, emphasis added). The 'external dimension working group' was also set up in 2005–2006 to collect and analyze reactions and echoes of various kinds from other parts of the world, such as ASEAN and the African Union. Regional cooperation with the "outer world" has also created a new space for the European Commission to act as a supranational entity. The Commission has provided financial support to a number of projects with ASEAN since the 2000s, such as the ASEAN-EU University Network Programme (AUNP 2000–2006),[2] the Asia-Link programme (2002–2006), Asia Windows (2004), the EU-Asian Higher Education Platform—EAHEP (2008–2009). These projects and the policy dialogues and networks that they generated could be seen as vehicles to diffuse the European policies of higher education.

3.2 Policy Diffusion

Börzel and Risse (2009, 2012) note that the EU promotes regionalism as a distinct European idea and the EU sometimes constructs new regions to interact with. Using examples from political science, the authors explain that in order to spread its idea of regional integration to other regions, the EU has developed five sophisticated diffusion mechanisms which exert direct and indirect influence (Table 1).

The first mechanism uses coercive authority, legal or physical force to impose ideas on the recipients who have no choice but to accept. This mechanism may only be relevant to the internal diffusion of ideas in the Europeanization process where members (or candidates) are obliged to comply with the EU laws and institution. By contrast, ASEAN has its own method of integrating new members, by accepting them as the 'persons' they are instead of demanding domestic structural adjustments from them (Jetschke and Murray 2012).

The second mechanism concerns diffusion of ideas through the manipulation of utility calculations by giving negative or positive incentives. The promoters of ideas use this approach in order to achieve certain goals, for example gaining access to new markets or preventing negative externalities, such as civil wars in neighbouring countries, by providing financial or technical assistance or sanctions. In practice, this mechanism manifests itself in the form of 'capacity building', which provides

[2]https://globalhighered.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/aunp.pdf (last accessed on 23 December 2014).

Table 1 Mechanisms of diffusion

Mechanisms	Rationality of action	Modalities and tools
Direct influence		
1. Coercion 2. Manipulation of utility calculations 3. Socialization 4. Persuasion	1. Legal and physical imposition 2. Instrumental rationality 3. Normative rationality 4. Communicative Rationality	1. Coercive authority 2. Incentives, sanctions 3. Normative pressure, authoritative model 4. Reason-giving
Indirect influence		
5. Emulation		
(a) Functional emulation (b) Lesson-drawing (c) Mimicry	(a) Instrumental rationality (b) Normative rationality (c) Mimetic/normative rationality	1. Comparison and competition 2. Best practice 3. Demand-driven

Source Adapted from Börzel and Risse (2009, 2012)

the targeted recipients with additional resources enabling them to make choices or in the form of 'conditionality', which aims to manipulate the cost-benefit calculations of the recipients through negative or positive incentives. For example, the EU seriously downgraded its relations with ASEAN, suspending meetings and avoiding high level contacts in the late 1990s due to the accession of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. This could be seen as a subtle form of negative conditionality. Power asymmetry is the key factor in these direct influence mechanisms. Hence, the less asymmetrical the power relationship between the EU and target countries or regions is, the less effective direct influence mechanisms of diffusion in inducing institutional change are (Börzel and Risse 2012, p. 203). For example, the lack of membership perspective of neighbouring countries seriously curbs the ability of the EU to manipulate their utility calculations. Since the EU has no or little ability to force non-members into compliance with its standards and institutional prescriptions, it relies more on other mechanisms, such as 'soft' incentives, socialization and persuasion if it wishes to influence regional institutional change (Jetschke and Murray 2012). In practice, the EU increasingly uses a co-funding modality.

The third mechanism—socialization—is based on normative rationality and works through diffusing authoritative norms and models which are aimed at different types of learning on the side of the recipients. Diffusion scholars portray policy makers of other regions or third countries as rational, calculating subjects engaged in 'voluntaristic' forms of policy learning through socialization. In practice, the EU often diffuses its policies in complex processes in which several mechanisms are at work simultaneously. There are cases of coerced transfer executed in the context of asymmetrical power relations combining socialization and incentives in the form of 'capacity building' for direct export of the European

Bologna model. For example, since 2011 the EU has allocated a total budget of Euro 9 million to support the "Intra-ACP Academic Mobility Scheme", which sets up university consortia and facilitates student and staff mobility within Africa and in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Similarly, in early 2014 the EU also launched a project called "the European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU SHARE)" with a budget of Euro 9.6 million. This programme will support ASEAN to develop regional frameworks of quality assurance, qualifications framework and credit transfer. Through the incentive and professional socialization, the EU will share its experience and expertise on the Bologna Process and the development of the EHEA (EU SHARE 2014). These projects could be seen as 'funded emulation'.

The fourth mechanism is persuasion, which promotes ideas as legitimate or true by reason-giving and logical arguments. Non-state international organizations often play an important role in this mechanism, for example the European University Association (EUA) and the European Network of Quality Assurance in higher education (ENQA) are active promoters of the Bologna model in and outside Europe. Often, the EU diffuses its ideas via socialization and persuasion in institutionalized patterns of political dialogues with third countries and other regions. The Bologna Policy Forum, Tuning (China, Japan, Russia, Latin America, USA, Africa) and the ASEM education forum are examples of such influential political dialogues.

Finally, the fifth mechanism is emulation, which does not require an active promotion of ideas, but relies on the principle of competition and comparison. The EU encourages competition among the countries and regions seeking closer relations with the EU, because competition does not only diffuse ideas as normative standards for political or economic behaviour, but also spreads causal beliefs, for example by learning from best practice, actors borrow ideas (emulation) to improve their performance in comparison to others. According to Börzel and Risse (2009, 2012), regional organizations across the globe have increasingly mimicked the EU. In particular, the ASEAN has imitated parts of the EU institution (e.g. the committee of permanent representatives, the human rights commission were added to the ASEAN's institutional structure) in order to increase its international recognition and reputation (Jetschke and Murray 2012; Wong 2012). The authors also posit that diffusion is "demand-driven by actors who seek to bolster their effectiveness and legitimacy" (Börzel and Risse 2009, p. 9). In a similar vein, sociological institutionalism analyzes the reproduction or imitation of organizational structures by emphasizing the patterns of institutional isomorphism shared across different countries, but in such case diffusion depends on the organizational fields in which institutions operate, the role of shared beliefs, legitimacy for an organizations' survival and cultural ties between actors (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

The major limit of the diffusion approach is that it tends to ignore the role of agency in what it portrays as almost a passive process. It is deficient in explaining how the ASEAN policy makers filter the Bologna ideas and transform them into their own regional context. This diffusion approach also neglects the robustness of 'firewalls' or political resistance along the diffusion path. These diffusion scholars

fail to mention that there are policies that do not diffuse, even in an interdependent world. Hence, understanding what does not diffuse should be as important as understanding what does (Solingen 2012). With regard to outcomes of policy diffusion, for instance 'regional institution building', the diffusion approach is only attentive to the formal structure, such as the emergence of regional organizations, but without explaining the efficacy of the organizations (Jetschke and Lenz 2013). It also focuses narrowly on the idea of policy convergence as the end result of a diffusion process, with little attention to policy implementation, wider consequences and variation in institutional outcomes at the receiving end (Dale and Robertson 2012; Peck 2011).

3.3 Policy Mobility and Mutation

While the diffusion literature defines policy diffusion as a distinctively conspicuous category of border-crossing practice, the occurrence of which is traced to superior performance or success stories in exporting jurisdictions, policy mobility scholars see the mobilization of policies as the reconstruction of power relations between jurisdictions. That is because the very movement of policies remakes the connections between sites of policy inventors and policy recipients through (re)constructing policy networks and circulatory mechanisms (Peck 2011; Peck and Theodore 2010, 2012). These authors also argue that context matters in the sense that political landscapes are more than just empty space where diffusion takes place; they are reconstructed through the back and forth traffic of policy norms and practices. Unlike the diffusion approach which sees policies diffuse from the capitals of innovators/inventors to the hinterlands of emulators, the term 'policy mobility' connotes the multiplicity of processes, in which policy regimes are becoming more deeply and relationally interconnected through global networks of policy actors (Peck 2011, pp. 1–3).

Peck and Theodore (2010) and Peck (2011) outline the five key features of the policy mobility approach as follows:

- First, policy formation and transformation are seen as socially constructed processes, as fields of power. Policy transfer is not reduced to a process for transmitting best practices, but is about adaptive connections, deeply structured by enduring power relations and shifting ideological alignments. Policy mobility also entails the reconstitution of fields of power and the establishment of connections between policy actors and policymaking sites (e.g. enrolment of 'audience' who are policy supporters and followers or emulators).
- Second, policy actors are not conceptualized as lone learners, but as embodied members of epistemic, expert and practice communities/networks. They are 'travelling technocrats' and 'policy entrepreneurs', who are not only high-level agents of elite institutions, but also mid-level technocrats (Temenos and McCann 2013), such as a web of governmental policy makers, regional and

national experts, university international officers and NGO consultants in the Bologna Process. Their peripatetic forms of expertise are also transformed by the journeys that they make.

- Third, mobile policies rarely travel as complete 'packages', they move in bits and pieces—as selective discourses, inchoate ideas, and synthesized models—and they therefore 'arrive' not as replicas, but as policies already in transformation. They do not simply travel, intact, from sites of invention to sites of emulation. Instead, through their very movement they remake connections between these sites, evolving in form and effect through mobility (Peck and Theodore 2012, p. 23). That means high rates of policy mobility are not leading to some sort of policy monopoly because new forms of uneven spatial development and new localizations are constantly being produced. Hence, there is no expectation of global convergence in these open-ended processes.
- Fourth, the resulting dynamic in the policy making process is not one of simple emulation and linear replication across the policymaking sites, but a more complex process of nonlinear reproduction. Policies will therefore mutate and morph during their journeys.
- Fifth, the spatiality of policy making is not "flattened into some inert plane or transaction space, marked only with jurisdictional boundaries, across which transfers occur, but in terms of a three-dimensional mosaic of increasingly reflexive governance shaped by multi-directional forms of cross scalar and interlocal policy mobility" (Peck and Theodore 2010, p. 170).

In sum, diffusion scholars tend to be preoccupied with accounts of rationally selected best (or better) practices moving between jurisdictional spaces. They neglect the fact that the policy making process involves "a series of contexts from the production of the policy to its movement and new point of fixity" (Dale and Robertson 2012). The mobility approach asserts that these contexts are not neutral backdrops or convenient landing places, rather they are co-constitutive social spatial contexts able to produce "hybrid mutations of policy techniques and practices across dynamized institutional landscapes" (Peck 2011, p. 2), including scale, territory, place, locality and the global (Cochrane and Ward 2012). One of the methodological challenges in studying mobile policies is to follow them, to trace their twists and localized effects. In essence, this requires an ability to trace power through the set of relations associated with policy mobility and mutation from one context to another.

3.4 Constitutive Localization

Wider policy networks are important to the construction of local responses, while at the same time globalized policies are only capable of realization in particular grounded and localized ways (Cochrane and Ward 2012). Globalized policies find their expression and are given their meaning in local contexts and that local

translation then feeds back into further circulation. Acharya (2009) uses the concept of 'constitutive localization' to denote processes of re-interpreting and re-representing the external policy norms to make them congruent with existing local beliefs and practices. The key aspect of the localization is the agency of the norm recipients, who are not merely passive norm takers, paving the way to a wholesale cognitive transformation. Much more often, they respond proactively to normative challenges through framing, grafting and pruning with an aim to transform them into 'domestic fit' (Acharya 2009; Rüland 2014a). The connections between the external ideas/norms/policies and local circumstances are not always obvious. Framing is about using language that names, interprets, redefines and reconstructs external ideas in order to create linkages between existing 'cognitive priors' and emergent norms. Grafting is a tactic employed to institutionalize a new norm to suit their local needs and values. Pruning is to cut and leave out some elements of the external policy norms, or sometimes local norms also need to be pruned. For example, assuming regional leadership role, Indonesian stakeholders remove the supranational dimension from the European model, but they also support the formal ASEAN Charter which challenges the non-interference norm and prunes the informal 'ASEAN Way' (Rüland 2014b). In other words, local actors play an important role in the construction of regions because they both resist and are socialized within its structures. They interact with, and simultaneously rework social meaning of new policies (Emerson 2014). These processes are also termed as 'Discursive Opportunity Structures' (DOS) which local actors utilise to identify ideas in the larger political context, that are believed to be 'sensible', 'realistic' and 'legitimate' and that facilitate the reception of certain types of framing (Koopmans and Staham 1999; McCammon et al. 2007, p. 731). 'Discursive Opportunity Structures' are different from plain 'Opportunities'. The concept of DOS is closely linked with social movements and contains three key features: (1) variations in opportunity determine variations in collective actions; (2) relevant variations in opportunity result mainly from the interaction with political actors and institutions; (3) variations in such opportunities are structurally shaped (Koopmans 1999). DOS can be highly stable structures if collective actions stem from discourses long-lived and deeply rooted in the surrounding culture, and they can be volatile structures if collective actions derive from short-lived and new ideation. All DOS are inherently selective and therefore it is important for local actors to identify which DOS provide fertile ground for only a narrow range of actions, and which DOS select a wider range (McCammon et al. 2007). Successful localizers are those able to mobilise local sources for their action, such as structural characteristics of political system, the behaviours of allies, adversaries, and the public; societal 'moods'; economic structures and developments; cultural myths and narratives.

It is also important to distinguish adaptation and localization. Adaptation tends to generate adaptive behaviours and make local practices consistent with external ideas. Localization, by contrast, describes a process in which external ideas are adapted to suit local practices (Acharya 2009, p. 19). Localization is often a long term and evolutionary process, while adaptation in international relations literature is seen as 'short run policy and accommodation'. Thus, adaptation may be tactical

and to a certain extent forced on the recipients, whereas localization is voluntary and the resulting change is likely to be more enduring. These aspects of localization render it constitutive.

In sum, the integration of policy diffusion, polity mobility and localisation delineates a useful theoretical framework to understand how ASEAN regional higher education policies have been made in the EU-ASEAN interactions.

4 ASEAN Regional Harmonisation of Higher Education

From around 2008, when Europe talked much about the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the phrase 'ASEAN Common Space for Higher Education' started to appear in the media and ASEAN policy documents (Sirat 2008). Perhaps the conception of an ASEAN education space is not without precedent because already in 1971 a regional European Education Space was conceived by a working group called the European Centre for the Development of Education (Lawn 2003). However, the ASEAN concept of common space for higher education has its own connotations and meanings resulted from localization processes. Senior officials from ASEAN countries share their personal views on 'common space', which is associated with an ASEAN concept of harmonization. By contrast, harmonization is a taboo word in the Bologna Process (Garben 2010; Zgaga 2003). So far, ASEAN higher education regionalization is not about achieving a highly standardized higher education zone as in the Bologna Process. It is not about making drastic changes to the national higher education systems, but rather aiming for harmonization, which allows diverse systems to be linked at points of junction. The underlying fact is that the ASEAN region is characterized by great diversity of political regimes, levels of development, religions, education traditions and gaps in quality. Kuroda (2009) described the EHEA as 'melting pot harmonization' which required structural changes of domestic higher education systems, and ASEAN higher education space is 'mosaic harmonization', which requires prudent steps of collaboration to seek points of linkages. Despite the differences that could possibly divide, there are also other factors that can unite the members of ASEAN+3 to arrive at some sort of affinity (Koh 2007, p. 9). Student mobility is an example of such unitive factors.

Inspired by the European Union Erasmus mobility programmes, the ASEAN+3, countries have launched CAMPUS Asia (Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia) and AIMS (ASEAN International Mobility for Students). Although CAMPUS Asia is a 'credit mobility' programme for students among all 13 countries in the ASEAN+3 region, it is not a 'twin brother' of the Erasmus programme due to several reasons.

First, CAMPUS Asia is one part of the 5-year strategic project called "Re-Inventing Japan". Originating from an agreement at the China-Korea-Japan Heads of State Summit in 2009, this idea was followed up and led by Japan with the support from China and Korea. CAMPUS Asia was developed and launched in

2011 by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Their national aim is to extend the international reach of Japanese universities by building connections with higher education institutions throughout Asia, the United States and other Western countries.

Second, the Erasmus programme is about short term mobility without joint or dual degree arrangements, whereas CAMPUS Asia focuses more on the latter. While the conventional internationalization of universities in Japan entails increasing number of incoming international students and outgoing Japanese students, and providing more courses taught in English, the recent strategies have focused more on transnational collaboration; setting up joint programmes and research projects (Yamada 2013). In fact, CAMPUS Asia consists of two components with different motives. The first component, perhaps similar to Erasmus Mundus, is to establish consortia of leading universities from Japan, China and the Republic of Korea to implement the strategic Northeast Asia region building through higher education ties. The name CAMPUS Asia is thus far attached more to this triangular mobility scheme. The second component is the exchange projects organized in a 'hub-and-spoke' model between Japan (being the hub) and universities in ASEAN and in China and Korea which are not covered in the above trilateral framework. However, in practice, the focus of Re-inventing Japan was twisted in 2012 to prioritize collaboration with ASEAN countries. This is evident in the number of approved projects consisting of 120 ASEAN partner universities in 2012 and 45 ASEAN partner universities in 2013 exchanging students with Japan at programme level (Re-inventing Japan 2012, 2013). In fact, the selected projects in these two years were almost exclusively for collaboration of Japanese universities with ASEAN universities.[3] This shift of priority occurred at the same time as the ASEAN+3 countries intensified their educational cooperation with ASEAN and prepared for the first ASEAN+3 Education Ministers' meeting with the ASEAN ministers in 2012. This also coincides with the EU Erasmus+ project which was devised with a bigger budget, a larger scale and more aggressive 'external dimension'. Thus, the need to establish an ASEAN+3 region and an intra-regional mobility scheme became more urgent in order to act as regional partner with the EU. It also becomes clear that such regional policy contexts, policy moments and the policy actions of Japan are constitutive elements of the circulatory systems which facilitate the Bologna regionalism ethos to ASEAN. A senior official shared his view on building an ASEAN+3 region through student mobility and establishing a higher education quality assurance centre for Asia.

> We have CAMPUS Asia and AIMS programme for mobility in Southeast Asia. I think we can connect those first. … [we do not have the European Commission] but we have ASEAN+3, a framework already. At the ASEAN+3 meeting on mobility in Tokyo in September 2013 we set up a working group. The next meeting will be in Bali in October 2014. The chair is from an ASEAN country and the co-chair will be from the 'Plus three'

[3]Re-Inventing Japan Project – Selection results for 2012, 2013, 2014
http://www.jsps.go.jp/j-tenkairyoku/kekka.html
http://www.mext.go.jp/english/highered/1326678.htm (accessed 15 September 2014).

> countries. And Japan is the organizer of the first meeting, so we were setting the agenda and making the documents. We are trying to help the working group. So we are a kind of coordinator in this project.
> (The author's interview with Ministerial Senior Official, Japan, May 2014)

Both components of CAMPUS Asia are intended to facilitate incoming and outgoing mobility across systems. Therefore, the policy tools, such as quality assurance and recognition of qualifications across the region became an important issue and the Bologna Process seems to have provided some solutions. However, it would be implausible to conclude that CAMPUS Asia replicates Erasmus and Bologna ideas by counting on the emergence of the scheme only. A closer look at the operation and the governance of CAMPUS Asia reveals marked differences from Erasmus. For example, while the Erasmus grants come from the common European funds in Brussels distributed through the sending country's Erasmus National Agency, the scholarship for students in CAMPUS Asia is granted by the host university with the funding from the host government. The mobility track of Erasmus is more flexible and based on any bilateral agreements between eligible universities in two different countries, whereas the mobility track of CAMPUS Asia is limited within a fixed consortium with varying study durations of one or more semesters leading to an exchange certificate or a dual diploma respectively. The governance of each consortium is similar to the model of the Erasmus Mundus joint masters' programs, but many CAMPUS Asia consortia cover all three cycles (bachelor, masters and doctoral). These consortia represent the participating countries' (and region's) leading universities with cutting edge research in their specialized fields. CAMPUS Asia also has many motives. Region-building (ASEAN+3), regional competitiveness enhancement, foreign policy (peace building, especially between Northeast Asian countries) and cultural exchanges are, thus, seen as 'logics of [educational] intervention' in the words of Dale and Robertson (2012).

From a different starting point and objective, the AIMS project is a short-term mobility scheme among ASEAN countries with the purpose of 'cultural enrichment' and less of 'academic advancement'. Launched in 2010 as a pilot mobility scheme between Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, three years later AIMS has involved around 700 students mobile among 60 universities from seven ASEAN countries, including Japan (Sujatanond 2014). The financial support for AIMS is allocated to the sending universities by their ministries. Perhaps one of the 'harmonization effects resulted from AIMS is that Thailand and the Philippines have changed their academic calendars to begin in August and September from 2014 in order to be in harmony with most other ASEAN countries (Chao 2014b). However, AIMS has been facing numerous obstacles, such as unsettled schemes for credit transfers and recognition of study period/academic modules, staff capacity, and readiness of universities, coordination, and funding. In some ways, it mirrors the version of Erasmus in its very early days, more than 20 years ago. An Asian expert shared the story about the rationale to start AIMS:

> The background is that we talked much about regionalization, but nobody set the mandate. During a retreat in 2009, the Thai, Malaysian and Indonesian High Commissions for higher

> education started to talk about what we can do together. ASEAN is about people-to-people connectivity, therefore we started with students first because these people are willing to learn and willing to explore […].We should choose something that we can handle and can really do together. […] 'ASEAN Research Clusters and Citation Index' is the last point added to the regional agenda because research is difficult to do".
> (The author's interview with Asian senior expert, May 2014)

This 'Erasmus-like' project displays a logic of diffusion that has less to do with the noble notion of optimal decision making, because ASEAN policy makers are conceived of as learning agents, working within the constraints of bounded rationality and context. Sometimes, a policy maker is a social engineer seeking knowledge instrumentally and his lesson-drawing is ultimately about whether policies can be transferred from one place to another (Peck 2011). The costs and capacity constraints induce policy makers to pursue the lines of least resistance, rather than searching endlessly for ideal policy solutions. Lesson drawing in this case also entails looking for shortcuts and acceptable compromises. Policy learning is thus an instrumental process.

These two examples shed light on the weakness of the diffusion literature that is primarily concerned with observed or alleged convergence, which are usually judged on the surface similarities in policy designs and normative rationales (Peck and Theodore 2010). In practice, the Erasmus mobility programme mutated into very different versions in Asia. One of the reasons for this policy mutation is the 'localization' process in ASEAN as illustrated below.

The political practices of ASEAN governments are strongly influenced by their 'cognitive priors', which tell us how external norms are considered appropriate and legitimate. This practice is reflected in the way Asian policy actors are making connections between foreign discourses and the local ideas and values.

> We don't want to use the word 'regionalize' because it is like you are departing (detaching) yourself from the rest to be a region of your own. […]
> 'Harmonization' is not about imposing on member countries, but only trying to harmonize what already exists in such a way that there is a common area, sort of overlap, which can be recognized by all the members. That is why the word 'harmonization' is preferred in our region. It is like an orchestra, everyone uses one instrument, but together they create a piece of music in harmony.
> (The author's interview with Asian senior expert, May 2014)

The policy networks are relational constructs, their efficacy depends on local political conditions (Peck 2011). While the EHEA is about a common set of rules and standards for higher education, common space in ASEAN is about opening your doors to your neighbours.

> Harmonization is about creating harmony, sharing information and experience in higher education. Student mobility is a part of a regional harmonization project. When students move between member countries, universities have to *open their doors* and show that their system is in harmony and keep pace with other countries. In order to receive international students, we have to improve our quality and adjust our higher education to be in harmony with the region.
> (The author's interview with Ministerial Senior Official, Vietnam, May 2014)

The term 'open door' is literally taken from a powerful policy discourse in Vietnam, when the country began to re-integrate in the international system after the lift of the U.S. embargo. By using this language, the actor has tapped into the larger system of meaning and even extended specific aspects of ideological orientations (McCammon et al. 2007) to make it appear local and politically persuasive. The localizers also have their own way of selecting some 'discursive opportunities' to frame the issue in ASEAN and prepare fertile ground for proposing new norms. In essence, the policy localizers use lesson-drawing to attack the status quo with evidence that feasible and potentially superior alternatives exist elsewhere.

> when you talk about mobility and harmonization then you need something in common. I remember my student time in the US, there was a 'common room' where people can do different activities together without annoying other friends. Everybody can go along very well in the common room. Let's take the example of recognition of qualifications; a Vietnamese student graduated from a bachelor programme in Vietnam, then studied a masters' degree in continental Europe and a PhD degree in the UK. That raises the question why we [ASEAN] do not/cannot do it in the region. Why don't we [ASEAN] open our systems to other members and help students to gain cross cultural understanding?
> (The author's interview with Asian senior expert, May 2014)

Departing from the idea of harmonization and common space, the vision for a regional higher education has moved towards a more macro level addressing the underlying goal of regional competitiveness. The viewpoint below indicates that, while discursive opportunity structures are apparent in the broader context, in the end the policy actors are agents who make decisions about how to respond to such opportunities (McCammon et al. 2007). The expression also implies that opportunity structure is socially constructed, and that collective actors who can articulate frames to fit with this discursive structure are more likely to be politically effective.

> Common space for higher education has to be some kind of common understanding, a common platform because ASEAN has to compete with all the other regions in the world […]. We can define the space and make sure that the participants are able to come up with learning skills that are appropriate for us to compete well. Common space here is more about the mind set and a common set of objectives, something that we will pursue together. Ten countries in ASEAN are doing the same thing so that we can excel.
> (The author's interview with Ministerial Senior Official, the Philippines, May 2014)

In practice, this goal of enhancing the region's competitiveness has great potential to shape and construct new policy landscapes in ASEAN. For example, the novel policy idea on ASEAN Clusters and Citation Index is the 'youngest' item on the regional agenda, beyond the student mobility. In 2010, Thailand proposed pioneering ASEAN Research Clusters and explored the possibility of setting up an "ASEAN Citation Index (ACI)". The initial objectives are to (a) compile national journal databases in ASEAN countries, (b) enhance the quality of research, (c) increase ASEAN academic visibility in the region and beyond. The recent structure was set up in an 'ASEANess institutional model'—multilateral and inter-governmental cooperation instead of central supranational institution. The Thai Ministry of Education provides funding for the project and the Thai Journal

Citation Index Centre (TCI) set up the ACI database. The database serves two purposes: (1) selecting outstanding journals from each country based on an agreed set of criteria and (2) enhancing cooperation between ACI and Scopus—the worldwide database of academic journals and books (the author's interview with Ministerial Senior Official, Thailand, May 2014).

Although this initiative does not look like it has been taken from the Bologna model, it has some traits similar to the British Research Excellence Framework (REF), especially the ranking of academic journals. It is a first step toward an ASEAN common space for research and predictably, a terrain for new public management discourse, to which ASEAN member countries subscribe. This, in turn, will transform the policy landscape in the region because policy mobility and mutation proceed in tandem and in on-going transformative processes (Peck and Theodore 2010). The new forms and effects of this regional policy are to be seen.

5 An Alternative Regional Model and Inspiration for EU-ASEAN Inter-regional Cooperation

This contribution has sought to introduce a new approach to examining the influence of the Bologna Process on a regional scale outside Europe by analyzing the contexts, local policy actors and policy substance at the receiving end. The policy diffusion literature provides a framework for explaining different mechanisms for rational diffusion and best practice replication, but this approach focuses narrowly on the action of policy exporters and the surface convergence of policy. The discussion of policy mobility provides a more convincing explanation of relational interconnectedness between the constitutive power of policy context and agency to mutate the policy outcomes. The Bologna policies have not travelled intact from Europe to Asia but have been transformed through networks of actors and shifting policy landscapes.

Although it seems that the Bologna Process provides points of reference for ASEAN, the active construction of an ASEAN regional higher education space in its flexible institutional design can arguably become a model in its own right and potentially provide a useful source for reflecting on European Bologna practices. ASEAN has long been perceived by its member states as an organization that has been set up in a manner that was essentially different from the EU (Jetschke and Murray 2012), and Asian regionalism (also with regard to higher education) continues to remain closely tied to the soft and non-binding "ASEAN way". The 'coercive'—albeit voluntaristic—character of the Bologna Process and its Open Method of Coordination using regional standards, benchmarks and peer pressure would have little use in making sense of ASEAN regional cooperation. Hence, it would be implausible to assume that Bologna experience sets the criteria by which ASEAN higher education harmonization should be measured.

This paper has also demonstrated that increasing policy mobility needs not imply policy convergence simply because policies will mutate in the course of their travels from one jurisdiction to another, and the policy actors and their peripatetic forms of expertise are likewise transformed by the journeys that they make (Peck 2011). Hence, there is no policy monopoly because new forms of uneven spatial development and new localizations are constantly being produced. Moreover, if bi-regionalism in a hub-and-spokes relationship model is what the EU builds with other regions, such as ASEAN, Africa and Latin America (Rüland 2010), this hub-and-spokes model is dynamic because regions can change their position as a hub. In practical terms, the CAMPUS Asia university consortia would undoubtedly become strategic partners for the cooperation with European universities under the new ERAMUS+ scheme in the coming years. Stated differently, other 'external' world regions' endeavours may affect the future of the Bologna Process and give impulse to the 'internal' consolidation of EHEA in the race for competitiveness and attractiveness. ASEAN goals and norms have the potential to offer an alternative to the European prevailing institutionalized model (Stubbs 2008) that in the medium to long term could have an impact on the global governance the higher education sector.

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Future Scenarios for the European Higher Education Area: Exploring the Possibilities of "Experimentalist Governance"

Robert Harmsen

1 Introduction

Even as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) formally came into being at the 2010 Budapest-Vienna ministerial conference, a growing sense appeared to be taking hold among participants that the Bologna Process (BP) had, to a significant extent, "exhausted" itself after a little more than a decade of existence. That sense of exhaustion was, in some respects, undoubtedly a positive development insofar as it could be likened to the exhaustion of a marathon runner who has completed the race. In less lyrical terms, the process appeared exhausted insofar as it had succeeded in achieving many of its initial goals, particularly at the level of the enunciation and acceptance of broad policy templates. As a commissioned independent assessment concluded at the time, "Most 'architectural' elements of the EHEA, i.e. those involving legislation and national regulation, have been implemented in most countries" (Westerheijden 2010, p. 5). At the same time, however, this underlying sense of exhaustion also had a more negative dimension. Here it appears rather more as an exhaustion born of frustration, of recognizing that perhaps a plateau had been reached from which further advances might not be possible, or would be possible only by overcoming inordinately difficult obstacles. Those frustrations, in large part, reflect the difficulties of on the ground implementation where, as the assessment report also highlighted, institutional and program level responses were "still wanting" (Ibid).

Given this situation, it would not be surprising if there were to be a (renewed) tendency toward questioning the "soft law" foundations of the EHEA as it has developed to date—i.e. the essentially non-binding character of the process, which seeks to foster policy learning through the establishment of shared understandings of best practice, processes of national reporting, and attendant peer review.

R. Harmsen (✉)
Institute of Political Science, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
e-mail: robert.harmsen@uni.lu

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These soft law moorings have generated a degree of criticism in the scholarly literature. Most prominently, Garben (2010, 2011) has advanced a comparatively broad-based critique of the soft law character of the Bologna Process, making the case for the putative superiority of a regulation of the area by way of conventional, "hard" European Union (EU) law—at least as regards those EHEA participating states that are also EU member states. In so doing, she highlighted what she regarded to be fundamental procedural failings as regards the democracy and transparency of the process, as well as related substantive shortcomings concerned with its lack of effectiveness. In this, she joined a wider body of criticism of the so-called new modes of governance, principally concerned with what are taken to be its negative consequences for both parliamentary and legal accountability (cf. Idema and Keleman 2006).

Such criticisms undoubtedly have a degree of validity; issues of both accountability and effectiveness do arise in the context of the process, as indeed—it might be added—of governance processes more generally. The question that needs to be posed, however, is whether a hard law alternative is either a practical, or necessarily a superior, option.

The question of practicality is a straightforward one. Bologna has soft law in its DNA, and is—in the literal sense—*practically* inconceivable in another form. Following a now well-known sequence of events, it was through the development of loose forms of cooperation deliberately placed outside of the remit of the EU that a European higher education (HE) policy space was finally created (cf. Muller and Ravinet 2008), overcoming the longstanding and sometimes fierce national resistance which had long met European Commission initiatives to move in this direction within an EU framework (cf. Corbett 2005). It is fair to say that little has changed as regards this underlying dynamic in the intervening years. If states have become more comfortable in discussing higher education policy in European fora, they have shown no particular willingness to cede control over this *chasse gardée* of national policy. Moreover, it is evident that the development of formal regulation in the framework of a (currently) 47 member pan-European process, extending well beyond the EU 28, is a political non-starter. As a practical matter, the EHEA will "sink or swim" on the basis of its ability to make soft law structures work; there is no politically realistic "hardening" alternative.

The argument could, however, further be made that, even were such a hardening to be politically possible, it would not be substantively desirable. Insofar as the Bologna Process has been successful in creating a common European "language" of higher education policy (cf. Zgaga 2012), with widely shared points of comparison, it has done so through the fostering of consensual dialogue, where no threat of imposed solutions—of a "shadow of hierarchy" to use the jargon of the public policy literature—hangs in the balance. It is this absence of compulsion that has opened possibilities for policy learning, which have been significantly—if unevenly—seized. It is by no means certain that a hard law regime, even if it were it to be possible, would produce better results. Given the sensitivity of the area, the risk would rather be that any hypothetical moves toward a formal regulatory regime would produce substantial national disengagement and/or non-compliance, while

undermining the strong potential learning dynamics engendered by the existing, looser forms of cooperation.

It is thus on this basis that the present paper proceeds to examine the future of the EHEA as a governance process, seeking to probe how soft law instruments may be better developed so as to introduce a renewed dynamism into an "exhausted" process. To that end, a model of "experimentalist governance", following Sabel and Zeitlin (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008, 2010), is first introduced below. Their four-stage model is then mapped on to an account of the governance of the Bologna Process. This mapping exercise particularly highlights the existence of systemic impediments preventing the development of strong dynamics of iterative policy learning connecting the national and the European levels. The final major section of the paper then seeks to draw lessons from this analysis, looking at the ways in which such impediments to policy learning might be removed or alleviated. Attention is focused successively on the relationship of expertise (and experts) to the wider policy process; the representativeness of European-level stakeholders; the higher education policy discourse of the European Commission; and the reframing of national higher education debates in terms which, over fifteen years after the Bologna Declaration, should now be seen as moving to a "post-reform" phase. Overall, a sketch is drawn of a series of plausible developmental paths, which may provide a means of both serving individual actor interests and the wider goal of further developing a robust pan-European higher education policy forum.

2 Unpacking the New Modes of Governance

The new modes of governance are most readily associated with the development of the so-called Open Method of Coordination (OMC) within the framework of the European Union. The OMC gained prominence as a generalized governance template in the context of the adoption of the Lisbon Agenda in the early 2000s, though the core idea of recourse to soft law instruments of governance may be traced a bit further back, at least to the 1997 European Employment Strategy and the so-called "Luxembourg Process". The BP/EHEA may be understood in relation to this, though with two caveats. The one, obviously, is the simple recognition that we are concerned with a pan-European process extending well beyond the EU. The other, perhaps somewhat less evidently, is that the BP/EHEA does not have a governance or process dimension as an objective—i.e. the OMC, at least in part, sought to foster more open or participatory forms of governance as something of a concomitant goal to the development of policy cooperation in given sectors. This is not true per se of the BP, whose launch dynamics appear rooted firmly and exclusively in reform agendas restricted to the higher education policy sector alone.

Nonetheless, though the BP/EHEA does not have these wider "democratizing" goals, we may nonetheless draw on these approaches as a means of understanding the functioning of the process itself, most particularly with a view to diagnosing its eventual shortcomings. To this end, I will take as my point of departure Sabel and

Zeitlin's somewhat stylized or ideal-type model of "experimentalist governance" in the EU (Sabel and Zeitlin 2008, 2010). This model sets out a four-stage policy process, which may be presented as follows:

1. *Goal Setting*
   The member states and EU institutions jointly establish framework goals and measures for their achievement.
2. *Delegated Responsibility*
   Lower level authorities (regulators, ministries, etc.) are "given the free-dom to achieve these ends as they see fit" (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010, p. 2).
3. *Reporting and Peer Review*
   As the counterpart to this autonomy, however, the lower level authorities must report regularly on their activities, and submit themselves to processes of peer review.
4. *Critical Re-evaluation and Policy Learning*
   Framework goals, methods, etc. are themselves periodically reviewed, "augmented by such new participants whose views come to be seen as indispensable to full and fair deliberation" (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010, p. 3).

While the first three phases of the process as defined by Sabel and Zeitlin largely correspond to the "official" version of the OMC as advanced by the EU itself,[1] the fourth and final phase points to a potentially more fundamental shift in the nature of the policy process, tied to what the authors term "democratizing destabilization". In effect, the intention is to effect a gradual opening out of the policy process—in the senses of both inclusivity and transparency—so as to allow for the expression of new ideas capable of shaking up—"destabilizing"—the existing policy consensus. This destabilization is further situated relative to the underlying conception of experimentalist governance as fostering "directly deliberative polyarchy", i.e. comparatively decentralized policy spaces privileging collective, reasoned discussions.

One need not, however, necessarily go as far as the argument for a systemic or structural destabilization in order to tap into the underlying logic of experimentalist governance. In effect, that which is being pointed to is the necessity to conceive of a form of *iterative policy learning* as the key to the functioning of the model. If experimentalist governance is to have a dynamic or distinctive rationale as a mode of policymaking, it is through the fostering of such "learning" processes—i.e. allowing for forms of comparatively open-ended or expansive deliberation, conducive to innovation, such as are unlikely to be promoted by more conventional "hard" policy processes driven by more immediate interests and outcomes. At least, as Radaelli (2003, p. 8) underlined in an early study of the OMC, it is this core premise of "a governance architecture based on incentives for learning" that allows proponents of the OMC to make a plausible claim for this potentially being "better

[1] See http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm. Website last accessed 2.01.2015.

governance", rather than merely a "second-best option" when hard governance instruments are not reasonably available.

This slightly modified version of the Sabel and Zeitlin model now established, the following three sections of the paper will map the BP/EHEA relative to this ideal-type policy process. The relatively unproblematic stages of goal setting and delegation are first briefly discussed. Somewhat more attention is then paid to the rather more problematic area of reporting and peer review. Finally, systemic shortcomings are highlighted as regards the final, learning phase of the model. As already noted in the introduction, it is this absence of a strong capacity to generate iterative policy learning that is then principally addressed in the following part of the paper, setting out the terms for a possible reform of key aspects of the process so as to enhance its learning capacity.

3 Mapping the Governance of the Bologna Process

3.1 Setting Goals and Delegating Responsibilities

The BP/EHEA for the most part rather unproblematically conforms to the first two dimensions of the model, though somewhat distancing itself from the ideal-type over time. The Bologna Declaration set out a series of (six) clearly delineated objectives with relatively broad margins of interpretation, whose detailed translation was then left to the competent national or sub-national authorities—e.g. calling for the "adoption of easily readable and comparable degrees", based "on two main cycles", which sets a clear direction without, however, prescribing particular structures. The early development of Bologna, moreover, could be seen as focusing on an interconnected set of goals concerned with mobility, comparability and quality assurance.

This balance, relative to the ideal-type of experimentalist governance, was then somewhat blurred in the later development of the process. Latterly, the trend has been to add further topics or areas for discussion, while eschewing more specific goal setting. Thus, for example, wide-ranging topics such as the relationship of the EHEA to the European Research Area (ERA), "lifelong learning", and the "social dimension" have been added—but for the most part without clear objectives being agreed by the participating states comparable to those seen in the earlier stages of the process.

The absence of goal setting in this way does not, of course, preclude meaningful discussions in transnational fora or the opportunity to share "best practice". Comparative data may also, of course, be gathered under these rubrics, surveying national patterns and practices. The absence of specifically defined objectives does, nonetheless, have inescapable implications as regards the more direct use of benchmarking and peer review techniques.

3.2 *Reporting and Peer Review*

Overall, this is a somewhat more problematic phase of the process. Some commentators have viewed this as a "success story". Ravinet (2008), for example, argues that it is essentially through the effective use of benchmarking and peer review that the Bologna Process may be seen to have gone from a system of "voluntary participation" to one of "monitored cooperation". Following her analysis, "countries feel increasingly bound by their commitments" because of: (1) The multiplication of information sources acting as a check on the accuracy of national reports and (2) The strength of socialization pressures ("naming and shaming") on poor performers by their peers to effect the necessary reforms.

This appears to be, however, a somewhat overly positive or optimistic account of the process, where at a minimum a marked unevenness of implementation has routinely been cited as a major problem (Amaral and Veiga 2012). These are also findings which stand squarely at odds with the findings of Dr. Gangolf Braband and myself in our 2010–2012 "Euro-Uni" research project.[2] In our interview sample, all European-level participants highlighted the excessive presence of "green" in BP benchmarking exercises (indicating full achievement of the relevant objective in a "traffic light" system), noting *inter alia* the difficulty to "dissociate implementation from prestige"[3] (particularly in the case of generally poorly performing states). National level participants, conversely (and predictably), defended the robustness of their reporting techniques and attendant data, but even here not in terms which would back the second—socialization—component of Ravinet's analysis. While stressing that they accurately reported outcomes, national officials nonetheless equally stressed that the use made of the results—i.e. whether it would be a spur to (further) reform—was essentially determined by national agendas. "European pressure", in other words, largely came into play only where this pressure corresponded to prior (often "uploaded") national commitments. In the words of one long-serving national official, "You put something on the European agenda because it suits your own domestic needs", as such "It creates a pressure to follow up a commitment you made in the first place. It is a bit of a chicken and egg question."[4]

The 2012 BP Implementation Report also appeared to acknowledge this more critical reading of the reporting and peer review process. The report, tellingly, noted that "the colour dark green is less prevalent in some action lines than before" (EACEA 2012, p. 7), reflecting "a more nuanced insight" as regards the yardsticks

[2]The project, funded as a competitively awarded internal research project by the University of Luxembourg, sought to examine the dialogical dynamics leading to the creation of a "higher education policy space" spanning the national and European levels. In the course of our research, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 senior national and European-level policy-makers, focusing on the European institutions and selected West European states. See further Harmsen (2013).

[3]Interview with a senior European-level official, 22.07.2011.

[4]Interview with a senior national-level official, 06.06.2012.

used for measurement or an extension in the scope of the indicator. The affirmation, obviously, is one of improvement—but in so doing also acknowledges the fairly widespread sense of some of the limitations of the (previous) reporting system.

An overall balance sheet of the (in-)effectiveness of the reporting process is beyond the scope of this short paper, but the broad tone of the 2012 report would seem to capture the underlying reality. Essentially, it is clear that the process of reporting and peer review has progressively improved over time. Primary information gathering has become more systematic, external checks have been multiplied, and the evaluation of data has become more consistent. This does not preclude the possibility of (egregious) national misreporting in individual cases—actors who "manipulate the information they provide so as to show themselves, deceptively, to best advantage" (Sabel and Zeitlin 2010, p. 13). It equally must be qualified by an awareness of the possible limitations of the sources used for the triangulation of data, potentially subject to the same unevenness as the primary data which they are meant to check (cf. Geven 2012). It does, however, point to a situation in which it could reasonably be argued that the mechanisms of reporting and peer review have attained a minimum level of robustness such that this is not/no longer the weak link in the chain of a model of experimentalist governance. At the level of the overall process, the quality of the information available appears broadly such as to allow for meaningful, evidence-based deliberation. If this deliberation has not taken hold in the terms or to the extent that one might have expected, the key thus lies elsewhere—as discussed below.

3.3 Critical Re-evaluation and Policy Learning

Relative to the analysis above, the question then becomes one, beyond information gathering, of whether and how the BP feeds back into national policy processes. Does it promote critical engagement, and widening participation, in a manner which would allow for "democratizing destabilization" in the terms of Sabel and Zeitlin? Or perhaps, more modestly, as suggested above, does it facilitate forms of iterative policy learning?

Here the indications are quite strongly negative; there appear to be significant disconnects between the BP/EHEA policy arena and its national counterparts. On the one hand, at a relatively diffuse level, there appears to be comparatively little "Bologna awareness" on the ground. On the other hand, where comparatively strong traces of the BP may be found in national debates, it is often used by national governments as a means of restricting rather than fostering debates surrounding HE policy. A broadly constructed image of "Bologna" is, in such scenarios, used to legitimate wide-ranging HE reform programs by means of a strategy of "discursive closure".

3.3.1 "Bologna Awareness"

Veiga's (2010) comparative study of the (non-)embedding of the BP at institutional level in seven comprehensive universities in seven different national contexts offers a strong indication of the relatively limited penetration of the process at grassroots level. Relative to the present context, Veiga (2010, p. 377) notes that "the perceptions of Bologna as a policy process remain relatively low". As she underlines, there was little effort by the "*pays politique*" to raise awareness within the "*pays réel*", resulting particularly in a very limited awareness of the underlying rationales for reform. At the political level, the BP came to be significantly translated as a "compliant action"—a sort of self-referential mimetism apparently unconnected to deeper policy concerns.

A somewhat different picture emerges when moving from policy process to policy implementation, as here aspects of the BP touch on the daily realities of academics, students, and administrators. Even here, however, significant aspects of the process, including legal framework, convergence of degree structures, and benchmarking activities, generated high proportions of "suspended opinions" among respondents. Moreover, insofar as the differing stakeholder groups might be differentiated, generally higher levels of awareness and engagement tended to be found amongst university administrators, reinforcing the managerial image of the process.

The overall portrait is thus one of generally low awareness of Bologna as a wider policy process, suggesting in itself little prospect for the type of expansive, participatory "destabilizing democratization" mooted in the original Sabel and Zeitlin model to take hold. This, in turn, points to the possibility of a more strategic manipulation of Bologna norms by centrally placed governmental actors, following a logic of what is presently termed "discursive closure".

3.3.2 "Discursive Closure"

Moving to strategies of "discursive closure",[5] it is no longer simply a matter of the "non-penetration" of Bologna norms, but rather of the strategic use of those norms by centrally placed actors so as to reframe—usually in a restrictive manner—higher education debates in other policy arenas. Broadly, where Bologna discourses have been strategically constructed in this manner, one might identify West European and EU accession state versions of the pattern.[6]

[5]The term is borrowed from Dostal's (2004) study of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), though presently conceptualized in a somewhat different manner.

[6]It should be underlined that the present examples concern only selected instances of the political "use" (cf. Woll and Jacquot 2010) of Bologna norms, as distinct from the question of the wider patterns of differential implementation across the full range of participating states. These wider patterns are, for example, interestingly surveyed (and categorized) in Furlong (2010).

In the West European version—seen in countries such as Austria, Germany, and Spain—the Bologna Process is used as an instrument of domestic leverage by governments seeking to legitimate much wider projects of structural reform in the higher education sector. The Bologna Process thus becomes "Bologna", often generating corresponding "anti-Bologna" oppositions.

In the German case, for example, Maesse (2010) has convincingly demonstrated how a technocratic "consensus discourse" was constructed around the Bologna Process, effectively seeking to restrict debates to questions over "how" reforms were to be realized, while correspondingly pushing questions concerned with the validity of the objectives themselves off the agenda. This, in turn, may be seen to have triggered what came to be styled as "anti-Bologna" protests, as reform opponents at least discursively took the governmental position at face value. These critics contested what they regarded to be the imposition of undesirable "European norms", associated with the "ravages of a neo-liberal modernization agenda" (see Charle and Soulié 2007; Schultheis et al. 2008). These contestations, moreover, extended over significant swathes of the sector—in the German case encompassing student groups, professors' associations, and prominent individual academics. As such, the "anti-Bologna" movement brought to the fore a broad range of concerns about curricular reform, accessibility, and professional status, as well as the more diffuse defence of a traditional, Humboldtian ideal of the university (cf. Thumfart and Braband, forthcoming). The strategic reconstruction of Bologna requirements, intended to restrict debate, could thus be seen to have reaped a predictable whirlwind, prompting a corresponding systemic opposition to the European process itself.

In contrast to the whirlwind seen in the West European pattern, the EU accession state pattern saw the Bologna Process substantially enter into the slipstream of the EU enlargement process. In the case of a number of CEE countries, Bologna came to be treated, or at least was effectively portrayed, as if it were a de facto part of EU conditionality—i.e. requirements which simply had to be met if one was to "join the club", and over which meaningful substantive debate was thus not possible. For example, Dakowska (forthcoming), in the case of Poland, highlights what she terms a "no alternative" narrative, used to push through a wide-ranging package of HE reforms. In similar terms, Deca (2015), analyzing the Romanian case, points to a "negative legitimation" strategy, whereby the emphasis was placed on the potentially isolating consequences of not embracing a broad series of putatively Bologna-inspired reforms.

Here too, therefore, Bologna may be associated with a "discursive closure"—broadly used so as to close down rather than to open up wider higher education debates. Strikingly, however, corresponding "anti-Bologna" movements and discourses did not significantly take hold in the CEE countries, perhaps reflecting the wider asymmetric dynamics engendered by the temporally parallel process of EU enlargement (cf. Dakowska and Harmsen 2015). Indeed, in the Romanian case, Deca even notes the subsequent use by student groups of "Bologna norms" of stakeholder participation in their opposition to a later set of government HE reforms.

This later Romanian example, however, appears to be very much the exception. Although this still requires more systematic research (focusing on the political uses rather more than the administrative implementation of Bologna), the general trend appears relatively clear. Far from fostering domestic higher education debates, Bologna appears rather more to have been used as an instrument to restrict them. This, to a significant extent, may be seen as a structural or systemic development. The main reason for governments to participate in an essentially normative policy arena such as Bologna, apart from the simple objective of recognition for more marginal members of the process, is to acquire discursive resources of a type that may be deployed in another policy arena with regulatory and/or redistributive consequences (cf. Harmsen 2013). That they should use the leverage which they have sought to give themselves is thus not surprising—but it does, effectively, choke off the possibility of iterative policy learning necessary for the process to sustain a dynamic development over time.

Can this be overcome? The failing presently identified is arguably a more generally symptomatic one for experimentalist or soft law modes of governance. It is not, however, irremediable—and the specific context of the EHEA offers perhaps a distinctively promising set of possibilities for re-engaging a more meaningful policy learning process by way of completing a feedback loop. To this end, four key lessons for the EHEA moving forward are drawn out below.

4 Lessons for the EHEA

Following from the analysis above, the four lessons below each concern possible developmental paths concerned with enhancing the capacity of the EHEA as a process to promote policy learning. Focused on removing impediments to learning at the system level, each lesson nonetheless also points to the manner in which the underlying interests of the actor(s) concerned could be strategically served by pursuing the suggested path.

4.1 Resisting an "Epistemic Temptation"

As the EHEA matures, there is a risk of the process turning in on itself—becoming, in the words of the 2010 assessment report (Westerheijden 2010, p. 9), "administration without much real impact on the reality of higher education." Following much the same logic, it is presently argued that the EHEA must not be allowed to go down a path where it is increasingly focused on comparatively narrow technical issues. Many in the process might feel themselves more comfortable with a narrowing agenda—an "epistemic temptation"—in which the EHEA comes to be seen as essentially concerned with issues of detailed implementation (if not simply

mopping up), at the expense of its role as a wider policy forum. Such an isolated expertise is not, however, desirable, nor in the longer term sustainable.

It is clear that international organizations in general derive substantial authority through possessing or providing distinctive expertise; it is, simply put, an "authority" that derives from the ability to make "authoritative" pronouncements in a particular area, drawing on forms of specialized technical or professional knowledge (Barnett and Finnemore 2004, pp. 24–29). The ability of forms of international organization to assume such authority—irrespective of the (non-) existence of formal institutional arrangements—has perhaps been most influentially captured in Peter Haas' widely cited (and, in some respects, over extended) concept of "epistemic communities". Such communities, as Haas defines them, are "groups of professionals, often from a variety of different disciplines, which produce policy-relevant knowledge about complex technical issues" (Haas 1992, p. 16). The more that such groups are able to achieve a consensus in a given area, encompassing both substantive and causal beliefs as to the nature of good or effective policy, the more they may be able to set the agenda at the relative expense of more diffuse political concerns. The international organization of expertise may, in other words, displace the locus of decision-making from broad political to more technical fora, with the relative merits of policy solutions as viewed within the expert community correspondingly establishing the prevailing policy templates.

The BP clearly has elements of such an epistemic community. The process, in specific areas such as quality assurance or the development of qualifications frameworks, is invested with a specific technical competence. More widely, it can be seen to have created an expert community, possessed of its own thick "coordinative discourse" (cf. Schmidt 2006), allowing for the specialist discussion of policy issues.

The development of such areas of expertise and governance technologies is, moreover, a substantial strength of the process. It does, in the terms set out above, allow for the making of authoritative claims on the basis of specialist knowledge, which carry authority relative to political actors. This, in turn, serves to legitimate particular policy templates and to delegitimate others, substantially on the basis of the consensus that has emerged in the group.

The limits of such a "depoliticization" also, however, have to be recognized; an isolated expertise, turned in on itself and concerned only with relatively subsidiary questions of policy instrumentation, is likely simply to atrophy over time. On the one hand, if such a community is to exercise an influence, it must maintain clear channels of communication to the wider policy process and constellations of concerned actors (cf. Dunlop 2012). On the other hand, such a community must also itself remain open to wider influences, and in particular stay attuned to the evolving policy agenda.

In the present context, this focuses attention on two sets of crucial connections. At a macro-level, it is important that the work of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) continue to be connected to a wider political process, as embodied in the (now) triennial ministerial conference, such that the linkages between detailed reforms and wider political agendas are not lost. At a micro-level, it is similarly

necessary for national officials engaged with the BP to remain closely connected to national decision-making processes, capable of acting as influential mediators between the two (or multiple) policy arenas.

4.2 Revisiting the Role of European-Level Stakeholders

The (more) effective functioning of the EHEA in terms of an experimentalist model also requires that one revisit the role played by European-level stakeholders in the process. It should, in this respect, first be noted that sectoral stakeholders, in comparative terms, have enjoyed a strong and structured presence in the BP, and have in some instances clearly exercised an important influence (for example, on such issues as the development of the social dimension or student participation in governance structures). Relatively little attention has, however, been paid to their role as representative bodies—i.e. "Who" do they represent? and "How" do they represent (in the sense of the patterns of connections or disconnections between European peak-level bodies and national-level member organizations)?

Despite the substantial growth in the body of Bologna research, including a limited, but important component concerned with the policy process itself, we still know relatively little about the patterns of representation which have or have not developed. More specifically, the work of Manja Klemenčič (2011) has, to some extent, addressed these questions as regards student representation—noting, for example, the existence of something of a divide between a European Student Union (ESU) agenda "almost 'hijacked' by the issues related to the BP" (Klemenčič 2011, pp. 1 and 18) and national agendas still more related to welfare and tuition issues (as well as national "misinterpretations" of the BP). We have, however, no comparable analysis on the institutional side as regards the European University Association (EUA) and/or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). Equally, we have little work that looks at the representativeness of the stakeholder community as a whole, including the relative absence of "line academics" from the process.

The intention in making this point, it should be underlined, is not one of making an a priori criticism. Rather, it is to call attention to the fact that these are major links in a representative process, which must be understood and critically scrutinized as such, if that process is to work in a reasonably inclusive and effective manner. This concern with the overall process, moreover, may also be seen to chime with the interests of the stakeholder groups themselves–whose longer term sustainability cannot be divorced from the quality of their connections with their grassroots membership and their effectiveness in representing the prevailing concerns of that membership.

In this regard, one must particularly bear in mind that the nature of European policy-making is often such that arenas create stakeholders, as much as stakeholders create arenas. European-level stakeholders, often supported by EU funding (Batory and Lindstrom 2011), have to some extent a vested interest in supporting the

development of European-level policy solutions, which may or may not correspond to the priorities of their national constituent organizations.[7] Whether or to what extent such a disconnect exists thus needs to be problematized, insofar as the (lack of) penetration or resonance of Bologna issues beyond the narrow EHEA arena itself may be substantially explicable with reference to the possible existence of such structurally induced shortcomings.

4.3 Recasting the Higher Education Discourse of the European Commission

In contrast to the discussion of the wider stakeholder community above, a critical look at the role of the European Commission rapidly turns to substantive criticism, given the development of an exceptionally narrow view of policy in the area, which singularly fails to exploit the considerable possibilities open to the institution. The Commission, through the propagation of its increasingly constrained "modernization" agenda, has become a significant deadweight as regards the potential development of a more dynamic European-level higher education forum. The modernization agenda in its current form (European Commission 2011), with its one-dimensional focus on the economic dimension of higher education alone, is both narrow and narrowing—i.e. the discourse in itself represents an impoverished view of higher education, and perhaps even more has the effect, given the pivotal role of the actor concerned (cf. Keeling 2006), of choking off potentially much richer dialogues.

The specific terms of the critique need perhaps be spelled out, as much of the problem, from the point of view of fostering wider dialogues facilitative of policy learning, stems from what appears to be a sort of reification of the Commission position around a narrowly defined orthodoxy over time. This, moreover, concerns not so much directly its position within the BP/EHEA per se, but rather its moves toward the development of a distinctive EU higher education policy arena, which strategically exploits the space opened up by the BP for other European-level initiatives.

The early phase of post-1999 positioning by the Commission appears readily comprehensible. Notably, its 2003 communication, on "The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge", sketches out a broad and plausible survey of the sector at the time—not unfairly highlighting the "comparatively isolated universe" inhabited by (many) European universities "for a very long period of time" in relation to both their immediate social environment and the wider world (European Commission 2003, p. 22). Relative to this diagnosis, central questions for the sector

[7]See Cram (1993) on the European Commission as a "purposeful opportunist", strategically creating a demand for European-level action.

are posed in relation to its growing economic relevance, in terms consonant with the EU's wider Lisbon Agenda.

By way of contrast, even a cursory glance at the Commission's 2011 communication points to this wider agenda having been lost. The title, indeed, rather gives the game away from the first page—"Supporting Jobs and Growth—An Agenda for the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Institutions". Higher education is simply subsumed under wider economic goals, with the structure of the paper itself further cashing out this logic. In contrast to the 2003 document, which starts with a vision of the sector and works out to seek interconnections, the 2011 document is structured almost entirely around the enunciation of policy priorities exogenous to the sector itself. Higher education as a distinct entity, with its own logics and purposes, seems to disappear from the screen.

This clearly poses serious problems for the wider development of meaningful European-level dialogues. In effect, it is this positioning by the Commission which substantially, if by no means exclusively, accounts for the often mooted characterization of "Bologna" as "neo-liberal", insofar as "European" policy in the higher education sector is identified with a narrowly defined "modernization". As a result, "Europe", in relation to higher education, is often identified with a narrow set of policy options, rather than a wider space of exchange—and rejected as such.

Relative to this, one might respectfully suggest that the Commission could and should play a rather different role in relation to the sector—shifting away from the role of advocate to that of honest broker. The sector would clearly be better served by a Commission more concerned with facilitating broad dialogues about higher education at the European level, within which its economic dimension would equally clearly continue to occupy a central (but no longer exclusive) role. At the same time, this would also appear to be in the strategic interest of the Commission itself, insofar as it is concerned to develop a more robust European-level policy arena in the sector. It would seem self-evident that such an arena, in an area of considerable national political sensitivity, will not be developed through an insistence on the predetermined acceptance of a narrowly defined agenda to the exclusion of a broader spectrum of alternatives. This failing, if left unaddressed, will continue to be a major brake on any serious development of the area, including that of a putative "modernization" itself.

4.4 Reframing National Higher Education Policy Debates

The final lesson returns us to national higher education debates, and the relative lack of penetration by or engagement with Bologna/the EHEA at the national level. As discussed in the previous section, part of the explanation for this shortcoming—such that the feedback loop is not closed up so as to facilitate policy learning—lies in the pursuit by national governments of strategies of "discursive closure". Governments selectively use broadly defined "Bologna norms" to legitimate particular policy choices, correspondingly restricting wider policy debates. The

government, in effect, sets itself up as the authoritative mediator between the national and the European arenas, and thus, at least from a purely strategic point of view, would have no interest in facilitating the opening of further channels of communication between those arenas. Insofar as this is true, why would governmental actors cede this strategic advantage?

Occasionally, perhaps, individual actors may listen to the "better angels of their nature" and, by acts of grace or charity, unilaterally withdraw from an advantageous position. A generalized outbreak of such altruism nonetheless appears no more likely here than in other walks of life. At a systemic level, the question to be posed is thus rather one of whether the strategic advantage remains a strategic advantage—and here it might reasonably be suggested that the leitmotif of the BP/EHEA has changed, and changed in such a way as to make it more amenable to dialogue.

The first phase of Bologna was undoubtedly marked by an ethos of "reform". Already the 1998 Sorbonne meeting set the tone for a process whereby the creation of a European framework was primarily conceived in terms intended to leverage difficult domestic reforms (see, for example, Haskel 2009). In the more than fifteen years since the launch of the process, however, major changes have occurred, fundamentally reshaping the context for at least a lead group of countries. Significant reforms have been realized, both in connection with the BP and more widely. This has, moreover, correspondingly reshaped the landscape of national higher education systems and the attendant demands of policy. There are, evidently, a great variety of national situations, having undergone very uneven degrees of change relative to highly diverse starting points. Nevertheless, at the level of the process as a whole, it no longer makes sense to speak of an agenda dominated by "reform" in the same terms as at the outset. Different problems and dynamics must inevitably come to the fore as the EHEA enters a "post-reform" phase.

Most evidently, at least for those countries having undergone major reforms, the focus has broadly shifted to questions of system steering. Again with due recognition of the diversity of national systems concerned, the broad thrust of reforms may nonetheless be described in terms of having moved from what were often comparatively hierarchical "command and control" models, with a strongly interventionist governmental presence, to systems which grant higher education institutions considerably more formal autonomy with, as a counterpart, new or extended mechanisms of external accountability (cf. Harmsen 2014). Correspondingly, that which policymakers now require is rather less the leverage of external legitimation, and rather more new understandings of how to operate the levers of a complex system, so as to allow for a necessary and desirable institutional-level autonomy, while also permitting the degree of steering required to secure overall system-level policy goals. Operating in such an environment thus requires new governance technologies, laying a particular emphasis on dialogue or communication—i.e. "steering", by definition, requires a connectedness and responsiveness which militates against the type of unilateral "discursive closure" identified earlier.

The questions posed for the EHEA are those of how it might engage this changed reality, and this on two levels:

- How, within its remit, may the EHEA contribute to dialogues about "best practice" in terms of developing policy instruments related to the steering of complex higher education systems (and this in a context where it is unlikely that the process will move significantly toward encompassing governance or management issues per se)?
- How, in developing these substantive dialogues, might the process itself be further opened out—drawing in and engaging a broader range of actors, particularly national-level stakeholders, than is presently the case?

If there are no easy answers to these questions, the broad direction of development nevertheless appears rather clear and rather clearly promising. A "post-reform" EHEA should, by the nature of the issues under discussion, be more amenable to the development of wider, more inclusive dialogues, having the potential to foster dynamic processes of policy learning.

5 Conclusion

The present analysis of potential future scenarios for the development of the EHEA, as outlined in the introduction, has been developed by a series of interlinked moves. The case for the inescapably soft law future of the process (if it is to have a sustained future) was first made, as a matter of both political realism and desirable policy development. This gave way, in turn, to an analysis of the governance of the BP/EHEA to date, in relation to a prominent ideal-type model of experimentalist governance as developed by Sabel and Zeitlin. This mapping of the process in relation to the model identified the absence of a strong logic of iterative policy learning as its principal shortcoming. On this basis, four lessons were then drawn, pointing to potential developmental scenarios whereby significant impediments to policy learning might be removed—re-energizing the process as a whole in ways which further could reasonably be seen as serving the underlying interests of the actors concerned.

The identification of such possibilities does not, of course, equate with their realization. Here as elsewhere, in-built inertias will be strong. On the negative side of the ledger, it might also be noted that many of the difficulties noted above in the specific context of the BP/EHEA reflect more general problems that have also afflicted the operation of the EU's OMC (see, for example, de la Porte and Nanz 2004; Smismans 2008). The core issues of both accountability and effectiveness highlighted in the present case have similarly dogged other attempts at developing soft law modes of governance.

Relative to this more general pattern, however, the distinctiveness of the BP/EHEA should finally be underlined. Undoubtedly, as a pan-European body, the BP/EHEA is faced with a diversity of situations extending well beyond that seen in the narrower EU context—raising, in some instances, questions of a basic governability that cannot be ignored. Yet, this very diversity—and even, paradoxically,

the potential "ungovernability" of the process beyond a certain point—is also an asset. The EHEA, unlike the EU, casts no "shadow of hierarchy". The process may be opened out—in terms of both substantive issues and scope of participation—with no fear that it conceals an underlying threat of formal regulation by stealth within its structures. It is this very openness which needs to be seized and developed so as to facilitate the wider channels of policy learning discussed above.

For wider policy learning of this sort to take place, strategically placed actors—most prominently, national governments and the European Commission—would themselves, of course, have to "learn" that their own wider interests may be better served by the fostering of more inclusive, structured dialogues. This is clearly neither automatic nor unproblematic. Returning to the introductory discussion of the possible exhaustion of the process, it is this step that may indeed finally prove to be a step too far. Yet, for the EHEA ultimately to succeed or fail as a learning process would, if nothing else, appear a fitting challenge.

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Part IX
Evidence-Based Policies in Higher Education: Data Analytics, Impact Assessment and Reporting

Evidence-Based Policies in Higher Education: Data Analytics, Impact Assessment and Reporting [Overview Paper]

Jamil Salmi

1 Introduction

Universities are among the oldest well-established institutions in modern history. For centuries, they were able to operate without any major transformation, as illustrated by the following quote:

> About eighty-five institutions in the western world established by 1520 still exist in recognizable forms, with similar functions and with unbroken histories, including the Catholic Church, the parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Ireland and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and seventy universities. Kings that rule, feudal lords with vassals, and guilds with monopolies are all gone. These seventy universities, however, are still in the same locations with some of the same buildings, with professors and students doing much the same things, and with governance carried on in much the same ways.
>
> Clark Kerr, former president of the California state university system

But the image of stability and continuity associated with the concept of the University has been recently shattered. The French philosopher Paul Valery observed with nostalgia that "the trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be". This is particularly true in the realm of higher education, which is in great flux. A recent report published in the United Kingdom proposed the image of "an avalanche" to describe the radical changes affecting tertiary education in many parts of the world (Barber et al. 2013). Indeed, powerful transformative forces are challenging higher education systems and institutions all over the world.

First, a growing number of rupture factors are at play in transforming the ecosystem in which higher education institutions are operating, drastically influencing how they perform their teaching and research functions. Among these rupture factors are technological innovations, such as flipped classrooms for interactive learning, mass online open courses (MOOCS) reaching hundreds of thousands of

J. Salmi (✉)
Global Tertiary Education Expert, Bogota, Colombia
e-mail: jsalmi@tertiaryeducation.org

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students all over the world, new forms of competition from for-profit and corporate universities that provide professional qualifications closely linked to labour market needs, and new accountability modalities like the global rankings, which allow to measure and compare the performance of universities across all continents (Salmi 2013).

Second, as a result of the 2007 financial downturn, the higher education sector in most regions of the world has been adversely affected by serious crisis factors. In the US, for example, the level of public support for tertiary education has been reduced substantially in nearly every state—48 out of 50 over the 2008–13 period—under the combined impact of the economic recession, federal mandates to fund other sectors such as healthcare, and the reluctance to increase state taxes (Miller 2013). In Europe, 13 out of the 20 university systems that the European Universities Association has been monitoring since the beginning of the financial crisis have experienced overall budget decreases in real terms between 2008 and 2012, nine of them of more than 10 % (EUA 2013). The cuts have been even more severe throughout the developing world and in transition countries, with the aggravation of falling household incomes and soaring graduate unemployment rates.

In this rapidly changing context, higher education has come under increased scrutiny from all quarters of society, industry and government. Students are concerned about the standing of the universities they plan to enrol into, especially when going to study overseas. Employers are preoccupied about the performance of the local higher education institutions. And politicians have begun to consider the position of their country's top universities in the global rankings as a vital indicator of national prestige.

As a result, higher education has found itself at the heart of the national public agenda in a growing number of countries. The high stakes involved have forced decision-makers to consider more systematically the role of universities as instruments of economic development and social mobility, making it all the more important to ground higher education policies carefully on evidence about what works. Similarly, at the institutional level, universities and other types of higher education institutions have learned to guide their transformative efforts with a more thorough analysis of their strengths and weaknesses and a deeper understanding of the factors behind the results of successful universities.

2 Overview of the Contribution of the Papers to the Theme

Higher education policy has two special dimensions that set it apart from other public policy domains. First, everyone is an expert on the topic by the mere fact of being a university graduate. This is one of the fields with the highest proportion of self-appointed professional authorities. But, as Andreas Schleicher observed, "without data, you are just another person with an opinion."

Second, higher education policy is the realm of controversy by excellence. As Machiavelli wrote in his famous political manifesto, the Prince, "there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in introducing a new order of things". While this observation is true of any political reform, it is particularly resonant in the case of higher education reforms. Universities are among the most conservative cultural and organizational institutions, with extremely vocal, yet highly transitory constituencies, including faculty and the students. These groups can effectively mobilize themselves against policy changes likely to challenge established practices and vested interests. This is often the case when it comes to financing or governance reforms such as the introduction of tuition fees, reductions in social benefits for the students, the elaboration of a transparent funding formula for public resource allocation, changes in the mode of selection of university leaders, or mergers among existing institutions to achieve economies of scale.

Therefore, instead of organizing higher education policy on the basis of a combination of ideology and personal experience, it is essential to build a body of relevant knowledge that can help define the range of reform options and make decisions suitably based on available evidence about causes and effects. The four articles included in this sub-theme on evidence-based higher education policy are good examples of the types of relevant studies that can serve to enrich the perspective and knowledge of policy-makers at the national level and university leaders at the institutional level. As the following list shows, the first three look at policy issues at the system-wide level, whereas the last one examines the consequences of the Bologna process on a specific university:

- Higher Education Research in Europe (Ulrich Teichler);
- Do changes in cost-sharing have an impact on the behaviour of students and higher education institutions? Evidence from nine case studies (Dominic Orr);
- Does research influence educational policy? The perspective of researchers and policy-makers in Romania (Georgeta Ion and Romita Iucu);
- The Impact of the Bologna Process and German Higher Education Reforms on Faculty Work at the University of Potsdam: A Case Study (Christen Cullum Hairston).

After retracing the history of the field of higher education as an academic research field and its stages of development in the European context, showing that it has remained up to the present a small academic area, Professor Teichler emphasizes the growing interest in higher education policy in recent years, as a consequence of financing and governance reforms and the multiplication of assessment activities by national governments and international organizations. His analysis shows that higher education research has remained essentially national in focus, without sufficient evidence-based work to establish the impact of national policies on higher education institutions. It finds also a paucity of work in international comparative research on higher education.

Professor Teichler notes, further, the lack of clarity and agreement in the delineation of the specific academic areas that define higher education policy, observing that it is an heterogeneous research domain and "a field of expertise with very fuzzy borderlines between research on the one hand, and consultancy, administrative oversight, evaluation and other search for evidence on the other hand." This leads him to ask the following two questions: "to what extent do these conditions serve the enhancement of higher education research? And to what extent do these conditions of knowledge generation serve a desirable future of higher education?" His answer is guardedly optimistic. He expresses the view that the joint perspective of higher education researchers and higher education policy analysts may enrich the understanding of the complex evolution of higher education systems and institutions.

Dr. Orr's chapter presents the methodology and findings of a recent major study on cost-sharing, which was commissioned by the European Union as an impact study on changes to the balance of higher education costs between public grants and private revenues. The purpose of the study was to provide a basis for a better understanding of reforms to higher education funding and their consequences.

This work on cost sharing was conducted on the basis of standardized case studies in nine countries: Austria, Canada, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and South Korea. Following the approach successfully applied to analyzing higher education reform by Cerych and Sabatier in their seminal work from the mid-1980s, the national case studies enabled to reflect both the influence of each specific context and the general impact of changes in cost sharing policies (Cerych and Sabatier 1986).

The analysis of the nine case studies led to the following general findings. First, public funding to higher education institutions did not decrease overall as cost sharing increased, not even on a per-student basis. Second, traditional universities were less agile in responding to changes in student demand patterns as a result of increased cost sharing. Finally, it is very difficult to attribute any adverse equity effect to increased cost sharing as the demand for higher education has continued to rise everywhere in the last two decades, even in countries like England where tuition fees are high.

Professors Ion and Iucu focus on the relationship between educational research and policy-making process, using the case of Romania as specific example. The paper focuses first on the production of research and its relevance to policy making. It then examines the views of policy makers about research products and knowledge dissemination. Finally, it discusses the obstacles to the transfer of research findings to policy making.

Relying on in-depth interviews of researchers and policy-makers, as well as questionnaires administrated to postgraduate students in Romanian universities, the authors find a large disconnect between education research and policy-making. The first major barrier is the fact that the quality and relevance of higher education research leaves much to be desired. The absence of proper communication and

dissemination mechanisms is another important obstacle. Based on these findings, Professors Ion and Iucu make a series of recommendations to improve the appropriateness of research and develop adequate channels of communication to ensure better relationships between research and decision-making.

The last paper, prepared by Professor Hairston, investigates the impact of the Bologna process and ensuing reforms in the German higher education scene on the role and work of academics. This case study of the University of Potsdam, based on in-depth interviews of 25 professors, seeks to provide a detailed account of the transformation of teaching and learning under the influence of the Bologna process.

The main finding of this research is that German academics are very resilient; they have adapted well to the many changes caused by the Bologna process: increased competition, new pay scale, introduction of junior professorships, increased enrolment and growing time demands in teaching and research, changing mentality and behaviour of students, and a greater authoritative management of their professorial roles. At the same time, the academics feel that "Bologna threatens the Humboldtian ideal of the university by reducing the responsibilities in the professional roles of teaching, research, and service and regulating a historically unregulated system. … Professors voiced their frustrations with the implementation of the Bologna Process especially in terms of ECTS points, modular definitions, student requirements, and a general lack of agreement across departments." The article concludes by outlining the need for the leaders of the University to work carefully at clarifying and harmonizing the new rules for organizing the courses and the teaching in accordance with the Bologna principles.

3 Conclusion

The American journalist H.L. Mencken once wrote "there is always an easy solution to every human problem—neat, plausible, and wrong." This observation is very relevant to the realm of higher education policy, where the stakes are so high and the power of ideology so strong. It highlights the importance of learning systematically from careful evaluations of the impact of reforms in order to inform policy-making. At the national level, policy analysis and decision-making must be based on a careful understanding of the situation and the potential effect of each reform option. At the institutional level, universities must develop their institutional research capacity, monitor the main elements of their performance, and make development decisions based on the lessons of experience.

Learning from the experience of others, nationally and internationally, is not about copying or imitating policies from other institutions or countries. But the lessons of experience can help understand what works and what does not work under various conditions and circumstances, in order to increase the probability of success and avoid repeating the mistakes of others.

To use the results of evidence-based research effectively, it is important to maintain the objectivity of the researchers involved in policy analysis and impact evaluation. With the rise of contracted research and consultancies, careful rules should be defined and enforced to avoid risks of conflict of interest between the researchers and the contracting agencies.

Finally, the recent higher education crisis in Chile is a good example of the dangers of not conducting an evidence-based policy debate. What started in 2011 as a demand by secondary school students that their free transport pass be extended to the entire calendar evolved into a full-blown confrontation between student organizations and the entire government. The leading factions of university students ended up demanding the abolition of fees at all levels of the education system. President Bachelet was elected in December 2013 on a platform promising free higher education for all.

At no time in the debate was there a technical discussion of the pros and cons of Chile's higher education financing model. Even though evidence shows that the Brazilian model of free higher education in elite public universities is much more unequal than the Chilean model of tuition fees associated with scholarships and loans for low-income students, the entire discussion has been driven by opposite philosophical views. Instead of debating the pros and cons of the present model, and reaching a consensus on the adjustments needed to remove existing elements of dysfunction (e.g., increased public funding for higher education, extension of scholarships to all eligible students from Quintiles I and II, unification of the two existing student loan schemes, reduction of unsustainable debt burden, etc.), the decision was made to eliminate fees altogether.

With this type of reform backtracking, the government faces the risk of abandoning some of the more innovative features of the Chilean higher education system, which is one of the best performing systems in Latin America today. While this could help resolve the crisis in the short term, it would likely have long-term adverse consequences, as illustrated by the Irish example of fee abolition in the 1990s. Ireland was the first Western European country that introduced tuition fees in the beginning of the 1990s, which helped improve the financial sustainability of the higher education system. In 1996, however, the new Labour government abolished the fees to fulfil electoral promises. As a result, inequality rose because, in the absence of fees, the poorer part of the population ended up subsidizing free studies for the middle class, but in addition quality suffered overall for lack of sufficient public funding.

Sound policy reform based on good technical analysis is not guaranteed to satisfy all stakeholders or quell political protest. However, when governments want to meet the challenge of staying ahead of the curve of public opinion, they may find it easier to engage with civil society around conference tables rather than in the streets.

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Higher Education Research in Europe

Ulrich Teichler

1 Introduction

Efforts in the past of analysing the situation of higher education research often have come to similar conclusions. On the one hand, they noted that certain characteristics tended to be named, which in principle apply everywhere where higher education research has emerged. On the other hand, they consistently underscored striking differences that exist between countries (cf. the overviews in Altbach 2002; Teichler 2013c, 2014a).

As regards common characteristics, first, we hear, even in countries with relatively impressive activities in this area, that higher education research is a *small field of research*. In looking at the overall size of higher education systems worldwide, the important role higher education systems are assumed to play in society, and the range and magnitude of problems which higher education has to cope with, we have to conclude that systematic knowledge on higher education is not held in high esteem even today. Interestingly enough, hardly any figures are presented in the respective overviews: even most of those who know the scene well do not dare to estimate whether there are about 5000 higher education researchers, about 10,000 or even more all over the world. Altbach (2014) recently estimated that there at least 6000 higher education researchers worldwide and even more than 12,000, if "institutional researchers" were included. Similarly we might ask: are there 2000 or somewhat more or substantially more higher education researchers in Europe?

This caution of estimating the size of the field can be explained in part by a second characteristic. *Many scholars* undertaking—occasionally or frequently—research in this domain *do not consider themselves to be higher education researchers*. Many of them understand themselves primarily as representatives of a

U. Teichler (✉)
International Centre for Higher Education Research, University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany
e-mail: teichler@incher.uni-kassel.de

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discipline: education, psychology, sociology political science, economics and business studies, law, history, etc.; higher education is just a thematic area for them, but not the core element of their academic identity. Moreover, some scholars, who see their research area as being thematically defined, consider higher education as important, but not as the prime thematic definition; for example, those analyzing research at universities might view themselves as science researchers, and those addressing graduate employment and work might name themselves labour market researchers.

Third, higher education is a field of expertise with *very fuzzy borderlines between research on the one hand, and on the other consultancy, administrative oversight, evaluation and other search for evidence*. Correspondingly, there is not always a clear distinction as regards who is primarily a researcher or primarily a consultant, evaluator, administrator or "reflective" policy maker or practitioner. For example, various academic journals, edited books, etc., on higher education provide a platform both for scholars and other experts.

Fourth, higher education research is *predominantly national in focus* or concentrates on smaller units within countries, i.e. regions, individual institutions of higher education or their sub-units, whereby often a strong impact of the national setting on these regional and institutional cases is taken for granted. Higher education research with a world-wide focus or international comparative research on higher education is by no means frequent. For example, a recent survey even of internationally visible journals comes to the conclusion that only 11 % of the articles published in 1992–2011 explicitly compared higher education in at least two countries (Kosmützky and Krücken 2014).

Fifth, though being altogether relatively small, higher education research can be understood as a *heterogeneous field*. The individual scholars and other experts, each, as a rule, cover only a segment: for example, teaching and learning, as well as staff and students, the higher education system and its societal framework, or governance and administration of higher education. As the system knowledge, as well as the theories and methods are different between such segments, one cannot be surprised to note that a common theoretical framework, a comprehensive information base and overarching network of communication are called for in vain.

Such generalisations about the characteristics of this field, however, have to be viewed with caution, because higher education research *varies substantially across countries*. There are enormous differences in the *size* of this field: In some countries, higher education research is a relatively strong field with a visible institutional basis (for example in the United States of America and in China); in other countries, we observe a widely scattered picture of institutions, persons and themes; in other countries, finally, higher education research is marginal or non-existing. *Disciplinary affiliations* vary across countries. As will be discussed below, there is no country in Europe with a visibility and clear *institutional basis* of higher education research in the way it holds true for the U.S. Views might vary, whether one would be inclined to name higher education research as sizeable and noteworthy in only two or about half a dozen European countries, or one would name larger numbers of countries in Europe where higher education research is marginal or

even non-existing. While "higher education" might be the denomination of professor positions and of research units, and possibly teaching in some countries, it is merely a theme among others which individual scholars might address in other countries. Finally, *links between research, policy and practice* vary: In some countries, higher education policy and governance tend to strive for systematic information as "evidence", while in other countries systematic information remains occasionistic.

2 Stages of Development of Higher Education Research

A first worldwide account of higher education research was published in the early 1970s by scholars of the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research, Berlin (Nitsch and Weller 1970–1973). This study showed that it had been a *marginal field* of research in most countries of the world up to the 1960s. Possibly, the U.S. could be named at that time as the only country where research in this domain was sizeable and visible.

Higher education research began to *grow in the 1960s and 1970s,* notably in response to two phenomena: the rapid growth of student numbers in many countries and the student protests in select economically advanced countries. Both triggered the notion that the traditional characteristics of the university might not fit anymore, when study ceases to be a privilege for the few and when higher education is increasingly viewed as highly relevant for the technology, economy, society and culture in general.

Scholars of various disciplines got interested at that time in analysing higher education issues. International organisations—notably OECD—undertook systematic analyses, arranged expert committees and stimulated research projects. Centres for 'teaching and learning' or 'staff development' (also 'Hochschuldidaktik', 'onderzoek van onderwijs', etc.) were established at various higher education institutions in many European countries—often with both research and service functions. Countries such as Sweden inaugurated a national programme for the promotion of research projects on issues of higher education, while others established major centres of higher education research outside universities. For example, the nowadays well known institutes in Europe in this domain were founded during this period: The Center for Higher Education Policy Studies of the Twente University (CHEPS) in the Netherlands was founded in 1984, and the International Centre for Higher Education Research of the University of Kassel (INCHER-Kassel) in Germany in 1978. Actually, however, systematic studies on the state of higher education remained scarce during that period as compared to the current situation.

From the late 1980s to the first years of the 21st century, higher education research became a noticeable field of research in many economically advanced as well as in some other countries, as various publications on the state of higher education research show. Many factors seemed to be in play: a growing emphasis

on evaluation of various kinds, 'accountability' and 'evidence-based policy, a decentralisation of power in higher education and thus an increase of key strategic actors, a professionalization of higher education management, a growing notion of complexity, a loss of confidence in first-hand knowledge on higher education in the wake of internationalisation and globalisation, etc.

Since about that time, a substantial number of *accounts on the situation of higher education research* have been published. Encyclopaedias on higher education as well explicitly address the state of higher education research (notably Clark and Neave 1992; see also Forest and Altbach 2006; Tight et al. 2009). Some books comprised analyses of the worldwide situation of higher education research, thematically and institutionally (e.g. Sadlak and Altbach 1997; Teichler and Sadlak 2000). Others focussed on the institutional basis of higher education research (Altbach et al. 2007; Altbach and Engberg 2000; Rumbley et al. 2014; Schwarz and Teichler 2000). Again, others addressed the thematic state of higher education and major findings—for example with the help of bibliographic analyses (see for example the books on 'researching higher education' by Tight 2003, 2012). Some overviews focused especially on higher education research in Europe (Frackmann and Maassen 1992; Neave and Teichler 1989; Sursock and Smidt 2010; Teichler 2005). Some membership organisations of higher education researchers or also of other experts show the situation of higher education research as experienced through the activities of these organisations (see Begg 2003; Kehm and Musselin 2013). Some publications comprise essays, partly written by higher education researchers and partly by administrators, policy makers and practitioners in that field (e.g. Fromment et al. 2006; Gaebel et al. 2008). Finally, there is a magnitude of books on specific thematic areas in which the authors and editors, while focussing on key issues of higher education, implicitly provide a valuable overview on the state of higher education research as regards these issues (see for example recently King et al. 2013; Kwiek 2013; Shin and Teichler 2014; Zgaga 2013).

3 Higher Education Research in Europe and Its Visibility in the English Language

Higher education research has gained momentum over the years in some European countries. Most of the research in this area is only accessible in the language of the respective country. Yet, publications in the English language often indicate the themes, major results and the expertise available in the various European countries. International and European publications, conferences and expert collaboration in the framework of intergovernmental organisations in the 1960s and 1970s suggest that various scholars from the United Kingdom, Ireland, some Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Germany and a few other European countries had already been active in this field, and that notable research on teaching and learning, curricula etc. had been established in Eastern European countries. Over the years, scholars from

additional countries became international known, but undoubtedly the communities of researchers in this field continued to differ substantially in size and collaborative activity by country.

The United Kingdom was the first country in Europe where higher education research became a sizeable field. The *Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)*, which is based in the UK, was already founded in 1965. It continues to be up to the present the largest community of higher education researchers primarily based in a single European country. SRHE, however, always reached across national borders. It has active members in Ireland, Australia and Anglo-Saxon countries, and it made its international ties visible by having always at least one of its vice-presidents, and altogether five out or more than 30 'fellows' from non-English speaking countries (see Table 1).

When the *first* '*International Encyclopedia of Higher Education*' was edited in 1977 by an U.S. university president (Knowles 1977), 75 % of the authors from topical essays were from the U.S., 14 % from the UK and Canada—about half each —as well as 11 % from other countries, among them less than half from other European countries (see Teichler 1980). Overviews on major publications on higher education compiled by the U.S. scholar Philip G. Altbach from the late 1970s onwards (see Altbach 1979), which aimed to look beyond what is available in the English language, suggest that one could have drawn from a larger pools of higher education researchers from various countries already at that time.

During the 1970s, two European associations were formed, that aimed at bringing together persons interested both in higher education research and in higher education policy and practice. First, the *European Association for Research and Development in Higher Education (EARDHE)* had an emphasis on teaching and learning (see for example Ritter and Kühn 1985); after some years of activities, it faded away in the 1990s, and its role was taken over by the *International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED)*, a network founded in 1993 of more than 20 associations from all over the world, of experts in teaching and learning in higher education; it publishes the International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD).

Second, the *European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR)* was founded in 1979. Its foundation was inspired by the impressive development of 'institutional research' in the U.S., as will be discussed below, and started off as partner association of the AIR. As 'institutional research' of that type had not become a sizeable phenomenon in Europe, EAIR became an association that promoted the dialogue between higher education researchers and practitioners, notably in Europe (see Begg 2003). Its journal, Tertiary Education and Management, published predominantly the major contributions to their annual conferences for a couple of years (Kehm 2005). EAIR's broad European base is underscored, for example, by the fact that it honoured 8 European higher education researchers from 6 countries since the mid-1990s through distinguished memberships, honorary president positions or awards for outstanding contributions to research, and additionally three experts from three countries for various contributions to EAIR (see Table 1).

Table 1 Key higher education researchers in Europe

Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE): Vice-president from non-English speaking country (currently): Ulrich Teichler (Germany); fellows from non-English speaking countries: Marianne Bauer (Sweden), Gunnar Handal (Norway), Peter Maassen (the Netherlands and Norway), Ference Marton (Sweden) and Ulrich Teichler
EAIR: Distinguished memberships, honorary president positions or awards for outstanding contributions to research in recent two decades: Ron Barnett (UK), Guy Haug (France and Belgium), Ellen Hazelkorn (Ireland), José-Ginés Mora (Spain), Guy Neave (UK and France), Michael Shattock (UK), Ulrich Teichler and Mantz Yorke (UK); distinguished membership for various contribution to EAIR: Kary Hyppönen (Finland), Roddy Begg (UK) and Anita Ax (the Netherlands)
European authors in B.R. Clark: The Higher Education System (1983): Tony Becher (UK), Ladislav Cerych (France and Czech Republic) Maurice Kogan (UK), Harold Perkin (UK) and Gareth Williams (UK)
Frequently cited scholars in the Encyclopedia of Higher Education (Clark and Neave 1992) from Europe: Guy Neave, Maurice Kogan, Ulrich Teichler, Tony Becher (UK), Gareth Williams, George Psacharopoulos (Greece), Mark Blaug (UK) and Frans van Vught (the Netherlands)
CHER chairpersons since 1978: Ulrich Teichler, Guy Neave, Jean-Claude Eicher (France), Oliver Fulton (UK), Alberto Amaral (Portugal), Christine Musselin (France) and Patrick Clancy (Ireland); *secretaries*: Frans van Vught, Peter Maasen (both the Netherlands at that time), Jürgen Enders and Barbara M. Kehm (both Germany at that time) and Pedro N. Teixeira (Portugal)
European higher education researchers frequently named in M. Tight: Researching Higher Education (2012): Ronald Barnett, Rosemary Deem, Lee Harvey, Peter T. Knight, Michael Shattock, Malcolm Tight and Mantz Yorke (all UK); Ference Marton and Ulrich Teichler
European higher education researchers frequently named in M. Kwiek: Knowledge Production in European Universities (2013): Nicolas Barr, John Brennan, Roger Dale, Rosemary Deem, Maurice Kogan, Hugh Lauder, Guy Neave, David Palfreyman, Peter Scott, Michael Shattock, Paul Temple, Paul Trowler, Richard Whitley and Gareth Williams (all UK); Alberto Amaral, Ivar Bleiklie, Andrea Bonaccorsi, Jürgen Enders, Aldo Geuna, Ase Gornitzka, Jeroen Huisman, Ben Jongbloed, Georg Krücken, Marek Kwiek, Loet Leydesdorff. Peter Maassen, Kerstin Martens, Christine Musselin, Johan P. Olsen, Carlo Salerno, Bjorn Stensaker, Ulrich Teichler, Pedro Teixeira, Jussi Välimaa, Frans van Vught and Luc Weber (all other European countries)
Long-standing coordinating editors of higher education journals published in Europe: Guy Neave, Alec Ross, Maurice Kogan, Noel J. Entwistle, Malcolm Tight, Roddy Begg, Bjorn Stensaker, Jeroen Huisman, et al.
Award of the Comenius Prize for research achievements upon the occasion of the UNESCO World Conferences on Higher Education in 1998 to Europeans: Ladislav Cerych and Ulrich Teichler; *European scholars members of scientific advisory committees of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge (2001–2008)*: Ivar Bleiklie (Norway), Maurice Kogan, Philippe Laredo (France), Francisco Michavila-Pitarch (Spain), Guy Neave, Baiba Rivza (Latvia), Helena Sebkova (Czech Republic), Sverker Sorlin (Sweden), Roland G. Sultana (Malta) and Ulrich Teichler
Members of the Academia Europaea: formerly: Tony Becher (UK) Maurice Kogan (UK); longstanding members: Peter Scott (UK) and Ulrich Teichler; recent members: Jürgen Enders (initially Germany, thereafter the Netherlands and UK), Simon Marginson (Australia and UK), Christine Musselin, Michele Rostan (Italy), Jussi Välimaa (Finland) and Marijk van der Wende (the Netherlands)
Coordinators of the ESF-sponsored project "Higher Education Looking Forward (HELF)" (2005–2007): John Brennan (UK), Jürgen Enders, Christine Musselin, Ulrich Teichler and Jussi Välimaa; *coordinators of the project consortia in the framework of the ESF-sponsored "Higher Education and Social Change in Europe (EuroHESC)":* Ivar Bleiklie, Uwe Schimank (Germany), Ulrich Teichler and Jussi Välimaa

While some major journals in this domain had been already established earlier in the U.S., various *international journals on higher education in the English language* are published in Europe since the 1970s: Higher Education (since 1972; now published by Springer, the Netherlands), a research journal covering the whole range of higher education research; Studies in Higher Education (since 1976, now published by Taylor & Francis, UK), a research journal established by SRHE with emphasis on teaching and learning, curricula, etc., but covering other themes as well; Higher Education in Europe (1976–2009), published by the European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES/UNESCO), and since 2011 substituted by the academic journal European Journal of Higher Education (published by Routledge, UK); Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management (1978–2012), established and published by OECD; Higher Education Policy (since 1988, now published by Palgrave Macmillan, UK), established by the International Association of Universities (IAU); Tertiary Education and Management (since 1995, now published by Routledge, UK), established by EAIR. Additionally, the European Journal of Education (since 1975, now published by Blackwell, UK), coordinated by the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, France, comprises at least one thematic issue annually on higher education. Among these journals, the two with an exclusive academic thrust, i.e. Higher Education and Studies in Higher Education, had a clear dominance of authors from the U.S., the UK and other Anglo-Saxon countries, at least up to the 1990s.

When Burton R. Clark—along with Martin Trow one of the two most influential international 'father figures' for the development of higher education research in Europe (see notably Burrage 2010; Clark 1983)—invited *in the early 1980s leading scholars to provide an account of the state of research* in this domain worldwide (see Clark 1984), the majority of scholars were from the U.S. He chose five speakers from Europe, among them four from the UK and only one from continental Europe (see Table 1).

The growth of quantity and quality of higher education research since the 1970s was reflected in the second major encyclopaedia of this field, published *in the early 1990s*. Among the 18 most frequently cited scholars in the *Encyclopedia of Higher Education* (Clark and Neave 1992), eight were from Europe—five from the UK and three from other European countries.

The foundation of the *Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER)* in 1988 certainly has contributed to improved communication among researchers and to growing research collaboration in Europe on matters of higher education, as well as increased international visibility of European higher education researchers. CHER aims at being the most visible international association of higher education researchers. Practically, it has a strong focus on Europe in various respects. More than three quarters of the members and similarly members of the board have been from Europe over the years. All chairpersons and secretaries were from Europe, and all annual conferences were held in Europe. Among the themes addressed in conferences and certainly in projects triggered two figure prominently, which are much more at the heart of higher education researchers in Europe than for example in the U.S., i.e. comparative research on higher education, as well as macro-system

issues of higher education (societal expectations, the overall fabrique of the higher education system, steering of the higher education system and the role of government, etc.), while more research in the U.S. focus on meso-level and micro-level issues.

CHER brought together higher education researchers from a broad range of European countries. The seven chairpersons were from five different countries, while the five secretaries came from three countries (see Table 1). Ten or more members each in 2013 came from the UK, Germany and France, five and more from Norway, Portugal, Italy, Finland, the Netherlands and Austria, and smaller numbers each from more than a dozen other European countries (members from outside Europe not taken into consideration here). Overviews on participants and speakers at the CHER conferences over the years show also active involvement of European scholars from Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland (see Teichler 2013a, b).

Yet, the development of CHER shows as well that higher education research in Europe continued to be based for a long time on an institutionally relatively weak basis. CHER relied very much only on *four sizeable institutes* interested in international comparison and in macro-issues of higher education: the already above named CHEPS (the Netherlands) and INCHER-Kassel (Germany), as well as the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) in Oslo (Norway) and the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (CIPES) of the University of Porto (Portugal). Also, only less than 50 members of CHER are holders of a professor title in the domain of higher education (according to the denomination of their professorship or that of their unit) (see Teichler 2013b).

Actually, the relatively small size of the higher education research communities in the individual European countries was a major reason for the establishment of supra-national associations such as CHER. Often, the national community was considered to be too small to ensure a functioning platform of discourse. Even up to the present, there are only a few national or regional associations of higher education researchers in Europe.

Major segments, but certainly not the complete picture of institutions and programmes mostly active within the respective countries and within the home country language, became visible in the inventories of higher education research institutions and of academic master and doctoral programmes of higher education published in 2000, 2006 and 2014. The most recent inventory records 66 research institutions on higher education in Europe (as compared to 50 in the U.S.), among them 18 in the UK, one in Ireland and 47 in 20 non-English speaking European countries, as well as 22 programmes in Europe (as compared to almost 200 in the U.S.), among them 13 in the UK, one in Ireland and 8 in 6 non-English speaking European countries (Rumbley et al. 2014).

With the growing communication and cooperation among higher education researchers in Europe, *English as the lingua franca* gained momentum. From 1993 to 1997, 21 % of the articles in Higher Education, the internationally most visible and prestigious journal in this domain, were still written by UK authors and only 13 % by authors from other European countries (Maassen 2000). In contrast, 29 %

of the articles published in 2001–2004 were written by authors from other European countries and only 12 % by UK authors (Teichler 2005); as the journal had substantially grown in size, however, the absolute number of contributions from the UK did not decline, but that of the contributions from other European countries more than quadrupled. In 2010, eventually, 36 % of the articles were from other European countries and 13 % from the UK (Tight 2012).

Yet, authorships of conference presentations and journal articles, as well as countries addressed in English-language journals have remained grossly uneven across those European countries where sizeable higher education research exists. For example, scholars from the Netherlands and the UK, as well as from Finland, Germany and Italy comprised more than half of the speakers at CHER meetings during the first ten years (Kehm and Teichler 2013a). The above named overview on leading journals in the English language showed that the U.S., the UK, Australia and Canada comprised altogether half of the country cases addressed in comparative articles from 1992 to 2011. While 230 articles report on the UK, only 44 address Germany, 37 the Netherlands, 34 France and 25 Sweden (Kosmützky and Krücken 2014).

The distribution by country looks more uneven if the analysis of publications is not based on a few leading journals, but rather on a broader range of English language-journals with a predominant Anglo-Saxon base. For example, Tight (2012)—drawing both from international and predominantly Anglo-Saxon publications—names five or more publications each of 14 authors, among them seven from the UK, two from other European countries and five from other regions of the world. In contrast, a Polish scholar (Kwiek 2013), summarizing the state of knowledge on higher education in Europe, names altogether more than 50 higher education researchers five times or more in his list of references, among them more from other European countries (22) than from the UK (14) and from other parts of the world (17) (see Table 1).

One might add that a different composition by country also shows up if one looks at the *assessments of organisations outside academia*. The UNESCO, when arranging its first World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, awarded the Comenius Prize to one U.S. and two continental European scholars. The Academia Europaea, co-opting excellent scholars from all disciplines, had or has currently altogether 10 higher education researchers as members, among them 4 from the UK and 6 from other European countries (see Table 1).

In Europe, higher education researchers of the United Kingdom and of Ireland publish mostly in English, and their academic achievements are fully visible in the English language. Higher education researchers from Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden often publish in English; many, but not all major academic achievements of prominent higher education researchers in those countries are visible in English. In contrast, more than nine tenth of the important academic publications on higher education are still published today in the respective native language in other large European countries, e.g. Germany, France and Italy, in most Southern European, as well as in Central and Eastern European countries, and one gets a good overview on the academic achievements of only few higher education

researchers from those countries by examining publications in the English language.

This holds true, even though numerous efforts are made to make research in those countries more visible to the English-reading audience (see for example CHEPS et al. 2010; Klemencic 2014; Zgaga 2013). However, one can get a glance at higher education research in a broader range of European countries with the help of books with collections of essays, e.g. Festschriften, books based on the annual conferences of CHER, EAIR, etc. as well as various thematically focussed conferences, comparative projects, etc., because the editors often intend to include authors from a broad range of countries (see Table 2).

Table 2 Major collections of essays—Contributions to conferences, festschriften, comparative projects, etc.—Published by European higher education researchers since 2002

Enders, J. and Fulton, O. (eds.) (2002) *Higher Education in a Globalising World: International Trends and Mutual Observations: A Festschrift in Honour of Ulrich Teichler*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers
Amaral, A., Meek, V. L. and Larsen, I. M. (eds.) (2003) *The Higher Education Managerial Revolution?* Dordrecht: Springer
De Corte, E. (ed.) (2003) *Excellence in Higher Education*, London: Portland
Williams, G. (ed.) (2003) *The Enterprising University: Reform, Excellence and Equity*, Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press
Sadlak, J. (ed.) (2004) *Doctoral Studies and Qualifications in Europe and the United States: Status and Prospects*. Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES 2004
Bleiklie, I. and Henkel, M. (eds.) (2005) *Governing Knowledge: A Study of Continuity and Change in Higher Education—A Festschrift in Honour of Maurice Kogan*. Dordrecht: Springer
Gornitzka, A., Kogan M. and Amaral, A. (eds.) (2005) *Reform and Change in Higher Education: Analysing Policy Implementation*, Dordrecht: Springer
Marton, F., Hounsell, D. and Entwishtle, N. (eds.) (2005) *The Experience of Learning: Implications for Teaching and Studying in Higher Education*. Third (internet) edition. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh
Krücken, G., Kosmützky, A. and Torka, M. (eds.) (2006) *Towards a Multiversity? Universities between Global Trends and National Traditions.* Bielefeld: Transcript
Meyer, J. and Land, R. (eds.) (2006) *Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge*, London: Routledge
Teichler, U. (ed.) (2006) *The Formative Years of Scholars*, London: Portland
Tomusk, V. (ed.) 2006 *Creating the European Area of Higher Education: Voices from the Periphery*, Dordrecht: Springer
Cavalli, A. (ed.) (2007) *Quality Assessment for Higher Education in Europe*, London: Portland
Enders, J. and van Vught, F. (eds.) (2007) *Towards a Cartography of Higher Education Policy Change: A Festschrift in Honour of Guy Neave*, Enschede: Center for Higher Education Policy Studies
Kehm, B. M. (ed.) (2008) *Hochschule im Wandel: Die Universität als Forschungsgegenstand. Festschrift für Ulrich Teichler*, Frankfurt a.M. and New York: Campus

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Shattock, M. (ed.) (2008) *Entrepreneurialism and the Knowledge Economy: Diversification and Organisational Change in European Universities*, Maidenhead: McGraw Hill and Open University Press
Taylor, J., Brites Ferreira, J., de Lourdes Machado, M. and Santiago, R. (eds.) (2008) *Non-University Higher Education in Europe*, Dordrecht: Springer
Amaral, A., Neave, G., Musselin, C. and Maassen, P. (eds.) (2009) *European Integration and the Governance of Higher Education and Research*, Dordrecht: Springer
Kehm, B. M. and Stensaker, B. (eds.) (2009) *University Rankings, Diversity and the Landscape of Higher Education*, Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense
Knust, M. and Hanft, A. (eds.) (2009) *Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning: An International Comparative Study on Structures, Organisation and Provisions*, Dordrecht: Springer
Paradeise, C., Reale, C., Bleiklie, I. and Ferlie, E. (eds.) (2009) *University Governance*, Dordrecht: Springer
Sadlak, J., Hüfner, K., Pricopie, R. and Grünberg. L. (eds.) (2009) *Topical Contributions and Outcomes,* Bucharest: UNESCO CEPES
Davis, M., Devlin, M. and Tight, M. (eds.) (2010) *Interdisciplinary Higher Education: Perspectives and Practicalities,* Bingley: Emerald
Clancy, P. and Dill, D.D. (eds.) (2011) *The Research Mission of the University: Policy Reforms and Institutional Response,* Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense
Rostan, M. and Vaira, M. (eds.) (2011) *Questioning Excellence in Higher Education*, Rotterdam and Taipei: Sense
Slowey, M. and Schuetze, H. G. (eds.) (2012) *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learning*, Milton Park: Routledge
Vukasovic, M., Maassen, P., Nerland, M, Pinheiro, R., Stensaker, B. and Vaboe, A. (eds.) (2012). *Effects of Higher Education Reforms: Change Dynamics*, Rotterdam: Sense
Engwall, L. and Scott, P. (eds.) (2013) *Trust in Universities*, London: Portland
Blömeke, S. Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, O., Kuhn, C. and Fege, J. (eds.) (2013) *Modeling and Measuring Competencies in Higher Education: Tasks and Challenges.* Rotterdam, Boston and Taipei: Sense
Karlsen, J. E. and Pritchard, R. (eds.) (2013) *Resilient Universities: Confronting Challenges in a Changing World*, Oxford: Peter Lang
Zgaga, P. Teichler, U. and Brennan, J, (eds.) (2013) *The Globalisation Challenge for European Higher Education: Convergence and Diversity, Centres and Peripheries*, Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang Edition
Brankovic, J., Klemencic, M., Lazetic, P. and Zgaga, P. (eds.) (2014) *Global Challenges, Local Responses in Higher Education: The Contemporary Issues on National and Comparative Perspective*, Rotterdam: Sense
Goastellec, G. and Picard, F. (eds.) (2014) *Higher Education in Societies: A Multi Scale Perspective*, Rotterdam: Sense
Mattei P. (ed.) (2014) *University Adaptation in Difficult Economic Times*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

4 Higher Education Research not Visible in the Lingua Franca—The Case of Germany

Germany is taken here as a case for showing the situation of higher education research in individual European countries. In this large country, a certain size and magnitude of higher education research is available. In relative terms, i.e. compared to the size of the population and of the higher education system, higher education research in Germany is clearly a smaller field than for example in Finland and Norway, but a larger field than for example in France or Italy.

It was a marginal field in Germany, as in many other countries, up to the 1960s. *In the 1970s, institutionalisation moved in three directions*: The establishment of centres for *'higher education didactics'* at various higher education institutions, both in charge of research and service of staff and curriculum development, further the establishment of sizeable *research units on higher education located outside academia*, and finally a growing thematic area taken up individually by *scholars from various disciplines*. In contrast, only a single university in Germany had opted at that time for the establishment of a sizeable centre focussing on higher education research (see Goldschmidt et al. 1984; Oehler and Webler 1988; Over 1988).

Interest in systematic knowledge on higher education seems to have *grown further in Germany since the 1990s*. Research on higher education expanded moderately, but changed clearly in structure: There were fewer centres for 'higher education didactics' now, but some other research units within higher education institutions were established or grew in size.

The authors of a study on the state of higher education research published in 2003 (Gunkel et al. 2003) actually had invited scholars, who had published at least five times in this domain (according to a major bibliography) or had been professionally active for a few years in a unit specialized on higher education research, to contribute to a directory, if they *view themselves as belonging to the category of higher education researchers*. Actually, about 150 persons in Germany identified themselves this way. Less than half of them were academics fully specialized on higher education, and this proportion was even lower within professorial ranks. Only about 10 % of the publications of these approx. 150 persons, which the authors had selected as their major ones, were not written in the German language, but rather mostly in English (cf. also subsequent overviews in Pasternack 2006; Zimmermann et al. 2008).

In recent years, higher education research has clearly expanded in Germany. One might estimate the number of scholars, who would identify themselves today as higher education researchers, as being at least twice as high as a decade ago. Some new research units and new professorships on higher education have been established. The Federal government created a regular scheme for the promotion of higher education research along its various previously existing modes of support for individual policy-relevant projects and a few institutions. The *Gesellschaft für Hochschulforschung (GfHf),* i.e. the association for higher education research in German-speaking countries, was established in 2006. A few institutions of higher

education introduced master programmes focussing on higher education or having it as a sub-area. The number of doctoral candidates and young scholars in the related disciplines, who opted for higher education as their thematic focus, increased substantially.

In 2010, a survey was undertaken of the almost 200 persons participating in a network of *young scholars or professionals* active in research on higher education. Most of the respondents were academic staff still working on or having already completed a doctoral dissertation thematically focussing on higher education. As no doctoral programme on higher education exists in Germany and as the dissertation has to fit in the disciplinary structure, more than one third of the dissertations were allocated to sociology and more than one fifths to economic fields, while the others spread over a broad range of disciplines. More than one third reported that their first supervisor and about a quarter that their second supervisor is a professor specialized on higher education. Most of the junior higher education researchers were junior academic staff at that time, among them more than a third in a unit within academia or outside academia that is specialized on higher education research (Steinhardt and Schneijderberg 2014).

In 2012, a *mapping of higher education research in Germany* was initiated by the *GfHf*. It named less than ten units as the institutionalized core of higher education research. First and second, two research centres within universities that are specialized in this domain: The Internationale Zentrum für Hochschulforschung (International Centre for Higher Education Research) of the University of Kassel (INCHER-Kassel), established in 1978, and the Institut für Hochschulforschung Wittenberg (HoF, Institute for Higher Education Research Wittenberg) at the University of Halle-Wittenberg, established in 1997 in the wake of the transformation of an earlier East German research institute. Third and fourth, two research units on higher education embedded into the educational sciences of the Humboldt University Berlin and into sociology at Constance University. Fifth and sixth, two government-linked institutes: Bayerisches Staatsinstitut für Hochschulforschung and Hochschulplanung (IHF, Bavarian State Institute for Higher Education Research and Planning), established in 1973 in Munich, and Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung (DZHW, German Institute for Higher Education and Science Research), founded in 2013 in Hannover and Berlin through a process of merger of two previous institutes abbreviated as HIS and iFQ.

Three further institutions are viewed to be somewhere between the ‘centre’ and the ‘periphery’ of higher education research. Seventh, the Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung (CHE, Centre for Higher Education Development) in Gütersloh, established in the early 1990s as a consultancy institution with some research activities. Eighth, centres for ‘higher education didactics’—with the Hochschuldidaktisches Zentrum (HDZ) of the Technical University of Dortmund as the strongest unit. Ninth, units of science research, among them notably the research group “Science Policy” of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB, Social Science Research Centre Berlin).

In addition, research on higher education is undertaken in a ‘periphery’: Individual scholars in the respective disciplines (the report only names a relatively

short list of professors with a long-term focus on higher education research), research institutes and units in related fields, e.g. educational research, and systematic information gathering within various areas of policy and management (e.g. higher education evaluation, higher education development and higher education management), (cf. also various essays on the state of higher education research in Germany in Pasternack 2014; see the summary of the unpublished report in Winter 2014).

As regards other visible activities, the mapping report pointed out that six *master programmes* existed in Germany in the area of higher education and research (in Speyer, Hannover, Osnabrück, Bielefeld, Hamburg and Oldenburg). Actually, the only master programme in this domain in Germany taught in English (the MAHE programme in Kassel) was discontinued in 2013 after six cohorts. Most of the existing master programmes, however, have a practical emphasis of training for higher education and research management rather than for higher education research and science research.

There are a few *journals* on higher education. They either address concurrently academics, policy makers and practitioners (e.g. Das Hochschulwesen), or have a clear emphasis on policy makers and practitioners (e.g. Deutsche Universitätszeitung and Forschung & Lehre), or those having an academic emphasis are published by single institutes (e.g. Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung published by IHF).

In looking at the approximately two dozens most highly visible senior higher education researchers in Germany since the 1960s (see Table 3) we certainly can state that the majority was or is interested in the state of research worldwide. But the majority did *not see any need to publish in the English language* or to be closely embedded in international networks in order to undertake successfully academically highly ambitious and practically highly relevant research.

Table 3 Major senior scholars in the domain of higher education research in Germany

'Nestors': Dietrich Goldschmidt and Ludwig Huber
Core higher education researchers (mostly with a social science background): Hansgert Peisert, Christoph Oehler, Ulrich Teichler, Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, Andrä Wolter, Jürgen Enders (Germany, the Netherlands and UK), Barbara M. Kehm (Germany and UK), Peer Pasternack, Georg Krücken, Ulrich Wilkesmann and Philipp Pohlenz
Higher education researchers specialized higher education didactics: Sigrid Metz-Göckel, Carl-Hellmut Wagemann, Johannes Wildt, Margret Bülow-Schramm and Wolff-Dietrich Webler
Coordinators in state-related institutions: Heinz Griesbach, Klaus Schnitzer, Michael Leszczensky, Edith Braun, Stefan Lullies and Lydia Hartwig
Representatives of various disciplines: Werner Thieme, George Turner (law), Anke Haft, Rainer Künzel, Gerd Grözinger, Dieter Timmermann (economic fields), Uwe Schimank (sociology) and Peter Lundgren (history)
Scholars predominantly active in consultancy: Detlef Müller-Böling and Frank Ziegele
Science researchers: Peter Weingart, Hans-Dieter Daniel (Germany and Switzerland) and Stefan Hornbostel

5 Thematic Areas of Higher Education Research

There is no widespread agreement as how to classify higher education research. Yet, some examples might show that most classifications opted for are not so far apart.

In some instances, higher education research is described as an 'archipelago', a 'schism' or 'two continents', i.e. as being divided between two thematic areas and research approaches: teaching and learning on the one hand, and on the other higher education policy and organisation (e.g. Horta and Jung 2013; Macfarlane 2012). Other analyses suggest that there are *three major foci of analysis*: (1) teaching, learning, curricula, competences, as well as teachers and learners, i.e. studies relevant for the teaching function of higher education, (2) governance, management, etc., i.e. studies relevant for decision-making and organisation, and (3) the higher education system and its societal context.

With a view of the areas of specialisation among higher education researchers, a classification of *four* '*spheres of knowledge*' was proposed: (1) quantitative-structural aspects, (2) knowledge and subject-related aspects, (3) person-related and teaching and learning-related aspects and (4) aspects of institution, organisation and governance (Teichler 1996).

In the framework of reviews of publications, a more disaggregated list of themes tends to be preferred. For example, Tight (2003, 2012) opted for eight themes: Teaching and learning, course design, the student experience, quality, system policy, institutional management, academic work, knowledge and research. In an analysis of 15 English-language journals, he classified 31 % of the articles published in 2010 as addressing course design, 24 % student experience, 13 % academic work and less than one tenth each of the other themes (Tight 2012).

The journal Research into Higher Education Abstracts, published by SRHE, also has established a list of eight—partly similar—categories. There were in 2014: (1) National systems and comparative studies, (2) institutional management, (3) curriculum design, (4) research, (5) students, (6) staff, (7) contributory studies and research approaches, (8) teaching learning and assessment. One additional category employed for a couple of years has been eventually dropped: finance and physical resources.

It might be worth as well mentioning in this context the range of themes addressed in a major historical account of the development of universities in Europe since 1945 (Rüegg 2011): changing the major themes discussed, patterns of the higher education system, relations with authority, management and resources, teachers, admission, education and students, student movements and political activism, graduation and careers, the various disciplines, and "From the University in Europe to the Universities of Europe" (Barblan 2011).

The thematic range certainly might look wider, if one paid attention to research on higher education undertaken in the framework of various disciplines. Actually, more than 20 "disciplinary perspectives on higher education" were named in the 1992 encyclopeadia: anthropology, comparative education, economics, higher

education studies (i.e. the 'discipline' in the centre of this article), history, law, linguistics and rhetorical studies, literature, macrosociology, organization theory, philosophy, policy analysis, political economy, political science, public administration science studies, social psychology and women's studies (Becher 1992).

According to a review of higher education research in Europe published in the early years of the 21st century, research in this domain has been *quick in taking up the themes currently discussed publicly*. At times, higher education and economic growth, inequality, students' views and attitudes, graduate employment, diversification, management, evaluation, etc., were highly on the agenda for a few years, and many research projects shed light on the respective themes (see Teichler 2005). According to more general categories than the ones presented above, however, a *relatively high degree of continuity in higher education research* could be observed with one exception: an increase of research on internationalisation of higher education (see Kehm and Teichler 2007; Teichler 2010b)—a change of research reflecting a change of reality, i.e. an internationalisation trend in higher education and research (see Scott 2008).

Two recent lists of themes seem to be most suitable to indicate the recent priorities of higher education researchers. First, an analysis was undertaken of the themes addressed in 291 articles published in the years 2011 and 2012 in four major international higher education journals published in Europe (Teixeira 2013). Though this analysis comprises also articles written by scholars from other regions of the world, it certainly mirrors by and large the *recent thematic priorities* of higher education researchers in Europe:

- 15 % system regulation/government and higher education institutions,
- 17 % institutional analysis, governance, management,
- 17 % quality, evaluation, assessment,
- 5 % funding and economic issues,
- 9 % access, equity,
- 24 % students' satisfaction, performance and evaluation,
- 14 % academic profession, and
- 12 % other themes.

Second, an analysis was undertaken of the *changes of the thematic interests of members of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers* (Kehm and Teichler 2013a). As already stated above, about three quarters to CHER members are Europeans. A comparison of statements made by the scholars themselves in the member directories in 1992 (2.0 themes on average) and 2012 (2.6 themes) shows, in contrast to be above named observation, a substantial thematic change over time:

- Interest increased most dramatically in Internationalisation, mobility, etc.: from 4 to 24 % within two decades,
- Also, we note a substantial increase of interest—from 27 to 48 %—in Governance, management and organisation,
- Four areas can be named, where a moderate increase of interest can be observed: Higher education systems (from 28 to 38 %), Study programmes, teaching and

learning (from 13 to 20 %), Academic profession and work (from 11 to 17 %) as well as Access, students and graduates (from 18 to 23 %).

- There are five areas, however, where figures hardly changed over time or even a moderate decrease can be observed: Quality, evaluation, etc. (25 % at both points in time), Knowledge, research and transfer (from 16 to 13 %), Higher education research, theories, methods, etc. (from 13 to 15 %), Higher education policies, reforms (from 35 to 28 %), and Funding, resources, etc. (from 13 to 9 %).

Table 4 Major issues addressed by European higher education researchers

The changing composition of power in higher education: The role of governments, external stakeholders, the market, and institutional management and the academic profession
The consequences of increasing competition mechanisms, market steering, incentive steering, privatisation, indicator-based policies, 'commodification'
Evaluation: modes, quality and validity, impact, the changing concepts of quality and relevance
Diversity of higher education: 'World class universities' and rankings, the profiles and characteristics of individual higher education institutions, pressures for diversification versus 'isomorphism' and 'academic drift', the impact of external demands and internal dynamics on the overall pattern of the higher education systems
Changes of learning and assessment: emphasis on 'competences' and 'learning outcomes', changes of assessment systems, potentials and limit of performance and achievement testing, the students as targets and as actors in the system of study programmes, teaching and learning
The changing role of research undertaken in universities: application drift, changing balance of disciplines, links of research to technology transfer and innovation, the changing role of the humanities and social sciences, etc.
The changing educational and training role of higher education: Consequences of expansion, dynamic occupational change, between an elite-reproduction, meritocratic and egalitarian function, challenges of life-long learning, the impact of study conditions and provisions on graduate employment and work, the links between levels of study programmes and degrees and the occupational structure
The changing function of higher education: Beyond knowledge production and dissemination, e.g. "service functions"
Higher education and Europe: convergence of structures, modes of governance and substance of teaching and research? Increasing similarity of quality or persistent inequality between national systems? Similarity or differences of the various national and supra-national policy rationales? The weight of national system persistence, Europeanisation and globalisation, impact of worldwide developments on higher education in Europe
The effects of higher education policies and reforms approaches—strategies, complexity of actors, implementation, known and unknown system dynamics, continuity and change, learning from intended and unintended effects?
Trends of visible internationalisation in higher education—migration, mobility, cross-border communication and cooperation, change of use of languages, international education, socialisation towards intercultural understanding, the overall impact of internationalization
The academic profession: changing expectations and pressures, changing status and self-perception, professionalization and changing tasks, between 'pursuit of knowledge and pursuit of revenue', changing academic careers
Doctoral education: Expansion, changing role for academia and other profession, changing modes of education, training and independent research work

Certainly, one has to bear in mind, and this is visible when these figures are compared to those presented in various bibliographic analyses undertaken by Tight (2003, 2012), that CHER membership only includes a small proportion of higher education researchers active in the area of teaching, learning, curricula, etc.

A livelier picture of research in Europe can be presented, if one looks at the key issues of attention and concern. The author of this article, therefore, presents a list of themes in Table 4, which he observes as frequently discussed in books and articles published by higher education researchers or having been the focus of conferences in Europe in recent years.

Altogether, we can conclude that *teaching, learning, curricula, competences,* etc. is a long-standing priority area of higher education research in Europe. Research on *governance, management and related themes* has some tradition, but certainly grew over the years. Research on various issues of *internationalisation* was a marginal area up to the 1980s and became a priority area in recent years. Though these three areas play a substantial role in concurrent higher education research in Europe as far as visible in the English language, one cannot argue that they have pushed other areas aside. All other themes together comprise clearly more than half of the research interests expressed and the research activities undertaken.

6 Types of Institutional Bases and Analysts

As already pointed out, it is difficult to establish a map of institutions and persons involved in higher education research, because the settings are varied and the borderlines are fuzzy. This is all the more true for Europe, because long traditions are lacking and the scene varies substantially by country.

As regards the U.S., i.e. the country with a long tradition and an enormous quantity as far as higher education research is concerned, El-Khawas (2000) perceived *a clear pattern of three separate sectors*:

- "*Research*": Academically-based higher education research is often institutionalised in university units of teaching and research. Most frequently, master and/or doctoral programmes are the educational core activities, and most of them are institutionalised in the U.S. within departments/schools of education; potentials for academic research on higher education, thus, are alimented by these study programmes. Academics put emphasis on theoretical and methodological quality, irrespective whether they favour a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake or whether societal relevance plays a role in their research activities.
- "*Practice*": Many institutions of higher education in the U.S. establish units, often under the supervision of key managers in the individual university, and initiate analyses, which are expected to provide action-oriented interpretation of the findings and are considered as important feedback for the enhancement of teaching and learning, research, management, etc.

- "*Policy*": Government or other supra-institutional actors (associations of universities, professional organisations, and various external stakeholders) in the U. S. have their own information and policy analysis units or sponsor such types of analyses expected to enrich the plausibility of policy processes through systematic collection of information, policy-driven interpretations, policy scenarios, etc.

In looking both at the institutional basis and the character of work, Teichler (1996) suggested a typology comprising six types of higher education experts:

- *The discipline/department-based occasional researchers on higher education*: They consider their departmental and disciplinary colleagues as their relevant peers. They embark on higher education as one theme of research among others. They might be strong in theory and methodology, while their research often lacks in-depth field knowledge, and many of them are not interested in the practical relevance of research.
- *The continuous discipline-based higher education researchers*: The discipline is a core element of their identity as well, but they focus—in contrast to the first type—on higher education for a long period or all over their academic life. They acquire sound field knowledge, and some of them might be interested to serve both academic quality and societal relevance.
- *The scholars based in a higher education research institute or unit*: Scholars in such an institution, as other theme-based scholars in theme-based units within or associated to academic institutions, have to strike a balance between academic recognition in terms of theoretical and methodological foundation on the one hand, and in-depth field-knowledge and practical relevance on the other hand.
- *The applied higher education researchers*: Similar to the above named type, they are predominantly or at least strongly involved in knowledge generation, for example as 'institutional researchers' and 'policy researchers', but this might be linked to practical tasks, e.g. 'staff development' or other service or administrative functions, and their reputation has to be based on the utility of their knowledge generation.
- *The consultants of higher education*: They have to draw from all kinds of systematic knowledge, possibly in part from own activities of knowledge generation, or practical experience, and to serve on this basis as advisors for policy makers and practitioners.
- Finally, *the reflective practitioners*: They might be politicians, university leaders, administrators, 'higher education professionals' and scholars in others disciplines, who consider themselves as experts in higher education. Some of them are actively involved part-time in collecting and systematizing knowledge on higher education and publishing in this domain, but even if this is not the case, they are strongly involved—as compared to other practitioners—in absorbing and 'digesting' systematic knowledge.

In an analysis of higher education research in Europe, six institutional settings of higher education were named (Teichler 2005): (1) Research and practice combined

(e.g. centres for 'staff development'), (2) Institutional research, (3) Research alimented by teaching (e.g. sub-units of—for example educational—departments/schools, as often found in the U.S. and in China), (4) Nationally sponsored research institutes (such as the above named NIFU in Norway and DZHW in Germany), (5) University-based centres (such as the above named CHEPS in the Netherlands and INCHER-Kassel in Germany), and (6) sub-units within research units of a broader thematic or disciplinary framework, established outside or within higher education institutions (e.g. higher education research within the Institute de Recherche sur l'Economie de l'Education (IREDU) of the Université de Bourgogne in Dijon, France, and within the Research Unit for Sociology of Education (RUSE) of the University of Turku, Finland).

In describing higher education research in Europe more concretely, we might point out the characteristics in Europe as compared to the above picture provided for the U.S. Five such characteristics might be named.

First, there are only *few master and doctoral programmes* on higher education in Europe (cf. Maassen and Pausits 2013). As a consequence, research in this domain in Europe hardly is alimented by teaching on higher education. Also, if professor positions have the thematic focus of higher education at all, hardly any department or institute has more than a single professorship in charge of this thematic area.

Second, there are *only a few European countries* where the study of higher education is predominantly *embedded in educational departments or educational research*. This holds true for the UK and Finland, but not for France, Germany and many other European countries. Instead, research on higher education is linked to sociology, economics and business study, law, etc. (e.g. CHEPS to public administration and INCHER-Kassel to sociology).

Third, sizeable units of higher education research are *established outside higher education institutions* in some European countries. This holds true, for example, for the above named NIFU in Norway as well as DZHW and IHF in Germany. In various instances, additionally, institutes with a broader thematic focus might be in part involved in higher education research, e.g. educational, labour market and youth research institutions. These institutions, as a rule, they have a stronger applied emphasis than research based in academic units of universities.

Fourth, there is *hardly any institutional research in Europe* in terms of defined positions and units within the administrative realm of higher education institutions, with the explicit task of undertaking research aimed at directly serving reflection and practical action. There are a few positions and units of that kind, though, but more often administrators undertake such activities as part of their job role. In comparison to the U.S., we observe almost an "absence of any collective understanding of the meaning of institutional research" (Taylor et al. 2013) in Europe; however, some activities in this domain began to spread recently, and the Higher Educational Institutional Research Network (HEIR), established in 2008, has members notably in the UK and Ireland. In contrast, analyses undertaken by practitioners in European higher education, which can be viewed a functionally equivalent to institutional research, have been also described as more conceptual, more reflective and more varied than in the U.S. and thus, as providing the

opportunity to contribute to more fundamental improvement in higher education (Klemencic and Brennan 2013).

Fifth, there is a *substantially growing involvement of 'higher education professionals' in activities of more or less systematic information generation on higher education in Europe*. While university administrations as well as governments and stakeholder organisations in Europe had small numbers of high-level administrators for a long time as compared to the U.S., we note a dramatic increase of highly qualified professionals in many European institutions of higher education in recent years, who are not academics, but have to have an in-depth understanding of the core functions of higher education, i.e. teaching and research in the various disciplines, in order to function properly in their service or management-support roles (Kottmann and Enders 2013). Often, they are just called according to their specific areas, i.e. quality managers, career officers, international officers, etc., while scholars analysing this phenomenon opt for various umbrella terms such as 'middle-level managers' or 'higher education professionals' (Gornitzka and Larsen 2004; Macfarlane 2011; Meek et al. 2010; Roesser 2004; Schneijderberg and Merkator 2012; Whitchurch 2009).

A study recently undertaken in Germany shows that the number of higher education professionals has reached about two-thirds of the number of professor positions at universities, whereby about one third of these professionals are doctoral degree holders. Only 7 % report that they are actively undertaking research, but more than half seem to be involved in 'monitoring', 'evaluation' and other forms of systematic information gathering (Merkator and Schneijderberg 2012); one might assume that systematic information gathering plays even a stronger role among higher education professionals employed outside higher education institutions, e.g. in government, umbrella organisations, stakeholder organisations and consultant agencies.

In sum, there is only a relatively *small number of persons in Europe who are officially defined as higher education researchers*—either as academics primarily in charge of higher education as a field of research and possibly teaching, or as applied researchers in institutional settings close to management and policy. Rather, higher education researchers in Europe are predominantly those who have opted to be higher education researchers, though they have not any irrefutable—academic or administratively based—professional mandate of undertaking higher education research. Thereby, a *clear dividing line is often lacking* in Europe between higher education research protected by academic freedom or not being protected that way, as well as *between a basic or applied research function*. Altogether, visible higher education research experiences a growth in Europe, but this trend seems to be small as compared to the—less clearly visible—growth of other more or less systematic information collection (statistics, 'reporting'. 'monitoring', 'evaluation', creation of 'indicators', 'best practice reports', etc.) undertaken by higher education professionals in policy and practice.

Altogether, higher education research in Europe is in a contradictory situation. On the one hand, it lives in an academic Zeitgeist where the *search for academic recognition as excellent according to pure academic criteria* prevails and

formalized assessments according to such criteria have become more and more forceful. As a consequence, for example, several higher education journals have recently drifted from being a forum for both scholars and reflective practitioners, towards criteria and processes, which signal academic purity and excellence. On the other hand, higher education research cannot avoid competing for funds and public recognition with a dramatically increasing number of higher education experts involved in various kinds of information gathering assumed to provide useful 'evidence' for higher policy and practice, and therefore *underscores its practical utility* (cf. Teichler 2014a).

7 European Communication and Cooperation Within Higher Education Research and with Higher Education Policy and Practice

In examining how higher education researchers communicate and cooperate with their colleagues across Europe or world-wide, and how higher education research interacts with policy and practice across borders, we have *to bear in mind*, as already pointed out initially, *that higher education research tends to have a strong national emphasis*. This reflects the fact that—irrespective of the global and universal elements in higher education—many features of higher education which are addressed in higher education research, e.g. institutional patterns, governance, funding, study programmes, and personnel policies, are predominantly shaped on the national level. As a consequence, the variety of higher education systems across countries is striking—a fact which justifies the analysis focus on single national higher education systems and concurrently increases barriers as far as in-depth comparative analysis is concerned.

Europe, however, has experienced since World War II a chain of supra-national higher education policies of stimulating the growth of similarities and of increasing border-crossing interaction in higher education. These policies and their actual impact on higher education have clearly called for increasing European and international perspectives in higher research. We might name *four waves of European higher education policies initiated by various supra-national actors* (Teichler 2010a):

- First, efforts were made since the 1950s to increase mutual understanding between the European countries by facilitating student mobility. The Council of Europe took the lead and later cooperated with UNESCO and the European Commission in taking care of conventions regarding the recognition of study (linked to access, temporary student mobility and mobility after graduation) across European countries.
- Second, a multitude of activities were coordinated notably by OECD since the 1960s to seek for common directions of modernisation of higher education in the wake of its expansion and its growing relevance for economic development.

For example, efforts of diversifying higher education in Western European countries were strongly influenced by these policy initiatives.

- Third, the European Community/Union became a major player of European higher education policy in the 1980s and 1990s with activities of stimulating mobility and cooperation, whereby ERASMUS support for temporary intra-European student mobility turned out to be the flagship of programmes.
- Fourth, the governments of the individual European countries decided in the late 1990s to strive for system convergence in the framework of what is called the "Bologna Process". Concurrently, the European Union advocated a "Lisbon Process" with the aim of increasing substantially the funding of research and technology across countries.

The growth of supra-national policy initiatives in Europe could be expected to be highly important for higher education research, because *supra-national actors tended to be more strongly interested in systematic information collection on higher education* than national policy actors (see Sadlak and Hüfner 2002)—obviously due to the fact that nobody on the international arena would trust the first-hand experiences of the policy makers and practitioners to the extent we still can observe on national level in many individual European countries. Moreover, *supra-national higher education policy actors tend to advocate 'evidence-based' approaches more strongly than national policy actors,* because they have to rely more strongly on the power of the argument than on political power as such.

As a consequence, many European higher education researchers were already strongly involved in stock-taking and policy formulation activities, before international communication between higher education researchers and a comparative project began to flourish. Actually, one of the motives to establish CHER as an international forum of higher education researchers was not to meet each other only under policy objectives at events arranged by international organisations, but also in settings aimed at enhancing the academic quality of knowledge generation in this domain (see Teichler 2013b).

Without being able to pinpoint in detail the complexity of specific trends and actions at specific points in time, we can argue that *the readiness for a European dialogue and for cooperation between higher education research and higher education policy and practise increased visibly since about the 1980s* due to:

- a higher density and forcefulness of supra-national policies in higher education,
- a gradual erosion of the formerly widespread belief within the individual European countries that higher education in their respective country is 'non-comparable' and, instead, increasing attention being paid to possible 'global' or 'convergent' trends of 'modernization',
- a growing intra-European interaction in higher education and an increasing inclination also of researchers in the behavioural and social sciences to communicate and cooperate across borders, and
- an increase of funds on the European level for undertaking comparative analyses, as well as analyses of supra-national features in higher education.

Organisations such as OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe continued or enlarged 'think tank' projects where higher education researchers play a major role (cf. Scott 2008; see the results of recent projects in Altbach et al. 2009; Meek et al. 2009; OECD 2008, 2009). And the European Union became a highly visible actor in the communication and cooperation between higher education policy and higher education research.

A detailed analysis was undertaken in 2004 about EU-funded higher education research—either initiated by the European Commission or by other political actors (notably those responsible for the Bologna Process) with financial assistance by the EU, as well as those initiated by higher education researchers (Van der Wende and Huisman 2004). No corresponding analysis has been undertaken for the subsequent years. Some major trends and major approaches, though, can be named here, which are indicative for the situation as a whole.

First, the *European Commission itself commissions studies for the purpose of 'evaluation' and 'monitoring' of the major EU programmes.* This has been often the case as regards ERASMUS, i.e. the largest of the educational support programmes, where evaluation must be undertaken for the preparation of the decision, whether the programme is continued, modified or discontinued after a few years. Actually, the largest and most ambitious studies of ERASMUS have been undertaken or led by higher education researchers (CHEPS et al. 2008; Huisman and van der Wende 2004–2005; Janson et al. 2009; Rosselle and Lentiez 1999; Teichler and Gordon 2001; Teichler and Maiworm 1997).

Second, there are *various modes and channels* for the EU to initiate policy-related analyses or for higher education researchers to apply for financial support of such analyses. For example, higher education researchers from six European countries have recently collaborated in this framework in a study on university-industry relationships (Mora et al. 2010).

Third, *the European Commission supports some projects in this domain in the framework of research promotion*. While EU research promotion had been confined to the natural sciences for a long time, social sciences have been eligible for support since 1995. The first major project supported that way was a comparative survey on graduate employment and work (Schomburg and Teichler 2006; Teichler 2007), which was followed by a second one five years later (Allen and van der Velden 2011; see also Mora et al. 2013). A study on internationalisation policies and activities of various European countries (Huisman and van der Wende 2004–2005) was also among the first ones funded in this framework.

Fourth, the *European Commission funded*—in coordination with the Bologna Follow Up-Group (BFUG), i.e. the policy coordinators of the Bologna Process between the ministerial conferences—various analyses of the reforms linked to the Bologna Process. Most of these analyses, however, were not open to higher education researchers. Rather, the EU asked its own information agency, i.e. EACEA—Eurydice, and one stakeholder organisation participating in the BFUG, i.e. the European University Association (EUA), to undertake systematic accounts of the extent to which the Bologna reform objectives actually were realized (see for example Eurydice 2010; Sursock and Smidt 2010). In three major recent studies

and publications on the Bologna Process, however, the research activities and the interpretations of higher education researchers became highly visible:

- The Flemish government initiated—in preparation of the 2009 Leuven conference—a collection of papers, in which European higher education researchers commented the developments and possible futures of the Bologna Process—notably in the areas of governance, quality, mobility and diversity (Kehm et al. 2009).
- In preparation of the 2010 Budapest and Vienna conferences, two research centres and a consultancy agency undertook a so-called "independent assessment" of the Bologna Process within the first ten years (CHEPS et al. 2010).
- In preparation of the 2012 Bucharest conference, many higher education experts were invited to write analyses on key themes of the Bologna Process. Actually, more than 50 articles addressed themes such as the principles of the European Higher Education Area, teaching and learning, quality assurance, mobility, governance, funding, diversification and the future of higher education (Curaj et al. 2012). According to those responsible, this activity "aimed at bringing the researchers' voice into higher education international level policy making", and it gave "an unprecedented opportunity for researchers dealing with higher education matters to interact and contribute to the political process shaping the European Higher Education Area, as well as national policy agendas" (Deca 2012, p. v). A similar project is underway in 2014.

Altogether, many higher education researchers in Europe got involved in comparative analyses or analyses on cross-cutting developments. Some projects were strongly shaped by the request of those supporting and commissioning the projects, while others were initiated and strongly reflected the researchers' notions and intentions. By and large, European higher education researchers seized this state of affairs as an opportunity to undertake studies that looked across national borders, and they took for granted that they had to strike a complicated balance in these projects between academic criteria of theoretical and methodological quality and objectives of practical relevance, between the notions of practical relevance held by the higher education researchers and those held by the policy actors funding the projects, and between the desirable conditions for high-quality projects and actually prevailing time and financial pressures.

Yet, critique is widespread among higher education researcher as regards the conditions these European projects are exposed to:

- First, the decision-making setting as regards the award of such projects is viewed by many higher education researchers as creating a disadvantage for them and an advantage for consulting firms and external stakeholder organisations.
- Second, the rules, the administrative surveillance and the financial controls of the projects are viewed as being hypertrophic. These mechanisms on EU level obviously are far more time-consuming and resource-binding than respective

mechanisms regarding projects funded by national governmental agencies or by national public research promotion systems.

- Third, some projects are viewed as so highly prescribed thematically and methodologically by the sponsoring or commissioning actors that hardly any room is left for improvement due to the expertise of those undertaking the study or due to learning processes in the course of the project.
- Fourth, the policies of supporting such projects are viewed as changing too quickly and not taking care of continuity. Thus, opportunities of improving the state of knowledge through regular inquiries are missed, for example repeated surveys in order to examine change over time—as up to the present they are only established as regards student life in various European countries (Orr et al. 2011). For instance, the above named surveys of ERASMUS students or graduate employment and work were suitable to be repeated after a while, but were not transformed into a regular information system.
- Fifth, a strong ambivalence is felt as regards the interface between research and policy (see the systematic discussion of this theme in Amaral and Magalhaes 2013; Gornitzka 2013) as regards the use of research findings. To what extent is there an openness for surprising and even policy-challenging facts? To what extent is there interest in a creative dialogue between researchers and actors in the system as regards the interpretation of findings? Do analyses have primarily a symbolic rather than an evaluative value?

Altogether, higher education researchers often consider themselves to be viewed by policy makers as being just one of many interchangeable experts. Even if an activity is undertaken from the policy "aimed at bringing the researchers' voice into higher education international level policy making", as reported above, the higher education researchers conclude that more than half of those invited to raise their voice are not higher education researchers.

Of course, the higher education researchers know that many policy actors and practitioners view the higher education researchers critically. Suspicion is widespread that practical relevance is not high on the researchers' agenda, that they exaggerate quality standards and that they tend to present their own political preoccupations as research findings, etc. (see also critique named in Scott 2000). There are reasons on both sides not to consider the interface between research and policy as being a smooth operation.

One should add, however, that there are some opportunities for collaborative research of higher education researchers in Europe without the ambivalences of policy-initiated or policy-funded research. The biggest activity in this domain in recent years was funded by the European Science Foundation (ESF)—the European association of the major research promotion agencies in the individual European countries. In 2006, some higher education researchers applied successfully for the support of the "Higher Education Looking Forward (HELF)" project: for collaboration through conferences and joint writings of analyses on the possible futures of higher education and the respective future tasks of higher education research (see Brennan and Teichler 2008). Subsequently, funds were made available for four

consortia of higher education researchers from 2009 to 2012 to conduct research on "Higher Education and Social Change in Europe (EuroHESC)". In this biggest collaborative activity of higher education research in Europe ever undertaken so far, more than 100 scholars addressed governance of higher education, higher education and knowledge society, and the academic profession in Europe. Currently, two books based on these projects (Teichler and Höhle 2013; Kehm and Teichler 2013b; Fumasoli et al. 2015) and many articles are available. Prior experiences in such international consortia of higher education research suggest that the projects are likely to last substantially longer than the major funding periods, but that eventually a multitude of results can be expected (see Teichler 2014b).

8 Concluding Observations

In sum, higher education researchers in Europe experience similar trends on the European level as on the national level, but even more striking than in their national arena. Higher education research experiences some growth, somewhat better conditions and somewhat more public attention and recognition. This, however, is embedded into a much more substantial growth of other higher education experts involved in some way or other as well in the—more or less systematic—generation of knowledge and into the expectation that enhanced knowledge on higher education has to be visibly useful. There are no simple answers to the questions: to what extent do these conditions serve the enhancement of higher education research? And to what extent do these conditions of knowledge generation serve a desirable future of higher education?

Some years ago, the dominant development trend of higher education research in Western Europe has been characterized as "From policy advice to self-reflection" (Frackmann 1997). Neither the "ivory tower" nor the mere policy advice are the dominant aim of higher education researchers, but rather the enrichment of joint reflection of the state of higher education on the part of the higher education researchers and the higher education policy makers and practitioners.

The chances for improved communication between higher education research and higher education policy and practice might be viewed as good: policy and practice actors like to style themselves as strategic and influential, and researchers like to style themselves as those who understand the logics and the movements of higher education. As they both suffer from the complexity of a situation which had been described as "age of supercomplexity" (Barnett 2000) and "age of uncertainty" (Nowotny et al. 2001), readiness for the search of the unknown 'truth' and 'solution' might be higher than in the past.

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[1]Cf. also the literature in Table 2.

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A Comparative Study on Cost-Sharing in Higher Education—Using the Case Study Approach to Contribute to Evidence-Based Policy

Dominic Orr

1 Introduction

As Solesbury has stated, evidence-based policy is not so much the triumph of the social science—i.e. supply-driven—but expression of a greater pragmatism on the part of the policy development process—i.e. it is demand driven (Solesbury 2001). Evidence-based policy presents an opportunity, but also a direct challenge for researchers; that of providing evidence which is deemed relevant to and can be communicated and discussed within the policy-making process. This paper will present a project, which was commissioned by the European Union to provide advice to countries on changes to the balance of cost-sharing in higher education and their possible impacts (Orr et al. 2014a, b). This commission can be seen within the context of a multinational organisation encouraging the use of evidence-based policy for European and national decision-making in the policy sphere. In the case of the European Union, it set this as one of its strategic goals in 2002 (EU 2002). Indeed national governments appear to be increasingly persuaded by the argument that policies can be developed and evaluated based on the experiences of other countries, which have adopted similar policies. This is evidenced by frequent requests from national governments for such advice from multinational organisations, particularly the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).[1] This means that enterprises, such as the

[1]For instance, the Thematic Review of Tertiary Education carried out by the OECD—http://www.oecd.org/edu/skills-beyond-school/thematicreviewoftertiaryeducation.htm.

D. Orr (✉)
Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung (DZHW), Hannover, Germany
e-mail: orr@dzhw.eu

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study presented here, are expected to facilitate policy learning between countries; these studies endeavour to make a virtue out of the fact that similar policies are implemented in different ways in different contexts, providing a rich ground for learning about how they work. The very virtue of being able to observe "living social experiments" also presents a huge challenge for research. This is of making the object of investigation comparable—of creating "relationally equivalent phenomena" (Phillips 2006)—to enable a comparative analysis. Additionally, policy and practice will ultimately never be the same in each country or over time, since it is shaped by the policy environment and the cultural-historic setting. This means that such a study has the second challenge of retaining the information within the analysis that is provided by the variety of contexts and the methods of implementation.

The specific task set for the researchers of the study presented here was formulated as follows: "*...to provide a consolidated, accessible and up-to-date overview of the effects of different models of cost-sharing in higher education on participation patterns, the diversity, quality and relevance of educational provision and system efficiency.*"

With regard to the specific task of this study then, the third problem of such work is the comprehensiveness of the scope set by the commissioning agency. In this case the object of the study is cost-sharing (i.e. differing the contribution to funding higher education made by the state and private organisations, households or individual persons) and an evaluation of its impacts on higher education institutions' diversity, quality and relevance of educational provision, and on students' participation patterns.

The authors of the study chose the Realist Evaluation approach (Pawson and Tilley 1997, 2004; Pawson 2006) in order to satisfy these challenges and produce a policy-relevant analysis. This approach is designed to improve the understanding of how and why interventions work or do not work in a particular context and has been used frequently in the field of the evaluation of social programmes. As described in a recent paper by the Australian government (Westhorp 2014): "Rather than comparing changes for participants who have undertaken a programme with a group of people who have not, as is done in random control or quasi-experimental designs, a realist evaluation compares whether a programme works differently in different localities (and if so, how and why) or for different population groups (for example, men and women, or groups with differing socio-economic status). Realist evaluations can be undertaken with small or large groups and with qualitative and/or quantitative data."

The realist evaluation starts out from the programme theory, i.e. the theory about how to bring about a particular change which underpins the specific intervention. This is a common approach in political analysis, since all policy must have an explicit intension at the outset. Following the realist philosophy (Sayer 1992), the approach assumes that social systems are open systems and their boundaries are permeable and flexible. This has important ramifications for any analysis, because it means that the way a particular intervention works (i.e. its outcomes) will vary depending on the context in which it is set. The approach looks to outcomes, but

particularly tries to identify "mechanisms" which enable these effects, as it also posits that these mechanisms sometimes fire and sometimes do not (i.e. outcomes may vary). Ultimately, it is people who determine whether this happens based on their decision-making, i.e. it is the interaction between the resources a programme provides, withholds, makes attractive or unattractive and the reaction of intended target group for the intervention which affects the outcome. Importantly, the assumption is that the mechanism will seldom be visible, but must be induced from this interaction. This is an important insight, which is helpful for policy reform, especially as many reforms have historically been found to be ineffective. In this regard, Andrews speaks of successful reforms as positive deviations and sees their openness to interactions and iterative adaptation as one common characteristic for success (Andrews 2013). Following this approach, the task of the researchers is to find or postulate programme theories, which can be investigated in the study.

In the following, the object of study (cost-sharing) will be briefly presented, and then the programme theories associated with it, the research questions and way of collating information for the study follow on from this. Subsequently, the results of the study will be discussed and the paper will close with general considerations for evidence-based policy.

2 Cost-Sharing as Policy Issue

Higher education systems have been and are continuing to be faced with the task of accommodating growing numbers of students without compromising the quality of education, and without creating undesired inequalities of access. The Council of the European Union stated in its strategy document for 2020 that "high quality will only be achieved through the efficient and sustainable use of resources—both public and private, as appropriate", whilst stressing that educational opportunity should be open to all citizens "irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances" (EU 2009). In 2011, a strategy document, specifically focussed on higher education within the framework of the overall EU strategy for supporting growth and jobs, laid out an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education system (EU 2011). It too called for improvements in the quantity and quality of higher education graduates. Some of this growth should come from attracting "a broader cross-section of society into higher education" (EU 2011). The document stated that the total investment in higher education in Europe was too low, at 1.3 % of GDP on average, behind both US and Japan, and that additional funding sources —"be they public or private"—were necessary (EU 2011). Internationally comparative data sets show that over the last two decades, there has been a shift towards larger shares of private funding of higher education. This tendency can be related to similar trends of privatisation in various areas of public services and administration (Megginson and Netter 2001). Even though higher education is not easily

comparable to other types of public institutions, motives to aim for increased shares of private financial contributions in higher education are not unlike what drives privatisation of other social subsystems. They include: restricting public spending in times of severe fiscal constraints; reducing organisational inertia; and increasing efficiency by replacing monopolies through competitive environments, among other things.

The three main issues highlighted in the study as relevant to policy development in cost-sharing are impacts on sustainability, effectiveness and equity.

- *Sustainability*: In the context of very large and in many cases still growing higher education sectors, there is a need to find a funding model that can cope with this challenge. Whilst higher education is seen as a major driver of a nations' economic and social well-being, growth in higher education participation puts enormous strains on the public purse. This has led to higher education institutions (HEIs) diversifying their income sources, often by charging (higher) tuition fees.[2] The advantage of tuition fees over other sources of supplementary income is that they do not tend to add additional costs to the institution or divert academic staff away from their core teaching responsibilities, as might be the case with entrepreneurial activities or research grants. Tuition fees can also represent a significant and reliable share of HEIs' income, unlike other possible sources of private funding (i.e. businesses and private donations).
- *Effectiveness*: This is about high-quality provision of higher education, which ensures that HEIs can provide students with the best possible training. There is an argument that the introduction of market mechanisms into the higher education system will increase HEIs' responsiveness to the needs of students and the labour market into which they should transition following graduation.
- *Equity*: There are in fact two perspectives to the equity issue. On the one hand, the equity notion argues that those who benefit directly from higher education should also contribute to its costs. If they do not, students' training is funded by all tax-payers, whether they themselves had a fair chance to study or not. On the other hand, the equity notion focuses on current barriers to higher education participation and places attention on the question of whether additional costs at entry to higher education will increase these barriers, making higher education participation even more unfair than before fees. These two perspectives do not have to be contradictions, since the additional money raised through private revenues can be used to particularly support under-represented groups.

As can be seen from these three issues, changes to cost-sharing are expected to affect the behaviour of institutions of higher education and of students. For this reason, the study adopts a twofold perspective on cost-sharing: firstly, cost-sharing

[2]This paper uses the term 'tuition fee' to refer to "any sum of money paid by students with which they formally and compulsorily contribute to the costs of their higher education" (Eurydice 2012).

is investigated in terms of the changing balance of public and private revenues for *institutions*. From the perspective of HEIs, cost-sharing involves changes to the share of public and private funding as income sources (and the respective role of tuition fees, contract income, philanthropic donations, etc. as opposed to state funding). Secondly, the study also adopts the *student* perspective by investigating the costs students (and/or their families) cover in order to pursue higher education, but also to support themselves while completing their studies. Thus, even in countries without tuition fees, there is still a substantial amount of cost-sharing, because no higher education system covers students' educational and living costs completely.

3 Method of the Study

3.1 Hypotheses

According to the method chosen, the first step was to set out a framework within which to investigate the programme theory associated with cost-sharing. For this, four "hypotheses" were developed. The hypotheses pick up on key aspects of sustainability, effectiveness and equity of tuition fee policies in higher education.

- *Hypothesis A*: As private funding increases, total revenue of HEIs increases, if public funding (at least) remains constant.
- *Hypothesis B*: As the incentives to earn private funding increase, HEIs become more responsive to student demand, if they have an increased motivation to maximize revenue.
- *Hypothesis C*: Increasing private funding has a negative effect on student demand, if some students have liquidity or rate of return issues.
- *Hypothesis D*: Increasing private funding affects student choice of how and what to study, if some students have liquidity or rate of return issues.

All hypotheses start out from a very general description of the intervention observed by stating that private funding increases. This is in accordance with the broad scope for the analysis set by the terms of reference. Later in the project and in the final analysis the specificity of the intervention was increased by focusing on increases (or decreases) in tuition fees.

The first hypothesis (A) is very simple assuming that an increase in private funding will lead to a total increase in the revenues of HEIs. It has—as with the following hypotheses—a special focus on the three central challenges for cost-sharing; in this case on sustainability. The mechanism required for this to work appears not to be a mechanism at all under the common understanding, since it does not speak of reasoning or norms which affect decisions of the target group, but instead it is an assumption about the intervention in connection with another intervention, i.e. the amount of public funding allocated. On another level, however,

it does make an assumption that increases in private funding will only be acceptable to the system (i.e. to students and to HEIs) if they are combined with (at least) stable public funding. This gives this posit almost the status of a meta-hypothesis, which provides the context for the following three hypotheses.

The second hypothesis (B) focuses on one of the expected behavioural changes —the change to the way HEIs act. It contains the expectation that more private funding will make HEIs act more like commercial enterprises, and focus more on the wishes of students as one of their major stakeholders (or customers). It contains a clear description of the mechanism which is expected to make this happen, i.e. HEIs will have an increased motivation to maximise revenue. In this, it makes an assumption about a change of culture and values, which will accompany the increase in private revenue.

The third and fourth hypotheses focus on expected changes to student behaviour. The third hypothesis (C) focuses directly on a much expressed expectation that increasing private funding will have a selective effect on students, and that some prospective students will decide against studying under the new conditions. The mechanism is that students will make their decision based on the money available to them now (i.e. their liquidity) and/or on considerations of the future financial value (i.e. rate of return) of participating in higher education, and that some will therefore decide against studying under these conditions.

The fourth and final hypothesis (D) is an attempt to be more nuanced about the possible outcome of decisions on liquidity and rates of return, since it posits that students do have some strategies available to them in order to decrease the financial impact of increases in private costs. This hypothesis expects that the outcome of decision-making may be that students change the way they study or what they study under the new conditions. For instance, studying part-time and working part-time or taking a subject area, where the costs of studying are lower (e.g. social science or business studies) or the financial benefits of the qualification are higher (e.g. engineering or law).

3.2 Case Studies and Comparative Analysis

The study investigates nine case studies of higher education reform in the period 1995–2010, in order to investigate the hypotheses described above—seven countries from inside the European Union and two from outside Europe. This selection of countries provides a variety of settings in which to investigate the effects. Different countries were chosen according to the following criteria: geographic coverage, economic strength, population size, enrolment numbers, share of students in private higher education, degree of public funding of institutions, changes to private funding, tuition fee policy, and student financial aid provision. The higher education systems covered are: Austria, Canada, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and South Korea.

The case studies were written in a standardised manner, based on a strict template for structure and for the data and information sources to be used for each topic. They were written by the authors, but the data and information were provided by national experts, who also carried out interviews in their countries (again based on a standardised template) in order to further investigate certain topic areas, especially those for which little national data were systematically available.

Although the case study reports cover the whole breadth of cost-sharing (Orr et al. 2014b), for the comparative analysis the authors focused on changes to tuition fee policy, since they took the view that the investigation should focus on a clear policy intervention in order to facilitate comparison across the countries. It was surmised that the countries with the biggest and most rapid shifts in tuition fee policy would be most interesting for the study, since such shifts could be expected to have greater impact on student and HEI behaviour than a generally stable tuition fee policy. For this reason the cases were split into 'discontinuity countries' (Austria, England, Germany and Portugal) and 'continuity countries' (Canada, Finland, Hungary, Poland and South Korea) for the analysis. The table in Fig. 1 presents a summary overview of the country patterns.

Share of fee-paying students (rows)			
Increased			England 1998 England 2006 Germany 2006/07 Austria 2001
Stayed the same		Finland	Portugal 2003 (England 2012)* South Korea Canada
Decreased	Poland Austria 2009 Germany 2011-2013		Hungary
Average amount paid per student (columns)	Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased

Fig. 1 Overview of tuition fee policy change in the period of investigation. *Note* When no year is given it means that any change was gradual. (England 2012)*: The 2012 tuition fee reform in England is outside the period of investigation of this study, but will be included where data are available and relevant for the purpose of this study. *Source* Orr et al. (2014a, p. 9)

4 Discontinuity Countries with Big Shifts in Fee Policy

In the cases of England (1998 and 2006), Austria from 2001 and Germany (from 2006), both the share of students paying fees and the average fees increased. In Austria and Germany this was because fees were introduced. In the case of England (1998), fees were introduced, but there were waivers for certain student groups; from 2006 almost all students were paying fees and the fees had also risen to higher levels. The share of students paying fees stayed the same in the newest 2012 reform in England, but the fee levels rose again. In the case of Portugal, fees were introduced in 2003 and rose insubstantially until 2010. That makes England, in the most recent period, and Portugal in some ways similar to the continuity countries.

In the cases of Austria (2009) and Germany (following 2011), both the share of students paying fees and the average amount of fees decreased. In the cases of Austria and Germany, this was because the fees that had been introduced earlier in the 2000s were abolished (for all, but a small group of students).

5 Continuity with Some Shifts in Fee Policy

South Korea and Canada are examples of countries in which fees are a common part of the funding constellation for higher education. In both countries fees rose over time, but there was no substantial change to the share of students paying these fees. Thus, although the countries have fees, they are viewed as continuity countries in the analysis.

In the case of Hungary and Poland, the share of students paying fees decreased over time, which was to some extent made possible by the declining number of students due to demographic change (Orr et al. 2014a, p. 35). In Poland this development even led to fees decreasing on average.

In the case of Finland, aside from an experiment with fees for some foreign students, neither the policy on the amount of students paying fees (none), nor the fee level (zero) changed over the time period observed in the study.

6 Analysis and Results

The four hypotheses were tested by analysing statistical and survey data from nine countries, and by conducting interviews with key national informants. The concept of discontinuity versus continuity policies was used to identify the most interesting differences, although some changes in other areas of funding policy also made the continuity countries illuminating. The results of the analysis are summarised below.

In general, public funds to institutions do not decrease as private funds increase—not even on a per-student basis.

An analysis of the data for the case-study countries shows that over the 15 year period of investigation, the general trend has been that public funding per student has increased, although this was not a constant upwards climb in most cases. Cases in which public income decreased significantly over longer stretches of time are Canada in the late 1990s, South Korea 1999–2001, England post-2007, or Austria 2004–2009. Further research suggests that these decreases in public per-student income have one of two main causes: either a serious economic downturn—this was the case in Canada in the early 1990s (with effects on public spending being delayed into the late 1990s), and in South Korea after the currency crisis of 1997/1998; or a fast enrolment growth, as in Poland in the 1990s to mid-2000s, and, albeit less pronounced, in Austria in the 2000s. In England, both factors appear to have worked together after 2007. Figure 2 shows the development of per-student income from fees and the public purse, which increased in parallel until 2007, when a system change becomes evident. In this case, therefore, England can be seen to be the only country in the set of case-study countries where HEI income is now largely increasing due to student fees. At the same time, this analysis hides the fact that the fees in England are offered to students as deferred payments, which they only begin to pay once they start earning a substantial wage. Until this point, the fees are indirectly funded through the public purse.

The conclusion, suggested by observations of the cases, is that the main principle of higher education funding remains "public first", with only England seemingly attempting to move to the principle of "private first". This conclusion is fortified by the fact that Poland and Hungary, and rather surprisingly South Korea, have used a decline in the number of students in order to increase their public funding per student.

What the data do not include are the more recent effects of the financial crisis from 2008 to 2009, which has taken some time to impact on public spending in certain countries. A case in point is Portugal, where recent figures suggest that

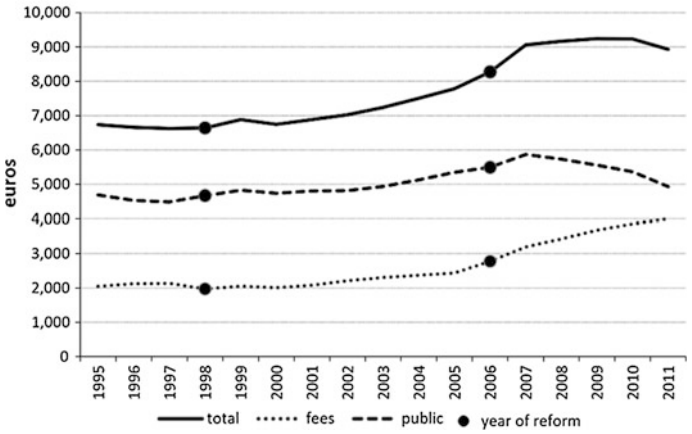

Fig. 2 Per-student income by source in English HEIs (1995–2011, constant prices). *Source* Orr et al. (2014a, p. 48)

public spending per student has been declining (Cerdeira et al. 2014). As with other cases visible in the observation of the 15 year period of investigation, however, this may not be leading to a system change, but instead a temporary situation in the context of the public funding crisis. Only time can tell.

In general, responsiveness as a result of cost-sharing is less marked in traditional universities and more clearly visible in new institutions.

This was not a simple area to investigate and the conclusions here are based on interviews and proxy measures for responsiveness. The term 'responsiveness' used in Hypothesis B subsumes any kind of behaviour that can be understood as a (re) action to satisfy actual or anticipated user demand or to actively produce such demand. Several aspects of such behaviour were investigated in this study: the mix of disciplines institutions offer, diversity of provision, diversity in the modes of study, the focus on certain, financially attractive user groups, outreach activities and efforts to increase quality and relevance of instruction.

It turns out that the expectation that HEIs will become more responsive is based on a naïve business-based concept of the university. The study finds little evidence for HEIs "chasing the money" for a number of reasons. Firstly, in many cases, the incentive for an HEI to do this is low. This is because fees often only cover a fraction of the total costs of a study place, with the rest coming from the public purse, which has increasingly been using performance-based indicators and target agreements to steer HEIs from a distance (Orr and Jaeger 2009). Secondly, and in connection with new governance constellations in higher education, the autonomy of HEIs is often restricted, so that quick reactions to new demands in the market are limited (Eastermann et al. 2011). Thirdly, there are other incentives, particularly concerning research activities, which may be stronger and may therefore gain more attention on the part of the universities (OECD 2014; Wespel et al. 2013). Finally, universities are perhaps better understood as organisations framed by a college culture, in which prestige and excellence in certain disciplinary fields is valued more than reactions to external stimuli (Bergquist 1992).

What the study did find, in contrast, was that a number of case-study countries had been introducing new forms of HEI in order to have a more responsive higher education sector. A wave of newly established private institutions (e.g. in South Korea and Poland) and/or of an alternative type of public or private institution with an inherent vocational orientation was the result (e.g. 80 % of student growth in Finland and 66 % of growth in Austria was in the polytechnic/Fachhochschule sectors).—To some extent, such developments also take the pressure for change off the existing university sector, including change towards more responsiveness.

Demand for higher education has been increasing everywhere throughout the last two decades to such a degree that adverse effects of increased cost-sharing on participation are difficult to establish.

Both Hypotheses C and D expect that a change to the cost of studying would work as a mechanism to change students' behaviour regarding their enrolment and their modus of studying. In the case of Hypothesis C, a downturn in the number of

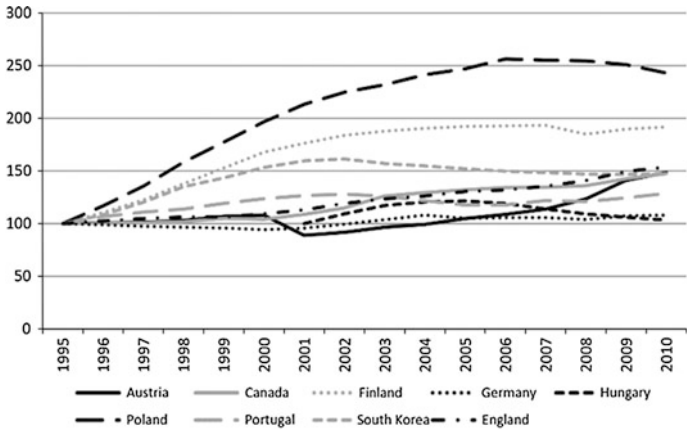

Fig. 3 Total enrollments in higher education (1995 = 100). *Source* Orr et al. (2014a, p. 79)

people enrolling for studies was expected. In the period investigated in this study, enrolment grew in all case study countries through to the mid-2000s, with declines or slowing of growth toward the end of 2000s—see Fig. 3. The case of Austria showed a dip in student numbers at the time of the introduction of the fees, but—as explained in the study—this is mostly related to the fees changing the incentive for non-students to enrol as student for such non-study benefits as cheaper medical insurance, cheaper urban travel etc. National studies showed only a small decline on the part of active-students related to the introduction of fees (Pechar and Wroblewski 2002) and Fig. 3 shows recovery and further growth in the number of students over time.

This pattern and further analyses in the study lead to four possible conclusions related to the effects of fees. The first is that the expected mechanism, that changes to students' liquidity or their evaluation of the returns on investment of studying would lead to a change in their enrolment behaviour, may occur, but not specifically because of fees alone. Fees are only a small part of student costs, in many cases, and looking at changes in the total cost structure for students over time provides a much more stable picture than one would expect if only looking at fees—see Fig. 4. Whilst the impact of the fees is clearly visible for England, it is non-apparent for Germany or Austria, where, inter alia, the drop in costs of clothing has had the largest impact on students' annual costs. Conversely, the rise in student costs for Finland, which does not raise fees, becomes visible.

The second possible explanation is also about putting tuition fees costs into a greater financial context. In many cases, study aid is provided to all students or targeted student groups in order to compensate for the fee costs. This led to the European Commission to define the major recommendation of the study as coupling study costs and study aid in a sensible manner (European Commission 2014). The study looked at the "out-of-pocket fees" of students by combining average fees and average support in the form of non-repayable and repayable study aid (grants

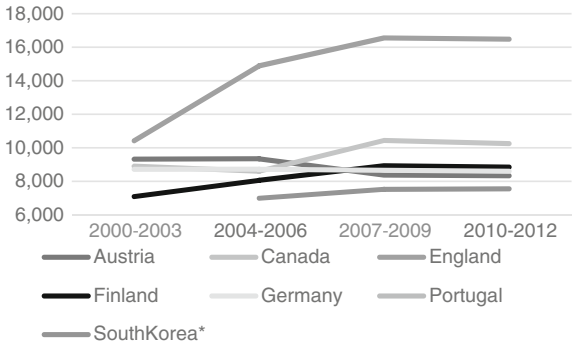

Fig. 4 Total annual costs to students in Euros including fees (constant prices 2011) *Note* In many cases the data are from national surveys, which are not carried out in the same year in every country. For this reason, the years have been banded. No multi-year data for Poland or Hungary. *Source* Orr et al. (2014a, p. 76)

and loans, respectively). The analysis showed that the "out-of-pocket fees" tend to remain under zero, which is not surprising under the assumption that such study aid is also meant to cover some part of students living costs. Only in South Korea do the costs remain above zero at around two thousand Euros per annum (constant prices). This stability is, in fact, the result of a policy whereby the annual increase in

Fig. 5 Tuition fees and out-of-pocket fees in South Korean higher education (in won, constant prices 2011). *Note* Net fees = fees minus grants, out-of-pocket fees = net fees minus loans. *Source* Orr et al. (2014b, p. 424)

fees is being compensated for through increasingly providing grants to students. This is the case in both private and public sectors—see Fig. 5 for a view of the public higher education sector.

The third possible explanation is that the mechanism of a change in financial costs is not strong enough to really have an impact. This could especially be the case in countries such as England, where there is a blanket cost of attending university or college and very little differentiation in the fee structure at Bachelor level (the focus of this study). This means that prospective students are presented with the binary choice of studying and paying the high fees (albeit deferred until they earn a regular wage on the labour market) or not studying at all. Indeed, two developments in the English context are particularly interesting. Firstly, that few student groups appear to have changed their enrolment patterns after the introduction of higher fees in 2012 (but all three previous explanations are also important in order to understand the English case) (UCAS 2012). Secondly, that HEIs have changed their support structures for new students over time. Whilst these largely provided certain groups of students (including students from underrepresented groups) with direct grants to offset the costs of their fees in the beginning, they are now using around 12 % of funding income through fees to fund specific (non-financial) support initiatives for these groups (OFFA 2013). This is also in accordance with a recent national study in the United Kingdom looking at effective means to support widening participation, which sees costs as only one of the issues (Higher Education Academy 2012).

The fourth possible explanation is that there are effects, but that these only impact on small groups of students—and big effects on small groups look like small effects, even if you can see them. In the review of studies looking at students' socio-economic characteristics, no common patterns were really evident. However, it was also not possible to conclude that fee policy has a direct impact on the participation on underrepresented groups. In fact, in a number of countries (including Poland and England, which had clear data to show this) participation of underrepresented groups has been increasing. However, it should not be forgotten that these changes are happening within a higher education system which has been both expanding and diversifying. We know, for instance, that the non-university and the private sectors are more inclusive than the university sector, so if these sectors are growing, it means that higher education is offering more places, which are attractive or "acceptable" for new student populations. More subtle research, which was outside the remit of this study, is necessary to unpack such (new) effects of both vertical and horizontal differentiation by social background within the higher education system.

7 Endnote

In a possible continuum between empirical research and policy advice, the study presented here tends towards the latter. This has made it a very useful vehicle for stimulating new debates on cost-sharing and tuition fee policy in Europe and abroad

(e.g. in Australia during the current reforms there). One of the central recommendations of the study was that policy-makers and disputants consider both the questions of sustainable funding of higher education provision, and equitable access and success for students together, since it can be observed that this is seldom the case. In Germany, which abolished all tuition fees in all Länder by 2014, the study was featured in a big article in Spiegel Online, but was not commented upon further. However, recently, the German Rectors' Conference has referred both to this study and a special German report on the development of public spending on teaching in higher education per student (Dohmen and Krempkow 2014) to call for a renewed discussion on tuition fees and their possible place in higher education funding. It is this type of triangulation of the results and re-connecting the findings to national contexts that should be the ultimate goal of comparative research. In this way, it can feed into national policy debates and decision-making processes. It is also hoped that the study will stimulate new research, which goes beyond a frequently encountered strong fixation on tuition fees as an isolated cost and an independent variable to view higher education funding in its larger real-life context.

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Does Research Influence Educational Policy? The Perspective of Researchers and Policy-Makers in Romania

Georgeta Ion and Romiță Iucu

1 Introduction

Over the last few years, there has been an increase in interest in European countries in the issue of how evidence is used to inform educational policy, and how these processes might be improved. Evidence informed policy and practice in education is one of the immediate priorities of the European Commission as described in, for example, the ET2020 strategic framework (European Commission 2009).

A growing interest in strengthening the link between research and educational policymaking has been reported in a number of European countries. There is evidence, for example, that in Denmark research has become more widely used in deciding policy (Bugge Bertramsen 2007). In the Netherlands, evidence-based strategies are present in the national policy agenda, and a new unit within the Ministry of Education Culture and Science, called the "Knowledge Chamber" (Kenniskamer), has been created with the aim of producing properly researched information which can be used by policy makers (Stegeman 2007), while in Finland the role of evaluation has assumed a greater importance within public administration (Jakku-Sihvonen 2007).

However, there is still a clear perception that in the field of education and research the evidence base for policies is much less substantial than for other areas covered by the Lisbon Strategy, such as economic growth (GDP) or the labour market (employment). It has been observed that, in contrast with technological or medical research, in education research there is a low level of R&D expenditure and

G. Ion (✉)
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
e-mail: georgeta.ion@uab.cat

R. Iucu
University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: romita.iucu@unibuc.ro

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success in knowledge production, and a correspondingly slow rate in the dissemination and implementation of research (European Commission 2007).

Most of the attention in the literature on the impact of research for policymaking focuses on research production. The research will not impact useless users are willing and able to benefit from its findings. The capacity of users is therefore a significant, but largely uninvestigated issue (Lavis et al. 2003).

The potential range of people and organizations interested in research in education is wide. They include all the teachers, students, administrators and policy-makers who are directly involved in education and governments as key bodies responsible for the educational system. Beyond that, almost every group in society—parents, employers, workers and their organizations, and the non-profit sector—has an interest in education in one way or another and thus, stands to benefit from research (Levin 2004).

A number of issues have been identified, concerning the limited impact of the knowledge produced by educational research:

- Relevance and quality. Recent writing on educational research has argued that short-term, small-scale "consultancy-style" funding and the "turbulence" of higher education and higher education policy encourage "reductionist, even myopic, research into higher education" (Scott 2000). Higher education research is thus regarded as "weakly institutionalized" (Scott 2000) and as lacking "stability and quality" (Teichler 2000). As Locke (2009) has put it, 'On the one hand, efforts to make higher education research more relevant to decision-makers may render it less rigorous in the eyes of academic peers, and therefore even less likely to result in publication in prestigious journals. On the other, attempts to build a firmer intellectual foundation, a more critical and sharper analytical edge and a stronger institutional base within higher education itself, all risk eroding its influence on national policy making and institutional practice.' (Locke 2009).
- Lower levels of education research funding compared to other policy fields (OECD 2000, 2003).
- Diversity of educational research and researchers. As a field of enquiry rather than a discipline in its own right, 'educational research relies on different disciplines and therefore may follow very different methodologies to reach different or even contradictory results on the same issues' (European Commission 2007: 15).

Difficulties in the process of knowledge transfer from research into policy are not unique to education. A recent report from the MASIS project (Monitoring Policy and Research Activities on Science in Society in Europe) on the knowledge transfer between research and policy in fields other than education suggest that a number of structural, contextual and cultural circumstances play a key role.

However, many of the challenges for research-policy transfer relate to the communication mechanisms and practices used (Bultitude et al. 2012; Cherney et al. 2012). Studies in educational research and practice indicate that policy-makers often perceive the use of technical and complex language in research reports as barriers (Vanderlinde and Van Braaka 2010). As has emerged in a series of interviews and surveys undertaken in 2008 by EC-DG Research with European policymakers, senior

advisers and knowledge transfer specialists, among the main factors hindering the take-up of research-based evidence by policy-makers reported by the three groups are differing time scales and imperatives for communication between policy-makers and researchers, the absence of appropriate channels for communicating between both groups and filters for translating results (European Commission 2008).

These remarks essentially point towards the process linking research findings to educational policy-making, and indicate the need to re-examine the role of the networks connecting educational research and decision-making (Levin 2004; Saunders 2007; Sebba 2007).

OECD has coined the term "brokerage" to define "the processes by which information is mediated between stakeholders"; the processes include formal and informal mechanisms, and, in some instances, agencies specifically set up to carry out this function. The 2007 EC Staff Working Document employs the term "knowledge mediation" as synonym of "brokerage", defined as 'the translation and the dissemination of knowledge and findings of research so that they can inform and influence the policymaking dimension' (European Commission 2007: 6). Mediation can take an "active" or an "interactive form", providing resources directly accessible to decision-makers (e.g. databases and websites) or mechanisms that actively engage the decision makers in the process, for example through forms of partnership (European Commission 2007: 42).

The dimension of "knowledge mediation" or "brokerage" for educational research has been flagged up by both EC and OECD as the weakest link in the research-policy transfer.

According to a survey conducted by the EIPEE project (Evidence-informed Policy-making in Education in Europe) in 2011, of 269 identified examples of linking activities in education in 30 of the 32 target countries in Europe, only 10 % of the activities identified occurred at the mediation level, compared with 67 % predominantly concerned with producing research (Gough et al. 2011).

In most Member States, web portals, databases and conferences exist to act as a communication channel between research results and policy-makers. These instruments are usually the responsibility of public education authorities or research institutions. The EC experts, however, are still waiting for conclusions about their actual dissemination and therefore their relevance and usefulness (European Commission 2007: 46).

A number of countries are seeking to achieve a closer and more stable relationship between research and policy through new forms of partnership between the communities. Some Member States have created regional institutions to create a consensual approach to policy development at local level (e.g. DE, ES, FR, IT). Brokerage agencies have been established in Denmark, Netherlands and United Kingdom with the aim of providing independent reviews, creating agreed methods of evaluation, and presenting the research results in ways which fit better with the needs of end-users. New research/analysis units have been developed within education ministries in, for example, Malta, the Netherlands, Spain, France, and the UK, and 'policy-facing research centres' in Finland, Austria, and Denmark (European Commission 2007: 46–51).

Furthermore, the correlation between the presence of brokerage arrangements and the extent to which research-based knowledge has a real impact on decision-making is found to be particularly weak in Romania and Albania. Though brokerage arrangements are in place, the de facto impact of the scientific evidence on decision-making processes appears to be modest (MASIS 2012). In Romania, implementation and regulation mechanisms have not led to planned, systematic and predictable outcomes in the long run. For example the problems within Romanian scientific research have been addressed in numerous articles, many of them appearing in the Science Policy Review. Kappel and Ignat (2012) claim that, in Romania, research faces particular difficulties.

- In Romania, both theoretical and applied research do not engage in dialogue with each other. Rather, they are based on flows of communication, information or knowledge that takes the form of a vertical transfer from science to technology.
- There is no need to examine the process of technological transfer;
- Issues about the quality of applied research are still unaddressed in Romania, and aspects of research relating to design and micro- production are not financed by the state.

Moreover, Lupei (2012) identifies further problems in the field of Romanian research: "In spite of some positive aspects, such as the elaboration of Romanian research strategy in line with the European Union framework and national research-development plans, the outcomes are below expectations".

Although it ranks very low, research results have improved in the last 5–6 years. There has been a growth in investment in infrastructure and an increase in the number of publications and patents (although it is still small compared to other former socialist countries).

The aim of this paper is to identify the major issues linked to the use of educational research, and the relationship between research in education and education policy insofar as they emerge through the attitudes and preoccupations of education researchers and policy makers. Does research influence educational policy? In what way? How well? In order to answer these questions, we focus first on research production, trying to identify the researchers' perception about the quality and the potential of their research for the policy making process. Secondly, we analyze the policy makers' attitudes towards research products and transfer. Finally, we discuss the obstacles and opportunities of research transfer to policy making, and offer some suggestions as to how it can be improved.

2 Methods

A qualitative approach, through the use of in-depth interviews, was adopted (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). The interview guideline was validated by pilot testing, evaluation and consultation with senior professional colleagues.

2.1 Method and Instrument

The use of interviews meant that data could be collected directly from the key figures within the university and policy making field. The interviews were conducted over a period of 6 months with the questions being determined by the nature of the research objectives and the theoretical framework identified in the introduction.

Internal validity was ensured by the selection of informants using the following criteria: length of experience in their position, type of institutional body (individual or collective), training and academic standing. This ensured that our interviewees conformed to a wide variety of profiles. The interviews took between 40 and 50 min and were conducted at each participant's workplace. The selection of the respondent sample was based on their representativeness, established using non-probability criteria and using the theoretical sampling of Flick (2004). In order to act as a control on the consistency of the responses, 6 of the participants were interviewed a second time.

The present study used interviews organized with two different key figures involved in the process of disseminating educational research results for policy-making: decision-makers and researchers. For **decision-makers**, a semi-structured interview was employed. The participants were asked about the following topics:

- their perceptions of the impact of educational research in the interviewees' department or institution in the last 2–3 years
- their perceptions about the areas in which recently performed research was most widely used
- their opinion regarding factors that favour/inhibit the use of research in decision making.

Data from **researchers** were collected through structured interviews that included open-ended questions. The questions examined the functioning of the research system in Romania, the characteristics of research production, research dissemination, obstacles and opportunities regarding research in education, and its transfer into the policy making sphere. The questions also focused on the involvement of key social groups and the structures and processes which serve to enhance the use of the research results in education.

2.2 Participants

Interviews were conducted at four public universities in Romania: University of Bucharest (UB), Alexandru Ioan Cuza University in Iasi (UAIC), the Babes Bolyai University of Cluj (UBB) and Transylvania University of Brasov (UTB). These are ones of the most important universities across Romania, according to the

classification of the universities in the Romanian higher education system.[1] UB, UAIC and UBB are the first three universities according to "the advanced research and teaching" classification and UTB is the first one according to the "research and teaching based universities" classification.

We also interviewed key figures involved into **policy making** from the national educational agencies and the Ministry of Education. The participants were:

1. Academics performing research and engaged in decision-making in universities, departments or faculties. This category comprised in-depth interviews with university vice-rectors in charge of quality assurance, faculty deans and heads of departments.
2. Leading analysts of higher education governance and management. This comprised interviews with senior academics and experts in higher education management, as well as academics currently engaged in senior managerial roles, such as chancellor or vice-chancellor.
3. Researchers. In this category we interviewed researchers working at university level and at research centres' level. The participants' profiles are detailed in Table 1.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data from the interviews were analyzed and systematized using Maxqda 11 software. A preliminary report was drafted, identifying the key themes that emerged from the interviews, as well as any issues or themes that could be considered contentious. This report then formed the basis for the second phase of data collection, involving a group of nine academics. These participants were selected on the basis of their expertise in management in the context of higher education in Europe.

The data analysis was conducted on three levels. At the preliminary level the key units of meaning were identified. The second level of analysis involved the identification of single units of meaning through an axial coding system linking the dimensions of analysis with a set of complex significance topics. The third level of analysis extended the process of synthesis in order to extract the textual units.

The strategy used to ensure internal validity was the selection of informants using a criteria system incorporating such aspects as: experience in management positions, type of institution (individual or collective), training, academic standing, and so on. This ensured that there was variety in our informants' profiles.

[1]According to Romanian Education Act (nr. 1/2011) the universities are divided into "advanced research and teaching" "research and teaching based universities" and "teaching based universities" (this classification was published in the HG 789/2011).

Table 1 Participants' description

Code	Participants' profile		
	Researcher	Policy-maker	Institution type
Interview 1 (I1)	x	x	Higher education institution
Interview 2 (I2)	x	x	Professional association
Interview 3 (I3)		x	National agency in pre-university educational system
Interview 4 (I4)		x	National agency in accreditation and certification system
Interview 5 (I5)	x		Higher education institution
Interview 6 (I6)	x	x	Higher education institution
Interview 7 (I7)	x	x	Ministry of Education
Interview 8 (I8)	x	x	Higher education institution
Interview 9 (I9)	x	x	Ministry of Education
Interview 10 (I10)	x	x	Higher education institution
Interview 11 (I11)	x		Higher education institution
Interview 12 (I12)	x	x	Higher education institution
Interview 13 (I13)	x	x	Higher education institution

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Research in Higher Education in Romania

Over the past few years, the Romanian Higher Education System has developed an interest in scientific research, covering all fields of study, except educational practices and policies. Both researchers and policy-makers welcome the recent governmental focus on financing research activity, as well as on upgrading it to a high standard so as to gain a high position in the academic rankings of world universities. The impetus for this derives from the most recent assessment of Romanian universities, an important criterion being the quality of the scientific outcomes.

In an attempt to define the context of research in Romania, participants showed an interest in the issue and identified the factors preventing the efficient production

and transfer of research. Insufficient financing and low quality research evaluation criteria are offered as possible causes.

A key observation is the growing interest in research shown by those willing to take part in this kind of activity: *There is a favourable context for research in Romania and, like any crisis situation, it fosters innovation. On the contrary, as far as financing is concerned, research activity must be reconsidered to be the backbone of any developing university. For the past year and a half, I have noticed a real interest in research on the part of academics and teaching staff preparing for their teaching grade I.*" *(I6)*

In spite of this favourable period, research activity faces structural and organizational difficulties. For instance, one of the researchers, a vice-rector, declared: *At the moment, in Romania, research is struggling. There are numerous legal and administrative barriers within the institution. People are extraordinary, but they are not given enough freedom to exercise their initiative. (I8)*

The questions to be posed are what are the causes leading to such a situation, and what can be done to improve the links between scientific research and decision-making processes in education? To answer these questions, we identify aspects of academic research and the transfer strategies used.

3.2 Research Production

One aspect of the research transfer process is research production and its producers. It should be stressed that the results of research must be transferred to policies based on high quality research.

3.2.1 Scientific Research—Between Relevance and Stringency

Most of the participants in the survey define the current context of the research production within the universities as being segmented and ambiguous, incoherent and fragmented. This is mainly due to the wide range of objectives and to the gap between research and politics. With regard to the first point, the target group believes that: *I would stress the idea that in Romania, researchers adopt European, rather than national policy determinants. (I1)*

Likewise, research production is not based on the real needs of the system or local context, but rather on international priorities, or they are imposed by the national or European financing organizations. In this sense: *Research should be based on the researcher's thirst for knowledge. It seems to me that, nowadays, researchers proceed according to financial and research opportunities. (I10)*

Furthermore, researchers believe that research activity is less institutionalized and lacks sustainability and quality as a result of a lack of financial resources. Thus, the interviewees consider that: *There is little to complain about it. There should be loud voices, more focused, less divergent. The existence of a scientific community*

becomes a "must", a community bound together by adults' training and education and prepared to speak up for educational policies. (I11)

Apart from this, there are also structural and organizational drawbacks hampering the management of research and highlighting the financial difficulties: *First, it is the research budget and reductions, and this is always tough for the university budget. In the case of LLL projects, based on a fixed budget, Romanian legislation prevented some activities from being carried out. Even if money is not a problem, the parameters of Romanian legislation and some exaggerated interpretations make it difficult for research activities to be performed. Moreover, there has been a reduction in finance at the European level for some time now. (I8)*

Besides, university managers believe that, even if it has become a priority, scientific research is still an *unequal structured* and *disorganized* domain. *Research is part of any academic field of activity. In the field of research, however, there is little research, besides the scarcity of financial resources. (I12)*

Another limit on research development is incoherent management (characterized by the lack of coherent politics and strategies promoted from top management), and a poorly developed culture of research ("*poor interest in research*", "*the value given to the research activity in the academic life*" among others factors, as participants stated). *From a structural point of view, I believe that organizational culture plays a vital role. Any organization is represented by the culture it promotes. (I3)*

3.2.2 Research Activity Between Duty and Vocation

Various answers helped to sketch the profile of the researcher, as the centre of any research activity. On the one hand, universities and public organizations expect researchers to produce high quality knowledge likely to have social application and, on the other hand, their activity is deterred by cumbersome institutional mechanisms and the lack of resources, and the balance between research and teaching in the case of academics in universities. Actually, researchers tend to focus more on the importance of research than on teaching. Illustrative of this is the comment: *Research is moving towards an international standard. Most universities exert a lot of pressure on the teaching staff to carry out research. Eight years ago, the focus was on teaching. Academic management considers research to be a prospective source of finance. This trend can now be found in the Romanian education system. The pressure is even greater due to academic ranking. (I11)*

In order to survive, as a researcher, you need to *be* "*strategic*", "goal-oriented so as to meet the social and academic demands regarding current interdisciplinary approaches promoted by the national and international research strategies" as argues one of the researchers.

The pressure to publish and the amount of research-teaching activity detract researchers' attention from the business of applying research results to educational policies. In this sense: *First, research only meant public dissemination at a conference and publication of one article, no more. Now, things have changed. We must publish only ISI articles. (I4)*

The teaching-research relationship is frequently raised by the interviewees, who mainly emphasized the value of research for institutional accreditation and personal assessment. Another key observation is the teaching workload that will influence the scientific profile of the research in education: *Most people in education are overloaded with tasks other than research. The regular teaching workload does not include time for research activities. Obviously, the amount you can produce is insignificant. There is not enough time for research. Cross-disciplinary teams are required. I hope there will be sufficient time and resources to motivate people. (I10)*

The evaluation system of the teaching personnel prioritizes research activity. Nevertheless, it brings about a conflict of roles at a personal level and causes *frustration since your job is purely didactic, whereas your evaluation is based on research. The teaching workload is too high, and the effort expended on daily tasks leaves little time for research (I3).*

All in all, the research system needs to be improved from the very beginning, starting with its production stages. All the participants in the research agreed on this. Other possible solutions are the balancing of teaching and research activities, and generating high motivation for the latter, as well as taking into account the impact that scientific research must have on the local educational practices.

3.3 Research Activity Between Duty and Vocation

Frameworks and policies developed by education systems have a great influence on schools. Despite the general move towards greater school-level responsibility over the past 15 years, it is still the case in government school systems that central policy makers have a significant influence on school staffing and resourcing, curriculum development, assessment, and shaping the environment within which schools operate. Central government educational policies also influence the conduct of schools and the work of teachers in other ways. The most obvious is through resource allocation in terms of staffing, and the provision of discretionary funding.

Research therefore can have an impact on schools not only through the direct take-up of new ideas and findings by principals and teachers, but also through developments initiated by government educational policy makers that are derived from research, and through information that is disseminated to schools by the central government.

Both researchers and decision-makers agree on the relationship between research and education, claiming there is no systematic transfer of research results to education. Researchers do not consider the transfer of research a priority, as within *the field of education there is a general conservativism and a reluctance to change* (I8). Lack of interest in research transfer is also due to lack of financing for the dissemination of project outcomes.

Bureaucracy is one of the main obstacles faced by researchers with regard to research transfer, *as well as the lack of specialized academic structures likely to ensure the effectiveness of the process* (I3).

Another reason is the researchers' "laziness". According to a researcher's opinion: "*One cause is laziness. People tend to feel more comfortable with what they already know. Obviously, there is some reluctance to undertake a research program, so much so financing is uncertain. You can launch a research project only to end up empty handed, with the project being suspended*" *(10)*

There are also barriers at the level of organizations and structures in charge of implementing the outcomes of research programmes, such as the Ministry of Education. Researchers consider it may not be interested enough in the research results and the participants emphasize the reasons why:

> Another problem is the frequent and rapid changes taking place within the Ministry. One politician may adopt a particular measure and then he/she leaves and somebody else steps in and no longer wants to implement it. Thus, there is change for the sake of change. There is no consistency and continuity in decision-making. For example, the Baccalaureate exam and admission to the pre first grade program. (I9)

Nevertheless, most of the limits of research transfer deal with the language barriers between the two sectors or limits of discourse reception, which, sometimes, can be too technical or scientific. The causes of such difficulties in the discourse between the two educational sectors, as well as the possible impact on educational practices are discussed below: *There is also a language and motivation problem. Some research results do not need to be interpreted by the decision-maker before reaching the practitioner. For instance, methodologically speaking, some results may not need validation by a decision-maker so as to be implemented by a practitioner. However, when these results are presented in difficult or incomprehensible language, the practitioner will always be reluctant to adopt them. (I3)*

The researcher plays a crucial role in this process; it is up to him/her to adapt the whole process and communication strategies to the needs of the beneficiary:

> I may be suspected of using too much theory. Nevertheless, I have learned to identify and shape my own audience as a researcher, so that, the moment I design and plan the research activity, I keep in constant contact with my prospective beneficiaries. [..]I have done this and I know it is possible. When I claimed there were no results regarding the subject the decision maker was interested in, within very short time and with no institutional support, I managed to convince him/her not to make a decision. I think this shows how it should be. (I5)

Success in communication is due to the decision-makers' responsiveness and willingness to trust the experts: *To be responsive to a certain category of people. Not all results are research results. (I3)*

Research is disseminated through various channels and the language is extremely important: *All persons are affected by this educational activity. Hence, you must pay attention to the language you use, to the communication channels, the instruments meant to bring about change, that's why research in education is so difficult. It is very easy to gather data. However, it becomes difficult to carry out research in order to make a change. (I4)*

With regard to the means of research transfer in education, the respondents were of the opinion that the best strategy to merge research with the decision-making

process is the creation of collaboration networks between researchers and decision-makers, the dissemination of research to educational institutions, as well as the publication of articles.

While these conditions are essential to ensure the wide influence of research, they must be supported by ease of access to research findings. This ease of access depends on the active dissemination of research findings, but also depends on the form this takes. A range of suggestions to improve research dissemination arises from this project. Most of these are based on the view that the dissemination of research findings should be an integral part of the research process for all researchers, including postgraduate students. Such dissemination, while including publication in academic journals, should take a wider range of forms. Generally, single studies do not have a significant impact. Literature reviews, and papers that synthesize research in a form that is accessible to decision-makers are needed. Programmes and applications based on research are a means of actively involving both researcher and decision-makers together.

4 Discussion

The results of the research have emphasized the links between education and the decision-making process in the field of education. The aim was to characterize the two contexts and identify the corresponding elements of continuity or discontinuity.

The results of the study show a disconnection between the researchers' and decision-makers' expectations. The researchers require more attention from the decision makers and expect to be involved directly in the decision making process. This is due to a lack of quality caused by the poor research culture within higher education, as well as by lack of a systematic approach in disseminating research results (Simon 2012). First, participants in the present research highlighted the importance of financing as a key element in producing good quality results and in being able to produce sufficient research. The issue of financing is not typical of the Romanian context. The financing bodies in Romania either fail to provide the necessary budget for the research activity (Ion and Iucu 2012; Simon 2012), or do not use solid and transparent assessment criteria when considering the results of the research (Kappel and Ignat 2012).

Secondly, the results of our research underline the fact that research carried out within universities is inadequate to meet the needs of the decision makers, as shown by Scott as early as 2000, taking into account both research production, and research use in policy making. This leads to at least two opposite positions in higher education. One is related to the research environment with implication on the research production and supported by leading researchers, with implications for academic management and for teaching and research balance in higher education. The other addresses the decision-makers environment with reference to the research use and claims that scientific research is capable of "meeting" the political objectives, with implications for financing and control.

The present research identifies some of the causes of the gap between the research and decision-making process. Some of these causes are related to the production of research and draw attention to the fact that the results do not always meet the needs of society. First of all, researchers consider that their research activity is influenced by the priorities of the financial bodies and claims for a real relationship between research results and political trends in order to create the necessary conditions for the transfer of results to policy. They have low expectations of the contribution of research to the decision-making process and regarding the quality of their studies. For this reason, our research is in line with the studies carried out in Australia by Smith (2000), who claims that research is just one of the information sources and not the only one. Likewise, the results of the current research agree with the studies done by Kappel and Ignat (2012) who claim that one of the causes of inefficient implementation of research in Romania is the small number of applied research studies and Romanian researchers' mentality, namely, an unwillingness to accept internationally accepted quality criteria.

Another barrier to research transfer is the procedure. As argued by Scott (2000), research projects, due to their long time scale, fail to address promptly political issues that require swift solutions. Hence, Huberman (1990) claims that the interaction between the two domains brings about areas of collaboration between research results and political issues. Moreover, these links may be facilitated by the institutional structures of the parties involved (Selby-Smith et al. 1992).

In addition, the present study sheds light upon the issue of language incompatibility. Most of the research results focus on dissemination and the transfer of research. The literature in the field highlights the need for harmonization of the two contexts, in so far as language is concerned. Both researchers and decision makers live in separate worlds, observe different norms and speak different languages (Ungerleider 2012). Our study shows that the "laws" governing research activity and decision making processes are different (Levin 2004), and focuses on the importance of mediation between the two domains. According to Huberman (1990), there is a need for 'sustained interactivity', through which we can generate changes, data flows and stimulate research competencies.

National studies carried out by authorized and accredited bodies showed that universities failed to plan their institutional mission in accordance with the professional roles and structures of staff. It may be possible that a higher education institution, whose mission is to focus on its educational objectives, may fail to fulfil its national mission, and thus have negative effects on the whole system. The relationship between quality assurance and research production cannot be ignored, so much so that just one university in Romania is responsible for almost 10 % of the entire scientific research output. Accuracy and seriousness in the reporting of scientific data is one of the most significant proposals for the improvement of national policies.

5 Conclusions

Considering the participants' opinion, we provide some guidelines for researchers and policy-makers in the field of education. These tentative guidelines are illustrated according to three levels:

5.1 At the Micro or Researcher's Level

The results of our research may have implications for various levels. Firstly, researchers' responsibilities for research production and transfer are highlighted. As professionals, researchers must provide good results and contribute to the development of improved performance in education. Another key observation relates to the training system within the field of Romanian research. In order to obtain good results, applicable to educational policies, solid expertise and a new academic researcher's profile are needed, so that the balance between teaching, research and administrative tasks can be reconsidered.

5.2 At an Intervention—Organizational Level

Our research paves the way for an in-depth analysis of organizational factors likely to affect research production and transfer: engagement—interpreted as the attitude of organizations and their members towards research, the political and managerial context likely to promote and favour research transfer, and the financial context needed to foster quality results. Moreover, these institutional mechanisms may facilitate the production and transfer of research. Thus, there is a growing need for a clearer academic mission, focused on high quality research, well developed transparency and social responsibility mechanisms, as well as including the "third mission" as an academic priority. A key observation is that academic management needs to promote efficient research structures and their corresponding social transfer.

5.3 At the Macro Systemic Level of Educational Policies

The role of research is analyzed, and the focus shifts from the symbolic use of research results to a policy based on evidence. Likewise, the transparency policies promoted by Romanian higher education system are still vague and incoherent. Policy-makers are responsible for engaging as active partners in research production and use. The political implications may address the QA mechanisms likely to

assess and approve research results. This should stimulate the transfer of research locally, regionally and internationally. Moreover, "mapping" mechanisms must be implemented, as well as there being fair opportunities to access research funds and infrastructures.

The links between the two contexts, at both formal and informal levels, may add value to the linkage between research production and its transfer and use. Thus, it may improve the sense of responsibility of the parties, as long as this is based on equality and mutual respect and shared responsibilities.

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Changed Academic Relationship Between Professors and Students at Uni Potsdam: Impact of Bologna 2011–2012

Christen Hairston

1 Introduction

The University of Potsdam (Uni Potsdam), a research-intensive university situated in former East Germany, is no stranger to the major German and European policy reforms that have transformed the German higher education system over the past decade and a half. Uni Potsdam's rich regional past, young institutional history, and low state funding present a remarkable context of reform. This case study analyzes the perceptions of 25 professors amid Bologna and national reforms and found significant changes to the structure of faculty work, teaching and learning, and interaction between professors and students (Hairston 2013). This paper focuses on one thread of these findings: the ways in which the Bologna Process, during major national reforms, has changed the academic relationships between students and professors at Uni Potsdam 2011–2012.

1.1 The Bologna Process

The Bologna Process stemming from the Bologna Agreement of (1999) was initiated by the European Commission and sought to (a) improve transferability of degrees for students across Europe and beyond, (b) support the goals of a united European Higher Education Area (EHEA), (c) restructure all European degrees to the Bachelor's/Master's/PhD model, and (d) address social issues like gender inequality and an increasingly diverse society (EHEA 2010; Pritchard 2010; Witte et al. 2008). As an original signatory of the Bologna Agreement and an invested member of the process, Germany was involved from the policy's inception.

C. Hairston (✉)
Office of Student Services, Greenville Health System, Greenville, USA
e-mail: christenhairston@gmail.com

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1.2 German Higher Education Reforms

Simultaneous to Bologna, the German higher education system also engaged in its own significant reforms. German higher education is traditionally a loosely coupled system, both institutionally and nationally. Over the past decade and a half, institutions and state officials (a) built a more prescribed curricular structure via Bologna, (b) agreed upon a degree qualification framework, (c) improved internationalization initiatives of the tertiary education system, (d) introduced tuition fees in some states in 2007 and in 2014 dropped fees and became free for all, (e) increased competition in professorial work within and between institutions, (f) expanded the professorial hierarchy to include the Junior Professor (JP), and (g) shifted governance responsibilities within institutions (BMBF and KMK 2008; Charlier 2008; Enders et al. 2002; Hoell et al. 2009; Witte et al. 2008). No doubt the many reforms coming from Europe and Germany have impacted the way Uni Potsdam's professors operated and students engaged.

1.3 The German Context

German professors and institutional leaders engaged deeply in discussions on issues pertaining to Bologna to ensure that implementation did not compromise the essence of the German university. A professor is a very elite status in German culture and is considered one of the top five most important professions in the country. When participants were asked what it means to be a professor in Germany today, their answers centered around three main themes: an earned privilege, a responsibility, and the best job in the world. The status is a privilege enjoyed after a long, difficult path to the professorate. It is a responsibility in which one manages the trust and funds of the state. Professors explain it is "the best job in the world" as an opportunity to work with talented students, enjoy constitutionally granted academic freedom, and engage in the scientific questions that most interest them. The special status of a German professor informs how they define their professional roles.

When the Bologna Process began in 2000, it meant greater imposed structure upon a traditionally less structured system. Historically, German professors acted as autonomous entities and managed their chairs and departments as individual structures disconnected from one another. Each professor maintains that his or her autonomous acts are justified by academic freedom. At times, various behaviors have resulted in differentiation within and a lack of cohesion across the system. Bologna, therefore, was not only highly resisted, but also challenging to implement.

1.4 University of Potsdam

An institution built in a region with a deep and colorful heritage, the University of Potsdam is a mid-sized research university established in 1991 in former East Germany, one year after reunification. This new university developed from intercultural negotiation, an emerging national identity, and a hope for Uni Potsdam's future in a reunified Germany. The genesis of Uni Potsdam required a significant level of compromise by leadership and professors, both to accomplish the goals of the university and to respect individuals' past (East) and present (Western ideals). The first president of Uni Potsdam was Dr. Rolf Mitzer, an East German. One current Uni Potsdam professor, who was employed when the university was founded, characterized Dr. Mitzer's reign positively. "And [the first President] came from the East, but he was enthusiastic, making a lot of mistakes, because he didn't know how it happens but he wanted to build up. [It was] fantastic. Really impressive for someone—he dream[t] and envision[ed]." As years went on, Uni Potsdam emerged as a research university by recruiting many university leaders and professors from the West and beginning the university anew, gradually changing the culture of the university. Originally, professors worked only on the Am Neuen Palais campus, a historical landmark. Today, the University of Potsdam is comprised of three vibrant university campuses located in Golm, Griebnitzsee, and Am Neuen Palais across the city of Potsdam. Each campus houses distinct disciplines and possess its own campus history (Universität Potsdam 2011, 2013; Zimmerman 2011).

The University of Potsdam is the youngest and largest university in the state of Brandenburg (Landes Brandenburg 2008). Inevitably the university is influenced by its former East German context of Potsdam. Participants for this study come from a variety of different European countries and from the all four geographic areas of Germany. One LCWiSo explained the transition after reunification was eye opening. He/she shared: "You must see, in the GDR, one did not have the possibility to read a book from West Germany; we had only East German books and Soviet Union books. So far it was sort of a new worldview. I think one's own belief [system] comes from the fact that you can watch the world, and this possibility was only for the first time allowed and through close contact with many professors and other people from West Germany, this is where we were able to get a different view of the world. I think that was a good process."

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the largest East German Paedadogigische Hochschule (teaching college) was situated on what is now the University of Potsdam's main campus (Am Neuen Palais). Following reunification in 1990, most East German professors were not absorbed into the new university out of fear of their allegiance to socialist principles. However, a few East German professors still remain. One LCWiSo explained: "But I think in recent years in particular, we made great progress in fully integrating these colleagues as well. And I don't think we look at them differently and I'm not sure they look at us differently: the Western imports. But of course you know…in social science and humanities it matters even more than natural sciences, the paradigm is totally

different. And these were people who were on a career path to be the academic elite of the GDR and that didn't happen. That didn't happen. And so you got, you have a degree of sensitivity for that, I think."

In Potsdam, the Uni Potsdam experienced a convergence of all reforms, and this study offers policy makers a micro-level analysis of the macro-level reforms. Major findings include (1) an increased pressure for professors and students as a result of this convergence, (2) more demands on time, and (3) less formality between professor and student. This article provides insight into extant literature on this topic; it explains the conceptualization and methods used for this study, presents the results, and discusses how the Bologna Process has impacted the faculty and student relationship at this one institution. These reforms have meant that Bologna has (a) required professors to adapt in new ways, (b) threatened the Humboldtian ideal of a German university, and finally (c) created confusion that will continue without further harmonization, described in greater detail below.

1.5 Literature Review

Researchers agree that the impact from Bologna on higher education in Europe has been extensive (Adelman 2008; Kehm 2010; Kehm and Teichler 2006; Mayer et al. 2007; Welsh 2009). Scholars have conducted research on its impact in countries such as Italy (Aitolla et al. 2009), Russia (Gänzle et al. 2008; Grigor'eva 2007), and Spain (Fernández Díaz et al. 2010). Many studies point to the unintended outcomes and failures of the Bologna Process (Hoell et al. 2009; Reichert 2009). For example, the extended implementation has led to "Bologna Fatigue." Hoell et al. (2009) argue that, given student retention and degree-credit transfer confusion, Bologna has not yet accomplished its mission. Erling and Hilgendorf (2006) suggest that the imposition of English as the common EU language has caused an "Englishization of the domain" (273).

Few scholars have studied the direct impact of the Bologna Process on professors in Germany. Winkel (2010) found that German professors experience roadblocks in their professorial work due to the added time from the increased accountability and degree reforms. He recommended that "faculties should be given much more autonomy to act when it comes to degree reform. This way, better results can be achieved, barriers to acceptance dismantled, and phenomena of demotivation reduced" (310). But beyond Winkel, this is the only study done specifically on the impact of Bologna on German faculty at one institution at the time of this study.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Conceptually this study concentrates on the micro-level of inquiry. Structuralism and symbolic interactionism were used to analyze the change to university

structures and the professorial interactions with one another and their students. The unit of analysis is the role, "a comprehensive pattern of behavior and attitude that is linked to an identity, is socially identified more or less clearly as an entity, and is subject to being played recognizably by different individuals" (Turner 2000, p. 112). Professorial roles at one university include the behaviors and attitudes towards teaching, research, and service, as well as advising, mentoring, collaborating, etc.

1.7 Methods

This case study was grounded in an interpretivist paradigm seeking to understand rather than change the status quo (Rossman and Rallis 2003; Willis 2007). It was conducted as an embedded single-case design (Yin 2003) with two primary areas of interest: professorial work and role definition as it provided a space, within which such a distinctive policy impact study could freely develop.

This particular university setting was selected as a representative case study of a formerly East German Universität that is research intensive and a non-winner of the Excellence Initiative. Participants were purposely criterion sampled from two disciplines and two career stages: economics/social sciences (WiSo) and natural sciences (NatSci) and then early career (1–10 years) and later career (11+ years) (Patton 2002). Twelve early-career and 13 later-career professors participated for a total sample of 25 professors. Of those, twelve were WiSo and 13 were NatSci. Interviews, document analysis (European, German, and institutional), and observations were conducted between November 2011 and March 2012.

This study employed the method of data analysis in qualitative research known as coding. "Coding is a procedure that disaggregates data, breaks them down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments" (Schwandt 2007, p. 32). This was done in four ways: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz 2006). Following each interview and subsequent transcription, I unitized the data separating each transcript into individual ideas. Conceptually, these units were small, logical concepts that shed light on one small idea or belief of the participant. For initial coding, I employed a constant comparative method, in which I identified a code for the first unit, and then for the next I decided if it matched the first or required its own code. This method was continued through hundreds of units comparing one against another. Upon completion of initial coding using the constant comparative method, focused coding was used to further categorize each code into larger emerging themes. For example, units of data included initially coded "hours teaching per week," "student learning," and "lectures" and data units were then categorized during the focused coding process as "teaching." Once the data were defined both by initial and focused codes, I then organized each category "into subcategories, [which] specifie[d] the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassemble[d] the data you have fractured during the initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis" (Charmaz 2006, p. 60).

This process is known as axial coding. For teaching, one axial coding category could be "increased demands on teaching prep time." Lastly, for theoretical coding, I created matrices for ECNatSci, ECWiSo, LCNatSci, and LCWiSo so to compare behaviors and beliefs across groups. In the theoretical coding stage, I used the lenses of structuralism and symbolic interactionism, which led to my final conclusions for this study.

2 Results and Discussion

2.1 Context and Structure

In 2011–2012, Uni Potsdam enrolled 20,999 students, who were served by over 200 professors, resulting in a student to faculty ratio of 100:1. That year, the university obtained €44 million in external research funding (Gesamtfläche der Universität Potsdam 2013). Brandenburg, the university's home state, receives the lowest funding allocation in Germany, thus Uni Potsdam must often do more with less and secure additional revenue without charging tuition. As a former East German state, challenges from reunification and rebuilding costs remain a strain to the budgets of today, and higher education is no exception. As such, Drittmittel (external research funding) accounts for a significant portion of the revenue for the university's operation.

Capitalizing on its location in Brandenburg and its proximity to Berlin, Uni Potsdam collaborates with a dozen well-known research institutes to supplement its Drittmittel and to elevate its productivity. One LCNatSci stated, "We are probably the science faculty in Germany with the most extra-university institutes and jointly-appointed professors per capita." These research institutes provide student research opportunities, and institute researchers with teaching and student recruitment opportunities. Indeed, these collaborations augment opportunities for both university faculty and institute researchers, creating a scientific hub for the region.

The following section outlines Uni Potsdam's implementation of the Bologna Process and the study's major findings, for how it has meant (1) greater pressure for all, (2) more demands on time, and (3) less formality between professors and students.

2.2 Uni Potsdam's Implementation of Bologna

The Bologna implementation at the University has occurred through three phases since 2005. The first phase can be characterized as the resistance phase that, given its outcomes, was not successful. Although the faculty changed the degree nomenclature from the Diplom and Magister to Bachelor's and Master's, the programmatic content, instructional practice, and academic organization has remained the same. One ECWiSo described it as "The majority of professors here in this faculty were not

so enthusiastic about Bologna at the beginning… So, their strategy was to ignore it because at the beginning you could open new studies on the base of Bologna, a new master's and bachelor's program. There was no fixed date. In this faculty, they ignored it and they [wanted] to postpone as long as possible."

The implementation phase was much more successful, lasting three to four years prior to 2009. This second phase focused on learning outcomes, program content, professorial and student responsibility, graduate employability, increased accountability, and increasing student assessments (Prüfungen). To make the implementation of the new two-track system (BA/MA) easier, and to lower the resistance of the students and the staff of the German state and federal governments, the German Rector's Conference decided to introduce the new system and to close the traditional system over a period of several years. Thus, old and new study programs were offered simultaneously.

Diplom and Magister students remain in the Uni Potsdam system. Having begun their studies prior to Bologna, many of the Diplom students continue to take too many years to graduate. Some professors indicated the lack of a structured course of study permitted students to become dilettantes. A non-German ECNatSci exclaimed "Because once you had…if you were a student for seven years, you had the flexibility to study whatever you wanted. Then you wake up after seven years and say, "What am I doing here? I'm not employable." So that's one thing. It's beautiful, but it's not really practical, if you really think about it." Thus, as a time limitation was not imposed, the system never held students accountable, and their procrastination often led to a lengthened residence. An LCWiSo noted that almost 600–700 Diplom students in WiSo alone are continuing to study at Uni Potsdam over multiple cohorts.

Starting in 2009 or 2010, the current phase of acceptance includes greater tolerance, better organization, and additional understanding of the requirements for success. An LCWiSo explained that after "evaluating the programs", the faculty recognizes that it "must reorganize them. [Professors] must make them more innovative and that is the phase we are now in."

The Diplom degree is, however, still quite valued by many of the faculty. Many feel very strongly that the Diplom garners great prestige in Germany and its graduates are regarded as well-educated, knowledgeable individuals with a breadth and depth of knowledge in their particular area of study. One LCWiSo added "And many thought that [the] German Diplom is recognized as best in the world." An ECNatSci stated, "What my impression is that people here are very proud of what they had." With multiple student cohorts, varying degrees of buy-in, and just merely the nature of transitions, Bologna inevitably created challenges on Uni Potsdam's campus for both students and professors.

2.3 Greater Pressure for All

Amid structural changes, the Bologna Process has influenced the ways in which professors now must interact with their students in regards to knowledge

acquisition. The contextual change propelled a transformation of the student-professor relationship in two distinctive ways. First, Bologna shifted the academic paradigm from one in which students take full responsibility for their own learning, attending lectures at will, to one that is focused on learning in the context only of what the professors are teaching. Second, Bologna shifted the learning expectations by employing many more examinations, generating the practice of studying only that which will be tested, and reducing students' desire to learn for learning's sake.

2.3.1 Learning Paradigm to Teaching Paradigm

For Professors, Bologna's shift in German culture from a student-learning paradigm to a professor-teaching paradigm has resulted in transferring a higher level of responsibility from students to professors. Professors now must teach at specific levels, provide more points of accountability, and ensure that students are meeting learning outcomes at every turn. In fact, one LCWiSo stated that this shift has resulted in greater expectations by students from the professors. "The students expect from us even more [now] that they are carried through the semester."

Interestingly, as professors assume responsibility for what students learn, students have become partners in the process by holding professors accountable to the outlined learning outcomes throughout the semester. However, professors indicate that students feel justified in learning nothing more and nothing less. The pressure on professors is coming from above with the implementation of the new academic structures, and below with the expectations of students to do well in the new system. The squeeze from the top on students has resulted in the compartmentalization of student's knowledge for the sake of achieving within the parameters. The value is therefore now on the targeted teaching and the outcomes of exams, and not on learning for learning's sake.

Formerly, in the Diplom/Magister culture according to the Humboldtian model of higher education, the student was considered to be a self-responsible young researcher; the responsibility belonged to students to attend lectures and seminars, take notes, read material, synthesize knowledge, and prepare for large final examinations at important points in their educational path. Professors constructed and delivered lectures and ultimately tested students on synthesized knowledge in mid-degree exams. Much less emphasis fell on the shoulders of professors to teach at certain levels and to ensure incremental individual student's mastery of knowledge. The responsibility has shifted to the professors to ensure that the students are engaged and learning systematically. The culture has shifted from one of learning for learning's sake to one more regimented and focused on teaching, outcomes, grades, and assessment. This shift for both parties has been nothing short of dramatic.

2.3.2 Expectations Changed and Intellectual Curiosity Declined

With so many additional parameters, professors are challenged to excite students in their academic journey. Recently, one LCNatSci finds less curiosity among the students. "You have to have all these exams at the end of each course. And [the students] are very much stressed out. And it is also frustrating because with some courses you really put your heart in it, and you try to tell them, look this is great and this is so interesting. And you would like them to be fascinated by your subject. But, in the end they just ask is this relevant for the exam? So it's like going back to school." Some professors are disappointed by the lack of intellectual curiosity as they seek to inspire future generations in their discipline. Many professors shared, however, that they thankfully still have some students who are always very curious and demonstrate a passion for their subject. The professors' challenge is to reach the average student.

2.3.3 Students Are Learning in Boxes

Indeed, professors believe that students now are compartmentalizing their learning, rather than responsibly synthesizing their knowledge across coursework. An ECNatSci related that one former student explained to him, "'Well, now I'm all just thinking about'-whatever the module he was taking at the time, and 'I have no idea about [your class] anymore.' It's this way of thinking inside little boxes and you also notice this." Another ECNatSci said,

> You could argue that that has always been the case, simply because we teach these things as separate subjects. But I think there's modularization and especially the fact that you have to do an exam at the end of each module, it contributes to this. I think somewhat it leads to a fragmentation of the student's view of [my discipline]. When you give lectures like [an] introduction to [course] lecture, when you give lectures and you refer to something that they should have or that they have heard before or in a lecture parallel about, let's say, [a different course]. You just look into blank faces or at least from 90 % of them. It's so boxed in the knowledge, there is no concept that ultimately, it all hangs together and so what you learn in [the different course] has relevance for what I tried to teach them in [this course] and they are connected.

The issue of students learning in boxes was a very common theme across all groups of professors in their perception of the Bologna Process. They are concerned that the students are no longer able to synthesize their knowledge due to Bologna. The ability to synthesize material helps students in their future endeavors, whether in graduate work or the workforce. Yet, professors are frustrated at the start of courses when they have to backtrack to ensure that everyone has the same knowledge base. In the former degree system, they felt that students were able to build levels of knowledge with each course. Remediation and frustration merely adds additional burdens to the professorial role.

The compartmentalization of knowledge is oftentimes purposeful on the part of the student within the new structure, in order to achieve on the exams. Interestingly,

this compartmentalization of knowledge started in the early 1990s (Nugent 2004), but has been exacerbated by the Bologna system. An ECNatSci explained: "Also the fact that each exam that you take contributes to the final mark, it fosters a certain attitude on the side of the students which is to really only be concerned about what do I have to do to get the best possible mark in this exam. For example, after giving a lecture, probably the most frequent question you get is not something related to the contents of the lecture, some problem that they stumble across, but the most frequent question is which bits of these are relevant for the exam?" An LCNatSci said his students will tell him "We have studied this, but now we have forgotten it." This change in attitude affects the entire learning culture for students and professors. Professors shared their excitement for interested students and what a joy it was to teach those who have a thirst for their field of study. One LCNatSci explained, "Yes, it has made it less fun since we have the Bologna Process."

2.3.4 More Examinations

With more exams, the faculty believes that student pressure has increased. An exam occurs after each module within each course, requiring students to study, retain, and at times memorize very specific material. Professors are sensitive to the change for students. An ECWiSo, "[Yes], really. I feel sorry for them. Because I understand for them it is really hard to study in such programs."

This shift compels professors to construct each exam, tying questions directly to the course's learning outcomes. The value of each small exam now adds up the value of the few larger exams in the former system therefore creating incremental pressure throughout the course of study rather than a few times during the whole degree. On the other hand, one LCNatSci perceives an advantage to the increased pressure on students and the new examination structure; "Students complain about the fact that there are too many tests. But I think in the past it was so that the students up to the intermediate examination had little feedback on their true performance and here I see …a sensible system [of] well-arranged tests that you can always get [formative feedback] of where you are currently, [what] are your strengths, and what are your weaknesses." The exams provide more gradual feedback to the students and allow for more open communication between the professor and the student on a student's progress. The feedback can help weak students to reassess and make corrections along the way. Most professors, both early career and later career and across the NatSci and WiSo, agreed that the Bologna Process has significantly increased the demands on students' time and in the way they approach their work. More examinations emphasize grades, another new aspect of the evolving culture. Not surprising, professors have been forced to adapt.

2.4 More Demands on Time

Bologna has meant a greater demand on time, that professors must commit to advising students on navigating Bologna, writing learning objectives, preparing to teach, and of course, also engaging in their own academic endeavors. Advising students also plays a more significant role in professorial life today as professors must help students (1) navigate the new system, (2) plan their academic path, and (3) decide options for study abroad.

2.4.1 Navigating Bologna Changes

The new degree structure has required students receive regular guidance from professors. Guidance is necessary because professors and administrators are still formulating courses of study and making tweaks along the way. The policies that guide the curriculum appear to change from year-to-year as the university refines its processes. For a professor, the ever-changing new policies have increased the amount of time he/she must spend, first, to know the details of what a student should need to know for their degree requirements and coursework options, and then to communicate and advise students on these matters. Unlike in some US colleges, no office of academic advising is available to students to support in these efforts; it is solely the role of the professor to advise as well as the responsibility of the student to learn about requirements independently online or in course catalogues.

2.4.2 Student Mobility Issues

The Bologna Agreement envisioned European student mobility through the transferability of credit points, recognition of degrees, and shared European-wide cultural knowledge to harmonize the EHEA. Mobility includes both baccalaureate degree recognition within and across European countries as preparation for graduate study and international study for a semester or more. In advising students, professors find three areas of challenge: (a) a semester away from Potsdam jeopardizes students' timely completion of their degree, (b) German modules and credit points are not necessarily equivalent or compatible between different countries, and (c) students have become more averse to studying abroad as a result of less time and more regulation.

2.4.3 Fewer Students Studying Abroad

The numbers of students who study abroad have decreased after Bologna at Uni Potsdam. One LCWiSo explains this phenomenon, "I mean what we see in the faculty is some of the problematic consequences of Bologna. The number of

students that have gone on student exchanges has actually gone down rather than up because we have three-year degrees." Students do not feel they have time to study abroad and if they do, they have faced challenges with transferring their international credit back to Potsdam.

In the social sciences, an ECWiSo described the issue, "I think we encourage students to go abroad, which of course is a problem in all these Bologna schemes. When we design new Bachelor's degree programs it's always a question, it's a bigger debate in Germany, if you want an eight semester BA and of course this is exactly the trade…. If you had a six semester BA it's very difficult to have an internship, which is very important for [this field], just to get to learn something about the job market and maybe do a semester abroad. It's not always easy to fit it into six semesters." Thus the shorter degree cycle in Germany contradicts the desire for greater mobility, which means that not all disciplines can meet the full experiential learning for its students in only six semesters.

When students take courses abroad they miss others while not at Uni Potsdam. Course equivalencies can be a challenge when courses are only taught every other semester and in some instances Uni Potsdam will not accept dissimilar transferrable credit if a student misses a specific course while abroad. Given the numbers who wish to study outside of Germany, the sheer magnitude of the needed faculty advising is great. One ECNatSci explained, "So if you look at all these students, it's not so easy to always really fulfill this promise of mobility, that there are still lots of issues with recognizing certain modules that someone takes somewhere else as equivalent from modules here."

Some disciplines or fields necessitate practical experience, extensive course work, but still prefer students to study abroad. Faculty are currently seeking new ways to encourage intra-EU mobility by requiring it as part of their degree curriculum hoping to reduce many of these challenges for their students. Most importantly professors want to ensure that students are positioning themselves as competitive in a new labor market of fellow Bachelor and Master graduates.

2.5 Change in the Formality of Student-Professor Relationship

The former German system was very hierarchical in nature requiring a high level of formality between the student and the professor. Although the social distance rules have not changed in theory, the new context within which professors and students must operate requires a different relationship between students and professors—one of greater support to be able to achieve mutual goals. However, the shift to professors' central role in student learning, alongside an increased student pressure to perform in the context of greater technology and social media communication, has led students to change the way they address professors in certain contexts. One LCNatSci received a one-line email without a name; the student asked to make up

missed work. Not being able to identify the student from the personal email account, the professor was unimpressed with the informality of the petition. Another LCNatSci discussed other instances of student informality. "The students today, they are at the university [and it seems] much more like a school, and they expect so much for granted here, you know. I mean, if they have a small problem… they just send an email to each professor with small questions instead of asking their peers. Small things, not thinking what it means for us if we have to answer hundreds of student questions….". For one ECWiSo, students disagreed with the final exam construction and together escalated their anger against the professor through a Facebook thread. The group of students eventually sent the professor a very nasty email that started a line of unprofessional behaviors between professor and a group of students and caused a great deal of stress for the professor. It is clear that Bologna is not the culprit of such interactions, but professors felt that the convergence of technology, generational shifts, and the increased demands on the student-professor relationship via reforms has meant a shift in the ways that students feel that they can communicate with professors. Now faculty members have to negotiate the new student attitude without precedent or experience.

Students are also more likely to display resistance to professional judgment. Responding to the pressure for grades leads students to argue with professors over decimal points. Their anxieties push them to question the content of each exam. Professors show great frustration with this change in mindset. Though the focus on exams and grades may be a familiar student attitude in some countries such as the United States, it is an unfamiliar concept in German universities. Therefore, the increased emphasis and subsequent informality creates a level of annoyance and stress on the part of the professors who must cope with the changed relationship.

Professors for this study agree that Bologna has imposed significant change to their work and not surprisingly to their interactions with their students. As such, we turn to how this fits within the larger context of German and European policy.

3 Discussion

3.1 Professors Are Adaptable Creatures

Over the past decade, professors have undergone dramatic changes to their work—increased competition, a new pay scale, introduction of the junior professorship, increased demands in teaching and research, changing attitudes of students toward learning, increased enrollments, and a greater management of their professorial roles. These reforms (Bologna and German) have meant a significant shift in professorial life at Uni Potsdam. Throughout this study, however, professors demonstrate their resilience and adaptability to change. Their adaptability comes both from necessity (i.e., legal regulations and guidelines) and their recognized benefit of the privileged role they play in society. Essentially, the benefit of their academic freedom, time with talented students, and their contribution to knowledge

outweigh the costs of bureaucracy and increased demands. Despite the pushes and pulls to their work, professors demonstrate the importance of upholding their academic freedom by engaging in the reform efforts rather than resisting them. They seek to have their voices heard—to be agents in the process—rather than merely complain from the sidelines.

This study offers a clear example of professors who have sought to find ways to make the Bologna Process reforms work in their academic life. They are not yet satisfied, however. Instead, they continue to contribute to the larger reform conversation and strive for a sense of equilibrium. Their adaptability to change will be the key to any university reforms effort's future success. Policy makers can continue to benefit from the commitment and thoughtfulness of academics in future policy formation.

3.2 Bologna Shifts Humboldtian Ideal

Bologna threatens the Humboldtian ideal (Pritchard 2004) of the university by reducing the responsibilities in the professional roles of teaching, research, and service and regulating a historically unregulated system. The Bologna reforms have externally imposed more teaching and advising responsibilities and additional administrative tasks. In turn, these demands have resulted in less time for professors to accomplish what they perceived as their core task—research. In the past, the allocation of time to these activities was the decision of each individual professor and never imposed by an external entity. These shifts have therefore created a paradox between external control and academic freedom, a conflict that appears unresolvable in the current iteration of the reform efforts.

The German university structure built by a community of scholars as a free-thinking organization is unwelcoming to the newly imposed external demands of Bologna. Professors explained that Germany took such a long time in implementing Bologna because they sought to remain true to the principles of Lehrfreiheit, Lernfreiheit, Wissenschaft, and Bildung. For professors, these academic freedoms are non-negotiable and in fact, a constitutional right. The interaction between the reforms and professorial work is couched in the need for a more tightly-structured measure of the quality of higher education—a social structure that provides the catalyst for the advancement of society.

Quality assurance is at the core of Bologna efforts. The Bologna Process' goal to harmonize degrees and not necessarily standardize (Michelsen 2010) has meant great confusion for the professors at Uni Potsdam who are caught between external control and professional freedom. This paradox means, for example, that a professor's efforts to interpret the reforms, coordinate ECTS points, decide on the departmental learning outcomes, and create aligned approaches to a regulated system are misaligned in autonomous acts.

In these modifications, Bologna has influenced a transformation from a system of intellectual freedom to a system of control. In addition, freedom under the

Humboldtian values was not merely freedom of thought. "Freedom meant the relative political autonomy of the university from interference from the above (the state) and from below (social demands of the society at large)" (Baker and Lenhardt 2008, p. 61). Accountability, quality, and assessment are all now mechanisms for control in professorial work and come from both above and below: above in terms of European and German impositions, and below in terms of society's need for accountability of state funds. This newly constructed paradox in the German university between control and freedom has resulted in professors' frustrations that are difficult to relieve. The Humboldtian concept remains an ideal, but within the current state of implementing Bologna, it is far from reality.

3.3 Without Further Harmonization, Confusion Will Ensue

Professors voiced their frustrations with the implementation of the Bologna Process especially in terms of ECTS points, modular definitions, student requirements, and a general lack of agreement across departments. Further harmonization of the Bologna implementation by the departments at Uni Potsdam is essential. This adjustment requires a greater level of agreement over the number of ECTS points per course. Greater harmonization could actually relieve many of the frustrations among faculty, as the pressure to specify the component parts of each degree and its modules would be completed, requiring only tinkering in the future. It also would relieve student confusion and reduce the necessary advising time for their degree completion. Collaboration within departments could determine criteria for the content of modules, points, and sequences. Adelman (2008) and Baker and Lenhardt (2008) both posit that the differentiation between professorial approaches to these tasks has created greater confusion and misalignment across ECTS point allocation, resulting in unmet overarching goals. Therefore, although Bologna overtly states harmonization over standardization, the internal system of alignment requires further standardized refinement within the departments at Uni Potsdam, both to meet Bologna's goals for greater harmonization and professors' goals for a reduction in administrative and teaching tasks imposed from above. Specific to Bologna, professors in this study offer six areas of advice for policymakers: (1) stop reforming, (2) improve processes for professors by leaving research to professors and reducing administrative tasks, (3) reduce new quality assurance efforts and allow for what has been implemented to play out, (4) rethink the professorial incentive structure that currently values research above all else, (5) build upon the university's strengths when reforming, and (6) reduce the administrative tasks on professors by incentivizing support staff.

What resonated most from this study is that faculty members need more space and time for research and teaching and less commitment to governance and policy implementation. For policy makers, this means that continued efforts to further professionalize the implementation and quality assurance of the extremely structural and procedural aspects of Bologna would be well received, leaving the academic

aspects still with faculty. Also, when making decisions for faculty, policy makers at various levels should consider the significant time and space necessary for creative scientific inquiry and innovation in professorial work.

On the European level, continued efforts in collaborating and sharing between systems are highly beneficial. Doing so provides opportunities for both the tangible sharing of ideas and programs, and also the philosophical discussions of maintaining the structure while allowing for organic fluidity. As Bologna continues to be part of everyday life, professorial work will likely endure new demands as one of the universally most demanding, yet enjoyable professions. The discussion must be kept going between full professors, new academics, students, and policy makers, as the need for everyone's perspective at the table is essential to the future of a unified EHEA and a well-executed Bologna vision.

4 Conclusion

This case study of Uni Potsdam offers an in-depth look at the perceptions of professors in the natural and social sciences, and illustrates their perceived impact of Bologna on the student-faculty relationship as it relates to faculty work. This study seeks to offer the space for professors and the university to continue their efforts towards refining and advancing their 21st century "jung, modern, und forschungorientiert" university.

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