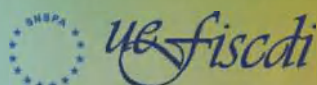Adrian Curaj · Ligia Deca · Remus Pricopie   *Editors*

European Higher Education Area:

The Impact of Past and Future Policies

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European Higher Education Area: The Impact of Past and Future Policies

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Editors

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Jamil Salmi · Hans de Wit
Co-Editors

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Adrian Curaj was member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Fulbright Commission in Romania and the Romanian representative at the Bologna Follow-Up Group. Also, professor Curaj is a fellow to the World Academy of Art & Science (WAAS).

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Prof. Remus Pricopie, Ph.D. is the rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) and former Romanian Minister of National Education. His activity within the Romanian Ministry of National Education began in 1996, and includes 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 relations and public communication at the National University of Political Science and Public Administration in Bucharest (SNSPA). He has been elected rector of the SNSPA in March 2012, a position he occupied until he was appointed minister of education.

Prof. Pricopie has a Ph.D. in Political Science at the SNSPA and he is a Millennium 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)*and *President of the Board of Directors of the Romanian-US Fulbright Commission,* 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, internationalization 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.

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He is the Founding Editor of the 'Journal of Studies in International Education', SAGE Publishers.

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

In 2005–2006, he was a New Century Scholar of the Fulbright Program Higher Education in the 21st Century.

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Introduction

Adrian Curaj, Ligia Deca and Remus Pricopie

Twenty Years of Bologna and a Decade of EHEA: What's Next?

Looking at the past policies proposed by the Bologna Process, one can see that structural reforms have been the most successful policy area of the EHEA. Even so, implementation is uneven, and some countries are far from fulfilling their commitments in one or more areas of structural reforms. This puts the credibility of the EHEA in jeopardy as a framework within which national qualifications are compatible, are issued within comparable qualifications structures, are quality assured according to agreed standards and guidelines and are described in easily understandable formats. Nevertheless, EHEA was successful in promoting structural reforms but less so at explaining the rationale and the principles behind them.

The fundamental values on which the EHEA builds—in particular academic freedom, institutional autonomy, student participation in higher education governance, and public responsibility for higher education—have not received the

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attention they deserve. This can be explained by the fact that there is a political need to show rapid accomplishments and that defining goals and assessing implementation of fundamental values have proved challenging. Also, fundamental values are closely linked to the overall situation of democracy and human rights, and the EHEA is not an area of democratic perfection.

The discussion on non-implementation has always been difficult. Uneven implementation is not solely a question of a North/South or East/West divide or a divide between countries that joined the Bologna Process in the early years and those that joined later and therefore had less time to implement the reforms since the expectation was—at least officially—that all EHEA members would have met the same goals by 2010.

"Two speed Bologna" is not solely due to different accession times or different starting points. Differences include: centralised versus decentralised systems, differences between larger and smaller systems, and the degree to which systems differentiate between different kinds and profiles of higher education institutions as well as varying levels of commitment between and within EHEA members. One of the challenges in the further development of the EHEA will, therefore, be to reconcile the need to ensure implementation of common principles and goals with the need to recognise that EHEA members have different traditions as well as recent pasts.

The EHEA was envisaged as a structure and a cooperation process fit for the challenges facing education ministers and the higher education community some 20 years ago. The future of the Bologna Process depends on the capacity to identify the challenges of political importance, and that can be addressed within the loose and extensive structure that is the EHEA. This is essential, as there is a widespread feeling that the EHEA is losing steam and political interest as shown by the decreasing participation rates of ministers in the Ministerial Conferences.

Failing that, Europe faces the need to redefine those structures so that a different EHEA can meet new challenges.

Bologna Process Researchers Conference—Where Research Meets Policy

The Bologna Process Researchers' Conferences aims primarily at further consolidating the researchers' community in order for it to provide those research-based insights and recommendations, which would best inform discussions and decisions, including of the Bologna Process Ministerial Conferences. As such, the third edition of the Bologna Process Researchers' Conference was an excellent opportunity to continue the dialogue initiated during the 2012 and 2015 Ministerial Conferences, between research, policy-making and implementation of the Bologna Process.

It is worth underlining that, in terms of its participants and interested researchers, the topics of the Bologna Process and the construction of the European Higher Education Area have already reached the stage of building its own research community.

The third conference was focused on the already configured impacts as well as on the future of the Bologna Process. It took stock of existing initiatives and attempted to identify some of the key challenges, needed developments and future trends. Five main topics were addressed in particular: internationalisation of higher education, the social dimension within a quality oriented higher education system, transparency tools, financing and governance and the future of the Bologna Process.

Context

The newly emerging contexts of the European higher education developments and Bologna Process implementation are altogether different from those of the launching period. A closer look at recent trends reveals challenges and new configurations, which may hardly be ignored.

The external higher education context is marked by accelerating changes, which bear on higher education policies:

Technological: the emerging digital revolution. Technology and digitalisation are becoming a basic necessity for society;

Social: growing inequalities, a shrinking middle class and a growing class of precariat, crisis of the traditional welfare state, population ageing, a growing demographic decline, increasing youth unemployment, changes in the life style, refugee crisis: rapidly increasing numbers and a hardening of attitudes in many European countries;

Political: the rising of populist ideologies, challenging of established status-quos and democracies, increase in violent extremism, decrease of a broad consensus on basic political and societal principles, and the emergence of "alternative facts" and "post truth politics" (e.g. illiberal vs. liberal democracy, international unilateralism vs global multilateralism);

Economic: slow recovery from the economic recession and financial crisis (2008–2012), emerging protectionism, tensions between old and newly emerging industries, sharply divergent views on globalisation;

Culture: following the previous post-materialistic cultural developments, a sort of cultural backlash is at work, bringing to the fore formerly dominating cultural values;

Regional: European Union is searching for its new future, while growing tensions within the wider Europe and in the shaping of globalisation waves are constantly emerging, including Brexit challenges.

The inner context of higher education is also marked by new configurations:

A steady decrease in student flows, following on the previous massification or universalisation trends—student numbers are starting to decline, influenced by the

decrease in demography, especially in some parts of Europe (Central and Eastern Europe);

A wider range of providers, serving a more differentiated student cohort, and challenging traditional providers with respect to programmes and credentials;

The decreased attractiveness of the Bologna Process, especially at the political level, due to its perception as a *fait accompli*;

Reaching a decade of EHEA with newly accepted members that did not all show a strong commitment to implementing all the Bologna Process measures;

Variable levels of the Bologna Process implementation in the overall EHEA, which have led to an increased need for dealing with non-implementation;

A refocus on academic values and principles as the political context in some countries has put negative pressure on the autonomy of higher education institutions (HEIs);

The need to search for alternative ways of institutionally codifying academic freedom and university social responsibility (e.g. a consequentialist approach to autonomous governance of university and respect for academic integrity codes);

A growing pressure on higher education to address academic and non-academic new societal challenges (e.g. integration of refugees, more transparency and assuming new institutional public responsibilities);

A re-emphasis on vocational/professional higher education in a world of rapidly changing occupational landscapes;

The view that study programmes diversification has reached a peak as a result of developments in the academic division of knowledge which are disconnected from the current economic division of labour;

A growing imbalance between the public and private financing of higher education;

The need for higher education public policies for new data, and the potential of big data and data analytics.

Both these contexts of higher education call for critically oriented research approaches to the Bologna Process and for the exploration of new innovative initiatives. A demand for an increased reflexivity of the Bologna Process is mounting. The researchers' papers and the Conference debates highlighted the relationships between European higher education's changing contexts and new developments in the Bologna Process.

Challenges

There are some **Bologna Process dilemmas and questions** that arise out of the Bologna Process implementation.

Research has evaluated that some of the most pressing and complementary ones are the following:

Should the Bologna Process be focused on the implementation of the goals already defined or develop new policies and policy areas to meet changing/developing needs and demands?

Is there a need for envisaging a "two speed Bologna Process" or just rely on a development "à la carte" that is adapted to each country's local circumstances, with hope for eventual 'full' implementation?

How should non-implementation be addressed in the Bologna Process? Should future Bologna commitments be more concrete in nature?

How and to what extent should the Bologna Process focus on fundamental values?

How should the interaction between supra-national (European), national and institutional levels be shaped in order to ensure a smooth implementation of the Bologna Process commitments and reaffirm the objectives and values of the EHEA?

How will the current socio-economic and political contexts (e.g. Brexit, authoritarianism, populism, migration, etc.) influence the future of higher education on the continent and in its countries?

Conclusions and Recommendations

Most articles provided a constructively critical overview of the Bologna Process. On the plus side, this provides legitimacy to the conference, focused on researchers and their analyses regarding the Bologna Process implementation, consequences and future endeavours. At the same time, it highlights the idea that after almost 20 years of Bologna Process and ten years of EHEA, there is sufficient evidence collected to highlight both achievements and shortcomings of implementation.

As anticipated from the first edition of the Conference, organised under the concept of European Higher Education at the Crossroads, the Bologna Process has reached a critical moment. Therefore, two possible scenarios for the Bologna Process/EHEA can be envisaged: either, through self-evaluation and lessons learnt, the process will be revived, adapted to the new global challenges and major societal transformations, or it will become irrelevant.

Looking at the present situation, one cannot help notice a stratification, or even a polarisation of the European higher education systems in two major clusters: countries that fully embraced the Bologna principles and largely implemented the key actions versus countries that joined the Process but have yet a long way to go. This could mean that only the "core Bologna countries" take implementation even further, thus potentially leading to a major schism in the European higher education.

Little time remains until Bologna Process turns 20 and the 2020 EHEA Ministerial Conference seems just around the corner. This is a period aimed at critical self-evaluation and an overall assessment of the Bologna Process, making use of all existing tools, including peer learning. Only by looking at past experiences and grasping the complexity of today can we redesign the Bologna Process as

a genuine European driving force, meaningful for the next 20 years, inspiring future transformations and ensuring cohesion of the European higher education.

In spite of the challenges, EHEA has been a successful story. Through the Bologna Process, higher education contributed to building not only EHEA but Europe itself. This should go on. The key from now on is how to adapt the Bologna Process constantly to its times so as to keep it up with the basic European aims and values of the time.

The Bologna Process Researchers Conference participants predominantly took the view that the future of the European higher education cooperation may be more effectively shaped by relying consistently and imaginatively on specific combinations between key referential values and operational commitments. In what follows, crosscutting illustrations, resulting from the conference papers and debates, are put forward.

Bologna Process and the Wider World of Higher Education

Bologna Process researchers share certain views with regard to the configuration of the wider world of the European higher education.

The key points of this configuration are the following:

Countries all over the world seem to be striving to increase internationalisation and global engagement, yet in many cases, the escalating trend towards isolationism and inward-looking nationalism results in a growing disconnection between the local and the global, thus fragmenting and indeed troubling developments in interuniversity cooperation;

While one may see an increase in academic credit and degree mobility around the world, only a small student elite is benefiting from it;

In recent years, there has been a shift from a more collaborative approach to internationalisation towards a more competitive focus. The paradoxical combination of collaboration and competition, as driving motives for internationalisation, is more manifest within the Bologna Process;

A misconception of internationalisation in higher education reduces it to a "study abroad" approach. Other misconceptions regarding what internationalisation represents are indicated by a series of perceptions like the following: the means appear to have become the goal; more teaching in English and adding an international subject to the programme would suffice for sustaining a programme of internationalisation; more recruitment of international students, more study abroad, more institutional partnerships would outweigh the constant and exigent assessment of international and intercultural learning outcomes; output and quantitative targets may run against the focus on impact and outcomes of internationalisation. Such misconceptions run contrary to an effective and valuable academic internationalisation.

There is a growing need for rethinking internationalisation in order to focus it on the internationalisation of the curriculum and learning outcomes to enhance the quality of education and research.

Social Dimension Within a Quality Oriented Higher Education System

The Bologna Process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area have resulted in a growing emphasis on equity and inclusion from all groups in society. At the same time, some of the research findings illustrate the persisting gaps between policy and practice, intentions and reality, rhetoric and concrete actions.

Looking at some gaps between policy and practice, certain challenges arise:

In their higher education access policies, many European countries have not systematically targeted policies to support clearly identified underrepresented groups, but rather mainstreamed strategies to expand access and success that all groups might benefit equally;

Student background data are not readily available in many countries, which makes it difficult to analyse equity needs and design appropriate targeted policies;

Many of the learning difficulties that students bring with them to higher education institutions result from inadequate secondary education;

Too many European countries are facing major new equity challenges due to the rapid rise in the refugee population, and the higher education needs of refugee students should be attended to.

Such challenges generate the need for further research and possible actions:

New positioning of higher education institutions within society. There should be a greater osmosis between higher education and society, particularly with reference to refugees and working students. The current practices in higher education institutions aim to make these groups fit the institutions, without institutions investing efforts to accommodate student needs;

Different definitions of success. Rankings, performance-based funding as well as individual students have different definitions of success. The former two strive to outline, at least to some extent, what achievements higher education institutions have. Student success is anticipated by the learning outcomes institutionally defined. The connections between the two areas of what counts as academic success may hardly meet. Such a conceptual and practical gap should be dealt with as to replace it with a convergent approach;

Peer learning does not currently work. Higher education institutions and policy-makers, countries involved in the Bologna Process themselves tend to act separately instead of exchanging ideas and cooperating for a common good. Collegiate mutual learning happens only randomly. Everyone thinks that their context is unique despite having common referential commitments within the Bologna Process framework. This practice should be substituted with one framed

by peer learning. New communities of practice and social networks of knowledge sharing should be built within the Bologna Process framework;

Focussing on new challenges should not lead to a neglect of 'old' ones.

Benefits of technology and digitalisation. Researchers' presentations and debates showed a neglect of the topic of digitalisation. More intensive teaching and learning support and also counselling could be made possible through smart applications of new technology.

No country or institution has found a magic answer to the question of how best to overcome the historical, cultural and psychological barriers faced by underrepresented groups (better counselling, better integration of migrant/working students by flexible curricula etc.). Nevertheless, the components of successful policy approaches outlined throughout researchers' articles provide a useful blueprint for developing new and innovative responses down the road and orienting much-needed further work in the critical area of equality of opportunities in access and success at the higher education level.

Transparency Tools—Impact and Future Developments

Higher education accountability is strongly enhanced by the wide and convincing transparency of its endeavours. Bologna Process researchers look closely at the current uses of institutional transparency tools and reach certain conclusions.

On the whole, higher education institutions should invest more in dealing with issues of social, academic and financial accountability to students and to society at large. Particular attention should be paid to the ways learning outcomes are set up and achieved, while graduate attributes and life-sustaining skills are closely followed up.

Transparency issues take different forms in each country, but essentially, questions are asked about the value and contribution/impact of higher education to individuals, society and the economy, and the appropriate forms of transparency and accountability of both public and private institutions.

Gaining and enhancing public trust in higher education and effective (re)assuring of academic quality are the essential objectives of higher education transparency. More innovative attention should be focused on the diversification of transparency tools, and the best ways (qualitative and quantitative) to assess and measure in an international context.

Financing and Governance

The discussions about governance and funding are particularly intense in times of major changes in the world around higher education, especially as Europe is once again going through such a period. External ruptures in society-at-large and

changing trends in higher education are influencing the policy discussions and reform initiatives.

Changes outside the higher education system, such as increased migratory fluxes, an escalating refugee crisis in Europe (with huge political, social, and economic implications), the emergence of new or recycled ideologies, such as populism and nationalism have brought new challenges to the higher education governance and funding systems.

A European notion of autonomy has emerged based on some kind of European consensus regarding the need for universities to acquire more institutional freedoms so that they could be more efficient in delivering the types of services and goods deemed necessary for the advancement of defined European and national policy goals. Many national governments have also promoted reforms in the area of university autonomy and until recently, most of these reforms have been meant to support increased autonomy, at least in certain dimensions, which in turn was expected to support a more efficient work of the university, as judged against pre-set criteria defined by the public authorities. At the same time, some governments have begun restricting autonomy and academic freedom. These emerging trends are not happening equally in all parts of Europe. European organisations such as the EU and the Council of Europe remain committed to the knowledge society narrative, democracy and to the European integration—and thus to supporting higher education. Many governments, in different ways, continue to act nationally, based on the conviction that higher education is indeed something to be treasured and nurtured, and that it must remain a key matter for public policy. But even in some of those countries, times seem to be changing.

Nevertheless, the "efficiency" concept in higher education, at the core of the developments regarding governance and funding, seems to be vaguely defined as there is no European accepted definition. Moreover, its' operationalisation and measurement are not straightforward.

The EHEA is a space for dialogue and practice in higher education becoming a new, *sui generis* type of entity (or system) that requires and indeed has developed new governance—that is, new concepts, principles, models, tools and practices.

Moving to the "Next Level"

The Bologna Process is at a critical stage, approaching a decade from the establishment of the European Higher Education Area and still facing a number of challenges. The lack of homogenous implementation is partially due to the accession of new members that do not have the same timeframe to implement the pre-existing commitments, but also to existing EHEA members that have not managed to implement those commitments. The political interest in the process has decreased as seen by the decreasing number of ministers participating in the Ministerial Conferences. It seems that there is a lack of new politically appealing commitments that would make the Bologna Process more attractive within national debates.

These challenges can be overcome by taking the Bologna Process to the next level focusing both on fundamental values relevant for our time (equity in access, ethical integrity, etc.) but also on concrete commitments and goals in connection with developments in other policy agendas (EU, OECD, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, etc.).

The fundamental values on which the EHEA builds—in particular, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance and public responsibility for higher education should be at the heart of the political debates and decisions. At the same time, it is necessary to focus on challenges of political importance in order to increase the political interest in the process, while addressing the issue of non-implementation, in order to increase the credibility of the EHEA framework. In this sense, the Bologna Process should become primarily a tool for policy learning and contribute to increasing national and institutional debates, rather than restricting them.

Also, when we talk about the *European Higher Education Area,* we don't have to look for a stage when this can be considered "fully implemented" but more we have to look for a process and build a mechanism that will be able to identify the challenges and to adjust—through appropriate policies—the higher education environment, in order to face these challenges.

From the participants to the *Future of Higher Education—Bologna Process Researchers' Conference*, Bucharest, 27–29 November 2017, the Editorial Board retained a number of specific issues that should be addressed immediately by the policymakers and assumed politically by the ministers of education across Europe. Among these it is worth mentioning:

1. Spanning the gap between the school system and higher education. Many underrepresented groups lose students prior to the point of entry into higher education, and many learning difficulties facing students come from the school systems.
2. Increasing the interaction between higher education and society—with reference to both refugees and working students, but also considering demographic developments.
3. Providing greater leadership in combating populism, extremism and anti-intellectualism by a greater focus on democratic education and links to local communities.
4. The need for a collaborative approach to internationalisation that is focused on the curriculum and learning outcomes to enhance the quality of education and research. This needs to become practice rather than a statement.
5. The need to revisit the concept of autonomy and academic freedom in a changing regional, national and European landscape, within the new frameworks of European cooperation and global competition.
6. More attention to the growing pressure to address academic and non-academic new society challenges.
7. The need for higher education public policies for new data and the capacity to integrate big data and data analytics in the new policy and governance systems.

8. Building capacities for full use of innovation and digital environments.
9. Sustainable financing and appropriate governance of higher education in the context of the above-mentioned values.
10. The need to review the EHEA governance structure to support these new ambitions.

Evolution or Revolution?

Since 2011, the *Bologna Process Researchers' Conference* has had the role of catalysing the quest for possible and plausible futures of the European Higher Education Area.

Some might think the future will be a *revolution*. Others might count on an evolution of the higher education landscape. Probably there is not a correct answer, and alternative paths should be considered. This publication is a contribution of research to policy-making, an informed dialogue among all actors accountable for the future shape of our higher education institutions and an input to the Bologna Ministerial Conference in Paris, May 2018.

The Editors

Part I
Bologna Process and the Wider World of Higher Education
(Coordinated by Hans de Wit)

The Bologna Process and the Wider World of Higher Education: The Cooperation Competition Paradox in a Period of Increased Nationalism

Hans de Wit

Introduction

The Bologna Process, launched with the Bologna Declaration of 1999, is nowadays implemented in 48 states which define the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Internationalisation has always been at the core of the Bologna Process. Additionally, internationalisation is one of the five priorities highlighted in the EC Modernisation Agenda. An EU Parliament study (de Wit et al. 2015) on Internationalisation of Higher Education shows that nowadays institutional and national policies must address challenges, such as digital and blended learning, demographic changes in the student population, immigration, financial crisis or ethnic and religious tensions. An increased nationalist inward-looking trend, as for instance expressed in the UK through Brexit, is another recent phenomenon that impacts on almost all aspects of internationalisation, which involved stakeholders need to take into account.

de Wit and Jones (2017) identify two main paradoxes in the internationalisation of higher education today: "First, we may be striving to increase internationalisation and global engagement, yet in many countries the escalating trend towards isolationism and inward-looking nationalism results in a disconnect between the local and the global. Second, while we see an increase in credit and degree mobility around the world, with some challenge in the United Kingdom and the United States as market leaders in degree mobility, this billion-dollar industry reaches only a small student elite, excluding 99% of the world's student population."

de Wit and Rumbley (2018) observe also that there is an increasing disconnect between the notion of the relevance of internationalisation, within and for the sector, and recent trends in society toward greater inward focus, manifested by

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anti-global and anti-international tendencies. They speak like de Wit and Jones (2017) of paradoxes between internationalisation as a collaborative endeavour and internationalisation as a competitive approach; between internationalisation as a key trend in higher education around the world and nationalisation as a rising social phenomenon globally. The Bologna Process has to be concerned about these two paradoxes and address them adequately in the next phase to come.

This introduction to the theme, the Bologna Process and the wider world of higher education, deals with those challenges, in particular with the paradox between collaboration and competition and with resulting misconceptions concerning internationalisation of higher education that have contributed to this inward-looking trend around the world. How is it possible to overcome these misconceptions and paradoxes to internationalisation and create a sustainable and comprehensive internationalisation for all students and faculty?

From Marginal to Mainstream

From a rather marginal and fragmented issue in most countries and institutions of higher education until the end of the 1980s, internationalisation in higher education has evolved over the past 30 years to become a mainstream and central component of policies and practices in higher education, at the international, regional, national, and institutional levels.

An increasing number of institutions of higher education around the world have an internationalisation policy and/or have integrated internationalisation in their mission and vision. More national governments develop strategies and policies for the internationalisation of their higher education systems. The global knowledge economy requires universities, cities, and nations to be key competitors for students, faculty, research funding, and strategic partnerships and to prepare their graduates to be global professionals, scholars, and citizens. Excellence programs, rankings, accreditation agencies are all indicators, and drivers of internationalisation of higher education.

This increased attention for internationalisation is positive news and brings many opportunities, but it also creates many challenges for the sector. The Bologna signature countries, in particular the first ones to sign on to the process in 1999, have been at the forefront of internationalising their higher education. The changing political climate in Europe, the United States of America, and elsewhere is a nationalist reaction to the increased globalisation of our economies and societies and threatens to impact negatively the internationalisation agenda as well as the Europeanisation agenda.

We also see a shift over the past period from a more collaborative approach to internationalisation towards a more competitive focus. Although student and faculty exchange and cooperation in education and research are still an important part of the internationalisation agenda, also, thanks to the European programs such as

Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, recruitment of international students and faculty, competition for talents, for research funding and for reputation are increasingly dominating the internationalisation agenda.

The Bologna Process and the Wider World

The Bologna Process, initiated in 1999, is one of the major reforms in higher education, and in addition to harmonisation and modernisation, Europeanisation and internationalisation are driving rationales for this reform. This is not the place to describe and analyse at length the process and the opportunities and challenges of its implementation over the past 18 years. Together with the European programs for research (Horizon 2020 and its predecessors) and education (Erasmus+ and its predecessors), the Bologna Process has contributed substantively to the internationalisation in higher education, and has travelled around the world, as analysed in the contribution to this thematic section by Woldegiorgis.

Intended as a reform to harmonize higher education systems and structures in Europe, and to enhance intra-European collaboration and global competitiveness, Evans, in her contribution, perceives it as a neoliberal process, and Bisschof, in his analysis of the effects of the Bologna Process on quality assurance regimes in the Post-Soviet space, concludes that there is more diversity than convergence. The paradox between collaboration and competition as driving motives for internationalisation is manifest in the Bologna Process. That paradox is manifesting itself in the different contributions to this thematic section.

Misconceptions

Ten years ago, the approach toward internationalisation was also still predominantly activity-oriented, even instrumental. de Wit (2011) mentions nine misconceptions, where internationalisation was regarded as synonymous with a specific programmatic or organisational strategy to promote internationalisation, in other words: where the means appeared to have become the goal—the main misconception. The other eight misconceptions were: more teaching in English; adding an international subject to the program is sufficient; more recruitment of international students; more study abroad; more partnerships; little assessment of international and intercultural learning outcomes; all for the sake of output and quantitative targets; while failing to focus on impact and outcomes.

The main misconception is that internationalisation in higher education means "abroad." The nearly exclusive focus, in most national and institutional strategies, on the mobility of students and faculty (for credit or degree, for short-term revenue or long-term soft policy) is elitist in that it concerns a small minority of students and faculty, worldwide only around 1–2%, with exceptions in Europe

(between 15 and 25%) and the United States (up to 10%). Internationalisation is, by far, not for all students and, thereby, not really *at home*. The leitmotiv of the "Internationalisation at Home" movement in Europe at the end of last century, "what about the other 98%?", is—even though the percentages are now closer to 80%—still most relevant.

Twenty-five years ago, the focus of internationalisation policies was nearly exclusively on the mobility of students for credits—, in Europe primarily the Erasmus program. At the end of the 1990s, a reaction emerged in Europe calling for more attention to the large majority of students that were not mobile: "Internationalisation at Home." At the same time, in Australia and the United Kingdom where there was a strong focus on recruiting international degree students, internationalising the curriculum received greater consideration. Internationalisation of the curriculum and Internationalisation at Home, two strongly intertwined approaches, have become part of the agenda of the European Commission and of national governments and institutions of higher education around the world. Implementation, however, is still quite challenging.

The rationale is that all graduates will live and work in an increasingly interconnected globalised world as professionals—economic actors—and as citizens—social and human beings. The need of the labour market for global professionals and of society for global citizens cannot be addressed solely by mobility. International, intercultural, and global learning outcomes are important elements of a modern curriculum.

Responsible global citizenship implies the need to develop social consciousness and a sense of belonging to a global community; cognitive justice; and support to faculty and teachers in developing responsible global citizenship. Education needs to develop a more inclusive understanding of knowledge in order to build capacity to find solutions to complex problems in local and global contexts. It requires curriculum development and content that engages with multiple and global sources of knowledge in which students explore how knowledge is produced, distributed, exchanged, and utilized globally (de Wit and Leask 2017).

Rethinking Internationalisation

In reaction to the dominant focus on mobility and fragmentation in internationalisation policies, a need emerged to rethink internationalisation for the following reasons:

1. The discourse on internationalisation does not always match reality in that, for too many universities, internationalisation means merely a collection of fragmented and unrelated activities, rather than a comprehensive process;
2. Increasing globalisation and commodification of higher education and the development of a global knowledge society and economy have resulted in a new

range of forms, providers, and products, and new, sometimes conflicting dimensions, views, and elements in the discourse of internationalisation;

3. The international higher education context is rapidly changing. "Internationalisation"—like "international education"—was, until recently, predominantly a western phenomenon, in which developing countries only played a reactive role. Nowadays, emerging economies and higher education communities in other parts of the world are altering the landscape of internationalisation. This shift away from a western, neo-colonial concept (as "internationalisation" is perceived by several educators) means incorporating other, emerging views;

4. The discourse on internationalisation is often dominated by a small group of stakeholders: higher education leaders, governments, and international bodies. The voices of other stakeholders, such as employers, faculty, and students are heard far less often, with the result that the discourse is insufficiently influenced by those who should benefit the most from its implementation;

5. Too much of the discourse is oriented toward the national and institutional levels, with little attention to programs. Research, the curriculum, and teaching and learning processes which should be at the core of internationalisation (as expressed by movements such as "Internationalisation at Home") often receive little attention;

6. Too often, internationalisation is evaluated quantitatively, in terms of numbers or in terms of inputs and outputs, instead qualitatively, following an approach based on outcomes and on measuring the impact of internationalisation initiatives;

7. To date, there has been insufficient attention to norms, values, and ethics in the practice of internationalisation. With some notable exceptions, the approach has been pragmatically oriented toward reaching targets, without any debate on potential risks and ethical consequences;

8. There is an increased awareness that the notion of "internationalisation" is not only a question of relations between nations but even more of relations between cultures and between "global" and "local" (de Wit 2013).

This rethinking process was manifested in a document by the International Association of Universities in April 2012, "Affirming Academic Values in Internationalisation of Higher Education: A Call for Action" (International Association of Universities 2012). Yet, in national and institutional strategies, most of the misconceptions are still prevalent (de Wit 2016, 2017a, b).

Contributions to This Thematic Section

Over the past years, an intense, stimulating, and sometimes provocative debate about the future of internationalisation has taken place. As de Wit and Rumbley (2018) observe, "Internationalisation is still primarily driven by dynamics at the

institutional level. National policies are often fragmented and tend to be focused on the mobility side and on matters of competition and competitive advantage, while institutional policies tend to be more coordinated and integrated and appear to strive to combine the dimensions of "internationalisation abroad" and "internationalisation at home" more intentionally." As also Crăciun in her contribution observes, national attention in all of these countries seems to be more focused toward the competitive end. In comparison, at the institutional level, references are more regularly made to matters of internationalisation at home and to global citizenship development—although, as de Wit and Rumbley (2018) state, "even at the institutional level, rhetoric around these ideas is still much more clearly in evidence than strategic and sustained action."

The contributions to this thematic session illustrate that, under the broad concept of the Bologna Process and internationalisation, there is great variety in—as well as disconnect between—national and institutional policies and strategies and between competition and collaboration.

Crăciun in her analysis of national policies calls for internationalisation as active engagement and policy-making and comes to the conclusion that national policies for internationalisation are still limited in number, mainly a European and developed world phenomenon, stimulated by the active inbound mobility of international students. This seems to imply that competition is driving more the national agendas than collaboration.

Perez-Encinas makes in her contribution a strong appeal for a collaborative approach that fosters community engagement and integration between students and staff members, while Fit and Gologan call for a stronger influence of student perspectives of internationalisation, more support systems for students and better information and communication channels.

Denisova-Schmidt illustrates in her contribution that corruption, lack of academic integrity and other ethical issues are prevalent in the Bologna signature countries and calls for more attention and specific measures to address these concerns.

These papers make clear that the focus is still more on competition than on collaboration, something that is in line with Evans' argument that the European Higher Education Area is essentially a neoliberal higher education area. One can question if that was the intended purpose of the process and if it does adequate justice to its more collaborative dimensions, but the neoliberal factor cannot be ignored.

The calls for a more collaborative (Perez-Encinas) and student-oriented (Fit and Gologan) approach to internationalisation as well as the concern by Denisova-Schmidt to address ethics and academic integrity in the European Higher Education Area align with Evans' analysis that there is a need to reshape academic professionalism. Similarly, it fits well with the call for rethinking internationalisation in higher education as described above.

The paradox also manifests itself in the internationalisation of the Bologna Process itself, as Woldegiorgis in his contribution describes the policy travel of the Bologna Process to Africa and its sub-regions. This travel can be perceived either as

advantageous and by that collaborative or as an instrument of neo-colonialism and by that competitive. As he makes clear, context is essential and a simple transfer is not possible.

Altbach and de Wit (2017) are less optimistic than Evans that the neoliberal university is coming to an end. They expect that in the current global political climate the commercial side of internationalisation will continue to thrive for some time, while internationalisation at home will encounter more opposition and will depend even more on institutions than on governments for development and support. New challenges, which were not so clear until now, have come to the forefront. These confront us with the need to look even more critically at our misconceptions and try to create opportunities out of these challenges (see de Wit 2017a, b).

Although we use labels like "comprehensive internationalisation" and "global citizenship" as if our approach were systematic and qualitative, the reality is that "internationalisation" has become a very broad term, used for a great variety of (mostly economic) agendas. Whether the changing geographic landscape of higher education will also result in different agendas remains to be seen.

Some major misconceptions in the coming years will deal with:

- Internationalisation being equal to "global" and ignoring "local";
- Internationalisation being a risk for national and cultural identities;
- Western values and concepts as the sole models for internationalisation; and
- Internationalisation unfolding worldwide without any regard for and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations.

The following definition of internationalisation—an update of an original definition by Jane Knight in 2008, developed in a Delphi Panel exercise as part of a study for the European Parliament—reflects this imperative adequately:

> [Internationalisation is] "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of postsecondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society." (de Wit et al. 2015)

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Re-shaping the EHEA After the Demise of Neoliberalism: A UK-Informed Perspective

Linda Evans

Introduction

Reflecting neoliberalism's "fundamental principle: the superiority of individualized, market-based competition over other modes of organization" (Mudge 2008: 706–707), the UK's universities—along with those in many European countries—have, over the last two decades or so, fitted themselves out with what are generally considered the trappings of neoliberalism: new public management, performativity, competitiveness, consumerism, and the commodification of services and personnel. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has inevitably emerged as a product of this incremental metamorphosis; reflecting the sum of its constituent parts—individual European nations' higher education sectors and systems—for the most part it is essentially a *neoliberal* higher education area. But now, subtle shifts are discernible and faint rumblings audible—which some commentators have interpreted as the overture to neoliberalism's death knell. Representing a recent perspectival shift from resignation that the dark neoliberal night is still young—with Kauppi (2015: 32), for example, lamenting that "[n]othing seems to stop the triumph of neoliberalism in academe", and Mason (2015, p. xii) similarly noting that "[o]ver the past two decades, millions of people have resisted neoliberalism but in general the resistance has failed"—are increasingly expressed predictions that the model has run its course and a new day is about to dawn. It is difficult to gauge how imminent is its demise, but when neoliberalism eventually does—as it inevitably will—become consigned to history, quite a different style of university must emerge from its shadow, and with it, the EHEA's shape and form will be redefined.

Predominantly conceptual and analytical, and based upon conjecture, deduction and hypothesis, this chapter addresses the questions: What might the post-neoliberal

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university look like?—and how might it impact upon academic life within the EHEA? As a prelude to such consideration, I first outline evidence that neoliberalism's grip on the European academy is indeed believed to be slackening.

The Beginning of the End, or the End of the Beginning? the Popular Backlash to Neoliberalism

As Zanoni et al. (2017: 575) note: "we are today witnessing epochal changes, which are fundamentally redefining the social, economic, political, and environmental realities we live in unforeseen and unimaginable ways". Symptomatic of what Jacques (2016) calls a "popular backlash" to the felt effects of "the most disastrous feature of the neoliberal period"—"the huge growth in inequality"—electoral predictions and political "certainties" have been overturned, with, for example, Emmanuel Macron's victory in the French presidential election of 2017 having "shattered the accepted wisdom of French politics" (Bock 2017), and politically inexperienced Donald Trump's controversial snatching of the US presidency from under the nose of a seasoned politician who, until the eleventh hour, looked every inch the front-runner (yet, perhaps equally threatening to the status quo in the USA was the surge of support for left-wing Bernie Sanders's candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination). It was moreover argued before the 2016 US presidential election took place that "Trump's position represents a major critique of America as the world's hegemon. His arguments mark a radical break with the neoliberal, hyper-globalisation ideology that has reigned since the early 1980s" (Jacques 2016).

Adding detail to this increasingly global scenario of unpredictability and cast-off of the familiarity of the status quo are recent political events in the UK, where the aftershock of the 2016 Brexit referendum earthquake remains palpable, and where the electorate sent further shockwaves resounding through Whitehall's corridors of power in the general election of 2017, when, on the basis of a manifesto that was unequivocally social justice-, anti-austerity- and public services democratisation-focused, the Labour Party dashed predictions of a Conservative landslide victory, wiping out the Tories' fragile majority and strengthening the power base of left-wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. In diverting directions of travel envisaged by the political masters and mistresses who had plotted the original policy itineraries, such subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) shifts and twists and turns away from acquiescence with prevailing hegemonies essentially reflect an appetite for fairer and more palatable ways of running countries and organising society—for inequality, argues Jacques (2016):

> is, bar none, the issue that is driving the political discontent that is now engulfing the west. Given the statistical evidence, it is puzzling, shocking even, that it has been disregarded for so long; the explanation can only lie in the sheer extent of the hegemony of neoliberalism and its values.

Such evident distaste for what is currently being served up at the macro level of organised society seems very likely not only to spill over to, but also to have its origins in, dissatisfaction focused on the meso level and manifested as demands for changes in how organisations and institutions are run—and on what principles, and reflecting what ideologies. Indeed, Jacques (2016) traces popular outrage against banks and bankers—over the societal inequalities that they represented and the ethically questionable practices that had become embedded within their occupational culture—as the prequel to demonstrations of dissatisfaction through the ballot box. Meanwhile, the inequalities in academic pay in the UK, represented by what are typically perceived as the disproportionally high salaries drawn by university vice-chancellors (or presidents or principals, as they are variously titled) and their senior leadership teams are, at the time of writing, also coming under fire (see, for example, Chakrabortty 2017; Richardson 2017). And as this kind of burgeoning unrest amongst the workforces and populations of many developed countries continues to be agitated, the most prominent target in the firing line is the economic model upon which, over the last two decades or so, much of the developed world has functioned: neoliberalism; for, as Buckup (2017) argues, "[n]eoliberal economics has reached a breaking point", and "[t]he neoliberal age [has] had its day"—observations that are echoed by Zanoni et al. (2017: 575): "These 'electoral mutinies' suggest that what is under crisis is the governance system of neoliberalism itself".

For Jacques (2016), moreover, "[a] sure sign of the declining influence of neoliberalism is the rising chorus of intellectual voices raised against it". A descant to the melody created by political and economic intellectuals whose voices carry across the public space where media and electorate meet, one such chorus represents academics' articulation of the deleterious facets of life within the neoliberal university and, in some cases, their proposals for renovating the academy in a different architectural style.

Out with the Neoliberal and in with the "New": Redesigning the European University

Most academics' negativity towards the neoliberal university is expressed as critical scholarship, and as railing—against governments, and institutional senior management—that yet falls short of proposing alternative, workable scenarios. Published on the website, and therefore under the aegis, of a collaborative research project focused on Europe and the Pacific Rim, "Universities in the Knowledge Economy", the Auckland Declaration,[1] for example, sets out the principles upon which its signatories believe universities in the twenty-first century should be run. But the Auckland Declaration is simply what its title implies: a declaration. It offers no tangible proposals for realising, through viable plans for restructuring higher

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[1]http://unike.au.dk/the-auckland-declaration/.

education systems and re-organising universities, the vision that its principles convey. Such limited opposition undoubtedly reflects the difficulty in conceiving of workable alternatives to the neoliberal university, for, as Kauppi (2015: 35) notes, "[n]eoliberal precepts have hijacked the future: at the moment there simply are no credible, coherently formulated political alternatives", and while Zanoni et al. (2017) highlight the need to "advance ways of organizing life other than the neoliberal one that reduces every activity to its monetary success and subjects to egomaniacs" (p. 581), they, too, fail to offer tangible proposals for how such re-organisation might be effected, and what it might result in: "[w]hat we know is changing and giving way to something new; *what shape that new formation may take is not apparent yet*" (p. 576, emphasis added).

The absence of a clearly defined path that will lead us to the next ideological destination, where we may lay the foundations of the *post*-neoliberal university, reflects the fact that its antecedent—the neoliberal university—neither evolved nor exists in a vacuum; it emerged as the product of a combination of intellectual, political and bureaucratic policymaking. Any transformation that it undergoes cannot therefore be achieved unilaterally but must span its essential tripartite constitution and reflect the complexity that this constitution ascribes to the university. Achieving this is, of course, easier said than done, and Batterbury and Byrne (2017: 30) identify a key issue that needs factoring into any realisable visions and plans for redesigning the university—it must somehow be paid for: "the problem is systemic, and financial. Running a university means managing a huge budget, paying hundreds or thousands of staff, and keeping the lights on. An ethical university, if we could somehow get back to that, will not come cheap, and this cannot be ignored". Furthermore, as Mudge (2008, p. 720) points out, "neo-liberalism reaches well beyond nationally bound politics and does not mesh neatly with right–left distinctions", so that, even at the level of government and international politics, acceptable alternatives remain elusive—and those that do present themselves as viable possibilities retain essentially market-driven dimensions.

Since it is more difficult to formulate practical plans based on envisaged scenarios that are entirely unfamiliar than it is to draw upon prior first- or second-hand experience, in any context contemplation of what a different future might look like often focuses on restoring the best of what is regretted as having been lost. Yet, despite Batterbury and Byrne's (2017) reference, cited above, to "*get[ting] back to an ethical university*" (emphasis added), within the academic discourse that problematizes the neoliberal academy there is evidently little appetite (see, for example, Archer 2008; Bacon 2014; Halffman and Radder 2015; Wright and Greenwood 2017a) for rekindling the past (or idealised perceptions of it). It is also important to recognise that, within the EHEA, the (most recent) past is not always or consistently imagined as a better scenario than the present "reality"; in many eastern European contexts the neoliberal ideologies that underpin higher education systems are assessed in relation to their antecedent: Soviet communism. Outlined by Hibert and Lešić-Thomas (2017) and Hvorecky et al. (2017), the ambivalence towards the neoliberal academy felt by some Eastern European-based academics, who recognise it as neither a better nor a worse alternative to the freedom-curtailing Soviet model,

represents the kind of no-win situation that might be described in colloquial English as having leapt out of the frying pan and into the fire.

While backtracking, then—whether towards academe's "real" or imagined past, however that may be assessed—does not seem a credible basis for it, the refashioning of the twenty-first century (European) university away from its current neoliberal style is the focus of a discernible small "group" of academic activists who have taken a step beyond routine denouncement of and railing against neoliberal higher education. Members of this "group" have tried to set the ball of change rolling by initiating or contributing to a discourse that articulates what are presented as viable alternatives.

A Discourse of Alternatives

One such proposal that features within what I call the "discourse of alternatives" is the notion of a co-operative university—what Wright and Greenwoood (2017a: 1), in their editorial introduction to a journal special issue focused on "alternatives to the deteriorating state of universities", explain as: "universities run by and for the benefit of students, academics and the public". Their own article within this special issue (Wright and Greenwood 2017b) presents: "an organisational critique of the pseudo-business model currently in use [in higher education]". They propose, as a solution, re-establishing universities as trusts, through the introduction of "a model of beneficiary ownership, a matrix form of organisation and renewed relations with society" (p. 42). While Bacon (2014) proposes as "a viable and emergent management paradigm" a model of what he calls "neo-collegiality", to combat the problem of academics' lack of input into university management and governance —"university staff in the UK have little say in how their institutions are managed. … Denial of voice represents an anachronistic approach to running universities" (pp. 1–2)—Wright and Greenwood's (2017b) proposal for involving academics and students as "collaborators and decision makers in all major institutional venues and processes" (p. 46) is more far-reaching and ambitious in scale. Drawing upon the examples of what they describe as "beneficiary-run organisations", such as the UK-based John Lewis Partnership,[2] or the Mondragón University, they argue that putting the university's assets into a non-revocable trust, whereby all members become "beneficial partners, with a clear purpose to engage in satisfying work that

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[2]The John Lewis Partnership underpins a chain of John Lewis department stores and Waitrose supermarkets, selectively located across the UK, and, with a reputation for product quality and customer service, targeting discerning middle-class consumers. The John Lewis Partnership website states that permanent staff are categorised as co-owning partners who share the business's benefits and profits: "The John Lewis Partnership is one of a growing number of businesses with an employee-owned structure and is a member of the Employee Ownership Association (EOA), the not-for-profit membership body representing the sector" (accessed 15.12.17 at: https://www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk/about.html).

is socially beneficial, and an equal say in working out how the university should achieve that purpose" represents a move towards "recreating a participatory public university" (Wright and Greenwood 2017b: 47).

Mondragón University featured in a 2013 *THE* report that considered whether its apparent success was replicable: "can the University of Mondragon, an established higher education cooperative in the lush green mountains of the Basque Country in northern Spain, offer any answers for academies elsewhere?" (Matthews 2013). The report tells us that the university was founded in 1997 from a collection of co-ops dating back to 1943, and that its academic and administrative staff jointly own it: "[t]o become a fully fledged member, employees have to work there for at least two years, and then pay €12,000 … which buys a slice of the university's capital that can be withdrawn upon retirement … no one at Mondragon may earn more than three times the salary of the lowest-paid worker" (Matthews 2013). Mondragón University's general assembly—the supreme body of its "highly democratic governance structure"—comprises one-third staff, one-third students and one-third outside interested parties, we are told, and its power to sack senior management team members was exercised in 2007 (Matthews 2013). Yet, while Wright and Greenwood (2017b: 47) highlight what they perceive as its key strengths—"students, faculty, administrators and staff together are the beneficiary owners and they can only pursue their interests when the consequences for all groups have been publicly discussed and agreed on. Institutional decision-making, finances and strategic planning are shared and open processes"—the *THE* report (Matthews 2013) uncovers several not-insignificant drawbacks of this version of a co-operative model, most of which represent revenue-related and other financial implications of its private status, including inevitable salary cuts when times are hard, and the marginalisation of arts and humanities subjects in contrast to the privileging of applied research with income-generation potential.

Meanwhile, whilst the basic idea of a co-operative university has been mooted in the UK (Matthews 2013), and a *Co-operative University Working Group* established,[3] no firm plans for founding such a university seem yet to have emerged. Wright and Greenwood (2017b: 60) nevertheless see, as a replacement to what they label the "neo-Taylorist" (and which seems to approximate to what has come to be known as the neoliberal) university:

> the creation of an operational meaning of community through the creation of legal structures that engage all the participants caring for the fate of the organisation. Whether they be trusts, cooperatives or employee stock incentive systems, the underlying structure must be based on shared beneficiary ownership or engagement that strongly encourages the participants to promote the interests of their organisation and the role it plays in society.

Along broadly similar lines to the model proposed by Wright and Greenwood, Halffman and Radder's (2015) proposals for "the project of a public university aimed at the common good" (p. 175), whilst delineated within a framework whose

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[3]https://www.co-op.ac.uk/our-work/researching-co-operatives/co-operative-university-working-group-cuwg/.

dimensions are determined by the context of the Dutch academy, are presented as having applicability across much of the neoliberal world. Their proposed "twenty provocative first moves" (p. 176)—which they later describe (Halffman and Radder 2017:1) as "concrete measures to achieve this public university", which is "more akin to a socially engaged knowledge commons than to a corporation"—include the introduction within the university sector of, inter alia (Halffman and Radder 2015): a flatter managerial and decision-making hierarchy; a limit to time spent on administrative overheads; a policy of co-operation, rather than competition, between institutions; bans on university mergers, institutional marketing, profitable renting-out of university buildings, and student fees; and the end of "productivity" as a research assessment criterion. Yet, quite apart from the distracting polemic that runs through the narrative of resistance to academic disempowerment, proletarianisation and exploitation within which they are framed, these proposals fail to strike a chord of viability because, unlike those articulated by Wright and Greenwood (2017b), they do not draw upon a model that has been shown—albeit with limitations—to be broadly workable in at least one small corner of Europe.

Rustin's (2016: 160) "principles on which reform should be based" are directed at the development of a higher education sector that moves away from the neoliberal model by encompassing three specific "traditions or systems of value": the "industrial", the "democratic" and the "old humanist" conceptions of educational purpose and provision. "[H]ow the balance of influence between these three traditions is to be struck is fundamental", he warns, (Rustin 2016: 160), and he emphasises that "[w]e cannot be indifferent to the well-being of the economy, or to the traditions of high culture. We … are not, after all, educational Maoists". He accordingly proposes a higher education system—paid for through a form of graduate tax—that recognises: "[p]ost-school education [as] a public as well as a private good, and … the entitlement of all citizens, supported and funded by the democratic state". Rustin lists several "principles" that HE systems should embrace, including: stakeholder parity in institutional governance; availability to the public of higher educational institutions' (HEIs') resources, skills and knowledge output; quality assurance and inspection to underpin professional learning and development, rather than fuel competition; a shift in the epistemological basis of sectoral and systemic policy (from accountancy to educational sociology); increasing universities' role in "the making of a good society"—supported with targeted research programmes which "are now needed to provide the knowledge-base through which a new consideration can be given to the provision of tertiary education in a democratic, post-neoliberal society" (Rustin 2016: 160–167).

Aligned with the overarching premise upon which Wright and Greenwood (2017b) have developed their vision of a university "for the public good", and overlapping with several of Halffman and Radder's (2015) ideas, while yet incorporating a little more detail and specificity than do those of the Netherlands-based authors in terms of how they may be developed into a financially viable plan for university redesign, Rustin's proposals nevertheless represent rather more focus on underlying principles than on specific plans whose workability may be assessed. As attempts to convey a sense of what the redesigned, post-neoliberal university may

look like, in common with all of the contributions to the alternative discourse outlined above, they represent preliminary impressionistic sketches rather than accurate blueprints. They can, after all, be nothing more than this, for a country's higher education system and the model of university that it will feature cannot be designed by intellectual analysis in isolation, detached from whatever political, economic and bureaucratic models evolve, emerge, or are strategically implemented. Yet, in terms of redirecting policy and practice, small steps can surely be taken that, cumulatively, may begin to restructure the landscape of higher education in Europe.

Reshaping the EHEA: Eroding the European Neoliberal Academy by Degrees

The neoliberal university is one whose policies and practices reflect the influence of market forces—most typically through performativity cultures and the commodification of resources (including staff), and the more specific ways in which these manifest themselves. Redesign or evolution into a different—non- (or post-) neoliberal—university involves relinquishing such "trappings" of neoliberalism. And since there are, of course, *degrees* of neoliberalism, dismantling it progressively and gradually is a more likely scenario than is sudden widespread strategic reform (though the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and may be used in conjunction); so we may conceive of transitions that involve, for example, diluted or reduced neoliberalism, as preludes to eventual total "abstinence" from it—or that retain residual neoliberal features. Such incremental reshaping of the EHEA is likely to be achieved through a snowballing effect, whereby this or that initiative undertaken in a single European region or country—or even in a single university—increases in size and scope as it rolls along and gathers momentum, through being adopted or adapted by others who see some merit in it by recognising it as a "better way".

Recognition of a "Better Way": The Micro-level Dimension of Reshaping a Post-neoliberal EHEA

This notion of recognising something as a "better way" is a key feature of the process of effective change; I have highlighted its fundamental importance (e.g. Evans 2014, 2018) to several aspects of leadership and the development of education workforces in the compulsory and the higher education sectors—including measures directed towards enhancing professionalism.

Within the sociology of professions, professionalism is now accepted as a contested concept, and the academic discourse has moved on (see, for example, Evetts 2003, 2013; Gewirtz et al. 2009; Noordegraaf 2007) from the focus (that was

prevalent in the twentieth century) on trait-based elitist notions of which occupational groups merit professional status, and on what bases. Consistent with my own conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism and professional development (presented, for example, in Evans 2013, 2014, 2018), I argue (Evans 2011) that, whether they be at the meso (e.g. institutional) or macro (e.g. sectoral or national) level, attempts at renovating or changing a workforce's professionalism constitute intended large-scale professional development. Moreover, for such professional development to be effective in shaping "new" professionalisms, the workforces—the professionals—targeted must "buy into" the refashioned professionalism that is promoted, by recognising it as, for them, currently a "better way": a "better" professionalism, on balance, than the one it is intended to replace.

These issues are relevant to the discussion in this chapter because this facet of work psychology—people's tendency to embrace what they judge to improve, and to resent what they consider to (potentially) impoverish, their work-related lives—is crucial to understanding not only academics' (and, in many respects, students') attitudes towards the neoliberal academy, but also their likely attitudes towards whatever may replace it. Essentially, then, just as the neoliberal university is so widely perceived as having created work (or study) situations that I describe as "compromising" (Evans 1998, 2001, 2018), since they distance people from their "ideals" by requiring them to compromise on their values and ideologies, the post-neoliberal university that eventually replaces it must, if it is to be assessed as representing a "better way", contribute towards creating for people more "un-compromising" work situations (Evans 2001, 2018) that better match their values and ideologies. This may be achieved by facilitating and fostering "new" academic professionalisms that are perceived as more acceptable—and hence as representing a "better way"—than those that have evolved to reflect neoliberal ideologies.

It is surprising that, whilst they are evident within the initial anti-neoliberal academic discourse that rails against the system, such work psychology-related issues scarcely feature within the associated "discourse of alternatives", for they are fundamental to consideration of what an acceptable and effective post-neoliberal European academy might look like; indeed, they should inform the point of departure of such consideration. Having highlighted the difficulties of conceiving of a viable "top-down", "big picture" vision of a political- or economic-generated alternative to the neoliberal model of organising and running higher education, I argue that we should consider reshaping the EHEA from a micro-level starting point: the constituent components and dimensions of European academics' professionalism(s).

The Building Blocks of a Post-neoliberal EHEA: European Academics' Professionalism(s)

It is evident from a plethora of studies (e.g. Archer 2008; Clegg 2008; Erkkilä and Piironen 2015; Kauppi 2015; Ylijoki and Ursin 2015) that the European neoliberal university, as I observe elsewhere (Evans 2018), has not got the best out of its

academics; for the most part, it seems to have increased precarity, fostered insta-bility, unsettled identities, and consequently eroded morale. Scaled up, this evi-dence leads us to reason that the neoliberal *EHEA* has not got the best out of its academics. Yet turning the page on such tense academic workplace conditions and relations by starting a new chapter in the development of the European academy—a chapter that both precipitates and is precipitated by, the decline of higher educa-tion's neoliberal era—presents the opportunity to redraft the EHEA's psychological contract with its academics by reshaping the professionalism "demanded" of them.

More precisely, such professionalism-(re)shaping would in fact represent *initial* drafting, rather than *re*drafting, since neither the Bologna Process nor the EHEA *explicitly* delineates the shape or nature of European academic professionalism that are either "prescribed" or "demanded (or requested)".[4] Certainly, since they are promoted and facilitated by the Bologna process, receptivity to international mobility, collaboration and co-operation are *implicitly* identified as features of what we may think of as EHEA-approved academic professionalism, but other than such implications, what the European academic (including at the pre-employment, early career stage) may reasonably be expected to "look like" (or aspire to look like) remains largely unarticulated—a lacuna that, with a specific focus on researcher development in Europe, I address elsewhere (Evans 2015).

Shown in diagram form in Fig. 1, my conceptualisation of it[5] presents profes-sionalism as a qualitatively neutral, rather than a merit-laden, concept that denotes people's "mode of being" in relation to their work—simply, how they go about it and what influences them to do so. I conceive of professionalism as trifurcated into three components—behavioural, intellectual and attitudinal—which, collectively, are constituted of eleven sub-components, or dimensions, relating to people's: perceptions, values, motivation (along with morale and job satisfaction), knowledge and understanding, skills and competences, rationality and analyticism, the bases of their knowledge and knowledge structures, and the processes and procedures that they apply to their work, as well as their output and productivity: how much they "do" or produce at work.

In conveying its expectations of them, the neoliberal academy—through the agency of universities as employing institutions, and reinforced and perpetuated by institutional rankings-determined competitive cultural hegemony (Erkkilä and Piironen 2015)—has imposed on academics a "demanded" professionalism whose shape is reflected in how particular neoliberal-derived interpretations of the nature and purpose of higher education are translated into each of the eleven dimensions shown in Fig. 1.

Moreover, through its acceptance of the institutional competitiveness that is a dominant feature of its landscape, the EHEA may even be considered complicit in

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[4]See Evans (2013), (2018) for a full explanation of what I variously label four "reified states" or "perspectival versions" of professionalism: "demanded (or requested)", "prescribed", "deduced (or assumed)" and "enacted" professionalism.

[5]This conceptualisation is explained in detail elsewhere (e.g. Evans 2014, 2018, and, adapted to relate to researcher professionalism, in Evans 2015).
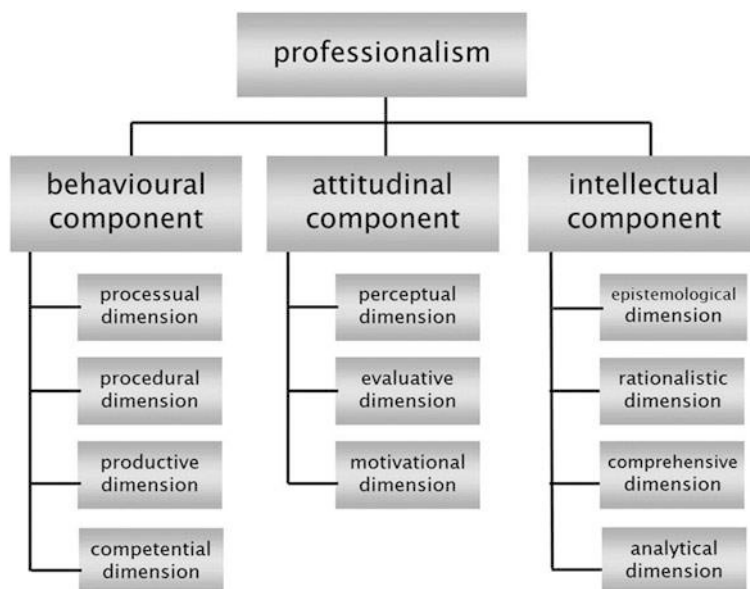
Fig. 1 The componential structure of professionalism

"demanding" of academics such a neoliberal-shaped professionalism. Turning the page on such complicity, then, by way of revisiting the Bologna Process, a new priority for the future of the EHEA beyond 2020, to mark its tenth anniversary, could be added to the list of priorities identified in the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué: the promotion of an explicit new, post-neoliberal, European academic professionalism.

The "Shape" of an EHEA-Approved Post-neoliberal Academic Professionalism

What would such a new European academic professionalism look like? To address this question it may be helpful to consider the embodiment of the professionalism in the person of the notional post-neoliberal European academic. Applying as a loose analytical and descriptive framework my conceptual model shown in Fig. 1, we may envisage such an academic as someone who, for example, rather than be influenced by consideration of their potential cost-effectiveness or profitability in deciding what activity processes to engage in and what procedures to follow, feels free to develop and nurture relationships or to respond to approaches and inquiries (from colleagues, students, and members of the public) for their own sake; to be more altruistically-focused than was generally possible within the neoliberal academy. She feels freer to pursue the kinds of "slow scholarship"—akin to what Sullivan (2014: 10) refers to as "measured thought and unhurried instruction—the

'life of the mind' concept"—that some detractors of the neoliberal academy lament as having been eroded (e.g. Mountz et al. 2015). Depending on her discipline, the post-neoliberal European academic may not need to be preoccupied with securing increasingly scarce research funds, because she knows that she has, or is being given the time and space to develop, other skills from which her university will benefit—such as curriculum development or teaching skills that will enhance its educational provision, or analytical and academic writing skills that will allow the institution to bask in the reflected glory from her internationally recognised scholarship that demonstrates her capacity for generating ground-breaking theoretical perspectives or policy recommendations that have the potential to contribute to societal growth. The post-neoliberal European academic is comfortable with the principles and ideologies upon which are based her university's strategic development agenda, because these are no longer focused on consideration of the need for everything to pay its way; rather, they are compatible with her own values that reflect a concern for social justice, equality of opportunity, and a perception of higher education as a vehicle for societal enhancement through a focus on public good, rather than profitability (in its widest sense). Her *self*-perception—her identity —is as an academic who is making a contribution to achieving such ideals, through her work in a university that shares her values, so, for the most part, she is able to buy into her university's mission. This means, too, that for much of the time she is motivated and enjoys high morale and job satisfaction.

But how might the EHEA, as it moves towards the next era of its development, facilitate such evolution?

EHEA-Facilitated Transition Towards a Post-neoliberal European Academy

A product of the Bologna Process, the EHEA is an enigmatic combination of real, physical entities—Europe's higher education institutions and the organisations (such as national ministries of higher education) that determine the parameters of their governance—and ideas, ideologies and principles that shape visions of Europe as a fluid, joined-up space. This is a space within which students and academics are ideally conceived of as moving about with few constraints, accessing and contributing to the provision of shared resources (including knowledge), for the purpose of augmenting Europe's growth as a cohesive society and its capacity and position and standing in the world as an intellectual superpower or knowledge-generator and -broker, in partnership with the European research area (ERA), through the achievements and for the benefit of these transient (in either a virtual or physical sense) Europe-based students and academics. Any—the only— form of agency that the EHEA may exercise as an agentic unity must be through agreements, commitments and declarations made in recognised official fora, such as ministerial conferences, and "ratified" in the reports and communiqués that emerge from these. Yet such "ratification" may turn out to be not worth the paper it is written on if implementation is patchy; indeed, Tibor Navracsics (European

Commissioner responsible for education, culture and sport, 2014–2019) observed in the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2015: 3) that "[a]lthough countries are moving in the same direction, they do so at widely varying pace. As a result, the foundations of the European Higher Education Area are not yet fully stable". What hope, then, is there that this somewhat nebulous—and in some respects, amorphous—entity that is the EHEA may take the initiative to refashion itself in a post-neoliberal style, through promoting the kind of renovated academic professionalism whose general shape I sketch out above?

There is undoubtedly the facility to place a focus on the "European" academic and her or his professionalism (as I interpret the term) on the EHEA development agenda. Yet it is both interesting and disappointing to note that, hitherto, despite passing reference in the European Commission's modernisation agenda (European Commission 2011, cited in European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017) that implicitly recognises "the importance of staff" (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2017: 3), agendas of ministerial conferences, and therefore of the reports on the progress of the EHEA's development and of the implementation of the Bologna Process, have so far failed to incorporate such a micro-level focus on the people—the individuals—who are at the front line of delivering higher education in Europe. The evident lack of recognition both that it is they who are the key instruments in ensuring the quality of European higher education, and of the importance of work psychology in elucidating how to get the best out of them in such roles, is unfathomable. The contents page of the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015) lists as topics and issues covered: the context of the EHEA; degrees and qualifications; quality assurance; the social dimension of higher education; lifelong learning; effective outcomes and employability; and internationalisation and mobility. A glaring omission is the higher education workforce and the university/higher education institution as a workplace; this topic is not covered—it is not even mentioned in passing—within any of the chapters to which it may reasonably be considered to relate, such as the one on quality assurance. Yet since it is an issue that, to varying degrees, underpins and/or impacts upon all of these listed topics— indeed, Navracsics notes that "Policy makers, *academic staff* and students must *work together*, within countries and across borders, *to learn from each other* and to identify and achieve measurable objectives" (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2015: 3, emphases added)—it surely merits its own place on the ministerial discourse agenda, and its own chapter in reports and documentation of progress in reforming and strengthening the EHEA.

There is, however, a glimmer of hope that the European academic workforce and its welfare and consequent capacity to deliver high quality higher education is finally being recognised as a significant issue. A 2017 Eurydice brief identifies the historic neglect of this issue as the impetus for the project whose findings it presents:

> While higher education has been subject to increasing demands amidst fast-moving societal transformation, *little attention has been paid to the staff at the centre of the picture*. Change in the higher education environment means that there are inevitably changes to the expectations, work roles, status and professional conditions of academic staff. The *lack of Europe-wide investigation into the situation for academic staff gave rise to this project* that set out to explore the academic profession in different countries, cultures and institutions. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2017: 3, emphases added)

As occurs with all such reports published under the aegis of the European Commission, however, the 2017 Eurydice brief is disappointingly limited to the presentation of quantitative data, mainly in the form of descriptive statistics, supplemented by very brief commentary; superficiality of focus dilutes elucidatory capacity, so that all we may glean are general overviews. Regrettably, the kinds of micro-level issues that I highlight above as important do not feature.

Consistent with the criticism I have levelled at the Bologna discourse on doctoral education (Evans 2015), I repeat that guiding principles, as the typical products of this discourse, are too general and wishy-washy to have a meaningful and transformative impact on the quality of European higher education provision and output. Greater specificity needs to be incorporated into agreed processes and procedures, including the provision of yardsticks that clearly delineate and illustrate standards (which could vary to reflect, and apply differentially to, different national or regional circumstances, stages of development, and cultures) against which achievements and progress at the micro and meso levels may be evaluated, that will take us—the European academic community—forward. In relation to reshaping European academic professionalism for the EHEA's transition into a post-neoliberal era, such specificity could take the form of agreed policies and practices that European higher education institutions (HEIs), through their ministries, would sign up to, in much the same way that they signed up to the degree structures and mobility-facilitating mechanisms that are so integral to the Bologna Process. These structures and mechanisms have evidently been adopted by a great many European HEIs, despite the profound changes to academic life they are perceived to have wrought in some countries (see, for example, Evans and Cosnefroy 2013; Rege Colet 2015 for accounts of the perceived impact of the Bologna Process on academics and academic working life in France and in Switzerland). There is therefore no reason to assume an unwillingness to co-operate in introducing incremental changes to institutional policy and practices that would be directed towards re-motivating the academic workforce to deliver the European—the EHEA's—vision, through fostering a "new" post-neoliberal academic professionalism.

At the heart of the neoliberal academy, sustaining and perpetuating it, are global university ranking systems. These spawn inter-institutional competition and undermine co-operation, since league table positions tend to be equated with income-generation capacity. Yet, as Lim (2018: 428) observes, "higher education leaders have the capacity to reflect, resist, and, importantly, shape the metrics by which they accept to be 'judged'". So, too, does the EHEA, for, as Kauppi (2015: 44) suggests:

> If going back is not a realistic option, linguistic counter-strategies might involve using quotation marks when using key concepts such as excellence, thereby indicating the distance between old and new content or inventing new concepts to construct an alternative reality. However, purely linguistic strategies are effective only if linked with transformations in social practices, in what academics do in their everyday activities.

To both support and precipitate academe's transition towards its post-neoliberal era, the EHEA could feasibly identify and agree on the kinds of values and principles for which it wishes to be recognised, effectively initiating and promoting the kinds of "alternative" criteria for judging institutional prestige, reputation and success that support and sustain a "new" European academic professionalism.

If the EHEA does not take the initiative in introducing such changes—including by adding to its discourse agenda the topic of the academic workforce and academic working life—there is a very real likelihood that some of its member nations, or, within these, individual HEIs, will unilaterally set the ball of change rolling across Europe. Indeed, there are signs that such a snowballing-type transition is about to be kick-started—in Scandinavia.

The Dawn of a Scandinavian-Led "New" European Academic Professionalism?

The nature or speed of any post-neoliberal transition that may occur within the EHEA will inevitably depend upon various regional, national and geo-cultural and -political contextual factors. Eastern European countries, for example, having only relatively recently "embraced" some aspects of neoliberalism, may perhaps be slower and more reluctant to change than may their western European neighbours. Many European countries' higher education systems are centralised, so that, to varying degrees, how their universities are run may be determined at government level, and is sometimes enshrined in law. Within such centralised contexts, the form and nature of the university, and the shape of its academics' professionalism, cannot simply emerge incrementally through a snowballing process; they must be planned, agreed and, effectively, "decreed". In decentralised higher education systems, in contrast, where—as in the UK—universities enjoy considerable autonomy, those of their features that denote neoliberalism may, if there is a will, be eroded unilaterally.

Evidently directed both at individual HEIs and at the UK's wider higher education "system", Peter Scott's rallying cry, published in the *Guardian* newspaper, represents a wake-up call that urges a policy re-think if universities are to avoid:

> ending up on the wrong side of history. They will be seen as accomplices in failing neoliberal markets, against which their students are in revolt, and spurious "modernisation", which alienates many of their staff. They need to get back on the right side of history—quickly. (Scott 2017)

Elsewhere in this *Guardian* piece, Scott makes a valid point that I touch upon above: that old (neoliberal) habits die hard, so it is difficult to conceive—let alone delineate the features—of a university that is run and organised in any other way, and on any other basis. Yet, even without a comprehensive vision of what the

refashioned university in its entirety will look like and how it will be financed, changes to or the relinquishment of specific neoliberal policies or practices have the capacity to erode the hegemony of neoliberal ideology. The replacement of performativity cultures and audit mechanisms, for example, with what Myklebust (2017)—attributing it to Jouke de Vries, professor of governance and public policy at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands—describes as "a more holistic governance approach based on 'confidence governance', or the 'public value' approach in public administration … where management objectives are reached through trust and legitimacy rather than through measurements and control" would represent a step towards university redesign that incorporates and is based upon consideration of how to motivate and get the best out of the academic workforce.

Such change is evidently on the cards for Swedish universities, Myklebust (2017) tells us—quoting Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfven's declaration that "[t]he time for New Public Management now is ended". Myklebust reports on a mandate from the Minister for Public Administration in the Ministry of Finance, Ardalan Shekarabi, to the Swedish Agency for Public Management, to work out a new proposal for public governance and leadership systems in public administration. Endorsed by the prime minister, "[t]he mandate included a reduction of reporting and documentation, better inclusion of staff members' competence and experience, and development of governance to become more 'holistic and effective', based on 'confidence governance'" (Myklebust 2017). The vision of higher education implied by such ideas and proposals is very similar to that articulated by Scandinavian academics Erkkilä and Piironen (2015), summed up as follows:

> Understanding academic work as collaboration involving a global research community would allow one to perceive academic work differently. Seen from this perspective, scientific progress would be a collective effort that is not the sum of the actors engaging in it but rather a social process that cannot be reduced to individuals. *For this system to perform at its best, we need a reappraisal of professional values and academic identities.* (p. 60, emphasis added)

It may be through such relatively small steps, rather than through programmes of sweeping reform, that the European university ends up being refashioned. It may even be through the brave actions of a single university, whose senior leaders and managers decide to go out on a limb and make a name for their institution as a pioneering reformist institution—the first one in their country (let's say, the UK)—to wander off the neoliberal highway and step out onto the *post*-neoliberal path by, for example, reducing or abolishing tuition fees, or telling academics (at least, in some disciplines) that they should no longer feel obliged to relentlessly chase research funding that is about as accessible as the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, or by relinquishing the goal to achieve, within the next five years, ranking as one of the world's top fifty or twenty-five universities. It may be, as we may infer from Myklebust's (2017) report, that Swedish universities will realign themselves with what Ylijoki and Ursin (2015: 187) refer to as "the Nordic welfare state model that perceived higher education as a public good" and will lead the rest of the EHEA into the next, post-neoliberal, phase of its development. Or it may be that in

one or other European country a new economic model is adopted by a newly elected government—such as a Corbynist Labour government in the UK—and the accompanying redesign of its higher education system paves the way for re-shaping the EHEA by degrees.

Concluding Thoughts

"The neoliberal age [has] had its day", insists Buckup (2017)—"It is time to define what comes next". Jacques (2016), too, argues that "the neoliberals and monetarists are in retreat", but adds: "[i]n the UK, the media and political worlds are well behind the curve. Few recognise that we are at the end of an era". It seems, too—as Scott (2017), cited above, notes—that those who call the shots in universities are burying their heads in the sand. As I argue elsewhere (Evans 2018: 246), "the marketised university is not about to rebrand itself in a hurry"—not only because universities are in denial, but also because they have no idea what that new brand will look like, how they may appropriate it, and, above all, what it will cost and how they may hope to meet that cost. In this respect they are evidently not alone, for, as Westwood (2017) points out, despite its 2016 general election manifesto to abolish student tuition fees in England, post-election, the UK's Labour party remains vague on the detail of how this may be achieved.

   Through its scholarly discourse and its politicised engagement with institutional and sectoral leaders and managers, Europe's academic community has, since around the turn of the millennium, become increasingly vocal in expressing its concerns about its workplace environment: the neoliberal university that has shaped the EHEA. For the most part, it seems, these concerns have fallen on deaf ears. But the political unpredictability and upsets that began to feature in the latter half of the 2010s have shown that those who used to call the shots have become less audible: less certain of their ground; less confident of their authority. They have had to sit up and take notice of the popular voice. They have had to listen, and to demonstrate that they have heard—as has the UK government, in launching in February 2018 a year-long review of post-18 education and funding that includes reviewing higher education tuition fees.[6] European higher education now "stands at a crossroads", warn Erkkilä and Piironen (2015: 55). The time is surely ripe, then, for opening our ears to the death knells of Europe's neoliberal university, and turning our attention to how the EHEA may be reshaped after its inevitable demise.

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[6]For the review's terms of reference, see: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682348/Post_18_review_-_ToR.pdf, accessed on 28.02.18.

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Policy Travel in Regionalisation of Higher Education: The Case of Bologna Process in Africa

Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis

Introduction

Higher education policies continue to be in a state of change as governments are constantly re-examining many aspects of the sector so as to meet the socio-economic and political expectations of stakeholders. In the era of globalisation, one can observe many commonalities in the reform themes that emerge across countries, suggesting that national and regional governments not only do face common challenges across many jurisdictions but also learn from each other in search of opportunities. Studies of policy travel are embodied within the broader notion of globalisation as both rely on the basic concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence of variance. Interconnectedness also implies interdependence and convergence through a constant flow of technology, information, knowledge, ideologies, values, policies, expertise and ideas across borders (Torres and Rhoads 2006).

In the course of interconnectedness and interdependence of higher education variance, however, technologies, information, knowledge, ideologies, values, policies, and models travel across regions, a situation Benjamin Levin calls "epidemic of education policies" (Levin 1998). The Bologna process of Europe is a manifestation of such interconnectedness and interdependence of variances as a regional framework to recalibrate the institutional architectures of many higher education institutions in the region and create a common higher education area. This reform has, however, managed to draw the attention of many other higher

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education systems, and the process has been travelling to different parts of the world, including Africa.

Explaining similar scenarios, a considerable volume of literature on the inter-regional movement of ideas and practices in public policy has been developed over the last twenty years through various concepts including "policy transfer", "policy diffusion", "cross-national attraction", "policy borrowing" and "policy convergence". This article explores the notion of policy travel through the conceptions of "policy transfer" and "policy diffusion" and addresses the underlying question of how the Bologna process of Europe travelled to the various sub-regions of Africa.

Conceptualising Policy Travel in the Context of Higher Education

Studies on policy travel emerged within the broader field of comparative studies in public policy analyzing how different policies operate when they are implemented in different contexts. The concept originally developed in the United States of America as an instrument to explain the adoption of policies and how they spread or diffuse throughout the federal system (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). Gradually, however, the notion of policy travel started to be taken as one of the instruments of comparative regional policy studies especially within studies of European integration (Haas 1970). This is because the concept of policy travel is embodied within the notion of globalisation since both are usually conceptualised in relation to their capacity to harmonise systems and embrace interconnectedness of variance across many jurisdictions. In this regard, there have been many works done on the movement of policies across different spaces (geographic, political, social or spatial) within or in comparison with other regions describing and analyzing the context of transfer or diffusion, efficiency, effectiveness, and the ethics of travelling policy (see Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Wolman and Page 2002; Dolowitz et al. 2000).

Conceptualising the notion of policy travel has always been a challenge because of the complexity of the process and as policies carry socio-economic, political and ideological values while travelling. There is an ongoing debate on the conceptualisation of the term itself, and different scholars use different words describing the movement of policies. Among others, policy learning, borrowing, transfer, mobility, translation, diffusion, convergence, lesson-drawing, assemblage, travelling ideas, bandwagoning, emulation, harmonisation are some of the terms used describing policy movement. Policy travel is a catch-all, umbrella term, and the central idea of the concept focuses on the movement of ideas, models, structures and institutions across various policy settings. Dolowitz et al. (2000) for instance, define it as: "A process in which knowledge about policies, institutions, and ideas

developed in one time or place is used in the development of policies, institutions etc. in another time or place" (Dolowitz et al. 2000: 3).

Since policies move across different spaces within certain socio-economic and political contexts, understanding the driving factors for policy travel, the actors involved in the process and their dynamic interactions, the way decisions are made and interests negotiated are central questions in policy travel research. This article focusses on the two most important components of policy travel—*policy transfer and policy diffusion*.

Policy transfer focuses on the transfer of the policy content itself from one time or space to another, and the role of different agencies in the process. As thoroughly discussed by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996: 349–350), policy transfer constitutes seven interdependent elements: goals, structure and content; policy instruments or administrative techniques; institutions; ideology; ideas, attitudes and concepts; and negative lessons. Policy transfer usually happens in a structured and top–down manner without thorough discussions and negotiations among stakeholders at the bottom. It is more of an imposition of policies from a "dominant donor" of ideas and practices to the "subordinate recipients" without proper dialogue among the key players, for example—professors, higher education institutions, and ministries of higher education.

Policy diffusion, on the other hand, emphasizes on the dynamics of diffusion or the gradual movement of policies focusing on the timing and sequence of the spread of ideas and practices. It focusses on explaining why some states either adopt or adapt policies and practices more readily than others. Explaining the dynamics of diffusion, literature places the concepts within two polarized scenarios called *immunity and isomorphy.* The immunity scenario implies strong resistance of states or regions either to adopt or adapt policies and practices (Bache and Olsson 2001: 218). The isomorphy scenario, on the other pole, explains how ideas, concepts, and policies easily diffuse across different spaces through the forces of globalisation (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In the context of higher education, the key element in the concept of policy travel is the notion of adopting international values in the operations of higher education institutions through transfer and diffusion of policies.

How Does the Bologna Process Travel to Africa?

Understanding the way higher education policies travel to Africa demands a comprehensive approach that utilizes the concepts of policy transfer, diffusion, and convergence. Since its inception in 1998, the Bologna process has managed to attract the attention of many higher education systems in different regions, including Africa, reshaping policies at national, sub-regional and continental levels. In spite of the varying reasons, the transfer and diffusion of the Bologna Process

occurred within the context of globalisation that facilitated not only the processes of policy travel but also the convergence of its variance. Thus, even though globalisation by itself does not lead to policy travel, it has facilitated the policy movement from one region to the other, including Africa, at different points in time. Many developments since the 1990s have pushed the higher education sectors in Africa to pursue different reform initiatives. The higher education sector in Africa has witnessed unprecedented expansions and developments since the 1990s. These expansions are not only in numbers but also in size and type of institutions. This period has also marked the development of privatization in the higher education sector and the expansion of ICT which facilitated cross-border, distance, and online education. These developments, however, came with different concerns/challenges over issues of quality and relevance. The growing student mobility and institutional partnerships have also necessitated regional discussions on how to deal with recognition of qualifications and transferability of credits. These issues have, however, not only been shared among higher education institutions across Africa but also demanded a collective endeavour in the process of addressing them since the nature of the concerns transcends national jurisdictions. Thus, the emergence of regional higher education policies and the efforts to harmonise them partially emanated from the nature and context of the challenges that African higher education institutions have been facing.

In the process of developing policy frameworks to address the above challenges, regional authorities, African governments, and higher education institutions considered the Bologna process as a potential experience to learn and adapt from. Apart from that, African institutions also felt the pressure to align their systems with European reforms as changes in the higher education system in Europe would have a direct implication on African higher education for historical reasons. The context of higher education policy travel to Africa in this regard is mostly related to the long-standing historical relationship of African institutions with European universities. Thus, ignoring European higher education reform will have implications for African higher education institutions as it may mean isolation from their historical partners.

Within the above context, the Bologna process travels to Africa both through policy transfer and policy diffusion processes. The African Union Higher Education Harmonisation Strategy which was introduced in 2007 to harmonise the diverse higher education systems of Africa, for instance, could be taken as a policy transfer process as it was adopted in a top–down manner without thorough discussions and negotiations among stakeholders at the bottom. The diffusion of the various components of the Bologna process—like the *Licence-Master-Doctorate* (LMD), regional quality assurance mechanisms and credit transfer systems—among governments and sub-regional communities, on the other hand, is a gradual movement of ideas and practices. The next sections discuss them in detail.

The African Union Higher Education Harmonisation Strategy

Higher education policy and strategies developed by the African Union (AU) can be best understood through the nature of the organization itself. The transformation of the previous Organization of African Unity (OAU) to AU through the Abuja Treaty was actually done following the European Union (EU) model in 2001. Historically, the European integration process has passed through different stages from simple free trade area and customs union to a more integrated scheme of monetary union. The Abuja Treaty is also adopted with the same intention of leading Africa on a similar path, to create a stepwise gradual process of regional integration with the assumption that the integration of one sector would lead to the integration of another (African Union 2001).

The Abuja Treaty implicated that the experience of the European integration process is an ideal progression from which Africa could learn since it has already evolved to a monetary union passing through different stages of integration. Once the regional integration scheme and the organizational setting of the AU have been modelled after the EU, adopting other regional policies also became easier for the continent (see Babarinde 2007). As a result, since the transformation of OAU in AU along the EU model, the experience of the EU on different regional policy issues has become a recurrent point of reference for regional policy initiatives in Africa.

It was within this context that the Bologna process of Europe was considered by the AU as a benchmark for regional higher education reform in Africa. The first discussion to adopt the Bologna process in Africa took place on the Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of AU Ministers of Education (COMEDAF III) in Johannesburg, South Africa in August 2007. During the conference, the African Ministers of Education discussed and emphasized the need for regional higher education harmonisation strategy for the revitalization of the sector and for making African institutions competitive in the global knowledge system. It was clearly stated that creating a comparable higher education system in Africa is important to bring together the fragmented higher education systems in the region.

In doing so, the Ministers recommended taking the experience of the Bologna process to develop a higher education harmonisation strategy for Africa. In the report of the COMEDAF III, it is stated, "*The Minister cited the Bologna process that has led to a new higher education system in Europe from which Africa should learn.*" (AU/MIN/EDUC/Draft/RPT (III) 2007, p. 11). Thus, it was within this context that the AU took the experience of the Bologna Process of Europe and developed a higher education harmonisation strategy in Africa. The decision to launch the harmonisation strategy was approved a year later by the 10th Ordinary Session of Assembly of the AU in January 2008 (Assembly/AU/Dec.173 (X) 2008). The draft document for the framework of the harmonisation of higher education was then developed by the AU and, as recommended by COMEDAF III, in the process of developing the harmonisation strategy, the experience of the Bologna process was strongly consulted.

In terms of general objectives, for instance, the African higher education harmonisation strategy is more or less a duplication of the Bologna process, as both documents took the mutual recognition of academic qualifications, promotion of student and staff mobility, provision of a framework for the development of effective quality assurance mechanisms, and transferability of credits as their main objectives (see Bologna Declaration 1999; AU/EXP/EDUC/2 (III) Part II. 2007). These general objectives, however, are further stated more specifically, through various communiqués, in the Bologna process than in the African higher education harmonisation strategy. To accommodate the context and interest of Africa in the policy transfer, the African higher education harmonisation strategic document sets six principles as a foundation for the whole process, namely: (i) harmonisation should be an African-driven process; (ii) it should be a true, mutual partnership of all the key players; (iii) it should be enhanced with appropriate infrastructural support and funding; (iv) it should involve the mobilization of all stakeholders in governments, institutions, civil society, and the private sector; (v) it should not disrupt, but should enhance, national educational systems and programmes; and (vi) it should involve improvement of quality through appropriate funding and infrastructural provisions in each country (AU/EXP/EDUC/2 (III) Part II 2007). Even though the African higher education harmonisation strategy document clearly stipulates the principles of the process, however, there is no indication as to how these principles should be operationalized.

The way the Bologna model travelled to Africa through the harmonisation strategy could be best explained within the concept of "policy transfer" rather than "diffusion". First of all, in the case of the harmonisation strategy, it is the content of the Bologna policy that travelled to Africa, not the practical implementation of its components. The goals and objectives stated in both documents are more or less identical even though the principles of design and implementation are assumed to be accommodative to the African context. This is exactly how policy transfer happens through movement of the policy document itself by a decision made at the top-level without gradual diffusion of its components in the system. The other point is that the transfer of the policy happened in a top–down approach where actors at the bottom have not been consulted much in the policy process. Even though the very idea of higher education harmonisation process is intended to be implemented by higher education institutions, faculties, departments, and professors, the actors have neither been significantly consulted nor communicated in policy transfer process. It was stated in the AU report that, after the endorsement of the strategy, various consultative meetings were organized to brainstorm, understand and further develop the strategic plan of the harmonisation process. In those meetings, however, student associations, university leaderships, representatives of faculty members, employers, and business groups were not represented or brought on board in the policy process.

As a result, the harmonisation process is still mainly floating at the AU level without being much felt at national and institutional levels. Even though the

harmonisation initiative is known among the Ministers of Education of member states, African Union Commission (AUC) experts, and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) coordinators, African universities are not yet fully involved as stakeholders in the harmonisation process, and the strategy is not yet fully implemented. Here, it is important to note that one of the challenges of the non-participatory nature of policy formulation and implementation is its potential to be misunderstood and misinterpreted by stakeholders. If the harmonisation strategy is not properly communicated to African higher education institutions through various consultation forums, and if the very idea of the policy is not debated openly on the various media outlets, and feedbacks are not consulted through the proper channel, then the effective implementation of the policy to achieve its intended goals will be questionable.

Advancing its cause, the European Union Commission (EUC) has also been supporting the AU harmonisation initiatives through funding and consulting the various projects. The EU has involved in the AU higher education harmonisation process from the very outset initiating, funding, expert-advising, and in some cases process-owning the various functional elements of the harmonisation initiatives. The AU harmonisation document states that the process is owned by AU but it also indicates that it has many things in common with the Bologna initiatives. Despite the AUC's claim, however, it is hardly possible to state that the AU harmonisation process is a purely African process since there is a huge involvement of European actors throughout the functional processes. The Mwalimu Nyerere programme that promotes student mobility; Tuning Africa, which works towards harmonisation of curriculum; the Pan-African University Network, that established joint degree programmes; and the African quality assurance and rating mechanisms which are intended to set up common understanding on quality and recognition of academic qualifications are largely funded by the EU commission, the World Bank, and donor countries mainly from Europe (Woldegiorgis et al. 2015).

In addition to the regional harmonisation initiative of the AU, sub-regional economic communities and some African countries have also taken isolated actions of adopting certain elements of the Bologna process in their respective sub-regions. This process of policy travel at sub-regional, national or institutional levels is more of policy diffusion than transfer since the process is a step by step adoption of the Bologna components in a more bottom–up approach. In the next section, we will see how the Bologna policy diffused to Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone African.

Bologna Process in Francophone Africa

The higher education system of most Francophone African countries has been modelled after the French higher education system. This has been manifested

through their program curriculum, degree structure, and medium of instruction which have basically been along the French higher education model. This similarity in higher education structure has facilitated higher education partnership and student mobility between the two. That is one of the reasons, among others, for having more students from Francophone Africa in French universities than in any other region.

Moreover, there are many joint post-graduate programs established between Francophone universities of Africa and universities in France. When French institutions shifted their higher education system to the Bologna model, however, it became challenging for Francophone African universities to keep up with their long-standing partners while keeping the old system. Thus, higher education institutions in the former French colonies of North and West Africa felt the urgency of shifting their higher education systems to the 3-cycle Bologna structure along the French reform initiative (Woldegiorgis et al. 2015). In this regard, the impact of the Bologna process has been felt more in Francophone than Anglophone Africa since the Anglophone degree structure has already been in line with the 3-cycle Bologna reform.

Comparability of degrees has been the main discussion at that time since the Three-Cycle Degree Structure in France may pose a compatibility problem for student mobility and recognition of academic qualifications with France. Thus, since 2003, Francophone Africa started to implement the new degree structure proposed by the Bologna process. The Maghreb region of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia), for example, were the first countries to implement the "*Licence-Master-Doctorate*" (LMD) higher education degree structure in their higher education systems. From the Maghreb region, Morocco was the first to start the LMD in 2003, followed by Algeria in 2004, and Tunisia in 2005 with the support of the French government, the EU and the World Bank. As of 2010, the Bologna 3-cycle degree reform at the Bachelor and Master levels has been widely implemented in most institutions and programs in the Maghreb region of North Africa.

The implication of the Bologna process in the Maghreb region of North Africa is not, however, limited to the introduction of LMD and the ECTS systems. One of the main instruments of the Bologna process, which is Diploma Supplement, has also been introduced in Algeria and Tunisia since 2009/2010 while the process is still under discussion in Morocco. Moreover, Tunisia has officially introduced a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for higher education and has already started implementing it while the process is underway in Algeria and Morocco. The policy travel of the Bologna process to the Maghreb region is not a one-time policy transfer act, rather a gradual diffusion of the instruments of Bologna process to address the challenges of compatibility of degrees and qualifications with their historical partners from Europe. In the course of adopting the Bologna process, decisions are made in a series of sequential phases, starting with the identification of a problem and ending with a set of activities to deal with it.

The adoption of the Bologna model in the Maghreb region has also been supported by various EU collaborative schemes. Among others, the Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area, and Tempus programs are the major ones (Ruffio et al. 2010). The Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area was founded in 2006 after the Joint Catania Declaration of the representatives from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, France, Spain, Italy, Malta, Egypt, Portugal, Slovenia, Turkey, Jordan and Greece to create a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education by 2010 (EACEA 2014). Since then, it has been providing strong support for the reform processes in the Maghreb region of North Africa. The basic idea behind the Catania Declaration is creating a higher education area among the Euro-Mediterranean countries by adopting the Bologna process in their higher education institutions. The Tempus program is also an EU initiative to support higher education reform initiatives along the Bologna line through promoting institutional cooperation that involves the EU and partner countries in the areas of curricular reform, governance reform and higher education and society from which the Maghreb region has been benefiting.

Other Francophone African countries have also adopted the Bologna process since 2007. Since the conference which was held in the Democratic Republic of Congo in July 2007, the member states[1] of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) have been adopting the Bologna process in their higher education systems. The LMD system, for example, was taken as a priority that needs to be adopted by member states to fix the incompatibility and incomparability of degrees among institutions. As a result, the UEMOA member countries officially adopted the LMD structure from the Bologna process in July 2007 through the Decision No. 03/2007/CM/UEMOA. Even though the LMD structure has been the main priority in the process of adopting the Bologna process, the issues of diploma supplement, regional quality assurance instruments, and qualification frameworks have also been gradually introduced among member states. To realize the implementation of the reform, the UEMOA allocated $5.8 million in February 2011 for a 3-year period, and the fund was mobilized by UNESCO.

Adopting the Bologna process has also been pushed by sub-regional organizations like the Network of Excellence in Higher Education in West Africa (REESAO). The REESAO was established by several universities from seven Francophone African countries[2] to make possible the smooth implementation of the LMD reforms and advance higher education co-operation as a mechanism of promoting academic mobility. Apart from that, the Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) (The African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education) has also been playing an important role in the process of

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[1]UEMOA member states are Togo, Senegal, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau Mali and Niger.

[2]Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.

implementing the Bologna reform in Francophone Africa. The CAMES is made up of 17 countries[3] and has been working to enhance mutual recognition of qualifications, promotion of academic mobility and implementation of the LMD structure among its members since 2005. Moreover, it has been playing a leading role in the process of creating regional quality assurance mechanisms among member countries by coordinating national quality assurance and accreditation processes. If we look at the pattern of policy travel in the above cases, it follows pragmatic utilitarianism in a sense that taking or adopting the Bologna process is a slow diffusion process of ideas in a more bottom–up style.

Bologna Process in Anglophone Africa

The policy travel of the Bologna process in Anglophone countries has relatively been less intensive as compared to that of Francophone Africa. This is because, unlike Francophone Africa, the degree structures of Anglophone Africa are still compatible with the Bologna reform as the three-cycle degree structure had already been in place in most Anglophone countries. However, higher education systems in Anglophone Africa still have differences in terms of the number of credits and years in each cycle, as some degrees take four years and others three. Moreover, along with the growing student mobility both within and out of Africa, concerns over quality, standardization, and recognition of qualifications started to become part of policy discourses at sub-regional levels. Thus, some elements of the Bologna process have attracted Anglophone countries of Eastern and Southern Africa to adopt and adapt part of Bologna reforms through diffusion. The main lines of reform in this region have been along the issues of quality assurance, accreditation, and recognition of qualifications. In this regard, sub-regional organizations, SADC and EAC have been playing a leading role in the process of adopting some elements of the Bologna process in Anglophone Africa.

The policy travel of the creating common higher education area in the higher education systems of the SADC region, for instance, started at the same time when European Ministers passed the Sorbonne Declaration in 1997. The discussion was not however provoked because of the European initiative at that time; instead, there were sub-regional higher education challenges that led to the policy debates. After the fall of the Apartheid regime in South Africa, the higher education sector expanded not only in number but also in size and shape. The region has also witnessed the expansion of private higher education and growing number of distance education. The recent development in the fast-growing number of international students in the region, particularly in South Africa, has also made regional

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[3]Members of CAMES are Cameroon, Rwanda, Guinea-Conakry, Togo, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Niger, Senegal Benin and Côte d'Ivoire.

collaboration and policy harmonisation issues in higher education even more pressing. As students move across borders, the issue of recognition of qualifications, quality and accreditation processes, and the issue of tuition fees demand regional frameworks. Thus, the discussion started among SADC members with the intention of creating common understanding when it comes to higher education training and qualifications (Kotecha 2012).

Apart from that, SADC also has Portuguese-speaking (Angola and Mozambique) and French-speaking (République Démocratique du Congo and Madagascar) countries that have different higher education structures. In order to facilitate student mobility and recognition of qualifications among member states, these diverse higher education systems need to be harmonised. This disparity in higher education systems among member states has also necessitated the need to look into the experience of the Bologna process so as to establish a mutual understanding of the meaning of qualifications to facilitate free movement of students across all universities in the sub-region. In this regard, SADC has been the agent of change and policy travel in the Southern African countries when it comes to adopting some elements of the Bologna process. Here, it is important to note that there are 109 public universities in the SADC region, 10 in Lusophone countries, 42 in Francophone countries and 57 in Anglophone countries. With the exception of South Africa and DRC, most countries have only a few public universities but a large number of private institutions (SARUA 2014).

After recognizing the above challenges, the SADC sub-region issued a comprehensive legal protocol called "*SADC Protocol on Education and Training*" to revitalize education in the sub-region in 1997. The protocol emphasized harmonising quality assurance systems and creating a mechanism of recognition of qualifications among member states. At that time, there was also a parallel process in Europe, Sorbonne Declaration, which later became the point of reference for the Bologna process. The Lisbon convention and the discussions that followed were important inputs for regionalization of qualification frameworks in the consecutive years among the SADC members. Since then, the members of the SADC region have been working on creating regional qualification frameworks along the Bologna initiatives. The initiative was also strongly supported by UNESCO since it was in line with the 1981 Arusha Convention.

The other important policy travel process in Anglophone Africa is the experience of East African countries. The efforts of harmonisation of specific processes of higher education started in East Africa after the Treaty for the Establishment of the current East African Community (EAC) which was signed on November 30, 1999, the same year that the Bologna process was declared. The East African Community is a sub-regional intergovernmental organization established by Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania (EAC 2014). The EAC later incorporated the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) as a leading institution for higher education reform in the sub-region. Since then, the IUCEA has been mandated to lead the higher education reform

processes in the sub-region and took the responsibility of developing a sub-regional mechanism for quality assurance and qualification frameworks in Eastern Africa. Currently, IUCEA has a membership of 88 universities, both public and private, which are part of the reform processes.

The quest for the Bologna approach and the collective intervention on higher education at sub-regional level in East African countries stemmed from different reasons. Just like other regions, new developments in the higher education sector including expansion of the sector itself necessitated having a regional framework to deal with higher education policy issues. The proliferation of private universities since 1994, in particular, raised the concern over quality, relevance and accreditation mechanism in the sub-region. Even though member countries of the EAC have their own mechanisms for ensuring quality in their higher education, such quality assurance mechanisms were not comparable and the processes were also highly fragmented. Recognizing the challenge, IUCEA took the initiative to develop a regional quality assurance system that harmonises quality assurance processes among the higher education institutions within EAC countries through benchmarking the Bologna experience in 2005 (Hoosen and Butcher 2012).

In order to share the experience from the Bologna process, the IUCEA arranged a visit in 2006 to Germany and the Netherlands for Vice-chancellors from 24 universities of East Africa (Joseph 2011). Not only universities but also heads of the national commissions and councils for higher education and senior government officials were part of the benchmark process. The project was jointly funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and IUCEA. After subsequent meetings, the members decided to develop a regional quality assurance system in line with the Bologna process. Subsequently, in 2006, IUCEA in partnership with the Kenyan Commission for Higher Education (CHE), the Tanzania Commission for Universities, (TCU), the Ugandan National Councils for Higher Education, (NCHE), and DAAD forged a partnership that was aimed at the joint implementation of a regional quality assurance system for higher education in East Africa.

The diffusion of the Bologna initiative, however, is not limited to quality assurance structures. Especially after the enactment of the EAC Common Market Protocol in 2010 which gave expanded mandates to IUCEA to handle the issue of harmonisation of higher education in the region, more elements of the Bologna propositions were recommended by the IUCEA. Among others, the IUCEA has initiated the establishment of a regional qualification framework in collaboration with higher education institutions, the national councils and commissions for higher education, East African Business Council and other actors since December 2011. In line with the 2010 Common Market Protocol, Article 11 of the protocol particularly called for "*Harmonisation and Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications*" in order to ensure the free movement of labour within the region (EAC 2010).

Thus, if we look at the dynamics and patterns of policy travel in Anglophone Africa, it has been a voluntary diffusion of the Bologna process into the

sub-regions. Adopting some elements of the Bologna process is considered as advantageous for newly emerging regional integration schemes since the models would have already been tested on another ground; thus, it is easy to adapt to the African context. This notion of voluntarily adopting the policy of others is described as "policy shopping" (Freeman 1999).

Bologna Process in Lusophone Africa

The other important development that can be observed as policy diffusion of the Bologna process in Africa is the experience of former Portuguese colonies of Africa, namely Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe. The Portuguese speaking countries of Africa have adopted the Bologna process in their higher education systems and have established a Lusophone Higher Education Area (ELES—Espaço Lusófono de Ensino Superior) since 2002. The Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) which was established in 1996 in collaboration with the Association of the Portuguese Speaking Universities (AULP) proposed the Bologna type of reform in the region at the 12th annual meeting of the AULP which was held in Luanda, Angola in 2002. At the conclusion of the 12th Annual Meeting of the AULP, it was proposed to use the experience of the Bologna Process to develop a special project within the AULP.

The reform is intended to change the higher education structures of the Lusophone countries in three major areas: mutual recognition of qualifications, student mobility, quality assurance and exchange through recognition of study periods. The above objectives are also included in a regional legal document signed at the 5th meeting of the CPLP Ministers of Education which was held in Fortaleza, Brazil in May 2004. At the end of the meeting, the member states passed a declaration called "Fortaleza Declaration" which was basically adopted from the 1997 Lisbon Convention of the EU (Declaração-de-Fortaleza 2004). The signatories of the Fortaleza Declaration agreed to work in the direction of building the CPLP Higher Education Area within four key action lines: working to build mutually acceptable and internationally recognized quality assurance structures; building solid relationships among the members of CPLP towards creating a regional higher education area; harmonisation of degree structures, promoting student and faculty mobility.

Just like the Bologna Process, the Lusophone Higher Education Area has also adopted a follow-up structure called a Follow-up Group which consists of representatives of each of the Ministries of Education and a representative from AULP. This reform has also enabled the Lusophone African countries to collaborate with Brazil in line with their own Bologna type reform practised in Latin America. In 2013, Brazil fostered collaboration with higher education institutions from the Portuguese speaking African countries and on May the same year, the

Lusophone African countries and Brazil had a conference entitled "*Education as a Strategic Bridge for the Brazil–Africa Relationship*" in which 20 Brazilian higher education institutions participated in launching the International Afro-Brazilian Lusophone University (UNILAB) in Africa.

Generally, the diffusion or transfer of the Bologna process in Africa is gradually impacting the higher education reform processes at all levels—national, sub-regional and regional. It is important to note that the Bologna process has not been considered as the ultimate remedy for the challenges of higher education in Africa but provided a policy path that brings various higher education systems together. The degree of policy travel among the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African countries varies based on the extent to which the sub-regions comply with the Bologna process. For instance, the Bologna process has diffused more among Francophone systems than the others.

As noted above, transfers of policy can be voluntary or coercive or a combination thereof. Some recent works in education policy have also attempted to recognize trends towards policy convergence while acknowledging the constant effects of accommodating contexts (Lingard 2000; Ozga and Jones 2006). Policy travel is not necessarily a coercive act of imposing interests of one on another as it could also be a forum for the exchange of ideas, values, systems, and practices whereby interests are negotiated on a constant basis. Here, one should keep in mind that, even though interests are negotiated in the course of policy travel, the imbalance in capacity among the negotiating actors could shake the momentum of voluntary policy travel. Higher education policies from the North usually have more bargaining power in the course of interest negotiations since their financial and technical might would be used as an indispensable comparative advantage to impose interests. Poor infrastructure, lack of funding and the weak institutional setting in Africa, on the other hand, usually situates Africa in a vulnerable position in the process of interest negotiation since the capacity of actors to mould interests on policy process depends not only on the political constituency of actors but also on their financial, technical, and logistical strength. In the process of interest negotiation, therefore, regional actors from the South sometimes do not have much choice but to lean on and comply with the conditions of donors in the policy travelling process.

Conclusion

Generally, there could be two lines of argument about taking the Bologna process as a model for regionalisation of higher education in Africa. The first notion could be that adopting the Bologna model may be advantageous to newly emerging higher education harmonisation strategies since the models would have already been tested on another ground; thus, it is easy to adopt to the African context. The

other line of argument, however, is more ideological and puts the notion of policy travel as instrument of neo-colonialism as it may perpetuate dependency of African policy processes on European models. But, the policy travel itself could raise practical concerns as it may not necessarily accommodate the specific context of Africa and achieve the expected outcomes.

Even though the Bologna process could provide many lessons worth noting in the course of higher education policy integrations, the difference in the context of the two regions makes the success of policy travels a challenge. The Bologna Process, from the very outset, has been created and implemented within the context of Europe which has the history of relative success in regional integration, unlike the African case. Moreover, prior to higher education integration, Europe as a region managed to create a well-structured common economic area which facilitated the development of other regional policy frameworks. Through the 1993 Maastricht Treaty, EU members even further redesigned their integration schemes to enhance European political and economic integration by creating a single currency, a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights. All these settings make not only the development of regional policy frameworks easy but also make student mobility and institutional collaboration flexible. Thus, the European higher education harmonisation process has evolved through time within the above socio-economic and political contexts in the region. The above structural context which abundantly favours the Bologna process in Europe does not however equally exist in the context of Africa.

Yet, on the positive side, there are progressive efforts to capitalize on the fact that harmonisation of higher education systems in Africa could facilitate an integrated knowledge system that informs socio-economic developments in the region. The AU and sub-regional economic communities are mobilizing their efforts to realize the effectiveness of African centres of excellence, regional and continental frameworks of collaborations to ensure the presence of common understanding among diverse higher education systems in the continent. There is no doubt that compared to 15 years ago, there is more student and staff mobility, partnership and collaborative initiatives, joint research and curriculum harmonisation, centres of excellences, integrated quality assurance processes and qualification frameworks now in Africa.

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Corruption, the Lack of Academic Integrity and Other Ethical Issues in Higher Education: What Can Be Done Within the Bologna Process?

Elena Denisova-Schmidt

Introduction

Transparency International (TI), an NGO working on corruption worldwide, commonly defines corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain." In higher education, however, corruption also encompasses "the lack of academic integrity." The second definition applies to both public and private institutions, since what they both offer—education—can be construed as a public good. Corruption might be perceived or it might not; in higher education, however, this differentiation is less relevant (Heyneman 2013). Along with the kinds of monetary and non-monetary corruption that can be found anywhere in society, such as corruption in procurement and favouritism in hiring and/or promoting employees, corruption in higher education can implicate the students themselves, thus exerting an influence over the next generation (Denisova-Schmidt 2016a, b, c, 2017a, b, c, 2018a, b; Denisova-Schmidt and de Wit 2017).

While corruption in higher education is not a new phenomenon, its unprecedented dimensions, the growing challenge of mitigating and preventing it in many academic systems as well as its international aspect are rather new. Can corruption be exported and/or imported with the rise of mobility among students and faculty and the internationalisation of educational institutions? Are universities prepared to deal with actors from endemically corrupt societies? What tools and best practices

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are particularly effective in increasing academic integrity? Or is it an irreversible process? How can the latest research contribute to the policy debate within the Bologna process?

The paper is structured as follows: first, I discuss the current trends in the general research on corruption and its implications for higher education within the Bologna context, then I give an overview of some successful tools for mitigating academic dishonesty and discuss the challenges of their implementation.

Corruption Research as a Field of Study

What is "corruption," really? Scholars and practitioners often work with definitions developed by international organisations such as the World Bank, United Nations (UN) and its sub-structures, as well as Transparency International (TI):

"[Corruption is] the abuse of public office for private gain" (World Bank[1]);

"[Corruption is] the misuse of public power, office or authority for private benefit through bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money or embezzlement" (UNDP[2]);

"Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" (Transparency International[3]).

In spite of some slight differences in wording, the idea is approximately the same: something that was previously "public" becomes "private", often in an improper way. How does this relate to higher education? While some might argue that these definitions apply to public universities only and do not cover private ones, these definitions, in fact, relate to both public and private institutions since what they both offer—education—is a public good. More concretely: Imagine a student writing a term paper. He or she plagiarizes, which is to say, he or she copies and pastes text from other sources without acknowledging them. The student submits this paper and receives a grade for it. This is fraud—one form of corruption. Taking it a step further, let's say that the faculty member who is responsible for grading this paper chooses to ignore the plagiarism. In this case, the faculty member is misusing an entrusted power for private gain, in the broader sense (Denisova-Schmidt 2017a). Faculty members do not necessarily have to be bribed to do it; their reasons might vary, from being overloaded with other duties to the lack of time to investigate. Some scholars often do not dare to call it "corruption" and mitigate this small "sin" by referring to it as "student dishonesty", "academic dishonesty", "cheating", or just simply "plagiarism" (s. e.g. Curtis et al. 2013; Golunov 2014; Curtis and

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[1]http://www.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/corruptn/cor02.htm#note1.

[2]https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/corruption/6010.

[3]https://www.transparency.org/what-is-corruption/.

Vardanega 2016; Chapman and Linder 2016; Denisova-Schmidt 2016a; Denisova-Schmidt et al. 2016a). The challenges of defining "corruption" might also be explained by the fact that corruption is a crime. Some scholars might consider only those activities to be corrupt that have been proven as such by a judge; otherwise, they might refer to the presumption of innocence. Depending on the national context, even an obvious bribe cannot be easily judged to be a bribe, as an advantage caused by this bribe still has to be proven, among other things.

Table 1 Selected examples of corruption in higher education

Terms/TI definitions[a]	**Bribery** The offering, promising, giving, accepting, or soliciting of an advantage as an inducement for an action that is illegal, unethical, or a breach of trust. Inducements can take the form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards, or other advantages (taxes, services, donations, etc.)
Examples	A student bribes a professor to change a grade in his/her favour; a faculty member bribes a ghostwriter for his/her own publication; university administration demands bribes from service suppliers
Terms/TI definitions	**Collusion** A secret agreement between parties, in the public and/or private sector, to conspire to commit actions aimed to deceive or commit fraud with the objective of illicit financial gain. The parties involved often are referred to as "cartels"
Examples	Faculty members ignore or pretend to ignore students' academic misbehaviour; Faculty members are involved in "citation" cartels: citing each other's works/journals without necessity; Administration chooses the winner in an open tender, based on a prior agreement
Terms/TI definitions	**Conflict of interest** A situation where an individual, or the entity for which this person works, whether a government, business, media outlet, or civil society organisation, is confronted with choosing between the duties and demands of their position and their own private interests
Examples	A high-ranking official responsible for accreditation is placed in charge of a university, for which he and/or she recently worked; A professor grades his/her nephew/niece or supervises a thesis written by his/her fiancé; A university manager responsible for catering buys food from his/her relatives only
Terms/TI definitions	**Favouritism** Patronage: a form of favouritism in which a person is selected, regardless of qualifications or entitlement, for a job or government benefit because of political affiliations or connections Nepotism: a form of favouritism based on acquaintances and familiar relationships whereby someone in an official position exploits his or her power and authority to provide a job or favour to a family member or friend, even though he or she may not be qualified or deserving

Table 1 (continued)

Examples	A student is admitted, or a faculty member is hired/promoted, based only on his/her personal connections and/or family relations; academic achievement and other relevant competencies are not considered
Terms/TI definitions	**Fraud** To cheat: the act of intentionally deceiving someone in order to gain an unfair or illegal advantage (financial, political, or otherwise)
Examples	A student cheats on his/her written assignment, or a faculty member plagiarizes in his/her paper; A staff member falsifies an admission application; A significant amount of a research grant goes to other purposes than what is indicated in the research proposal; Universities expect a contribution from students receiving financial support
Terms/TI definitions	**Lobbying** Any activity carried out to influence a government or institution's policies and decisions in favour of a specific cause or outcome
Examples	Some industries support research projects expecting positive and/or promising outcomes for their products/services
Terms/TI definitions	**Revolving doors** An individual who moves back and forth between public office and private companies, exploiting his/her period of government service for the benefit of the companies he/she used to regulate
Examples	An influential government official opts for employment as a university rector

Source Updated and expanded version from Denisova-Schmidt 2017a
[a]The Anti-Corruption Plain Language Guide. TI. 2009. http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/the_anti_corruption_plain_language_guide

Corruption is typically used as a generic term for a wide range of actions, including favouritism, nepotism, advantage granting, cronyism, and many other activities. Table 1 illustrates some other types of corruption as well as some examples from the higher education sector. All these types might be judged differently depending on the perspective (insiders or outsiders) and the national/cultural context.

Corruption in Bologna Countries

Virtually all forms of corruption are prevalent in the Bologna countries. According to a 2015 survey conducted in Ukraine, for example, every second student reported an experience with bribery at university (Denisova-Schmidt and Prytula 2017). According to Guardian Data, the number of cheating incidents involving technology (mobile phones, smart watches, etc.) at UK universities increased by 42% between 2012 and 2016. In 2016 alone, 25% of students caught cheating used various electronic devices (Marsh 2017). Cheating and plagiarism might happen

among scholars, too. The Austrian Agency for Research Integrity reported about several recent cases, including double submission of the same proposal or authorship conflict. The latter case was a conflict between a PhD student and her supervisor, which made it impossible for her to defend her dissertation in Austria ("Research Integrity Practices in Science Europe Member Organisations" 2016). In 2016, the Ministers of Education of Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Russia, and Ukraine were all implicated in conflicts of interest. In addition, some or all the deputy Ministers of Education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine, as well as some members of the cabinets in Armenia and Kazakhstan, have also been accused of having conflicts of interest. These ranged from an active for-profit affiliation to an expectation of going through the "re-volving door" into a salaried or shareholder position at a university after leaving the public sector. For-profit affiliations with universities were also common among lower-level heads of departments for higher education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Russia, and Serbia, as well as among education-focused legislators in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine (Milovanovitch et al. 2018). Milovanovitch et al. (2015) claims that the hiring of faculty members and staff in Armenia is often based on personal relationship rather than on merit; in addition, dismissals of academic staff might occur due to their activism in fighting for their rights or their membership in the political opposition. *Dissernet*, a community of Russian activities fighting plagiarism in academic writing, including dissertations, created a ranking of university rectors with questionable academic backgrounds who sought to exploit monetary interests in their positions by employing friends and relatives as employees and/or subcontractors.[4]
Some social groups—women, for example—still face several career disadvantages in academia. While there is an increasing trend toward gender balance at the bachelor, master and Ph.D. levels in many countries, the number of female researchers holding top-level positions remains significantly low, for example, in 2013 in Cyprus (10.8%), the Czech Republic (13.1%), Lithuania (14.4%), Belgium (15.6%), the Netherlands (16.2%), Luxemburg (16.5%), Estonia (17.2%), Germany (17.3%), the United Kingdom (17.5%), Denmark (19.2%), Switzerland (19.3%), France (19.3%) and Greece (19.6%) (She Figures 2015). The reasons for this might vary from traditional gender roles in the respective societies to a lack of knowledge of how to develop an academic career more strategically to—in some cases—sexual harassment, including the refusal to provide favours in exchange for career advancement.[5]

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[4]Rectory: prizvanie i biznes. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xNWeAjSLsY.

[5]It should be mentioned that this topic still remains taboo. The "MeToo" campaign might encourage some victims not to feel alone in their situations and even to act. Recent cases discussed in the media include the court decision against Siegfried Mauser, ex-rector of the Mozarteum University Salzburg and ex-president of the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, who was found guilty of sexual harassment and rape (Rost 2016; Wimmer 2017).

The geography of the violence of academic integrity is wide; the scope and the techniques might vary, as might the courage of all involved actors to talk about it openly. Some scholars argue that the current situation in many countries leads to "academic collusion" (Titaev 2012), or situations in which almost all of the stakeholders involved in academia might occasionally pretend to teach, carry out research, or study due to high pressure. The following example demonstrates the challenges of this phenomenon.

Favouritism Versus Strong Social Ties

The situation in which a (new) faculty member is hired and/or promoted based on his/her personal connections and/or family relationships and not on his/her academic achievement or other relevant competencies is called "favouritism"—or corruption, according to TI. Should any personal and/or family relationships be banned per se in university employment decisions? I am familiar with a case that happened at one Russell-Group University in the United Kingdom, where a new faculty member was indeed not hired because his brother had already been working for the same institution. In Germany, on the other hand, according to Kehm, it is almost impossible to get a university professorship without personal networks. This informal "… support is never made public and never openly discussed but will be able to topple ranking lists of candidates established by search commissions" (Kehm 2015, p. 130). The competition is very high: for every five successfully completed habilitations,[6] there is only one vacant post (Müller 2017). Stipulating the fact that the lack of a formal habilitation might be compensated by a "habilitation equivalency", the situation is even more drastic. More influential people in academia tend to help (young) colleagues for many reasons: one of them might belong to the same research school and/or share similar research ideas and a willingness to continue the work on a particular research topic. But even powerful networks cannot always guarantee a job. A search commission might favour an average candidate over an excellent one in order not to be swayed by the fame of this great researcher when he or she becomes a colleague, or they might decide on a candidate with less informal support in order to spite the personal networks of other competitors (Denisova-Schmidt 2017c). Nevertheless, it is important to have a network and sometimes even belong to the "correct" political party or church. In 2007, for example, Alfred Scharenberg claimed that he was not appointed as a professor of political science at the Free University of Berlin due to his activity in

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[6]The habilitation is a formal requirement (but not a guarantee) for a full-professorship position at German universities. The search committee might consider candidates who are "habilitation equivalent", however. In some fields such as engineering or economics, a habilitation is not required anymore (cf. Kehm 2015).

the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (cf. e.g. FU Berlin 2007; Kirchgessner 2007; Wittrock 2007).[7] Moreover, Ulla Wessels sued the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in 2012 for not hiring her as professor of philosophy because she was not Catholic (cf. e.g. Scherf 2012; Auer 2015). While this seems to be an open secret in Germany, the importance of social ties and loyalty in academic life is often stressed explicitly in other countries, as, for example, in Russia (cf. Yudkevich 2015) or the practice of *cooptation* in France.

Anti-corruption Research and Anti-corruption Measures

A great deal of contemporary research into corruption assumes that corruption can be defined and quantified clearly, thus allowing it to be combatted successfully (for a contrasting view, see Ledeneva 2009, 2013; Barsukova and Ledeneva 2014; Denisova-Schmidt et al. 2016b; Ledeneva et al. 2017; Denisova-Schmidt and Kryzhko 2018). In such theoretical approaches as the principal-agent (Klitgaard 1988) and rent-seeking models (see Graeff and Grieger 2012), corruption is often defined by researchers as a "deviation from the norm" that can to be eradicated. There are, however, other approaches that examine corruption in its own indigenous context, where it might be considered as a "norm". These approaches are particularly useful in endemically corrupt countries (see, for example, Mungiu-Pippidi 2011; Rothstein 2011), where the fight against corruption is often more difficult since it is deemed to be a collective action (Marquette and Pfeiffer 2015). When people believe that corruption is already widespread, it can even lead to more corruption (John et al. 2014; Corbacho et al. 2016). In Ukraine, a country with a high rate of corruption, two recent experiments have shown that anti-corruption campaigns can actually have the opposite effect: rather than reducing corruption, such campaigns might, in fact, promote it. Examining the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures at state universities in Lviv, Ukraine, a pair of recent studies (Denisova-Schmidt et al. 2015; Denisova-Schmidt et al. 2016a) indicated that young people with previous experience with corruption at university level were not influenced by anti-corruption campaigns based on TI materials, though these students still often judged corruption in negative terms (corruption is "bad" or corruption is a "crime"). For those students who had not encountered corruption at university, however, the studies showed that anti-corruption programs can have the opposite effect: students are able to learn new cheating techniques, and their assumptions about the widespread nature of corruption are confirmed. Marquette and Pfeiffer (2015) argue that anti-corruption measures often fail not because the theories they are based on (i.e., the principal-agent or collective action models) are inadequate (Persson et al. 2013; Mungiu-Pippidi 2011), but rather because such

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[7]The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation is a German organisation affiliated with the political party The Left.

measures do not allow for the fact that corruption can be a necessary instrument that helps people deal with the problems of everyday life, particularly in an environment of weak institutions. Therefore, those who make policies need to recognize the important role corruption plays and develop equally effective alternatives to replace it. This consideration would boost the efficacy of anti-corruption measures significantly (Denisova-Schmidt and Prytula 2016; Ledeneva et al. 2017).

Remedying Corruption Within the Bologna Process

In order to combat this corruption, the faculty should present their assignments and expectations more clearly to the students, stipulating their educational and cultural backgrounds. In some cultures, for example, students might have a different concept of the term "plagiarism": some material might be widely considered to be common knowledge and, therefore, does not need to be cited properly. While editing three books[8] with young Russian authors (undergraduate and graduate students), my colleague and I observed that some of them simply copied and pasted without acknowledging any sources, especially when describing the state of research. One student even argued, "this is only theory". Only after some discussions with those students did we realize the problem: Russian students need to be taught such basic concepts as a precise definition of plagiarism in their academic writing courses. One of the useful arguments here might be mentioning several recent examples of high-profile politicians accused of plagiarism during their university years and the consequences on their professional future.[9] Additional courses on academic integrity might increase students' awareness significantly (Curtis et al. 2013). Faculty members should serve as role models, however. If they also cheat, they might not be able to demand the opposite behaviour from their students. A large number of (external) proctors for supervising examinations might be an effective remedy, as well as the use of randomized seating and several versions of the same examination (if possible) to prevent copying from a neighbour (Denisova-Schmidt 2017a).

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[8]Denisova-Schmidt, E. and Leontyeva, E. (2012a), *Korrupciia v povsednevnoi zhizni, biznese i kul'ture. Vzgliad rossiiskikh studentov* (Corruption in Everyday Life, Business and Culture. A Russian Student Perspective), Europäischer Hochschulverlag, Bremen; Denisova-Schmidt, E. and Leontyeva, E. (2013a), *Korrupciia v Rossii: aktual'nye tendencii i perspektiv. Vzgliad rossiiskich studentov* (Corruption in Russia: Current Trends and Outlooks. A Russian Student Perspective), Europäischer Hochschulverlag, Bremen; Denisova-Schmidt, E. and Leontyeva, E. (2013c), *Siuzhety o korrupcii v rossiiskich fil'mach i serialach: Vzgliad rossiiskich studentov* (The Representation of Corruption in Russian Movies and Sitcoms: A Russian Student Perspective), Europäischer Hochschulverlag, Bremen.

[9]Just to name a few examples: German Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg in 2011, Hungarian President Pal Schmitt in 2012, German Education Minister Annette Schavan in 2013 and Romanian Minister President Victor Ponta in 2016.

In addition to training and raising awareness, creating appropriate policies and procedures on academic integrity might be another very important step for orienting all of the involved stakeholders: students on what is right and what is wrong, as well as faculty members and university administration on what to do in detected cases of academic dishonesty. The University of St. Gallen (Switzerland), for example, defines in its regulations academic dishonesty as follows: "falsifying a candidate's own or another candidate's examination paper, using or making available inadmissible aids or information, failing to comply with general or specific instructions for the conduct of the examination or arrogating other people's intellectual property (plagiarism)" (Examination Regulations 2014). Even attempted dishonesty might be punished. The punishment might include a reduced grade or grading with the lowest possible mark 1.0 (inadequate) or some other sanctions including removal from the university. Sanctions for misconduct and malpractice might be an effective remedy among scholars, as well. The survey report "Research Integrity Practices in Science Europe Member Organisations" (2016), for example, recommended that sanctions be applied for individuals as well as for institutions. Depending on the national context, sanctions against individuals might be covered by (a) *employment law*, ranging from a written letter of reprimand to dismissal; by (b) *civil law*, such as financial penalties for copyright infringement or repayments of received funds; and/or by (c) *academic policies or professional standards*, whereby the tools might include withdrawal of a degree, academic title, or licence, as well as exclusion from membership in an academic society, team, or pool of future grant applicants. Sanctions against institutions are also possible, though uncommon, "because usually it is an individual who has transgressed, not the institution". These sanctions might include repayment of a research grant or a ban on further funding (often for a limited period of time). These issues might be outsourced or they might be regulated by a third agency, as in Austria, for example, with the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI).[10]

Many national governments have implemented programs to promote women in academia, from mentoring to fellowships and vacancies for female researchers only. The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), for example, has offered the Marie Heim-Vögtlin[11] Program (2001–2016) "for female doctoral students and postdocs in Switzerland who had to interrupt or reduce their research activities due to family commitments".[12] Since 2017, the SNSF has continued its support for female scholars through the new PRIMA (Promoting Women in Academia) program for

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[10]http://www.oeawi.at/en/index.asp.

[11]Marie Heim-Vögtlin (1845–1916) was the first female Swiss physician.

[12]See http://www.snf.ch/en/funding/discontinued-funding-schemes/mhv-grants/Pages/default.aspx.

"excellent female researchers from Switzerland and abroad who aspire to a professorship in Switzerland".[13] Two additional programs for female researchers are named after Lise Meitner (1878–1968), an Austrian-Swedish physicist; these are administered independently by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF)[14] and the German Max Planck Society,[15] both with the goal of addressing gender inequality in academia. Several universities have established career paths for women only; in the Netherlands, these include, for example, the University of Groningen, offering Rosalind Franklin Fellowships, or the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), providing highly qualified women with the Delft Technology Fellowship.

It is crucial to acknowledge this problem and not to treat it as the elephant in the room. General research on corruption suggests not fighting corruption in general but rather focusing on specific malpractices (cf. Shekshnia et al. 2017). The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), for example, established the Akademische Prüfstelle (APS) in 2001 in Beijing to prevent Chinese applicants from coming to German universities with fake diplomas. The agency is responsible for validating certificates awarded in China and assessing young people in appropriate discipline. Now German, Austrian, Swiss, and Belgian universities require this document for Chinese applicants. The UK battle against plagiarism might consider this as another ongoing successful example. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) recently published a report on the "growing threat to UK higher education from custom essay writing services" or "essay mills". The agency develops concrete actions to be taken against companies providing such services. Inspired by the experience of New Zealand, which has fined and even frozen the assets of essay mills, QAA suggests the introduction of the same procedure. Milovanovich et al. (2015) in their study on academic integrity in Armenia suggest first to look at a single case of suspected integrity violation, then describe and determine the factors that create incentives for the integrity violation and, based on this analysis, develop pointers for action. The researchers name two main reasons for the widespread cheating among Armenian students: "the lack of intrinsic motivation to study" and "overloaded and/or outdated study content" and argue that, by addressing these two issues, cheating might decrease.

Some measures might be easily implemented, so why have not all universities within the Bologna process done it? Why do not all universities clear procedures and policies on the ethical behaviour? Why do not all universities use anti-plagiarism software programs and take legal actions against companies providing questionable services? Some of the measures might be costly. Take for example the use of anti-plagiarism software in Ukraine: a company offering such

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[13]See http://www.snf.ch/en/funding/careers/prima/Pages/default.aspx.

[14]For more about the "Lise Meitner Programme", see https://www.fwf.ac.at/en/research-funding/fwf-programmes/meitner-programme/.

[15]For more about "The Lise-Meitner excellence programme", see https://www.mpg.de/11767653/lise-meitner-programme.

services currently charges 1 hryvnia per page[16]; therefore, many universities can only afford to check bachelor/master/Ph.D. theses (if at all) and not term papers. Some measures mean more additional resources and/or obligations for already overworked faculty members and university administrations. Some measures might not be implemented yet due to weak management, while other measures might be not implemented concisely. Corruption seems to be a very effective tool to respond to massification, falling or insecure financial support, and growing competition among institutions on the national and international levels, as well as to the increasing demands on university researchers and instructors. Tackling these issues might be a good and effective strategy for tackling corruption.

The negative consequences of corruption in higher education are particularly severe: in their last formative years, students consciously and/or unconsciously learn that corruption is widespread and even "normal"—behaviour that these young people might transfer to their future professional lives (Heyneman 2013; Denisova-Schmidt 2013, 2016a, b, c). No one should ever wonder if graduates in medicine would become involved in promoting drugs without evidence, if managers would cheat and steal, or if lawyers and bankers would develop new schemes for tax evasion and fraud. Universities should incorporate ethical issues into their curricula and certainly act ethically and transparently themselves, as was suggested in the Poznan Declaration—"a formal statement aimed at mainstreaming ethics and anti-corruption in higher education" endorsed by 68 member universities of Compostela Group of Universities, the World University Consortium, the World Academy of Art and Science and TI. The decision-makers within the Bologna process should support and encourage exchanges on this topic among all involved stakeholders on practical issues, as well as more reflection and research on blind spots and borders between legal and illegal, good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable practices.

Conclusion

What can educators and decision-makers within the Bologna process learn from general corruption research? First of all, many anti-corruption reforms failed not because they were based on inefficient theories, or because the involved stakeholders lacked the courage to implement the new reforms, but because the decision-makers did not consider the functions that corruption might serve, especially in weak institutional environments. In higher education, corruption might often be considered an effective tool to address the challenges of massification, internationalisation and shrinking financing. Hence the latter issues should be considered when developing anti-corruption strategies and measures within the higher education sector. Secondly, such measures should not attempt to address

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[16]The current average monthly salary in Ukraine is 750 hryvnias (about 275 USD).

corruption in general, but rather focus on specific practices, such as the recent initiatives of the UK government to hinder the operations of essay mills within the country or the "old" practice developed by the German Akademische Prüfstelle (APS) of checking the creditability of Chinese students applying to study in the German-speaking countries. Such remedies might have a controlling function, as in the case of anti-plagiarism software programs, or a preventing function, as in training on academic integrity. Last, but not least, it is crucial to start addressing this phenomenon using all the available resources within the Bologna process, to admit its existence and scope and to work together to mitigate it.

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Effects of the Bologna Process on Quality Assurance Regimes in the Post-Soviet Space: Isomorphism and Path Dependencies in Moldova, Russia, and Kazakhstan

Lukas Bischof

Introduction

The Global Context

When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, Central and Eastern European countries such as Russia, the newly independent republics of the Baltics, the Caucasus, and Central Asia needed to redefine their political, cultural, and economic orientation vis-a-vis each other and the world (Silova 2011a). A global and a European trend can be observed in these developments: Since the late 1990s, both Eastern and Western European HE systems have become increasingly embedded in a transnational environment which promoted changes to traditional governance structures of their higher education systems in the spirit of *New Public Management* (Leišytė et al. 2006). By the 1990s, virtually all Western European countries were implementing reforms aiming at transforming HEIs into "complete organisations" (Hüther and Krücken 2007, p. 28) and were moving from a "state control" model to a "state supervising" model (Goedegebuure et al. 1993) in which the state is steering from a distance (Marginson 1997; Meek et al. 1996). While highly heterogeneous themselves, reforms generally aimed at delegating greater organisational, financial, personnel and academic autonomy to the leadership of HEIs and at using competition and markets as steering mechanisms (e.g. through the use of project funding or through the promotion of student choice based on league tables and rankings). Direct state control over operations was eased while, at the same

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time, more explicit standards and performance measures were introduced, which placed greater emphasis on outputs vis-a-vis processes.

These policies were promoted globally by international organisations like the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank to such a degree that a new "global model" has been said to now dominate the international discourse on higher education governance (Baker and Lenhardt 2008). The same organisations promoted these reforms as parts of the "Post-Socialist Reform package" in former socialist countries (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi 2008). They have become part of official policy discourse in almost all countries of the region, if not necessarily in practice, alongside privatisation, marketization of financing, stakeholder governance, and standardisation of student assessment (Silova 2005).

European Influence in Higher Education in the Post-Soviet Space

In parallel to global trends, the influence of European Integration grew visibly since the early 1990s when the Baltics states and other EU accession countries began participating in a wide range of EU-funded educational programs designed to prepare them to join the EU. In 1999, 29 European countries signed the Bologna declaration. The Bologna Process continued to extend into the Post-Soviet space when Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003, the rest of Eastern Europe in 2005, and Kazakhstan in 2010. By 2017, even non-signatory and non-eligible states like Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and—at least on the rhetorical level—Uzbekistan, have started implementing Bologna-inspired reforms of their own. A multitude of EU-supported policy and cooperation platforms such as TEMPUS projects, Erasmus Mundus cooperation, the EU-Central Asia Education Initiative, and activities within the "Eastern Partnership" with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine have provided high-level meetings, HEI cooperation projects, technical working groups, national level dialogue, and funding promoting the action lines of the Bologna Process in these countries.

Quality assurance (QA) gained a particular prominence within the Bologna Process with the development of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* (ESG). The ESG represent a set of guidelines on internal and external quality assurance of HEIs and their study programs. A key principle of the ESG is autonomy: HEIs are primarily responsible for the quality and that Quality assurance agencies (QAAs) should be organisationally independent and operate without third-party influence such as from HEIs, governments and other stakeholder organisations (ENQA 2005, 2015). Substantial compliance with the ESG has become a prerequisite for QAAs to become members of ENQA, the European association of QAAs; and EQAR, the *European Quality Assurance Register*, which is intended to promote trust and cross-border cooperation in quality assurance across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Both memberships are highly coveted among national governments and QAAs.

Within my Ph.D. thesis conducted between 2014 and 2017 at the University of Leipzig (Bischof, *under review*), I have studied the changing governance of higher

education systems in Post-Soviet countries, applying the "*glonacal agency heuristic*" (Marginson and Rhoades 2002) to identify the global, regional, national, and local driving forces and path-dependencies, which have shaped the development of three distinct governance frameworks from their common Soviet origins. In this paper, I will give an overview of the developments in quality assurance in the three Post-Soviet countries Russia, Moldova, and Kazakhstan, focusing on the role the Bologna Process has played in the complex interplay of global, regional, and national forces shaping the systems of quality assurance in the Post-Soviet space.

Three Country Cases

Russia

In Russia, in higher education as in other areas of state and society, the 1990s were a period of decentralization, liberalization, and marketization (Adrian et al. 2000; Bain 2003). The increase in university autonomy compared to the Soviet era was enormous: Appointment of rectors by the state was replaced with elections by academic councils. HEIs received the right to enrol students on a tuition-fee basis and to open new study programs. HEIs received considerable financial autonomy and became free to define their internal organisation, to employ their own staff, to set their own salaries, to rent and lease assets, and to establish branches campuses (Beliakov et al. 1999). Because of the budget contractions during the 1990s, however, the majority of HEIs used their new organisational autonomy mainly for economic survival. As a former vice-minister for education remembered in a personal communication, the spirit of the 1990s was "*We cannot give you money, but we can give you freedom*".

In order to assure the basic quality of more autonomous HEIs, as well as to maintain a unified educational space in Russia, a set of State Educational Standards (SES) were developed which defined common standards for structure and contents of study programs. A system of State *licensing*, *attestation*, and *accreditation* was established to control and certify that HEIs complied with these standards. This meant that the QA system changed from a model of state control and inspection to one based on regulation, something that had never existed in Russia previously (Motova and Pykkö 2012). Under the new system, **licensing** verified whether an HEI had sufficient *resources* (premises, equipment, information and library resources, or teaching staff) to carry out educational activities. Attaining a license meant that HEIs were authorized to deliver instruction and could benefit from certain tax benefits. **Attestation** consisted of verifying that graduates' *performance* was on par with SES. Lastly, **accreditation** granted the accredited institution the right to award nationally recognized state diplomas and to participate in state budget funding and exempted its male students from obligatory military service. All

procedures were administered by a *Department of Licensing, Accreditation, and Attestation* within the Ministry of Education[1] (MoES) with a plethora of specialized centres under its purview. Decisions were taken by an *Accreditation Board* composed of heads of HEIs, and representatives of associations of HEIs and sectoral ministries (Chistokhvalov 2007).

Turning Towards Europe

In the beginning of the 2000s, the government began to reassert itself as an actor in the higher education system. Rising oil prices and the ruble depreciation of 1998 had laid the basis for rapid economic growth. Along with reforms in the economy, the state re-identified education as a priority (Semyonov and Platonova 2017). The introduction of a centralized national admission exam (the so-called *Unified National Exam*) was launched to combat corruption in admission and support student mobility.

The year 2000 marks a turning point also for the QA system in Russia which opened itself to European influences in higher education. Attestation and accreditation were merged into a single procedure. Accreditation became compulsory for all HEIs (before, it had been only for state HEIs), and the MoES began organising a competition for the best quality management systems within universities (Forrat 2012). After Russia joined the Bologna process in 2003, Russia launched a number of legislative initiatives and regulations regarding the introduction of a two-tier system of degrees, introduced a new generation of educational standards granting greater freedom to HEIs to define their own contents of study programs. There was also continued support for the development of internal quality management, such as a "Coordination Council on Quality Provision" which in 2005 issued recommendations on internal quality management systems (Motova 2015). The effectiveness of internal quality management systems became one of the indicators for accreditation (Forrat 2012). During the period between 2002/2003 and 2009, related to Russia's ascension to the Bologna Process, proposals within the MoES were continuously being discussed that independent accreditation agencies should be certified by the state and their accreditation be recognized as equivalent to state accreditation. An incorporated "guild of experts" received support from the state oversight body for education *Rosobrnadzor* to conduct trainings for reviewers, and independent QAAs were given signals that they might be recognized by the state replacing state accreditation.

The development of an independent accreditation system as it has become the norm (if far from ubiquitous) in the European Union, however, never came to fruition in Russia. On the contrary, since 2004, the state began to reassert itself as the steering *and* intervening actor.

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[1]The Ministries of Education and that of Science were merged in 2004.

The new framework for quality assurance which successively emerged between 2004 and 2017 was guided by the idea that public resources in HE should be concentrated on so-called "pivot points" (*tochki rosta*), a smaller number of high-quality HEIs while the overall number of HEIs should be radically reduced. In interviews Fursenko gave in 2004 and 2005, he argued that instead of the then over 1000 HEIs, there should be 20–50 leading HEIs and 150–200 HEIs of second rank to provide highly qualified specialists to the economy (Fedyukin and Froumin 2010). This new system rested on support and incentives through a redistribution of funding, on the one hand, stricter state monitoring of performance indicators, state inspections, closures and mergers of HEIs, on the other, and a redistribution of public funding from the weaker HEIs to the stronger ones.

The first pillar consisted of support for leading universities. Since 2005, a series of support programs were launched to support *Federal Universities* (in 2005/2006), *National Research Universities* (in 2008), world-class research universities (*program "5–100"*[2] in 2012) and *flagship universities* (in 2016). Participants were chosen in an open competition[3] and were allocated considerable additional funding but at the price of losing the right to elect their own rectors, who were appointed by the government (Froumin and Povalko 2014). They also had to submit to a regime of regular evaluations of their implementation progress towards their HEI's development program. HEIs which do not meet their own goals can be expelled from the program, although so far none ever was.

The second pillar of the strategy rests on tighter control and intervention by the state. In 2009, by decision of the new head of Rosobrnadzor, a staff reshuffle took place at the National Accreditation Agency (*Rosakkredagenstvo*), and almost all of the staff left due to disagreements over the role and functioning of the agency. The centralization was completed when the seat of Rosakkredagenstvo was moved from Yoshkar-Ola to Moscow in 2011 where the agency now shares offices in the same building with Rosobrnadzor. At the same time, Rosobrnadzor received the right to conduct unannounced inspections of HEIs at any time as well as the power to revoke a license of a university, which earlier could have been done only by a court decision. This change converted the system of licensing and accreditation from fairly bureaucratic, yet predictable process into a powerful instrument of state steering and control in the hands of *Rosobnadzor*. As a high-ranking staff member of Rosobrnadzor explains its significance:

> The assessment and accreditation of HEIs are now a prerogative of Rosobrnadzor. This is a very strong instrument of power: You give to some, you don't give to others. […] It is clear that the loss of a license or of accreditation is a really big loss [..] Therefore, there is an infinite number of issues related to the objectivity of decision-making" […] Now there will be a trial of the European university, a good university. They will sue Rosobrnadzor. [.] There were many attempts [to close a university], but earlier we decided these issues through the courts, as we could not decide on accreditation ourselves. [..] The courts are in

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[2]The designation "5–100" refers to the program's goal of at least five Russian universities being represented among the top one hundred in global university rankings by 2020.

[3]Except for the Federal universities.

favour of the government, but this is a long, tedious process, a large machine which accompanies these things. [..] Now it is easier: Rosobrnadzor cancels [accreditation] and [the universities] need to go to court and try to protest [...] For many this already means a loss of reputation, a loss of students, and you will go to court? You already have nothing.[4]

With the ground thus laid, the so-called "effectiveness monitoring" (*monitoring effektivnosti*) was launched in 2012 with the purpose to identify HEIs with low performance based on centrally collected indicator data[5] (Froumin et al. 2014). HEIs which did not meet performance standards set by the MoES were labelled as 'ineffective' and subsequently investigated by Rosobrnadzor. If sufficient short-comings are found, HEIs can be merged with other institutions, partially restruc-tured or lose their license or accreditation altogether and have to close.

Finally, a third pillar can be seen in the new mechanism of allocation of state funding for HEIs that was introduced in 2013. HEIs which perform well on a set of state-defined performance indicators (similar to the ones used in the efficiency monitoring) are now getting a preferential allocation of state-funded study places. This puts further pressure on weak HEIs and increases their risk of being investi-gated by Rosobrnadzor (*pillar two*). Since 2012, decisions by Rosobrnadzor have resulted in mergers and liquidations of a large number of HEIs and an even higher number of branches. In 2014 alone, Rosobrnadzor closed 357 HEIs and branches. In the first half of 2015, 151 Russian HEIs and branches had their license with-drawn, 34 lost their accreditation.[6]

Moldova

During the early Post-Soviet regulatory vacuum, there was no formal quality assurance procedure in Moldova. Soviet regulations were quickly abolished by the Moldovan government, without a coherent strategy to replace them. As Padure (2009) quotes a policymaker of the time "...*the first years of independence rep-resented a period of legal nihilism in education, when Soviet regulations were declared invalid in the Republic of Moldova, while local regulations were missing*". As a consequence, the number of public and private HEIs mushroomed, often to the detriment of their quality (Tofan and Bischof 2017).

Only during the second part of the 1990s, did the state try to reassert its regu-latory role with the first law on Education (1995), the *Law on the Evaluation and Accreditation of Educational Institutions* (1997), and the *Law on the Endorsement*

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[4]Personal interview.

[5]Indicators relate to quality of student intake, teaching effectiveness, research, faculty, infras-tructure, finance, labour market outcomes of graduates, and internationalisation.

[6]https://www.ucheba.ru/article/1041.

of the Regulations on the Evaluation and Accreditation of Educational Institutions (1999). Prior to 1999, the assessment and accreditation of educational institutions were seen as a prerogative of the MoE which had failed, however, to establish transparent criteria and procedures. The steep increase of the number of private HEI —which were, not rarely, even using the same physical spaces, learning resources, and teaching and administrative staff of public HEIs—was seen as a sign that the system was ineffective or even corrupt (Toderaş 2012).

The law of 1997 established a quality assurance system through state control and accreditation similar to the Russian model. Between 1997 and 1999, CNEAA was supported by the US-embassy with study trips and consultations by US experts[7] and developed a peer-review system for the accreditation of HEIs and study programs based on international practice. In 1999, the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (*Consiliul Naţional de Evaluare şi Acreditare Academică—CNEAA*) was established as the Quality Assurance Agency for study programs. While the process of accreditation was formally independent, however, final accreditation decisions needed to be confirmed by the MoE and the government. This led to a series of conflicts with influential interests over the non-accreditation of certain study programs.

The CNEAA had started to conduct its first accreditations when in 2001 the communist party came into power and the new minister Gheorghe Sima abolished it as of August 2002. The former head of CNEAA relates this to their independent stance:

> We began to critically evaluate their work [..], we criticized the ministry in that it did not fulfil certain [of its] tasks. Well, they did not like this, they wanted the council [CNEAA] to be subordinated to them, as a unit of the ministry. And that the minister could give it orders "do this, or do that". This did not happen, and in principle, because of it, they completely transformed us. Not one [of the staff of CNEAA] was kept on the new team [at the ministry][8]

All of its functions were transferred to the MoE. Nevertheless, the procedures and criteria CNEAA had developed for the accreditation of study programs and HEIs remained in place after 2002, although the government gained more immediate influence over final decisions which it did exercise in a number of cases in which accreditation was granted against the results of the evaluation. Nevertheless, the Directorate of Higher Education Accreditation conducted evaluations and accreditations from 2002 until 2008, bringing a degree of order back into the higher education system. During this time, a number of private HEIs were closed down or voluntarily ceased operations due to stricter accreditation requirements. All public HEIs retained their accreditation.

In 2003 Moldova began to prepare to join the Bologna Process, which officially took place in 2005. This required changes to a number of laws, structural reforms in higher education, a new nomenclature of study programs and a number of other

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[7]Personal interview with CNEAA's founder.

[8]Personal interview.

changes, among them an orientation of the quality assurance system at the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). In 2006, trying to adapt to the ESG and responding to a certain pressure from the Council of Europe and the European Commission to separate the MoE from evaluation, authorization and accreditation of HEIs, the Moldovan government decided to close the department for quality assurance within the MoE and to transfer its responsibilities to a newly created Agency for Assessment and Evaluation (*Agenţia de Evaluare şi Examinare—AEE*), a public institution under the remit of the MoE. While already charged with a very wide range of responsibilities, this agency was burdened with additional tasks for which it was ill-prepared, such as the organisation and administration of examinations in secondary education, or the organisation of science Olympiads and national and international competitions. As a consequence, the communist government had difficulties finding a director who was knowledgeable in both secondary and tertiary education, willing and capable to run the agency, as well as politically opportune. In the end, the agency only occupied itself with non-tertiary education, and the MoE continued to conduct accreditations itself.

By 2008, however, it had become obvious to the Communist party that they would lose the next elections and they would lose their influence in the MoE. Among other decrees, in November 2008, the Government issued a decree creating the **Quality Assurance Agency** (*Agenţie de Asigurare a Calităţii—AAC*) and approved a set of new regulations. The objective was to create a transparent, integrated quality assurance system for both secondary and tertiary education. Possibly due to the lack of time for its elaboration, instead of clarity, the concept for the new agency created even more confusion and uncertainty among its stakeholders. The QA processes foreseen for higher education and those for primary, secondary and upper secondary education were not clearly differentiated. Toderaş (2012) claims that in addition to these design flaws, some structures and departments were created not to best serve the foreseen processes, but to guarantee the influence of certain individuals and their special interests within the future structures.

When the communist party lost their parliamentary majority to the Alliance for European Integration, the Department of Accreditation within the MoE had been closed, but the new agency had not been founded. Without any legal procedure in place, study programs which were established after 2008 could not undergo the mandatory periodic evaluations and accreditations and were, therefore, operating in a state of semi-illegality (Ciurea et al. 2012). As one former ministry official remembers:

> In the context of the Bologna Process we studied the experience of other countries and it was clear that within the framework of the MoE it is not good to have such a structure. […] This is why they closed it within the Ministry, because it did not correspond with the tendencies in Europe. It was clear that we needed to create another structure […] but, unfortunately, they closed one but did not establish the other[9]

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[9]Personal interview.

For the new government, integration into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) remained a priority, however, and having a functional QA system at institutional and country-level was seen as crucial not only for achieving this goal. Work on a new code of education began shortly after the elections. While all stakeholders were, in principle, in agreement that an agency for quality assurance and accreditation was urgently needed, disagreements between the Moldovan Rectors' Council, the Academy of Science and other interest groups in the parliament dragged the discussion out to almost four years. The frequent changes of ministers at the head of the MoE further complicated reaching a consensus.[10] The first draft was published for debate in early 2010. Several times, a new version of the Code of Education was worked out by the Council of Rectors and the MoE, only to be sent to the parliament to be refused or changed.

During this process, the TEMPUS project "*Development of Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Moldova*" (QUAEM)[11] (2012–2016) contributed to the development of the new QA system by conducting trainings and discussion sessions of different European models of internal and external QA, as well as pilot evaluations and accreditations by a German QAA. The new code of education was finally passed in 2014, providing the framework for the new quality assurance agency ANACIP. Its practical establishment, however, was a fraught journey: Rifts quickly appeared between the agency-to-be and the MoE on the structures, procedures and evaluation criteria. Limited funding, personal and institutional independences in a small country and political pressure from opponents like the Academy of Science still threaten its work as an independent agency.

Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, as in other Post-Soviet countries, the economic collapse and the disappearance of the central authority and funding from Moscow made the creation of state institutions the first order of business to assure the short- and mid-term survival of the educational system. A new legal framework was formulated in the laws "On Education" in 1992 and "On Higher Education" in 1993 which regulated the overall operations of HEIs (Brunner and Tillett 2007). These laws, along with other regulations and standards re-created the high degree of centralized curricular design and control that had existed under the Soviet regime and which HEIs were used to (Ahn et al. 2017). Accompanying state curricular standards, the government launched a ministry-controlled QA procedure which obliged all HEIs to receive a license to operate and undergo periodical attestation by the State. While the initial chaotic growth of HEIs and study programs had eschewed regulation, by 1996, the

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[10]With Leonid Bujor, Mihail Şleahtiţchi, and Maia Sandu, there were three different ministers of education between 2009 and 2012 alone.

[11]530537-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-DETEMPUS-SMGR.

vast majority of HEIs had been brought under the supervision of MoES (McLendon 2004). By 1999, a highly centralized and detailed system of standards and control of study programs was in place for all subjects.

In 1999, the system was further centralized through the introduction of a *Unified National Test* for university admissions and a voucher-based system of state financing for HEIs. This way, the quality of students entering HE should be increased, corruption eradicated, and incentives created for HEIs to become as attractive as possible for students. Both reforms had been inspired partially by Russian developments but were implemented much more swiftly. While this system improved the quality of top-tier HEIs, there still remained a large segment of HEIs which fully depended on tuition fees and pursued a strategy of low-tuition, low-quality study programs, which in some cases amounted to little more than diploma-mills. The period between 2000 and 2004 was marked by a series of state measures to eradicate low-quality HEIs. In 2001, the first attempt to combat these was to introduce a system of state accreditation, which was based on an assessment of quantitative indicators (Kalanova 2014). The new methodology was launched prematurely, however, as neither standards nor procedures had been developed yet. Within the first three days, 59 universities had been officially accredited. Following heavy criticism of the system from the academic community as non-transparent and ultimately pointless exercise, in 2002, state accreditation was suspended for almost a decade. Instead, from January 2002, the MoES began to conduct a series of inspections of HEIs. Until 2003, 166 HEIs were controlled, of which 12 HEIs and 32 branches were closed down, and 170 licenses for study programs were withdrawn from 42 HEIs and 75 HEIs and 64 branches had their licenses suspended for different periods of time (Lyal'kina and Kanafina 2016). Later, branches were made illegal altogether and a cap on the ratio of students enrolled in distance versus full-time education was introduced. Even though several HEIs had been forced to cease their operations, many little selective, low-tuition HEIs continued to operate. In order to expose and regulate such HEIs, in a following step, the MoES in 2003 introduced "*Comprehensive National Mid-Term Tests*" to be conducted at all HEIs after the second year of studies on the contents of the compulsory subjects foreseen by the state standards. Students who failed the test were not allowed to continue their studies to the third year (World Bank and OECD 2007). By 2003, a heavily regulated quality assurance system resting on detailed standards and top-down control was in place.

The State Program of Education Development 2005-2010 and the Appearance of Accreditation

By order of the President, the first State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2005–2010 was passed in October 2004.[12]

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[12]Presidential orders play a significant role in Kazakhstan, as they are binding orders to the government and its often-changing ministers.

The overarching objective of the program was to adapt Kazakhstan's education system to international practices in many aspects. This concerned the structure of education (such as introducing 12-year pre-tertiary education and a three-tier structure of higher education), governance of higher education (introduction of cooperative governance and the expansion of autonomy for HEIs, the integration of external stakeholders into the governance of HEIs), and the participation in international studies such as PISA, TIMSS, CIVIC, SITES, LES. Regarding quality assurance, it called for an overhaul of external and internal quality assurance and the participation in international networks of quality assurance agencies such as ENQA, and INQAAHE. The SPED 2005–2010 outlined for the first time an integrated perspective on the "*national system of quality assessment in education*" which structured the existing instruments of quality assurance (licensing, state attestation, the UNT and intermediate state control) to which independent accreditation, internal quality management were to be added (Kalanova and Omirbayev 2009). Quality management systems and institutional and specialized accreditation were explicitly related to "*implement[ing] the key principles of the Bologna declaration and the WTO*" (SPED 2005–2010).

The international dimension of this reform program cannot be overstated. According to one of the authors of the program, the SPED "*…promoted HEI to international standards, and in particular to European ones. […] It created a powerful impetus and created the preconditions for the realization of the action lines of the Bologna Process. […] It was important to do this so that we would be noticed and understood in Europe and the world.*"[13] Implementing the SPED, a *National Accreditation Centre* was founded under the MoES to develop a new methodology for accreditation, which began to develop its own standards based on American QAAs and the ESG. In 2007, accreditation was introduced in the law on education as a voluntary procedure to be conducted according to the standards of the accreditation agency carrying it out. This allowed NAC to instantly start working on the basis of the ESG without waiting for the government to develop their own set of standards and created an important precondition for the independence of Quality Assurance agencies in Kazakhstan. Thanks in part to the changes in study structures and quality assurance reforms of the SPED 2005–2010, on March 12, 2010, Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian Republic to sign the Lisbon Convention and become the forty-seventh member of the Bologna Process (BP).

As part of the efforts to align Kazakhstan with international practices in higher education, a review of Kazakhstan's education system was commissioned from the World Bank and OECD (2007) which made a strong case for further reforming the system of higher education, investing in quality, and decentralizing the system of bureaucratic governance. In 2010, the next "*State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan*" was passed (SPED 2011–2020), which called for independent accreditation to replace state accreditation and

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[13]Personal interview.

attestation by non-commercial, non-government accrediting agencies, which would be listed members in a register of recognized accreditation bodies. The absence of independence had been criticized in several external reviews (World Bank and OECD 2007; Raza 2009). The process of state *attestation* had also been receiving a lot of criticism from the academic community for being both too inflexible and indicator-oriented as well as for being conducted in the spirit of distrust and control. Within the MoES and the responsible committee for control in education, however, there was a strong reluctance to let go of these instruments of state control. During the preparation of the SPED, the President himself held several meetings where he urged all ministries to reduce the amount of oversight-related controls and the number of inspections in their areas. This top-down push, in concert with the international models and advice, was instrumental in the subsequent policy changes. As a former senior official from the MoES describes the impact of the Bologna Process on the development of independent accreditation:

> As a country which joined the Bologna Process and took upon itself the responsibility to correspond to these criteria, we started to reform our system of quality assurance in accordance with these requirements. As you have seen, as the system changed from government accreditation to independent accreditation which corresponds to European standards. If we had not been in the Bologna Process, of course we would have said, "oh no, we will do it our way[14]

In 2008, the first *Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency for Education (IQAA)* had already been founded by the former head of NAC and, when NAC ceased conducting accreditations in 2011, part of its staff founded the *Independent Agency for Accreditation Rating (IAAR)* as the second non-governmental quality assurance agency after IQAA. The 2011 law on education also included powerful incentives for HEIs to undergo independent accreditation (Sagintayeva et al. 2014): HEIs that passed institutional and program accreditation in recognized accreditation agencies would be exempt from state attestation for the period of accreditation. More significantly, only accredited HEIs would be allowed to enrol state-funded students.

The move from state attestation to independent accreditation represented, for the first time since independence, a transfer of powers from the MoES to bodies not under its direct control. It went even further than most EU-countries, as it recognized national reviews as well accreditations conducted by international agencies. As one representative of a quality assurance agency comments:

> Kazakhstan in this respect is at the forefront of probably the entire planet. Even among European countries you hardly find a country which has completely opened its market for international agencies. You see, in 2011 when we conducted the reforms, we implemented the Bologna Process […] There were recommendations that there should be an independent agency and the system should be open and so our government opened the system so that it would be competitive, that there should be competition on this market. Maybe we approached the [Bologna] ministerial recommendation a bit overeagerly, but on the other

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[14]Personal interview.

hand, it is good, even for national agencies, because for us this is an incentive to develop because we have strong international competition[15]

The degree of resistance against this change should not be underestimated, however. When in 2015, according to the SPED, accreditation should have fully replaced state attestation, the MoES initially submitted a draft law for state attestation to remain in place while accreditation would be uncoupled from financing in any way. A public conflict erupted between the Ak-Zhol opposition party and the minister of education over this issue. Finally, the authority of the presidential status of the SPED prevailed over the MoES's position, as non-implementation of independent accreditation would have implied a failure to implement a presidential order.[16] Finally, a compromise was reached and from January 2017, state attestation was discontinued for the majority of HEIs. Licensing, intermediate testing and licensing controls remained in place as instruments of control within the purview of the MoES. This is not to say that the changes are all "locked-in". Attestation remains for some ministry-affiliated HEIs, and the quick succession of ministers looks unlikely to change, and the pace of legislative changes remains high as factions in parliament, government, QAAs and the HEI lobby for their interests and their vision of governance of the HE system.

Conclusion

After 25 years of transformations of higher education systems in Post-Soviet countries, the single Soviet model of higher education has evolved into fifteen unique national systems, shaped by economic, cultural, and political forces of national, regional (European) and global nature. On the one hand, it is visible that no country has been left completely untouched by the "global model" of HE governance. It has become clear that the Bologna process and the ESG principle of independent external accreditation have exerted a considerable isomorphic influence on quality assurance in all three Post-Soviet countries under analysis. On the other hand, the specific developments in quality assurance in the three countries illustrate clearly diverging trajectories, driven and influenced by different national forces:

- In Russia, during the 2000s, there was a clear openness to adopting a "European" model of quality assurance; the support this movement enjoyed among the top echelons of the MoES and the Russian government as a whole was never sufficient to overcome the resistance within the state bureaucracy and parts of the higher education establishment. In 2009, adapting to the ESG ceased to be a relevant consideration altogether, as Russia developed its own

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[15]Personal interview.

[16]Several personal interviews.

governance model based on the three pillars of financial support, financial redistribution and administrative intervention. Independent accreditation continues to exist at the fringes of the system but demand remains low, and the agencies offering it have never come to play a significant role in the overall governance of the higher education system.

- In Moldova, the ascension to the Bologna Process did create a situation of "coercive isomorphism" insofar as the ESG provided a strong model of what kind of quality assurance system would have to be developed in order to become part of the European Higher Education Area (Toderaș 2012). Significant resources and support were made available, primarily by the European Union, to support policy convergence in Moldova. On the other hand, the often-changing political landscape in the country, political inter-dependencies of key actors, vested interests of the academic oligarchy, corruption in the HE system and the overall economic and financial difficulties of HEIs acted as powerful forces of inertia and resistance to any systemic change in quality assurance as in the overall governance of higher education (Ciurea et al. 2012). To what degree the new QAA will indeed be independent and successful in the long run, remains to be seen.

- In contrast, Kazakhstan, even though joining the Bologna Process much later than the other two countries, has become a type of "model student" of the Bologna Communiqués on QA. Not only did the country introduce independent accreditation, but also allowed international QAAs to operate on par with national agencies. Looking at the national factors underlying this apparent policy convergence, however, three stand out: Firstly, Kazakhstan did not have a strong entrenched higher education lobby rejecting reform that conflicted with past ideals. Secondly, a number of key experts in the MoES and the presidential administration, have lobbied for reform on accreditation and have succeeded to include it in the presidential development programs. Lastly, and most importantly, the president of the country has acted as a decisive proponent of reform (not only) in the sphere of higher education pushing for the adoption of international practices, inviting international organisations and pursuing membership in international bodies from the Bologna Process to the OECD. Presidential support for the state strategies for education development was undoubtedly a key factor in overcoming (or overruling) resistance and scepticism in the ministerial bureaucracy. This factor sets Kazakhstan apart also from other Central Asian countries, where "travelling policies" promoted by international organisations have increasingly clashed with the desire of policy-makers to maintain Soviet education legacies (Silova 2011b).

The review of the three countries makes it clear that mere surface "convergence" of policies ("e.g. the existence of independent accreditation agencies") hides a considerable diversity of actual practices. Considering national contexts, development trajectories, actors and formal as well as informal institutions is key to a deep understanding of the nature of institutional change and the necessary foundation for any form of sound policy advice.

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National Policies for Higher Education Internationalization: A Global Comparative Perspective

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What Do We Know About Higher Education Internationalization so Far?

Higher education has always been international in scope (Guruz 2008; Matthews and Sidhu 2005). Nevertheless, against the backdrop of globalization and neoliberalism, nation-states—and, by extension, universities—have faced pressure to internationalize their practices at an increasing pace (Altbach et al. 2009; Brooks and Waters 2011). As such, higher education internationalization is talked about as a strategic priority for governments and is considered to be at the forefront of policy agendas around the world (Brooks and Waters 2011). Since the beginning, the main goals of the Bologna Process—specifically the harmonization and mobility aspects —have underscored an interest in internationalizing national higher education systems in Europe.

Despite this, there is little large-scale comparative research on the actual policies deployed by nation-states to internationalize their higher education systems. With some notable exceptions [see de Wit et al. (2015); Helms et al. (2015)], country level studies on internationalization policy typically focus on in-depth case studies or small-n comparative research. Nevertheless, internationalization does not occur in a vacuum. It only occurs at the intersection of cooperation and competition between nation-states, institutions, and individuals. Therefore, studies that have a narrow geographical scope—while providing valuable insights into the multidimensional fabric of the process—are limited in their ability to map the global reach and impact of internationalization. For instance, while it is commonly argued that internationalization and globalization phenomena have changed the face of higher

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education across the globe (Altbach 2016), it is less clear what this transformation entails on a country by country basis (Altbach et al. 2009).

This is not to say that internationalization has been a neglected phenomenon in higher education research. In fact, quite the opposite is true. In the last couple of decades, the topic has received so much attention from researchers that it would be "impossible to provide an overview claiming to be somewhere near complete" (Kehm 2003, p. 112). The fact that there is no universally accepted definition of internationalization (Altbach et al. 2009), is an important clue that it has taken different forms in different contexts. It is precisely because of this multi-faceted nature that "there is no simple, unique or all-encompassing definition", but it is also "not helpful for internationalization to become a 'catch-all' phrase for everything and anything international" (Knight and de Wit 1995, p. 16). This perpetual quest for generalization has led to a situation where internationalization is applied both when a university introduces an English-taught course and when the whole higher education system is overhauled to integrate an international dimension into its functioning and purpose.

The ubiquitous use of the concept (Teichler 2009) has resulted in what could be called a "Hegelian night in which all cows are black and eventually the milkman is taken for a cow" (Sartori 1970, p. 64). Namely, the process of conceptual traveling (applying the concept of internationalization to new contexts and cases worldwide) has led to concept stretching which has reduced the analytical purchase of 'internationalization' (Crăciun 2015). The lack of conceptual clarity has important implications not only for research, but also for public and institutional policy formulation and funding (Matei et al. 2015).

On the one extreme, one may ask whether internationalization is only a fad that has been boosted by semantic inflation aimed at giving birth to an 'internationalization industry' (Healey 2008) or 'business' (Jones and de Wit 2014). On the other extreme, the lack of clarity may lead to deficient policies that are not equipped to deliver the intended outcomes. For instance, in spite of the rhetoric support for internationalization from institutional and national leaders, many of the articulated objectives of internationalization have not been operationalized for implementation (Knight, 1994 cited in Childress 2009).

While these cases may seem to overstate the actual situation, they point towards the need for a broader and more systematic approach to make sense of the complexity and variety of national higher education policies. The present chapter takes this observation as its point of departure, and suggests a way forward by conducting a global census of national internationalization strategies and revealing the insights that such an extensive data collection exercise brings to light. As such, it argues that internationalization can better be understood if one looks at what governments actually do to forward internationalization. It attempts to answer questions like: Is strategic thinking about internationalization a widespread phenomenon? Is it an old or a new phenomenon? Which are the countries that pursue internationalization in a strategic fashion? What common characteristics do they have?

To answer these questions, the chapter proceeds as follows. Section "What Is Internationalization and What Role Does the Nation-State Play?" establishes a

working definition of internationalization and delineates the importance of the nation-state in forwarding the process. Section "Data Gathering Protocols" discusses the data gathering protocol and the measures designed to ensure the reliability of the collected data and, as a result, of the findings that derive from it. Section "What Does a Global Map of National Higher Education Internationalization Strategies Reveal?" presents the insights that a global census of nation internationalization strategies reveals and their implications for internationalization research and practice. Finally, section "Conclusions and Further Research" summarizes the main arguments of the chapter and points towards some limitations and avenues for further research in this direction.

What Is Internationalization and What Role Does the Nation-State Play?

As we cannot dig for any construction without landscaping, it is important to establish how internationalization is understood in the wider literature and provide a working definition for the current study. The prevalent definition of internationalization (Childress 2009; de Wit 2010; Qiang 2003) sees it as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research and service) and the delivery of higher education" (Knight 2004). In other words, internationalization is taken to mean a shift from previously inward looking national higher education systems to outward looking ones. Moreover, internationalization is a multi-level phenomenon that spans across scales, including institutional, national, regional, international and transnational efforts (Altbach et al. 2009). Adopting such a broad definition has the advantage of catering for an eclectic mix of developments that have impacted on higher education systems and institutions. Nevertheless, this comes at the cost of watering down the concept and seeing any process that spills over or into the national borders as internationalization.

In this chapter, internationalization will be taken to mean the active engagement with the design of policies, plans, programs, strategies and approaches at various levels of decision-making so as to promote the idea of internationality in higher education.[1] In other words, internationalization is seen as a process forwarded by active policy-making, not by drift. While this definition does not provide a more

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[1]The chapter makes a clear distinction between two key concepts: 'internationality' and 'internationalization'. In order to differentiate these terms, the conceptualizations proposed by Brandenburg and Federkeil (2007) are employed. On the one hand, internationality refers to a *state*, and can be used to characterize an institution or a country's higher education system "current status or the status discernable at the date of data acquisition" (p. 7). On the other hand, internationalization refers to a *process* in which a university or a national system shifts—in a steered manner—"from an actual state of internationality at time X towards a modified actual status of extended internationality at time X + N"(p. 7).

exact account of what internationalization entails, it allows for the identification and investigation of specific and explicit policy endeavors to promote the process. In this context, understanding the role of different actors in the internationalization of higher education becomes crucial.

Traditionally, the University has been a medium for promoting national cultures through standardized teaching and research methodologies, which was dependent on the nation-state for funding (Scott 2000; van der Wende 2001). It is generally argued that globalization has challenged the very nature of higher education, pushing it to reform "both the content and scope of its activities" (Guruz 2008). Starting from the proposition that there is an inherent contradiction between "internationalization" which "reflects a world order dominated by nation-states", and globalization which involves a "process of global competitiveness", Scott contends that the very existence of the University has been challenged (2000, p. 4).

On the national level, internationalization is just "one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalization, yet at the same time respects the individuality of the nation" (Knight, 1997 quoted in Kreber 2009, p. 2). However, these national response strategies impose two competing 'laws of motion' upon higher education: the internationalization of learning and the nationalization of its purposes (Kerr 1990). In other words, there is a tension between 'the internationality of substance versus the nationality of form' (Teichler 2002).

Data Gathering Protocols

The proposed analysis was carried out at the national policy level. This stance was taken for many reasons. To begin with, as a plethora of studies have shown, nation states still play a central role when it comes to steering higher education (Beerkens 2004; Enders 2004; Vlk 2006; Witte 2006). As such, higher education policy "still tends not only to reflect but to underscore the specific traditions and circumstances of individual countries" (Enders 2004, p. 361). Empirical research has shown that even countries with similar socio-economic and political conditions have distinct higher education internationalization policies (Callan 2000; Graf 2009; Luijten-Lub et al. 2005; Matei and Iwinska 2015).

Next, these plans express a political commitment to internationalization, and not just political rhetoric. In other words, they are an integral part of the policy output of any government that promotes a supportive culture towards internationalization. There are countries in which national policies are implicit rather than explicit, the USA being but one example of such a case. However, these cases are not dealt with in this chapter as internationalization by stealth is not the focus of the current investigation. Also, such plans push governments to operationalize their understanding of internationalization. Having a well-defined and coherent strategy has been shown to be an important ingredient for moving forward with internationalization efforts (British Council 2011; Henard et al. 2012).

Lastly, the advantage of employing this strategy is that the unit of analysis remains constant on a cross-national basis. In turn, this allows for a consistent mapping and comparison of the cases. Moreover, it helps to establish the parameters of the study and represents a guide for data sourcing (Yin 2009).

In order to collect systematic information about national higher education systems and policies put in place to forward the internationalization process, the World Higher Education Database built by the International Association of Universities was used as a data sourcing guide. Because the website where the database is located was hard to use for such a comprehensive data collection exercise, a web scraping application in Python was built to gather the relevant information. This meant acquiring an offline library of documents with systematic, reliable, and valid information on national bodies responsible for international cooperation in higher education for 189 countries.[2]

Two steps were taken to ensure the reliability of the collected data. First, at the moment of data collection, the existence (or non-existence) of a higher education international strategy was verified against scholarly literature and reports on the state of internationalization in the particular national context. Second, using groups of graduate students from various countries studying higher education policy, the results from a convenience sample of 11 observations[3] were verified once again. For the test, intercoder reliability was adapted from manual content analysis to 'intercollector' reliability—the extent to which two or more independent data collectors agree on the coding of the content of interest (i.e. existence/non-existence of a higher education internationalization strategy). The measure of percent agreement was used a diagnostic tool for reliability and yielded a result of 100%. All in all, the tests conducted attested to the reliability of the data collection process.

What Does a Global Map of National Higher Education Internationalization Strategies Reveal?

"Classifying is an activity inextricably linked to the human desire for creating order out of chaos" (van Vught et al. 2005, p. 9). Classifications—of which mapping is a sub-type—are spatial and/or temporal dissections of the world which "provide a systematic, nominal distribution among a number of classes or characteristics without any (intended) order of preference" (Ziegele 2013, p. 79). By assessing the similarities and differences between units and clustering them based on empirical information, they provide a description of the diversity within a system. As such, classifications are not aimed at assessing or establishing causality, but at promoting

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[2]The final list of countries surveyed was 195, as the World Higher Education Database and the United Nations country lists were merged.

[3]The convenience sample included: Hungary, USA, Philippines, Albania, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Greece, Croatia, Brazil, and South Korea.

transparency. In other words, mapping is a purely descriptive endeavor that establishes indicators of diversity without assembling "a specific normatively fixed combination of features that stands for a type" (Ziegele 2013, p. 80). Mapping allows for the flexible combination of indicators and leads to the possibility of dynamic clustering.[4]

This extensive data collection exercise carried out for this research brought to light some interesting insights and patterns into higher education internationalization. Figure 1 presents a global map of national internationalization strategies around the world: the countries in dark grey represent those which do have a national strategy for internationalization, the countries in light grey represent those which have a section on internationalization in their general higher education strategy, and the countries in white those which do not have a higher education internationalization strategy.

Looking at the map, it becomes immediately apparent that thinking about higher education internationalization strategically is not a very widespread phenomenon: 80% of countries worldwide do not have any national higher education internationalization strategy. In fact, only 11% of countries—to be precise, 22 out of 195 countries—have an official strategy in this direction. Moreover, looking at the publication years of these documents shows that thinking strategically about higher education internationalization is a new phenomenon (see Fig. 2). Most of these strategies have been published in the last 5 years and, as a result, it is difficult to assess their results and impact.

These findings are surprising considering that national policies and the national context are considered to play the most important part in internationalizing higher education (Enders 2004; Graf 2009; Luijten-Lub et al. 2005). It is all the more surprising, if we consider that, since years, not only higher education institutions (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014; European University Association 2013) but also supranational organizations (European Commission 2013; Henard et al. 2012) have encouraged and supported the participation of the nation-states in the process.

In alphabetical order, the countries that have a higher education internationalization strategy are: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Looking at the characteristics of these countries, various findings in relation to internationalization become apparent.

First, thinking about higher education internationalization strategically is mainly a European phenomenon. If we look at the distribution of the countries according to world regions (based on United Nations Country Grouping) we find the following distribution of countries which have a national higher education internationalization strategy: 13 in Europe, 5 in Asia, 2 in Oceania, 1 in North America, 1 in the

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[4]Per se, classifications and maps are static because they portray a structure at a defined point in time (i.e. when data was collected). However, what is meant here is that users can dynamically combine indicators to produce different classifications.
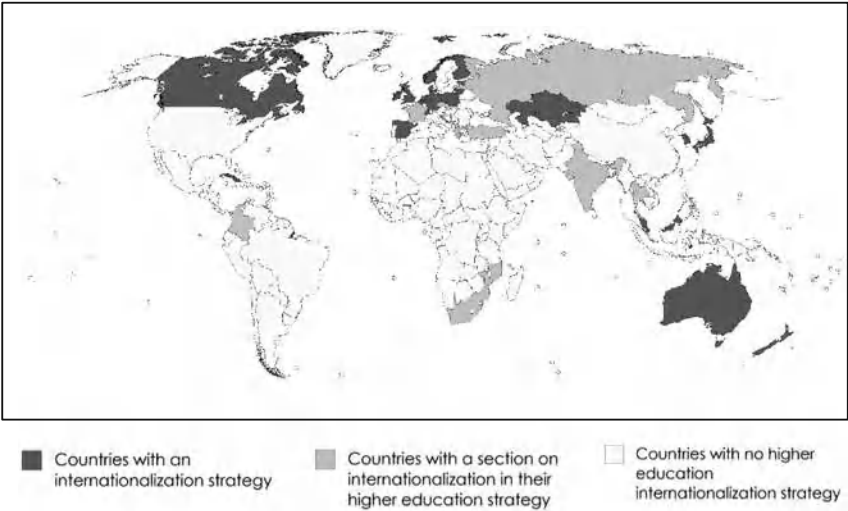
Fig. 1 A global map of national internationalization strategies. *Source* Compiled by author
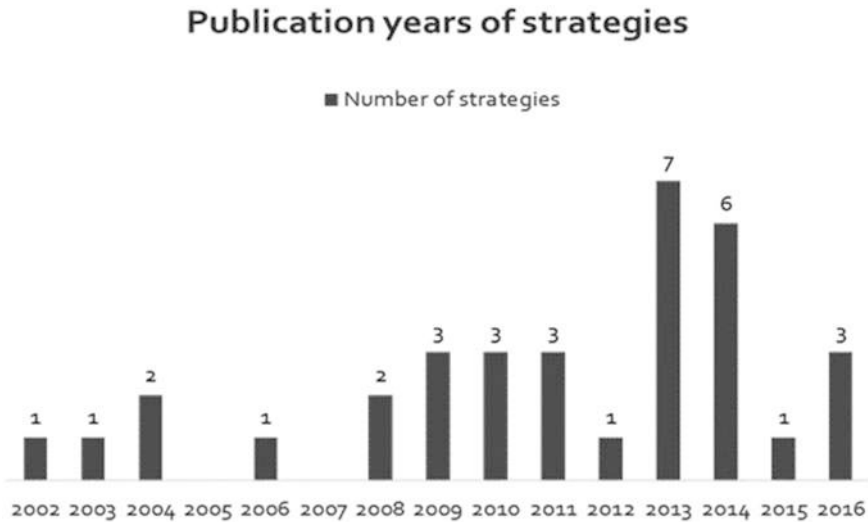
Fig. 2 Publication years of national internationalization strategies. *Source* Compiled by author

Caribbean, and zero in Africa, Central America, the Middle East, and respectively South America. Nevertheless, internationalization is not so much related to the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (which have 49 member countries) as it seems to be to the European Union (11 out of the 13 countries are EU member states). An explanation for the lack of national internationalization

strategies in so many of the Bologna countries could be that the Process already covers some of the central aspects of internationalization and also promotes a sort of regional internationalization in the area through its harmonization policies.

Second, thinking about higher education internationalization strategically is mainly a developed country phenomenon. If we look at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) membership—which is an intergovernmental organization with 35 member countries founded in 1960 to stimulate economic progress and trade—we find that 77% of the countries which have a higher education internationalization strategy are OECD members (n = 17).

Third, the countries that have a higher education internationalization strategy receive the lion's share of internationally mobile students. Out of over 4.1 million higher education students who studied abroad in 2013 (Project Atlas 2016), the 35 OECD countries attracted 73% of them (OECD 2016). By comparison, nine of the countries with a national higher education internationalization strategy hosted 41% of all students who studied abroad in 2013: 12% UK, 7% in Australia, 6% Canada, 6% Germany, 4% Japan, 2% The Netherlands, 2% Spain, 1% Finland, 1% New Zealand (Project Atlas 2016).

It is already common knowledge that "the reality of international education is geographically uneven and far from global in scope and reach" (Brooks and Waters 2011, p. 45). Internationally mobile students are not evenly distributed across countries, but they are highly concentrated in economically advanced states, especially Anglo-Saxon societies (Guruz 2008). Research has shown that more than 50% of the students who study abroad are clustered in just four English-speaking countries: United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada (Hughes 2008). These countries have benefited from English being "the Latin of the 21st century" (Altbach 2005, p. 66) and the reputation and capacity of their higher education systems (Hughes 2008). If data were openly available for all the countries, it is safe to say that the 22 countries with national internationalization policies probably receive more than half of the internationally mobile students worldwide. This is also because two-thirds of these countries have English—the academic Lingua Franca—as (one of) the official languages of instruction.

Certainly, the USA is the 'odd man out' in this respect as it does not have a national policy for internationalization. This can be explained by the fact that, unlike in most other countries, the responsibility for steering higher education in the USA does not fall on the national government, but on the state government. While there have been calls for a federal level policy, the main arguments against it have been the size, institutional diversity, and decentralization of the US higher education system (Helms 2015). The question then becomes, what is the state level engagement with higher education internationalization?

Traditionally, "states have been ambivalent, if not outright hostile, toward the international engagements of their colleges and universities" (Lane et al. 2014, p. 24). Recent research on the current state of affairs has concluded that support for internationalization at state level is quite limited as there are: very few states with an international higher education policy agenda (mostly *Study in* initiatives that are in fact run and financed mostly by higher education institutions through membership

fees), little state funding (in 2016 only 5% of universities had received state funding for internationalization), and a lack of a formal administrative structures to manage internationalization (Helms 2015; Helms et al. 2017; Lane et al. 2014). In fact, it continues to be the case that "most international efforts continue to come from faculty members, students, and staff members" (Lane et al. 2014, p. 3), and that "internationalization-related support is still very much centred on individual opportunities and activities" (Helms 2015, p. 27).

A possible explanation for this state of affairs could be that other countries adopted comprehensive internationalization strategies as a catching up mechanism to compete with USA (this claim is supported by the fact that the adoption of national policies in other parts of the world is very recent). Further research on the matter would be needed to test this hypothesis. However, it can be reasonably concluded that while US higher education is at an advanced level of internationality, there is little system-level support for internationalization.

Conclusions and Further Research

The internationalization of higher education remains a messy field, as only timid attempts were made to systematize the process (Kehm 2003). The chapter showed how large-scale comparative research of national higher education internationalization strategies can bring to light new aspects of the process that would otherwise be obscured in small-n in-depth case studies. All in all, the chapter advocated for mapping higher education internationalization policies around the world to make the diversity of the system transparent. In itself, the mapping exercise is purely descriptive. However, it allowed one to observe variations in the data and pose tentative questions about the causality of patterns. More empirical work is needed to catalogue these strategies.

Some of the main conclusions drawn from this global map of national internationalization policies were discussed. First, thinking about higher education internationalization in a strategic manner at national level is a relatively new phenomenon that is not as widespread as the literature might suggest. Second, strategic thinking about internationalization is mainly concentrated in developed countries more generally, and European countries more specifically. Third, 41% of all the international students worldwide are received by just nine of the countries that have an internationalization strategy in place. Finally, two thirds of the countries with a national strategy for internationalization also have English as (one of) the language (s) of instruction.

While these findings bring a new perspective on higher education internationalization around the world, further research is needed to dig deeper into the different rationales, approaches, and substantive measures that the countries employ to forward the process. A content analysis exercise on these strategies could easily reveal the similarities and differences between them, and open avenues for cooperation or completion between countries. Such a comparative perspective could also help to

characterize and contextualize the European Higher Education Area within a global reference framework and highlight the particular aspects of regional internationalization forwarded through the Bologna Process. The main contribution of such an endeavor would be to increase the transparency of higher education policies for students, universities, policy makers, and businesses, and to ease consortia formation between universities and mutual agreements between states.

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A Collaborative Approach in the Internationalisation Cycle of Higher Education Institutions

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Introduction

Internationalisation as a concept has been extensively researched in the field of higher education as well as in other fields. In an attempt to outline the concept, many authors have agreed on a number of broad definitions to conceptualise the new, global phenomenon. The Bologna process was a key component catalysing the internationalisation efforts of European institutions. It aimed to make higher education more attractive to students from other parts of the world and to facilitate intra-European mobility (Teichler 2009); moreover, it sought to standardise system-wide European higher education processes that indirectly supported the internationalisation efforts of European higher education institutions.

The number of mobile students has grown significantly in the last twenty years, reflecting the expansion of tertiary education systems worldwide: according to the last report from Education at a Glance, nearly five million students may be included in this category (OECD 2017). European higher education institutions have also been focusing on international strategies and cooperation agreement to attract international students from all parts of the world, the ERASMUS programme being the most well-known and successful evidence of the mobility exchanges within the European Union and an important part of the internationalisation efforts of institutions. Nevertheless, mobility is not all, and a more comprehensive approach to the internationalisation of higher education is called for (Hudzik 2014), increasing awareness that internationalisation has to become more inclusive and less elitist.

One of the key parts of the internationalisation as a process is to offer internationalisation opportunities for all stakeholders within the institution. In this sense, the Bologna Process has been a great initiative to provide an accepted structure of programmes and activities that affect all parts of the institutions.

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The aim of the Bologna Process (1999) was to make higher education systems more compliant and to enhance their international visibility. This unique approach aimed to establish a system that provides a convergence of higher education systems in Europe, as well as to gain visibility in other parts of the world. In fact, the Bologna Process has reached other continents and create awareness of a system that connects different higher education institutions in different regions, and therefore also their staff members and students.

Thus, this paper focuses on a key aspect of the internationalisation cycle of higher education institutions. It encourages a supportive culture that will facilitate not only mobility schemas but also the integration of internationalisation in all aspects of institutions by using a collaborative approach between formal, informal services and all stakeholders.

How Do We Define Internationalisation to Be More Inclusive and Supportive of All Stakeholders Inside the Institution?

The term began to be used widely by higher education sector in the 1980s (Knight 2012, p. 27) and over the years, the meaning of the term internationalisation has changed and, in some cases, its purpose. This has resulted in differing definitions and agreements about terminology, leaving out some misconceptions about the term. The definition of internationalisation has evolved since 1994 when internationalisation was first defined by Knight (1994, p. 3) as "the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of higher education".

The definition of internationalisation evolved to highlight its international and intercultural dimension: "Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (Knight and de Wit 1997, p. 8). It is important to note that Knight and de Wit identify three components in this definition: internationalisation is, first, process and second a response to globalisation (not to be confused with the globalisation process itself). Third, it includes both international and local elements, represented in the definition by the term "intercultural" (Knight and de Wit 1997).

In 2002 Söderqvist (2002, p. 42) introduced a new definition that, for the first time, described internationalisation as a change process from a national to an international higher education institution. Moreover, she added a holistic view of management at the institutional level, an inclusive approach engaging more stakeholders in the process. In fact, definitions started to move forward to a more comprehensive understanding assessed by Hudzik (2011, p. 6) as 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.

Consequently, it is claimed that a more comprehensive approach to the internationalisation of higher education (Hudzik 2014) will increase the awareness that internationalisation has to become more inclusive and less elitist by not focusing predominantly on mobility but more on the curriculum and learning outcomes (de Wit et al. 2015). One indicator of the inclusiveness and the change of focus is the recent definition of internationalisation by the Internationalisation of Higher Education study, which was requested and published by the European Parliament (de Wit et al. 2015, p. 33):

> the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.

This definition is heavily informed by the commonly-used definition provided by Knight (2003). However, it extends Knight's definition to represent the inner culture of institutions and to reflect the importance of internationalisation as an ongoing, comprehensive and intentional process that gathers together all stakeholders as internationalisation agents, focusing on all students and staff rather than only the few who have the opportunity to be mobile. Indeed, more inclusive and supportive actions were taken towards a more comprehensive internationalisation process. The next part of the chapter focuses on internationalisation strategies and the internationalisation cycle of higher education institutions, where all stakeholders play a role.

Internationalisation Strategies and Support Services

University strategic management covers a series of actions and services taking place at the institution. There are different support services (formal and informal) that impact the internationalisation process. Bianchi (2013) identifies the provision of two types of services: core (which are related to teaching and learning) and peripheral (those related to the living conditions and the environment of the host country, such as security, cultural and social activities, accommodation, transportation and visa/entry requirements). Knight and de Wit (1995) highlight the relevance of extra-curricular activities and institutional services by identifying a list of special services that are needed to support a university's internationalisation strategy: international students' advice services, orientation programmes, social events and other facilities for foreign guests, international student associations,

international houses for students and scholars, international guest organisations, and institutional facilities for foreign students and scholars (such as libraries, restaurants, medical services, sporting facilities, etc.). According to a recent doctoral study (Perez-Encinas 2017), as well as sources including the UNESCO Book titled "Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education: Global Foundations, Issues and Best Practices" (2009) by Ludeman et al., the ESNsurvey 2016 (Josek et al. 2016), and the ISANA guide (2011), among others, a list of services that universities can offer is presented. These include: admission offices, administrative services, academic support/advising, international offices, IT and system support, counselling services, careers advisory service/employability, library, language courses, buddy/mentor systems, orientation and welcome activities, healthcare and safety, accommodation offices, campus engagement, campus eating places, student organisations, disability support office, alumni service, emergency numbers, family support, community services, sports, cultural adaptation, student affairs assessment and city offerings.

The provision of the aforementioned support services can enhance and strengthen the internationalisation strategy of higher education institutions. As a first step, institutions should analyse and develop their internationalisation plans in accordance with their needs, aims and priorities. Second, they can incorporate some of the relevant activities and support services into their strategic plans (de Wit 2002; Knight and de Wit 1995). Third, they may seek to integrate the views of key stakeholders of higher education institutions in all actions and activities to promote a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. And, finally, they may re-assess the internationalisation plan in collaboration with these critical stakeholders on an intermittent basis.

Support services and diverse activities taking place in higher education institutions under the auspices of overall university strategies have been categorized by Knight and de Wit (1995) in two main groups: programme strategies and organisational strategies. The first category relates to academic activities and services that integrate the international dimension into the higher education institution. The second category refers to the development of appropriate policies and administration systems in order to maintain that international dimension (de Wit 2002; Knight and de Wit 1995). Therefore, we may observe that support services and internationalisation activities may fall under both of those categories, which are indeed of equal importance. In order to provide a holistic approach to the internationalisation of higher education, all aspects, activities, and university strategies (programme-based and organizational) must be in focus in order to reach the mission of the institution.

Trends and Issues in International Student Services

As stated previously, there are different activities and support services that universities can offer to (international) students to support the internationalisation process of universities. Internationalisation of higher education seeks to include not only foreign or mobile students but rather all types of students in higher education. In most cases, institutions offer support services specifically oriented for international or foreign students and have a designated office for that purpose. International student services (ISS) has been an evolving concept in some institutions of higher education, while it is regarded as a well-established practice in others. Although its definition might differ from country to country or among organisational types, institutions that host international students share one mutual goal: to support international students in their educational and cultural transition during their studies abroad.

Recognising the potential impact on the students' experiences and success, as well as recruitment and retention efforts, some institutions are becoming more intentional about equipping their ISS with the necessary resources and staffing to serve the complex needs of international students and help them develop global and intercultural competencies during their stay on campus and in the community (Ward 2016). Although the structure of ISS might differ from institution to institution, and be organised in the form of centralised or decentralised services, it is tied to programmes and services provided to students in relation to their formal and informal education at postsecondary level (Osfield et al. 2016). According to the European Union's Erasmus Impact Study (Brandenburg et al. 2014), the increase in the number of both inbound and outbound students has led to an increased awareness of the necessity of providing support services and streamlining administrative procedures. At many universities, this has, in turn, resulted in the establishment and further strengthening of support services for international students. Providing support services does not only enhance the internationalisation vision of a university but also has a potentially important role to play in terms of attracting and retaining international students (Kelo et al. 2010), as well as building momentum for the future recruitment of high-quality students.

These trends have been identified and categorised into five major groups (Ammigan and Perez-Encinas 2018): (1) increased responsibility for providing immigration services to the international community on campus; (2) the importance of developing strong support through a collaborative programming and outreach model; (3) using key strategic communication strategies to maintain contact with international students; (4) the need for assessing international student satisfaction as a way to improve support services; and (5) the preparation for managing crisis and response to emergencies.

Collaborative Services Inside Institutions

The role of international student support services is an important driver in the internationalisation efforts of a university (Perez-Encinas 2017). In fact, due to the growing numbers of mobile students, the provision of student services has become a key topic among academics and other stakeholders involved in the process of internationalising higher education. Therefore, providing support services and integration activities by and for staff members, faculty members and students will increase the internationalisation of the campuses and, moreover, enhance their attractiveness in comparison to other institutions (Perez-Encinas 2017).

Additionally, institutions seeking to attract and retain international students are adopting student services and programming to meet their expectations (ACE 2016), in order to not only create an international campus but also to offer an inclusive environment that meets the needs of international students, both academically and culturally, not to mention personally. Indeed, figuring out the best way to meet the needs of international students is not an easy process (ACE 2016), although more programmes and services are being provided to more international students because this is becoming central to the work of all student affairs professionals at the university, not just those who work in the international office (ACE 2016). Hence, a collaborative approach is encouraged for all stakeholders within higher education institutions, with the goal of working together towards supporting an international culture with international and domestic students and staff members. Student support is requested not only by international students; domestic students may well be "interculturally deficient". Leask (2009) suggests that international educators "move away from deficit models of engagement, which position international students as interculturally deficient and home students as interculturally efficient, when both need support".

Another important service where a collaborative approach is important relates to the integration of international and domestic students. Besides attracting and receiving international students to enrich the campus and provide an international atmosphere, the integration of international students on the campus is desired. Unfortunately, there is still much to be done to socially integrate international students and local students. Key actions to foster integration include: (1) to identify students' needs in the institution, regardless of whether they are domestic or international students, (2) to include all stakeholders and community members to foster engagement and (3) to associate and collaborate with different services and organizations on campus for a better social integration provided by and with different agents. Social integration has been defined by (Rienties et al. 2012) as the extent to which students adapt to the social way of life at university. Some studies have addressed the integration of students in higher education. Tinto (1975, 1998) notes that students have a variety of educational experiences, competencies, skills and values, as well as family and community backgrounds before they enter into higher education. These previous personal experiences might influence how

students integrate in higher education, socially and academically. Another interesting finding from Tinto (1975, 1998) is that students do not only need to focus on their studies to graduate and succeed academically, they also need to participate in the student culture that universities provide. Authors such as Wilcox et al. (2005) found that social support by family and friends (i.e. social networks of students) had a positive influence on the study success of first-year students. This data can be related to international students and to the efforts of an inclusive and comprehensive strategy for internationalisation.

Some recommendations for the strategic development of an international community include: to connect international initiatives with the institution's existing strategic priorities; to focus on continuous data-driven approaches to decision making; and to forge flexible coalitions with key campus stakeholders. Another recommendation is to collaborate with the international student community, which involves empowering international students to participate in open forums, serve as representatives at fairs, be responsible for the organisation of events, etc.

All these endeavours may positively impact students' social and academic experiences. The American Council on Education (2016), in their report on "Integrating International Students", highlights four key methods to provide the best possible experience for international students: welcoming international students, adjusting services and programmes to meet their needs, facilitating interaction between international and other students, and assessing students' experiences. Subsequently, de Wit has identified a missing component (related to a collaborative approach); this will be explored in the following section.

The Internationalisation Cycle and the Missing Component

An internationalisation cycle has been developed to facilitate the phases and the process of internationalisation in higher education institutions. The modified internationalisation cycle described below by de Wit (2002) highlights that all phases of the internationalisation process in a given institution combine distinct points of view. The proposed cycle, a combination of Van der Wende and Knights's internationalisation cycle, takes into account several variables. Van der Wende (1999) puts emphasis on the internal and external factors affecting the environment (the analysis of the context), and the implementation and long-term effects, while Knight's cycle (Knight 1994) relates more to the awareness, commitment, planning, organisation and review. The internal circle, an addition by de Wit (2002), represents the supportive culture that will facilitate the integration of internationalisation into all aspects of institutions. There is an implicit emphasis that internationalisation is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance the quality of education, research and service function of the university (Fig. 1).

In fact, de Wit's (2002) modified version brings a comprehensive perspective to the internationalisation cycle by combining approaches and including the
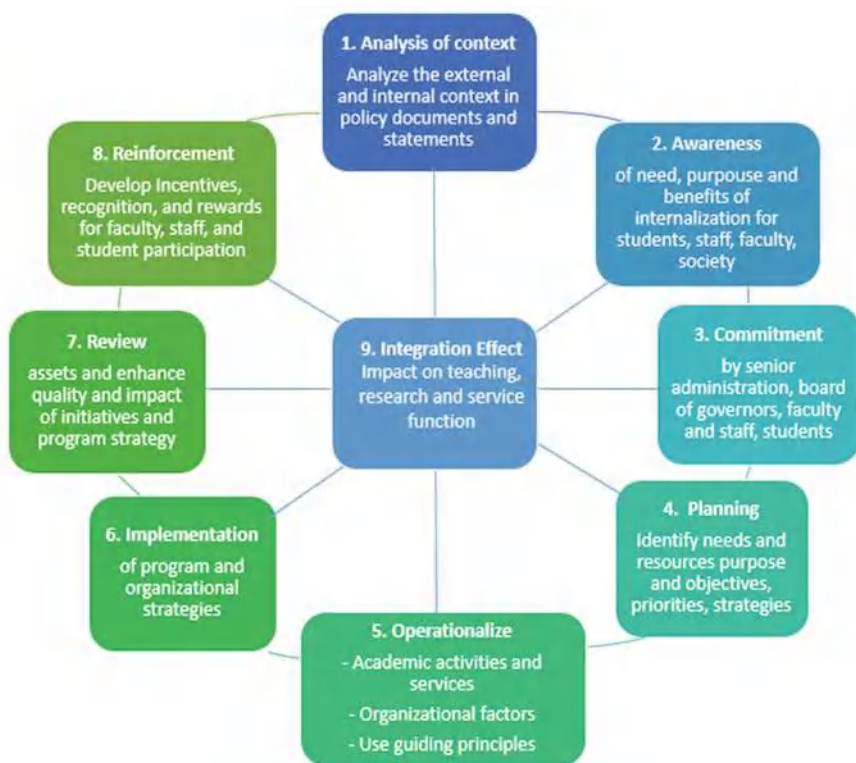
Fig. 1 Internationalisation cycle. Modified version de Wit (2002)

integration effect: it gathers together the six elements of Knight's cycle (1994) with three elements from Van der Wende (1999). This means that the internal circle acts as an integration effect promoting a supportive culture in the institution. In addition, I argue that there is a missing component in the internationalisation cycle, highlighting the key inclusion of all stakeholders in the decision-making process, which undergirds the supportive culture of an institution. This is a collaborative approach. By including a collaborative approach into all services, I offer a more comprehensive and inclusive view of the internationalisation process. Internationalisation can be seen as a strategy in itself (de Wit 2009) that can be integrated into all the aspects, functions of higher education institutions, and collaborate with different networks and stakeholders. Thus, internationalization as an approach should be inherently collaborative. The distinction proposed here is to include collaborations among formal and informal services, as well as all stakeholders, to enhance the quality of education, research and service.

In Fig. 2, I offer a representation of the newly added component (on the left side) of the collaborative approach, to be taken into account along all parts of the internationalisation cycle of higher education institutions.

Fig. 2 Internationalisation cycle. Modified version (2017)

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I present an evolving concept of how internationalisation is moving towards becoming more inclusive and collaborative within the internal culture at higher education institutions. The Bologna Process has been a great initiative to promote collaborative schemas and to internationalise higher education systems. Also, to create awareness for the need of an educational system that connects different higher education institutions and internationalization strategies, staff members and students in different regions. Indeed, the paper reflects on a missing component in the internationalisation cycle of higher education institutions. This is a collaborative approach that can be included as part of the internationalisation strategies to foster community engagement and more integration among students and staff members on campus.

It is important to note that internationalisation of a university is not only aimed at those mobile or foreign students but at all stakeholders playing a role in a higher education institution. In fact, it is ever more important to have an internationalisation strategy that not only focuses on programmes and actions abroad but also at home. Under the larger heading of internationalization strategy, I have identified trends in ISS in higher education institutions as falling in five major groups (Ammigan and Perez-Encinas 2018): (1) more responsibility in providing

immigration services; (2) a collaborative programming and outreach model; (3) key strategic communication strategies; (4) the need for assessing international student satisfaction as a way to improve support services; and (5) the preparation for managing crisis and response to emergencies. In order to follow the aforementioned trends and actions to be taken into account, the participation and work together of all stakeholders in and outside the campus are essential. For this purpose, student affairs associations in different regions of the world serve as an umbrella for emerging issues and work to promote a social infrastructure at the higher education level.

A collaborative approach among support services at higher education institutions can enhance and strengthen the internationalisation strategy of higher education institutions by (1) identifying internationalisation needs, aims and priorities; (2) incorporating some of the activities and support services into their strategic plans; (3) integrating the view of all stakeholders of higher education institutions in all actions and activities to promote a more inclusive and supportive educational environment; (4) by assessing the internationalisation plan together with stakeholders' perspectives intermittently. Thus, I propose that internationalization as an approach should be inherently collaborative between formal, informal services and all university constituents to enhance the quality of education, research and service function of the universities.

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Student Perspective on the Institutional Efforts to Develop Internationalisation Within Romanian HEIs

Cristina Ramona Fiț and Delia Gologan

Abbreviations

ANPCDEFP	The National Agency for Community Programmes for Education and Professional Development
EHEA	The European Higher Education Area
ESU	European Students Union
IEMU	Internationalisation, Equity and Institutional Management for a Quality Higher Education
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
UEFISCDI	The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding

Introduction

This study has been developed considering the context of the Bologna Process, as well as the 18 years of experience that Romania has gained while implementing the educational policies that are part of EHEA. Therefore, the aim of this study is to increase the awareness on the strengths and weaknesses of the internationalisation dimension of education in Romania. We intend to do this by better understanding students' perspective on this phenomenon and the range of internationalisation activities initiated by various universities. In the first part, the paper analyses stu-

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dents' perception on internationalisation, presenting the conclusions of a survey taken by 5126 Romanian and foreign students enrolled in the 17 target HEIs, including reasons for or barriers against taking part in a study or placement mobility. Also, the paper offers an analysis of the university strategies on internationalisation, thus showing the perspective of Romanian universities in terms of what dimensions they prioritize, and what institutional measures are taken to integrate internationalisation into the teaching, research, or services of HEIs using as a proxy the objectives found in their strategic documents on the subject. Clarifying these aspects as well as discussing students' recommendations for improving the international dimension of education will help identify, in the final part of this paper, potential solutions to improve the international dimension of the Romanian educational system.

The purpose of this endeavour is to contribute to the improvement of the internationalisation dimension of education in Romania, by understanding more thoroughly the perspective of students, one of the biggest stakeholders in the field of HE and the potential solutions to improve it.

Methodological Aspects

This paper focuses on a combined qualitative and quantitative analysis of data collected through a perception survey, followed by a scan of the conclusions emerging from the analysis. Choosing this combined methodological approach served as a driver for reflecting the complexity of the issues tackled by this research paper and the availability of data from multiple sources that needed triangulation in order to answer the RQs. This approach also has some connected limitations that we describe at the end of this paper. For the quantitative part of the analysis, we have investigated the relationship between different variables using nonparametric correlations and the variability among some of the correlated ones using factor analysis.

Data was collected through a survey designed and applied during the "Internationalisation, Equity and Institutional Management for a Quality Higher Education" (IEMU) project.

Section "Internationalisation of HE in Romania—Short Introduction" of this paper presents the qualitative analysis of institutional documents from 19 HEIs that included their objectives regarding the development of the international dimension of their activity.

We are aware of the limitations of this study that have two main sources: the unbalanced sample of respondents and the impossibility of presenting the perspective of other stakeholders regarding the efforts put up by the HEIs. The first of them derives from the fact that an uneven number of students from different universities took part in our survey, thus the sample is not representative for the entire

student population of the institutions that are part of the study. This could have been solved by factoring-in the sample, but we considered that, at this stage of the analysis, the reached conclusions are relevant even if not representative for the Romanian student or academic population. The second limitation would have been overcome if similar surveys were distributed among teachers and representatives of the HEIs management. This will be done through further initiatives and projects of the authors. However, for this paper, the mitigating strategy that includes analysing the official documents of the institutions that referred to the institutional objectives for internationalisation, reflects both the academics' and the management's perception of the priorities in this domain. (Since these documents were adopted through the voting procedure within the HEIs Senates).

General Context

Relevance Issues

The relevance of this paper is given by the fact that it innovatively considers students' opinion on the international dimension of education. The reasons behind this decision lie on arguments of the dimension of this stakeholder, their stake in the process of internationalisation and their characteristics as parts of the HE governance. Students are the largest stakeholder in HE—fulfilling both the role of beneficiaries of the educational process, and that of partners in policy development and implementation, since this was agreed in the context of the Bologna Process, by the Ministers of the EHEA states, in 2001. Moreover, we agree with the ESU arguments that the student input can be not only strong and unbiased but also extremely relevant, as students are, above all, the most interested academic category in providing useful feedback for the improvement of the educational system (ESIB 2001). Their stake is, therefore, bigger in what internationalisation is concerned as it is one policy area dependent on their involvement in the process from the beginning.

Students have already proved their interest in educational policies and perseverance in making a point according to their interest in all the international structures they have been represented since the establishment of The European Students' Union (ESU) in 1982. They have contributed to the development of EHEA and the implementation of the Bologna Process policy lines at national and local level. This is also true for the Romanian students.

As highlighted in the next subsections of the paper, there is a favourable context for discussing manners of improving the dimension of internationalisation in the Romanian educational system. Thus, there is no better moment for surveying the perception and opinion of all stakeholders, especially students, than now.

Concepts and Definitions

Given the absence of an agreed-upon definition for internationalisation—the main concept the paper works with—as well as the many perspectives on it, the authors have chosen as a working definition for the paper the one developed in a study and revised Jane's Knight definition (de Wit et al. 2015). This definition describes it as "[t]he intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of postsecondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society (de Witt et al. 2015). Just as the definition proposed by Jane Knight, the above-mentioned description includes two main related components—"internationalisation at home" and "internationalisation abroad" within the one of internationalisation of Higher Education (2008). And this way of perceiving internationalisation as a process or a set of measures that authorities, at different levels, can implement, stood at the basis of the study presented by this paper and developed the survey questions. It also emphasizes the importance of internationalisation in enhancing the quality of education. Last but not least, it also conveniently builds upon the idea of students as a major stakeholder in the HE system, as well as one of the major beneficiaries of this process and of all public policies and activities related to comprehensive internationalisation.

The Romanian Situation

Internationalisation of HE in Romania—Short Introduction

During the communist period, Romania was actively involved in the internationalisation of HE. "As part of a wider foreign affairs agenda of the pre-1990 communist regime, Romania implemented several strategies to attract foreign students. These strategies included applying lower tuition fees compared to other countries, providing specific services for foreign students, such as Romanian language courses, facilitating access to libraries, and introducing special university regulations, canteens and accommodation arrangements as well as providing a small number of government-funded scholarships" (Pricopie 2004). These policies were successful and, at the beginning of 1980s, Romania was among the top 15 countries in the world providing academic services for foreign students (by then foreign students accounted for 10% of total enrolments). The number of foreign students declined in the late 1980s and early 1990s, despite new bilateral agreements with Europe, Canada and the US and Romanian membership of the Socrates program (Deca and Fit 2015).

After the fall of the communist regime, the Romanian ethnicity was addressed as part of a new government policy in the field of education creating a special type of mobility programs. At that time, through the policy, the Government offered students coming from The Republic of Moldova special study grants to attract them towards Romanian universities and determine their enrolment in the Romanian HEIs. This policy is still in place and it has extended the pool of potential beneficiaries to all ethnic Romanians living abroad, though it specifically targets The Republic of Moldova, Albania, Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine and Hungary, as well as other ethnic Romanians living abroad.

Romania has been part of the Bologna Process since 1999 when it signed the Bologna Declaration. From 2004 through 2007, Romania implemented the main Bologna Process reforms, such as switching to a three-cycle system of HE, developing a qualification framework, implementing the ECTS system, issuing a diploma supplement, facilitating recognition of study periods abroad (Egron-Polak 2014).

A strategic influence on Romania's policies on internationalisation and more attention to their implementation was brought along with the opportunity to host the Bologna Ministerial Conference Secretariat in Bucharest, between 2010 and 2012 and organize the eighth Ministerial Conference in Bucharest. During this period, young experts were involved in the Bologna Secretariat, where they contributed to raising awareness on the importance of following the Bologna Process commitments and the specific issues where Romania still had to work on. During that conference, the strategy "Strengthening Mobility for a Better Learning" (EHEA 2012) was adopted as an addendum to the Bucharest Ministerial Communique. As a result, most of these Ministerial Conference recommendations were integrated in the most recent Romanian National Education Law no. 1/2011. Unfortunately, that did not automatically mean instant or full implementation in the Romanian HE system. Lack of secondary legislation, lack of funding or implementation capacity or simply the fact that the provisions changed many times since then are just some of the reasons for this situation. Therefore, Romania has only a few national public policies or strategies targeting the development of and support for internationalisation (UEFISCDI 2013).

Another reason for the prioritization of internationalisation could also be the decrease in the number of students in the Romanian HE system, hence the need to target new potential recruitment pools. However, to attract foreign students, universities needed to become more international. Attracting more students became essential for the survival of universities, which were otherwise forced to gradually resume their economically inefficient study programs.

However, the reality of the Student mobility in Romania is difficult to analyse especially because there is no robust data collecting system for internationalisation, as many experts have noticed, over the years. In many cases, both national and international experts recommended the improvement of the data collecting system

in order to be able to develop coherent and evidence data-based public policies. That is why, when describing the Romanian situation, one has three alternatives: (1) to initiate an individual effort in collecting raw data and analyse it; (2) to use data collected in European-funded projects and reuse it; or (3) use the only set of data available that dates back to 2011 from the classification initiative of the Ministry.

Student Mobility in Romania—Trends

Since 2010, Romania has registered a positive trend in international degree-seeking students, their number reaching 5% of the student population (with an EU average of 7%). However, more than half of them are Romanian ethnics living abroad. Thus, Republic of Moldova is the no. 1 country of origin for international students studying in Romania. They benefit from bilateral agreements allowing them to study in Romania in their native language. For the rest of the international students, low tuition fees, low living costs and a large number of available study places—especially in medical programmes, are very attractive, and less attractive is the level of development of the international dimension of the Romanian HE system.

Compared to these students, there are almost three times more Romanian students seeking degrees outside of the country—the top three destinations for them are the UK (5900 students), Italy (5700 students) and France (4200).[1]

The same proportion is reflected among students involved in credit mobility programs: there are three times more students going abroad to study or work (6885 outgoing students in 2014–2015), than those coming to Romania (3418 incoming students in 2014–2015), but the overall number of students involved in such mobility programs is still low (ANPCDEFP and CPEDU 2015).

In terms of a strategic document in the field, Romania has no national strategy on internationalisation of HE endorsed by the Ministry of Education, only a proposal developed during the IEMU project, in 2015. In 2016, the Ministry created a working group appointed to finalize a national strategy on internationalisation, but unfortunately, in 2017, it did not record any progress (the Government changed and meetings of the WG were resumed).

To conclude, this article takes all these observations—the status of the internationalisation dimension, the demographic challenges, the opportunity to develop the internationalisation etc.—and suggests a way forward. This refers to using the perspective of students on this area in order to develop it. The following two sections of the paper aim to do exactly this.

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[1]Dataset available online, here: http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics—Outbound internationally mobile students by host region).

Results and Discussions

The Perspective of Romanian Universities

An analysis (during the IEMU project[2]) of the strategic plans of 19 HE institutions (UEFISCDI 2015) was conducted and revealed the goals and objectives for internationalisation of Romanian universities. Despite the natural differences between universities, as well as their mission and context, that determined normal differences in their strategies, the authors of the UEFISCDI study also observed some similarities (2015). For example, most of the institutional strategies covered the areas of internationalisation at home, mobility, research, marketing, partnerships, services for international students and areas regarding the quality of education and internal organization matters. All universities had goals related to internationalisation at home, namely developing programs taught in foreign languages, developing foreign language skills for the teaching staff, attracting international speakers and staff. The authors considered this as a proxy for the interest the university has for these aspects of the international dimension of education. Unfortunately, the study also revealed a limited understanding of the concepts linked to internationalisation, as there were no signs of intending to internationalize the curricula of the offered programs—for example. Moreover, there were no signs of their intention to develop internationally relevant competencies as part of the intended learning outcomes. Increasing mobility was also a goal of all institutional strategic plans, focusing on both incoming and outgoing mobility, and only in few cases, the importance of the qualitative aspects of mobility was highlighted. Research is still one of the main areas that universities are very interested in, this being the area that enables teachers to improve their career and that supports other initiatives in internationalisation. The goals for this area of interest were related to increasing research partnerships and attracting new funding opportunities and researchers. More attention was paid to increasing the number of partnerships than to the importance of choosing them strategically. Marketing and promotion were, as well, a core goal focusing on increasing the university's international visibility and developing a dedicated marketing strategy to become more visible in the international area, thus attract more students. In terms of partnerships, the focus was on increasing the number of partnerships and involvement in international networks, without taking into consideration the importance of choosing these in a strategic way. Half of the analysed universities had goals related to improving student services, but none of the institutions mentioned improving staff services. It is a positive thing that most of the institutions developed institution goals based on results of surveyed international students.

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[2]IEMU—Internationalisation, Equity and University Management for a Quality Higher Education —project developed during 2014–2016 by UEFISCDI.

Other goals mentioned in their institutional strategies were related to the third mission of the institution, involvement in the local community and start partnerships with local businesses (companies, local branches etc.), becoming an important regional stakeholder, building an alumni network, developing online and/or blended programs, including the use of MOOCs.

The Student Perception

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The results of the survey (developed during the IEMU project) taken by 5126 Romanian and foreign students enrolled in the 17 target HEIs are presented below. Out of the total number of respondents, 5.7% are foreign students and 94.3% are Romanian students, while 61.7% are male and 38.3% female. Most of the respondents were at the time enrolled in a BA programme—83%, while 21% in a MA programme. Out of the total number of respondents, 2.1% were Ph.D. students and 2% identified themselves with none of the categories, which means they were probably post-doc students or individuals following post-university studies etc.

As far as their distribution over the study fields, respondents cover all major study fields and reflect more or less the student population in Romania: 41.3% study Social Sciences and Sport, 17.7% Engineering Sciences, 17.1% Mathematics and Natural Sciences, 10.6% Humanities and Arts, 7.8% Biological Sciences. 5.4% of the respondents gave invalid responses, thus falling in the *Not defined* category.

Perception of the Level of Internationalisation of the Romanian HEIs

Most of the students consider that their HEI is internationalized, but not in a very deep and meaningful way or they consider that their university is channelling only a small percentage of their resources towards internationalisation. However, students from various fields of study have considerably different perceptions on the internationalisation activities performed by the university. This could be explained in two ways. First of all, certain universities or faculties might have at hand more resources to spend on these issues, thus their efforts to internationalize their institution would be more visible. For example, students in the Economic field of study are privileged in this way, as their faculties attract many students, most of them paying high tuition fees, thus their institutions have a large budget to work with.

On the other hand, there are certain study fields that traditionally attract many foreign students in Romania. For example, 50% of the students enrolled in Medical programmes are foreign students choosing to study in Romania due to the low tuition fees, compared with their countries, or due to the severe quotas on these programmes in their home states. Obviously, the HEIs with Medical programmes

are more advanced in implementing all the mechanisms and instruments of the international dimension, thus the respondents coming from these universities are prone to considering their institution more international.

These aspects could be further explored in order to answer the questions about the source of the observed dissimilarity among study-fields and/or institutions in what perceived internationalisations is concerned. It could be due to the fact that different institutions have differentiated access to international activities because students are involved differently, or because these students have distinct expectations from their universities regarding its international activity, therefore they are not satisfied with the same initiatives undergone by the institution.

However, these observations might be hindered by the fact that the study did not include a stage of pondering the results from different clusters of respondents in order to unify the difference in volume of the clusters—as explained above.

Our first hypothesis was that the perception of internationalisation differs with the field of study and there were signs pointing into the direction of verifying this premise. However, no statistically significant correlation was identified between the study field of the respondents and their perception of the level of internationalisation of the institution they are enrolled in (Fig. 1).

As explained in the previous sections of this paper, internationalisation means different things to various people, therefore it was of interest for us to explore the possibility of understanding what are the proxies considered by the students when thinking about an internationalised university. We used the responses to answer the following question: "*What do students take into consideration when they say their university is very international?"—a question that could also offer insights over "What efforts undertaken by universities to develop more internationalized HEIs do students perceive as being implemented and working?*".

From the respondents that consider their university "very internationalized", 81% responded that their HEI has the website available in different languages, 86% that there is a variety of international subjects to choose from, 82.8% said that some programs or courses are delivered in English, or other foreign languages. Moreover, 74% consider that the university looks international when you walk around, 85% consider that there are international activities and events, 73% find that the library has a wide range of international texts and 57% agreed that signs are written in different languages. All these proved to be positively correlated with having international students (Table 1).

In terms of information, 89.5% of the respondents consider that their HEI gives opportunities to study, work, or volunteer abroad, 82.6% find that there is good information about study, work, or volunteering abroad and 70.4% find the International Relations Department as helpful (Table 2).

However, when testing the relationship between grading one's university as very internationalised and all the elements of internationalisation, a correlation proved to exist with the following affirmations:

- My programme prepares me to work in an international environment (prepare).
- Teachers encourage study/work/volunteer abroad (encourage).

The perception of students over the international dimension of their university according to their field of study
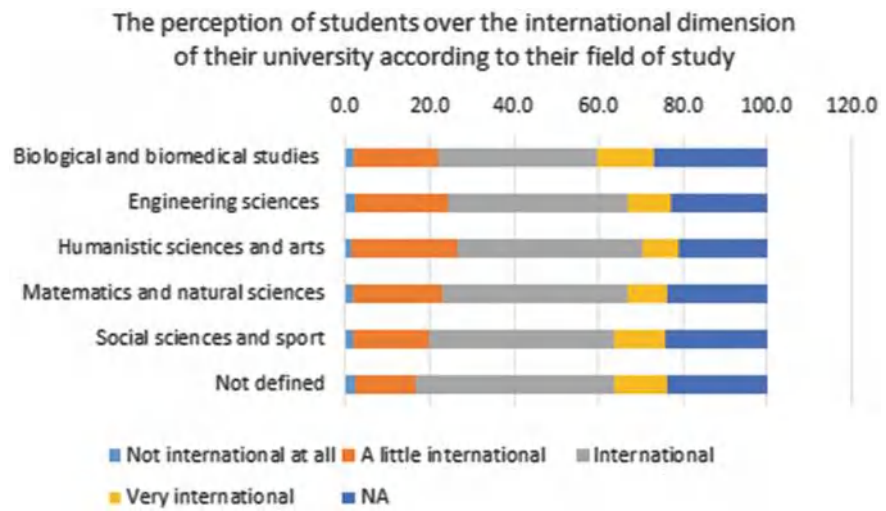
Fig. 1 Perception of students on the international dimension of their university according to fields of study

Table 1 Correlation between (1) being perceived as able to welcome international students and (2) being perceived as offering them opportunities to mingle, with all the tested elements of internationalisation (website in a foreign language, English study programmes, etc.) all gathered in one overstanding indicator—I1

		Welcome	Mingle
I1	Correlation coefficient	0.306**	0.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	3913	3913

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 The link between the perception over the activity of the international department and the perception over the availability of data about the mobility opportunities, as well as the link between the perception over the number of mobility opportunities (study, working or volunteering) and the perception over the availability of data about them

		Opps_A	Depart
Info	Correlation coefficient	0.429**	0.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	3913	3913

*Info = There is good information about study work volunteering abroad
*Depart = There is a helpful International Relations Department
*Opps_A = There are opportunities to study work volunteer abroad
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

- My programme helps me develop an international outlook (outlook).
- International opportunities are included in the programme (Opps).
- There is the opportunity to study another language (languages).
- Academics and support staff are aware of European global issues
- There are teachers from other countries in my programme (Acad_foreign).

A complementary correlation was tested positive with the elements that influenced the respondents to rate their university as very poorly internationalised—the university is perceived as lacking:

- A choice of international study subjects (IntlSubj).
- International activities and events (intlAE).
- Signs in different languages (sings).
- Capacity of welcoming international students (welcome).
- Activities and events that help home students and those from other countries to mingle (mingle).
- Openness of Support staff (staff_open).
- Capacity of support staff to speak other languages besides Romanian (staff_global).
- Capacity of academic staff to speak other languages (languages_A).

The third hypothesis tested was whether there is a positive correlation between the participation in a mobility program facilitated by the university and the perception that it is "internationalised", thus that students who have been in an international mobility tend to say their university is international.

As seen in Table 3, we have failed to reject this hypothesis, since we have a correlation level between the two variables of r = 0.475, $p < 0.001$, that is participants in a mobility program tend to perceive their home institution as more internationalised. This could be explained in two ways: either, these students consider their institution internationalised based on the fact that it offered them the opportunity to study, work or volunteer abroad and this is enough for them; or they are more perceptive to the elements of internationalisation, thus more easily observing them among the efforts of their university. This was surprising since our expectation was that students who have participated in an international mobility, and have already met another international institution, thus being able to compare it with their home university, will be more critical with the latter.

When testing for the relationship between the perceived internationalisation level of HEIs and other characteristics of academic and support staff, we found only one statistically significant relationship. In universities where support staff is perceived as being open to international students, it is more likely for respondents to perceive the institution welcoming to international students.

Table 3 Relationship between level of internationalisation and participation in a mobility

Correlations				
			Internationalization	Mobility
Kendall's tau_b	Internationalization	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.417**
		Sig (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	5126	5126
	Mobility	Correlation coefficient	0.417**	1.000
		Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	5126	5126
Spearman's rho	Internationalization	Correlation coefficient	1000	0.475**
		Sig (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	5126	5126
	Mobility	Correlation coefficient	0.475**	1.000
		Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	5126	5126

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Mobility Programs: Reasons and Barriers

One of the most well-known aspects of internationalisation is mobility of students. In Romania, mobility programs are sometimes mistakenly associated as the only part of the internationalisation dimension of the university, thus the only one that is in the focus of data collection efforts—as section "General Context" has shown. Mobility programs are more or less the only activity in which students are directly involved, not only as beneficiaries but also in the process of decision-making or implementation of public policy. That is why a great part of our questionnaire addressed the issue of student mobility programs in trying to find out the students' perspective on their implementation. The aim was to identify the positive aspects/ reasons for and barriers in the way of attracting more students in participating in mobility programs. The other aim was to identify potential solutions from the students' perspective to improve the mobility programs and the international activity of the university.

Out of all responses, 19% have participated in a mobility program (study mobility, placement/internship programs), 37% did not take part in any mobility, but they would like to try one in the future, and 19% of respondents did not participate in a mobility. Unfortunately, 23% did not answer this question, thus their status is unknown.

Out of the total mobile students, 61% had a study or research mobility experience, 36% underwent a placement mobility (being involved in a job/internship) and

Table 4 Distribution of respondents according to the perceived level of internationalisation of their institution and their previous experience in a mobility program

	Yes (%)	No (%)	NO, but I would like to go (%)	NA (%)
Very international	3.14	**2.30**	5.63	0.11
International	**11**	11.21	20.85	0.17
A little international	**4.60**	5.22	9.91	0.01
Not international at all	0.56	**0.42**	1.09	0

Yes—they have already been part of one; No—they did not get this chance; No, but would like to go

Table 5 Contingency table of conditional proportions for the two variables: owning a website in a foreign language and having an international student community

	International student community		
Website in foreign language	Yes	No	Not know
Yes	0.789617	0.65625	0.714286
No	0.076503	0.16875	0.061224
Not know	0.13388	0.175	0.22449

12.9% had a mobility as a volunteer. Only 2.92% out of all mobile students had the chance to take up all three types of mobility opportunities.

According to this contingency test, one can conclude that providing a website translated in a foreign language can have a direct impact on the potential of growing the international student community.

Our hypothesis as for the reasons that determined students to follow a mobility program was confirmed, as respondents mentioned, among the most important reasons for choosing a study mobility, the following: personal development opportunities (88% of respondents), new career opportunities (83%), and taking up the financial opportunity (67%). In addition to these reasons, students also mentioned that an element they considered attractive and a good reason for them to go on a study mobility was the opportunity to follow a course or a program unavailable in their home-institution (38%). The support of their family and friends was one of the reasons encouraging 18% of the respondents to take up this opportunity.

The lack of financial resources is one of the well-known issues linked to lack of access to education or the reason for early drop-out, and one of the most frequently mentioned barriers (47%) that stands in the way of more students embarking on a mobility program (study/research/working mobility). It is commonly known that the Erasmus + grant is not enough to cover the real costs of the mobility, thus universities request students to manage the difference (e.g. by requesting financial support from their families or taking up loans with this purpose). However, many of them cannot receive this kind of help. In this position, one can observe especially those students coming from categories that are already under-represented within the educational system and face high risks of social exclusion. They are usually students with several combined risk factors, namely they come from rural environments, from poor families, with parents who do not have high levels of education, thus have small chances to earn enough in order to support them financially.

Moreover, they lack the appropriate previous education (e.g. high levels compe-tencies in languages or knowledge about the cultural aspects of other countries) or the life expectations to motivate them to engage in this effort and to believe they deserve such an experience and can make it possible. These elements would prevent them not only from applying for a mobility grant but also from having a pleasant and successful experience abroad, should they be given this chance.

However, there are other reasons that make students reluctant to apply for a mobility, such as incomplete information about the process (18%), few opportu-nities available—that are distributed based on merits, thus only very few privileged students benefit from them—(18%). In addition, the lack of moral support from families or friends (14%)—for e.g. the fact that none of their friends/colleagues participated in such a mobility (11%), or the anticipated difficulties upon return is a turn-down (6%) too. As a conclusion to the information above, we could say that there is not enough counselling (from the HEI level) and information sharing regarding the process of applying and the benefits of taking a mobility.

Students' Recommendations for Developing Internationalisation

Students were asked to suggest a few ways in which they consider their university could improve its international dimension. 49% of the respondents mentioned the importance of developing more international cooperation opportunities, inviting more foreign academics to teach within the university (39%), offering more courses in English even for home-students (31%), and attracting more international students (32%) in order to ensure a more diverse learning environment (32%). Courses taught in foreign languages would contribute to the development of appropriate language competencies among students, thus helping them when applying for a mobility abroad.

Other suggestions were to raise the level of decision-making transparency, improve the promotion of mobility opportunities, and raise the capacity of teachers to teach in foreign languages, develop MOOCs and online courses, adapt the curriculum so that it follows international trends, organize alumni events, and invite professionals to share their previous mobility experience. They considered that organizing events where students can share their international exchange experiences would be of great help, as well as hiring new/more staff for coordinating the process and organizing a "buddy system" (tutoring) or finding manners to expose home students to multicultural environments (ANPCDEFP 2013). All these would also help increase the participation of students in mobility programs.

Other similar studies in the field revealed in 2015 other student recommenda-tions that included (ANPCDEFP and CPEDU 2015):

- Increasing the transparency of study/exchange programmes by offering relevant information in a way that best suits the needs and expectations of the interested parties;
- Making the funding available upon departure;
- Increasing the value of the grant;
- Offering more support to beneficiaries in covering the paperwork, finding accommodation, and solving other logistic issues; Reducing paperwork and bureaucracy specific to the programme.

Looking at the suggestions offered by students, one could say they have a good understanding of the HE policy-making processes, some of the recommendations are consistent with the agreed directions of the Bologna Process in the Ministerial Communiques, and their recommendations are aligned with the authors' opinion. However, they are obviously not familiar with all the elements of internationalisation at home, thus not many of them are found in the list of students' recommendations.

Conclusions

Having analysed all these data, we conclude that despite the already registered efforts of the universities regarding the development of their international dimension, they have a long way to go to fully develop it.

Strengths

Even though students from different fields of study have very polarized perceptions of the internationalisation of their university, most of the respondents consider that their university is internationalised. When characterising their university as such, students appreciated different efforts undertaken by their institutions. Some considered that the most important thing is to have a website available in a foreign language, some courses or programmes delivered in English or the possibility to choose from a course offer that included international subjects. Others appreciate more an international-looking campus, the availability of international texts or materials in the library, the offer of events or activities with international participation etc. However, the majority of the survey respondents still appreciate the most the efforts made by their HEI regarding the opportunities to study, work or volunteer abroad, and mobile students tend to appreciate that their university is more internationalised.

Weaknesses of the Internationalisation Dimension

However, the general perception is that the efforts towards internationalisation are only occasional and lack in depth and a strategic approach, while many of them still only refer to organizing mobility programs. Unfortunately, students do not perceive many of these efforts, thus proving that one of the main weaknesses of the internationalisation initiatives is communication with the students. In the absence of other efforts, these mobility programs will only be able to send Romanian students abroad, to study, work or volunteer, and not to attract international students or academia. Thus, the number of mobility beneficiaries is still small, as students are not motivated to embark on such experience, nor helped to overcome the perceived barriers.

The study reveals the student perception on internationalisation is limited and that only some of its elements have an impact or are actually visible to students. This makes us believe that it would be useful to teach students what is comprehensive internationalisation, through trainings or lectures, in order for them to fully understand the internationalisation of HE and see all the possibilities they have at hand to further contribute to the development of this. This can enable them to provide comprehensive feedback not just for mobility programs but for all internationalisation processes undergone by their university.

Motivations and Barriers Encountered by Students When Considering Being Part of a Mobility Program

Furthermore, this study provides relevant data and observations of the obstacles and barriers to mobility, which can be connected with institutional and national policies on internationalisation as a good starting point to improve these policies. Out of these results, we can understand the type of policies or regulations universities could develop in order to encourage students to go on a study or placement mobility, leading to prepare active citizens for the global market and meet the EHEA target of 20% of international students abroad by 2020. Even though this target is set at a European level, Romania still has to improve its percentage of outgoing and incoming student mobility. In addition, we recommend that universities focus more on implementing and developing new policies such as creating special scholarships or other financial incentives for those who want to go abroad. It is well known that EU grants are not enough for students, and not being able to cover the remaining costs is the main reason why most students do not want to take part in a mobility. As recommended in the 2012 "Mobility for a better learning" strategy, there is a need for developing awareness campaigns for students, academics and parents in order to better understand the goal and importance of a short-term mobility abroad and the impact these could have on the development of a student in becoming an EU active citizen with a complex skill set. Furthermore,

counselling centres for students who want to go on a mobility would also be helpful in order for students to have the courage to take a mobility opportunity, be prepared for such an experience and understand the impact this activity could have on his/her personal and professional development.

The choice of going to study abroad for a period is justified by the possibility to personally and professionally develop during that period, thus becoming more employable. The most common reasons for students not engaging in outward mobility are financial difficulties experienced abroad or inadequate support from the home university. The latter translates in a small number of opportunities, lack of updated information and of cooperation for recognition of the study period abroad for the student returning home. Students provided their feedback on the exchange/mobility program in terms of positive aspects and issues that still require fine-tuning in the recommendations section.

Institutional Perspective on the International Dimension

From the analysis of the institutional documents regarding internationalisation, one can conclude that endeavours towards it represent small efforts directed towards many elements, with no prioritised directions that could add value to the university. Unfortunately, most of the efforts are still built around the mobility programs and sometimes for research.

Recommendations

It is important to emphasise the need for more efforts to be directed towards making these processes more transparent, better promoted and communicated among the potential beneficiaries. Also, there is a need for a better-facilitated access to the information regarding the mobility process through specialized centres. The available support needs to cover financial needs, emotional needs (empowerment, motivation) and academic needs (academic requirements to study in another country and ease of recognition of the mobility program upon return). As well, there is a need for understanding the students' perception of the benefits and risks of internationalisation and align more the mobility aspect of internationalisation with the internationalisation of the curriculum, teaching and learning.

As a recommendation, we suggest developing internationalisation at home in all its aspects (internationalised curricula, more international students and international staff etc.)

More funding is needed both for developing more international cooperation opportunities, offering more English-taught or internationalised courses or improving the marketing of mobility opportunities, but also for investing in developing the institutional and human capacity of HEIs for internationalisation.

Better funding would allow the use of technology for improving the bureaucratic processes related to internationalisation as well as enabling more support to mobile students (moral and logistical), both before, during and after the mobility period. All these and a consistent data collection system for making informed decisions that might help improve the international dimension of the Romanian educational system.

As a recommendation on the Bologna Process, in order for the 20% mobility goal to be achieved, there is a need for more financial investment from all participating countries, as well as empowerment policies and programmes for students in order for them to understand the importance of internationalisation in all its aspects (internationalisation at home, curricula, teaching or mobility etc.). In the context of current heavy migration, the EHEA should take serious action and develop possible national/European policies and include workshops, courses and programmes in the members' institutions regarding diversity with all its aspects. Withal, better marketing for placement mobility together with special benefits for companies and institutions that could financially support students during their mobility period should take students' perception of the importance of internationalisation and the fact that internationalisation (e.g. mobility) can happen to another level of trust and awareness. As well, more policies and programmes dedicated to national and local level institutions could be developed in order to better align the mobility aspect of internationalisation with the internationalisation of the curriculum, teaching and learning. And as a final recommendation, to better understand students' perception of the benefits and risks of internationalisation together with possible improvements within EHEA, more studies at an institutional, national and European level should be done.

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Part II
Social Dimension Within a Quality Oriented Higher Education System (Coordinated by Jalmi Salmi)

Social Dimension Within a Quality Oriented Higher Education System

Jamil Salmi

Introduction

Equality of opportunity: the impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting it.

R.H. Tawney

The European higher education systems have experienced two major transformations in the past decades. First, traditionally elite systems have become mass education systems as a result of the rapid increase in the proportion of each age group entering higher education. Today the EU-28 countries enrol close to 20 million of students. Second, the Bologna process has led to the harmonisation of degrees and quality assurance approaches within the European higher education space.

However, in spite of the spectacular growth in student numbers, higher education generally remains elitist, with a disproportionate share of students enrolled in the best institutions coming from wealthier segments of society (Marginson 2016). The various Excellence Initiatives aiming at making research universities more globally competitive, such as those in France and Germany, bear the risk of accentuating this trend. Even when they get access to higher education, students from under-represented and traditionally excluded groups tend to have lower success rates.

Even though the social dimension was not specifically mentioned in the 1999 Bologna declaration, it was explicitly underlined in the 2001 Prague communiqué as an important area deserving further attention. The 2007 London communiqué defines the social dimension as follows:

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> Higher education should play a strong role in fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities and raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences in society. Policy should therefore aim to maximize the potential of individuals in terms of their personal development and their contribution to a sustainable and democratic knowledge-based society. (p. 5).

Since then, European higher education systems have worked to ensure that efforts to raise the quality of teaching and research would go hand-in-hand with raising opportunities for under-represented groups, instead of bringing about increased social exclusion. The commitment to making higher education more socially inclusive was firmly inscribed in the 2015 Yerevan communiqué announcing the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) social dimension strategy.

Looking at the social dimension in higher education requires focusing on the needs and trajectories of at least four equity target groups:

- Individuals from the lower income groups,
- Women,
- Groups with a minority status linked to their ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, or residence characteristics, and
- People with disabilities.

These categories are not mutually exclusive. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The principal dimensions of inequalities often overlap in several ways. For example, ethnic minorities tend to be more predominant in rural areas and are commonly affected by poverty. Being a girl with a disability in the Roma community is almost certainly the passport to a life of exclusion and discrimination.

In the European context, the drastic increase in refugees and illegal immigrants, fuelled by conflicts in South Asia and the Middle East, has translated into an additional category of students deserving careful attention from an equity viewpoint: refugee students.

Against this background, this introductory chapter explores various aspects of the social dimension in the European higher education space. After presenting a theoretical framework explaining the importance of the social dimension and explaining how under-represented students are defined in Europe, it reviews the articles included in this section and draws broad conclusions based on the findings of the studies.

Theoretical Framework[1]

Given the extensive social and private benefits that result from higher education, inclusive access and success are essential for achieving social justice and ensuring the realisation of the full potential of all young people. While acknowledging fully

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[1]This section builds on earlier work by Bassett and Salmi (2014).

the impact of disparities in primary and secondary education which shape the size and characteristics of the pool of potential students at the tertiary level, there is no doubt that improvements in equity in higher education can offer meaningful and sustainable development potential.

Eliminating inequality is imperative for two complementary reasons: fairness and efficiency. In the first instance, religious, philosophical and legal traditions in most cultures emphasize equity as a pervasive concern. The 2006 World Development Report (WDR) on Equity and Development documents how several major religions endorse the notion of social justice as a basic tenet of their beliefs and values (World Bank 2006).

The WDR also analyses notions of equity as a fundamental theme in secular philosophical traditions. In ancient Greece, for example, Plato maintained that "if a state is to avoid […] civil disintegration […] extreme poverty and wealth must not be allowed to rise in any section of the citizen-body because both lead to disasters" (Cowell 1995, 21). Modern theories of distributive justice have shaped societies' thinking about equity. The contributions of four prominent thinkers, John Rawls, Amartya Sen, Ronald Dworkin, and John Roemer, are particularly relevant in that respect. While their theories are characterized by significant conceptual differences, they all converge in moving the traditional focus of social justice from outcomes—such as welfare or utilities—to opportunities (World Bank 2006).

The economic efficiency argument in favour of equity promotion is just as strong. A talented, low-income and/or minority high school graduate who is denied entry into higher education represents an absolute loss of human capital for the individual person her/himself and for society as a whole. The lack of opportunities for access and success in higher education leads to under-developed human resources and a resulting shortfall in the capacity to generate and capture economic and social benefits (Harbison 1964; Bowen and Bok 1998; Ramcharan 2004). The public, societal benefits accrued by having higher levels of education present in the workforce include low unemployment rates, increased tax revenues, greater inter-generational mobility, greater civic and volunteer participation and lessened dependency on social services. Research has shown the positive effect of educational attainment on crime reduction, improved health and better citizenship (Lochner 2011).

Thus, in the interest of both social justice and economic efficiency, every individual must be given an equal chance to partake in higher education and its benefits irrespective of income and other individual characteristics including gender, ethnicity, religion, language, and disability. Considering the strong correlation between higher education enrolment and family background (McPherson and Schapiro 2006), concrete initiatives are necessary to provide better opportunities of access and success for students from lower-income families and disadvantaged minority groups. Without such purposeful action, the cycle of inequity can only continue, and disparities will endure.

The importance of ensuring equal opportunities is reinforced by recent advances in biology, neurology and genetics, which are challenging traditional views about the distinction between innate and acquired abilities. A growing body of evidence is

showing that the line between what is attributed to genetic heritage and the psychological, on the one hand, and cultural and social factors that shape each individual's development, on the other hand, is much finer than previously thought. Robert Sternberg from Tufts University leads this movement, which views intelligence as a set of competencies in development (Sternberg 1997; Sternberg et al. 2001).

Defining Underserved Students in the European Context

Despite the common goal of increasing participation in higher education, there is hardly a common European definition of under-represented groups. Instead, it is up to each country to define how it views underserved categories of students according to its specific social context. With respect to national widening participation policies, very few systems in Europe set targets for specific groups. The majority tend to set general objectives and mainstream their policy approach instead of identifying specific groups (Eurydice 2015a). In addition, few institutions collect social data on their students. In countries such as France, Germany and the Nordic countries, strict privacy laws make it illegal to gather such data.

Similarly, a recent report on "study success" in 35 European countries revealed that the definition varies across Europe (EC/EAC 2015):

- Completion: students succeed when they have completed their study and earned a degree.
- Time-to-degree: students succeed when they have earned their degree within a set period (e.g., during the nominal period, plus one year).
- Retention or dropout: students re-enrol in a program until they earn a degree successfully; students fail when they drop out before completing their studies.

Almost half of the countries included in that report places a high policy priority on student success. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of data on completion. Only 12 countries report regularly data on completion and even fewer countries report on retention, dropout rates and time-to-degree. Referring to previous work done in this area, the study stresses the need (i) to harmonize definitions and data collection in Europe to allow meaningful comparisons and (ii) to promote research to evaluate which policies are effective.

Eurydice notes that, in most cases where completion and dropout rates are monitored, this is done without distinguishing students' profiles. Only ten countries look more specifically at under-represented groups. These groups are defined differently depending upon contexts.

The first academic year is critical to student success. "Yet, only about half of the EHEA countries have developed policies and practice focusing on the retention of first-year students"; of those, only one half (12) apply the full set of measures: introductory or insertion courses, tutoring and mentoring, and specific courses and supports to acquire learning and organisational skills (Eurydice 2015b).

Overview of the Contribution of the Papers to the Social Dimension Theme

The eight contributions included in this sub-theme on the social dimension within a quality higher education system come under three categories. The first three articles analyse national level conditions and factors that influence inclusion. The second group reviews policies that have the potential of improving inclusion. The last group of articles is devoted to institutional responses to growing numbers of refugee students in Germany and Turkey.

The full list is as follows:

1. A Typology of Admission Systems Across Europe and Their Impact on the Equity of Access, Progression and Completion in Higher Education (Cezar Mihai Haj, Irina Mihaela Geanta and Dominic Orr).
2. The Social Dimension and the University Rankings (José M. Nyssen).
3. Study Success at the Clash Point of Excellence and Social Dimension? (Aleš Vlk and Šimon Stiburek).
4. Studying and Working—Hurdle or Springboard? Widening Access to Higher Education for Working Students in Malta (Christine Scholz Fenech and Milosh Raykov).
5. The Role of Student Counselling for Widening Participation of Underrepresented Groups in Higher Education (Janine Wulz, Marita Gasteiger and Johannes Ruland).
6. Inclusive Practices in Response to the German Refugee Influx: Support Structures and Rationales Described by University Administrators (Lisa Unangst and Bernhard Streitwieser).
7. A New Aspect of Internationalisation? Specific Challenges and Support Structures for Refugees on Their Way to German Higher Education (Jana Berg).
8. Access, Qualifications and Social Dimension of Syrian Refugee Students in Turkish Higher Education (Armagan Erdogan and M. Murat Erdogan).

The first paper, by Mihai Haj, Geanta and Orr, is based on a comprehensive study of admission systems in the European higher education space. In spite of the complexity of admission modalities and contrasting approaches across European countries reflecting a variety of philosophical views regarding access to higher education, the authors were able to create a comprehensive classification of admission systems. They identified four main categories along the two dimensions of (i) selectivity upon entering higher education and (ii) degree of streaming in upper secondary education. They then proceeded to analyse the implications of each model in terms of equity and social inclusion, complementing their comparative assessment of the admission system of the 34 members of the European Higher Education Space with in-depth studies of eight countries.

The first group of countries—including for example Germany and the Netherlands—are those that stream students in high school, but where higher

education institutions are not allowed to select incoming students (*selection by secondary schools*). The researchers found this model to be the least favourable to low-income students.

The second group of countries—including for instance Finland and Portugal—are those where there is no streaming, but where higher education institutions are allowed to apply additional criteria to select their students (*selection by higher education institutions*). This model is not as restrictive as Type 1, but nevertheless higher education institutions tend to use academic achievement as a main selection criterion, which generally plays against under-represented students.

The countries in the third cluster have neither streaming in secondary education nor further selection upon entering higher education (*least selection*). Students in these countries—including, for example, Ireland and Sweden—have the widest options for choosing an academic pathway and the most equitable education attainment results.

The last group of countries—including for instance Romania and Spain—have both streaming at the secondary education level and additional selection upon entering higher education institutions (*double selection*). Paradoxically, these systems do not have the worst equity results but come in second place after the third model. This unexpectedly good result is due to the fact that these systems are doing relatively well in terms of female completion and participation of mature students.

The comparative evaluation of admission systems carried out in this article led the authors to make a few policy recommendations. First, the data suggest that, among the most effective ways of improving equity in higher education, eliminating early streaming comes as a priority. Second, the evidence shows that, by and large, higher education institutions in Europe do not consider the pursuit of inclusion as their responsibility. It is, therefore, important that governments put in place incentives to increase inclusion, following the example of Ireland and the United Kingdom. Finally, a closer articulation between secondary and higher education would go a long way towards increasing inclusion, particularly through joint services for academic and career counselling and bridge programs to improve the transition from high school to university education, as happens, for instance, in the United States.

The second article, written by Nyssen, looks at the relationship (or lack thereof) between university rankings and a range of purposes linked to the social dimension, stressing not only equity aspects but also those relating to democratic citizenship, sustainability and human rights. The author starts from the observation that, in spite of their many methodological flaws, the rankings have come to be seen as a proxy for quality in higher education by a wide range of stakeholders. Bearing in mind the advantages and disadvantages of university rankings, rather than just criticising them, it may, therefore, be more useful to see how they can foster the social dimension outcomes of higher education.

Nyssen goes on analysing the most frequently mentioned international rankings, (ARWU, THE, QS, Webometrics and U-Multirank) to find out whether they include any indicators related to the social dimension of higher education. The main

finding is that U-Multirank is the only ranking with a few relevant indicators, namely those on gender equity and community service learning. The other rankings are all biased in favour of the research function of universities.

In the second part of the article, Nyssen proposes a set of indicators reflecting the social dimension of higher education that international rankers could take into consideration to widen the scope of their university classifications. The choice of indicators is based on a review of EHEA, UNESCO, UN, Council of Europe and EU statements about equity, inclusion and others aspects of the social dimension and also on the results of a Delphi survey made in the context of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI).

The third article, prepared by Vlk and Stiburek, examines the tension between the search for excellence and the concern for equity, with a focus on four former socialist countries in Eastern Europe, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The authors use study success, completion and dropout as a filter to assess the impact of national and institutional policies to foster excellence in research and teaching. The purpose of their research is to test whether excellence and inclusion can be promoted at the same time.

Relying on information from the Europe-wide report on success (HEDOCE study), data from the OECD's Education at a Glance and national reports for each of the four countries reviewed in their article, Vlk and Stiburek review the range of national and institutional approaches used to promote success. In all four countries, the government introduced negative financial incentives to discourage students from taking too long to complete their studies. This meant, concretely, that they would have to pay fees if they exceeded a set time for finishing. Acting in a more proactive way, the Czech Republic has established social scholarships targeted for students with special needs. The beneficiaries appear to be more successful than the other students. Besides financial incentives, Poland and Hungary are providing students with detailed information on labour market outcomes to help them in their choice of academic programmes. Some universities have put in place counselling and support services for at-risk students.

Looking in more depth at the Czech experience, the article finds out that, due to the high degree of institutional autonomy, the government's ability to boost completion rates and reduce the number of dropouts is limited. The main instrument is the funding formula which takes graduation rates into account in the budget allocation to universities. The Ministry of Education also relies on institutional performance plans to boost social integration and improvements in academic success among at-risk students. At the same time, however, the priority given to excellence and increased research productivity appears to take the attention of university leaders away from teaching effectiveness and the need to decrease dropouts.

Based on the results of their case studies, the authors conclude that striving for excellence may lead universities to neglect important aspects that are not at the heart of national policies or measured by international rankings, such as the quality of teaching and learning, student support, diversity and other key elements of the social dimension. To reverse this trend, they argue convincingly in favour of

devoting additional resources to curriculum reform and innovative pedagogical initiatives to stimulate student engagement and recommend that QA evaluations take completion rates more systematically into consideration.

The article written by Scholz Fenech and Raykov is a case study of working students in Malta, investigating whether the fact that they are studying and working at the same time is an impediment in terms of social inclusion opportunities or an advantage from a skills building viewpoint. Relying on the results of the 2016 Eurostudent survey carried out in Malta, the authors analyse the profile and experience of working students and compare them with the situation of non-working students. The specific context of Malta is that of a still under-developed higher education system because of the lasting dependence on Great Britain, the former colonial power, even after independence, resulting in many labour market opportunities for unskilled workers and a higher share of students from well-off families than in other EU countries.

As reported in the article, the literature on working students points to the additional difficulties that these students encounter. In many cases they are at risk of enjoying the education experience less fully, suffering from mental stress, achieving lower levels of academic achievement and dropping out more easily because of the conflicting demands on their crowded schedule as working students. At the same time, some researchers argue that working students enjoy a motivational advantage in so far as they can more readily see the positive impact of their studies on their labour market situation.

The results of the Malta Eurostudent survey are consistent with what has been observed elsewhere. Close to 53% of all Maltese students work and study simultaneously. Working students tend to be older and come from under-represented groups with limited financial resources. Combining work and studies is more frequent among those students with a delayed entry into higher education, who tend to prefer part-time, short-cycle programmes. A positive finding of the survey is that students who combine work and studies are often enrolled in programs directly related to their job, despite the increased workload. This means that they are likely to improve their labour market outcomes in the long run.

One important finding of the study is that the impact of students' work on their academic achievement depends on the characteristics of their job and the intensity of their work. Students working more than 20 h per week alongside their studies are challenged by a considerably high workload resulting from the combination of their paid job and studies. The policy implication is that offering part-time and/or short cycle study programs with flexible hours is likely to encourage workers to pursue their studies and help low-income students who must work and study at the same time. Under these conditions, combining work and learning can be a springboard to increase the share of non-traditional students in higher education, thereby contributing to raising educational attainment in Malta.

The fifth paper, authored by Wulz, Gasteiger and Ruland, gives a student perspective on the role and importance of academic and career counselling for widening the participation of under-represented students. Using survey data collected in nine European countries, it explores how counselling services offered by

student unions operate, what challenges they face, and what contribution they make to promoting the social dimension in higher education.

Together with financial aid and student-centred teaching and learning, counselling is considered to be one of the most effective measures to reduce dropout rates, especially among disadvantaged students. The literature reviewed in the article confirms that counselling helps students make the right choice of study programmes, thereby increasing their motivation and the likelihood of academic success.

In three out of the nine countries (Denmark, Spain and the United Kingdom), the student unions do not provide counselling services as such, the task being undertaken by the universities themselves. But in the other six, the student unions are all directly involved in such activities. The survey results show a wide range of practices. The student unions offer both services to the general student population and targeted counselling in support of carefully identified groups of underserved students, the definition of these groups varying from one country to the other. They also work closely with other actors (government agencies, higher education institutions, NGOs) to coordinate counselling services and avoid duplications.

The article highlights two interesting trends regarding evolving practices in the area of student counselling. First, there is increasing reliance on online and social media mechanisms to support students in need of academic and career advice. Second, a growing share of the advice is provided by other students, confirming that peer counselling can be as effective or even more effective compared to advice offered by professional counsellors, especially when the role model relationship involves a student who comes from an under-represented group.

In the first of three papers on student refugees, Unangst and Streitwieser study the responses of German university administrators faced with rising numbers of refugee students in the wake of the Syrian civil war. Combining background reports and interviews with administrators and academics in 12 universities, they explore the main barriers encountered by would-be refugee students and the range of measures put in place by universities to facilitate access for refugee students.

Even though higher education policies are set in Germany at the state level rather than the federal level, several mechanisms operate at the national level to help universities confronted with the challenge of welcoming a larger number of refugee students. These include funding provided by the Federal Government and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) through the *Integra* programme, a central system to recognize foreign qualifications, a testing platform to evaluate the scholastic aptitudes of potential students, and language proficiency assessment tests. At the university level, however, few institutions have put in place a clear information system to monitor the academic progression of refugee students. This is further complicated by the strict privacy laws enforced in Germany, which make it difficult to access and analyse the personal data of students. Some universities have also been overwhelmed by the surge of applications in 2015 and 2016.

Based on the results of their interviews and review of relevant reports, the authors found that many refugee students interested in studying do not succeed in enrolling partly because of the language proficiency barrier. There is a considerable

variation in the type of support programs offered by German universities linked to differences in institutional decisions and administrator experience/interests regarding the refugee issue. Most universities, however, show an explicit effort to increase access for Muslim refugee women. The authors conclude that university administrators and academics involved in supporting refugee students would highly benefit from sharing relevant information and experience across universities and identifying which practices seem to be most effective in promoting success among refugee students.

The second article on refugee students in Germany, written by Berg, looks at the challenges experienced by refugee students in a complementary way, introducing a new angle by examining the role played by international offices at five universities. The paper reports on the findings of a series of interviews of international office officers at five universities in four states. In addition to the standard difficulties identified in the case of refugee students (funding, language, administrative requirements to prove one's academic qualifications, residential status and conditions), the study documents the social isolation and psychological distress experienced by Syrian students as a key integration barrier at German universities. In response to these challenges, most universities in the study sample have created positions to deal specifically with refugee students, most often as part of their internationalisation activities.

In the conclusion, the author underlines the positive contribution of preparatory colleges in preparing potential refugee students for the achievement and language tests. She also innovatively suggests that German universities, or for that matter all universities enrolling refugee students, should view the presence of refugee students as an enriching element of their internationalisation strategy with potential benefits for the entire student community.

The article ends with a few policy recommendations concerning the need for dedicated financial resources to institutionalise support structures for refugee students and help fund their living expenditures, and the usefulness of establishing networks bringing universities and outside agencies together to share relevant information and good practices. Regarding the general topic of social dimensions, the article argues that the implementation of support structures for refugees can, on the long-term, apply in a beneficial way to addressing the needs of other equity groups.

The last article, written by Erdogan and Erdogan, focuses on the experience of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Out of a 3.3 million refugee population, close to 15,000 Syrian students are enrolled in about 140 Turkish higher education institutions. The article, which draws on the findings of a survey of a representative sample of refugee students, analyses the challenges faced by these students in being able to access higher education and successfully complete their degree.

As mentioned in the two Germany cases discussed previously, Syrian refugees in Turkey must also overcome the language barrier and get their prior qualifications recognized in order to be able to study successfully in a Turkish university. In addition to these factors, the survey revealed the importance of providing specific information for refugee students about academic opportunities and funding sources.

While the Turkish government provides grants earmarked for refugee students, only 20% of Syrian students actually receive financial assistance. The majority of the students is funded by their families.

In spite of all the difficulties encountered, the Syrian students report that they are happy with the quality of education received and that they are achieving satisfactory results in terms of academic progression and success. This confirms that a high level of motivation—what some education researchers now call mindset—helps overcome the academic and financial barriers that refugee students are confronted with (Claro and Loeb 2017).

Conclusion

The willingness of nations to work together not just for refugees but for the collective human interest is what is being tested today, and it is this spirit of unity that badly needs to prevail.

Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees

The collection of articles presented in this book section on the social dimension of higher education shows that the Bologna process and the creation of the European Higher Education Space have resulted in a growing emphasis on equity and inclusion for all groups in society. At the same time, some of their findings illustrate the persisting gaps between policy and practice, between intentions and reality, between rhetoric and concrete actions.

Studying the social dimension in higher education from an international perspective reveals striking differences between policies in Europe and approaches in other parts of the world. By and large, most European countries do not have systematically targeted policies to support clearly identified underserved groups, unlike what happens for instance in the United States or in Australia. A possible exception is Ireland, which is a clear outlier in that respect with its well-articulated equity plan and sets of measures to promote access and success for students from a low-income background. European nations tend to implement mainstreamed strategies to expand access and success on the assumption—not necessarily well founded—that all groups will benefit equally.

An additional complication, in some European settings, is that student background data are not readily available, which makes it difficult to analyse equity needs and design targeted policies to implement the social dimension of higher education. The data limitations sometimes arise from a weak technical capacity at the national or institutional levels. But in some cases, ethical and privacy considerations can result in legal barriers to data collection on the personal characteristics of students, as is the case in France where universities are not allowed to collect or disseminate information on the socio-economic, ethnic or religious background of students, or in Germany and some of the Nordic countries where privacy laws are very strict about the kinds of data that can be collected about individual students.

European nations have sometimes adopted divergent approaches. For example, as documented in the case studies, some countries (Slovakia for example) try to discourage students from enrolling in part-time programmes on the assumption that full-time studies are of higher quality. But there is a growing consensus—illustrated by the results of the Malta Eurostudent survey analysed in this book—that offering flexible pathways is one of the most important ways of supporting underserved students.

On the positive side, a number of important lessons can be drawn. It appears that the most effective ways of increasing opportunities for underserved students are those holistic strategies that combine financial aid with measures to overcome non-monetary obstacles such as lack of academic preparation, information, motivation, time, and cultural capital. Thus, European policy makers, institutional leaders, student unions and NGOs can work together to address the social dimension comprehensively, instead of relying on piecemeal approaches for overcoming barriers to access and success.

Many of the learning difficulties that students bring with them to institutions of higher education result from inadequate secondary education. This is particularly true for students from rural areas and low-income students. Students with inadequate academic preparation and insufficient motivation are more likely to struggle in higher education and are at a higher risk of dropping out before earning a degree. Therefore, secondary and higher education systems can intervene more purposefully by engaging in coordinated interventions—both academic and non-academic—to support success among students from under-represented groups.

Many European countries are dealing with a major new equity challenge due to the rapid rise in the refugee population and the necessity of attending to the higher education needs of refugee students. As demonstrated by the three case studies included in this book, refugee students face significant barriers in the host countries. They must have a proper visa to live and study, get their prior academic qualifications recognized, learn the language of instruction, and find financial resources to study.

The success of refugee students in overcoming these barriers is determined, to a large extent, by the existence of national policies to provide the necessary academic and financial support and the willingness of higher education institutions to put in place adequate systems to orient and accompany their refugee students. Many universities and civil society organisations have established programs to help refugees overcome the various barriers mentioned above. However, three changes are needed in order to scale up the most effective programs. First, rather than compelling refugee students to fit rigidly into existing systems and processes, universities should evolve and adapt to the new groups of incoming students. The same principle should apply to other categories of "equity" groups, for example working students. Second, what is likely to make a real difference in terms of expanding refugee student programs is the direct support from governments and the availability of public funds to help refugees with their higher education. Finally, the dissemination of innovative practices in the area of refugee education is beneficial to spread peer learning about good practices and facilitate collaboration across universities.

Focusing on new challenges, such as the influx of refugees, should not distract policymakers and university leaders away from their efforts to address long-standing equity concerns such as the low participation of students from underprivileged families or the absence of women from engineering and science, especially in top academic positions. All stakeholders interested in developing the social dimension in higher education should embrace a comprehensive view of equity groups.

Finally, one area where Europe seems to stay behind developments in retention policies is the use of learning analytics and big data to identify at-risk students and set support interventions into motion. A recent survey estimated that about 40% of US universities have experimented with novel data analysis methods to follow the digital footprint of their students and detect, very early on, behavioural changes associated with potential academic difficulties (Ekowo and Palmer 2016). European universities could use smart applications of learning analytics to improve their interventions to improve the learning experience and achievements of underprivileged students.

No country or institution has found a magic answer to the question of how best to overcome the historic, cultural and psychological barriers faced by underserved groups. Nevertheless, the components of successful policy approaches outlined throughout the articles in this section provide a useful blueprint for developing new and innovative responses down the road and orienting much-needed further work in the critical area of equality of opportunities in access and success at the higher education level.

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The Social Dimension and University Rankings

José María Nyssen

The Quality of Higher Education in University and Its Link to the Social Dimension

The concept of *university quality* and a number of initiatives set up in order to improve this quality in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) serve the particular objectives that have been assigned to universities by society. Therefore, "quality criteria must reflect the overall objectives of higher education" (UNESCO 2009a).

These objectives, among others, are focused on the key role of a Higher Education oriented to increase social and human development and also to give its citizens "the necessary competencies to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space" (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 1999).

A number of relevant supranational institutions have stated a broad scope of aspects related to the social dimension to which Higher Education has been invited to be fully involved for their development.

The most recent UNESCO Communiqués focused on Higher Education (1998, 2009a) stress the important role that this Education should play worldwide, not only for economic but also for social development. The above mentioned Higher Education objectives are guided by the commitment to leading society to generate global knowledge so as to address global challenges of the utmost importance (UNESCO 2009a)—for instance, developing quality programmes geared to bridging skill gaps for advancing sustainable development objectives (United Nations 2012), and they "should aim at the creation of a new society consisting of

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highly cultivated, motivated and integrated individuals, inspired by love for humanity and guided by wisdom" (UNESCO 1998).

These Communiqués are in keeping with an idea of *quality education* as "an effective means to fight poverty, build democracies, and foster peaceful societies" (UNESCO 2005). Actually, the Framework for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO 2006) as a precedent of the current UN Global Education 2030 Agenda, underlined the close relationship between sustainability learning outcomes and quality education.

In the European context, along with supranational institutions like European Union (2010, 2012) and Council of Europe (2006, 2010), which are also concerned about the impact of Higher Education in improving social development, the Bologna Process and the EHEA have played an important role by defining the "social dimension".

The Bologna Declaration (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 1999), that marked the beginning of the construction of the EHEA, put forward an overview of key goals for the society in which Higher Education can contribute to their achievement. Therefore, these declarations identified a set of aspects linked to the development of economy and labour market, and also defined the cultural, intellectual and scientific progress in an international context. Furthermore, taking a historical perspective into account, the importance of some aspects closely related to social development (e.g. democratic citizenship, intercultural respect, peace, international cooperation, etc.) has been stressed.

On the basis of this Declaration, the "social dimension" in the Bologna Process was mentioned by European ministers for the first time in the Prague Communiqué (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2001) two years later. This "social dimension" on that phase of the Process still had to be defined in its objectives, scope and contents, but there was anticipated concern in a number of aspects embedded in its scope, including mobility and its relationship with democratic values, diversity of cultures and languages, and the diversity of the higher education systems. Likewise, linked to the lifelong learning strategy and equity in the access to tertiary education, attention has been paid to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life.

But it is during the Ministerial Conference of Bergen (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2005) when an initial definition for the "social dimension" in this European framework was created, and within this definition, the main objective of "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".

Bearing in mind all these elements, the London Communiqué (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2007) presented in a more precise manner the Bologna Process vision about the aims of Higher Education, including "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". And according to the above-mentioned vision, it went further than the

previous Communiqué in the range of purposes of the "social dimension" stressing not only equity aspects but those related to democratic citizenship, sustainability and regard for diversity.

Finally, the recent Yerevan Communiqué (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2015), that is aligned with a vision of the "social dimension" mainly focused on aspects of equity and reduction of inequalities, stated on the previous Ministerial Conferences (European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 2009, 2010, 2012), also lays down a "renewed vision" of the EHEA and its role in addressing serious challenges, in which democratic citizenship and human rights issues have been outlined.

In conclusion, despite some differences in the scope of the social dimension fostered by these supranational frameworks, all in all, they underline the importance of this dimension and furthermore reflect a common interest in its strengthening.

The Impact of University Rankings in Defining "Quality" in Higher Education

If there is any consensus on rankings, it is on their considerable and growing *protagonism* as "quality measure" instruments, despite the weaknesses known to be associated with them (Altbach 2006: 77; Altbach et al. 2009: 11; Gutiérrez-Solana and Valle 2013: 27; Hazelkorn 2013a: 49–55, 59, 2013b: 85, 87; Marginson 2007: 131; Martínez 2013: 61; Rodríguez 2013: 151, 153; Saisana and D'Hombres 2008: 5–6; Salmi and Saroyan 2007: 82) and the mismatches between indicators of league tables and indicators of educational quality (Salmi and Saroyan 2007: 85). Attention is repeatedly paid in the literature to the problems found in these resources; for example, conditioning derived from: lack of data for calculation of fundamental aspects; lack of rigour in the methodology employed; lack of information and transparency in this methodology and in the dissemination of results; etc.

This work will not attempt a broad or complete discussion of the lively debate that has in recent years surrounded the proliferation of university rankings, though those interested in such a discussion will find it in such works as Dill and Soo (2005), Usher and Savino (2006), Marope et al. (2013) and Rodríguez (2013: 151–265). Rather, we will focus here on setting forth some key "narratives" of the idea of *quality* linked to these instruments that aim *prioritize* a range of aspects still under discussion.

The literature reveals a number of advantages and strengths of the facilitating character of university rankings:

- In their synthesis, university rankings "simplify" the information on the current state of higher education for various of the interested parties, supplying, in the strongest terms, a verdict on the quality, excellence or distinction of institutions or educational programs (in this respect, see Hazelkorn 2013a: 49; Marginson

and van der Wende 2007a: 55; Marginson 2007: 131; Marope and Wells 2013: 9; Rauhvargers 2011: 12; Rodríguez 2013; Safón 2013: 73; Santiago et al. 2008, vol. II: 254, 279).

- They also prioritize and make public information presumably "of interest" on certain aspects of institutions and programs of higher education (Buela-Casal et al. 2007: 2; Dill and Soo 2005; Hazelkorn 2007; Federkeil 2002; Marginson and van der Wende 2007b; Marope and Wells 2013: 12; Rodríguez 2013; Vlăsceanu et al. 2004: 52).

On the other hand, however, there is a notable conditioning derived from a reductionist construction of the concept of "quality" in university rankings that is not adjusted to the diversity of the demands that society places on Higher Education (Altbach et al. 2009: 11; Ellis and Weekes 2008: 494; EU High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education 2013: 36; Hazelkorn 2013a: 52–53; Marope and Wells 2013: 13; Rodríguez 2013; Scott 2013; Usher and Savino 2006, 2007). And among the above-mentioned demands, it is important to take into account those relating to the social dimension.

Habitually, the selection and weighing of "quality"—configuring indicators in international rankings—has the impact of prioritizing indicators associated with size and age of the institution, and with the volume of scientific research and production, fundamentally in English, all of which implies, a priori, the predominance of a particular institutional profile found mostly in a reduced group of countries (Altbach 2006: 79; Marginson and van der Wende 2007a: 62; Rauhvargers 2013: 19; Rodríguez 2013; Saisana and D'Hombres 2008: 8; Salmi 2009: 17; Salmi and Saroyan 2007: 84–85; Santiago et al. 2008, vol. I: 279; UNESCO 2009b: 25; van der Wende 2008: 60, 62). In short, there is a strong bias in favour of research universities, and less attention is paid to good practices of teaching and learning or to the regional engagement of the universities. "Institutional diversity", in objectives and ways of reaching them, is radically diminished in terms of its compatibility with this particular idea of "quality". Therefore, it would be difficult for any university not adjusted to this model to reach an advantageous position in relation to it. Despite this, all universities in the international context are, explicitly or implicitly, examined and evaluated through this *prism of quality*, which scarcely takes into consideration other enriching and relevant aspects nor any historical, disciplinary, contextual or cultural circumstances.

Another example of this is the type of expression used to denote the ideal position to attain, that of the highest esteem and value. This is frequently encapsulated in terms such as *quality, excellence, World-class, success* at a *Global scale*. However, the use of these concepts is habitually criticized as mistaking the part for the whole and for making an attempt to express complex concepts and objectives with very few and not always well-chosen aspects. Furthermore, these terms suggest an ideal state of *purity*, supposedly desirable in and of itself, though not effectively delineated into substantive components fundamental to higher education objectives such as social development or attainment of *capabilities* (Nussbaum 2012) by individuals in society.

In this sense, two points are of further importance:

- Firstly, the prioritisation of certain aspects established by the organisations and bodies setting the rankings disregards any accordance to the set of Higher Education objectives outlined by EHEA and organisations such as UNESCO. Therefore, such prioritisations can lead to the reorientation of Higher Education objectives ignoring the agreements of member states in this respect (some authors qualify this prioritisation as arbitrary or even to be in self-interest).
- Secondly, the idea of "quality" used in rankings, particularly in reference to the concrete aspects supporting it, does not correspond to a democratic criterion, but nonetheless it strongly affects Higher Education as a *public good* (United Nations 2010: 9) because university systems as a whole cannot escape being affected by the strong effects of rankings in the shaping of this idea, which is not including important demands in society.

Thus, there is a notable change in the behaviour of universities resulting from the effects of these evaluation resources and their results.

However, beyond the presumed virtues of rankings, and considering all of the problems we have seen, might there be an additional element explaining the enormous and growing influence these resources exercise on the policies of Higher Education?

A partial answer may be that these rankings, on top of everything else, offer something "of interest" which other resources do not offer in such evident and immediate form: participation in the social dynamics of self-esteem and explicit public recognition (Rauret 2013: 90; Rodríguez 2013: 152).

More concretely, rankings bestow public recognition upon universities, academic programs, and people connected to them (for example, research personnel or students), recognition which, both in and of itself and because of its frequent consequences, creates an incentive to upgrade in: (a) certain assessed factors, and (b) the supply of visibility—conveying information on advances in these factors (Hämäläinen et al. 2003: 12; Kaiser et al. 2007: 40; Marginson and van der Wende 2007a, b: 326; Marope and Wells 2013: 17; van der Wende 2008: 64; Westerheijden et al. 2009: 80).

It is clear that this pursuit of social recognition is no simple allegorical exercise, as this recognition is seen as a means towards access to resources and opportunities (Clarke 2007; Martínez 2013: 63; Liu 2013: 35) in a competitive institutional field.

With rankings, the better-classified institutions obtain, in many cases, superior resources and more prestigious professionals. Their students frequently have access to better jobs and contacts in higher positions with more responsibility. In short, there is a clear relationship between the idea mentioned above and *capital*[1] growth in a type of *Matthew effec*t (Merton 1968, 1988; and also in this respect Altbach et al. 2009: 11, 32; Archer 2007: 641; Hazelkorn 2007: 4–5; ESU 2009: 39); so that institutions in better positions at the start tend to garner resources that allow them to maintain their positions.

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[1]"Capital" in a wider sense such as that used by P. Bourdieu (2000).

Also importantly, the dynamic of the *pursuit of social recognition* flourishes in the university context at various levels, reaching a point where it displaces other, presumably objectives of higher priority, and becomes essentially predominant. Put another way, *demonstrating its own value itself* becomes a primary objective over other elements.

On top of this, the semantic and formal elements of the university ranking narrative also convey a value judgment. For example, the highest ranked institutions are frequently alluded to as "elite" institutions, as opposed to "massified" institutions. This discourse invites a reading of the university reality in terms of the dichotomy elite/masses (Altbach et al. 2009: 84; Bjarnason et al. 2009: 15; Hazelkorn 2013a: 49, 2013b: 86; Marope and Wells 2013: 17; Rauhvargers 2013: 17; Santiago et al. 2008, vol. I: 308) and assumes an aspiration on the part of all universities to reach a state of identification with the elite and flee as far as possible from any connotation of "massification".

However, instead of viewing the university world through the lens of "massification", why not interpret this reality in other terms? For example, given the challenge of making a quality higher education accessible to an always greater and more diverse number of people all over the world, are not the very universities ranked at the "massification" extreme of the scale contributing in greater measure than those considered "elite" towards the goal of making education accessible to those of economically disfavoured social origin?

Further than this, there is a key conclusion. Rankings are oriented toward making social recognition possible through the valuation of very particular aspects and also map out a tangible route to its procurement, centred on improvements in these aspects. Thus, rankings are a powerful conduit not only for the public display of recognition but also for determining which efforts are to be made in its pursuit. For instance, some universities are using league tables for goal-setting purposes (Salmi and Saroyan 2007: 89).

In this lively debate about university rankings, an important question arises: *can rankings be used in a constructive way?* (Salmi and Saroyan 2007: 88). Given the impact of university rankings and the great importance of advancing in a range of social dimension goals through Higher Education, what if university rankings could foster the commitment of universities to better their outcomes as regards social dimension?

The Commitment of the University with the Social Dimension Through the Quality of Higher Education: A Proposal to Include University Rankings

Five of the most currently followed international rankings were examined in order to verify whether, among the substantial objectives of higher education they contemplate, they include, to any extent, in their idea of "quality" any aspects related to social development through Higher Education (see Table 1).

Table 1 Social development aspects in international rankings

University ranking	Social development aspects
QS World University Rankings®	Labour market issues
Academic Ranking of World Universities—ARWU	Labour market issues; relationship to industry
Ranking Web of Universities (Webometrics)	
Times Higher Education World University Rankings (The World University Rankings)	Relationship to industry
U-Multirank	Labour market issues; relationship to industry; gender equity; community service learning; regional engagement

The main conclusion drawn from this analysis is that four of these rankings do not contemplate indicators directly related to diverse aspects of social development, with the sole exception of economic indicators connected to labour market issues and to the relationship between universities and industry. Only U-Multirank has added a set of indicators relating to the social dimension, including issues such as *regional engagement* (e.g. BA theses with regional organisations[2]; MA theses with regional organisations[3]; Regional joint publications[4]; etc.), and more recently, *gender equity* (e.g. Percentage of female students[5]; Female students bachelor[6]; Female students master[7]; Female academic staff[8]; Female professors[9]) and *community service learning.*[10]

Nonetheless, incipient initiatives are already working toward the inclusion in university rankings of indicators tied to a bigger number of aspects through which higher education can influence social development; notably, among others:

- the "Call to Action" Communiqué (Talloires Network 2014): in which leaders from 134 universities and higher education partner institutions from 40 countries across the globe encourage the global university ranking systems "to take civic

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[2]Degree theses of bachelor graduates done in cooperation with organisations (industry, public, non-profit organisations) in the region.

[3]Degree theses of master graduates done in cooperation with organisations (industry, public, non-profit organisations) in the region.

[4]The percentage of department's research publications that list at least one co-author with an affiliate address in the same spatial region (within a distance of 50 km from the university).

[5]Percentage of female students enrolled at the department.

[6]The number of female students enrolled in bachelor programmes as a percentage of the total enrolments in bachelor programmes.

[7]The number of female students enrolled in master programmes as a percentage of the total enrolments in master programmes.

[8]The number of female academic staff as a percentage of the total number of academic staff.

[9]The number of female professors as a percentage of the total number of professors.

[10]The percentage of credits given in service-learning activities, in relation to the total number of credits.

engagement seriously and to reduce the negative effects of the ranking systems on the public service responsibilities of higher education";

- QS Stars ratings (QS Quacquarelli Symonds Limited 2014): a rating system that takes into account a number of factors that are often overlooked in university rankings, including in the "Social Responsibility" and "Inclusiveness" a set of criteria, such as "Community investment and development", "Charity work and disaster relief", "Regional human capital development", "Environmental impact", "Scholarships and bursaries", "Disabled access", "Gender balance" and "Low-income outreach".

- "UI Green Metric" (Universitas Indonesia) and "Business Education for Sustainable Development—BESD" (Spitzeck and Siegenthaler 2007: 52–54): both *value-driven* rankings that aim at addressing sustainable development through league tables and a set of indicators focused on a picture on how the university is responding to or dealing with the issues of *sustainability*, such as transport, water usage, waste management, infrastructures, energy and the role of education by creating the new generation concern with sustainability issues.

This work, that is part of a wider investigation, aims to: (1) encourage universities to work to improve their situation over a range of aspects of the social dimension; (2) publicly value the work of universities on this matter; and (3) provide students and society with more complete, accurate and balanced information on university outcomes according to the Higher Education objectives outlined by EHEA and UNESCO.

Presented here as a complement to the above-mentioned valuable initiatives is a proposal to enrich university rankings, so that these, in turn, would incentivize a higher education more committed to social development in its various facets. Therefore, the proposal aims at reconciling social dimension objectives for higher education—set out by EHEA and UNESCO—with the *persuasive power* of rankings.

As a result of going through two main sources of information, a number of key aspects related to the social dimension and the Higher Education missions have been identified. This work has analysed, on the one hand, the institutional communiqués and official statements about Higher Education challenges published by EHEA, UNESCO, United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union from 1998 to 2015 and, on the other hand, the content of the Delphi study responses given by 214 experts (higher education specialists, rectors and other university employees, public policy makers and members of civil society involved in various different areas of development) from 80 countries, who were invited to participate in this study set up by Global University Network for Innovation (Lobera and Secretariado GUNI 2008) that aimed to gather the diverse participant's approaches to the role of Higher Education for social and human development.

Far from a restricted idea of social dimension, the proposal that is presented is based on a more comprehensive idea of this social dimension according to the objectives of Higher Education stated by the above-mentioned institutions.

The proposal is divided into two parts:

- The first part of the proposal offers a series of indicators complementary to those already existing in international university rankings, so that these rankings incentivize attention to certain objectives tied to particular aspects of social development and, at the same time, serve as a guide for channelling the efforts of agents involved in the pursuit of these objectives.
- The second part of the proposal, subsequent to this, draws the main lines of future strategy for the strengthening, improvement, and recognition of the quality of university rankings more clearly conscious of these objectives and of their potential repercussions.

University rankings are not, a priori, forced to value a set of circumscribed dimensions of higher education—such as "scientific production" in certain journals—but their idea of "quality" may be shaped, at least in part, by the recognition of certain aspects of common interest related to social development.

Due to the great limitations in available data, this pilot proposal of indicators is meant to be a modest but realistic beginning, with every indicator open to discussion and to adaptation for incorporation in any nationally or internationally recognised university ranking (see Table 2[11]).

Centring our attention on the final five indicators in this proposal, which measure the presence in curricula of substantive learning outcomes directly tied to diverse facets of social development, as stated by Salmi (2009: 72–73), it is important to point out the debate on measuring learning outcomes at the tertiary education level as a recognition that "excellence is not only about achieving outstanding results with outstanding students but ought perhaps to be also measured in terms of how much added value is given by institutions in addressing the specific learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population".

Actually, certain higher education objectives can only be reached if the substantive content joined to them is nurtured and empowered in a similar way as occurs now with other content more closely tied to professional development.

Beyond the mere proposal of new indicators open to being included in current university rankings, the next steps would be:

- First, carry out a pilot study contemplating the calculation of indicator results as far as available data sources allow.
- Likewise, confronting the lack of or inconsistency in data, document each case and call it to the attention of the entities responsible (or potentially responsible) for the sources of data.
- Second, submit this set of indicators and results to discussion by different stakeholders involved so that, on the one hand, the proposal is improved in specific aspects and, on the other hand, these stakeholders are encouraged to reflect on the importance of the relationship between Higher Education and social development.

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[11]More detailed information on the indicators and their data sources is available on request.

Table 2 Set of indicators

Equity	• *Annual contribution of the number of university graduates from recognized institutions to society*
	Number of graduates from a recognized institution[a] per academic year
	Note: Level of studies according to International Standard Classification of Education—ISCED
	• *Upward intergenerational mobility in education (by parents' educational attainment)*
	Number of graduates from a recognized institution whose parents both have below tertiary education
	• *Gender equity in completion of higher education*
	Ratio between the numbers of graduate women and men
	Note: from a recognized institution
	• *Gender equity in composition of highest level academic staff*
	Ratio between the numbers of female and male full professors
Institutional engagement	• *Consideration of work on social engagement*
	Number (and level) of prizes awarded by institutions or institutional networks that are recognized in the field of Social Development
	• *Leadership in actions focused on sustainable development and social engagement*
	Full member of a recognized university network focused on sustainable development or social engagement and also working at that moment on a project focused on that issue (published by the network)
	• *Leadership in social development projects*
	Annual amount received in order to coordinate competitive projects in the framework of institutional programmes focused on social development and cooperation
Substantive learning outcomes in accredited university degrees[b]	• *Learning outcomes in "Equity"*
	Percentage of degrees that include learning outcomes focused on "Equity" out of the total number of degrees of the university (number of degrees in which their syllabuses include one or more learning outcomes or competences relating to "Equity" out of the total number of degrees offered by the university)[c]
	• *Learning outcomes in "Sustainability"*
	Percentage of degrees that include learning outcomes focused on "Sustainability" out of the total number of degrees of the university
	• *Learning outcomes in "Democratic Citizenship"*
	Percentage of degrees that include learning outcomes focused on "Democratic Citizenship" out of the total number of degrees of the university
	• *Learning outcomes in "Human Rights"*
	Percentage of degrees that include learning outcomes focused on "Human Rights" out of the total number of degrees of the university
	• *Learning outcomes in "Cooperation and Social Engagement"*
	Percentage of degrees that include learning outcomes focused on "Cooperation and Social Engagement" out of the total number of degrees of the university

[a]Available at

– UNESCO Portal to Recognized Higher Education Institutions—HEIs (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/resources/unesco-portal-to-recognized-higher-education-institutions/)

– ENIC-NARIC. Recognized HEIs (http://www.enic-naric.net/recognised-heis.aspx; http://www.enic-naric.net/higher-education-institution.aspx) and Quality assurance: accredited programmes (http://www.enic-naric.net/quality-assurance-accredited-programmes.aspx)

– Quality Agencies (INQAAHE http://www.inqaahe.org/; EQAR https://www.eqar.eu/)

[b]Official university degrees accredited by a Quality Agency (for example, in the EHEA, the quality agencies of the European Quality Agency Register—EQAR)

[c]e.g. Public information about competencies and learning outcomes included in each official degree syllabus in the Spanish University System, is available at the 'Register of Universities, Centers and Degrees—RUCT' website

- Third, integrate accepted indicators into the university rankings.
- And fourth, take progressive steps to inaugurate certification processes for university rankings.

On this last point, we are not starting from zero. For example, the objective of the IREG Ranking Audit initiative (IREG Observatory 2011) is to verify and certify that the ranking under study is professionally developed, with transparent methodology, observes best practices in its area, and responds to a need for information on the part of various agents (in particular students, higher education institutions, employers and institutional managers).

However, despite its similarities with the IREG Ranking Audit initiative (IREG Observatory, n.d.), which might suggest a complementary relationship, the project proposed here emphasizes in particular the need of bringing the bases for certifying the pertinence and quality of rankings in line with the Higher Education objectives reflected in texts endorsed by UNESCO or others of similar character in the respective fields involved in the construction of the European Area concerning us today. For this reason, substantive aspects tasked to these universities, starting with the teaching/learning process, would need to be addressed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a noticeable lack of attention to the social dimension in the rankings, although the inclusion of indicators focused on this dimension is not only important but also feasible and affordable.

The main purpose of the present work is to contribute to the fostering of a range of social dimension aspects in the EHEA through a newly proposed instrument focused on the impact of current university rankings. Therefore, taking into account the important role of higher education in addressing current and future challenges, further development is needed in order to make "quality measure" tools, including university rankings, more relevant for society.

Far from ignoring the magnetism of some social dynamics linked to university rankings, such as the previously noted "simplification" or "pursuit of recognition," the immediate challenge may lie not so much in an impetuous battle against rankings as in taking advantage of their potential, making an effort to endow them with a *substantiveness* that favours social development in its diverse facets, encouraging its inclusion in the so-called *capabilities approach* (Sen 2000; Nussbaum 2007, 2012).

In short, given that university rankings are already a far-reaching reality, and bearing in mind the previous analysis of their advantages and disadvantages, it is fitting to try to ensure that their effects are, as far as possible, in the service of social objectives arising from democratic debate among a citizenry that is committed to the attainment of fundamental rights and freedoms.

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A Typology of Admission Systems Across Europe and Their Impact on the Equity of Access, Progression and Completion in Higher Education

Cezar Mihai Haj, Irina Mihaela Geanta and Dominic Orr

Introduction

In a world confronted with more numerous and diverse challenges than ever, having educated people becomes vital for economic and social development. The EU target stating that by 2020 the average share of 30–34 year-olds in EU member states with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40% is on track, already reaching 39% in 2016 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014). A large part of this has been achieved through expanding the share of upper secondary graduates qualifying to enter higher education. This share increased by 4% between 2008 and 2015.

At the same time, on European level, the demographic decline can no longer be ignored, with some countries being more affected than others. For children and young people aged 0–29, the percentage in the overall EU-28 population has decreased from 41% in 1994 to 36% in 2004, to reach 33% in 2014 (Coyette et al. 2015). This translates into a smaller pool of potential students from which HEIs can select. And this demographic decline is starting to impact on European countries' higher education systems, with the absolute numbers of higher education entrants decreasing by 19% in the same timeframe (Orr et al. 2017a).

However, even within this framework, some higher education institutions (HEIs) continue to see growth in their entrants' numbers. When surveyed on this by the

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European University Association's Trend Study, HEIs attributed this overall phenomenon to widening participation, international recruitment and changes in the admission policy (Sursock 2015). So, it could be stated that the time is actually right for more inclusive policies since the pool of "traditional" students is declining in many European countries, and policy-makers and HEIs have to look to more inclusive policies (Orr and Hovdhaugen 2014). At the same time, higher education institutions (HEIs) have been keen to exercise their autonomy in recruitment and selection decisions. As such, higher education has entered a new phase of consolidation and realignment, which requires HEIs to implement new strategies for recruiting students—from focusing on candidates from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who have not been a major focus group in the past, to designing customised selection procedures.

Given this wider educational context, the role of admission systems to higher education becomes more important than ever. The admission system is a process of matching, guidance and selection that enables students to graduate with the new skills required for the networked knowledge society. In this, admission should be seen as a lengthy progression starting sometimes as early as primary education and continuing into the first year of higher education studies.

Moreover, admission systems into higher education are complex and vary across countries. They are the product of different social, historical, political and economic backgrounds, based on contrasting philosophies of education and what education can and should aim to achieve for individuals and society as a whole (Turner 1960). However, despite the great complexity of elements, there are similar features that allow a clustering of the admission systems across the EU Member States, EEA/EFTA countries and candidate countries into a small number of well-defined types.

This article will draw from the data and findings of the "Study on the impact of admission systems on higher education outcomes—EAC-2015-0470" (Orr et al. 2017a), which was commissioned by the European Commission and was published in August 2017. The authors were part of the consortium that was tasked to deliver the study.

It should be noted that this paper takes a "mainstream" view of the respective national admission systems, i.e. it tries to understand the baseline impact of the general system. Almost all higher education systems are confronted with further challenges regarding equity and inclusiveness (see chapters in this section on refugees and working students are just two target groups), and their possibilities for reacting to these are shaped largely by how the baseline system is configured. Furthermore, this approach does not take into account the large differences within higher education systems due to starkly different profiles. For instance, it describes the basic structure for France, but not the difference between general universities and the grandes écoles. For more details on how national admission systems are organised and work for the case study countries (including France), see volume II of the final report which includes detailed national studies (Orr et al. 2017b). In terms of their effects on equity, however, it is clear that greater stratification of higher education will further increase the challenge of achieving participative equity of underrepresented social groups and require even better directly policy initiatives.

Methodology

The study used an innovative qualitative and quantitative mixed method, which aimed to look beyond the usual practices when analysing admission systems. While previous research relied mostly on comparative mapping among individual countries (McGrath et al. 2014), the methodology in this particular case focused on a broader perspective, looking at 36 European countries—the 28 EU countries, the five EU candidate members, as well as the three EEA/EFTA countries, and included focus groups and interviews to understand how the system really works.[1]

An initial extensive mapping was undertaken analysing the 36 countries across 24 indicators that followed students from primary education to the labour market, measuring both quantitative and qualitative aspects. This in itself was a challenging exercise, with identifying relevant data sources that were comparable. The information collected was then validated by national experts in all countries to ensure its accuracy, and a number of characteristics deemed most relevant were selected for further comparative analyses.

In order to reflect the diversity of countries in Europe in terms of higher education participation, to have a balanced geographical coverage as well as a focus on countries developing new initiatives in this area, eight countries[2] were then selected to perform an in-depth analysis which included both interviews with the policy-makers and key informants (representatives from ministries dealing with upper secondary and higher education and from other bodies responsible for the admission process, registrars from a number of public and private universities), and focus groups with students in the last year of upper secondary and first year of higher education. This provided a comprehensive view of the admission system from all stakeholder perspectives.

The results were refined and translated into a new typology of admission systems, under the form of a two-dimensional matrix built on what were deemed the most important dimensions of admission—streaming in upper secondary education and further selection by HEIs.

For the streaming in upper secondary education, the authors took into account the existence of significant learning pathways through upper secondary schooling that do not lead to higher education to split the countries in two groups:

- at least one pathway through the school system does not lead to a qualification enabling higher education entry (to some part of the system)[3]
- in general, all pathways may lead to higher education entry (in some part of the system).

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[1]For consistency purposes, Liechtenstein was excluded from the further statistical analysis.

[2]France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain.

[3]Streams that led to ISCED 4–5 programmes were not taken into account.

Table 1 Types of admission systems in European countries

Selection / Streaming	(Nearly all) HEIs can select with additional criteria	HEIs cannot select with additional criteria (in normal circumstances)
At least one pathway through the school system does not lead to a qualification enabling higher education entry (to some part of the system)	**Type 4: Double selection** *Croatia, Czech Republic, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom*	**Type 1: Selection by schools** *Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia*
In general, all pathways may lead to higher education entry (in some part of the system)	**Type 2: Selection by HEIs** *Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Portugal, Lithuania, Latvia*	**Type 3: Least selection** *Albania, France, Greece, Ireland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Sweden, Turkey*

Source Orr et al. (2017a)

Regarding the extent of higher education autonomy in further selection of students, countries were also split into two groups[4]:

- (Nearly all) HEIs can select with additional criteria, which included countries where most of the HEIs can also base their decision on secondary school exit results: results in the "secondary school exit exam";
- HEIs cannot select with additional criteria (in normal circumstances), which included countries where most of the HEIs cannot organise any further assessment of students and the decision regarding students is taken based on:

  - national regulations with regard to the related discipline which pupils have achieved when graduating from high school and a random allocation mechanism;
  - national regulations regarding school exit results: results in the "school exit exam" or the grades for some disciplines in high schools;
  - a national entrance exam that provides further assessment.

The two-dimensional matrix has led to identifying four types of admission systems: Type 1—Selection by schools, Type 2—Selection by HEIs, Type 3—Least selection and Type 4—Double selection. These types were then reviewed for their impacts on equity, efficiency and effectiveness of higher education admission. This paper focuses mainly on the equity dimension in the analysis of admission systems (Table 1).

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[4]Exceptions may exist for medicine, military, arts and EU-regulated programmes.

Conceptual Background

There are three main mechanisms for selection that take place within the education system: limiting the share of pupils achieving the qualification necessary to enter higher education, selecting after secondary schooling at the point of transition, and selecting during the study process. Whilst the first process is part of how the school system is organised, the following two are about how prior academic qualification, student choice and HEI recruitment interact with one another.

The Pipeline Through a School System

In all school systems over the course of a pupil's learning career, the secondary school system assigns grades to students, which can be used to examine their relative academic capabilities in various fields. The pathway into which a pupil is placed during their time in a secondary system can determine to a greater or lesser extent their future options. In some countries, a major "sifting" occurs at the end of primary or lower secondary when students are streamed into different pathways based mostly on perceived academic ability. The difference between countries concerning streaming is in the timing and the consequences of selection procedures. In some school systems, the pathway into which a pupil is placed during lower secondary schooling can determine whether he/she is likely to obtain the qualification necessary to enter higher education, whilst in others all routes lead to the likely attainment of the entry qualification but the part of the higher education system they are likely to enter is different. The final school exit examination, present in a multitude of educational systems, will also play a key role in the students' future educational path.

Figure 1 provides an overview of this pipeline for Germany: pupils are streamed into one of three main tracks in upper secondary schooling, and only two of these provide direct access to higher education – the Gymnasium is the academic route, and around one third of all pupils take this route; the Realschule used to be the higher vocational route, but this is being expanded to other streams and can be a direct route into higher education too, this accounts for 22% in the Realschule and a further 25% in a mixed stream system; those in the so-called Hauptschule, around 12%, do not usually progress into upper secondary schooling. A particular development in Germany has been the increasing share of pupils in mixed stream schools and decline of the Hauptschule, generally giving more pupils the chance to enter higher education.
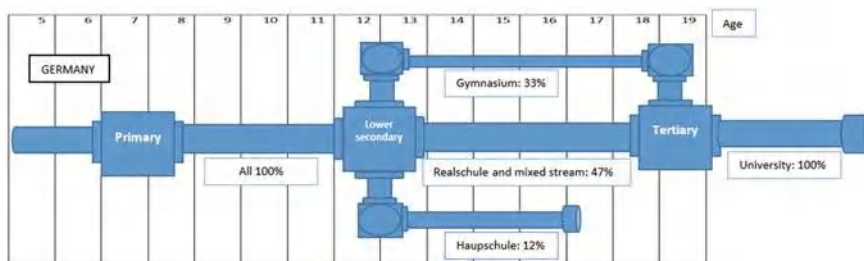
Fig. 1 Overview of the pipeline to higher education in Germany. *Source* Orr et al. (2017a). *Note* The missing 8% of pupils are those in other school forms, especially those supporting pupils with learning difficulties

The Role of HEIs

With the increasing autonomy and institutional diversity of higher education in Europe, a large number of higher education systems have given their HEIs more freedom to decide which type of applicants they enrol and how many (Eastermann et al. 2011; Fumasoli and Huisman 2013). HEIs contribute to student selection based on the level of existing autonomy, which sometimes allows them to apply additional criteria in order to select and enrol those deemed more academically fit for the study programmes provided. Institutional mission, legal constraints, financial incentives awarded, innovative selection procedures or specific policies targeting different groups of students are all drivers that impact HEIs' selection.

Students as Agents in the Admission System

Students are actors in the HE admission process. HE admission is not something that just happens to students, they shape it themselves with their choices—albeit choices that are constrained by the behaviour of the other actors in the system. The process through which students select a particular HEI or study programme is possibly the most complex one amongst the three. Apart from the information and guidance received throughout various educational stages and the academic results obtained, students rely heavily on the proximity network (friends and family) when making a study choice. The focus group work showed that the pressure stemming from the multitude of choices and the "cost" of wrongful selection weighs greatly on students when making a final decision on their study programme.

Types of Admission Systems Across Europe and Their Link to Equity

For the purpose of the rest of this article, the authors have concentrated on the equity side of the analysis where an equitable admission system is considered to be one focusing largely on students' potential to succeed irrespective of their social background.

One of the most important policy challenges in European higher education over the past decades has been the expansion of opportunities in higher education. While **equity** features high on the European and international educational agenda (European Commission 2010; United Nations 2016), significant efforts are still required to narrow the gaps and allow for better access to (higher) education for under-represented groups. An OECD review of equity in tertiary education famously stated that "merit is never pure" (OECD 2008). Initiatives designed to make all forms of higher education more accessible to diverse populations should evaluate prospective students' *potential* rather than simply their past scholastic achievements in the school system, but this is rare.

The article now takes a closer look at each type of admission system and attempts to describe how it works in terms of equity. Proxy quantitative indicators for success used in the following quantitative analysis were participation by social background (attainment by parental social background), participation by gender and participation by age (for mature students). It should be noted that the typology based on the two dimensions in Table 1 represents only a snapshot of current policies and practices. Taking into account the limitations of the simple statistical analysis on the typology, the authors have tried to partly overcome this through the in-depth analysis of the case studies. Despite this limitation, this basic model can be used by policy-makers in European countries to evaluate different policies, thus enabling any country to consider some of the consequences of shifting from one category to another.

Type 1—Selection by Schools

The countries in this category have educational systems where students are being placed in various streams, sometimes as early as primary education, and at least one of these streams awards qualifications that do not allow access into higher education. Moreover, most HEIs do not have the autonomy to select students using additional criteria.

These systems also have the lowest relative participation rates by students from low social backgrounds.[5] One might therefore say that, while they are effective

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[5]The study used attainment by educational parental background as a proxy measure of socio-economic background while recognising the limitations of this approach.

systems, as countries with this type of system have low rates of unemployment among recent graduates, they are *only effective for those who have social advantages,* to begin with.

The statistical data on the odds ratio of young adults (25–34) with highly educated parents (i.e. tertiary educational attainment) completing tertiary education over young adults (25–34) with medium educated parents (i.e. upper-secondary—ISCED 3 or post-secondary non-tertiary education—ISCED 4) show that countries with Type 1 admission systems perform the poorest in terms of equity, as children of medium-educated parents have much lower chances of attaining higher education than children of highly-educated parents (Fig. 2).

Between the two factors of influence, streaming has a slightly larger impact on selection than HEIs autonomy, which means that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds have more chances of being put in streams that do not lead to higher education. Furthermore, when looking at the existence of career guidance services, data collected from the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report questionnaire (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015) show that in countries with no career guidance services targeting underrepresented groups, children of medium educated parents have much lower chances to attain tertiary education than children of highly educated parents.

Looking at the qualitative data from the case studies where these trends can be analysed in depth, one can see that a*t the school level*, **streaming determines greater social inequalities**, meaning that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend to have less chances of entering higher education. There are
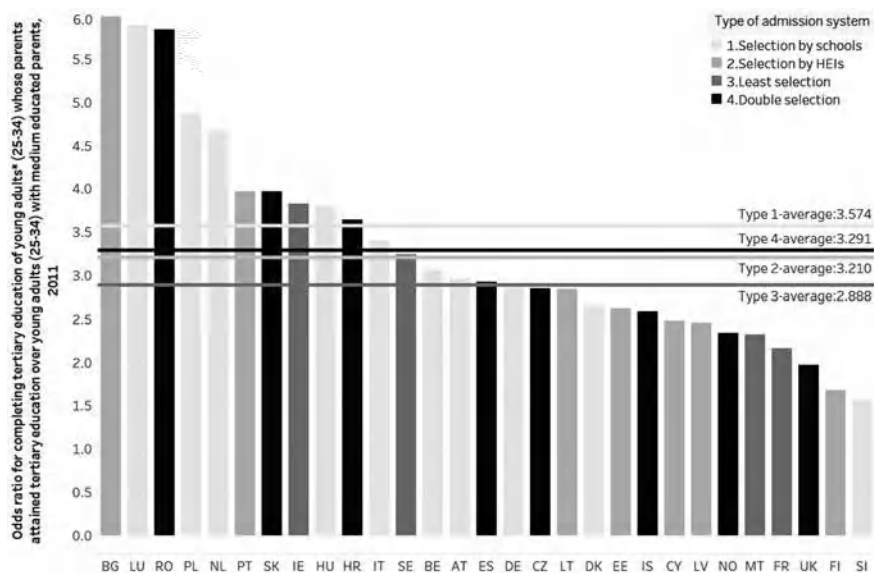

Fig. 2 Attainment by educational parental background, 2011. *Source* Orr et al. (2017a)

different stages in the educational process when school pupils are placed on paths with a higher or lower likelihood of leading to higher education entry. In some countries, a division is made between those expected to go on to higher education and those expected to go into vocational training or the labour market (sometimes as early as the age of ten, in the case of Germany), while in others students are not divided until the exit or transition phase in upper secondary schooling. Whether the streaming is based on academic merit or teachers' recommendations, there is also a direct correlation with parents' socio-economic background. Students put into vocational streams have lower chances of re-entering the path to higher education, although in theory transition between academic and vocational tracks is possible (as is the case for the Netherlands). However, if this transition occurs, it usually takes place from academic to vocational, not the other way around.

Merit is often solely defined as students' ability to perform in secondary school examinations. Evaluations throughout secondary education focus exclusively on academic performance, without taking into account students' additional skills or interests or even their socio-economic background. While this may be perceived as an objective, system level method of assessment by schools, students often consider that too much emphasis on standard examination does not allow for their full potential to be discovered.

In many educational systems, especially where HEIs do not benefit from autonomy at admission level, the main criteria used for selecting students is the secondary school exit examination. Thus, **the exit examination may not be fit for purpose**, as it serves two sometimes contradictory roles: measuring the secondary education students' performance level and placing students into specialised higher education study programmes. As highlighted by policy-makers, HEIs representatives and students themselves through interviews and focus groups, the principal role of the exit examination should be to assess the students' performance at the end of secondary education. Given the importance awarded to this exam, teachers are often shifting focus from providing students with a meaningful learning experience to a better preparation for successfully passing the final test. Furthermore, as many times the examination method is not indicative of future academic success or is not in line with HEIs study programmes.

Type 2—Selection by HEIs

The countries that fall under Type 2 are characterised by the lack of secondary school streams that hinder the students' right to access higher education. The selection can be, nevertheless, influenced by HEIs ability to organise a further selection of students.

In terms of equity, these higher education systems are not as restrictive as Type 1 systems. However, since HEIs are allowed to apply additional criteria when enrolling students, they will seek efficient ways to do so, which means they will
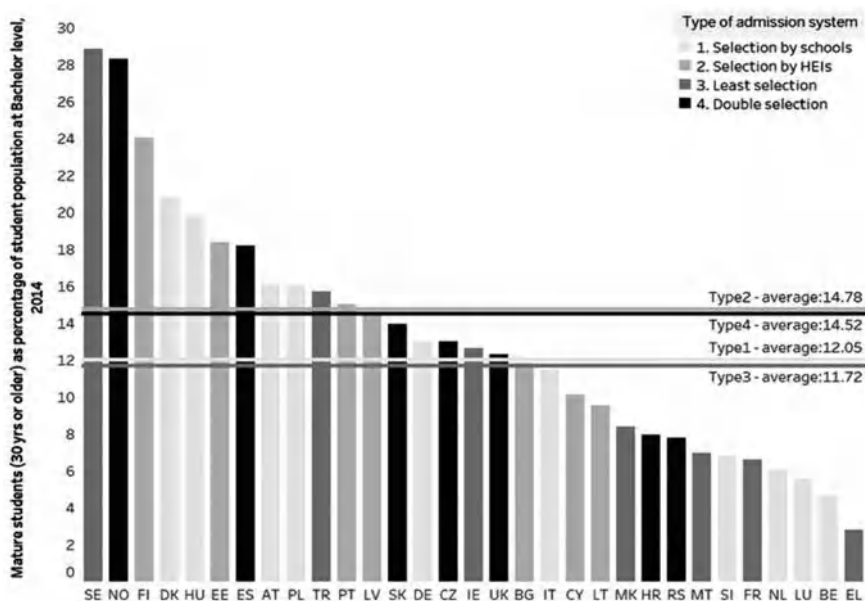
Fig. 3 Mature students (30 years or older) as percentage of student population at Bachelor level by admission type, 2014. *Source* Orr et al. (2017a)

most likely focus on scholastic achievement as the main criterion, thus indirectly limiting the chances for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

But even in this case, as the secondary school exit examination does not solely perform the role of entry criteria, higher education institutions are able to admit more mature students.[6] The figure below shows the degree to which older students are welcome within the system. This is done by measuring the percentage of total Bachelors enrolled by country and cross-tabulating with the level of autonomy the HEIs possess in organising admissions. A high value indicates a higher percentage of mature students in the student body. As the difference between type 4 (double selection)/type 2 (selection by HEIs) and type 1 (selection by schools)/type 3 (least selection) is the level of autonomy HEIs have in selecting with additional criteria, it appears that this is an important factor in terms of access of older students (Fig. 3).

Looking at the qualitative data regarding the impact of HEIs autonomy on equity, the case studies showed that **social inclusion does not score high amongst institutions' priorities**. With the typology developed, where HEIs autonomy plays a significant role in the admission process, this translates into perpetuating inequality. Where HEIs can further select their students, they will aim for a

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[6]This increased participation of mature students does not necessarily translate also into high completion rates for mature students.

meritocratic approach, looking mostly at scholastic results rather than looking beyond, and selecting more students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Irrespective of existing autonomy at admission level, **HEIs benefit from instruments that allow them to manage student pathways**—before, during and after admission. Before admission, HEIs can actively promote their study programmes in schools as part of information and counselling. They can additionally target specific groups of students—by promoting positive discrimination for underrepresented students (i.e. specific study places for Roma students in Romania or places specifically for students attending high schools in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods for one HEI in France). At entry level, individual initiatives are implemented, but the Netherlands has introduced the "Study Choice Check", an innovative approach through which students can test if they are a good fit with the desired study programme either by direct interviews, online testing or spending a day at the institution and performing academic student activities. This results in a recommendation from the HEI on the prospective match between the student and the study programme; while not mandatory, this can provide better insights for prospective students. After admission, some HEIs implement tools to make the transition phase easier for students—such as mentoring and buddy systems or preparatory courses.

HEIs are expected to produce graduates who are well prepared for the labour market, however, evidence from the existing data and case studies show that there is a **loose link between the distribution of study places and labour market**. While HEIs could adjust their allocation of study places either by analyses of trends across the labour market or changing student demands, few institutions tend to do so. This is the result of a variety of factors: in some countries, reallocation of study places is negotiated at both national and regional level (e.g. Spain), thus taking a long time; in other countries, there are no financial incentives for institutions to do so (e.g. Romania, France, Germany), while in specific instances, this is not the perceived role for higher education (e.g. Germany). However, private HEIs are at an advantage here, their flexibility in the decision-making process enabling them to react faster to labour market changes and design study programmes accordingly.

While HEIs advocate for more autonomy, this also comes with additional challenges. Across Europe, HEIs autonomy varies between countries—in Spain (for public institutions), Germany or Norway this is limited, and HEIs act under a clear framework set at national level. On the other hand, HEIs in Romania, Lithuania or Ireland benefit from extensive autonomy which allows them to make choices in the interest of institutional benefit. In terms of selection of students, representatives of various HEIs have expressed in favour of more autonomy, equally aware of the financial and human increased costs for such an approach or the overall admission timeline which sets additional constraints.

Type 3—Least Selection

The countries in this cluster are characterized by the absence of streaming at secondary school level (with all pathways providing access into various parts of the higher education system), and no further selection at the level of HEIs. In such systems, if neither the school systems limit nor the HEIs select students, then students have the widest choice in terms of academic pathways.

As it might be expected, since Type 3 systems put up the fewest academic barriers to access, they are also the one with the most equitable outcome as shown in Fig. 2—Attainment by educational parental background where the authors look at the odds ratio of young adults (25–34) with highly educated parents completing tertiary education over young adults (25–34) with medium educated parents. This is also the system where information, advice and guidance play the most important role in supporting students to make the best-informed choices in selecting their desired study programme.

However, a more inclusive system is not also a more efficient system, as the data analysis shows. While a more diverse student body gains access to higher education, HEIs inability to further select means that they will not be able to get students that best fit with the study programmes provided. This is reflected in the completion rates (ISCED 5A) indicator, which is the lowest for Type 3 systems (Fig. 4).

From *young peoples' perspective*, the in-depth case study analysis showed that **students tend to make study-related decisions under pressure**. There are two
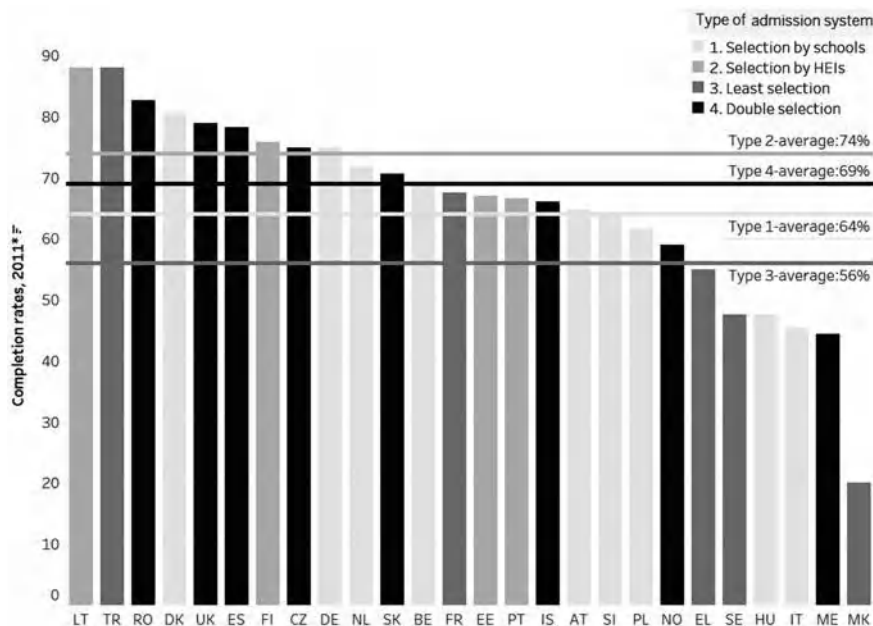

Fig. 4 Completion rates by type of admission system, 2011*. *Source* Orr et al. (2017a)

major events in terms of academic life that occur almost simultaneously at the end of upper secondary education: selecting the study programme in which to enrol and preparing for the final examination. While, in terms of selection, the trend in Europe is to select a study programme first and then look at HEIs that provide it, prospective students have a multitude of options available. Inadequate choices can additionally be costly since any mistake in the selection of courses will translate into a delayed entrance on the labour market. This makes the information, advice and guidance instruments extremely important because if these are not sufficient or properly provided, it puts an enormous pressure on the young people. As focus groups revealed, stress is also emphasised by teachers who tend to further highlight the importance of their choices. At the same moment, students also prepare for the final examination at the end of secondary education, which in many systems is the main criterion for higher education access. As such, many feel the burden of major life decisions in a very short period of time.

With students relying heavily on their proximity network in making decisions, providing adequate information and guidance becomes of utmost importance for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, especially in countries with Type 3 admission systems, where extra weight is put on students.

Type 4—Double Selection

Countries with Type 4 admission system are characterised by both streaming into secondary education and HEIs ability to further select students using additional criteria.

One would expect these systems to perform poorly when it comes to equity. Surprisingly, when looking at Eurostat data on attainment by educational attainment data—Fig. 2, Type 4 systems come second, after Type 3 systems. Differences emerge when taking a closer look at the participation of mature and female students. HEIs autonomy in further selection is reflected, as for Type 2, in the enrolment rates of mature students, which are relatively high. Nevertheless, this high enrolment rate for mature students does not necessarily translate into high completion rates for them.

A distinct feature is the higher participation of female students, resulting from this double selection. Looking at the data, in countries with type 4 admission system, more female students tend to go into higher education. Female students also perform slightly better in terms of completion rates. As female students receive better academic results in secondary schools, this result is intuitive: they have better academic results and so are more likely to be selected in a competitive system. On the other hand, male students are more likely to enter in vocational routes, where these are available.

This conclusion is highlighted in Fig. 5, which looks at the degree to which female students are welcome within the system. This is done by measuring the difference between the percentage of females in upper-secondary schools and
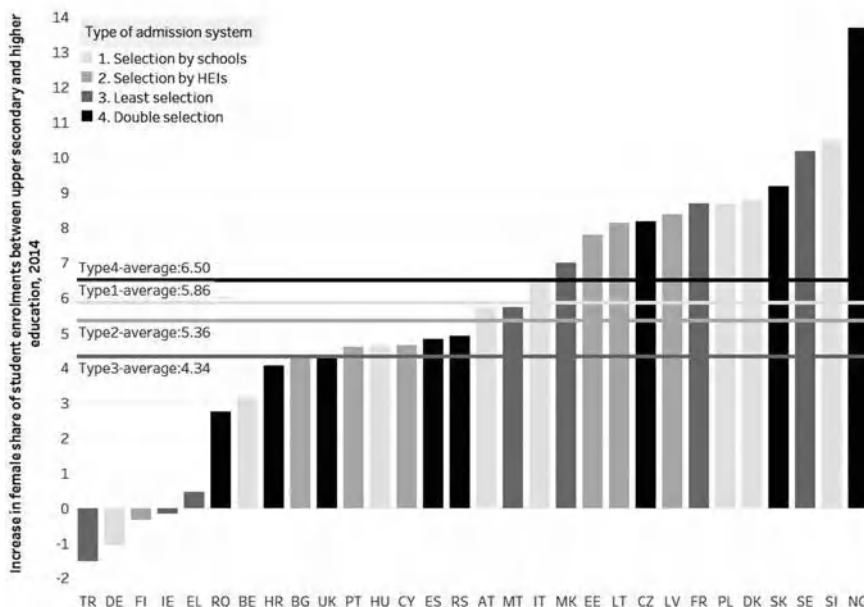
Fig. 5 Increase in the female share of student enrolments between upper-secondary level and higher education by admission type, 2014. *Source* Orr et al. (2017a)

the percentage of females in higher education (ISCED 6). A higher value means that the proportion of women in higher education has increased compared with secondary education.

Further related to the issue of equity, the analysis shows that **second chance routes, which could be implemented by HEIs to attract students not choosing the "traditional route", are not well-developed as the availability of these routes and the number of students using these routes are still limited**.

As a consequence, for the few countries that clearly provide such opportunities (e.g. Spain, Norway), the student population targeted is marginal. Additional efforts have been made, either by allowing access from vocational routes into higher education (e.g. Germany, Norway) or allocating places for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. places for Roma students in Romania). Thus, numerous potential students are not being considered for higher education.

From Conclusions to Recommendations

With relevant and comparative information, policy-makers can re-evaluate and perhaps realign their admission system in line with national or European equity strategies. This paper had the objective of using the typologies developed during the SASH study to draw comparative findings, notwithstanding the fact that Europe has

a very diverse higher education landscape. Therefore, any policy recommendation needs to be contextualised.

Based on the results of the analysis and case study insights, eight general recommendations can be made:

- Systems where streaming occurs at an early age (especially in Type 1—selection by schools) appear to embed social inequality into higher education entry and, as students get older, make further policy interventions related to equity harder to deliver. So, with a focus on the policy framework, **policy-makers could reshape the selection processes at secondary education level** by reducing the consequences of allocating pupils to different upper secondary streams and/or re-designing the exit examinations in such a way that more students gain the necessary qualification to access higher education study programmes or specific HEIs.
- To better match students with the educational offer, **HEIs should be allowed to experiment with ways of identifying student potential** (especially in systems where HEIs want more autonomy—Type 1 and Type 3 admission systems). While accepting the need for balance, HEIs should be given greater autonomy to select their students, regulated by a legal framework that enhances rather than constrains equitable admissions. There are various ways to achieve more inclusive entry, either by expanding the existing access routes to higher education or by creating new ones in accordance with specific strategies for inclusion.
- Evidence suggests that HEIs already have institutional tools to deploy resources more proactively in order to help such students enter and succeed; yet in most instances, HEIs are not stepping up because they do not see this as their responsibility. As the paper from Vlk & Stiburek in this publication states: many HEIs are following the strategy: "striving for excellence, acknowledging the social dimension". **Incentives should be provided for HEIs to become more inclusive** (especially in Type 2—selection by HEIs), in order to select, support and help graduate more students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, thus no longer perpetuating inequality. An example could be the English case with the universal system of equity performance agreements which, despite the very high cost of student tuition, has increased higher education participation amongst students from lower socio-economic groups.
- In order to relieve the pressure experienced by students when making study choices, **HEIs could use Bologna tools to facilitate transition throughout higher education** by extensive use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to facilitate movement between different study programmes and institutions. Reducing the consequences of "mistakes" would take much of the pressure off the experience for students. Making credits easier to transfer from one programme to another could achieve this.
- **HEIs should improve their communication of the choices provided to students** (especially in Type 3—least selection), which would give prospective students more accessible and relevant information about their future academic

paths. Providing students with study programmes that better fit their skills and interests is desirable, however, there should be a balance between better study opportunities and an overwhelming number of choices.

- **Schools and HEIs** should **improve the information, advice and guidance** available. While counselling exists across Europe in various forms, the tendency is to focus on providing timely and accurate information. Indeed, better guiding services would enable students to select the best study programmes for them, alleviating misinformed competition is some cases (i.e. because a share of students is applying for study programmes based on misinformation). This, however, implies deep knowledge of both the higher education system and the individual students. The situation is further complicated by the human resources available and the way counselling is provided, which varies significantly (i.e. one counsellor per 800 students in Romania to an extensive counselling system in France). With students relying heavily on their proximity network in making decisions, providing adequate information and guidance becomes of utmost importance for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, especially in countries with Type 3 admission systems where the focus is particularly on student choice.

- **Schools can reduce pressure on students during their final year of secondary school** (especially in Type 3—least selection) by supporting them to make choices about higher education earlier, together with providing adequate information, advice and guidance. The tension between the needs of the schooling system and those of higher education is a difficult challenge to resolve in the final year of secondary school. That is why it is important to ensure that students think about higher education choice much earlier than in the final year of secondary schooling, which should be the final stage of a much lengthier process. This is also very important for Type 4—double selection, as the streaming in secondary school and the HEIs additional selection process can severely limit the options a student has.

- This all leads to **one** final recommendation, which is perhaps the most important one: for **an increased collaboration between schooling and higher education as a** way of overcoming the tensions between the needs and purpose of the schooling system and those of higher education. Working together, they would help construct better, fairer and more inclusive education systems.

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Study Success at the Clash Point of Excellence and Social Dimension?

Aleš Vlk and Šimon Stiburek

Introduction

Traditional higher education (HE) systems and higher education institutions (HEIs) in Europe are under pressure due to increasing demand of various stakeholders and the society as a whole, global developments, political and economic doctrines as well as many initiatives at the EU level (see for example Clark 1997; Enders et al. 2011; Mazzarol and Soutar 2001; Neave 1994; van der Wende 2003; van Vught 2011).

First, we can see a major concern for efficiency of public expenditures and efficient institutional behavior. Second, institutions, as well as individual academics, are stimulated to achieve higher quality or excellence. Third, higher education institutions are expected to accommodate a more diversified student body, combat dropout and offer more relevant study programs as a part of their social mission.

In our contribution, we look at study success as a special element of the social dimension of higher education. We argue that the issue of study success, completion and dropout can serve as an interesting example of how various internal and external pressures—including national and institutional policies—can affect the openness of the HE system. We are particularly interested in how the emphasis on excellence in teaching and research influences the actions taken towards study success on both the national and the institutional level. The most important question is whether study success and excellence can be stimulated effectively at the same

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time and how. Could universities that are devoted to excellence be also inclusive? Finally—can we find measures, which can contribute to achieving both goals at the same time?

The first part of this paper discusses various demands on higher education as described in selected theoretical literature. Then, special attention is paid to the social function of higher education followed by an analysis of the topic of excellence. Afterwards, we shortly summarize the state-of-play of the dropout/study success agenda in the European context. The article describes the four Visegrad countries (V4)—Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia—and their approach towards dropout in order to provide for international comparison in the central European context. An in-depth case study is devoted to the Czech higher education system. In the concluding part, we provide preliminary answers to our initial questions.

New Demands on Higher Education

Higher education institutions are organisations with a longstanding tradition of searching for truth and maintaining knowledge (Maassen 1997). Contemporary society expects the HEIs to fulfil their core mission in teaching, research and a "third mission". Many authors argue that in the last few decades, traditional higher education systems, as well as individual higher education institutions, have been facing increasing demands from society in general. Two decades ago, Clark (1997) identified three major demands on higher education which seem to be still valid today:

1. a demand for greater access to higher education;
2. more qualifications and positions on the labour market require a university degree;
3. governments, as well as other stakeholders, expect a more efficient behaviour of traditional higher education providers.

In the European context, we should note that the European Commission (EC) has been paying increasing attention to higher education as a tool to facilitate European integration (Neave 1995). The Bologna declaration signed in 1999 launching a complex Bologna process, followed by the Lisbon Strategy (2000) drafted by the European Union can be seen as major milestones in the European higher education landscape.

Due to various demands, global trends, national, EU or international policies and other external as well as internal factors, a modern European higher education institution is facing at least the following challenges:

- to absorb an increasing number of students while the student body becomes more and more heterogeneous in terms of background, abilities and expectations;
- to maintain the social function of HE in society;

- to keep the quality of teaching;
- to attract more fee-paying international students in order to compensate for the decline of domestic student body;
- to meet the rapidly changing requirements of employees;
- to achieve excellence in research;
- to increase knowledge transfer and commercialisation of research outputs;
- to demonstrate efficiency.
  (Švec et al. 2015)

Social Function of Higher Education

International organisations, scholars and policy-makers have underlined the role of higher education in economic as well as social development (for example World Bank 2002; European Commission 2003; Cremonini et al. 2014). Bryson et al. (2014) note that citizens would like to have a highly performing HE system, which is effective in achieving the desired outcomes, operating justly and fairly and generating societal benefits.

In the European context, a social dimension has been formulated and discussed mainly by the European Commission through communications and analytic materials and through the Bologna process. A very short chronological summary of selected policy documents and statements concerning social dimension of higher education is described in the following paragraphs.

Although a social dimension is not referred to in the 1999 Bologna declaration, it has become an integral part of the Bologna process since 2001. In the Prague Communiqué, the social dimension of higher education is explicitly mentioned as an area for further exploration. The 2007 London Communiqué finally defines the objective of the social dimension of higher education:

> Higher education should play a strong role in fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities and raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences in society. Policy should therefore aim to maximize the potential of individuals in terms of their personal development and their contribution to a sustainable and democratic knowledge-based society. (p. 5).

The document *Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: The Impact of the Bologna process* (Eurydice 2010) describes the impact of the Bologna process on various dimensions of HE systems. Social dimension is the most challenging aspect of the Bologna process as its understanding differs in various countries. Only very few countries set up specific targets to increase the participation of under-represented groups, and only a half of the countries systematically monitors the participation. The most common measures are a targeted financial support and alternative access routes/admission procedures.

The European Commission summarises the achievements concerning access and retention (dropout) in the 2014 document *Modernisation of Higher Education in*

Europe. Only nine countries define attainment targets for specified groups monitoring only a few important characteristics on their national level. Furthermore, quality assurance agencies rarely examine admission systems from the perspective of widening the access. The document underlines the societal responsibility of institutions and the system as a whole for minimizing the psychological, financial and emotional impact of individuals who do not finish their studies. Further steps should be taken in order to clarify basic definitions, collect proper data, introduce various measures on different levels (institutional as well as national) and monitor their impact.

The 2015 Yerevan Communiqué underlines the commitment to make higher education more socially inclusive by implementing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) social dimension strategy.

A recent communication "*A renewed EU agenda for higher education*" of the European Commission (2017) discusses two additional aspects of the social dimension of higher education institutions: social contribution to the wider communities where they are located and providing civic values. The higher education systems should create better conditions for inclusion. Study success and higher completion rates are perceived as improved efficiency and returns on public investments.

To summarize this, we can see that, at least for the last fifteen years, the social dimension of higher education in the European context has gained considerable attention. Its meaning has been gradually demarcated through the Bologna process as well as by the EC policy papers.

However, while discussing the social function of higher education, the European Commission as well as other important societal actors have been at the same time emphasizing excellence in both teaching and science.

How to Achieve Excellence

Global competition in both research and teaching has caused the pursuit of excellence in higher education and science (Marginson 2004; Rust and Kim 2012). In the European context, the political concept of excellence has been closely connected with the "Europe of Knowledge" discourse (Pinheiro 2015). In higher education, excellence is usually connected with reputation and rankings, both based in particular on research performance in global comparison. University league tables and international rankings have played an increasing role in the pan-European context (Hazelkorn 2011).

The concept of excellence is exclusive and competitive by its own nature translating into policy measures focusing on the concentration of scarce resources, i.e. people and funding (Antonowicz et al. 2017). Academic excellence is believed to be a scarce good present only in a limited number of institutions with specific features related to internationalisation and size (Maassen and Stensaker 2011).

THE World University Ranking, QS World University Ranking, the Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai Ranking) or the CWTS Leiden Ranking are eagerly monitored by university leaders and managers, the students and the press. The main criteria of these rankings are the academic reputation, research performance, internationalisation, cooperation with business or regional involvement. As Nyssen mentions in his paper in this sub-section, U-Multirank is the only ranking taking into account indicators concerned with the social dimension such as gender equity and community service learning.

The European Commission (2010) note that European higher education institutions should attract more top global talent and perform better in the existing international rankings as only relatively few of them have reached the leading positions so far. Some European countries that felt unrepresented in international rankings have implemented reforms targeted at supporting top universities (France), world-class science (Germany) or world-class university (Finland) (Cremonini et al. 2014).

Study Success

As mentioned earlier, study success is an integral part of the policies promoting the social dimension of higher education. Nevertheless, the topic of study success and dropout was discussed already in the 17th century and reached considerable attention in particular in the United States (see for example Berger and Loyd 2005). The most quoted modern theoretical conceptualisations have developed since the 1970s, and the one of Tinto (1993) has become probably the most influential one. Tinto builds his theory on the concepts of social and academic integration of students, stressing both the importance of individual as well as institutional characteristics for study success. Detailed reviews of theoretical as well as empirical work in the field have been done for example by Larsen et al. (2013), Kuh et al. (2006) or RANLHE project (2011).

Over the time, a broad variety of terms has been used in the scholarly literature to address study success (completion, graduation, retention, persistence, survival, attainment, re-enrolment or time-to-degree) and dropout (stop-out, discontinuation, attrition, wastage, turn-over, dismissal, withdrawal or student departure). In our contribution, we use the terms "success" and "dropout", and in specific cases the terms "completion" or "graduation".

As reviewed by the HEDOCE project[1] (Vossensteyn et al. 2015), policies addressing student success and dropout are currently being developed in most European countries. The topic is high on the agenda in almost half of the countries.

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[1]The main task of the research assignment on dropout and completion in higher education was to conduct a comparative overview of the main policies and measures in 36 countries, including eight in-depth case studies. The European Commission awarded this research to a consortium led by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente, the Netherlands and the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation (NIFU), Norway in 2014.

National governments take actions to improve chances for students to succeed, employing a broad range of measures. These cover financial measures (incentives for both institutions and students, ranging from funding formulas and project funding to scholarships and tuition fees), information and support (mentor, counselling, consultancy, rankings and other measures) and organisational changes (such as increased flexibility of study pathways, curriculum changes, revision of admission criteria or quality assurance procedures). In the following text, we take a quick look at how the issue of study success has been approached in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

Visegrad Countries and Study Success

The main source for this comparative part of the paper is the HEDOCE study (see above) and country reports. The following country reports have been analysed by the authors:

- **Czech Republic**, written by Aleš Vlk (with the support of Václav Švec and Šimon Stiburek) and summarised by Martin Unger (Vossensteyn et al. 2015, Annex 2, 31–35),
- **Hungary**, written by Jozsef Temesi and summarised by Renze Kolster (ibid., Annex 2, 76–79),
- **Poland**, written by Marek Kwiek and summarised by Sabine Wollscheid and Elisabeth Hovdhaugen (ibid., Annex 2, 119–121),
- **Slovakia**, written by Alexandra Bitusikova and summarised by Sabine Wollscheid and Elisabeth Hovdhaugen (ibid., Annex 2, 129–130).

Unfortunately, no comparable data are available to compare the dropout rates across the Visegrad countries. The most recent comparison was provided by OECD in its 2013s Education at a Glance (Table A4.2), where indicators used by the national stakeholders were collected. According to the review, 75% of newly enrolled students who started their first study in a full-time ISCED 5A program in the Czech Republic in 2001 graduated in any study program in 2011 or before. At the same time, based on a cross-section comparison, 72% of Slovak students who enrolled between 2006 and 2009, depending on the standard duration of their study program, were estimated to graduate successfully. The same is true for 64% of the same cohort in Poland and 66% of those who enrolled in 2006/07 or 2009/10 in Hungary (OECD 2013). As we see, the Czech Republic figures are based on a true cohort analysis while the others are build on a cross-section comparison. As additional differences in national methodologies are likely to occur, the figures should be interpreted with extreme caution.[2]

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[2]For more on the differences between individual calculation approaches and other issues see e.g. OECD (2013) or Vossensteyn et al. (2015).

According to the HEDOCE study, a range of measures to fight student dropout and promote success have been implemented by the governments in the V4 countries. The most prevailing one is the introduction of financial incentives for students to complete their studies in time. All four countries have introduced this measure in a similar way—charging fees to students who exceed a set time limit for completion. Although the impact of these measures has not been rigorously evaluated, it can be expected to motivate students to proceed with their studies swiftly. However, it seems that fees charged in the final phase of studies do not prevent students from dropping out in earlier years, or in the moment they are required to pay the fee.

Poland and Hungary have taken actions to provide students with more relevant information, in particular in relation to career prospects and employability. These initiatives are expected to reduce student-program mismatch, stimulate student motivation and attract the attention of applicants to the fields most relevant for the economy and society. Graduate tracking and graduate surveys are conducted in order to collect necessary information in this respect. In line with that, both countries have introduced financial incentives for students directing them to priority fields, in particular, engineering and other STEM areas. The Czech Republic is currently in the process of preparation of a comprehensive information portal with a similar goal. In Slovakia, tuition fees have been introduced for part-time study programs in order to promote full-time study, where a higher quality of learning is expected.

In the Czech Republic, social scholarships for students with special needs were introduced to improve their chances of completing their studies. Although only a small number of students qualifies for the grant, and the overall amount of support is not large, those who receive financial support are more successful than average. In addition, special funds are available to higher education institutions for modernisation and innovation projects targeted at improving the quality of teaching and services. These funds are not specifically targeted on study success, however, various projects related to this agenda have been supported as well.

Hungary seems to be the most active country in the region in adopting measures to prevent dropout and shorten the time students take to graduate. Besides the measures mentioned above, other steps have also been taken in the Hungarian higher education to stimulate study success—in particular the introduction of university centres providing mentoring and counselling to students in need. In addition, a legal framework was adopted in order to improve recognition of prior learning to motivate students transferring from one higher education institution to another or bringing competence acquired outside the university. Moreover, success and dropout statistics are required in HEI self-evaluation reports and are reflected by the Accreditation Committee during external quality assurance process.

It is worth noticing that the V4 countries also share, to a great extent, the way they conceptualise the study success and dropout. In all four countries, the number of students entering the system increased rapidly after 1990—it resulted in an augmented heterogeneity of student body. Broadening the access to higher education, in general, is often seen as the main reason for the dropout increase by the

decision-makers in the V4 countries. Most of them view dropout as a positive phenomenon helping keep the "quality" of education high.

It seems that the most frequently articulated motivation for the V4 countries to tackle student dropout is the economic reasoning: low success rates are considered to be inefficient, consuming the scarce resources without leading to the final product —graduates needed on the labour market. This is in line with the adoption of measures to stimulate early completion (see above). The general ideas of social dimension and fair access to education do not appear to be the main drivers promoting this policy.

In none of the V4 countries, the issue of study success and dropout dominates the higher education policy agenda. It is quality and excellence, which are often quoted as the main priorities. The only exception might be Hungary, where substantial attention has been dedicated to stimulating completion, in particular in order to increase the number of graduates in priority areas such as engineering.

In the following part, we take a deeper look at the Czech case study in order to illustrate the development of study success policies in the context of the promotion of social dimension and excellence.

Case Study of the Czech Republic

First of all, we look at how the issue of dropout in higher education is described in strategic documents of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS).

Attention was paid to this issue as early as in 2000 (MEYS 2000), yet only limited measures were suggested, stating vaguely that the flexibility of study pathways should increase. In the following years, the study success policy did not receive any considerable attention, rather the opposite. The 2005 Strategic Plan (MEYS 2005) highlighted the context of economic efficiency, and in the subsequent period,[3] the promotion of social dimension in HE remained underemphasised.

The topic of study success and dropout re-emerged in the policy documents in 2014 in the ministerial Framework for HE Development (MEYS 2014). The topic appeared on the agenda as a result of external pressure from the European Commission. The EC asked for a strategic framework covering a list of agendas, including dropout as part of the social agenda, to be defined before approval of operational programs funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014–2020.

The Strategic Plan 2016–2020 (MEYS 2015), which is the major strategic HE document currently in effect, builds on the 2014 framework and adds more specific measures and goals. The policy of student success and dropout seems to be finally an established part of the HE policy agenda. However, only limited measures have

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[3]Central-right coalitions were in power in the Czech government bringing tuition fees and diversification of higher education high on the agenda (see e.g. MEYS 2009).

been introduced so far, and many policy actors (such as the management of HEIs) rather tend to maintain their elitist perspective, considering dropout a desired event "weeding out low quality students" (Vlk et al. 2017).

In the meantime, the dropout rates have grown gradually. Since 2005 less than one half of studies started at the undergraduate level[4] have actually led to graduation, although many of the students dropping out returned to the system again later. Dropouts are most prevalent in the fields of study such as agriculture, engineering and science, but all the other disciplines are also affected. The success rates are even worse at the postgraduate study level where only about one-third of enrolled students graduate. On the other hand, about three-quarters of students succeed at the master's level.

At this point, it should be stressed out that the ability of the government to steer the HEIs is rather limited. Institutional autonomy and self-governance, inspired by the Humboldtian idea of a university, remain the dominant organisational principle of the HE system in the Czech Republic (File et al. 2006). Thus, the government directly influences neither the internal organisational processes and structures of universities, the content of the study programs, the modes of teaching, the HR decisions, nor institutional actions taken to promote quality and student success. Indirect measures are in place (accreditation criteria, performance-based funding formula and other financial incentives—see below), however, these are usually a result of rather complicated negotiations with HEI representative bodies.

Financial incentives are probably the most influential instrument applied by the Ministry of Education to affect the behaviour of the HEIs. Among them, the funding formula reflecting student numbers, internationalisation, graduate employment as well as research performance (with the specific criteria varying every year) is the most important one, accompanied by project funding for strategic projects and extensive investments from the European funds.

Mostly indirect measures are in place in case of study success and dropout policy. For the above-mentioned reasons, the policy documents highlight the importance of measures on an institutional level—they recommend HEIs to invest in teaching initiatives, social integration and analysis of the dropout causes and drivers. Such measures are supported by the so-called Institutional Programs allocated by the MEYS to individual institutions for strategic innovation projects and quality assurance. However, study success is only one of many priorities the program is targeting.

Besides financial incentives promoting institutional actions towards study success, measures to improve access to information about study programs and graduation rates have also been implemented. Since 2016 dropout rates have been

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[4]A study is not equivalent to a student. One individual student can be registered at several studies/ study programs, even at the same faculty or university. As a result, the number of studies is always higher than the number of students within the system.

published in annual reports of higher education institutions. In its Strategic Plan, the Ministry also emphasises that more research into the topic should be undertaken (MEYS 2015).

At the same time, multiple steps have been initiated to promote and support excellence in Czech higher education. In particular, research performance of individual institutions has become crucial for public funding. The concept of excellence is connected mainly to publication output and qualification structure (number of associated professors and professors). It should be also mentioned that the existing system of funding research in the Czech Republic is purely quantitative. It is based on a sophisticated mathematic formula transforming the points assigned to various research outputs (journal articles, books, conference contributions, patents, prototypes etc.) into institutional funding of research organisations (see for example Good et al. 2015).

The support for achieving excellence is also present at the programs funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). There are special calls targeted at excellent teams as well as excellent research centres. Other granting agencies (supporting either basic or applied research) also support excellence. In the public discourse, one can find a strong argument that mainly excellent organisations, excellent teams and excellent outputs should be supported, while the mediocre ones should be gradually pushed outside the system.

To summarise, the concept of social dimension has been the driving force behind the development of the study success policy only since 2014. Furthermore, it was introduced to the agenda by an external force—the European Commission. On the other hand, the struggle for quality and excellence has been perhaps the main concept attracting the attention in the Czech higher education. The pursuit of excellence has often been quoted as the main reason why not to take actions to reduce student dropout.

Concluding Remarks

In the concluding part, we come back to our key question—whether study success and excellence can be stimulated effectively at the same time and how.

It seems that the excellence concept, based mainly on the research performance and publication outcomes, has preoccupied the academia in the analysed area of Visegrad countries. To a great extent, it is due to the parameters that are fundamental to table leagues and international rankings. This trend is being further reinforced by the system of institutional funding. Therefore, at least in the Czech Republic, the teaching role has lost its priority. Individual academics, as well as institutions, do not have enough time and resources to devote to teaching as they have to publish, get grants, administer projects and cooperate with business. They must prioritize. Naturally, the social dimension, including the study success and drop out, is not seen as the top issue. On the contrary, it could be even perceived as an extra burden on the journey to excellence. For example, during our interviews

with HE stakeholders within the HEDOCE case study, only one person felt that the dropout rates could be lowered without downgrading the quality of teaching.

The best way to describe the stage of the Czech higher education system (based on the data, we suppose that the same is true also for many other Central and Eastern European countries including the V4) is the following: according to the share of age cohort entering the system, higher education has moved from mass into universal access model (Trow 2006). However, most of the institutions and mainly the academics still mentally stick to the idea of elite higher education, in which only a small number of top motivated and gifted students are educated. For many of them, the main motivation is research and academic career—not teaching and transfer of knowledge to the young generation.

For the above-mentioned reasons, we expect that most of HEIs devote their resources to the excellence "agenda", unless the social issue is directly required and financially stimulated, or the dropout rates reach such a high level that they jeopardise the existence of a department, faculty or university. Therefore, we see higher education institutions using the label "research excellence" rather than "exemplary in social dimension".

In our opinion it is rather difficult, especially in the V4 countries, to find the proper balance between the pursuit of excellence and the social function of higher education. Interestingly enough, the countries with the shared history of the former communist regime seem to be most persistent in keeping the most conservative and elitist approach towards higher education closely connected with the research mission. The social dimension has been adequately internalised neither by the academia nor by the public. This statement is also supported by Mihai Haj, Geanta and Orr as they argue that higher education institutions do not feel that pursuit of inclusion (as a part of the social dimension of HE) is their responsibility.

The seeming "clash" between the social dimension and excellence is only one example of the pressures HE management faces, resulting from a variety of expectations from the higher education system. In many cases, the management feels that the demands and expectations contradict each other. In order to meet the requirements of the social dimension (provide access to quality education to broader masses of students with respect to their diverse needs), HEIs should invest substantial efforts in reducing student dropout. In many cases, this means revisiting the traditional academic curriculum, supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds and reflecting special needs of non-traditional learners and many other steps.

However, we believe that there are several measures on the institutional as well as national level that can support excellence and study success at the same time. We can think, for example, about curricular and teaching initiatives stimulating student engagement, peer-review of teaching methods, publication of QA evaluation results to increase the prestige of proactive, innovative and student-oriented programs, measures reflecting work-study-life balance, information systems supporting matching of interests between students and HE institutions, etc. However, any measure requires adequate resources.

Another question is the level of the HE system diversification. In diversified systems, a small number of institutions are devoted to excellence (mainly related to research), while others reflect mainly the social role as well as the rapidly changing needs of the labour market and the society. This could mean supporting a small number of exclusive "excellent" universities that would maintain the high dropout rates and selective practices (low social dimension) and, at the same time, applying different quality criteria to "the other" (second-tier/regional/applied) institutions preferring the social dimension to research performance and global reputation. Such a model has not been (fully) implemented in the observed countries at the moment, although it is widely discussed.

It is not easy at all to find a proper and general solution. Cremonini et al. (2014) ask whether concentrating public resources at the most excellent universities—rated high by external rating organisations—improves the overall quality of a higher education system as a whole. For example, targeting research performance alone might help a top-tier institution, yet at the expense of the others. The authors also argue that pursuing rankings should be complemented by other policies inducing system improvements.

To conclude—as it seems, it is becoming increasingly difficult to combine policies on the national level with specific measures on the institutional level. The described "clash" between the social dimension of higher education, on the one hand, and the excellence of research, on the other, is just one example. However, we believe that there are ways for the higher education policy to face these challenges through more intensive discussion within our societies what HE is and should be and with the help of exchanging best practices and intensive involvement of relevant stakeholders.

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The Role of Student Counselling for Widening Participation of Underrepresented Groups in Higher Education

Janine Wulz, Marita Gasteiger and Johannes Ruland

Social Dimension as a Crucial Element of the Bologna Process

Higher education was available only to a small proportion of the population for a long time. While in the 1960s higher education participation was around 10% in most European countries, today raising the proportion of graduates between 30 and 34 years to at least 40% is an European target (European Commission 2014) and the importance of higher education for economic revival and social cohesion is underlined in many European documents. Recently we can observe higher education following different, even contrary approaches. We notice an increasing commodification of higher education with a focus on competition of European graduates in worldwide economy rather than its social benefits. At the same time, higher education is more and more acknowledged as a means for fostering social mobility and cohesion, also because of high rates of youth unemployment and widening levels of inequality (Riddell and Weedon 2014).

The social dimension of higher education became an important topic in European higher education policies since the beginning of the 21st century: it was mentioned in different Communiqués following the European Ministerial Conferences, and it is often seen as part of the so-called third mission of universities, considering higher education having a role in society aside teaching and research.

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Social dimension was mentioned in the Prague Communiqué in 2001 for the first time; in 2007 the London Communiqué reaffirms "the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background" (London Communiqué 2007). Later on, one of the goals the participants in the Ministerial Conference in 2015 in Yerevan agreed on was making the higher education system more inclusive and therefore widening participation in higher education: "We will enhance the social dimension of higher education, improve gender balance and widen opportunities for access and completion, including international mobility for students from disadvantaged backgrounds." (Yerevan Communiqué 2015). This aim shows already the most common interpretation of social dimension, which is that "a state of participative equity should be attained in European higher education" (Hauschildt et al. 2015). Following the idea of widening access and developing a more inclusive higher education system, underrepresented groups have been in the focus of policies since.

The importance of the issue of social dimension in higher education was raised by the European Students Union for a long time (Vukasovic 2017). During the economic crisis followed by growing numbers of unemployed youth, other stakeholder organisations, such as the European University Association (EUA) and Education International (EI) promoted stronger advocacy for underrepresented groups in higher education and a more inclusive higher education system. Whereas there is a general consensus within all the mentioned Communiqués about social dimension, the stakeholder organizations' approaches were very different in the beginning. While EUA focused mainly on the equity in mobility programmes, at least until 2003, ESU underlined the need to reduce financial obstacles already in its Goteborg Declaration in 2001 (Vukasovic 2017).

Although the social dimension of higher education has been a topic of discussion for more than 15 years now, student population is still not very diverse in most European countries and disadvantaged groups, such as disabled students, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds or those with care obligations are still underrepresented in higher education (EACEA 2015). According to the European Students Union report "Bologna with student eyes", social dimension has only a "more or less high priority" in eight out of 36 countries. And even in countries with a high priority, no major progress has been made so far. The implementation of national access plans is one of the strategies recently developed in many countries, focusing on identifying target groups, developing measures at national and institutional level as well as monitoring the implementation process and its impact (ESU 2015). The measures developed in many countries differ, but can be summarised in the following two different approaches. There are measures developed aiming for widening participation in higher education by general approaches with benefits for the entire student population, and measures put in place to widen participation by the implementation of specific measures for underrepresented target groups. Nevertheless, the 2015 Bologna Process Implementation Report states there is a thin line between those two groups (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015).

In this paper we focus on student counselling provided by students' unions as one of the most common measures student unions deliver to empower prospective students and underrepresented groups: What type of counselling offers do students' unions have? Which channels do they use, which challenges do they face? And how are they involved in the development of national strategies for social dimension? And after that: Which role do students' unions have in widening participation of underrepresented groups in higher education through their counselling activities? This paper provides an insight rather than a broad overview—because the challenges, opportunities, goals and disadvantages students' unions and counsellors meet in the various national contexts strongly differ.

Underrepresented Groups in European Higher Education

One of the main challenges for implementation of measures related to the inclusion of socially and culturally disadvantaged groups of higher education is that the understanding of underrepresented groups differs by country. Based on the definition used in the Eurostudent survey, we define them as a group which is not represented within the student population as it is in the general population (Hauschildt et al. 2015). Moreover, countries vary to a great extent in terms of monitoring participation of various student groups and the need for additional support. Most countries monitor participation and progress of students based on gender or disability, although disability is not defined the same way in many countries (e.g. if psychological disabilities are included or not). In some countries migrants and/or migrant children are considered important categories, while in other countries students with families are targeted (Weedon and Riddel 2012). From a student's perspective, the main groups underrepresented in higher education include students from low socio-economic background, students with physical disabilities and students with psychosocial disabilities/mental health issues. Other groups mentioned in many European countries include LGBTQ* students, students with children/dependents, students from immigrant background, students from different ethnic groups, specific gender of students, students with chronic health issues and mature students (ESU 2015). Eurostudent provides an overview of the educational background of students in the different Eurostudent countries. It shows in detail for example, that "underrepresentation of students without higher education background is apparent in almost all EUROSTUDENT countries" (Grabher et.al 2014).

Recently, the inclusion of migrants and refugees in higher education was discussed as an important issue in many European countries due to increasing worldwide mobility bringing more and more international students to European universities. Related to the social dimension, they have to overcome additional barriers and are affected by mechanisms other students don't have to face. "International students face the same life events and stressors as other students, but also additional pressures without the support system from friends and family home. The transition from one academic system to another can be confusing. Adjusting to

a foreign culture can bring about a sense of loss in regard to native language, security and the self. Culture shock, loneliness, problems of language proficiency, financial dependency and expectations from the supporting families can increase the likelihood of developing mental health issues" (Rücker 2015).

The underrepresentation of specific groups does not only tackle higher education participation in general but also specific elements such as the internationalisation of higher education. For example, many disadvantaged student groups are underrepresented in mobility programmes as in the Erasmus+. To achieve higher participation from a more diverse student population in mobility, the Mobility and Internationalisation Working Group of the Bologna Follow-Up Group recommended in its report to develop a common understanding of underrepresented groups and each country should analyse the in-depth reasons for underrepresentation within the national context (EHEA 2015). However, groups underrepresented in mobility programmes do not necessarily match the underrepresented groups in national higher education systems (Grabher et al. 2014).

Measures to Include Underrepresented Groups in European Higher Education

Measures to widen participation in higher education have been taken in many European countries, including a number of mainstream-measures aiming for increase of participation as a whole, expecting to also increase the participation of underrepresented groups, as well as measures targeting specific groups directly. A more mainstream approach is undertaken by countries aiming for most accessible higher education for the widest range of learners, as for example education free of charge, grant and loan systems and high number of university places. Counselling is considered as one of the measures to widen participation in higher education, together with the provision of student facilities (e.g. housing, medical support, childcare). At the same time, many countries implement measures targeting underrepresented groups specifically, as for example students with disabilities, students from ethnic minorities or from socially and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds (EACEA 2015).

Students' disadvantaged background is one of the main reasons for young people not to attend higher education. One reason for that can be explained by social capital theory (Bourdieu 1983), based on the idea that contacts or connections within and between social networks have an impact on individuals. For example, families with first-generation students can often provide less educational resources and support than academic families: they cannot help when deciding for a study programme, nor in case of difficulties with a professor or the question where to apply for grants. Counsellors can play an important role for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as they can somehow compensate the lack of support other students might have from their family and friends (Pham and Keenan 2011).

Other measures identified recently that enable students with low socio-economic background to participate in higher education is the introduction of alternative access routes, also mentioned in the 2012 Bucharest Communiqué. In many countries, the regular entry routes are defined by formal qualifications such as a higher education entrance degree or have access regulations such as exams or scoring based on school grades. While these regulations are considered a barrier for disadvantaged groups, many countries aim for providing alternative entrance routes, in order to compensate the imbalance between over- and under-represented groups. Also recognition of prior learning is considered an important tool to widen participation in higher education.

Dropout from higher education has a number of reasons, which might include psychological reasons, wrong choices of study programme, lack of financial resources. However, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to dropout. For example, in case of socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds, students risk to drop out might be higher because of a lack of support from their families.

Counselling is one of the measures to reduce dropout in many countries. Other measures include additional financing or social support groups as well as student-centred teaching and learning approaches (ESU 2015). Reducing dropout and increasing completion rates in higher education is mentioned in one of the key strategies within the EHEA. Guidance of students, also when deciding their study programme is considered an effective tool to reduce dropouts. Students' expectations, commitment to the content of the programme as well as study programme expectations often differ from reality and lead to little satisfaction and often dropouts. Having the right image and realistic expectations is crucial to the probability of completing higher education successfully (Warps 2012). Counselling and guidance activities as career choice activities, visiting of future study programmes or matching activities support these choices (Mittendorff et al. 2017). Thus, better-informed students have more realistic expectations for their studies and are more satisfied with their choice because their expectations correspond to their experiences (Blüthmann 2012). This is why counselling plays such an important role in the decision-making process—not only for underrepresented groups but for them even more. Higher satisfaction means a higher chance to conclude the studies and therefore a lower rate of dropping out (Blüthmann 2012).

Student Counselling as a Key Measure to Widen Access to Higher Education

Counselling and guidance activities for students and prospective students are provided by diverse actors in Europe. There are many areas of counselling identified, such as educational guidance, career guidance, disability/equal opportunity guidance. While educational and career guidance is widely accepted and used by many

students, services such as psychological counselling differ by country and also age of students. In countries where students enter higher education at a younger age (e.g. USA, UK, Ireland), psychological counselling is considered common for young people. In countries where students traditionally enter higher education at an older age, they are regarded as adults and expected to take care of themselves, (Rücker 2015) thus psychological counselling is often not provided for all students although there is a high number of students with psychological disabilities.

The way counselling is organised, the level of competence and qualifications of counsellor differ greatly from sector to sector, from institution to institution and from country to country (Rücker 2015). While in some countries, universities have an obligation to provide counselling, in other countries many private associations or NGOs provide counselling to students, especially in countries with high demands to access higher education. In other cases organisations aiming for support of specific student groups and/or disadvantaged or underrepresented groups provide specific counselling. This often does not include only provision of information but also support in difficult situations (e.g. where students are affected by harassment) as well as provision of a peer-network. For example, these activities are provided for female students in STEM programmes, older students, LGBTQ students or students with children.

In many countries counselling and guidance is provided by students' unions. However, the approaches of students' unions differ as well as the specific measures undertaken. In most cases counselling activities by students' unions are based on the concept of peer counselling. Students providing guidance for other students or prospective students has many advantages, often meaning that counselling is provided on a level playing field. All those involved live in a similar environment, often taking part in the same study programme. They experience similar difficulties and challenges and counselling often includes an exchange of good practices on how to overcome these. At the same time, peer counselling comes with difficulties: many of the counsellors are volunteers and provide their services in their free time. Thus, the quality of counselling is diverse and based on the individual's engagement in learning e.g. about legal backgrounds and other counselling opportunities. In many cases, the students' union provides trainings and/or documents and information materials to overcome this issue. Another challenge is the lack of professional counsellors and/or supervisors. Not all questions can be answered within peer counselling alone. A network of professionals who can support students is important, but often not possible because counselling activities may lack funding. In some cases students' unions are able to provide funding for legal or psychology professionals who can support student counsellors or students if required.

Another challenge for students' unions is that they do not only aim to solve individual student issue but identify a political solution to problems encountered by the overall student population. Thus, provision of counselling is often considered an conflicting area, as the problems identified during counselling are also used to make political claims. with making political use out of the problems identified during counselling activities (Wilhelm 2013).

The diverse types of counselling provided by students' unions make it difficult to compare them in terms of effectiveness also because little data is available. But results from Germany and Austria tend to show that counselling activities provided by student unions are helpful to students. In a representative study in Germany, 74 percent of the students who took advantage of student union counselling activities perceived it as useful (Ortenburger 2013). In the nation-wide Social Survey 2015 in Austria, two out of the top three rated counselling activities are provided by the Austrian Students' Union. Besides counselling activities, mentoring and tutoring by peers is also a common activity by students' union. As there is no data on the specific mentoring programmes, they are seen as a successful measure to prevent dropouts. As Cullen wrote "[…] a number of studies suggest that institutions that adopt peer and mentoring support programmes have lower rates of dropout" (Cullen 2013).

## What Kind of Counselling Is Provided by Students' Unions in Europe?

To learn about different approaches to student counselling provision in Europe, nine countries were selected for an in-depth analysis to identify current practices in student counselling by students' unions, based on geographical diversity. The data was gathered by an online survey sent to the national students' unions of the respective countries, desk research and follow-up telephone interviews with student representatives in the nine countries analysed.

Students' unions follow diverse approaches regarding counselling activities. While some unions consider the provision of counselling as one of their major tasks, others are not involved in counselling activities at all. The approach followed by the students' unions is influenced by the traditional self-understanding of their role. Some unions consider themselves more as a political actor in the academic and/or public sphere, others consider the provision of services to students as their core activity. Counselling activities are also a question of resources. Many students' unions do not have financial resources to provide counselling to students for example by hiring professionals. Other students' unions dedicate their staff resources to other issues, as they are considered more urgent. For example, in the UK counselling is provided mostly by universities, while the students' unions focus more on academic representation and raising awareness on issues such as student welfare and support for student groups experiencing discrimination: women, black and minority ethnic students, disabled students and LGBTQ students. Another reason for students' unions not to engage in student counselling is the political environment. For example, with the ongoing crisis in Spain, the students' unions focus on the struggle against raising tuition fees and financial cuts to scholarships, although counselling activities are considered important in the future.

But also, unions which provide counselling activities struggle with the available resources. For example, in Italy, counselling is mainly provided by student volunteers while there is a lack of resources for the organisation of counselling, as paid staff or counselling offices. In Germany and Austria, the expansion of psychological student counselling was identified as not satisfactory at the moment. In total three of the students' unions in the nine countries analysed do not provide student counselling due to the reasons described. Six unions provide counselling activities.

Counselling activities provided by the students' unions vary. The Lithuanian students' union provides general counselling for individual students, which might range from student loans and scholarships to the quality of student housing. The German students' union only counsels few individual cases at national level, which are specifically brought to their attention, while the main counselling activities are provided by the unions at institutional level. The fzs (Germany) provides specific counselling to students who have problems in finding a study place matching their preferences because of restricted access. A specific website was developed to enable the exchange of study places among students (Fig. 1).

In Italy, Slovenia and Austria counselling provided by the students' unions is diverse and covers a number of activities. This includes counselling of prospective students on entering higher education and choosing a specific study programme. The Austrian Students' Union provides counselling for prospective students also in schools and organises a peer-counselling programme, where prospective students join a student to attend lectures and can ask questions afterwards. The Italian students' union organises guided tours by their local unions, providing background information about the university to new students with a focus on local specifics, services offered and unions as well as student rights. The Slovenian students' union (SSU) attends higher education fairs, providing specific information via website and
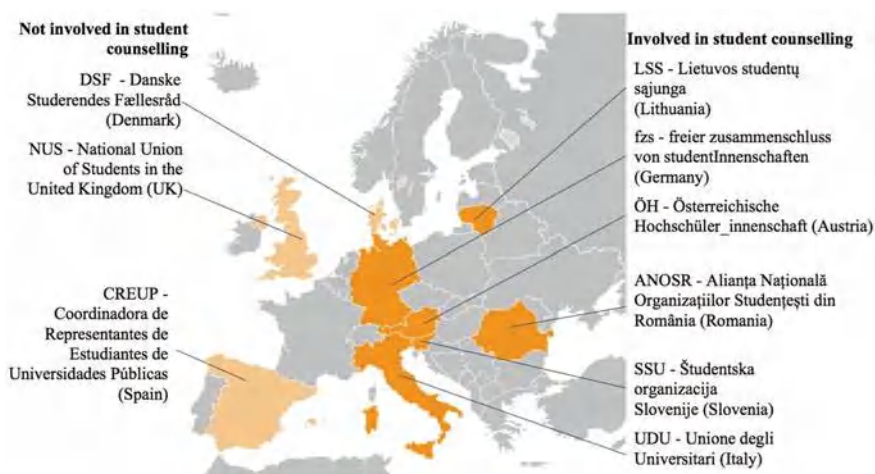

Fig. 1 Students union involvement in student counselling. *Source* Online survey; n = 9

email. The Italian and the Austrian unions both offer regular counselling at national and local level on diverse issues. The Austrian union also provides online counselling through a chat programme as well as counselling for specific topics such as accessibility and barrier-free education, social affairs, foreign students and higher education regulations. In Romania the students' union (ANOSR) was actively involved in the development of the methodology provided by Counselling and Career Orientation Centres, which was adopted in October 2014 by Order of the Ministry of Education. These measures were, nonetheless, not put in practice—according to the union, due to inadequate funding.

Students' unions do not only provide general counselling but also counselling for specific target groups, underrepresented in higher education. The target groups approached differ by country. While most target disabled students and students with mental disabilities, working students and students facing financial difficulties, care obligations and gender issues are not tackled by all unions specifically. Target groups such as first-generation students, non-traditional students, migrants and students from developing countries, or students with migrant background are provided with specific counselling by only half of the unions analysed.

Three students' unions (in Lithuania, Denmark and Austria) also reported providing mentoring and tutoring to (prospective) students. This is organised and implemented by local students' unions which organise the mentoring programmes and match the mentors with prospective and/or first-year students (Fig. 2).
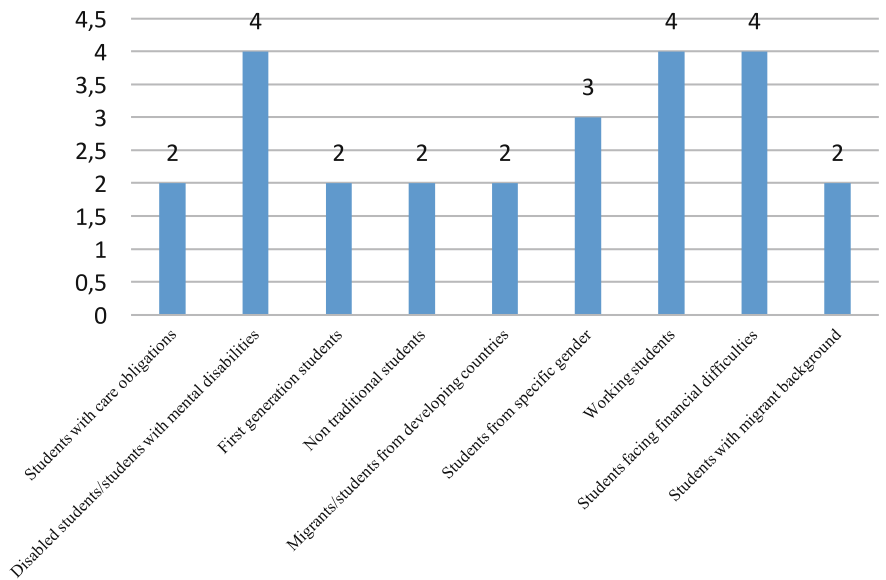

Fig. 2 Counselling activities for specific target groups. *Source* Online survey; n = 9

Many students' union cooperate with other organisations in order to provide counselling to students, especially when it comes to specific issues such as housing, law or working students.

The Lithuanian students' union often cooperates with youth organisations. The German students' union cooperates with tenants' unions in housing issues, with higher education groups of the federal trade union (DGB) or local lawyers associations. The UK students' union works with the Child Poverty Action group to produce a yearly advice book on student finance and cooperates with other organisations providing advice and guidance to students, in order to exchange good practices and the impact of legislation on students. The Italian students' union collaborates with the high school students' union (Rete degli Studenti Medi) to provide counselling to students in their last year of upper secondary education. They also work with the trade union (CGIL) to support working students, as well as with LGBT organisations (e.g. Arcigay).

The Austrian students' union cooperates with the Ministry of Science, which funds counselling activities for prospective students. Other cooperation takes place by exchange of experiences and best practices with the federal Psychological Counselling Service, the department for study grants and higher education institutions. Two unions (SSU in Slovenia and ANOSR in Romania) cooperate with representative bodies: SSU reported cooperation depending on the target groups, whereas ANOSR cooperates and meets regularly with the Romanian Youth Council and the National Council of Students. ANOSR and ÖH (Austria) reported cooperation with the responsible ministry and other institutions which provide student counselling (Fig. 3).

Students' unions describe that most counselling activities take place regularly face-to-face, via phone and by e-mail. Face-to-face counselling is considered the most useful way, as students often feel more comfortable by meeting a peer-counsellor and issues can be discussed in more detail. E-mail and social media conversation are also often used to arrange a face-to-face meeting or to direct students to the most appropriate counsellor in case of specific questions (Fig. 4).
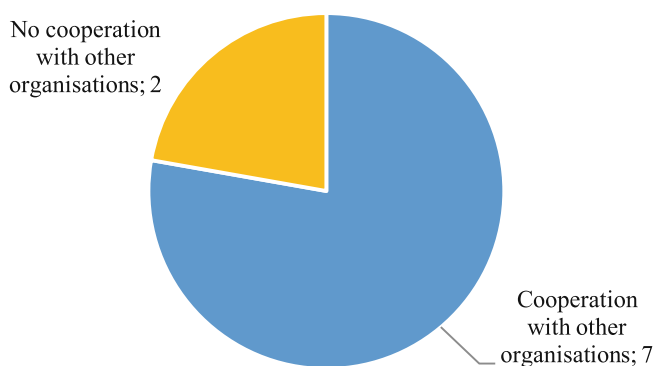
Fig. 3 Cooperation with other organisations. *Source* Online survey; n = 9

Fig. 4 Communication channels used for counselling activities. *Source* Online survey; n = 9
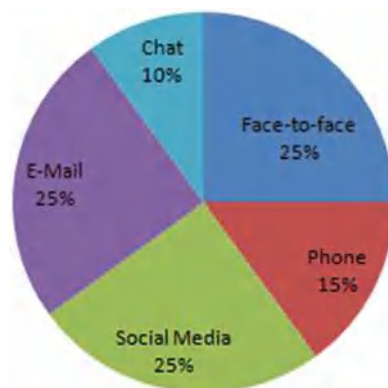
The use of social media in student counselling was mentioned by all unions. Social media is considered an additional way of counselling, for example using the Facebook chat. One union reports the growing use of virtual communication (e-mail or social media). Also, other chat programmes, such as WhatsApp or Telegram, were mentioned amongst used communication tools. They are considered helpful as they provide quick, informal counselling for some questions or help schedule face-to-face meetings.

Individuals providing counselling to students have diverse backgrounds, however in most cases, counselling is provided by student peers. This is considered helpful by many students' unions, as peer counselling lowers the barrier to ask "silly" questions and counsellors know the living and studying situation from their own experience. However, some students' unions also employ professional counsellors. When it comes to legal issues, professionals with a background in law, often specialised in higher education law, are employed. In some cases, professional counsellors, as educational counsellors with a background in social sciences or psychologists are employed, for example to support prospective students in the selection process of their desired study programme or to support students in psychological crisis.

Counselling is provided mostly on a regular basis. There are daily or specified opening hours (e.g. 2–3 times a week). In two of the analysed cases, counselling is available on a non-regular basis, upon demand of students (Fig. 5).

Students' Involvement in the Development of National Strategies for Social Dimension

The social dimension of higher education is considered of different importance in the European countries. Within the "Bologna with student eyes" survey, students' unions considered the social dimension as a high priority in only eight countries
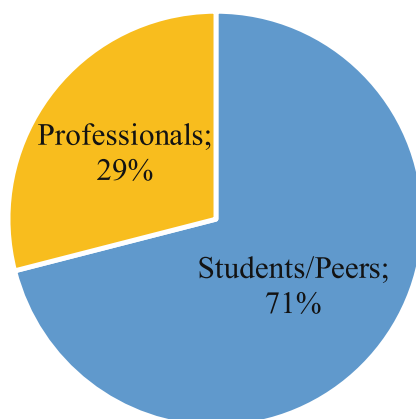
(out of 36 Bologna countries) and many reported they perceived students as the only stakeholders interested in taking action in the field of social dimension.

Since the Bucharest Communiqué (2012), countries are encouraged to develop national access plans to widen participation in higher education. In 2015, access plans were successfully implemented in two countries, six were struggling with proper implementation of action plans, ten countries were debating implementation of an action plan and 13 countries did not debate it until that moment (ESU 2015). However, it seems that several countries started to work on the implementation of a strategy to widen participation in higher education since then.

Nearly all students' unions interviewed for this analysis, with one exception, are involved in the development of a national strategy for social dimension in their country. The development of national strategies for widening access to higher education differs by country. While some countries have strategies already implemented, others are in the early stages of this process.

The involvement of students in the process of developing a strategy for widening access differs by country. However, in most countries, students' unions are critical about the outcomes and not satisfied with the measures described in the strategy.

In Lithuania, no strategy on social dimension is in place yet, but there are ongoing working groups involving the students' union. The Spanish students' union takes part in the consultation process, but has a critical perspective on the process and is not satisfied with the results yet. In Germany, the students' union is involved in related working groups and the legislative procedures. However, due to the German structure of regional responsibility for education, no national strategy is in place. Also in the UK, there are regional differences, however, all four administrations have been focussed on policies relating to the student dimension and as a national representative organisation, the students' union is consulted and has an input into proposed legislation on widening access. The students' union is involved in commissions and implementation groups of access plans and is very active in identifying barriers to different student groups and raising awareness about the

social dimension. In Italy the students' union is involved in the process to develop the national strategy on the social dimension as a consultant body. However, the students' union is not satisfied with their involvement in the process so far. The Austrian students' union is not satisfied with the outcomes of the process to develop a strategy for widening access to higher education. They were involved in the consultation process within several workshops, but do not consider their recommendations adequately represented in the final outcome. The Slovenian students' union is fairly satisfied with the outcome of its involvement—the union reports being part of all task forces and participating in negotiations reminding the others about the importance of the social dimension. In Romania, the students' union started to campaign for social dimension issues in 2016, demanding public funding and other goals for higher education development for the election cycle 2016–2020. As a result of ANOSR's commitment, the student scholarship fund increased by 142% between January and March 2017 and the students benefit from free train transportation throughout the year, with all types of trains. ANOSR has requested specific increases for different budget chapters such as basic funding for scholarships, investment funds in higher education, subsidy for transport or canteens, etc. The only students' union which is not actively involved in the development of national strategies regarding the social dimension is the Danish one.

Conclusions

The analysis of student' union involvement in student counselling and guidance activities identifies a number of good practices supporting underrepresented groups in higher education. Counselling and guidance are considered highly important when it comes to widening access to higher education and support for disadvantaged students.

Students' unions are well aware of the social dimension of higher education and aim to provide services and engage in policy-making to achieve a more diverse student population, which includes negotiations with responsible stakeholders and policymakers while also campaigning and lobbying. However, the approaches used differ by students' union. While some unions consider the provision of counselling and guidance as one of the main pillars to support disadvantaged students on their way to higher education and successful completion of their studies, other unions are more active in policy-making and consider counselling mainly a responsibility of universities and other organisations.

For those students' unions involved in counselling and guidance activities, the peer learning approach has proven specific relevance. The contact on a level playing field as well as the communication tools used (e.g. social media, chat, e-mail) reduce barriers for (prospective) students. Especially in cases where counsellors are also role models from underrepresented groups, the peer counselling is effective, as counsellors and students share similar experiences.

However, students' unions also identify challenges when it comes to peer counselling activities. For example many of them lack the necessary resources and funding to provide adequate counselling involving professional supervisors or professional counsellors. Moreover, sometimes they lack infrastructure and professional training. Another point mentioned by both students' unions and relevant literature is the lack of data on underrepresented groups in higher education. At the same time some students' unions face restrictions and higher education reforms such as stricter study plans with less individual choices and flexibility, reforms which link grants to a certain study progress and similar issues.

Counselling activities offered by students' unions fill a gap: on one hand, most of them cooperate with other organisations and, on the other hand, students or prospective students are less hesitant in asking for help. So, students' unions often interact with those who might not get in contact with specialised organisations. From this perspective, students' unions have to be all-round talents in their counselling offers: different target groups, different issues, different channels. However, in a certain way, they are also the connecting "glue" between specialised counselling offers due to their cooperation with responsible organisations or stakeholders.

The role of counselling activities for widening access and creating an inclusive higher education system, as well as for reducing dropouts from higher education was mentioned by several documents and authors. Following the Ministerial Communiqués of recent Ministerial Conferences, many countries aim for the implementation of a social dimension strategy or national access plans. While students unions are involved in the development of these strategies, many of them are not satisfied with the process and/or its outcomes yet, although it will be a crucial point for the successful further implementation of the Bologna Process that aims for a more diverse student population.

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A New Aspect of Internationalisation? Specific Challenges and Support Structures for Refugees on Their Way to German Higher Education

Jana Berg

Introduction

In 2015 and 2016, the number of asylum applications spiked in some European countries, including Germany. Many refugees and asylum seekers have high educational aspirations (Brücker et al. 2016), and their level of education determines their chances of integration and success in the host country (Fortin et al. 2016). Therefore, the question of how to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into higher education institutions (HEIs) became increasingly relevant. Supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), universities, universities of applied sciences and preparatory colleges started the "Integra"-programs to assist refugees on their way to and through higher education (Fourier et al. 2017).

Based on a system theoretical intersectional perspective, this article works out what first contacts for refugees, members of the international offices and a vice-president at 5 German HEIs of internationalisation identify as specific challenges for refugees and asylum seekers[1] on their way to German higher education, and then focuses on how German HEIs support them. Concluding, it recommends backing HEIs up financially in order to encourage and help the process of institutionalising supporting structures; and also to target more networking and

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[1]While it will generally be referred to refugees in this text, technically, some of the prospective students are also asylum seekers, which means they do not have received a refugee status yet (see Columbia n.y.).

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exchange of information between the HEIs. The article argues for an understanding of refugee students as internationals, as an addition to the HEIs and societies' diversity and as potentially highly skilled students.

Access to Higher Education for International Students, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Germany

Regardless of their residential status, refugees can apply to any German higher education institution; as long as they fulfil the general criteria for international applicants, they will be treated as international students (Study In n.y.a). Mostly, that means to hold a university entrance qualification and speak the required language, which in the vast majority of German Bachelor programs is German, on a C1 level.

Study preparation and access to higher education in Germany are central issues for international students: 32% of international students come to Germany with a high school diploma, while 21% had previously studied abroad, but had not completed their studies (Apolinarski and Poskowsky 2013, p. 4). International diplomas need to go through a process of recognition before being acknowledged as university entrance qualifications in Germany. The German Act of Recognition, however, is not applicable to school certificates obtained in non-EU countries (Anerkennung in Deutschland n.y.). Therefore, the matriculation offices or international offices of higher education institutions take the decision on their eligibility.

Preparatory courses can be a crucial aspect of access to higher education. Prospective international and refugee students with secondary diplomas that are not recognised as university entrance qualification in Germany have to take an assessment test ("*Feststellungsprüfung*"). They can enrol in either private or public[2] preparatory colleges ("*Studienkollegs*") to study for this test (Studienkollegs.de n. y.). The two-semester courses cover terminology and basic knowledge in the desired academic field. In 2012, 18% of all international students had to visit a preparatory college (Apolinarski and Poskowsky 2013, p. 5).

While technically, refugees are treated like all international (prospective) students during their application and enrolment, during the phase of study preparations they receive special support in order to deal with their specific situation. For example, the entrance criteria for the preparatory colleges already include advanced knowledge of the German language. Therefore, special classes prepare refugees for the entrance test in order to enrol in the preparatory courses that lead to the assessment test (Studienkolleg Hannover n.y.). Additionally, HEIs started offering courses, for example language and math classes, to support prospective refugee

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[2]Cost and availability of preparatory colleges depend on the German state and the individual college.

students on their way to higher education (Beigang and von Blumenthal 2016). In 2016, 6806 refugees and asylum seekers took part in courses offered by 135 HEIs and 37 preparatory colleges within the "Integra"-program (Fourier et al. 2017: 12). Due to the time needed to reach the necessary language skills for study preparations, it can be assumed that the number of refugees in preparatory courses is still going to increase. Generally, preparatory colleges and preparatory courses can be seen as important institutions for the internationalisation of German higher education and the support of prospective refugee students.

Challenges and Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers at German HEIs

In order to work out specific challenges for refugees on their way to higher education and to compare the support and integration programs at different HEIs, I conducted eight expert interviews (Kruse 2015, p. 166 et seq.; Bogner et al. 2002) at five HEIs in four German states ("*Bundesländer*"). My interview-partners where first contacts for refugees, members of international offices, one head of an international office and one vice-president for internationalisation. The sample consists of members of five HEIs, two universities of applied sciences and three universities, in four different German states and regions. The HEIs have been sampled based on a regional cluster to cover different areas in Germany and on their support for refugees (existing support and special programs). An additional criterion was to include a university of excellence.[3] I analysed the interviews and the mission statements for internationalisation as well as the information for refugees offered by the universities' website with content analysis. In the following, an overview of the specific challenges for refugees the interview-partners described will be given, followed by short descriptions of the sampled HEIs and their support for refugees.

Specific Challenges on the Way to Higher Education for Refugees and Asylum Seekers: An Intersectional Approach

Prospective international students face a variety of challenges in Germany. It can be assumed that, to some extent, refugees face similar difficulties as all international students, amplified by and in addition to hindrances arising from their specific

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[3]The excellence initiative is a program by German's federal and state's governments to fund and support outstanding programs and institutions at selected universities. In intervals of 7 years, universities have to apply with proposed excellence clusters. Each time, 11 universities will be selected to be of excellence and receive the funding (see BMBF n.y.).

situation. In addition to entrance qualification (Brücker et al. 2016, p. 5) and language, literature on the situation of international students in Germany identifies several issues, for example study culture, finances (Schammann and Younso 2016, pp. 12–13), social isolation, information and support (Ebert and Heublein 2017; Levantino 2016, p. 90), gaps in the educational biography (Ebert and Heublein 2017, p. 32) and residential status as possible central challenges for access to and success in higher education in Germany (Apolinarski and Poskowsky 2013; Morris-Lange 2017). Trauma (Joyce et al. 2010) and residence obligations for asylum seekers are examples of additional hindrances for (prospective) students with the experience of forced migration.

The situation of refugees can be understood as an intersection of various factors of marginalisation. This means that those factors don't simply coexist or add up but interdepend and influence each other. They cannot be understood independently but have to be considered within their interdependence (see Müller 2011, p. 305). Instead of focussing on set factors like race, class and gender, as it is often done in intersectional approaches (see Müller 2011, p. 302ff.; Weinbach 2008), this article focuses on the factors influencing refugees' integration into HEIs that members of HEIs describe from their perspective,[4] following Weinbach's (2008) system theoretical approach to Intersectionality. The factors highlighted here are those influencing the inclusion into the HEI as an organisation and cannot be understood as a holistic representation of challenges refugees face within the host society. Some of those factors also apply to national or international students with no experience of forced migration; their specific combination is due to the individual situation—in this case, the specific situation of refugees. It can be assumed that some issues are amplified and others added by the specific situation of refugees. Also, their impact differs. While language and entrance qualification influence the access to higher education directly, others can be crucial hindrances for learning conditions and the general possibility of remaining in higher education. In the following, I will give an overview of several closely connected and interdependent challenges for prospective refugee and asylum-seeking students that were described by HEIs members throughout the interviews.

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[4]This paper is based on the perspective of members of German HEIs. For an advanced understanding of the situation and needs of refugees, their perspective must be considered. Studies as the WeGe-project (www.wege.dzhw.eu) are working on this task. It can be assumed and some studies show that refugees will have different perspectives on some of those aspects, or even add completely others (see Stevenson and Willott 2007: 675). Harris and Marlowe indicate that staff members do not always "recognise important factors contributing to" (ibid., 2011: 190) refugee students' performance. Examples are aspects of age (Schammann and Younso 2016, p. 28) and gender (Hobsig 2004), which have only been briefly mentioned in the interviews this paper is based on.

Language

It stands and falls with German language training and finances

(Interview international office member, University E, translated by JB)

Speaking German is a crucial skill and a requirement for applying for German higher education as well as for preparatory colleges. Preparatory colleges usually require German on at least a B1 level; HEIs often require a C1 level for inscription and also B1 for preparatory classes. More than one third of all international students describe their German as bad (Morris-Lange 2017, p. 21; Apolinarski and Poskowsky 2013, p. 48). While a total of 54% of international students' state to have acquired first language skills before coming to Germany. Refugees seem to start with less previous experience. In a study of the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) with 4500 refugees in Germany, 90% stated to not have had any knowledge of German when entering the country (Brücker et al. 2016, p. 7); there is no statistical information on the selective group of those who plan on studying, but according to the interviews, the level of refugees' German language skills is regularly very low in the beginning. The missing language skills of prospective refugee students in comparison with other foreign students are explained by some interview-partners with the unpredicted nature of their stay in Germany. Since they mostly did not plan to study in Germany, they did not prepare it with language classes.

Another issue is the diverse quality of language classes offered for refugees. Not all of them are accepted by the universities so it has to be certain classes which, on the other hand, are not always accepted by the job centres or the immigration office. This points out another issue: Refugees have to generally consider the rules, requirements and restrictions of several institutions connected to their financial situation and their residential status.

A Multitude of Bureaucratic Requirements

The life of asylum seekers is highly regulated in Germany. Benefits, accommodation and integration support like language classes or integration courses are connected with official requirements they have to meet. They differ locally by state and on the municipal level, and partly depend directly on the person responsible. Schammann shows exemplarily how the Asylbewerberleistungsgesetzes (AsylbLG), the law that regulates social benefits for refugees in Germany, depends on the interpretation of local officials (Schammann 2015, p. 168 et seq.), and Täubig argues that the highly regulated and repressive everyday living conditions of asylum seekers and refugees are designed to inhibit quick integration rather than to support it (Täubig 2009). The complication of access to higher education can be one example for that. Especially during study preparations, different and even

contradicting regulations and unclear responsibilities can lead to difficulties for prospective refugee students. For example, meeting the requirements for social benefit can contradict or prevent the visit of preparatory classes. A member of the international office at university E describes a case when several members of a family had to drop out study preparations in order to take part in a job-creation program:

> I experienced it once with a whole family that somebody really worked against it. So he, I fought a long time for him to be allowed to take the German class, and fought long for the wife to also be allowed to take the German class. They all had to sto, because the job-centre or the consultant did completely not support it. It simply could not be. They absolutely had to take part in a job-creation program.
>
> (Interview international office member, University E, translated by JB)

Finances

Depending on the level of income in the country of origin, the family background and potential scholarships, finances can be a serious difficulty for international students, despite the comparatively low study costs in Germany (Morris-Lange 2017: 23). For asylum seekers and refugees, finances can be a crucial hindrance. Especially during the preparatory classes, they depend on benefits under the "Asylum-seekers Benefit Act" or "Unemployment Benefit II" (ALG II) (Study In n. y.b). Depending on the length of their stay and their residential status, refugees can be supported by student loans granted under Germany's Federal Education Assistance Act (BAföG) while studying, which in one interview is described as an advantage of refugees in comparison to other international students. The application requires a confirmation of admission to a HEI and can be a high bureaucratic obstacle even for national students (Morris-Lange 2017, p. 12; also see Schammann and Younso 2016, pp. 12–13). Even though a lot of the programs universities offer for refugees are for free or financially supported, especially the time of study preparations is precarious up to impossible; while official responsibilities for financial support are unclear.

> The BAföG-office says, it is the job-centres' responsibility to pay during the hold-up time, and the job-centre says, nah, we don't, because it is supposed to be supported by BaföG.
>
> (Interview international office member, University E, translated by JB).

Entrance Qualification and Missing Documents

While 32% of refugees hold a secondary school degree with a university entrance qualification which, according to the IAB, is in most cases likely to be acknowledged as such (Brücker et al. 2016, p. 5), as for all prospective international students, the non-recognition of foreign degrees can be a serious obstacle. In 2012,

18% of all international students had to visit a preparatory college, because their qualification was not recognised as university entrance qualification (Apolinarski and Poskowsky 2013, p. 5). For refugees, there are some additional hindrances to be considered, an example for some cases is incomplete paperwork due to the circumstances of migration. A special case is the students from Eritrea, where a lot of people go to school, but only get a certificate after finishing their military service (ibd., p. 6). Also, especially in areas of armed conflict, a lot of refugees dropped out of school without finishing it. In case a certificate or diploma is missing, the residential status becomes important. Based on a decision of the German ministers of Education and the Arts, refugees can be given several options to still apply for higher education in case their documents are missing due to the circumstances of forced migration. The possibilities range from suitability tests to declaration on oath, and vary not only in between German states but also between single universities (Study In n.y.c).

Gap in Educational Biography

Another challenge for refugees is the gap in their educational biography. It can be assumed that it took them some time to arrive in Germany, and then it takes time to meet the criteria for applying and enrolling at HEIs. At the time they are able to start preparatory colleges or apply for higher education, they might have been outside educational institutions for years. That adds up to cultural differences of learning and language barriers. Because of the time needed for study-preparation, the interview-partners argue that the numbers of applicants with the experience of forced migration will increase heavily soon, since the people that arrived in 2015 and 2016 will soon meet the formal criteria and language proficiency to enrol.

Study Culture

Studies show that typical elements of higher education differ internationally. According to the members of the HEI, mode of discussion, self-discipline etc. can be issues for international students and refugees who have been socialised in different learning environments. Getting accustomed to a new study culture can take time and hard work, especially after some time completely outside of educational institutions (Morris-Lange 2017, p. 22). When asked about specific challenges for refugees that want to access higher education, five of the eight interview-partners described teaching and learning styles and different organisation structures of HEIs as crucial issues.

> That group work is rather unknown. That "chalk and talk" teaching is preferred.
>
> (Interview first contact, University D, translated by JB)

As a solution, they proposed social integration and intense counselling.

Social Isolation

Many international students state that they would like to have contact with national students but find it difficult (Apolinarski and Poskowsky 2013, p. 48). Since their support networks are mostly abroad, they need that contact for personal reasons but, most likely, also to help them get along in German higher education institutions (Morris-Lange 2017, p. 25). One interview-partner also mentioned this network when it comes to getting internship-positions. Throughout the interview, contact with peers is argued to be an important factor for social integration and therefore academic integration in Germany.

> Actually, the biggest win is that they finally meet Germans at the same age. Which is great and to me an example of really successful integration, because at some point this, this factor, is somebody a refugee or not, it does not matter at some point, because it is simply, yes, contact to peers.
>
> (Interview first contact, UAS B, translated by JB)

Based on this, the interview-partners argue to teach international students with and without the experience of forced migration together as soon as possible and quickly integrate refugees in regular classes.

Information

The availability and utilisation of consultation and support vary in connection to the local network and available information. As the first contacts describe it, for many refugees, personal interactions seem to be more important than information on the websites (see Baker et al. 2017).

> They generally look for information. So the self-information is not very strong. Many want information from face to face interaction, instead of looking it up at the internet first, as I would do it.
>
> (Interview first contact University D, translated by JB)

Generally, international students make use of information centres more often than national students (Ebert and Heublein 2017). For refugees, counselling is especially important and also difficult because of the already mentioned involvement of many actors and regulations: "The plurality of actors involved and complexity of legislation furthermore make it difficult for refugees to quickly get the information they require, and to understand it correctly" (Levantino 2016, p. 90). Especially during the interview with first contacts, the need of valid information was constantly emphasised and it was criticised that information gained via a personal network can be misleading, but also that incorrect information was given to the refugees from other institutions.

> Many refugees that come to me daily have been given wrong information. […] For example from friends, acquaintances, the job-centre.
>
> (Interview first contact UAS A, translated by JB)

Residential Status

More than two thirds of international students come from countries outside the European Union and need a residence permit in order to stay in Germany which needs to be renewed frequently. Academic success and finances have an impact on the renewal process. Even for successful students, this process can mean a lot of stress and put additional pressure on them and their studies (Morris-Lange 2017, p. 24). Nonetheless, the specific situation of refugees generally seems to be more insecure. Processing times in the Asylum procedure can be months, but can also last over a year (Brands and Morris-Lange 2016), and it is unclear if study success influences the procedure at all. Long waiting periods accompanied by the fear of deportation can cause high "psychological cost of uncertainty awaiting the outcome of the recognition process" (Levantino 2016, p. 90).

Residence Obligation and Infrastructure

The (in)ability to choose their place of living and their freedom of movement inside the country can be an important factor for refugees. Especially during the first months, they are under residence obligations and not able to choose their place of living. Even after that, preparatory classes are only available at certain locations, so if refugees are able to participate depends on where and how well connected they live. In relation to the cooperation with other relevant institutions, as the job-centres, one interview-partner mentions that it was much easier to work with the one in the university's city than with job-centres in the region. Two interview-partners mentioned the financing of public transportation tickets as a crucial hindrance for some prospective students.

> But it is very difficult that the refugees pay for the ticket to the free language class themselves. Not all of them can do that.
>
> (Interview first contact UAS A, translated by JB)

Trauma and Psychological Stress

Having to flee a conflict zone, potentially leaving family and friends behind, living in a new country under restricted conditions and never knowing how long one is able to stay—all interview-partners mention the insecure living conditions and past and present trauma as a huge challenge for refugees; they are at least a constant distraction up to a major influence on productivity and aspirations. Most HEIs do not offer specific psychological counselling for traumatised people. While on the one hand, refugees can use the HEIs' general psychological counselling, the vice-president for internationalisation at UAS A refers to the responsibility of the whole society which points at the fact that the integration of refugees into higher education does not only depend on the support they receive from preparatory colleges and HEIs.

> When we have many traumatised people in the country, then it is actually a task of the country to take care of it. And I do think it has to be taken care of, but I don't know if it is the university's task.
>
> (Interview vice-president for internationalisation, UAS A, translated by JB)

Absence

Three interview-partners describe absence from preparatory classes as a central issue. They explain it with other responsibilities within the multitude of bureaucratic requirements, family issues, a lack of motivation caused by trauma, the need to work due to financial issues and religious reasons for absence during Ramadan. This shows how challenges on several levels manifest as an influence on study success.

> If a family member is doing badly, they sometimes stay at home. Because at this moment one has to take care of the family, not of the German class.
>
> (Interview first contact, University D, translated by JB)

Support Structures at German HEI

In order to help refugees to deal with the previously described challenges, many German HEIs institutionalised different support structures and offers. The sample shows some differences in the specific offers; within the path dependency of pre-existing organisational structures, some of the specific offers of the sampled HEIs include strong collaboration with local businesses, specific offers for traumatised students or extensive online-classes. What all sampled HEIs have in common are language classes, academic preparation like math-courses, offers to support the social integration and the offer of access to infrastructure like libraries and Wi-Fi for refugees. Hereafter, the HEIs will be shortly described, and an overview of their specific support for refugees will be given.

University of Applied Sciences (UAS) A is focused on the combination of theory and praxis with praxis-oriented teaching and on internationally oriented research. Internationalisation is a crucial part in the UAS mission statement and broadly promoted in order to support students' career opportunities and extend research possibilities in a globalised world and market. Therefore, the position of a vice-president for internationalisation has newly been implemented and online-courses, international study-programs, exchange programs, partnerships and international research cooperation are maintained and extended. The UAS A is well appointed with funds and staff: While the Universities of Applied Sciences A and B have about the same number of students, there are 532 enrolled students per person working at the international office, 182 less than at UAS B.

Within the international office, a position for the counselling of refugees has been established in November 2016. Because there is no nearby preparatory college available, the UAS offers a three stages study preparations program, including counselling, language classes and academic preparation. The program is supported by local companies, which offer funding. Further offerings are social events, (already existing) international study programs in English and online classes. The information on the website is addressed to prospective refugee students. While there is broad support and even funding offered, the online information for refugees is only available in German. This HEI is the only one in the sample that offers applying refugees to benefit them by raising their entrance qualification grades during the application process.

University of Applied Sciences B is practice-oriented and works closely together with relevant companies. In the University of Applied Science's Profile, student mobility is described as a crucial part in supporting the career opportunities for local students. The international office mostly focuses on student mobility, mainly via exchange programs and international study programs. There are 714 enrolled students per person working at the international office. A position of a vice-president for internationalisation and a mission statement for internationalisation have not been established yet, but within the international office, there is a department for the support of the internationalisation process and of social inclusion for international students.

Within this department, the engagement for refugees is coordinated. This was initially done within the regular working hours and partly as voluntary work. Starting with September 2017, a 20% position for the consultation of refugees was established. Even though there was no institutionalised position to do it, due to a lot of voluntary activities, the UAS B started a supporting program in 2015. The three stage program includes counselling, language and academic courses and support for social integration. The UAS B has its own preparatory college. In addition to this and in cooperation with the local university, audits, trips and other social events, access to the library and Wi-Fi and information on studying and applying are offered. Detailed information and related links are provided on the website in German and English. They are addressed to prospective refugee students and to already enrolled students who want to support refugees. Special about this HEI is a program that allows enrolled students to do an intercultural training and collect credit in exchange for their support of refugees. In an interview, the first contact for refugees explained that this way the voluntary engagement should be acknowledged and maintained after the topic is not present in the media anymore.

University (U) C is a university of excellence with a profile of high-quality research and a strong orientation towards internationalisation and diversity. The mission statement for internationalisation includes the mobility of students and academic staff, as well as research-cooperation and the internationalisation of teaching, including international study-programs. It explicitly emphasises service for all international incomings beyond academic questions, and a comprehensive approach. Internationalisation is meant to attract the best researchers and students and not only understood as the international office's task, but as a mission of the

entire organisation. Per person working at the international office, the university has 571 enrolled students.

The support for refugees is located at the university's centre for diversity, where a 50% position has been established as a first contact and counsellor for refugees. This allocation is different to the other HEIs, where support for refugees is mostly located within the international office. That can be explained with a focus on the special needs of refugees and also with a generally stronger involvement of the centre for diversity with international students. Information for refugees on the website are available in German and mostly also in English; they address prospective students as well as academics with the experience of forced migration. Most information is about the university counselling and support offers and the criteria to apply and enrol. Support programs for refugees at university C include language classes, audits, infrastructure (access to premises, the library and Wi-Fi), a buddy-program and students initiatives like a refugee law clinic. The first contact for refugees explains in the interview that most of the service for refugee and asylum-seeking prospective students is included in services that already existed and are now extended. Newly implanted offers are the counselling service and language classes. They started in 2015. A special offer that is embedded in the already existing institutional structures is psychological counselling for people with trauma.

University D is one of the leading Technical Universities in Germany. Within its extensive internationalisation mission statement, the focus is on student mobility and exchange, additional points are networking, research cooperation, researcher's mobility and the support of a north-south dialogue. Cooperation and aims to win new international students are targeted at certain countries. The head of the international office explains this regional focus with historically grown structures. Within the sample, the international office has about half the staff compared to University E and also less international office employees but more than double as many students as University C. There are 1627 enrolled students for every person working at the international office.

Within the international office, a 50% position has been established to counsel refugees and administrate special offers for them. The university's homepage offers information for prospective students, mostly on entrance criteria, preparatory courses and colleges, relevant institutions and offers at the university and finances. For researchers with a refugee background, contact information is given in order to support connection and access to the university. All information is given in English. In addition to academic and language preparation and the regular offers of the international office and student counselling, a buddy program and students volunteer projects offer social inclusion and a refugee law clinic.

University E is the biggest university in the sample; it is almost two and a half times as large as University C. While it does have a strong focus on internationalisation in its mission statement, no position of a vice-president for internationalisation has been established yet. Internationalisation includes research cooperation, student and staff mobility and international study programs and is strongly seen in connection with a globalised market. Per person working at the international office, there are 982 enrolled students.

Within the international office, a 50% position for the counselling and the coordination of support-offerings for refugees was established in April 2017. Before that, it was done in addition to the regular work by another member of the international office. The person the university lists as a first contact for refugees is a volunteering emeritus professor, who also offers counselling for refugees. The university's homepage offers detailed information on formal criteria for application and enrolment, missing documents, language classes and preparatory courses for prospective refugee students and academics with the experience of forced migration, in German and English; central information is also available in Arabic, Sorani and Kurmanji. Compared to most other HEIs, the extensive information available on the website for refugee and asylum-seeking academics is remarkable. The university supports refugees with German classes, audits, counselling and library-access and offers cooperation and networking for academics with a refugee background.

Conclusion

All sampled HEIs did not have special offers for refugees before 2015, which shows how closely the HEIs are connected to the topics of society. It can be understood as part of their "*Reflexivität*" (self-reflexivity) (Weinbach 2008, p. 183), which means that HEIs as organisations reflect on their environment and react to changes as they are currently trying to find ways to include refugees in their system of higher education. Generally, this reflectivity results in special offers to prepare refugees. Many HEI members describe helping to integrate and educate refugees as one of the HEI's contributions to society, while also they expect support and integration programs from society, the government and other actors. How far they can support refugees depends on funding, individual engagement and also on previously existing structures. For example, the only university in the sample that offers special counselling for traumatised people did already work on that topic before. For some questions, the HEI's international office and counselling staff are just not qualified, so other structures are necessary.

> Of course sometimes people come, who are in the middle of legal actions because […] they got a negative notification. Then we say, okay, there is a refugee law clinic or a lawyer must be asked, but we can't do this, also counsel on legal questions of asylum

> (Interview first contact University C, translated by JB)

After 2015, even HEIs with small international offices set up broad support structures. A lot of them started out as volunteer work and then were institutionalised; at UAS B even the student support initiatives became a part of the "Studium Generale" and can be rewarded with credit points. When the interviews took place in summer 2017, all sampled HEI either already had established or were establishing part-time positions for people in charge of counselling refugees and administrate support structures and courses. This is made possible by the "Integra"-

program of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. In most interviews, money was emphasised as a crucial factor in order to be able to guarantee the support. While generally, the first contacts for refugees maintained connections to other people in similar positions, the need for a network to exchange ideas and experiences was mentioned several times.

Within their mission statements on internationalisation, most HEIs focus on student mobility, more or less in accordance with the academic staff's mobility and academic exchange. Different actors at the HEIs work on different aspects of the process of internationalisation: academic exchange and international research projects are usually in the area of responsibility of individual academics or departments, student mobility and service for internationals is a huge part of the international offices work, while presidents and vice-presidents for internationalisation focus on strategic cooperation and transfer of organisational structures. The support-offerings for refugees are usually also facilitated by many institutions throughout the HEIS, such as language centres, student counselling, centres for diversity and student initiatives. Their coordination is mostly located within the international office, but partly also in diversity centres.

Whether and to what extent refugees are understood as part of the HEI's internationalisation or otherwise, for example its diversification, as part of a third mission etc. will need further investigation, but in the interview, they generally seemed to be understood as prospective students with special needs. Most interview-partners mention the social and academic inclusion of refugees and eventually their transformation to the status of (regular) international students as highly important. Several challenges to refugees' inclusion in the HEI are emphasised by the HEI actors, and for some of them, solutions are proposed. The integration of refugees into higher education is seen as a chance for refugees to improve their living conditions and help a quicker integration. Generally, all interview-partners assume that the number of refugees applying for higher education will keep rising.

The similar challenges that are described from the experience of different actors at 5 HEIs in 4 different German states suggest that structural support for refugees on their way to higher education is necessary; so are efforts to help social integration. The aim should be to minimize disadvantages. While the different challenges can be understood as interdepend intersections, their exact occurrence and impact depend largely on the individual situation. They cannot all be addressed by just one institution, but refugees rather depend on the support by several actors and institutions, individually addressing the numerous challenges they face. This also means that refugees can be included in pre-existing support structures, and newly implemented offerings can, on long term, be of help for other groups (partly) facing similar challenges.

The support structures include several parts of the HEI, but also actors and institutions outside of higher education. Since language skills and entrance qualification are the most direct influence on compatibility with the HEI, all sampled HEI offer courses in this context. Within their path dependency of already existing

structures, they organize additional offers to meet other challenges. In order to include refugees, as many of the named factors as possible should be addressed by HEIs and surrounding organisations. Especially the extension of pre-existing structures, the provision of extensive and detailed information, the interconnection of support structures within and outside of HEI and the possibility of individual solutions seem crucial in order to support (not only) refugees on their way to German HEIs. Additionally, HEIs should reflect on some of their organisational structures, like their language requirements, the non-acknowledgement of some integration-courses refugees have to visit and other bureaucratic challenges they create for refugees. For example, some access criteria might need to be revised in order to comply with the situation of refugees in Germany. This would mean to take the organisational *Reflexivität* one step further and adjust organisational structures in order to enable the integration of a new group of students into the system of higher education.

The internationalisation of higher education, as described in the corresponding mission statements, is usually focused on program- and network-based partnerships and mobility and aims at winning high-income, highly trained students from specific areas. It mostly is a process that is pushed by and takes place within international competition. In this context, it seems obstructive to focus on refugees solely as people with special needs. Regarding the aim of the HEI members to see refugees become regular international students, it would make sense to frame them as a potential enrichment of a diverse and international HEI, but also as potential highly educated international students. This could also mean to re-think the connection between internationalisation and diversification of HEIs, and maybe shift the competitive focus of internationalisation-strategies. Structures that are implemented to support refugees can then be seen as a positive influence on the entire organisation since the support structures enrich a diverse internationalisation and might also be of use for other students on a long-term (see Schammann and Younso 2016, p. 46). Therefore, the investment in support for refugees can be seen as a general effort towards a social and diverse system of higher education.

As a bottom line, the following points should be taken into consideration for higher education policy:

- The HEIs support of refugees depends on funding. Since finances are important to refugees as well as universities, the institutionalisation of support structures like counselling and special offers for refugees as well as the funding of refugees costs of living should be supported as much as possible.
- Most HEIs started their programs with volunteer work based on a try and error strategy. A strong network and guidelines concerning regulations and demands of other institutions can be a lot of help for them.
- While the HEI do an important job for integrating refugees, they cannot do it on their own. Integration and information for refugees should be treated as general tasks of the whole society. HEIs and actors outside of higher education should be encouraged to network and cooperate as much as possible.

- The information on the possibilities of studies for refugees should be pointed out to other relevant actors active in counselling refugees.
- Diversity and internationalisation should be framed as positive factors within a globalised world, and refugees should be seen as prospective highly capable students instead of exclusively focussing on their special needs.

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Studying and Working—Hurdle or Springboard? Widening Access to Higher Education for Working Students in Malta

Christine Scholz Fenech and Milosh Raykov

Introduction

Higher education has a significant influence on all members of a society as well as on the overall national social and economic development. The provision of equitable access to higher education is not only imperative for attaining inclusive societies but also central to fostering economic development and harnessing the creative potential of people (Bergan 2005; Zgaga 2005; Orr 2012). This has also been acknowledged by policymakers (Brooks 2017), which in the Bologna Process stressed:

> 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. We therefore continue our efforts to provide adequate student services, create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education, and to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity. (London Communiqué 2007, p. 5)

The impact of higher education on economic development is also the focus of the Lisbon Strategy, which in 2000 established the goal of becoming "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council 2000, p. 3). More recently, it was emphasized in the EU 2020 strategy seeking to increase the educational attainment among 30–34-year-olds to

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40% by 2020 (European Commission 2010). Through the recent skills agenda, the European Commission also emphasizes the importance of the higher education sector to respond to labour market needs (European Commission 2016).

Thus, the importance of widening access to higher education is not only a question of ensuring an inclusive society but also a response to labour market demands. Orr (2010), with reference to Koucký and CEDEFOP, has argued that maintaining current graduate rates will not be sufficient to meet the market demand for highly skilled labour. Increasing attainment levels may not be realised only by increasing the share of post-secondary school graduates continuing in higher education but also through attracting and re-integrating those who did not continue their education. Thus, meeting the labour market demand requires catering to the needs of a more diversified student population. As Beerkens et al. (2011) argues, this is particularly the case for strong and rapidly expanding economies with a shortage of skilled workers that incentivise an early entry into the labour market, and the likelihood that those who took up employment would be hesitant to give it up to take on full-time studies.

Malta is an example of such a situation. As Auers et al. (2007) argue in the case of Latvia, Malta faced a triple challenge. First, as a young independent nation-state, it remained dependent on its former colony economically well up to 1990 (Vella 1994) through a low-paid and low-skilled export-driven manufacturing sector restricting its potential for self-sustained growth. Second, as a result, it experienced an expansion of its higher education system only recently resulting in a slow increase in educational attainment. Third, it has a strong labour market with a low unemployment rate not only for high-skilled labour but also for medium and low-skilled jobs. This situation serves as an additional pull factor that encourages an early entry into the labour market, in particular for youth without a family background in higher education. Consequently, increasing higher education will require attracting a higher share of mature students, who are more likely to have commitments outside of higher education, such as time dedicated to work or family. This group probably needs to reconcile their various commitments with their studies, and higher education providers and policymakers should be sensitive to these needs in order to facilitate their engagement in higher education (Astin 1999; Orr 2012).

The article provides an overview of the challenges to higher education expansion and presents findings from the 2016 EUROSTUDENT student survey conducted in Malta. The article will conclude with recommendations for higher education providers and policymakers.

Higher Education Expansion and Working Alongside Studies

Increasing participation in higher education in countries that witness the 'massification' of their higher education systems is associated with reaching out and attracting a more diverse student body (Orr 2010). This expansion in Europe and

other OECD countries is characterized by an increased participation of employed students (Auers et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2007; Callender 2008; Hall 2010; Lowe and Gayle 2016; Mercer et al. 2016; Billett et al. 2016; Sanchez-Gelabert et al. 2017). Research in the domain of student employment and learning demonstrates not only an increasing prevalence of students involved in paid work during their studies but also that the number of hours dedicated to employment is increasing (Beerkens et al. 2011; Logan et al. 2016).

The increased prevalence of students working alongside their studies raises concerns about its impact on their academic achievement since a large body of research suggests that paid work alongside studies negatively affects academic achievement by reducing the amount of time available for studies (Svanum and Bigatti 2006; Auers et al. 2007; Callender 2008; Miller et al. 2008; Torres et al. 2010; Richardson et al. 2014; Logan et al. 2016; Mercer et al. 2016; Burston 2017; Sanchez-Gelabert et al. 2017). Moreover, research suggests that working alongside studies negatively affects the quality of the student's educational experience (Lederer et al. 2015; Lowe and Gayle 2016), stress levels and mental health (Miller et al. 2008), increases the time to degree (Tur-Sinai et al. 2017) and the likelihood of dropping out (Bozick 2007; Torres et al. 2010; Moulin et al. 2013; Hovdhaugen 2015).

However, several studies also found that working alongside studies had a limited impact on students' academic performance (Wang et al. 2010; Beerkens et al. 2011; Roshchin and Rudakov 2017) and, in some cases, even had a positive impact (Kouliavtsev 2013). Body et al. (2014) found that the impact of students' work on their academic achievement depends on their work intensity and the flexibility of their job. Similarly, Tuononen et al. (2016) suggest that students' organisational skills are also an important factor determining study progress and the impact of work on their studies. Moreover, Sanchez-Gelabert et al. (2017) found that working alongside studies had a positive impact on the transition into the labour market, especially for students whose work was related to their studies. In addition, some studies also suggest (e.g. Hall 2010) that work related to one's studies strengthens students' goal orientation.

Given that the main reason for working alongside studies is a lack of financial resources (Auers et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2007; Hall 2010) rather than to gain work experience (Hall 2010) and since it mainly affects disadvantaged and underrepresented students in higher education (Callender 2008; Sanchez-Gelabert et al. 2017), research has stressed the need for policymakers and higher education providers to ensure a flexible provision of higher education to better support this vulnerable group of students (Hall 2010; Lowe and Gayle 2016). This would also contribute to making higher education more responsive to labour market needs by enabling those already in employment to return to higher education and undertake studies that could contribute to their career progress without the need to interrupt their employment (Beerkens et al. 2011).

Challenges to Higher Education Expansion in Malta

The challenges to higher education expansion in Malta are specific due to the country's prolonged economic dependence on its former colony after gaining independence in 1964. This dependence was evident until 1990 and included a low-paid and low-skilled export-driven manufacturing sector (Vella 1994), which influenced higher education until the beginning of the new millennium.

This influence is evident through the higher education attainment levels in 2016 of different age groups of the population (see Fig. 1), which confirm that in previous decades participation in higher education was very limited and available only to a small share of the population. The same figure also indicates that the increase in higher education attainment in the past three decades was more considerable in Malta compared to the average of the EU 28, most notably among females, who show considerably higher rates of attainment than males.

Similarly, numerous studies including the EUROSTUDENT V survey (Hauschildt et al. 2015, p. 53), which indicates that the share of students with lower educational backgrounds is high in Malta compared to other European countries, have to be interpreted as a result of the continued overall high share of the population with a relatively low level of education.
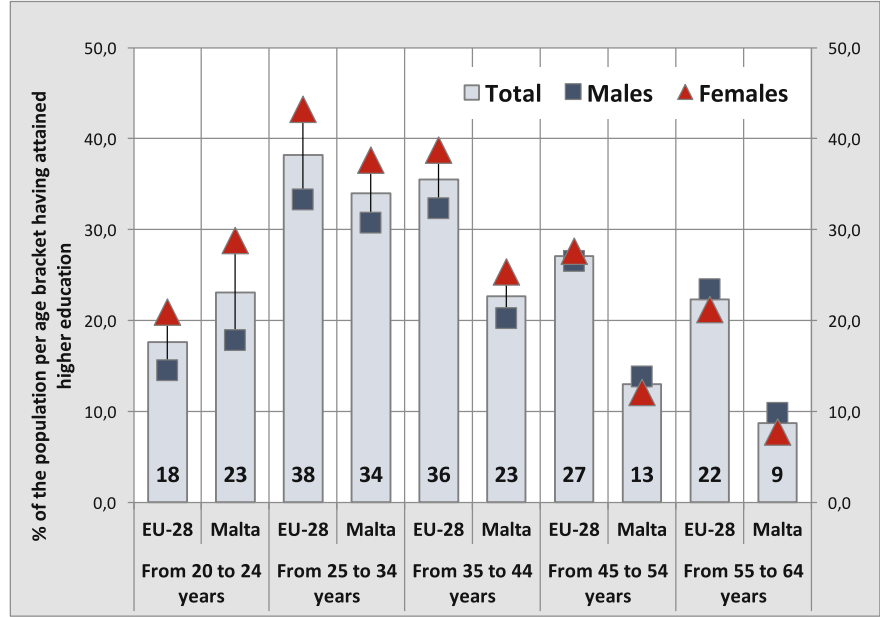

Fig. 1 Higher Education attainment rate in Malta and the EU-28 in 2016 by age group. *Source* EUROSTAT, edat_lfse_03

EUROSTUDENT data for Malta also shows that students from families with a higher educational background are overrepresented in higher education in Malta in contrast to students whose parents have attained compulsory or upper secondary education, who are underrepresented in higher education (see Fig. 2).

This persistent underrepresentation of students from families with lower education attainment is of concern in view of the link between education attainment and labour market outcomes, since EUROSTAT data shows that higher levels of education are linked with higher income (see Fig. 3).

The continued expansion of the higher education sector in Malta is expected to further increase higher education attainment and the participation of underrepresented groups. However, despite a rapid increase in the higher education attainment rate among 30–34-year-olds in Malta from 17.6% in 2005 to 29.8% in 2016, this progress is still well below the average EU-28 rate which increased from 28.1 to 39.1% over the same period (see Fig. 4). In view of this development, Malta has set itself the target to increase higher education attainment among 30–34-year-olds to 33% by 2020 (NCFHE 2015) compared to the overarching EU 2020 target of 40% by 2020 (European Commission 2010). This target appears to be realistic if higher education participation and attainment levels continue to increase as witnessed in the past decade.

The presented data indicates that further efforts are required to increase the share of students who continue their studies at post-secondary level following compulsory education in order to increase the share of those eligible to enter higher education. Data on early school leaving in Malta (see Fig. 5) shows a sharp decrease from 33.0% in 2005 to 19.6% in 2016. However, this rate is still considerably above the average in the EU 28 which decreased from 15.7 to 10.7%
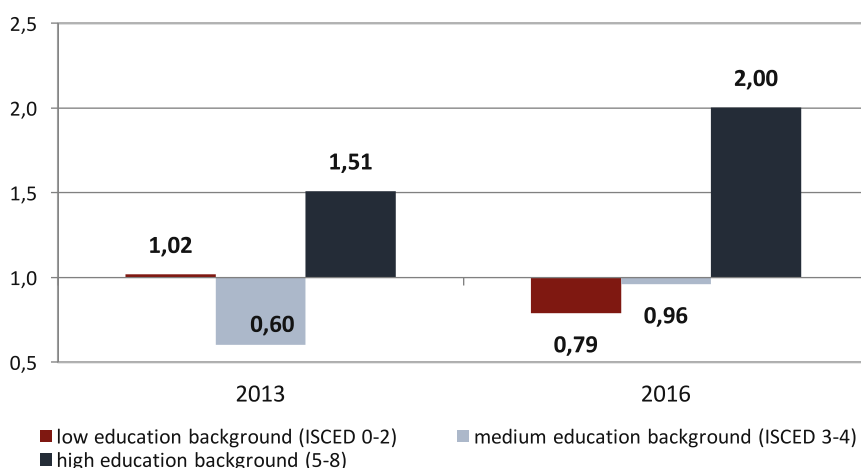

Fig. 2 Representation of students from high, medium and low educational backgrounds (based on fathers' educational attainment). *Source* EUROSTUDENT V national data for Malta, 2013 and EUROSTUDENT VI national data for Malta, 2016
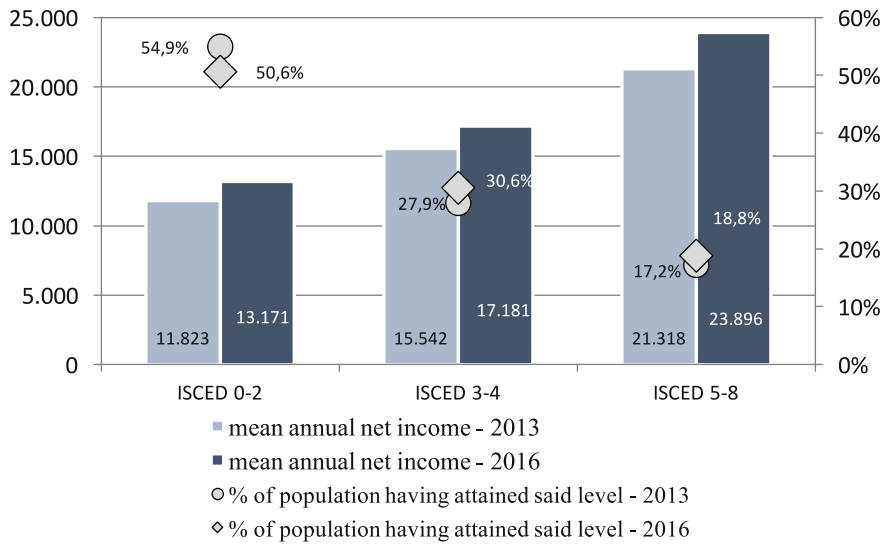
Fig. 3 Attainment rate and mean annual net income by education level attained, Malta in 2013 and 2016. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), ilc_di08
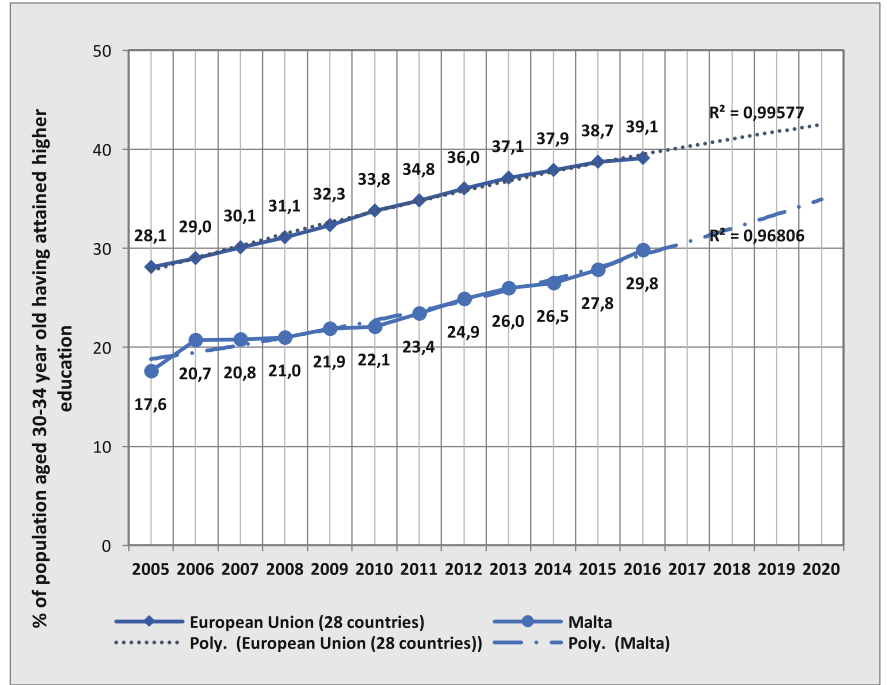
Fig. 4 Higher education attainment rate among 30–34-year-olds in Malta and EU-28. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), edat_lfse_03
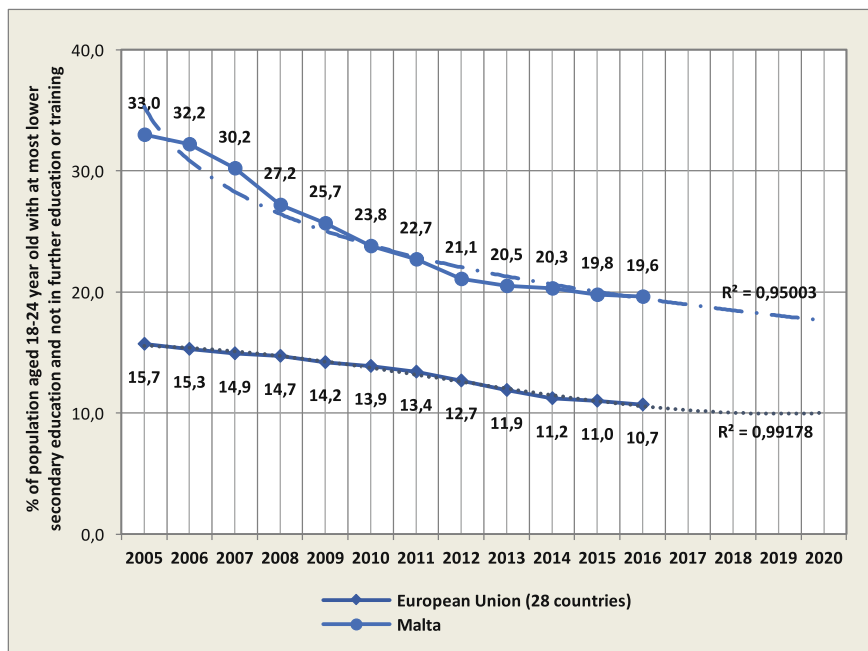
Fig. 5 Early leavers from education and training among 18–24-year-olds in Malta and EU-28. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), edat_lfse_14

during the same period. If this development continues as is indicated by the trendline, it appears very unlikely that Malta will succeed to achieve the EU 2020 target of reducing the incidence of early school leaving to 10% by 2020.

It appears that a strong labour market and a low unemployment rate in Malta are strong pull factors for an early entry into the labour market. As can be seen from EUROSTAT data, the employment rate of 15–64-year-olds in Malta has been increasing steadily in the past decade and is now just below the average of the EU 28, while the average employment rate for the EU 28 remained rather unchanged (see Fig. 6). Moreover, over the same period, the unemployment rate in Malta decreased considerably in comparison to the average unemployment rate of the EU 28 (see Fig. 7).

This suggests that the labour market in Malta has witnessed a considerable growth when compared to other EU countries. This growth in the labour market demand in Malta appears to have been satisfied in part through an increase in the skilled labour force and in part by reintegrating unemployed workers into the labour market. However, with a currently very low unemployment rate, any future demand for skilled workers will serve as a strong pull factor for new entrants into the labour market.

This is already evident when comparing the employment rate among young people aged 15–24 in Malta and the EU 28 (see Fig. 8), whereby close to half of all
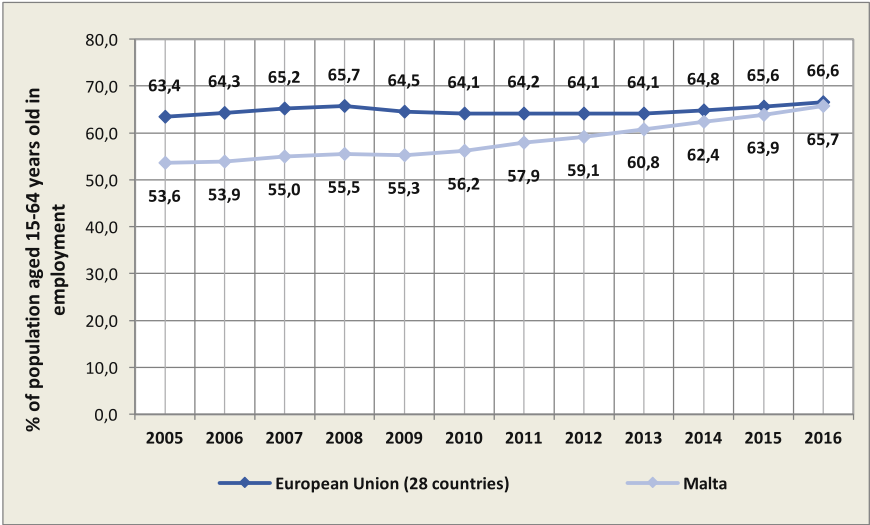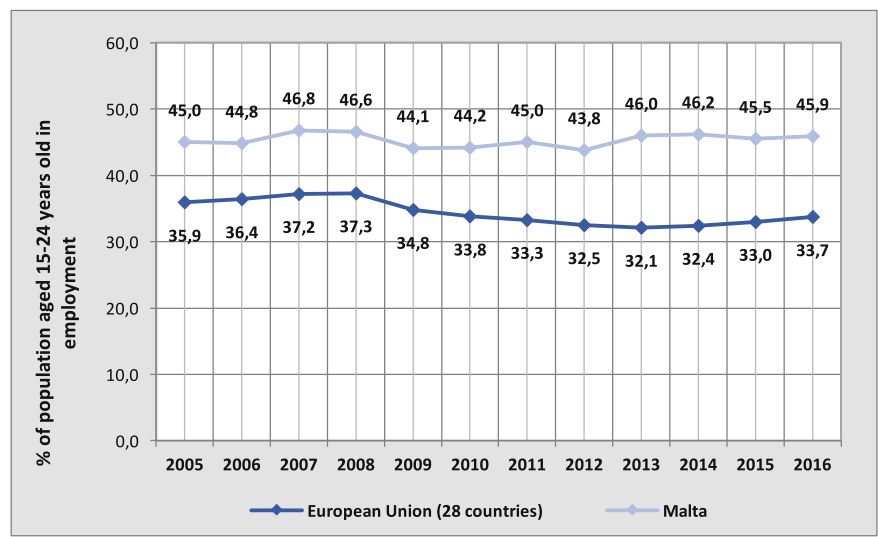
Fig. 6 Employment rate among 15–64-year-olds in Malta and the EU 28. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), lfsa_ergaed
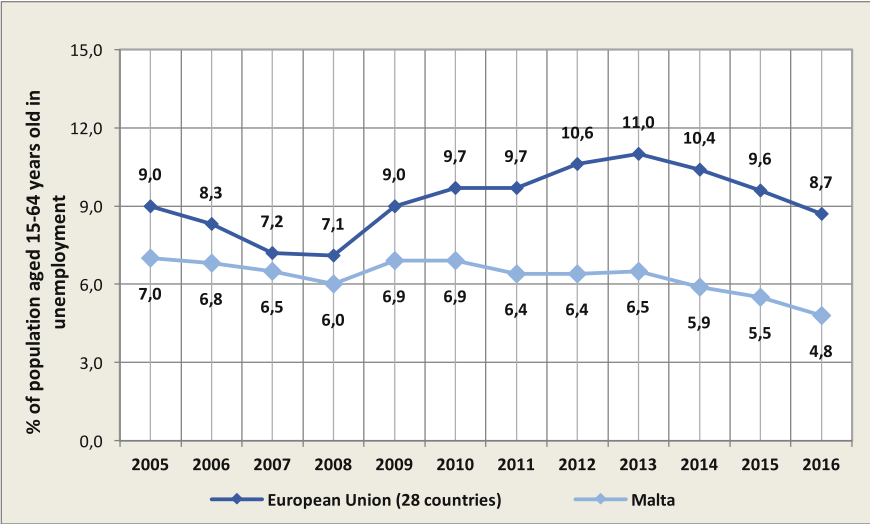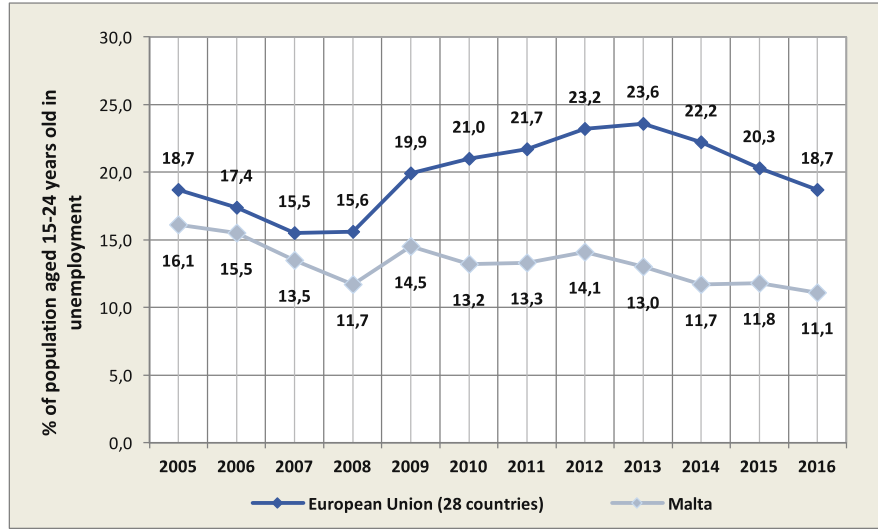

Fig. 7 Unemployment rate among 15–64-year-olds in Malta and the EU 28. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), lfsa_urgaed

young people in Malta are employed compared to about one third in the EU 28. Young people in Malta are also less likely to face unemployment. While nearly one-fifth of young people aged 15–24 in the EU 28 are unemployed, the share in

Fig. 8 Employment rate among 15–24-year-olds in Malta and the EU 28. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), lfsa_ergaed

Malta in 2016 was 11.1% (see Fig. 9). Thus, a strong labour market demand with a low unemployment appears to attract many young people into employment. This is a challenge for retaining young people in education or attracting them to return to education.

Fig. 9 Unemployment rate among 15–24-year-olds in Malta and the EU 28. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), lfsa_urgaed

Finally, our analysis of the age at entry into the labour market shows that the entry occurs as early as following the end of compulsory education between age 15 and 19 with 21.4% of this age group being employed in 2016 (see Fig. 10). However, the labour market entry is more common among youth at the ages of 20–24 and 26–29 with 66.0 and 87.6% respectively being employed. It seems, therefore, that the entry into the labour market takes place most often after completion of post-secondary education and at the first cycle of higher education.

In sum, it appears that the main challenge to higher education expansion in Malta remains the high incidence of early leaving from education, which is compounded by a strong labour market and a low unemployment rate serving as pull factors for an early entry into employment. In this scenario, the main concern of the discussion on combining work and learning in Malta might be how to encourage those who discontinued their studies to return to education in an effort to increase participation and attainment levels in higher education. This may not be achieved only through increasing the share of those entering higher education following post-secondary schooling. Since youth who entered the labour market are unlikely to return to full-time studies (Beerkens et al. 2011), they will require more flexible modes of learning. A closer look at the profile and situation of working students in Malta provides insights into the obstacles encountered by this group to provide policymakers and higher education providers with guidance on how to improve higher education provision for students combining work and learning.
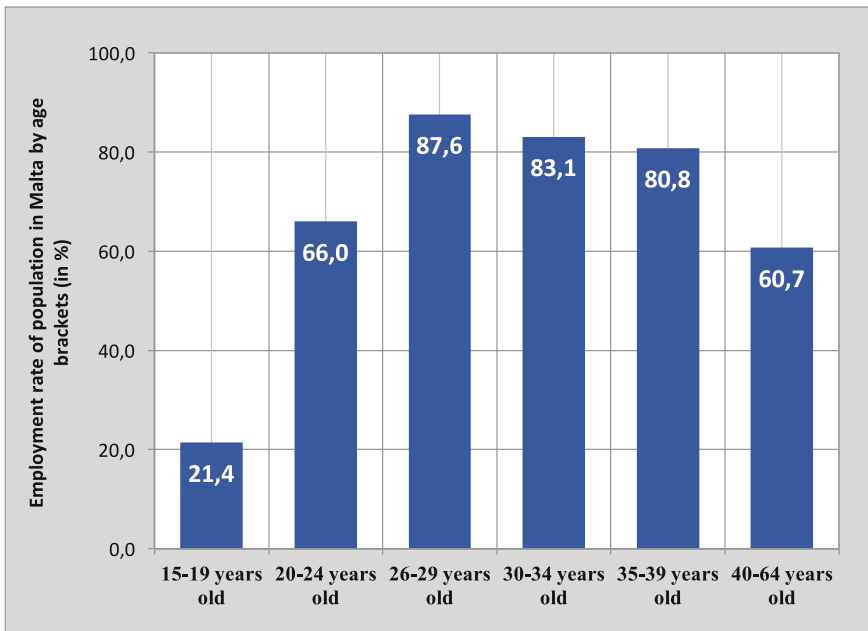

Fig. 10 Employment rate in Malta in 2016 by age bracket. *Source* EUROSTAT (2016), lfsa_ergaed

Working Students in Malta

Our analysis of working students is based on the national student survey carried out in Malta in 2016 (N = 1,423) and forms part of the data collection for the EUROSTUDENT project which seeks to collect comparable data on the social and economic conditions of student life in different European countries through a common core questionnaire and common set of indicators.

Based on the findings from this survey, 52.5% of students in Malta are working alongside their studies, of which 39.0% are working regularly and 13.5% occasionally throughout the entire lecture period. Only a quarter (26.9%) of participants in this national study reported not to work at all. This data includes both full-time and part-time students. When comparing these findings with data collected in 2013 for EUROSTUDENT V (see Fig. 11), the findings are consistent. However, one has to bear in mind that data for 2013 refers only to work during term time, excluding work during semester breaks. In 2013 54% of Maltese students reported to be working during term time, which compares to 52.5% reported in 2016. The data also shows that Maltese students work more frequently than their counterparts in other countries, with the exception of students in the Netherlands.

Working alongside studies is more common among older students with 80.6% of those aged 30 years or older working regularly or occasionally compared to 40.8% of students up to 21 years of age. Also, approximately one third (31.8%) of young

■ not working   ■ working < 5 h/wk   ■ working > 5 h/wk
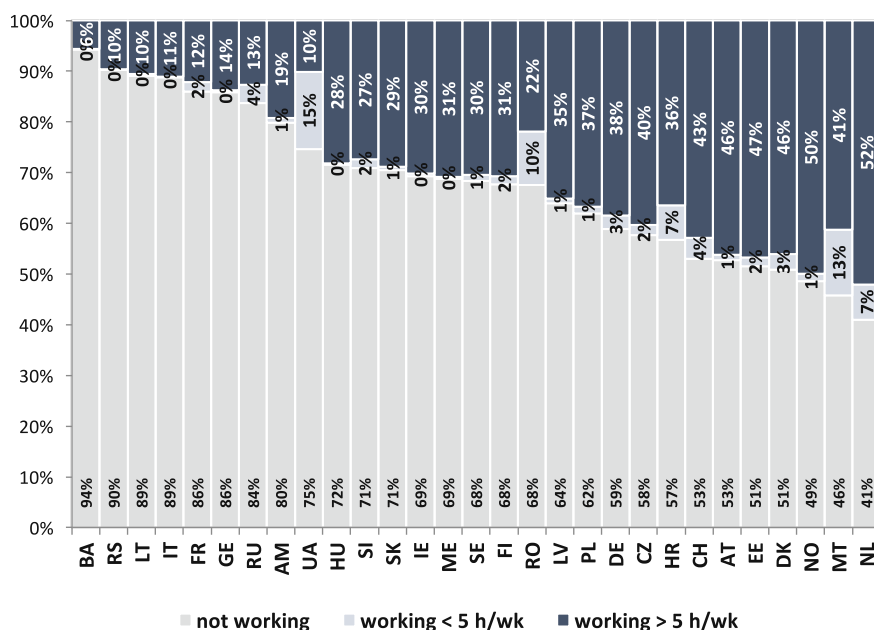
Fig. 11 Employment rate of students during term time. *Source* EUROSTUDENT V

students up to the age of 21 do not work at all, while the corresponding share for students over the age of 30 is only 15.2%. Students without a family background in higher education are also more likely to be working: 54.8% work during term time compared to 45.0% of those whose parents have attained higher education. This may be linked to the continued expansion of the higher education sector in Malta since students without a higher education background in their family are more likely to be older (mean age of 26.4) than those with a higher education background (mean age of 23.4) and, as shown before, older age cohorts are less likely to have benefitted from higher education. Given that higher levels of education attainment tend to be linked to higher earnings, it is not surprising that working students also tend to assess their parents' wealth more negatively than students who do not work at all. Overall, 25.5% of students who work during term time consider their parents as not very well-off compared to 14.9% of students who do not work at all. Moreover, it appears that with increasing time dedicated to work, the share of students who consider their parents less well-off is increasing, namely 20.7% of those working between 1 and 20 h per week compared to 30.7% of those working more than 20 h per week. Thus, the need to work more may be linked to parents' limited means to provide support to their children, suggesting that working alongside studies is linked to financial demands.

Indeed, students working alongside their studies in Malta mention most often that they do so to cover their living costs or would not be able to continue their studies without the income from their paid job (see Fig. 12). While students also value the quality of work experience gained through their paid job, this factor is of less importance compared to the income, and the difference in rating is most notable for those working more than 20 h per week while it is less pronounced for those working between 1 and 20 h per week. It is also important to note that over one third (36.4%) of students working more than 20 h per week do so because they
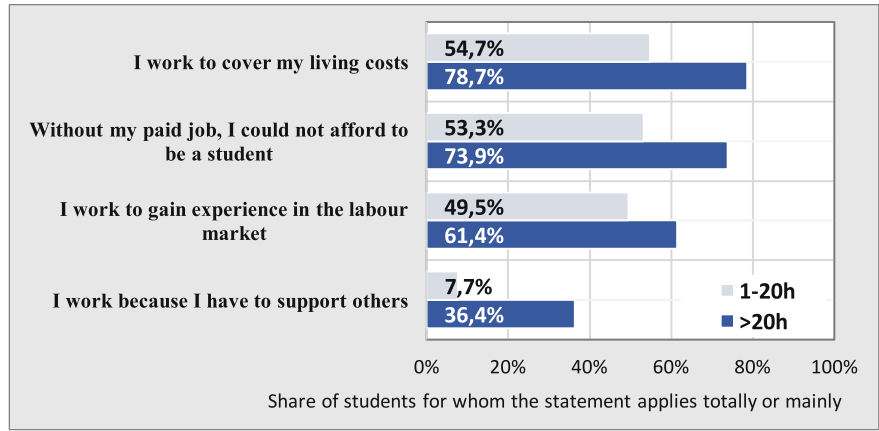
Fig. 12 Reasons for working during term time by hours per week spent in paid jobs. *Source* EUROSTUDENT VI national data for Malta, 2016

need to support others. Consequently, family responsibilities are not only a potential time constraint on students, but also increase financial commitments.

Our findings are consistent with other studies that examine the relationships between work and learning indicating that students working alongside their studies are generally older (Auers et al. 2007; Beerkens et al. 2011; Hauschildt et al. 2015) and tend to be driven by financial constraints to engage in paid work alongside their studies (Callender 2008; Beerkens et al. 2011; Hauschildt et al. 2015).

When looking at the programmes followed by students combining work and learning, it appears that students enrolled in short-cycle higher education (74.6% work) or following Master programmes (55.3% work) are working more often than students enrolled in a Bachelor degree (46.1% work). The results of our study indicate that combining work and learning is common both among students seeking to attain a first higher education qualification and those following postgraduate degrees. This is further corroborated by the fact that students with a delay of more than 2 years between attaining the entry qualification for higher education and eventually entering higher education are more likely to be enrolled in short-cycle programmes, namely 24.6% of them, compared to 11.5% of students who entered higher education directly after attaining the entry qualification. Students who delayed their transition into higher education are also more likely to work during their studies (70.9%) than those who entered higher education directly after graduating from post-secondary education (48.5%). Providing more flexible study programmes that would allow students to combine work and learning could, therefore, serve as a strategy to help individuals who have left the education system to return and continue their studies. This would contribute to increasing the share of non-traditional students in higher education as well as increase education attainment of the entire population.

Considering that research frequently links working alongside studies with lower academic achievement (Svanum and Bigatti 2006; Auers et al. 2007; Callender 2008; Miller et al. 2008; Torres et al. 2010; Richardson et al. 2014; Logan et al. 2016; Mercer et al. 2016; Burston 2017; Sanchez-Gelabert et al. 2017), increased stress levels and diminished health (Miller et al. 2008), increased time to degree (Tur-Sinai et al. 2017) and higher chances of drop-out (Bozick 2007; Torres et al. 2010; Moulin et al. 2013; Hovdhaugen 2015), further analysis of the impact of paid work on time dedicated to studies and the outcomes of work for students in Malta are necessary (see Fig. 13).

Overall, students in Malta without any work commitments spend on average 48 h per week on study-related activities, of which 19 h are dedicated to taught lessons and 29 h to self-study. When comparing this with data from EUROSTUDENT V, which was collected in 2013 (Hauschildt et al. 2015), it appears that students in Malta spend a considerable amount of time per week on study-related activities. In fact, the (unweighted) average time spent on study-related activities across all countries participating in EUROSTUDENT V by students who were not working was 38 h, of which 20 h were dedicated to taught lessons and 18 h to self-study (Hauschildt et al. 2015, p. 108). In comparison to
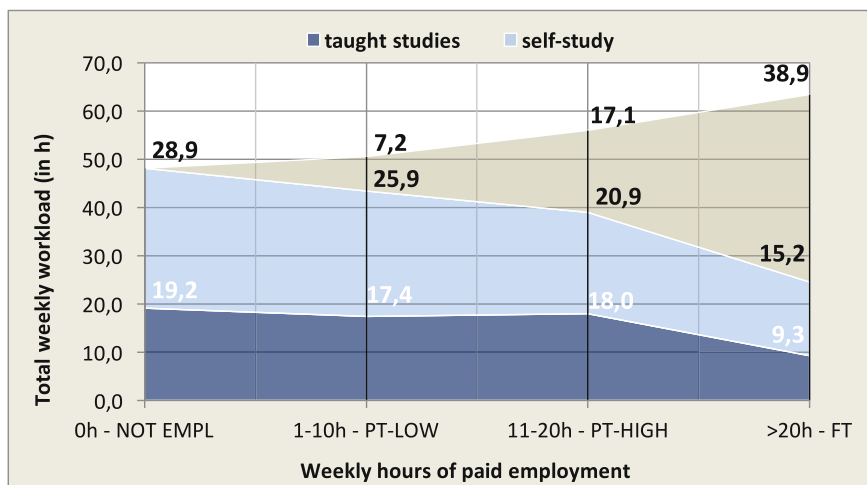
Fig. 13 Time budget of all students for study-related activities by extent of employment—Malta (in hours/week). *Source* EUROSTUDENT VI national data for Malta, 2016

students in other European countries, students in Malta appear to spend considerably more time on self-study.

In view of this, it is plausible that students who are working alongside their studies would compensate for the additional workload arising from their paid job first and foremost by reducing the time they spend on self-study. Indeed, the time spent on taught lessons hardly decreases for students working between 1 and 20 h per week compared to those students who do not work at all. This is consistent with the pattern observed across EUROSTUDENT V countries, namely that work commitments encroach on study-related activities and, first and foremost, on time spent on self-study (Hauschildt et al. 2015, p. 108).

Moreover, it is evident that students with work commitments report a higher overall weekly workload compared to students who do not work at all and their time budget increases considerably with increasing time dedicated to their paid job. While students who do not work at all have a weekly time budget of 48 h, students working more than 20 h per week have an overall weekly time budget of approximately 63 h. As a result, time spent on paid jobs does not only encroach on time dedicated to studies, but also on students' free time reducing the time available for relaxation and recreation (Astin 1999; Miller et al. 2008; Lederer et al. 2015; Mercer et al. 2016; Lowe and Gayle 2016). For students with family commitments apart from work, this may be a considerable strain.

Given the diverse needs of students and the centrality of studies in their lives, Orr (2012, p. 185) proposed a model of four constellations of organisational learning (see Fig. 14). He suggests that the programme design that is responsive to these diverse needs could be guided by this model, whereby it may be appropriate to design programmes expecting a high degree of centrality of studies for young

Fig. 14 Four constellations of organizational learning. *Source* Orr (2012: 185)
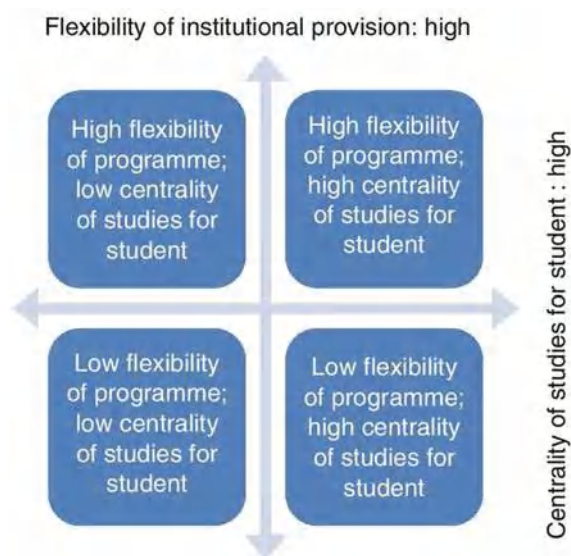

students, but this may be less appropriate for mature students that may have to reconcile studying with other commitments, such as work or family life. This is in line with recommendations arising from the research of Perna (2010), Hall (2010) and Lowe and Gayle (2016). Besides the need for flexible forms of programme delivery, research also suggests that learning styles of mature students differ from those of traditional students (Morton 1963; Richardson 1995; Toynton 2005) by benefitting from the recognition and utilisation of their prior experience and multidisciplinary approaches to learning. This means that higher education institutions need to be sensitive to these needs and accommodate them in their teaching methods in order to adequately support mature students.

The analysis of the study-related workload of students working more than 20 h per week shows that it is about half (24.5 h per week) of the study-related workload reported by those students not working at all. This suggests that those working more than 20 h per week are more often enrolled in part-time programmes, which in Malta generally correspond to half of the weekly workload of a full-time programme. Indeed, working alongside studies appears to be the norm among students following their programme on a part-time basis (93.3%), while those studying full-time work considerably less often (42.2%). In addition, the former are most often in regular employment (91.9%) rather than working only occasionally during the lecture period (1.4%). This suggests that students working alongside their studies seek programmes providing them with more flexibility to combine their work commitments with their studies, which supports Orr's model (2012) arguing for more flexible forms of learning for students with a low centrality of studies in their lives.

It is also evident that employment is more common among students enrolled in non-university type institutions (67.5% work) than in universities (48.6% work). This could point to non-university institutions providing easier access to higher education for working students or possibly more flexible or less workload intensive study programmes. This is further corroborated by a much smaller share of non-university students spending more than 40 h per week on study-related activities (39%) compared to students at universities (49%) despite the fact that there is little difference in the share of students enrolled in full-time programmes at universities (80%) and non-university institutions (78%). Further analysis also shows that students enrolled in non-university institutions are more likely to have parents that did not attain higher education (78%) than students enrolled at universities (58%). This clearly indicates that non-university institutions are more easily accessible to non-traditional students.

The impact of work on students' overall workload and the resulting strategies for enrolment in more flexible study programmes raise the question of the extent to which such strategies are successful in terms of raising the quality of their educational experience (Lederer et al. 2015; Lowe and Gayle 2016) or having a positive impact on their stress levels and health (Miller et al. 2008). This may be reflected in students' satisfaction with their time-budget for study-related activities and paid jobs (see Fig. 15). It appears that those students who are working more would like to dedicate more of their time to study-related activities and less to paid jobs. This suggests an additional opportunity for improvement of the educational experience of working students by providing them with more flexible opportunities for combining work and studies. It appears that more flexibility may be needed
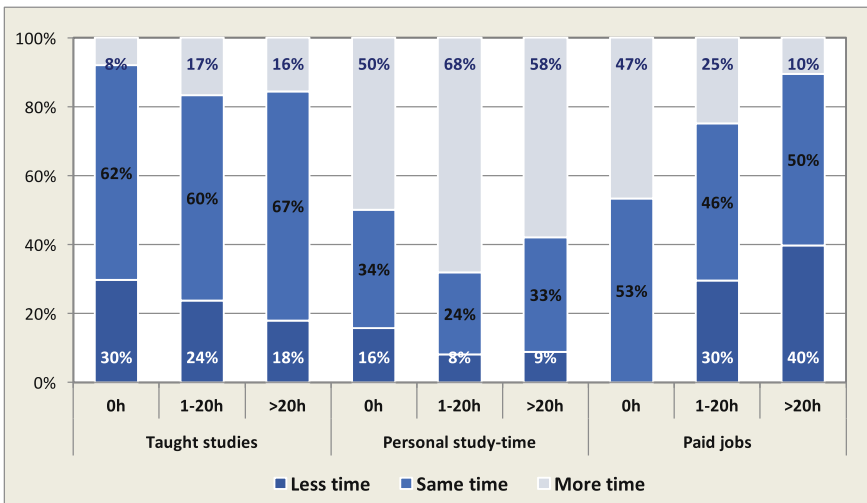

Fig. 15 Students' satisfaction with time spent on taught studies, personal study time and paid jobs by extent of employment. *Source* EUROSTUDENT VI national data for Malta, 2016

from employers to release staff engaged in education. Given the importance of working for financing living costs, such initiatives should not result in loss of earnings. Government incentives may help in this regard and may provide positive impulses for both employees and employers to encourage further studies alongside work that could be beneficial for both parties while contributing to an overall increase in education attainment. Research on employers' perceptions of the attractiveness and effectiveness of such measures as well as on existing initiatives undertaken by employers and governments to promote further education of their employees may prove useful in this regard.

It is also interesting to note that working students overwhelmingly wish to spend more time on personal studies rather than taught lessons. Indeed, since time for personal studies is reduced first in order to compensate for additional workload arising from paid jobs, this response is consistent. This desire to increase their personal study time rather than taught lessons underscores the need for more flexible forms of learning for those students with commitments apart from studies since an increase in taught lessons may cause conflict with their work schedule or family commitments (Orr 2012).

Apart from the negative impact of an increased overall weekly workload on students' academic progress, research indicates that combining work and learning has a more detrimental effect on academic success if the students' job is not related to their studies (Sanchez-Gelabert et al. 2017). The link between job and studies is also important since research revealed that the transition into the labour market is improved if students work in jobs that are related to their studies (Sanchez-Gelabert et al. 2017). Such a close link between job and studies could contribute to contextualise what is being learned and, in this way, increase the relevance of higher education to the labour market. Indeed, linking higher education more closely with the needs of the labour market has also been highlighted by the New Skills Agenda of the European Commission (European Commission 2016). Given that in Malta combining work and learning is particularly common among mature students seeking to attain a first higher education qualification and those with a delayed entry into higher education, it is worthwhile exploring whether these generally underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students hold jobs that are related to their studies.

In view of this, it is positive to note that the data indicates that those most likely to be negatively affected in their studies by their extensive job-related workload hold more often jobs related to their studies (see Fig. 16). Most students working more than 20 h per week hold a job that is (very) closely related to their studies (65.1%), while only 30.0% of students working 1–20 h per week have a job that is closely related to their studies. Moreover, most students enrolled in short-cycle or Master programmes hold jobs that are closely related to their studies (63.9 and 60.6% respectively). Consistent with the previous finding that students with a more intensive job-related workload are more often enrolled part-time, our results also indicate that students with a study-related workload of up to 20 h per week, which is consistent with a part-time programme, are more often in jobs related to their studies compared to students following programmes with a higher study-related weekly workload.
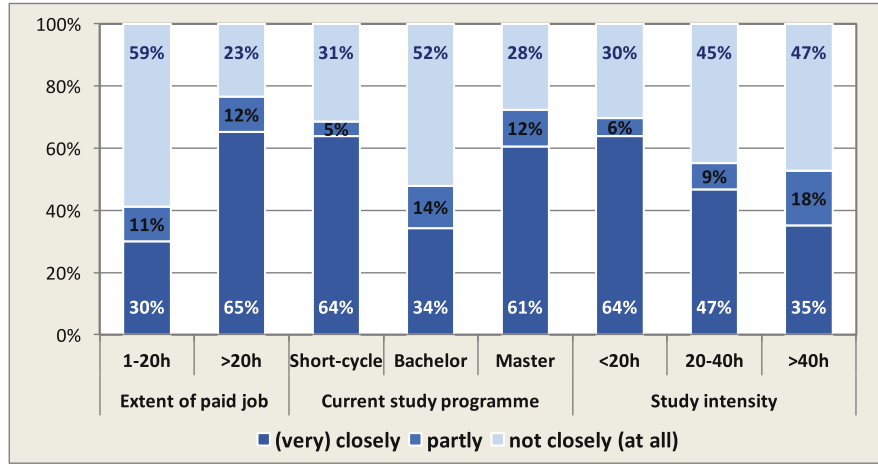
Fig. 16 Link between studies and job of students working throughout the lecture period. *Source* EUROSTUDENT VI national data for Malta, 2016

Despite the increased burden arising from combining extensive work commitments with their studies, students working more than 20 h per week and those enrolled in short-cycle or Master programmes have more often jobs that are related to their studies. This would allow them to contextualise what they are learning in their workplace or explore aspects of their work more deeply through their studies. This clearly contributes to the policy objective of making higher education more responsive to the needs of the labour market (European Commission 2016). Given that students undertaking short-cycle or Master programmes appear to have been employed before taking up their studies, the link between studies and job may be the result of students choosing programmes aimed at furthering their career development. This appears to indicate that it is likely that combining work and learning in Malta may be a springboard to increase both one's level of education as well as improve labour market chances. From a policy point of view, this finding is positive since combining work and learning delivers both on making higher education more inclusive by increasing attainment levels as well as on making higher education more responsive to labour market needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, EUROSTUDENT VI data for Malta are consistent with other research on work and learning indicating that working students in Malta are usually older, from families without a higher education background and with limited financial resources. As a result, students work most often because of financial necessity, in particular, if they have to support other family members. Students working more

than 20 h per week alongside their studies have a considerably high workload resulting from their paid job and their studies and that is despite the fact that they seek more often part-time study programmes offering them more flexibility in terms of combining work and learning.

The fact that combining work and learning is more frequent among those undertaking short-cycle programmes and those with a delayed entry into higher education suggests that the provision of flexible study programmes which allow for combining studies and work could encourage those who have left the education system to return and continue their studies. From this perspective, combining work and learning appears to be a springboard to increase the share of non-traditional students in higher education and also contribute to increasing educational attainment in Malta. In this context, it is encouraging to note that this underrepresented group of students is often enrolled in programmes of study related to their job. Therefore, despite the increased workload arising from working alongside studies, this close link can help work and learning and positively contribute to long-term labour market outcomes.

Research also shows that working students need more time for their studies, in particular time for personal studies, which sharply decreases with increased work intensity. At the same time, a considerable share of students working more than 20 h per week expresses the desire to reduce the weekly workload associated with their paid job. Since financial constraints are the main reason for combining work and learning, such decrease of work-related hours is most likely an option only if it does not result in loss of income. This suggests that strategies to facilitate combining work and learning should focus on both increasing the flexibility of study programmes and encouraging employers to support their employees who are seeking to further their studies. The support could come in the form of a variety of measures, including paid study leave or sabbaticals. Financial incentives by government to this end may be useful, apart from support for students with financial needs. This support is particularly valuable in view of the high incidence of working students undertaking studies that are related to their job. Thus, their involvement in higher education contributes to increasing educational attainment, productivity and improves the quality of work.

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Access, Qualifications and Social Dimension of Syrian Refugee Students in Turkish Higher Education

Armağan Erdoğan and M. Murat Erdoğan

Introduction

This paper is based on the findings of the "Elite Dialogue" project which was designed and implemented as a comprehensive and multi-layer study on Syrian teachers and higher education students in Turkey. Considering the numbers and tendency of Syrians to stay in Turkey, this paper argues that the qualified young groups, higher education students within the refugee population, must be involved to set up the inclusive, comprehensive and long-term adaptation policies. This group has a potential for bridging the Turkish and Syrian communities; their profile, expectations and challenges might help design new data-based policies.

Although the research focused on two target groups in the higher education Syrian teachers and students, this paper will only focus on the students' results. The main question of the survey was "how do the Syrian higher education students adapt to the Turkish higher education system and in the Turkish society?" More specifically, the research tried to find out what their academic and social profile was, what challenges they faced and what expectations they had so that some recommendations for the new policies could be suggested. As Turkey has a young population, and accessing higher education is highly competitive for all high school graduates, the young group of Syrian refugees needs to be dealt with delicately.

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They have potential to be mediators between their community and the Turkish society since the majority of refugees in Turkey have a lower educational background. Secondly, Turkish higher education system is already the second largest one in the EHEA in terms of student numbers. Adding some thousands of Syrian students to the system is a big challenge in terms of capacity and quality.[1] Therefore, this research was aimed to contribute to better understanding the profile, qualifications, and expectations of the Syrian students already admitted into the system. A survey was conducted with 497 Syrian higher education students, out of which 395 respondents qualified to be evaluated, which makes this survey the most extended one done with Syrian students so far in Turkey.

Syrian Refugees in Turkey[2]

The Syrian crisis, which has been identified as "the biggest migration wave in recent history" by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), began with the demonstrations and protests in Syria, which then turned into a serious conflict and later into a civil war (Fig. 1).[3]

Number of Syrians fleeing from this hostile environment, initially to neighboring countries, has exceeded six million people between April 2011 and July 2017. In Syria, which had a population of 22.4 million in April 2011, at least 465,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands of people were injured, more than six million people left Syria, and 7–8 million were forced to move within the country.[4] This uncommonly high number shows that in the last five years, at least 25% of Syrians were forced to leave their country. The total number of refugees in Turkey was over 3.5 million in November 2017, which makes up 4.5% of Turkey's 80-million-population.[5] The majority of refugees live all around Turkey as it can be seen from the map below, and only 8% live in the camps established in the region.[6]

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[1]See AlAhmad (2016), de Wit and Altbach (2016) and Watenpaugh et al. (2014).

[2]This study uses the concept of "refugee" for Syrians in Turkey, regardless of the legal-administrative context in Turkey, acknowledging they are not legally "refugees", and as a concept reflecting the situation better in a sociological sense. The legal framework in Turkey and the reasons for this use are addressed in the section titled "Legal and Administrative Regulations on Refugees".

[3]Erdoğan (2018), p. 11.

[4]The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (London) (http://www.syriahr.com/en/) and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 14.04.2017) and see Brookings Institution and USAK (2013)

[5]Erdogan (2017).

[6]Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) (http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/duzensiz-goc_363_378_4710_icerik) See also Brookings Institution (2015).

Fig. 1 Provincial breakdown of Syrian refugees in Turkey. *Source* http://data.unhcr.org/
syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224 (access: 2 July 2017)

Legal and Administrative Regulations on Refugees

The UN defines a refugee as "*owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for
reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or
political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to
such fear, is unwilling to return to it*". Developing this status in the international
context was mainly due to the human tragedy experienced in World War II. In 1948
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights used the phrase "Everyone has the right
to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." (Article 14/1).
When the reasons for people seeking asylum in another country are justified,
"refugee" status is granted. The legal status of refugees in the international arena is
determined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the
1967 "Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees". Two important exemptions
were given to signatory countries on the validity of the convention, one regarding
history (except those experienced before 1951 or at all times), and geographical
area. International liabilities of Turkey around asylum seekers and refugees are also
determined under "The 1951 Refugee Convention" and "The 1967 Protocol
Relating to the Status of Refugees".[7] With a declaration in 1961, Turkey, one of the

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[7]The 1951 Refugee Convention: http://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html.

first countries to sign the Geneva Convention, stated that "geographical limitations" will be applied, meaning that whatever the reason, Turkey will not accept people coming from outside of Europe as "refugees". Many signatory countries of the 1951 Convention used this exemption for a while and afterwards ceased this practice by choosing "situation" over "country of origin". The national legislation amended after the Syrian crises, "Law on Foreigners and International Protection" (2013) which constitutes Turkey's legal framework on migration and refugees and Temporary Protection Regulation (2014), adopts this geographical limitation principle. This means that, under the current legal regulations in Turkey, regardless of the situations they are in, people who are in Turkey and are in fact defined as "refugees" by international law are not considered officially refugees in Turkey.[8] The legal status of Syrians in Turkey is "temporary protection" under the latest "Temporary Protection Regulation".[9] The Regulation translates into "well-meant support from the host for the guests—within the bounds of possibility", rather than "rights" of refugees and involved liabilities of the state (Fig. 2).

According to the current data, educational backgrounds of Syrians in Turkey are as follows: 33.3% of Syrians in Turkey are illiterate; 13% are literate without a school degree[10]; 25.6% of Syrians chose not to make any statements on their educational backgrounds, which should probably be added to lower education level; 16.5% of Syrians in Turkey are primary or equivalent school graduates; 6.5% are secondary or equivalent school graduates; and 5.6% hold high school diplomas or higher degrees.[11] There is serious doubt about the reliability of this information gathered during the registration process performed by Directory General of Migration Management (DGMM).

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[8]See: Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013) Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), (http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/law-on-foreigners-and-international-protection-lfip_913_975).

[9]See: Temporary Protection Directora (2014), Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), (http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/_dokuman28.pdf) Article 91—Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013) *((1) Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection. (2) The actions to be carried out for the reception of such foreigners into Turkey; their stay in Turkey and rights and obligations; their exit from Turkey; measures to be taken to prevent mass influxes; cooperation and coordination among national and international institutions and organisations; determination of the duties and mandate of the central and provincial institutions and organisations shall be stipulated in a Directive to be issued by the Council of Ministers.*

[10]Ministry of Development (March 2016) Turkish Ministry of Development Ministry, "First Stage Need Assessment Covering 2016–2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Turkey" March 2016, p. 7.

[11]For the educational conditions of Syrian refugees see also, Bircan and Sunata (2015).
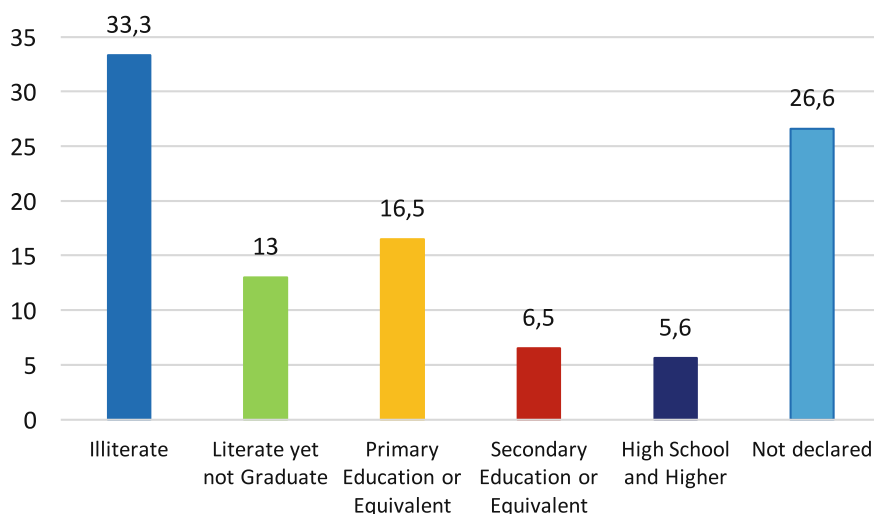
Fig. 2 Syrians uTP in Turkey according to their Educational Statuses (%). *Source* Turkish Ministry of Development Ministry, "First Stage Need Assessment Covering 2016–2018 Period for Syrians with Temporary Protection Status in Turkey" March 2016, p. 7

Research on Syrian Students in Turkish Universities

The main goal of the "Elite Dialogue" project is to understand the evaluations of Syrian college students regarding their educational programs, social and economic surroundings, integration attitudes and future expectations. How do they like their universities? What kind of challenges were they faced with when applying and registering? What are their main difficulties at the moment? What are their plans for the future in terms of preferred location and their economic and political expectations from their home and host countries? What are their integration attitudes or their interest in becoming citizens? What are their relations with Turkish students in terms of social distance or inclusion? These are some of the questions the research team sought to answer in this study.

An online survey was designed to be implemented through a Survey Monkey module. The survey was announced mostly through social media i.e. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp. Syrian student group page admins of several universities were contacted to reach the individual students. A snowball sample was used in order to approximate the actual distribution of Syrian college students across Turkey. For these interventions, a multitude of methods was employed including asking for the assistance of Syrian and Turkish students and professors at these universities. Also, several NGOs such as SGDD and Hilalder and language schools such as DILMER assisted in announcing the survey to a variety of student groups.

Syrians Students in Turkish Universities

According to data from November 2017 provided by YÖK, the number of Syrian students studying in 140 public and foundation universities in Turkey is 15,000 (9700 males, 5300 females).[12] The actual ratio of Syrians in Turkey who have studied at a university or graduated from one is expected to be under 2%. This is a crucial rate in terms of future projections for education and integration policies. It is observed that 86.7% of these students study in public universities, whereas 13.2% study in private foundation universities.[13] Although there are Syrian students studying in all 140 universities, 46.4% of these students study in 10 of these universities, and 65% are grouped in only 11 cities. Gaziantep University alone hosts 11.2% of these Syrian students, and Istanbul alone hosts 21.8% (Fig. 3).

In 2013, various measures were taken by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) regarding the students from the countries in which education cannot be pursued due to violence and crisis. The following decisions were taken on the transfer/recognition of undergraduate degrees for those students who attended undergraduate programs (except for Medicine and Dentistry programs) before the 2013–2014 academic year in Syria or Egypt. To ease the recognition of the qualifications of the refugees UNESCO and Council of Europe developed "Recommendation on the Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications under Lisbon Recognition Convention and Explanatory Memorandum", Paris/Strasbourg, 14 Nov 2017:

1. If students present the documentation required for the recognition unit, they can be transferred to the Turkish HE institutions
2. Undergraduate applications will be assessed and admitted by the higher education institutions (provided that such applications do not exceed 10% of ÖSYS quota of the applied department in the respective year, to protect the balance of the national students)
3. Students who cannot present documentation will undertake courses as special students at the seven universities in the region (Gaziantep, Kilis 7 Aralık, Harran, Mustafa Kemal, Osmaniye Korkut Ata, Çukurova, and Mersin).[14]

It was decided that programs in Turkish and/or a foreign language can be established in the above-mentioned universities. It was also decided that students who cannot present the required documents but apply for the second or third time can be accepted according to the results of the proficiency tests held by these universities.

In Turkey, since 2011, tuition fees for Turkish citizens were abolished. Council of Ministers decided that for the 2012–2013 academic year, tuition fees for Syrian

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[12]Council of Higher Education (YÖK): www.yok.gov.tr & https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/.

[13]Information regarding the numbers of students studying at universities in Turkey holding "Temporary Protection" and "Residence Permit" could not be found. Soon, "denizens" will be added to these categories. Distinguishing these categories is critical in planning the future. Systems in universities and YÖKSİS should be structured in a way to reflect this distinction.

[14]See YOK. (2017).
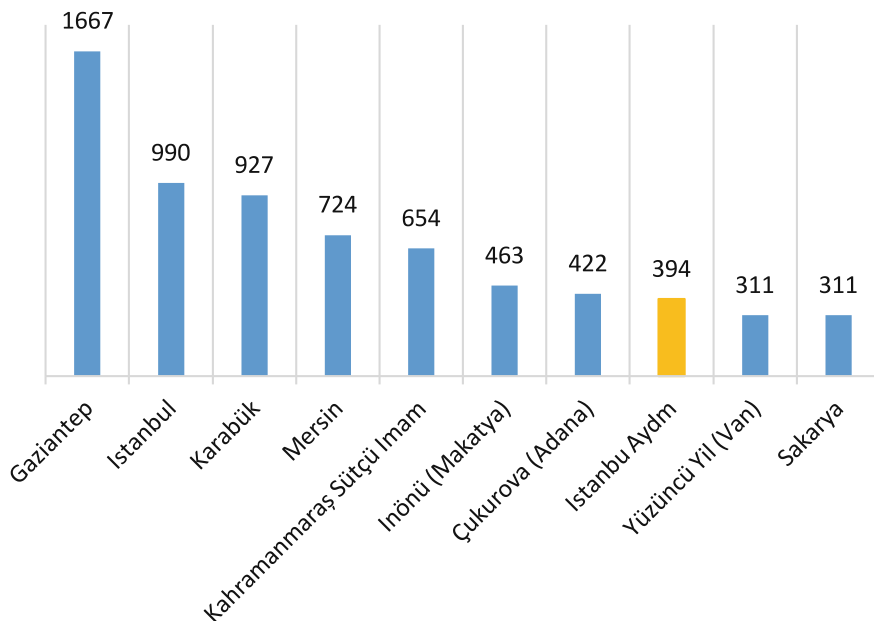
Fig. 3 Top Ten Universities with Syrian Student. *Source* Council of Higher Education (YÖK) www.yok.gov.tr; https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/ (accessed: 10 July 2017)

students enrolling in an institution through application to foreign student quotas will be covered from the budget of the public institution called Turks Abroad and Related Communities Presidency budget. For the later years, the tuition fees for the Syrian students were regulated by the "Decree on Determining Student Contributions to Current Service Costs in Higher Education Institutions and Tuition Fees for 2014–2015 Academic Year" issued by the Council of Ministers and published in 27/09/2014. The decree states that, in accordance with the principles determined by the Council of Higher Education, tuition fees for Syrian students who continue their education within the period of the program or enroll to daytime education and open education programs should be covered from the public institution "Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities" budget.[15]

Survey and the Key Findings

The survey was implemented between January and March 2017. As already stated, 497 students across the country participated, of whom 395 took the online survey and the remaining 102 took the hardcopy survey the researchers conducted in

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[15]See: Council of Higher Education Announcements (No: 57802651) http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/09/20140927-6-1.pdf.

Istanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep and Mardin during the workshops. The demographic features of the participants are consistent with the actual distribution of Syrians across universities, 35% of the participants were female and 65% male. The resulting sample was highly representative of this distribution, as evidenced in the following graph shows.

The average age of participants is 23.15 which also indicates that most of these students dropped out of their higher education program before arriving in Turkey. When we asked them if they attended a university in Syria, 45.47% answered yes (Fig. 4).

The survey questions have been divided into four parts, namely to inquire about post-war vulnerabilities, family background, academic qualifications and socio-economic conditions and expectations.

- Post-war vulnerabilities:
  To start with the findings of their post-war vulnerabilities, we asked them how often they feel depressed remembering the war in Syria. About 60% indicated that they still suffer from this (Fig. 5).

In order to have an idea about the level/impact of this trauma, we asked them about their losses in the war. Only 14% of our respondents did not lose anybody close during the war, while 60% lost either a distant or a close relative, and 25% lost a friend. This makes the student population represented in the survey highly vulnerable in terms of their memories during the war (Fig. 6).

- Family background:
  When we asked them about the current location of their family members, we got a result indicating a much dispersed family diaspora. Accordingly, 89% of those in our sample still have family in Syria and 78% of the participants stated that at least one member of their family lives outside of Turkey and Syria.
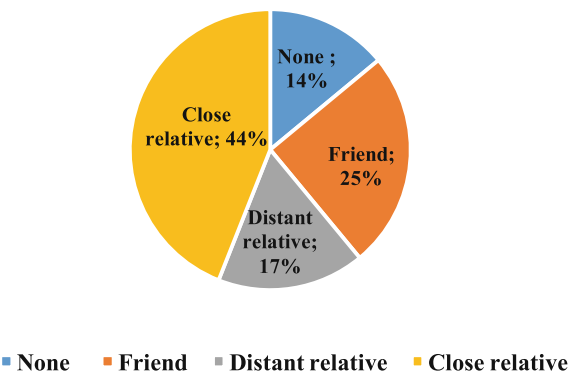

Fig. 4 Distribution of the students in the sample of Elite Dialogue Survey

Fig. 5 Feeling trauma after war

▪ Frequently ▪ Sometimes ▪ Never
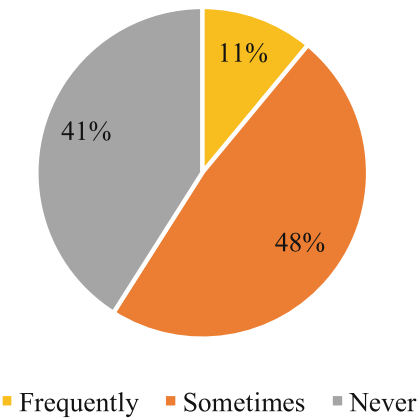
Fig. 6 Loss of family/friends during war

▪ None ▪ Friend ▪ Distant relative ▪ Close relative

In order to understand whether there is a relation between educational statuses of the parents, it appears that 21.3% of students have parents with higher education degrees. The percentage of men (fathers) (30.87%) is higher than that of women (mothers) (7.65). The share or people with no family members with a higher education degree is quite high at 40%. Educational statuses of siblings paint a similar picture. Approximately 54% of siblings of Syrian college students participating in the research have attended higher education institutions (Fig. 7, Table 1).

- Academic qualifications:

  37.75% of Syrian students participating in the survey stated that they can speak Turkish at an advanced level, and 41% of them at the intermediate level. The high percentage of this result has two reasons; one is that they attended the TOMER (Turkish language) course after their enrollment, the other is that some participants are of Turkmen origin for whom Turkish is a native language. The share of students who can speak advanced English is 31%, French is 4.6%; and about a quarter of the students indicated that they can speak other languages such as Kurdish, German, Russian, etc.
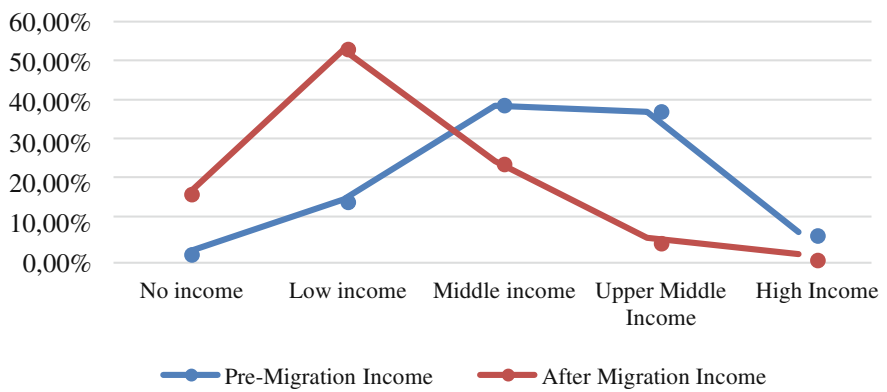
Fig. 7 Household income of before/after migration

Table 1 Higher education attainment of the parents

Answer choices	Responses (%)	Responses (no.)
Both parents went to college	21.37	81
Only the mother went to college	7.65	29
Only the father went to college	30.87	117
None of them	40.11	152
Total	100.00	379

There is a very visible income gap when pre- and after migration household income is compared. The welfare level of Syrian refugee students has dropped dramatically after migration, as indicated by the high income skewed normal distribution of their household income that has heavily shifted towards lower income levels. As a result of this, many students find themselves in the labor market either to support their families or their studies.

Syrian college students participating in the research were asked about the kind of difficulties they encountered when registering for colleges in Turkey. Only 19% of these students stated that they did not encounter any difficulties, however, it is understood that there are two main problems regarding this process, one is paying tuition fees and the other is gathering the required documents. Once again, it can be seen that the lack of information sources and language barriers are other difficulties they face (Fig. 8).

When we asked the students, 74% of Syrian respondents chose their field of study based on their own decisions. This is very important and positive in terms of student's motivation. 8.1% of these students stated that the university chose their field of study, which is due to the student and field quotas of certain universities (Fig. 9).
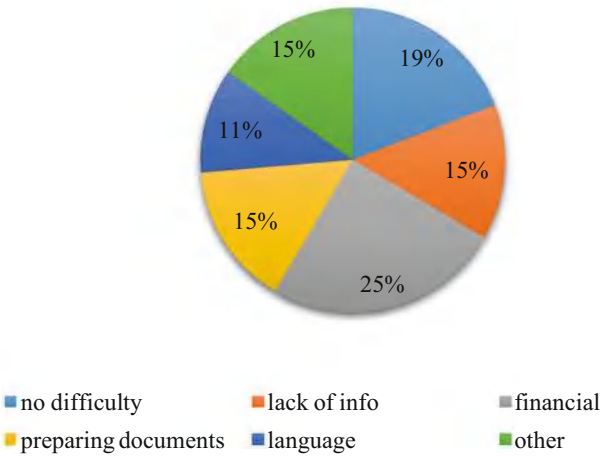
15% 19%

11%

15% 15%

25%

- no difficulty
- lack of info
- financial
- preparing documents
- language
- other

Fig. 8 Difficulties faced during admission

Turkish authority; 3,16%

Other; 2,16%

My university; 8,16%

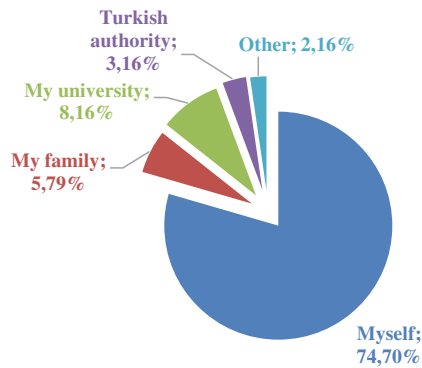My family; 5,79%

Myself; 74,70%

Fig. 9 Chosing the field of study

22.6% of Syrian college students participating in the research stated that they are beneficiaries of a scholarship. This ratio is consistent with the national average in Turkey. Turkish government gives approximately 3500 scholarships using its own and international resources. With 14,740 students, this number corresponds to 23.7%. This response is critical for the reliability and representative quality of our research. 51.45% of Syrian college students participating in the research stated that they applied for a scholarship but were rejected, whereas around 23% of them stated that they never applied for a scholarship. It is very important to support Syrian students coming from Syria with no financial resources so that they can continue their education and dissemination of the information regarding these scholarships (Fig. 10).
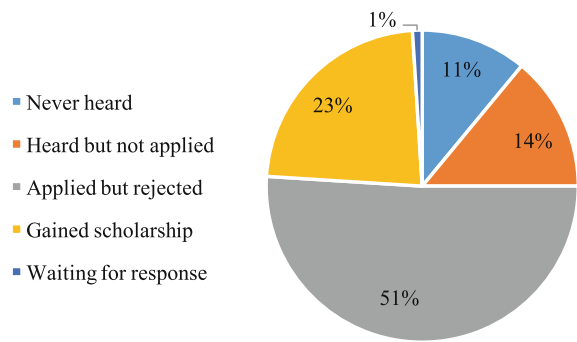
Fig. 10 Scholarships from Turkish government

Success Levels in the Courses

Academic standings of Syrian students participating in the research in the last few years are rather promising. Of all participants in the survey, 75% stated that their success levels are "average", "good", or "excellent". Students considering their success as "poor" are only 1%, those saying "average" are 15%. The level of success achieved despite very difficult conditions and a serious language barrier is indeed very promising (Fig. 11).

Quality of Education

A major part of Syrian college students participating in the survey (64%) appears to be satisfied with the quality of education provided by their departments in Turkey. Still, 20% of students seem dissatisfied with the quality of education, indicating the need for assessing this lack of satisfaction (Fig. 12).
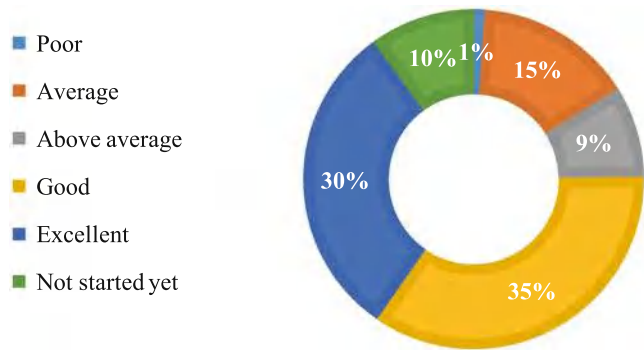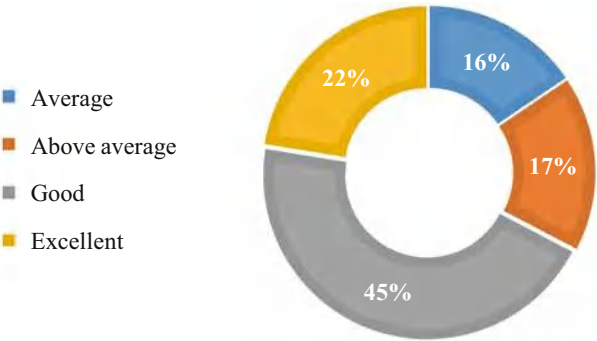

Fig. 11 Success levels in their courses

Fig. 12 Quality of education

Table 2 Social Relations

	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
Turkish friends	19.79% 75	20.32% 77	8.97% 34	24.54% 93	26.39% 100
Arabic friends	3.43% 13	8.18% 31	7.12% 27	31.40% 119	49.87% 189

- Social Integration and Future Expectations
  In order to discover how happy and adapted Syrian students in Turkey felt, the research tried to focus on social relations and asked the participants about their relationships with their Turkish and Arab friends. More than 50% of Syrian college students participating in the research stated that they have good and excellent relationships with Turks, and 40% of them expressed bad relationships. The "good relationships" between this same group of students and other Arabs, including Syrians, is of 80%, the relationships between these groups defined as bad is of 11%. This might be because Syrian students have not yet socialized with Turks fully. However, language barrier and significant obstacles due to cultural differences should be kept in mind (Table 2).

Living/Work[16]

Syrian students were also asked how they finance their education. About 18% of the students stated that they finance their education by scholarships, 25% of them said that they work, and the rest are supported by their families (Fig. 13).

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[16]Syrians under temporary protection (refugees) in Turkey have work permit. But more than 90% of Syrians in Turkey work informal. See: Erdogan and Ünver (2015); and Icduygu and Migration Policy Institute (2015).
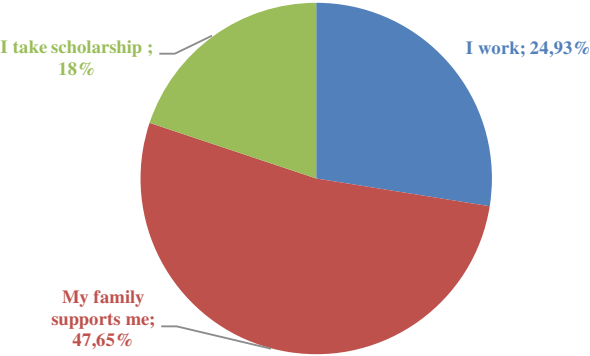
Fig. 13 Financial conditions

Future Perspectives

At this point, it is also important to explore the employment prospects of Syrian refugee students as this is one of the main reasons why they are enrolled in higher education programs. First, when it comes to their future expectations, the figure below ranks these with regards to different issue areas where 0 indicates no hope and 4 indicates high hopes from the future with respect to each issue area. As shown, they have the lowest levels of hope with regards to politics and economy of Syria and sociological high hopes from both Turkish politics and economy. When it comes to personal issues, they are most worried about household finances and least worried about life in general.

As can be expected, the level of hopes for Syria's future is the lowest, and Syrian college students participating in the research feel most hopeful about their personal lives and Turkish politics (Fig. 14).
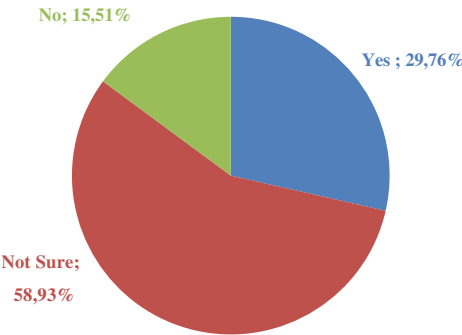

Fig. 14 Do you think you will find a job after graduation?

Plans for the Future

11.39% of Syrian college students participating in the research said that they would go back to Syria under any circumstances, and 9.17% stated they would go back "when the war is over". 27% of the remaining participants stated that they would never go back, and 52% is willing to go back when the war is over and their desired regime is established. However, considering their responses to other questions indicating that their hopes are rather low, it can be concluded that more than 80% of Syrian college students will not go back to their country (Fig. 15).

Responses to the question exploring this issue show that 52.5% of the students are not willing to migrate to a third country in the future. 30% of the students stated that they would go if they cannot finish their studies in Turkey or if they cannot find a job, whereas 14% of them would choose to go if they have the chance. 52.5% of the students stated that they would prefer to stay in Turkey. Although this is very valuable, it wouldn't be surprising if these ratios would turn more to pro-migration intentions over time.

Responses of Syrian college students participating in the research to the question asking which country they would go to "if they would go" are quite interesting. According to their responses, the first choice of Syrian students would be to go to Canada (41%), followed by the UK (25%), and then Germany (18%) (Fig. 16).
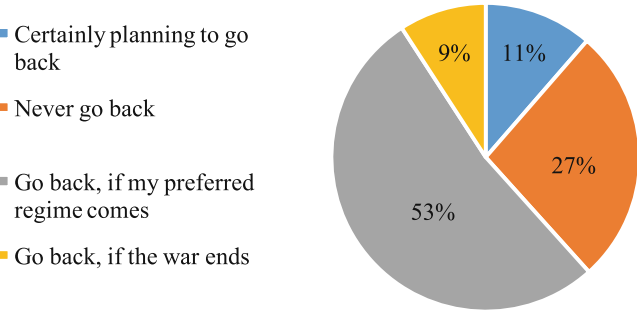

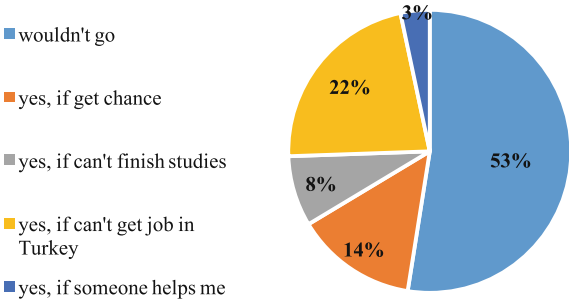**Fig. 15** Plans to move back

Fig. 16 Migration to third countries

Conclusion

This project is the first comprehensive work on Syrian students in Turkey. A survey featuring a sample of 495 representing the 14,740 Syrian students studying at Turkish universities was conducted. The main purpose of the project was to determine the situation of higher education students in Turkey. However, there are two main objectives underlying this purpose. The first one is to determine the problems of Syrian students and put forward recommendations for policies on this matter, and the second one is to understand this qualified group's contribution to the long-term adaptation process of Syrians and to provide ways and means for them to motivate themselves. We mainly believe that most of the Syrians, whose numbers are over 3.3 million as of November 2017, will stay in Turkey, which was clearly confirmed during the study. The number of university students (14,700) is very small compared to the overall Syrian population (3.3 million) in Turkey. There are around 500,000 young Syrians between 18 and 25 years old.

Higher education is highly competitive in Turkey due to the large young population and the imbalance between supply and demand in the system. Admitting Syrian students into education and particularly higher education is one of the most discussed issues and one of the main areas of social conflict in Turkey. Despite the fact that Syrian higher education students do not deny Turkish students their educational rights and enroll in universities under foreigner quotas, this has been one of the most criticized points in Turkish society regarding the rights granted to Syrian students. On the other hand, from a right-based approach, these groups have to receive a quality education and for the inclusive integration policies, the education level of the overall refugee population in Turkey must be increased. In order to prevent new lost generations, to help the youth continue their education, to enable them to contribute to Turkish society and act as bridges in adaptation processes, new effective and data-based policies must be implemented. However, increasing this number of students and incentivizing policies should be structured in a manner to prevent any additional societal turmoil, and policies should be developed with support from the Turkish society.[17]

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[17]This approach can be noticed in the document for the most refugee hosting countries created by the UN. See 3RP (Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan). (n.d). Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2015–16: Turkey. *Report, 3RP*. Retrieved from https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Syria/3RP-Report-Turkey.pdf. For a European policy for the recognition of the qualification see Recommendation on the Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications under Lisbon Recognition Convention and Explanatory Memorandum, Paris/Strasbourg, 14 Nov 2017.

Findings of This Research

Higher education students will play an important role in peaceful future prospects and contributions to all segments of the society including Syrian refugees. ED Project is based on this view, believing that Syrians students studying at universities in Turkey will play a rather important part in the process. The current profile, as gathered from the participants in the survey, shows that Syrian university students in Turkey:

- are traumatized young people experiencing deep psychological outcomes of the war;
- have low enrollment rates to universities;
- are academically vulnerable, having no clear perspectives and supervision;
- are not integrated socially with the local people;
- have unclear future prospects, second and more migration plans.

Our recommendations for new policies addressing the Syrian students are to create data-based and more inclusive policies, to have clear, sustainable, comprehensive mid and long-term migration strategies covering all areas of social integration, to determine more funding and more study places in higher education, focus on gender imbalance in all aspects of life and to implement lifelong education to increase their active participation in life.

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Inclusive Practices in Response to the German Refugee Influx: Support Structures and Rationales Described by University Administrators

Lisa Unangst and Bernhard Streitwieser

Introduction

New and rapidly evolving challenges in the German post-secondary ecosystem have followed the recent influx of refugees from the Middle East, North Africa and beyond. Actors in the public, private, and community-based sectors alike have contributed resources and initiated programs seeking to address some of these challenges and capitalize on opportunities (for example, utilizing MOOCs in new and innovative ways). However, it is the 16 federal states that are primarily responsible for setting the higher education policy, and indeed, public universities are the primary providers of post-secondary education in Germany. Thus, policies set by the states are mediated both by federal government structures and supports— German Academic Exchange Service (or DAAD) funding serving as a good example—as well as by institutional priorities. Indeed, the influx of refugees to Germany and significant shifts in higher education policy make this a timely human rights issue with broad impact. As Kogan, Gebel, and Noelke write, "understanding how different education systems generate or mitigate social inequalities in education is a central aim of social stratification research" (Kogan et al. 2011, p. 70). Refugees in the German context encounter distinct supports and barriers in accessing higher education.

This paper highlights the support systems developed by 12 German universities for refugee students, probing these structures through two separate interview-based studies conducted by the authors and targeting university faculty and staff. With an

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eye toward informing both practitioners and academics in the field, this paper presents data and seeks to encourage change at the institutional level, enabling understanding for and direct support of refugee student populations. We also seek to identify emerging best practices, particularly with practitioners in mind.

Background

As asylum-seekers and refugee numbers in Europe swelled from 2014 to 2015, German Chancellor Merkel took the rather remarkable step of committing significant resources to the support of unregistered refugees, issuing a call to action enshrined in the now famous phrase, "Wir Schaffen Das" ("We will manage it"). "In September 2015, Berlin pledged 6 billion euros ($6.6 billion) to support the 800,000 migrants—about quadruple the number from 2014—it was expecting to receive by the end of 2015" (Park 2015). However, initial optimism about taking a lead role in the refugee crisis soon turned to doubt, in large part because the financial burden was (and remains) substantial, with many costs falling directly on towns and municipalities. *Die Zeit* has estimated that costs ranged among German cities between Euro 132 and Euro 1666 per refugee per month in Germany (Friedrichs and Malter 2016).

Higher education in Germany is tuition-free, for domestic as well as for most international students (though this will soon change for non-EU students in the states of Baden-Württemberg and Nordrhein-Westfalen), including refugees. Further, all students who complete the university entrance qualification known as the Abitur become eligible to enter any public institution. However, because there are more applicants than spaces, in many institutions (particularly in the more popular metropolitan centres like Berlin or Munich), only those with top grades will be admitted; the problem is further heightened in the most popular subject areas. Of particular concern is the area of medical studies which tends to apply the "numerus clausus" most strictly. Despite their asylum status, refugees do not generally receive differential treatment in admissions decisions and must compete with all international students. However, while admission is competitive, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that there may be an informal cap on the number of refugee students per program.

Broadly speaking, the recent refugee influx has spurred the creation and extension of a suite of services for refugees who seek to enter the university in Germany. These services include verifying higher education entrance credentials, ensuring German language competency through preparatory classes, offering buddy and mentoring programs, auditing classes, and providing additional guidance and individual consultations services. Three general types of support ease the path to refugee entrance to German higher education. First, if tangible credentials are unavailable (if a refugee had to flee without documentation), one's university entrance qualification, or *Hochschulzugangsberechtigung,* can be verified against the *Anabin* database ("*Anerkennung und Bewertung ausländischer*

Bildungsnachweise") and then processed at the universities through the *Uni-assist e.V.* organisation, which is the credential service provider to universities. Second, the *TestAS* exam is available to verify scholastic aptitude through a centrally administered, standard examination. The test can be taken in numerous languages and is free of charge the first time it is taken. Third, verifying applicants' *language proficiency*, which for university study at the BA, MA or PhD level in Germany must be at a level C1 competency, may be completed via a number of widely available testing mechanisms.

Theoretical Framework

We ground our study of inclusive practices and institutional support for refugee students in Critical Theory to explicitly acknowledge the social, historical, economic and ideological forces that impact contemporary German universities as well as their faculty, staff, students, and community stakeholders. That is to say, we acknowledge the impact in Germany—and Western Europe more broadly—of unequal power structures in society at large, which are reflected in the university setting and necessarily influence the experience of both prospective and enrolled students. As Gutierrez-Rodriguez puts it,

> universities reflect deeply entrenched social inequalities marked by class, race, disability and migration…Thus, universities reflect the inherent social inequalities within the nation state. When it comes to German and British state universities, what becomes apparent is the class and racial stratification of these institutions (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2016)

Critical Theory allows for both macro and micro level exploration, which works well in analysing narrative work: administrators, students and faculty alike have direct experiences that shed light on campus, area, and national phenomena, as well as on specific student support programs as they exist in the German context.

Further, in the mode of Solórzano et al., we situate our work within a transformative paradigm that emphasizes "the centrality of experiential knowledge" and encourages an intersectional approach, calling attention to the experiences of marginalized groups such as refugees (Solórzano et al. 2000, p. 63). Finally, we focus on the power dynamics of the university setting, which can be split in broad terms into de facto (in practice) and *de jure* (formalised) operations.

As noted by Hurtado, "Researchers who use a transformative lens are typically engaged in a research process that helps educators and students divest from inequality embedded in norms and structures to devise solutions for social and institutional change" (Hurtado 2015, p. 290). Indeed, researchers in this mode respond directly to Bourdieu's problematisation of the school-based "reproduction of existing power relations in society by privileging the cultural background of students of the dominant class" (Kanno and Varghese 2010, p. 313). That is, transformative research commits to offering prompt, practical solutions for disadvantaged or marginalized groups. Transformative work is critical, in our view, to an

exploration of refugee issues; not only have students of colour, migrant and refugee students (distinct categories which may overlap) been traditionally marginalised in the post-secondary education sphere, but given massification, neo-liberalism, and immigration reform (which continue to produce structural changes), a closer examination of this sector is indicated (Heath et al. 2008; Kristen and Granato 2007).

Methodology

In developing their interview protocols, both authors structured open-ended items with prompts that allowed ample opportunity to delve deeply into issues and experiences when the interviewee allowed while still maintaining a neutral stance as a researcher. Participants in interview series A (conducted by Unangst) were all attached to public research universities in northern or central Germany, with an even distribution among large cities, a medium-sized city, and large towns, all of which are situated in former West Germany (Unangst 2017). All participants were recruited through personal outreach and interviewed for about sixty minutes in nine in-person and one Skype conversations. A standard interview protocol was employed, with questions addressing administrator/faculty background, experiences with refugee and migrant students over time, conceptions of diversity at their university, and institutional support for their programming areas.

Participants in interview series B (conducted by Streitwieser) came from three universities of applied sciences (*Hochschulen*) in Berlin (both former East and West) and were recruited by a well-networked senior administrator from one of the institutions. The data were collected over four days in January 2017 through a series of one hour-long interviews. Four university administrators charged with refugee integration and two groups of six refugees each in focus groups were interviewed, however, this paper focuses on the administrator interviews (an analysis of the refugee student data is currently being prepared for separate publication[1]). A standard interview protocol was used and questions addressed to administrators asked them to describe the situation of refugees seeking access to their university, what their main constraints and support were, how they feel the higher education sector is responding, what their motivations and goals were for working with this population, and what they expected the ramifications to be in the coming years (Table 1).

In reviewing interview transcripts, an open coding technique was utilized to identify main concepts emerging from participant insights and observations. Next, axial coding was performed to group concepts into "families" employing a critical

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[1]Streitwieser, B. (in progress). Integration of Refugees into German Higher Education: Seeking Access to Berlin Universities. Chapter proposal accepted for inclusion in K. Magos & M. Margaroni for a Special issue on "Refugees Education and Experience" in the *Global Education Review*, Volume 5, No. 4, November, 2018.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of interview participants, Series A and B

Respondent	Number	Gender	Migrant background	University type
Faculty	5 (Series A) 1 (Series B)	2 male, 3 female (Series A); 1 female (Series B)	1 faculty (Series A)	Research Universities (Series A)
Administrators	5 (Series A) 2 (Series B)	3 male, 2 female (Series A) 1 male, 1 female (Series B)	2 administrators (Series A) 1 paid student administrative assistant (Series B)	Research Universities (Series A) Universities of Applied sciences serving 10,000 + students (Series B)
German student support	3 (Series B)	2 female, 1 male (Series B)	1 male	
Totals: 16				

lens (Kaveh 2014). While, assuredly, additional coding might result in important findings, the main emphasis in this iteration of the analysis was to identify broad themes relevant to a comparative case study of refugee student support at German universities.

In the mode of Pugach and Goodman, this paper seeks to offer a transparent evaluation of the author's own positionalities, so as to provide important detail and nuance on the role of the researcher (Pugach and Goodman 2015). As a graduate student and tenure-track academic who have worked on questions surrounding educational policy relating to the education of migrant populations in Germany (Streitwieser et al. 2017a, b), the authors are both interested on a personal and professional level in equitable access and attainment. As a result, we view reporting in the popular media on the refugee influx and education as well as research literature with a particular, critical lens. As Kilbourn writes,

> A fundamental assumption for any academic research is that the phenomena (data) that we wish to understand are filtered through a point of view (a theoretical perspective)—that is to say, it is assumed that there is no such thing as a value-free or unbiased or correct inter-pretation of an event. Interpretations are always filtered through one or more lenses or theoretical perspectives that we have for "seeing" (Kilbourn 2006, p. 545).

Key Findings

German Language Proficiency as a Significant Barrier

German is a difficult language, both grammatically and phonetically, and when it is used colloquially it is distinctly different from the way it is used in professional situations. Arguably, university-level German is the most complex version and

learning the particular academic language (*Fachsprache*) is exceedingly difficult. To learn this level of German sufficiently to successfully understand lectures and to produce quality written work takes time. Administrators in Series B noted frequently in this regard that refugees face a particularly difficult challenge as they compete with often more linguistically familiar international students, who may have a much longer history and familiarity with the German language (for example a Dutch or a Russian student) than a newly arrived refugee. Fear of inadequacy in German can then translate into a stronger reluctance to attend lectures and ask questions, thus further hindering integration. As the Staff Coordinator of Refugee Affairs at one Berlin universities noted

> My goodness, it will not just take a few months but a few years. How are they supposed to get by with just a rudimentary understanding of the language?….If someone's been a foreign student in Germany for years, or maybe worked here as an Au pair, they pose significant competition to refugees, so language is really the main and first hurdle that they need to overcome…. I tell them the story of a Finnish student who also had a very hard time getting into a German university so they won't think it's just being made difficult for Syrian students.

Given that prospective students with a refugee background enter Germany with varying levels of German proficiency, the length of time to acquire even B1 level proficiency (required for applicants to the university pathway programs surveyed) may be substantial. Pathway programs are not credit-bearing programs, but rather span a range of language and orientation offerings, aiming to prepare students with a secondary-level leaving certificate to successfully enrol in a degree-granting university program. Not all students are familiar with this two-tiered system of study encountered by most refugees: as one interview participant in Series A put it, he spent a lot of time telling students "it's going to take longer to get into the university system and even to graduate from the university than they were expecting." As noted by one staffer, a language preparation program launched at his institution was meant to bridge two language levels (from B1 to C1) in five months (in its first iteration), and the time allocated was found to be insufficient. The program was subsequently extended to six months, and a proposal for the third iteration of the initiative outlines a course of one year in length.

Several authors have noted that the relatively high threshold of C1 German language proficiency—generally required to enter a German language university degree program—prevents refugee students from accessing credit-bearing study for some time. C1 level proficiency is defined by the Council of Europe's portal as follows:

> [Student] can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices (Council of Europe 2017).

Further, one interview participant in Series A highlighted the even higher language threshold for teaching training programs, which is set by the state at a C2 level.

In addition to these barriers to degree program entry, another difficulty identified by interview participants in Series A was in absorbing content knowledge concurrent with learning new academic vocabulary. One administrator reported that a degree-seeking student with C1-level German skills dropped out of their political science program for this very reason: "He took classes for the first six weeks and then he terminated his university program because, he said, the language barrier is so high" and went on to note that it was the *Fachsprache* (subject-specific language) that was the main difficulty. The student has since taken an internship in the field and plans to re-apply in the future, after having acquired these subject-specific skills.

Distinct Programs Offered in Distinct University Contexts

The development of refugee support structures has varied widely by university. At one institution included in Interview Series A, an orientation program is limited to six-eight weeks, after which "people can go into the educational settings and find out if the educational system in Germany will suit their expectations" and then pursue being admitted as a degree-seeking student in the subject of their choice (once they meet language and secondary school leaving certificate requirements).

Further, it seems that the professional background of key constituents plays a critical role in how these programs evolve. Given the structure of primary financial support for most refugee programming, this is indeed logical: the DAAD's *Integra* program has funded a range of initiatives proposed by post-secondary institutions, which were developed to match university staff capacity and perceived current needs (Kanning 2017). For instance, one university staff member interviewed in Series A who has administered refugee programs since November 2016 noted that her prior experience working for the university played an important role in her current work. Building on a network of university, political, and community-wide contacts she had established over the previous years, she found it relatively easy to develop a range of seminars and modules which introduced refugee students enrolled in pathway programs to various academic specialties at the university, allowing them to consider whether they might like to study the topic more intensively. Further, she is responsible for continuing a pre-existing series of networking meetings for community stakeholders working on refugee issues. A Berlin university administrator interviewed in Series B spoke of how her prior experience living in Egypt and speaking Arabic had helped her to better understand some of the cultural nuances of refugee students from that region.

Another interview participant in Series A indicated that his university had launched programs supporting prospective refugee students in fall of 2015, after the city had received a swell of refugees in the summer of that year, and that it was very

difficult to build upon the initial program offerings for the first academic year, given that offerings were closely tied to planned seminars and other academic offerings. This participant also noted the emphasis on the financing of education in his university's pathway program and provided an example of how critical this issue can be to students: a student who had attended several consultations with the university staff over summer months made the staffer aware that he was living in a tent, and as winter approached, his situation became more acute. The staffer himself estimated that he had spoken with over twelve agencies in the area trying to assist the student with financing and housing, and that this experience (while extreme) highlighted how difficult the process of resettlement can be for refugee students. The staffer reported, "we had to get in contact with a dozen… even more different institutions, which all said 'ok, you have a problem, we know that problem, and we would be responsible, but we cannot help because first of all you have to go there, and then you have to go there [to different offices].'" He ended by saying that "that was so striking for me…how hard it was for *us* even to get clear information, to get clear direction… it must be really, really hard for people that don't know the system, that don't know the language… that don't even have a place where they can rest."

An additional Series A participant, a faculty member, noted that her university had offered to host refugees on the university campus itself at the beginning of the refugee influx and then convened a task force comprised of various university stakeholders to identify areas in which the institution could support prospective refugee students. She observed that she was not clear on whether students from a refugee background received, for instance, extra time for exams, which would be made available to other students who qualified for a "*Nachteilsausgleich*" (accommodations), but that she was in support of such an initiative.

"Success" in Refugee Support Programming Is Opaque and Inconsistent

Though how "success" was measured at the respective institutions was not a question explicitly addressed in either interview series, this emerged as a clear theme given a lack of data on student participation, lack of benchmarking practices, uncertainty regarding future funding, and lack of a clear mission or vision at the institutional level. In part, this difficulty measuring success via longitudinal evaluation is hampered by Germany's very strict data protection laws (*Datenschutz*), which make student tracking particularly challenging. These laws, which are even more restrictive than the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations in the United States, do not allow for tracking of students with refugee backgrounds (*Fluechtlingshintergrund*), meaning that, as these individuals are mainstreamed into universities as regularly matriculated students, it becomes difficult to track whether they persist or drop out at proportionally higher rates than other international students. Universities, as a result, may only be able to anecdotally document the longer-term success of their refugee students after matriculation.

Additionally, data are lacking on several levels: first, almost all interview participants noted that their institution had had very little idea how many refugee students to expect when programming was launched, and many noted that this was still the case. For some universities, most of the students served to date arrived on campus in 2015, while for others, 2017 represented a year of significant growth in refugee student engagement. One interview participant in Series A noted that his institution enrolled 30 language program participants in the summer semester of 2015, and by summer 2017, 330 students were enrolled in at least one program at the same site. Another staffer noted that their program launched in October 2016, when they had "no idea what the needs of the people participating in the program would be" and that they "developed the program on the fly." Only recently, he said, had they been able to plan ahead and proactively "plan solutions" for students, almost two years after program implementation.

In 2016, the secretary general of the DAAD, Dorothea Rüland, made the estimate publicly that 30,000–50,000 refugees would be prepared—having overcome administrative hurdles and language requirements—to seek access to higher education in the next several years (Rüland 2016). Universities surveyed did not have a "target" number of refugee students that they would like to be serving though, as noted previously, some had capacity limits on the number of students they were able to serve. It must be noted that, while in 2015 close to one million new refugees (890,000) entered Germany, by 2016, due to an EU deal with Turkey and the closure of borders in transit countries, the refugee influx entering Germany had been reduced to 280,000 (Trines 2017). But even so, as one administrator in Series B interviews noted, German bureaucracy had been confronted with a major challenge. He noted, for example, that Berlin's state Office of Health and Social Affairs, known as LaGeSo for short (Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales) had had to hire 1000 additional workers with only three months of training, and yet empowered them with authority to make life-altering decisions about a refugees' right or not to stay or need to leave the country.

As this enormous administrative challenge has filtered down to the university sector, we may also consider how nation-wide system actors seek success in terms of matriculated, degree-seeking students from a refugee background. According to a study by the German Rectors Conference (HRK), as of 2017, 1140 refugees had become officially enrolled in university study in the country, a fivefold jump over six months earlier, and the numbers of those seeking guidance to enter university had doubled over the course of one semester. Does this increase demonstrate "success" for the DAAD? For the HRK?

Students, staff and faculty interviewed almost universally displayed a lack of knowledge of refugee support structures at other universities. None of them had a clear sense of the most successful universities in this area; they were not aware of the number of refugee students in pathway or degree programs of other universities. A student interviewed in Series B was the only participant to mention the recognition that DAAD offers to notable refugee support programs. The DAAD has a small-scale competition that highlights student-led university programs that support refugees and it also holds regional conferences to highlight successful programs in

the area. However, apparently neither of these initiatives were known to the interviewees in Series A.

Indeed, it seems as if the DAAD as the primary funder of such programs would be the natural party to distribute this type of information. In any case, the lack of knowledge of the scope of institutional responses may demonstrate a lack of familiarity with best practices and, of course, this necessarily limits the construction of success in any given campus context.

Further, all institutions surveyed in both Series A and Series B noted uncertainty regarding future funding for refugee support programs. While defining concrete funding mechanisms was not a primary focus of this project, it seems that some universities dedicate more institutional funding to refugee-relevant programming, while others rely primarily on DAAD support, and still others seek a combination of institutional, DAAD, and state or federal level support. Naturally, a lack of clarity around the sustainability of programming impacts the scope of work attempted and additionally creates stress for staff and faculty who already feel overburdened by their workload and student needs.

Finally, while a few interview participants in Series A highlighted the direct involvement of their university's vice president or rector in refugee programming, it was primarily related to securing funding for *Integra* programs and not related to an overarching, long-term vision for refugee integration. That is to say, it does not seem that senior leadership level "talking points" have translated to the faculty and staff level on this topic. One exception is notable: a faculty member who also holds a senior administration appointment spoke at length about their goals for the institution as a whole around not only refugee integration but issues of diversity more broadly, including the integration of students from a migrant background. However, this individual noted repeatedly that university politics and power structures made change slower than might be optimal. To be fair, change management is a chronically vexing challenge for most large institutions, whether they are universities, businesses or any other type of enterprise. Several administrators in Series B, however, while generally pleased with the level of support from above, were quite proud of the level of support from below, namely from students stepping up to volunteer for refugee integration initiatives. For example, the "Welcome—Students Helping Refugees" program of the DAAD funds students offering refugees language programs and other training opportunities during the summer months.

Another issue worth contemplating is the substance, not just societally but also within the universities, of the oft-touted "Welcome Culture." While the German response from the highest levels of government down to the university level were clearly inspired by Chancellor Angela Merkel's inspiring "Wir schaffen das" mantra, it is fair debate whether the response was one of obligation and a desire to continue to rehabilitate the country's image, or a truly energetic movement to take up refugees and help them find their way throughout German society. Indeed, some of the student administrators interviewed in Series B questioned the intent of programs like the DAAD's *Integra* initiative; were programs developed by universities, they wondered, mainly because they were receiving monetary support from the DAAD and because other universities were establishing similar programs?

Speculation on this topic varied among respondents and was dependent on individual circumstances. However, it appears that many of the current programs on offer were not well thought out or carefully targeted to meet the needs of the refugees themselves. One administrator in Series B, for example, found it highly problematic that refugees themselves had not (at least to that point) been asked yet through an evaluation study to assess the services they were receiving. For her, any claim of the program's success could therefore only be anecdotal and unreliable. The respondent also noted that any future survey including identifying information would likely prevent a refugee student from responding candidly. After all, as she noted, who will bite the hand that feeds you?

Enabling Access for Women Refugees Is a Key Goal

It seems clear that interview participants perceive women to comprise a minority of refugee students being served at their institutions. In the Series A interviews, one staff member noted that 14% of participants in refugee support programs at her institution were women and that the university was making an effort to consider measures such as combining child care with programmatic offerings in order to increase participation in this area. Notably, the staff member who highlighted this gap identified herself as having a background in gender studies. In Series B, the administrators also voiced their concerns over the small number of Muslim refugee women in language courses then going on to seek entrance into university study. In this regard, the administrators noted a struggle between, on the one hand, wanting to encourage a greater participation among these women while, at the same time, not seeking to step into unfamiliar cultural territory and offend established norms.

In terms of the refugee influx to Germany in 2015–16, roughly 30% were women. The term "Asylum Darwinism" has been used to characterize the lower number of women who fled their countries for the simple reason that the passage was more dangerous for them (Lebecher). Once arrived in Germany, women also faced additional dangers in refugee centres where bathrooms and showers were not separate and sexual violence has been a significant factor (Hertie School). Some women may also serve as caretakers for the family, which may include children as well as older parents and partners, potentially resulting in limited mobility and time to pursue university access. The research shows that refugee women are also more reluctant to seek out health counselling, and psychological counselling, again compounding why women may face greater internal and external challenges in finding the time, money, and support to even contemplate, let alone find their way into a university, and eventually into a program of studies (Hertie report). Likely as a result of this, so far a much smaller percentage of women than men appear to be accessing language and university content courses. This gender disparity in university access is of concern to administrators, who would like to understand better what women refugees need in order to be able to access university opportunities (RUB).

Gap Between Refugees Interested in Study and Those Succeeding to Enrol as Students

Several interview participants in Series A reported that the number of enrolled, degree-seeking refugee students at their institutions in 2017 was lower than they had anticipated. Some interview participants went further, indicating that education officials had underestimated how difficult it would be for refugee students—even those with strong academic backgrounds—to access public higher education in Germany. One staffer noted that there are "large groups" of people who fulfil the "basic requirements" to get into university but don't attend "because there are so many barriers to get into the university" and that this gap between "formal" and "actual" access didn't allow for a "diverse student body." Indeed, another interview participant noted that he believed that in medicine, about 600 people applied for study places each year, though only about 15 places were available. One faculty member in Series B interviews spoke at length about having to temper refugees' expectations (*Erwartungsmanagement*). She noted that not only do universities need to provide information to interested refugees about possible pathways into the institution but must also be sensitive to the natural disappointment or even anger some are bound to feel if they are unable to access higher education.

While degree-seeking student numbers stemming from the refugee influx are low, enrolment in so-called pathway programs (which are housed at various so-called *Studienkolleg* locations and other sites) is relatively strong, with some universities serving several hundred students in this capacity. While pathway programs differ by site, all of those surveyed offer language instruction, as well as some version of orientation programming, which may include: introduction to library services, access to sports offerings, and research and writing tutorials specific to the German context. One interview participant in Series A noted that, while the pathway program located on the university campus itself was the most popular program in the (relatively rural) region, that program's enrolment was capped and, therefore, prospective students were often forced to enrol in pathway programs at different sites in the region—it would be interesting indeed to compare the university enrolment ratios of graduates of the on-campus and off-campus programs.

During another interview in Series A, a staff member at a second relatively rural university noted that in the previous year, there had been 120 applications for the university's pathway program and that 40 applicants had been accepted. The same interview participant noted their concern that pathway program students would enrol at other universities when qualified for admittance; there appeared to be a concern for return on investment, as well as perhaps an awareness that certain cities or regions within Germany are perceived as more welcoming to the refugee community. This also indicates a possible roadblock for students: a desire to move to a more welcoming area without the resources to do so. Indeed, in Germany's response to the current refugee influx (previous crises having been in the early 1990s during the Balkan crisis, before that a variety of less dramatic population

spikes through the post-war guest worker programs, and most dramatically in 1945 as millions of expelled ethnic Germans retreated from Eastern Europe toward Germany), Merkel's government has instituted a program that works to distribute refugees throughout the country in an effort to avoid them congregating in cities and creating what has been referred to as "parallel societies" or "ethnic enclaves" for lack of a better term.

Several staffers in Series A indicated that students enrolled in pathway programs or individual workshops were side-tracked from pursuing a credit-bearing study at university due to mental trauma, health issues, and family crises caused by war, flight and displacement. One interview participant noted that a refugee student from North Africa had had ten family members die during an attempted Mediterranean crossing—indeed, it is not only maintaining mental health which may be a "distraction" from study, but also life outside the classroom which moves forward in sometimes unexpected and difficult ways. This is an area widely studied among first-generation college students in the United States as well as among ethnic minority students in Germany. Claudia Diehl and co-contributors in their research highlight the difficulties encountered in student housing for Turkish students (Diehl et al. 2013). Along similar lines, in the Series B interviews an administrator cautioned that since "Syrians will be here for years to come, we need to treat them as *Bildungsinlaender*, not *Bildungsauslaender*," or those who earned their university entrance qualification in Germany versus international students. In this, she implied that Germany has an obligation to successfully integrate refugees, dealing with a wide range of challenges including mental health, on the assumption that they will remain for many years or perhaps permanently.

Conclusion

While current refugee flows to Germany have abated significantly given current efforts at the federal level to curtail entry by creating "reception centres" in Africa (and elsewhere) and the EU agreement with Turkey alluded to above, refugees will continue to seek entry to higher education in the country, particularly as more and more attain C1 German language proficiency. This paper has outlined initial findings from two closely related interview series with university staff and faculty at twelve institutions in Germany. We find continued evidence that the C1 language proficiency requirement for entry to a degree program represents the most significant barrier to refugee students; that a wide range of diverse and uncoordinated programmatic offerings exist in distinct university contexts; that "success" in the context of refugee support programs is ill defined and poorly communicated so that it is difficult to assess how well program implementation has gone; that women are underrepresented in refugee support programs; and that a troubling gap persists between students interested in study and those enrolling as degree seeking students (as well as the related challenge of the transition from interest to actual enrolment in the face of stiff competition for few spots).

Moving forward, as students from refugee backgrounds continue in pathway programs and enrol as degree-seeking students in larger numbers, it will be important to observe whether there are differences in student persistence rates at different universities. Several interview participants at one of the "new" universities founded in the 1960s noted in Series A that their campus already had a high degree of diversity in terms of socio-economic status and non-traditional student backgrounds, and indicated that they felt that this environment was relatively welcoming to those from a refugee background. Interviewees in Series B also expressed pride in the openness of their institutions to helping refugees. Campus diversity, among many other factors including state social supports; diversity of the community at large; cost of living, etc., will likely impact persistence for this vulnerable student population. One interview participant in Series A noted that he felt that the university at which he worked ought to "embrace diversity" and that it was "symbolic what we do here." Indeed, post-secondary education plays (most critically) a practical role in the integration of refugees, but also a symbolic one.

It is also important to note that Series A and Series B focused on research universities and *Fachhochschulen*, respectively. These two types of institutions have different structures, different student populations, and a plethora of other distinctions that should not be ignored. That is to say, while we seek to provide an outline of our combined findings—areas of overlap—in this paper, future research might productively probe support structures at each of these institutional types.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize the problematic lack of information sharing among the institutions surveyed in the research discussed here. Given that staff time and other resources are required in order for an effective exchange of best practices to take place, we urge that German post-secondary institutions explicitly support these practitioners. Further, we urge both state government actors and the DAAD to support this improved communication wherever possible. After all, when services to refugee students at one institution work well, sharing that success more widely may improve services for all, surely a worthwhile endeavour.

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Part III
Twenty Years of Bologna and a Decade of EHEA: What is Next? (Coordinated by Sjur Bergan and Ligia Deca)

Twenty Years of Bologna and a Decade of EHEA: What Is Next?

Sjur Bergan and Ligia Deca

A Brief History of Considering the Future

Considering or raising critical questions about the future of the European Higher Education Area is hardly an original endeavor. In one sense, considerations of the future have been present since the outset. In the Bologna Declaration (Bologna Process 1999),[1] the Ministers of the then 29 "Bologna countries" referred to consolidating a European area of higher education by the end of the "first decade of the third millennium" by coordinating their policies to reach specified objectives and indicated their intention to meet two years later to assess progress and "the new steps to be taken". The first new countries acceded to the Bologna Process already two years later, at the first Ministerial conference after the adoption of the Bologna Declaration (Bologna Process 2001), and in 2007 the Ministerial communiqué included a section on "Looking forward to 2010 and beyond" as well as a mandate to the BFUG to "consider further how the EHEA might develop after 2010 and to report back to the next ministerial meeting in 2009" (Bologna Process 2007a, paragraph 4).

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[1]All Declarations and Communiqués of the Bologna Process as well as the web sites of the successive Ministerial conferences are accessible through http://www.ehea.info/pid34363/ministerial-declarations-and-communiques.html, accessed on November 2, 2017.

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Horizon 2010

To our knowledge, the first organized consideration of the future of the European Higher Education Area beyond its initial phase[2] came with the 2007–2009 Bologna work program. The Flemish Community of Belgium and Luxembourg, with Noel Vercruysse and Germain Dondelinger as the prime movers, organized a seminar on "Bologna 2020: Unlocking Europe's Potential - Contributing to a Better World"[3] in Ghent on May 19–20, 2008. The seminar included a broad range of presentations by well known "Bologna actors" and was based on a survey of stakeholders carried out by the Academic Cooperation Association as well as a research project coordinated by INCHER, the International Center for Higher Education Research at Kassel University (Kehm et al. 2009). The topics of the research papers that informed the seminar ranged from "European higher education in search of a new legal order" and "student mobility and staff mobility in the EHEA beyond 2010" through "market governance in higher education" and "quality, equity, and the social dimension" to "the Bologna Process toward 2020", "the relevance of higher education", and "European higher education in search of a new institutional order".[4]

A month later—on June 24–25, 2008—the BFUG held an extraordinary meeting in Sarajevo on the same topic. The meeting was unusual in more ways than one: it was held outside of the ordinary series of BFUG meetings, it was the first BFUG meeting that focused on a single topic, with parallel sessions and not just plenaries, and it was the first held outside of the country holding the rotating BFUG Chairmanship as well as the first to be held in a non-EU country. In this sense, this extraordinary meeting anticipated the new governance arrangement adopted by Ministers in 2009, whereby the BFUG would no longer be chaired exclusively by the country holding the EU Presidency but co-chaired by this country and a non-EU country (Bologna Process 2009). The paper presented to this meeting (Bologna Process 2008) reviews all Bologna policy areas and action lines with a view to finalizing the agenda, on the safe underlying assumption that "not all the action lines will have been completed by 2010" (*op. cit.*: 1). The paper also considers further possible issues for the Bologna Process, phrased as having to provide "relevant, concrete and operational answers to issues affecting higher education in

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[2]The term "the end of the first decade of the third millennium" has generally been interpreted as meaning 2010.

[3]http://www.ehea.info/cid103198/seminar-on-bologna-beyond-2010.html, accessed on November 2, 2017. Unfortunately, most of the documents for the seminar are no longer available through this link. The background note and provisional program are available at https://media.ehea.info/file/20080313-14-Brdo/27/1/BFUG(SI)13_5b_Ghent_Bologna_Seminar_592271.pdf, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[4]The research papers were published as Kehm et al. (2009). The INCHER link to the publication through https://www.uni-kassel.de/einrichtungen/en/incher/research/projects-completed-up-to-2010/the-european-higher-education-area-2010-to-2020.html no longer seems operational (accessed on November 2, 2017).

the second decade of the 21st century" (*op. cit.*: 1) and underlines that while these challenges tend to be global, the Bologna Process needed to identify a specifically European response. The third part of the document discussed the follow-up structure.

In the paper and the discussion, we can already identify elements that have been a staple of discussions about "the future of Bologna" since then. The tension between focusing on implementation of goals already defined and developing new polices and policy areas, concerns about a "two speed Bologna Process" and the search for viable governance of a loosely organized European process that reconciles all these elements are reflected in the paper. Among the possible new policy areas identified (Bologna Process 2008: 9–14), some have been taken up in subsequent discussions, whereas other have not, and not always for good reason. Globalization, public responsibility, and cultural diversity have all been addressed to some extent. The financing of higher education was a hotly debated topic at the Bucharest Ministerial Conference before Ministers agreed on a formulation (Bologna Process 2012a) and was also the topic of a conference organized by Armenia in September 2011 as part of its co-chairmanship of the BFUG,[5] but has not been a topic of sustained debate. Issues like institutional diversity and demography have not been pursued, even if both have been important in at least some national contexts.

A Boost at Mid-term

The next significant debate on the future of the EHEA was, in our judgment, the one held at and leading up to the Yerevan Ministerial conference in 2015. The timing is not surprising, since the Yerevan conference was held at equidistance between the formal launching of the European Higher Education Area in 2010 and the next milestone of 2020.

At the same time, there was a fairly widespread feeling that the EHEA was losing steam and political interest. The first Ministerial conference after the formal launch of the EHEA was held in Bucharest in April 2012.[6] Even if the preparations were excellent and the program very interesting, and even if there was considerable discussion at the conference, in particular around the issue of financing, the number of countries that attended at political level[7] dropped markedly but not dramatically. The list of participants at the Ministerial conferences and hence the exact figures are

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[5]https://www.ehea.info/cid104241/funding-of-higher-education-international-conference.html, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[6]The authors should declare an interest here: Ligia Deca was Head of the Bologna Secretariat 2010—12 and one of the main organizers of the Bucharest Ministerial Conference. Sjur Bergan was an active participant, representing the Council of Europe.

[7]Understood as being represented by either a Minister or a Deputy Minister/State Secretary or similar.

not readily available.[8] Based on the lists of participants we have been able to obtain, which include all conferences except those held in 2001 and 2005, some tendencies may be identified:

- The percentage of countries represented at political level (defined as either Ministers or Deputy Ministers or equivalent[9]) has remained at or, for the most part, well over two thirds, ranging from highs of 92.5% in 2003, 89.7% in 1999 and 89.1% in 2007 to lows of 72.3% in 2012 and 66.7% in 2015.
- The percentage of countries represented by either their Minister or their Deputy Minister (or equivalent) remained above 85 through 2010 and then dropped as indicated above in 2012 and 2015.
- The percentage of countries represented by their (full) Ministers has evolved somewhat differently. From 69% in Bologna in 1999, the percentage rose to around 82.5 in 2003 and 2007 and then showed two marked drops: a first, to the 61–63% range in 2009 and 2010, and then a further marked drop to 38.2% in 2012 and even further to 31.3% in 2015. It is worth noting that the level of Ministerial—or for that matter overall political—representation was not significantly different in 2010 than in 2009 in spite of the symbolic importance of the 2010 conference, which formally launched the European Higher Education Area.

Our findings are summarized in Table 1.

We would make one additional remark on participation. The lists of participants are difficult to obtain and in some cases require further work to identify the position of the Heads of Delegation. Even with a long record of direct involvement with the BFUG, we faced challenges; it seems reasonable to assume that future researchers who have not been directly involved will face even greater challenges. It would seem important that the BFUG take measures to make reliable overviews and statistics available to future researchers.

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[8]Only the lists for the 2003 and 2007 conferences are accessible through the EHEA web site. In addition, the list for the 1999 Bologna conference is available indirectly because all Heads of Delegation signed the Bologna Communiqué, with their titles.

[9]Some of the decisions on which positions to consider as "equivalent" can, of course, be open to discussion. As examples, the Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education (Holy See) and the Swiss Federal Counselor responsible for education have been considered as equivalent to Ministers. Assistant Ministers have been considered equivalent to Deputy Minister even if, in some countries, this is not considered a political function. All countries are for the purposes of the statistics considered as a single delegation even if some countries (Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom) have during the whole or part of the period had double delegations (*in casu*, Flemish and French Communities, later also the German community; Federal and *Land* levels; England/Wales/Northern Ireland and a separate delegation for Scotland). In cases where a single Head of Delegation was indicated in the list of participants, we considered the level of the Head. In other cases, we considered the highest ranking member—thus if at least one Minister participated, this is counted as Ministerial representation. There may well be slight errors in our judgments but the figures clearly indicate an order of magnitude.

Table 1 Political representation at Ministerial conferences of the Bologna Process/European Higher Education Area

Conference	Member countries[a]	Ministers	Deputy Ministers	Political representation (%)	Ministerial representation (%)	Uncertain
Bologna 1999	29	20	6	89.7	69.0	
Praha 2001	33	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Berlin 2003	40	33	4	92.5	82.5	
Bergen 2005	45	33	7	88.9	73.3	1[b]
London 2007	46	38	3	89.1	82.6	2[c]
Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009	46	29	11	87.0	63.0	
Budapest/Wien 2010	47	29	12	87.2	61.7	
Bucureşti 2012	47	18	16	72.3	38.3	
Yerevan 2015	48	15	17	66.7	31.3	

[a]Countries that acceded at the conference are counted as members since the accession was generally decided in the first part of the conference, with the possible exception of 2001. We have counted all members rather than those that actually attended for two reasons: firstly, the lists available are those of registered delegates rather than actual participation. Secondly, since our purpose is to establish the degree of political commitment through the position of Heads of Delegation, non-participation is not an indication of stronger political commitment than being represented at civil servant level

[b]The list of participants indicates that the French delegation was headed by the Minister. However, we are reasonably sure that this was not the case. In the absence of a list of those who actually attended, we have indicated the head of this delegation as "uncertain"

[c]The list of participants does not indicate the position of the Heads of Delegation. We have established the positions on the basis of web searches, but in two cases we were unable to reach a firm conclusion

The feeling of loss of political relevance and also loss of a clear sense of direction was strengthened in the following period of the EHEA work program and in the preparation of the 2015 Ministerial conference in Yerevan. This was reflected in the inclusion of a session on the impact of the Bologna Process on the EHEA and beyond at the 2014 Bologna Researchers' Conference,[10] for which two contributions in particular considered options for the future (Harmsen 2015; Bergan 2015). After some initial challenges, the drafting of the Yerevan Communiqué (Bologna Process 2015a) turned into a discussion that was largely focused on the further development of the EHEA.[11] The drafters sought to give the Yerevan Communiqué a clearer focus and to identify challenges and policy measures rather than seek to provide an extensive overview of achievements and policy measures; an overview of policy measures adopted and commitments undertaken by Ministers in Yerevan will be found in the Appendix to the Communiqué. The Communiqué identifies four equally important goals as the Ministers' "collective ambition":

- Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching;
- Fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives in rapidly changing labor markets;
- Making our systems more inclusive;
- Implementing agreed structural reforms.

The Communiqué also makes it clear that "[t]he governance and working methods of the EHEA must develop to meet these challenges" (*ibid.*: 3).

The intensive work on the Communiqué, which involved several exchanges in the BFUG and the Board, was reflected in vivid discussions at the Yerevan Ministerial Conference itself. In our experience, which in one way or another spans all the Bologna Ministerial conferences since 1999, the discussions around the draft communiqué have never been as lively, and the number of amendments proposed and considered has never been as great, with the possible exception of the preparation of the Bologna Declaration. The evaluation report presented to the first BFUG meeting after the Yerevan Conference (Bologna Process 2015d), as well as informal feedback from delegations, also indicated they found the discussion stimulating and worthwhile.

Running Out of Steam?

The Yerevan Ministerial Conference therefore gave many participants a sense of optimism and achievement. The challenge would be to translate this renewed vigor into the new work program. In spite of the best efforts by the first BFUG Co-Chairs

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[10]http://fohe-bprc.forhe.ro/2014/, accessed on November 19, 2017.

[11]The authors should again declare an interest: Sjur Bergan was one of the four main drafters of the Yerevan Communiqué.

after the Ministerial conference—Liechtenstein and Luxembourg—and early meetings of both the Board and the BFUG, it soon became clear to many BFUG members that it would be difficult to maintain "the spirit of Yerevan". The vision displayed in the discussions of the Yerevan Communiqué was largely absent from those of the work program in the BFUG,[12] and the focus was partly on organizational details. An attempt to reduce the number of thematic working groups led to three Working Groups—on Monitoring, Fostering implementation of agreed commitments, and Policy development of new EHEA goals—being supplemented by four Advisory Groups: International cooperation, Support for the Belarus Roadmap, Dealing with non-implementation, and Diploma Supplement revision.[13]

There were good reasons for establishing each and every working and advisory group, and these groups provide an opportunity to involve many representatives of countries and organizations to contribute to the implementation and development of the EHEA. It is, however, not evident that this potential has been realized. There may also be confusion about the remit of some of the groups in relation to other groups, in particular, those that have to do with monitoring, implementation, and non-implementation, even if the terms of reference per se do not overlap to a great extent.

Even more, however, some of the groups have faced considerable challenges in their work. They submitted their first reports to the BFUG in Tartu on November 9–10,[14] shortly before the Bologna Researchers' Conference, and several of the groups will review their reports in the light of the discussion and submit their final reports in early 2018. It is therefore too early to pass definitive judgment. Feedback to the BFUG as well as informal feedback from the groups would, however, indicate that it would be challenging to reestablish the relative optimism that marked the Yerevan Conference and the run-up to it. The BFUG has had difficult discussions on the basis of preliminary reports by the Advisory Group on non-implementation that indicate considerable divergence in how the EHEA is viewed. The Advisory Group supporting the Roadmap accompanying Belarus' accession to the EHEA in 2015 faces difficulties in establishing the degree to which the Roadmap is being implemented, as well as in deciding what to recommend if it is not, even if some form of specific follow-up of higher education reforms in Belarus in the 2018–20 period seems likely. The Advisory Group on internationalization has struggled to devise a clear topic and format for the Bologna Policy Forum (BPF) and hence a clear rationale for holding it, even if a solution is now

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[12]This is admittedly a subjective judgement but one based on participation in the discussions in both fora.

[13]For an overview, see http://www.ehea.info/pid35146/work-programme-2015-2018.html, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[14]http://www.ehea.info/cid115326/bfug-meeting-56.html, accessed on December 8, 2017.

being devised.[15] This is also due to the multiple views on what the BPF should represent, which vary according to the host country and to the predominant voices in the BFUG—a platform for policy exchange, a forum for agreeing on common cooperation goals with countries interested in the EHEA model, or a way to enhance inter-regional cooperation. Perhaps even more seriously, the Working Group on "new goals" seems to have faced serious difficulties in defining clear policy measures of interest to a majority of EHEA members and that lend themselves to the particular context of the EHEA.

Challenges Beyond 2020

From the relative optimism of Yerevan, the EHEA is therefore again faced with serious challenges that will determine its future orientation and perhaps even whether the EHEA will have a meaningful role beyond 2020. Without pretending to be exhaustive, we will seek to examine some of the main challenges.

Reforming Education Systems

The EHEA is an intergovernmental process. Its decision makers are the Ministers responsible for higher education of its 48 member states. This, of course, colors the process. Even if both international institutions and stakeholder organizations representing higher education institutions, students, staff, and employers are consultative members of the BFUG—and the European Commission even a full member —Ministers and their representatives make decisions, and they make decisions in areas that fall under their competence. Ministers are responsible for their countries' education systems (Bergan 2005, Council of Europe 2007). They are not directly responsible for the ways in which institutions teach, researchers work, students learn, or employers recruit, even if they may have a measure of political responsibility, and even if public authorities may take measures to encourage other actors to behave in certain ways. Vukasovic et al. (present volume) make a solid argument regarding how the complexity of EHEA governance can be better understood utilizing the "three multi-s" framework (multi-level, multi-actor and multi-issue).

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the reform of education systems, and in particular of their structures, has been the hallmark of the Bologna Process and the EHEA. The three-tier degree system, qualifications frameworks, the recognition of qualifications, and quality assurance have been key topics either since the launch of

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[15]The Bologna Policy Forum has been held in conjunction with every Ministerial Conference since 2009. It is intended to provide a platform for policy debate between EHEA Ministers and Ministers from other parts of the world with an interest in the development of the EHEA. In our judgement, the Forum has yet to find a convincing format, even if several options have been tested.

the Bologna Process or shortly thereafter.[16] The main standards, texts, and decisions of the EHEA concern structural reforms: the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA)[17] as well as the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)[18] were adopted by the Bergen Ministerial Conference (Bologna Process 2005). The Lisbon Recognition Convention (Council of Europe/UNESCO 1997) was included already in the Sorbonne Declaration (Bologna Process 1998), followed by later calls to ratify it (e.g. Bologna Process 2005), something that has now been done by all EHEA members, except Greece.[19] The Diploma Supplement and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) have also been the subject of Ministerial attention and commitments (e.g. Bologna Process 2003). Structural reforms have also been the topic of several working groups, including one that reviewed the full range of structural reforms (Bologna Process 2014).

Structural reforms lend themselves to the loose organization of the EHEA, in which overall policies are decided by Ministers at European level and implemented nationally and within higher education institutions. As an example, the QF-EHEA sets the frame or "outer limits" within which countries develop their national qualifications frameworks. They have considerable leeway in doing so, as demonstrated by the fact that in some countries the first degree assumes a workload of 180 ECTS credits and in others up to 240. There are, nevertheless, limits to national discretion: no country could develop a framework in which the first degree would require, for example, 360 ECTS credits and make a credible claim to compatibility with the QF-EHEA.

The succession of stocktaking and monitoring reports[20] show, however, that implementation is uneven and that some countries are far from fulfilling their commitments in one or more areas of structural reforms. Other countries are even tempted to go back on some of the implemented reforms, in particular, the three cycle degree system. This diminishes the credibility of the EHEA as a framework within which national qualifications are compatible, are issued within comparable qualifications structures, are quality assured according to agreed standards and guidelines and are described in easily understandable formats. It is worth noting that

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[16]The Bologna Declaration refers to a two-tier degree system; the third tier, doctoral qualifications, as well as a reference to qualifications frameworks were first included in the Berlin Communiqué (Bologna Process 2003). Quality assurance was firmly established as a "Bologna topic" through the Prague Communiqué (Bologna Process 2001).

[17]See http://www.ehea.info/pid34779/qualifications-frameworks-three-cycle-system-2007-2009.html, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[18]The ESG were revised by Ministers in Yerevan (Bologna Process 2015a). The current version will be found at https://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/72/7/European_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Quality_Assurance_in_the_EHEA_2015_MC_613727.pdf, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[19]An updated overview of signatures and ratifications will be found at http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/165/signatures, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[20]For an overview, see http://www.ehea.info/pid34367/implementation-and-national-reports.html, accessed on November 2, 2017.

the seemingly straightforward commitment of issuing the Diploma Supplement automatically, free of charge and in a widely spoken language by 2005, undertaken in Berlin (Bologna Process 2003) was only partly fulfilled 10 years later (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015: 74–76).

The relative lack of implementation of some structural reforms led to the setting-up of the Advisory Group on non-implementation in the 2015–18 EHEA work program, as discussed by Strand Viðarsdóttir in this volume. As non-implementation has to do with the broader discussion of the governance of the EHEA, it will be considered below. Dang (present volume) offers an interesting comparison of challenges of implementation in the contexts of the EHEA and the ASEAN Common Space for Higher Education and introduces the concept of "façade conformity".

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are, together with research, at the core of higher education, and even more so in the EHEA which has not focused extensively on research policy beyond issues related to doctoral education. At the same time, teaching and learning are not primarily Ministry activities. Ministries may learn, of course, but teaching and learning are done by teachers and students at higher education institutions, albeit within an overall framework established by public authorities.

The culture and style of teaching vary very considerably between countries, institutions, and even individual teachers and students throughout the EHEA. Some see teaching as a one-way communication—or perhaps rather transmission—from teachers to students, whereas others emphasize interaction. Auditorium lectures are often supplemented by seminar groups, discussion groups, tutoring, or other forms of more interactive teaching, but sometimes one-way communication from teachers to students is predominant. The concept of student centered learning is by now firmly established in the EHEA starting with the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (Bologna Process 2009: 3) and has been the subject of studies European Students' Union (2015) and projects (T4SCL[21] and EFFECT[22]). Student centered learning emphasizes, among other things, innovative teaching methods, digital technologies, and pedagogical innovation. In many institutions, these goals are still aspirational at best. Nevertheless, the fact that student centered learning is

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[21]https://www.esu-online.org/?project=time-student-centred-learning, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[22]https://www.esu-online.org/?project=european-forum-enhanced-collaboration-teaching-effect, accessed on November 2, 2017.

now among the topics warranting a separate sub-site within the EHEA website[23] gives hope that teaching and learning will evolve considerably throughout the EHEA.

Self-study and the ability to search and assess information are also an important part of higher education learning. Classical libraries, which incidentally suffer from the high price of many academic publications and journals at a time when higher education institutions feel the impact of economic constraints, are supplemented by other sources of information, notably web-based (and often open source). With the almost explosive increase in the information available, developing the ability to identify and assess information is becoming even more critical.

One of the main challenges in teaching and learning will be to blend and make good use of the many different methods and modes of delivery that are available now and will continue to develop over the coming years. It is our assertion that no single mode will be adequate to provide quality teaching and learning. Rather, any teaching method, to be effective, will need to be used in combination with other methods. Digitalized and web based education is set to change teaching and learning in ways we can still not foresee, but it is our assertion that they will not be able to replace face to face teaching and learning in all circumstances and for all purposes. MOOCs will remain but they are unlikely to reign uncontested. Universities will need to change profoundly to benefit from new technologies and methods as well as to avoid their pitfalls, but if they do, the announcement of the "death of the university" will not only have been premature but a false alarm. On the contrary, we believe that one of the hallmarks of high quality institutions in the future will be their ability to use the full range of teaching and learning methods, from auditorium lectures through face to face interaction between teachers and students as well as among students to digital learning and teaching.

It would make sense for the European Higher Education Area to make teaching and learning the focus of its further development, as outlined in the final reports of the 2nd edition of the Bologna Process Researchers' Conference.[24]

Technical Reforms or Commitment to Fundamental Values?

Structural reforms have been the most successful policy area of the EHEA. Even if implementation is uneven, the EHEA has developed standards for qualifications frameworks and quality assurance, established a European Quality Assurance Register for higher education (EQAR),[25] adopted the principle of a three-tier degree

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[23]See http://www.ehea.info/pid34437/student-centred-learning.html, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[24]https://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/73/5/06052015_FOHE-BPRC2_Final_report_613735.pdf, page 8, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[25]https://www.eqar.eu/, accessed on November 2, 2017.

system, incorporated the Lisbon Recognition Convention as the basis for the recognition of qualifications, and made good use of the Diploma Supplement and the ECTS as transparency instruments, even to the extent of establishing an Advisory Group to review the former and adopting the revised ECTS User's Guide as an official EHEA document (Bologna Process 2015a: 4).

In spite of the uneven implementation of structural reforms throughout the EHEA, we would therefore argue that the EHEA has been successful in devising and reasonably successful in implementing reforms of education systems. We would equally argue that Ministers and the BFUG have been less good in outlining and explaining the main principles behind these reforms as well as the values on which the EHEA builds.

A consideration of values has certainly not been absent from the EHEA. The Bologna Declaration refers to the "importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies" (Bologna Process 1999: 1) as well as "the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988" (*ibid.*: 2). The latest communiqué refers to "public responsibility for higher education, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and commitment to integrity" (Bologna Process 2015a: 1) and includes, as we have seen, making education systems more inclusive among the four priorities defined for the 2015–18 work program. In this context, Ministers state: "We will enhance the social dimension of higher education, improve gender balance and widen opportunities for access and completion, including international mobility, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will provide mobility opportunities for students and staff from conflict areas, while working to make it possible for them to return home once conditions allow" (*ibid.*: 2–3). The Roadmap accompanying Belarus' accession to the EHEA, also adopted by Ministers in Yerevan, includes the fundamental values of the EHEA as one of the areas in which Belarus needs to demonstrate adherence to adopted EHEA principles and policies, with reference to the Yerevan Communiqué, the Magna Charta Universitatum,[26] and Council of Europe recommendation Rec/CM(2012)7 on the public responsibility for academic freedom and institutional autonomy[27] (Bologna Process 2015b: 2–3).

Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that the fundamental values on which the EHEA builds—in particular academic freedom, institutional autonomy, student participation in higher education governance, and public responsibility for higher education (Bologna Process 2004)—have not received the attention they would deserve in the BFUG or in public EHEA statements and policies. The reasons for this are of course not stated, but it seems safe to surmise that at least two factors have played a considerable role.

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[26]Available at http://www.magna-charta.org/magna-charta-universitatum, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[27]Available at https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805ca6f8, accessed on November 2, 2017.

The EHEA is a political process with regular milestones in the form of Ministerial conferences held every two or three years. Ministers reasonably wish to demonstrate commitment to clear goals as well as progress in achieving these goals. Qualifications frameworks and quality assurance standards lend themselves to such a schedule: they can be adopted by Ministers and progress in implementation can be measured. Ministers can "tick the box" as far as their countries are concerned when the stated goals have been met. The fundamental values are less easily measured and their implementation perhaps more prone to fluctuate with shifting governments and political circumstances. In this case, the EHEA may be seen as giving importance to what can be measured, rather than measuring everything that is important—but this statement should of course not be taken to imply that structural reforms are unimportant.

More importantly, the fundamental values are closely linked to the overall situation of democracy and human rights in EHEA countries, and the EHEA is not an area of democratic perfection. Several members have issues with democracy and human rights. Not only are these highly sensitive issues where few countries would admit to fundamental problems but they are generally considered as pertaining to the domain of Ministries of Foreign Affairs or even Heads of State or Government. Facing challenges in implementing one's national qualifications framework is one thing, and the responsibility lies squarely with the public authority responsible for education. Facing challenges in implementing democracy and human rights is quite another story, and it is not one that primarily falls within the remit of the Minister of Education. Formally, regulations concerning student participation in higher education governance or institutional autonomy do, but no Minister of Education can promote democratic governance of universities if democratic governance faces serious challenges overall in the country.

It is politically difficult for governments to advocate measures against other governments for breach of fundamental EHEA principles. Such measures are likely to be taken only in extreme cases. An important consideration is also whether one is more effective in assisting those who work for higher education reform and/or democracy by engaging with a country or by keeping it out of the EHEA. Most would agree that at some point the balance between engagement and a clear public statement of fundamental principles will tip but the point is not easy to identify, and agreement on where it may be located has proved elusive.

The partial exception has been Belarus, where an interest in accession was rejected twice for political reasons. In the run-up to the Bergen conference in 2005, it was communicated unofficially to Belarus that a formal accession application was very likely to be rejected,[28] and the authorities chose not to apply. In the run-up to the Bucharest conference, Belarus did submit a formal application that was given due consideration by the BFUG. However, the arrests of faculty members and students during the widespread protests against the presidential election in

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[28]By the nature of things, documentation of this is difficult to produce, but one of us (Sjur Bergan) was involved in the discussions.

December 2010, which was widely perceived as unfair,[29] made it impossible for the BFUG to recommend to Ministers that they welcome Belarus as an EHEA member (Bologna Process 2012b: 24–25). When Belarus was admitted in 2015, these discussions were part of the reason why the accession was accompanied by a Roadmap (Bologna Process 2012b), in addition to the fact that Belarus was the first country to accede after the formal establishment of the EHEA in 2010.

Recently, the BFUG has again placed academic freedom and institutional autonomy on its agenda, through a thematic debate at its meeting in Bratislava in December 2016 (Bergan et al. 2016). The purpose of the discussion was to discern issues of principles and to arrive at a more nuanced view of academic freedom and institutional autonomy than the one that simply views them in terms of the legal relationship between public authorities (often referred to as "the State") and the academic community. Even though several EHEA countries can reasonably be considered to be in breach of one or more fundamental principles, the debate did not aim to identify specific cases, and EHEA members have been reluctant to do so. In the immediate aftermath of the failed coup in Turkey in July 2015, when members of the academic community were barred from traveling abroad on business and deans at all Turkish universities were temporarily suspended, several EHEA members informally questioned Turkey's status within the EHEA.[30] However, these countries later softened their stance, partly because some of the measures were eased—even if many members of the academic community were still hit by measures—and partly because most European countries found it more fruitful to work within Turkey to try to help nudge developments in the direction of greater democracy or at least avoiding the worst excesses rather than seek to isolate the country. Higher education policy was therefore aligned with foreign policy, despite being in a situation similar to the Belarus accession application in 2012.

The BFUG has so far not addressed the changes to the Hungarian higher education law that put the viability of the Central European University as a Budapest-based institution in doubt. It will be interesting to see how the BFUG and then Ministers would handle this sensitive issue if the crisis persists. Matei and Iwinska (present volume) introduce the notion that institutional autonomy has gained a European conceptual understanding, while academic freedom benefitted from less attention in the EHEA discussions. The Hungarian situation is presented as a clear example of how these two basic EHEA values—institutional autonomy and academic freedom—are dependent on each other, but should not be considered as intrinsically linked.

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[29]See for example the joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Sweden published in the New York Times on December 23, 2010, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/24/opinion/24iht-edbildt24.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=Carl%20Bildt&st=cse, accessed on November 2, 2017.

[30]Personal communications that for obvious reasons will remain anonymous. Some higher education NGOs, including the European Students' Union and the European University Association, did issue critical statements.

More broadly, as discussed by Tony Gallagher in this volume, the civic and democratic role of higher education could and should be one of the main challenges of the EHEA. Higher education has an important role in developing the democratic culture without which democratic laws and democratic institutions will not function.[31]

Commitments and Governance

The difficulties governments face in criticizing other governments over issues with fundamental values have also been found in other and a priori less controversial policy areas. Through the Bologna Declaration and successive Ministerial communiqués, EHEA members have committed to principles and policies that need to be implemented in each country. The stocktaking and monitoring reports show that successful implementation is less than universal, which leads to the question of how to address non-implementation.

This is not a new issue in the Bologna Process. As 2010 and the formal establishment of the EHEA approached, there was discussion of how the transition from the Bologna Process to the EHEA could best be organized and of whether any member of the Bologna Process would automatically become a member of the EHEA, regardless of the country's record in implementing key policies and priorities. The option of establishing the EHEA through an international convention to which countries would accede and that would outline their obligations as well as mechanisms for addressing non-implementation was raised and discarded in the run-up to the Bergen conference in 2005.[32] The discussions in the BFUG in the mid- to late 2000's are well summarized in an excerpt from the minutes of the BFUG meeting in October 2006:

> There was a need to consider how the transition from the Bologna Process to the European Higher Education Area could best be made. This would include deciding how to react if stocktaking for 2010 showed that a number of countries had yet to implement or achieve key goals of the Process. Options could range from deciding that all countries of the Bologna Process would automatically become members of the EHEA; deciding that all countries would become members but that assistance would be offered to those that had not yet achieved all the key goals; or deciding that only those who had achieved the key goals could become members of the EHEA in the first instance. It would be important to consider the range of possible options prior to 2010.

> There was widespread recognition that current informal, flexible approach had served the Process very well. (Bologna Process 2006: 11).

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[31]Several volumes in the Council of Europe Higher Education Series explore the democratic mission of higher education. See e.g. Klemenčič et al. (2015), Bergan et al. (2015), Bergan et al. (2014), and Bergan (2011).

[32]Personal recollection (Sjur Bergan).

The discussion on how to address non-implementation has always been difficult, and it has never completely disappeared, but it resurfaced more explicitly through the Yerevan Communiqué. Ministers ask the BFUG "to review and simplify its governance and working methods, to involve higher education practitioners in its work programme" and at the same time "to submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation of key commitments in time for our next meeting" (Bologna Process 2015a: 3).

Some researchers also pointed to a more legally binding format for the EHEA commitments as a possible way to enhance accountability and bring the Bologna Process closer to EU instruments (see Garben 2011).

The Yerevan Communiqué thus links governance and non-implementation. The view we take of whether and how non-implementation need to be addressed is linked to how the EHEA is viewed. In one view (see e.g. Harmsen 2015), the EHEA is essentially an area of peer learning, where countries develop good practice by learning from each other but where it is either not desirable or not possible—or neither desirable nor possible—to take measures to address cases where countries do not implement commitments. Another view (see e.g. Bergan 2015) recognizes the importance of peer learning in developing the EHEA but emphasizes that to be credible as an area in which qualifications are broadly and automatically recognized based on qualification frameworks and standards for quality assurance as well as commitment to common fundamental values, the EHEA needs a mechanism for addressing serious cases of non-compliance.

To meet the Ministers' request, the BFUG appointed an Advisory Group on non-implementation in the 2015–18 work program, co-chaired by Iceland and Liechtenstein. Its remit is to "submit proposals for addressing the issue of non-implementation and incorrect implementation of key commitments (how to implement them best by respecting and reflecting the EHEA instruments and the EHEA culture)" (Bologna Process 2015c: 1). Preliminary reports from this Advisory Group were the subject of difficult discussions in the BFUG in December 2016 and May 2017 when the group put forward proposals for a system of cyclic reviews of key commitments, in the first instance linked to structural reforms. Under this model, the BFUG Co-Chairs would initiate dialogue with and offer assistance to EHEA members for which the previous monitoring report would demonstrate serious concerns about implementation. Countries themselves could also request advice and assistance. On both occasions, a clear majority of delegations that took the floor spoke in favor of the proposal by the Advisory Group, but a minority of delegations were outspoken proponents of the view that the EHEA should be an area of peer learning without any "constraints" on members. The further discussions at the BFUG meetings in Tartu in November 2017 and Sofia in February 2018 confirmed this orientation, and the Advisory Group has now submitted a revised proposal that moves quite far in the direction of countries requesting peer learning if they themselves feel they have issues with implementation. There is no longer a reference to the possibility of the BFUG Co-Chairs or a BFUG-appointed body approaching countries to suggest that in view of their score in the implementation report, they may benefit from cooperation in implementing

specific commitments. In our view, these developments weaken the view that that while membership of the EHEA is voluntary, implementing the commitments members undertake on joining is not. Reference is again made to Strand Viðarsdóttir's article in this volume.

At the time of writing, the debate on non-implementation overshadows other issues of governance. There is nevertheless concern that BFUG delegations carry insufficient political weight in their own Ministries and are therefore not always able to speak on behalf of their authorities. This is clearly not the case of all delegations, but the concern is serious enough to be raised from time to time, at least informally. There has been no substantial discussion of voting arrangements, and one application from an NGO for observer status was turned down. Despite this situation, a substantial change in the governance structures seems unlikely in the near future, as it would have to be agreed by the same delegations that are considered to have less political weight than the process would need.

A change in Secretariat arrangements also seems unlikely. At present, the country hosting the upcoming Ministerial conference also provides the Bologna Secretariat. The Secretariats have typically been staffed by nationals of the same country[33] and have operated under the laws of this country. France, while providing the Secretariat under French law and within French structures for the 2015–18 period, has associated some non-French experts with the Secretariat, as well as one full-time staff member provided by Germany. Many BFUG members have expressed a desire for a more international Secretariat with a longer mandate than from one Ministerial conference until the next. This model has often been labeled a "permanent Secretariat". The practical, financial, and legal issues[34] involved in establishing a Secretariat that would de facto be a new international NGO serving an intergovernmental process are, however, so complex that the BFUG decided not to pursue this option further, at least in the current period (Bologna Process 2017: 7–8). Secretariat arrangements may become a part of the discussion on the EHEA beyond 2020 leading up to the 2020 Ministerial conference, but the challenges in identifying alternative arrangements will remain formidable, especially in light of the previous attempt to establish a more permanent Secretariat structure (put forward by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE 2009); it should be noted that the latter did not have the support of the Council of Europe Secretariat or the Council's (then) Steering Committee on Higher Education and Research).

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[33]With the exception of the period 2007–10, when Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands were joint hosts of the Louvain-la-Neuve conference and provided a joint Secretariat, which continued to operate through the 2010 Ministerial conference in Budapest and Wien, reinforced by one Austrian and one Hungarian staff member.

[34]For a somewhat more detailed consideration, see Bergan 2015: 746–748.

Two Speeds or Development Adapted to Local Circumstances?

The challenges in implementing policies and commitments undertaken through the Bologna Declaration and communiqués could be read as indicating an uneven commitment to the EHEA. To an extent, this is undoubtedly true, and even within countries, different governments have demonstrated different levels of enthusiasm in implementing "Bologna reforms". One example among several is Georgia which was well engaged in reforms up until around 2007 or 2008. A period of relative inactivity both in the BFUG and in internal reforms then followed, but Georgia has again been an active contributor to the BFUG and also launched national reforms since around 2013.

Uneven implementation is not solely a question of a north/south or east/west divide or a divide between countries that joined the Bologna Process in the early years and those that joined later and therefore had less time to implement the reforms since the expectation was—at least officially—that all EHEA members would have met the same goals by 2010.

At the same time, not only have countries joined the EHEA at different times, they have also had different starting points when doing so. The Bologna Process was launched less than 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a symbolic but very real moment that more broadly indicates regime change in many European countries. As a result of these changes, the membership of the Council of Europe doubled between 1989 and today, the Bologna Declaration was signed by Ministers from 29 countries, including several that had been part of the Warsaw Pact and three that had even been part of the Soviet Union. Academic mobility was extended to all parts of Europe on a much larger scale and with fewer restrictions that had previously been imaginable.

Even if the EHEA looks toward the future in setting goals for common principles and policies, national education systems are also inheritors of the past. Europe can be seen as a unique balance of what we have in common and what is specific to individual countries, cultures, or regions. Six EHEA members shared the education system and traditions of former Yugoslavia until the early 1990s. Even if Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" have developed their education systems at different speeds and partly in different directions, and even if the break-up of former Yugoslavia had a different impact on each of the countries, they share a recent past that in some aspects sets them apart from the experience of other EHEA members. The same is true for countries that were a part of the former Soviet Union, where the differences in the development trajectories after independence are greater but a shared past nevertheless colors the present to some extent.

The weight of the past is of course not specific to countries that have undergone dramatic upheavals over the past generation. To some extent, all EHEA members are marked by their past. Some differences that come to mind include centralized

versus decentralized systems, the differences between larger and smaller systems, and the degree to which systems differentiate between different kinds and profiles of higher education institutions (Deca 2016). Armağan Erdoğan describes developments and prospects in the case of Turkey (Erdoğan 2015).

One of the challenges in the further development of the EHEA will therefore be to reconcile the need to ensure implementation of common principles and goals with the need to recognize that EHEA members have different traditions as well as recent pasts. Different traditions may offer an explanation of why certain reforms are particularly challenging or why they may take a long time to implement, but they should not provide reasons why EHEA would not see a need to launch the reforms they have committed to when joining the Bologna Process.

An EHEA Gazing Inward or Looking Out?

The EHEA has been followed with great interest in other parts of the world. Examples include academic publishing in the United States (Adelman 2009; Gaston 2010), as well as policy initiatives in Asia (Dang 2015 and in the present volume). The development of qualifications frameworks was not a European invention, with Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa as pioneers, but the current interest in qualifications framework would most likely not have come about without the decision by EHEA Ministers to adopt an overarching framework and to develop national frameworks compatible with the QF-EHEA. To our knowledge, the notion of a regional qualifications framework was pioneered by the EHEA. Later, the European Training Foundation has played an important role in promoting the development of qualifications frameworks in different parts of the world and for all levels and strands of education.

In spite of the strong interest in the EHEA from countries outside of Europe, and in spite of the equally strong interest among many EHEA members in developing global or at least inter-regional dialogue and cooperation on higher education reform, attempts to do so in the framework of the EHEA have so far been unsuccessful. The EHEA interest was manifested through a report on the "Bologna Process in a global setting" as early as 2007 (Zgaga 2007), as well as the adoption of a "global dimension" strategy (Bologna Process 2007b).

The first Bologna Policy Forum was held in 2009, a forum for exchange and debate at political level between EHEA Ministers and Ministers from selected countries in other parts of the world. Since then, the Policy Forum has been held in conjunction with every Ministerial conference, but it has proven difficult to move beyond relatively superficial discussions or to maintain political interest. Different formats have been tried, ranging from plenary debates to thematic discussion groups within the Forum, and with targets ranging from all regions of the world to a modified format with a stronger regional focus in 2015.

The reasons for this lack of success have not been fully explored, but it seems reasonable to assume that they may have to do with the format of the Forum as well as the lack of follow up between high level meetings with a political focus. Including a half day or one day session with non-EHEA ministers in the regular EHEA Ministerial meetings is unsatisfactory to the non-EHEA Ministers who would need to travel long distances for a short conference. At the same time, BFUG delegations have expressed strong and consistent concerns that their Ministers would not be prepared to add a day and a half or two days to the Ministerial conference. There has also so far been no effective follow-up work under the auspices of the BFUG in the periods between Ministerial conferences and Bologna Policy Forum, so that there have been no Policy Forum dialogues with regions outside of Europe on EHEA topics like structural reforms, the social dimension of higher education, or fundamental values like academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This may at least in part be due to the fact that there is no specific budget for the EHEA beyond what each member invests in its own participation and activities and the host country invests in the Secretariat. One consequence of this is also that non-EHEA countries play a very limited role in preparing the Bologna Policy Fora and could understandably see them as an invitation to dialogue with agendas set entirely by the EHEA.

The fact that the specific EHEA attempts to establish a forum for cooperation have largely failed does not mean there is little cooperation between European actors and public authorities and higher education communities outside of Europe. The European Commission, NGOs like the International Association of Universities, the European University Association, and the European Students' Union as well as individual countries are engaged in extensive cooperation and much of it focuses on policy areas inspired by the EHEA. A particularly interesting example is the Asia—Europe cooperation, as described by Dang (2015, 2017). This cooperation includes regular meetings of higher education leaders as well as of Ministers, and attendance at the Ministerial meetings tends to surpass political level participation at the Bologna Policy Fora. A comparative study of the involvement of relatively peripheral countries in the EHEA and the ASEAN Common Space for Higher Education will be found in QueAnh Dang's contribution to the present volume.

Challenges in the further development of the EHEA include finding an attractive format for organized cooperation between the EHEA and other parts of the world, through the BFUG and not only through individual actors, as well as defining attractive priorities for that cooperation. However, the challenges also relate to the internal development of the EHEA: will the EHEA develop in ways that will make it credible as a higher education area and not just as an area of more or less organized peer learning? An EHEA that were only to gaze inward would be neither an attractive cooperation partner nor a model for emulation, but neither would an EHEA that were unable to identify credible goals, ensure credible implementation, or develop credible governance.

Professional Higher Education

Even if preparation for the labor market is an important purpose of higher education in all 48 EHEA members, their traditions vary greatly. In particular, the extent to which the traditional university is supplemented by institutions and programs providing shorter and more specifically employment oriented qualifications varies considerably. The proposed QF-EHEA as submitted to the Ministers in Bergen in 2005 included provision for short cycle qualifications within the first cycle. This was, however, rejected by the Ministers, who could accept this only as an option within national frameworks, but not as a feature of the QF-EHEA (Bologna Process 2005: 2). In part, Ministers found it difficult to accept that the QF-EHEA might include a qualification they did not intend to develop in their own country. In part, some Ministers seem to have found it difficult to accept short cycle qualifications as higher education. In the debate, one Minister, who shall remain unidentified, even maintained that nothing short of three years could be considered higher education.[35]

Demographics

The influence of demographic developments on the number of students and, more broadly, on the development of higher education, has been curiously absent from discussion on the development of the EHEA. Roderick Floud's statement to the London Ministerial Conference to the effect that "I did not hear a single reference in either the plenary sessions or in the panel discussions, to demography, either of our populations in general or in relation to higher education staff and students. Yet the challenges here for us are immense" (Bologna Process 2007c: 9) remains valid today.

In the present volume, Robert Santa illustrates the importance of demographic developments to higher education through a case study of Poland, Russia, and Romania.

The EHEA: A Framework Fit for Purpose?

The EHEA was devised to address a set of issues of concern to European Ministers in the late 1990s. The challenges had to do with the extent to which European higher education was seen as credible and attractive to European actors like students, employers and policymakers as well as to actors—not least students—from other parts of the world. They also had to do with the extent to which students in Europe completed their studies with success and within reasonable time as well as the extent to which European study programs were seen as "fit for purpose".

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[35]Personal recollection.

To a large extent, the response to the challenge lay in reforming education structures and systems. But the originality of the Bologna Process was perhaps less to be found in the topics chosen than in the proposition that the challenges could be met only through European cooperation, as well as in the proposition that an intergovernmental process needed to include higher education institutions, students, faculty, international institutions and other stakeholders to be successful.

In our view, the EHEA *has* been successful, in spite of the criticism contained in these pages. Its success is demonstrated by the fact that it is exceedingly difficult to imagine what higher education in Europe would have been like today had there *not* been a broad, if fairly loosely organized, cooperation that included not only public authorities but also higher education stakeholders and civil society, and had that process not been flexible enough to admit new members. The fact that it has grown from the original 29 countries to the 48 EHEA members of today is also a witness to its success. The EHEA is not a forum from which many European countries feel they can afford to remain aloof.

The EHEA was a structure and a cooperation fit for the challenges facing Education Ministers and the higher education community some 20 years ago. An important part of the challenge to "the future of Bologna" is to identify challenges that are of political importance and that can be addressed within the loose and extensive structure that is the EHEA. Or failing that, to redefine those structures so that a different EHEA can meet new challenges.

The rather optimistic assertion in the BFUG discussion paper on "Bologna 2020" to the effect that "it is, therefore, necessary that the Bologna Process should continue after 2010 so that its implementation can be finalized" (Bologna Process 2008: 3) is therefore still valid if one substitutes 2010 for 2020. We fear it will be valid even longer.

That, however, is positive. The assertion raises the question of whether the implementation of the Bologna Process can be meaningfully "finalized". It may be akin to our private definition of lifelong learning as the kind of learning about which nobody can speak from the point of view of a fully accomplished learner since by definition a fully accomplished lifelong learner is no longer alive.

The European Higher Education Area faces formidable challenges in staying relevant and in improving the daily lives of students and staff. It is our belief that in spite of the difficulties, these challenges can be met provided there is both political and practical will to do so, and that includes the will and ability to finance the endeavor.

A European Higher Education Area that considered itself "fully implemented", on the other hand, would not only be increasingly irrelevant. It would be dead.

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Multi-level, Multi-actor and Multi-issue Dimensions of Governance of the European Higher Education Area, and Beyond

Martina Vukasovic, Jens Jungblut, Meng-Hsuan Chou, Mari Elken and Pauline Ravinet

Introduction

With massification and increasing focus on knowledge as the foundation for inclusive and sustainable social, cultural, political as well as economic development, higher education has become more salient and politicized (Busemeyer et al. 2013; Gornitzka and Maassen 2014; Jungblut 2015). In this chapter, we employ a novel framework (Chou et al. 2017) that provides the analytical precision required to dissect and examine these developments and unpack their implications for the future development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

To start with, the centrality of knowledge implies that decisions (planned as well as those already taken) concerning higher education are more connected to policy developments in many other sectors, such as research, welfare, environment,

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employment, trade, migration, or security. This means that, in higher education policy processes, *multiple issues* concerning a variety of sectors need to be considered, including horizontal tensions about jurisdiction and ownership. Coupled with this development are also upward and downward shifts in governance arrangements that characterize contemporary public policy making (Maassen 2003). The former concerns the institutionalization of governance arenas beyond the national level, e.g. through the Bologna Process, EU initiatives in higher education or similar macro-regional integration efforts in South-East Asia, Latin America, or sub-Saharan Africa (Chou and Ravinet 2015, 2017; Maassen and Olsen 2007). The latter reflects the wave of reforms increasing the formal autonomy of higher education institutions (HEIs), which are often coupled with changes in internal governance arrangements strengthening central leadership and administration (Christensen 2011; Maassen et al. 2017). The outcome is that governance takes place across *multiple levels*, potentially leading to vertical tensions concerning the distribution of authority. The third relevant development is the increasing participation and influence of *multiple actors* in higher education governance. This concerns a variety of non-state actors, such as universities, student and staff unions, business associations and other stakeholder organizations, as well as state actors coming from different ministries or agencies. While these actors may focus on similar issues, they are likely to have different policy preferences that may be difficult to reconcile (Vukasovic 2017). Moreover, they will also differ with regard to access as well as organizational and political capacity to influence decision-making, implying that tensions with regards to power and preferences are also present in higher education governance.

Each of these developments—*multi-issue*, *multi-level* and *multi-actor*—has been the focus of much research, albeit often in isolation from each other. In this chapter, we employ a novel conceptual framework for analysing these three "multi-s" and their interactions, and we demonstrate how such a framework enables a more nuanced analysis of policy dynamics in European higher education, by focusing on three interrelated topics: (1) political salience of the Bologna Process, (2) the role and impact of European stakeholder organizations and their members across governance levels, and (3) relationship between European and regional policy coordination and convergence. These three examples provide a basis for the reflections on possible future developments of the Bologna Process and the analytical toolbox that could be employed to study these developments.

Conceptualizing the Three "Multi-S"

Of the three "multi-s" highlighted here, most of the research in higher education, as well as more generally in social sciences, has focused on the multi-level aspect. In this respect, the concept of multi-level governance (MLG) has become a taken-for-granted perspective to describe policy coordination across different governance levels, in particular in the European context. According to one of the most cited contributions on MLG—"Unravelling the Central State, but How" by

Hooghe and Marks (2003)—two distinct types of multi-level governance can be identified: one in which different levels of authority are neatly nested within each other and which is designed to comprise an entire fixed system of governance (Type I, e.g. typical federalist structure), and the other in which the focus is on task jurisdictions which may change should the need arise and where jurisdictions may overlap (Type II). While often used, the challenge with this dichotomous categorization is that multiple Type II governance arrangements are in place for achieving an overarching common objective of European Higher Education and Research Areas, and the typology does not allow for exploring the implications of such multiplicity. For example, efforts to construct a common area of knowledge in Europe (see "Europe of Knowledge" in Chou and Gornitzka 2014) encompass developments in the higher education policy sector (i.e. EHEA), in the research policy sector (European Research Area, ERA), and in the innovation policy sector (now the Innovation Union, which also incorporates the ERA). What is notable about these developments is that each set of sectoral governance arrangements follows a distinct method of coordination and upholds their individual sectoral rationales, even though policy reforms have been introduced to promote coherent coordination across these sectors. Thus, it is necessary to look beyond this typology.

The popularity of MLG as a concept also means that it has been a subject to concept stretching. Trying to redress this issue, Piattoni (2010) focused on its conceptual, empirical, and normative aspects and proposed three MLG dimensions: (1) domestic-international, reflecting the emergence of governance layers beyond the nation state, (2) centre-periphery concerning the devolution of authority to local actors and key organizations (in this case higher education institutions), and (3) state-society referring to the involvement of both state and non-state actors. This means that the involvement of multiple actors is, according to Piattoni, just one dimension of MLG. This is, in our view, problematic because the reference to "levels" effectively conflates at least two distinct developments: distribution of authority across governance levels which we refer to as the *multi-level* aspect, as well as participation and influence of both state and non-state actors—which we term the *multi-actor* aspect. These two aspects need to be conceptually distinct in order to allow for both nuance and robustness in analysis.

However, policy-making in higher education, regardless of levels or actors, does not concern higher education only. The fact that higher education is "exported" as a policy solution to other sectors, and that issues from these sectors are sometimes "imported" into the higher education sector as policy problems to be solved (e.g. finding a solution for global warming and society's energy needs) implies significant coordination challenges (Braun 2008; Chou and Gornitzka 2014). This in particular concerns what can be termed *multi-issue* aspects of governance, which can be illustrated through the following questions: (1) which issues should be dealt with exclusively within the higher education sector?, (2) in which issues should actors from other sectors be involved?, and (3) which issues are better addressed in another sector? These questions are not a purely technical matter but are also underlined by differences in perceived importance between sectors (e.g. finance

usually trumps education), as well as a reconciliation of policy preferences between different actors. It is thus essential to also make explicit the multi-issue feature in addition to the two other "multi-s"—multi-level and multi-actor—because this characteristic often masks the hidden strategies that policy actors apply to achieve their sectoral goals and objectives in another policy domain (Chou 2012).

To sum up, we posit three conceptually distinct characteristics of higher education governance (see also Chou et al. 2017) that also have implications for the analyses of dynamics within the EHEA:

1. Multi-*level* characteristic—the focus is on the processes leading to distribution or concentration of authority at different governance levels and the subsequent consequences of these processes. The key is to identify governance levels based on the existence of institutionalized governing structures, regardless of their formal regulative competence. Apart from the "usual suspect"—the national level—which in some cases actually needs to be split into two levels (federal and state), in the European context there are also institutionalized governing structures at the European level, e.g. the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG), which has a broader membership than only members of the EU, or the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament. Moreover, there are regional initiatives between different countries (i.e. the Nordics or Benelux) that in some policy areas have developed distinct regional approaches. The multi-level aspect also recognizes that there may be differences in how authority is distributed across levels and does not consider distribution of authority as a zero-sum game—e.g. most authority remains at the national level, but more and more decisions are taken at other levels as well.

2. Multi-*actor* characteristic—it is necessary to acknowledge both the heterogeneity of the "state" and its many composite institutions, as well as the involvement of non-state actors (e.g. stakeholder organizations, businesses, consumers) in a policy domain. Here, one should first identify the actors who are formally recognized as "insiders" in decision-making (Dür and Mateo 2016)— e.g. the European Commission (a full member of the BFUG) or the six European stakeholder organizations,[1] UNESCO and the Council of Europe that have consultative status in the BFUG. However, a wider net should be cast so that actors which vie for influence but may not have a formal position in the different governing structures (i.e. "outsiders") can also be included, e.g. a student union in a country in which students do not take part in the governing process and are not systematically consulted.

3. Multi-*issue* characteristic—one should identify how clashes as well as complementarities between policy sectors move into and away from the policy domain of interest. This requires a detailed analysis of the policy development

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[1]They are: BUSINESSEUROPE, Education International (EI), 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).

process in the focal higher education sector, monitoring which issues are put on the agenda, and whether they actually are core higher education issues or are spillovers from other sectors. It can also be done through monitoring whether actors linked to other policy sectors (e.g. ministries of finance, migration agencies, unemployment offices) take part in higher education policy development, and whether actors from higher education take part in policy development in other sectors, e.g. EHEA stakeholder organizations taking part in discussions on European migration. In this, the identification of multiple actors facilitates the identification of multiple issues.

It should be stressed that these three "multi characteristics" can be conducive to policy dynamics—e.g. the fact that actors can choose at which level or within which sector to push for a specific policy development can lead to policy changes despite formal obstacles or a lack of explicit jurisdiction (Elken 2015). However, each of the characteristics can also lead to deadlocks, standstills and similar coordination challenges (Peters 2015), in cases in which the actors cannot agree on the route to take, at what level a specific development should be discussed or which sector should take the lead.

In our view, analyses of European higher education governance, processes leading to particular arrangements and consequences thereof require unpacking three distinct characteristics of this very coordination—multi-level, multi-actor, and multi-issue—and addressing them separately from one another as an independent perspective, and recognizing their interaction as likely to be responsible for the outcomes observed. This means that, in total, there are seven potential variations of "multi" features that are of interest when examining governance of EHEA: (1) multi-level, (2) multi-actor, (3) multi-issue, (4) multi-actor and multi-issue, (5) multi-actor and multi-level, (6) multi-issue and multi-level, and (7) multi-actor, multi-issue, and multi-level.

Three of these interactions in the context of the EHEA—(a) multi-actor and multi-issue, (b) multi-actor and multi-level, (c) multi-issue and multi-level—will be illustrated with empirical examples in the remainder of the chapter. The illustrations show how the three multi-s can be the basis for novel avenues of research that have not yet received sufficient attention.

The Three "Multi-S" in Action

Multi-actor and Multi-issue: Political Saliency of the EHEA

The first aspect of governance in the EHEA that will be discussed concerns its political salience for national level policy actors, i.e. ministries responsible for higher education, as well as transnational non-state actors, i.e. European stakeholder organizations. As argued by Vukasovic et al. (2017), one of the ways in which the political salience of the EHEA can be assessed is to analyse who is representing the

different actors at the key decision-making meetings—in this case, the ministerial conferences—and how this has changed over time. This approach reflects more general studies of political salience of European level policy developments (see e.g. Grøn and Salomonsen 2015), in which the basic premise is that the political rank of those "sitting at the table" matters, as well as that for successful lobbying it is often important to show both "strength in rank" as well as "strength in numbers".

Taking this as the starting point, Vukasovic et al. (2017) argued that political salience of the EHEA is comprised of two distinct dimensions: (a) a substantive and (b) a symbolic one. The substantive dimension reflects the fact that policies developed at the European level have an impact on both higher education systems and institutions, and thus both national and transnational actors are interested in shaping this process. The symbolic dimension highlights that participation and influence in the process send strong normative signals concerning (1) the importance of European level coordination of higher education policies for national and institutional level changes, and (2) the relevance of and rationale for policy activities (and therefore existence) of European stakeholder organizations. These two aspects combined also provide opportunities that participation and recognition of European stakeholder organizations on the European level are used as a symbolic resource by domestic stakeholder organizations to boost their own legitimacy and standing in their own domestic policy arenas.[2]

However, variance in both dimensions of salience is expected across:

- *time*, due to gradual consolidation of EHEA governance structures, but more importantly for this discussion, continuous elaboration of policy issues and preferences developed by these structures as well as EU institutions;
- *space*, because for EU Member States, the pan-European EHEA governing structure is not the only platform available for European level coordination, while this is not the case for countries that are not likely to become part of the EU (e.g. Russia or the South Caucasus countries);
- *types of policy actors*, as national level actors and transnational non-state actors have different rationales for participation in the process.

Thus, Vukasovic et al. (2017) focused on several patterns of interest, including: (1) changes in average size and rank of national delegations over time, (2) comparison between rank and size of national delegations of EU members, candidate countries and potential members, and (3) changes in size of delegation of European stakeholder organizations. Analysing participation at the ministerial conferences between 1999 and 2015, they found that average size and rank of national delegations did indeed decrease over time, that in recent years unlikely EU members and potential EU candidates have been sending higher-ranking delegations to ministerial summits than candidates or EU members, and that the size of delegations of European stakeholder organizations have been relatively stable since 2007.

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[2]See Chou et al. (2016) for analytic similarities regarding policy failures.

Such variance is indicative of the interaction between multi-actor and multi-issue aspects of the EHEA's governance. Namely, the evolution of the EHEA policy agenda from the initial six, relatively ambiguous, action lines to ten action lines and rather specific preferences concerning various aspects of higher education, including those that are of interest to other policy sectors (e.g. migration, employment) signifies very clearly the multi-issue aspect. Moreover, some of the issues—such as the qualifications frameworks—have been dealt in two separate (somewhat interrelated) arenas, the pan-European EHEA and the policy arena embedded within the EU framework. This means that some of the multiple actors taking part in EHEA governance have a choice in terms of which issue to purse within which policy arena. As suggested by Vukasovic et al. (2017), this is one possible explanation for the decline in the rank of the delegations of EU Member States. While European stakeholder organizations can theoretically do the same, their choice comes with more constraints. This is because they are officially recognized as legitimate actors in the EHEA arena (as indicated by their formal status as consultative members in the BFUG), while within the EU institutions their access to all relevant decision-makers is not guaranteed (Vukasovic, forthcoming in 2018). This adds a multi-actor aspect, implying that changes in the political salience of the EHEA may be accounted for by the fact that interactions between multi-issue and multi-actor aspects of EHEA governance play out differently across time, across space (for different national-level actors) and across different European stakeholder organizations. While these analyses provide first steps into unpacking the role and behaviour of various actors, there is also a need to further and expand this research agenda.

Multi-level and Multi-actor: European Stakeholder Organizations as Meta-Organizations

The second aspect concerns six European stakeholder organizations that are consultative members of the BFUG, i.e. BusinessEurope, EI, ENQA, ESU, EUA, and EURASHE. As previously indicated, the involvement of stakeholder organizations as such (regardless of the governance level) is reflective of the multi-actor aspect of governance and highlights the fact that policy development also involves mediation between interests of different stakeholder groups. However, European stakeholder organizations, given that their members are national or local stakeholder organizations or, in the case of EUA and EURASHE, higher education institutions, are actually organizations of other organizations, i.e. they are meta-organizations (Ahrne and Brunsson 2005). This means that they are multi-level organizations themselves and thus their participation and influence in the governance structures of the EHEA reflect the interaction between multi-actor and multi-level aspects of governance.

The key implication of this is that European stakeholder organizations constitute an additional link between different governance levels, thus providing a channel through which interest intermediation at one level can affect interest intermediation at the other. This first concerns the status of stakeholder organizations in their respective policy arenas. For example, in order to become recognized on the European level as a representative of students, ESU had to argue that its members are both representative and recognized in their own national contexts (Elken and Vukasovic, 2014; Klemenčič 2012). Moreover, given that the key struggle to be recognized as an actor took place prior to the Prague Ministerial Summit in 2001, it was important that, *inter alia*, (1) the Czech member of ESU (SKRVS), i.e. the student union from the country organizing the ministerial conference, and (2) the Swedish member of ESU (SFS), i.e. the student union from the country presiding the EU in that period, were at that point recognized as partners in higher education governance in their own national contexts and could use their "insider" position to support ESU's claim for involvement in the EHEA governing structures. Thus, while at the Bologna Ministerial Summit in 1999, ESU representatives were present only in an unofficial manner, in Prague ESU's chairperson was one of the keynote speakers and students were recognized as key partners in the process (Bologna Process 2001).[3] This enabled ESU to push for a stronger focus on student participation in governance, and together with some allies—the Council of Europe and some EHEA countries—promote the practice of some of the national delegations to include student representatives as a recommendation for all national delegations. This was in turn used by some ESU members to argue for improvement of their own position in their national policy arenas. Among others, the Student Union of Serbia used its membership in ESU and recognition of ESU as the student representative in the Bologna Process to strengthen its claim for participation in the governance of HE in Serbia (Branković 2010).

Another aspect in which the European stakeholder organizations provided a link between interest intermediation at various governance levels concerns the development of policy positions. Given that the key purpose of these organizations is advocacy and influence, their policy positions constitute their main organizational outputs and act as signalling devices both towards the European decision-makers as well as towards their own membership (Vukasovic 2017). Similar to the relationship between EU institutions and Member States, policy positions of European stakeholder organizations are often the result of some of their members "uploading" their policy preferences to the European level, while other members may be "downloading" the European level policy positions to apply them in their national contexts (for a more general discussion of uploading and downloading, see Börzel 2003). The lack of systematic research regarding the relationship between stakeholder organization policy development at various governance levels has also major

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[3]ESU (then ESIB) pushed for its inclusion in the EHEA governance structures by other means as well, including providing expert advice through its Committee on Prague in 2001 and later the Bologna Process Committee.

consequences. First, this means that there is still a limited systematic understanding and conceptualization of where specific policy ideas come from and how they might be adapted and translated by different actors operating across governance levels. Second, analysis of the democratic legitimacy of European decision-making in this context has not sufficiently taken into account the role of members in developing positions of European stakeholder organizations, as well as comparing positions of European stakeholder organizations and their members. There are great expectations in this respect, and Elken and Vukasovic (2014) argue that this was the reason why most of the stakeholder organizations were granted consultative status in the BFUG in the first place. Yet, research on such organizations implies we should be more cautious. This is because (1) the legitimacy expectation relies on the assumption that the "long chain of delegation" (Kohler-Koch 2010) between grass-roots and Brussels works well and this is not necessarily a given, and that (2) there is actually "*nothing intrinsically democratic*" about such organizations (Binderkrantz 2009: 658). Thus, while enhancement of democratic legitimacy might be a means for gaining access, the consequences of this need to be studied in much more detail. One way of assessing the extent to which European stakeholder organizations contribute to the democratic legitimacy of European decision-making is to study governance arrangements of these organizations, in particular concerning development of policy positions, as well as to assess the congruence between their policy positions and policy positions of their members.

Multi-issue and Multi-level: Policy Coordination and Convergence on Regional and European Levels

The third aspect of interest is based on the necessity to take a closer look at the different levels of governance of higher education in Europe. While there are studies which focus on commonalities and differences between countries with cultural, economic and political similarities (e.g. Branković et al. 2014; Christensen et al. 2014; Dobbins and Khachatryan 2015; Dobbins and Knill 2009; Vukasovic and Elken 2013; Vukasovic and Huisman 2017; Zgaga et al. 2013), the role of regional arrangements in the European Higher Education has not been systematically studied.

With this in mind, Elken and Vukasovic (forthcoming in 2018) compare (a) policy coordination and convergence at the European level with (b) policy coordination and convergence within four European regions: the Balkans, the Baltic countries, Benelux and the Nordic countries. The four regions exhibit a complex mix of similarities and differences in their policy developments and thus are suitable for exploring policy coordination and policy convergence in a more nuanced way. Two of them—the Balkans and the Baltic countries—belong to what is sometimes still termed as post-Communist Europe and are in general poorer than the other two regions—Benelux and the Nordic countries—which frequently come on top of

various prosperity, human development and democratic stability rankings. Given their geographical proximity, these regions shared historical legacies: Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) for the Balkans, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) for the Baltic countries, Danish or Swedish rule for most of the Nordic countries and, among others, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands for the Benelux. These historical legacies have also contributed to their cooperation following the dissolution of earlier political configurations: for instance, the Benelux is a political and economic union that predates the EU, the Nordic countries have been coordinating their policies through the Nordic Council of Ministers (and a Nordic Passport Union has been in existence since 1952), the Baltic countries have had a similar structure in place since the early 1990s, while in the Balkans the Regional Cooperation Council was set up in 2008 in order to achieve more integration. At the same time, the regions differ with regards to their position towards the EU, with the Benelux countries being some of the founders, while all of the Baltic countries and some of the Balkan and Nordic countries became members (much) later.

Elken and Vukasovic (forthcoming in 2018) complement the analysis of three governance levels with analysis of multi-issue aspects, i.e. similarities and differences of interrelated policies: quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and recognition of qualifications. The study finds that policy development in the Balkans does not go towards increasing similarity within the region, but rather a convergence with European level developments concerning the three issues. For the Baltic countries, the situation is somewhat different, given the close cooperation between QA agencies and the AURBELL[4] project focusing on automatic recognition. Benelux exhibits strong convergence within the region concerning recognition of qualifications (automatic recognition is already in place) and partially quality assurance, given the fact that the Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands have a joint QA agency (NVAO). For the Nordic region, the developments concerning automatic recognition are similar to the Baltics—there is commitment but at the time of writing a decision has not been reached, while NOQA (the Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education) that has existed since 1992 has been a basis for some convergence.

In light of the fact that studies about the implementation of the Bologna Process continue to report that there is "surface convergence, persistent diversity underneath" (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2015; Westerheijden et al. 2010; Witte 2006, 2008), the lack of systematic analysis of the regional level coordination in relation to national level policy changes and European integration initiatives means that a possible explanation for varied patterns has not been sufficiently analysed. Moreover, the regional level matters in different ways for different policy issues, thus clearly highlighting one of the implications of the interaction between multi-level and multi-issue dimensions of governance in the EHEA.

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[4]Automatic Recognition between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania project.

What's Next? Expanding the Analysis of the Bologna Process

Since 1999, the Bologna Process has expanded considerably. Yet, the analytical toolbox to analyse these developments has not followed suit. This chapter argues that, in order to understand the intricacies and nuances of governance of higher education, it is necessary to conceptually distinguish between three dimensions: (1) the multi-*level* dimension concerning how authority is distributed or concentrated across governance levels, (2) the multi-*actor* dimension which highlights heterogeneity of state and the involvement of non-state actors (e.g. stakeholder organizations, businesses, consumers), and (3) the multi-*issue* dimension which concerns clashes as well as complementarities between policy sectors. The potential of the "three multi-s" framework to improve our knowledge of European higher education policy developments has been demonstrated through (a) analysis of changing political salience of the EHEA, (b) exploration of the role of European stakeholder organizations, and (c) consideration of the regional policy coordination and convergence in relation to European level developments. While each of these developments can be analysed on its own, the umbrella framework of the "three multi-s" allows us to see them as interrelated and more general European developments. Moreover, these examples show how the multi-framework also allows for a new focus of analysis.

While the focus of this chapter has been on European developments, the "three multi-s" are not contextually bound and can be employed for analysis of similar integration dynamics in other macro-regions of the world, e.g. South East Asia (as demonstrated by Chou and Ravinet 2017), or for exploring inter-regional interactions. Moreover, analysing EHEA governance in a comparative manner (and not as *sui generis*) can be conducive to a deeper understanding of EHEA, with regard to both its commonalities with other regional integration projects and its specificities. With further studies, we may begin to address emerging questions that are engaging scholars in recent years, such as: Are concepts such as "academic freedom" unique to Europe or the West? What about the institution of the University, to what extent is this a European idea? How can we reconcile deep policy developments in Europe and its centuries-old universities with the rise of Asia, especially its younger universities that have been climbing the international rankings in meteoric ways? By engaging in such comparative research, it is also possible to enhance and nuance our understanding of the developments within EHEA.

Looking into the future, we expect that the governance of EHEA—should it continue—to persistently exhibit complexity with regards to governance structures as well as actor constellations—with sometimes diverging and sometimes converging interests, depending on the issue at hand. The expansion of the process to 48 countries has only added to this complexity, given that with every additional country the complexity increases as different actors, regions or issues are included in the EHEA. Given this increasing complexity and the need for unanimous agreement by all full members of the EHEA to ministerial communiqués, it is very

likely that agreements between the different actors on concrete policies will become harder if their interests remain divergent. Thus, we are most likely going to continue to observe rather ambiguous European policies as well as variations in national and organizational implementation. Moreover, one can also expect that responses on regional level could become a stepping stone in the context of EHEA as a whole. At the same time, it is less likely that the increased number of countries will be able to agree on new comprehensive action lines for the EHEA, but rather focus on technical aspects, for example detailed development of the existing tools in the area of quality assurance or qualification frameworks. EU efforts to consolidate the European Education Area by, among other things, launching the Sorbonne process for mutual recognition is, in this context, an interesting development and emphasizes the necessity of a multi-actor and multi-issue approach to analysing the Bologna Process.

To what extent would the complexity and ambiguity of future EHEA governance contribute to its vulnerability remains to be examined. However, we contend that the conceptualization of the "three multi-s" offered in this chapter and the discussion of their interactions provide a more robust analytical tool for understanding the past, current, and future developments of the EHEA as well as its implications for higher education in and beyond Europe.

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Promoting the Civic and Democratic Role of Higher Education: The Next Challenge for the EHEA?

Tony Gallagher

Introduction: The Growth and Development of the EHEA

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has developed over a period of almost two decades to develop reforms of higher education on the basis of common key values. These values included freedom of expression, academic freedom and institutional autonomy, independent students' unions, and free movement for students and staff. A total of 46 countries worked towards this achievement until the EHEA was formally launched in 2010 and two more have since joined the process. The years since then have been difficult as the deepening economic crisis not only created challenges for public funding of higher education institutions but also saw pressure towards greater levels of accountability and pressure for institutions to more directly respond to economic and social needs (EUA 2015). The last few years have seen political challenges compound the situation: on one level we have witnessed the growth of anti-establishment populist politics, of the right and left; but more worryingly, there has been a trend towards non-rationalism in political debate, often characterized as the development of "post-truth" politics. What is the role of universities in this emergent environment and does it point to new priorities for the EHEA?

At its origins, the EHEA was focused on the need to increase student and staff mobility, and to facilitate employability. The primary focus of the early years of its development was on structural reforms so that a cohesive and supportive environment existed for mutual exchange and cooperation. Since this was also focused on the enhancement of academic quality and graduate employability, it was rec-

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